Road to Perdition

by jesbakescookies

Summary

Happy's past resurfaces when Tara is in need of protection after being sentenced to hard time. How will he cope with facing his largest regret after so long?

Notes

I cant seem to help myself but start all kinds of projects. This is one of the many Happy x OC I have had brewing for about a year now. Not sure if it will have the draw my other's have but thought I would throw it on here to see if anyone is interested.

I don't own SOA etc etc. OC and non canon are of my own creation.

I'm using a brunette Margot Robbie as inspiration for my OC.

ENJOY
Chapter 1

12 years, 3 months, 16 days since incarceration

Happy sat at the table with the rest of his brothers. His eyes stayed on Jax as he smoked down his third cigarette of the last half hour. The man was on edge now that his wife was headed behind bars for forging federal documents to see Otto Delaney. She was lucky that the death of the prison nurse wasn't pinned on her, but she would still do a year for her part in the crime. Jax was obviously struggling with the idea that she would be doing hard time.

Happy felt his spine stiffening and his chest tighten as old memories and emotions began to bubble up inside him. Things from his past that should stay dead and buried. People that shouldn't even be thought about, nor spoken of.

"Tara's gonna need protection." Jax drawled, his eyes meeting the group after silent introspection. "Who do we have inside Chino Women's?"

Happy shifted uncomfortably at the question, his eyes sliding to his president's. Jax cocked his head and raised an eyebrow. "Got something to say Hap?"

Growling lowly, Happy leaned forward and drummed his fingers on the table top. He looked over the men sitting at the table, none of whom knew what he was about to spill.

"Brother. This is my old lady, if you got somethin' you gotta tell me."

Happy clenched his teeth until his jaw popped from the pressure before he finally spoke, "I know someone that might be able to help."

"Who?"

"She's reliable. If she agrees to it, she'll keep her word." Happy tried to dodge the question but knew they wouldn't stop digging.

"Who is she?" Jax repeated with a sharper edge, his blue eyes scanning him with a calculating gaze.

Happy balled both of his fists, while grinding his teeth in frustration at the idea of sharing personal shit at the table. "My ol' lady."

"What" Tig exclaimed, his blue eyes wide and crazy as his heavily ringed hand slammed the table top. "The fuck?"

"Your old lady?" Jax repeated, sitting up to give him his full attention. "Since when do you have an old lady?"

Happy snarled his teeth as the anger from years ago roiled up inside him like a volcano. He tightened his fists in irritation as his eyes met Jax's.

"Got together when I first patched. Inked her, made her mine." He rasped, his dark eyes drilling holes into the reaper in the center of the table when he admitted his failings as an old man. "Shit went sideways. She ended up locked up."
"What's she in for, brotha?" Chibs asked, his scars downturned at the news.

"First degree murder. Thirty years, parole in fifteen."

"Jesus Christ, man."

"How longs she been inside?" Chibs drawled, lighting up a joint before passing it to him. Happy took a short toke and handed it back before he answered. He knew the exact day she was yanked from his life and he'd counted every vacant day since.

"Twelve years, three months, sixteen days." Happy rasped through his exhale, his jaw tightening as his brothers cursed under their breathes.

"How come you never told us, brother?" Jax asked, his words sounding hoarse from the revelations.

"It's old news." Happy grunted, shaking off Quinn's comforting grip on his shoulder.

"Hap." Jax rasped, his brows raised, "How come?"

Shaking his head, he finally explained, "ATF was aiming at SAMTAC. They had eyes and ears everywhere."

"This when Desi was President?"

"Yeah." Happy nodded, with a scowl. The old Tacoma President was dirty and corrupt. He was a dark stain on the charter's history and one of the reasons his old lady ended up behind bars.

"The pigs pushed on everyone they could get their hands on. This... prick agent got his eyes set on my ol' lady. He got evidence from a sloppy club kill, a guy she had ties too. Pinned it on her, had a couple rat witnesses set to testify."

Happy chewed a toothpick aggressively as the events all those years ago began to flood his mind. He found out about her arrest from his president when he arrived back from a run to Vegas. The man, someone Happy had looked up to and trusted, had told him not to worry, that everything would work out. Happy just hadn't realized that Desi meant, no Son would do time for their fuck up. Happy's old lady would take the fall. She would do his time.

"Prick Agent told her that if she flipped, if she gave them shit to nail the Sons she would go free." He balled his hands up as he recalled the scene unfolding at the police station. "She wouldn't say shit so Desi's dirty lawyer had her take a deal, they took off life in prison if she'd signed a confession. Desi kept me on the road when shit was falling apart, he didn't want a Son to take the fall, he knew I would've taken her place in a heartbeat. When I got back it was too late. She was on her way to lock up. She pled guilty a few days later."

"Jesus Christ."

Happy glanced around the table seeing too much pity for his liking. He didn't do pity.

"How much club shit did she know?"

"All of it." Happy rasped, looking down at the skull ring that most probably assumed was nothing more than Reaper gear. She'd had it crafted special for him, the happy face carved in its forehead matching the ink he'd embedded in her skin. The statement spoke volumes, she was as loyal as they came. His old lady could've taken the club down at the knees, but instead she shut her mouth and
did his time.

"So is she protected inside?"

Grunting at the question, Happy shook his head, "She's inside because of the club. She won't rat but she doesn't want anything to do with me or the club. I tried to get some pull inside there but couldn't get any back up and by the time I did, she'd cut ties. She's been on her own."

"What makes you think she'll be able to help Tara?"

"She's survived twelve years inside on her own." Happy drawled, crossing his arms. "She's tough."

"Man's got a point, Jackie boy. More time than any of us has done consecutively."

"Meet with her. See if she's solid."

"I haven't seen her in a while. She told me not to come back." Happy grunted, his skin feeling too tight for his body. Old emotions were growing inside him, guilt being the main one, but also excitement to see her again. He could picture the last time he had and he would give a limb to have something other than the image of her teary eyes and cuffed wrists.

"Better late than never. Will you do it, Hap? For Tara."

"Yes I will." he nodded resolutely.

"What's her name?" Juice asked, the club's intelligence officer obviously looking to research the woman.

"Harlowe." Happy rasped her name for the first time in a decade. "Harlowe Wentz."

Happy sat stiffly at the booth facing a sheet of glass as he waited for the guards to usher the inmates into the visiting area. He hadn't seen his old lady in almost 12 years, but recognized her the moment she stepped through the iron gate. She wasn't tall but not the shortest woman in the room, her head held high as she shuffled across the room in slip on tennis shoes and cuffed wrists.

Harlowe walked up to the booth with a completely blank expression, all reaction to Happy's sudden return hidden from the man. The time had been hard, the lines around her eyes were new and the angles of her face had sharpened. She bore a new scar across her cheek and one cut through her eyebrow, the sight igniting a rage inside him he hadn't felt in years. Her dark brunette hair was french braided tight to her head, her face clear of makeup. She was just as beautiful as she'd always been, but there was a hardness incasing her that seemed foreign. Time had passed but his feelings for the woman sat across from him hadn't.

He loved her as deeply and as fiercely as he had the day she was dragged away from him in cuffs.

She was thinner, her arms and shoulders cut with lean muscle. She held herself with a lethality that Happy recognized from his own prison stints. He felt as though he were looking in carnival mirror, the sight was even harder to bear than if she was broken mess. Their association caused her to be imprisoned, which turned her into the dead eyed predator that sat before him. Her life was being stolen and he couldn't do anything about it.

"What're you doing here?" Harlowe asked after finally picking up the receiver, her voice rougher
"Nice to see you too, Lowe." Happy rasped, his eyes narrowing at her aggressive attitude.

"We both know you don't like small talk, Hap. Cut the shit." She scoffed, her eyes scanning the room before returning to him.

Happy huffed out an irritated breath and counted to ten before replying, "Need something."

Harlowe snorted, leaning forward towards the glass and asking into the worn phone receiver, "You do or the club?"

"We do." Happy answered gruffly.

Harlowe's green eyes blazed a hole in him as she sneered through clenched teeth, "My life not enough for you, killer?"

Happy's jaw popped at the pressure he had to apply to keep from snarling back at her. It wasn't that she was mistaken, she had given up her life for the club. She'd given up more for the club than some of his brothers had. She kept quiet, didn't rat and was doing hard time for a crime she hadn't committed. A crime that Happy clearly remembered committing himself. He could picture the dead fuck's face after he blew it away, the bastard that ruined his old lady's life. He'd fucked up and left clean up to the prospects. A lying rat bastard prospect with a drug problem and loose lips. It was the reason Happy cleaned up his own kills now, so no one else would pay for the crimes he committed.

"If I could change shit I would." Happy growled, his hand clenched into a fist on the tiny counter as he suppressed the urge to punch the glass in front of him. "If I could take your goddamn place I would, Lowe, you know that... You don't owe me shit and you owe the club even less, but I still need something."

Harlowe looked away, her eyes connecting with one of the women being led passed. Her lip curled in anger at the sight before she returned her gaze to Happy.

"Who's she?" Happy asked, his eyes following the dark skinned woman as she was seated at the furthest cubicle.

"Nobody." Harlowe answered flatly. "What do you need?"

Happy brushed off his curiosity and replied, "Gonna be someone heading inside."

"And?"

"She's family. She needs a friend in here."


"She needs someone to have her back. Can you do it?"

Rolling her eyes, Harlowe glanced at the woman a few stalls down. Happy watched the way they eyeballed each other. He could tell they were probably familiar adversaries. He wanted to question her, but knew he had no right to ask about her life or the goings on inside. When her gaze finally returned to his, she sighed and muttered, "Yeah. What's her name?"
"Tara Knowles. You sure?"

"I said yeah." Harlowe huffed, leaning forward onto the counter.

"You solid in here? Got a crew to back you up?" He asked, his dark gaze looking her over critically.

Harlowe nodded blandly, her eyes finally looking over her old man. He smirked when he caught her looking at him with a familiar hunger.

"Looking good in your old age, Hap." She finally spoke, her plump lip curling slightly to show off the dimple in her cheek. "Bet all those sweetbutts love it."

Happy shifted uncomfortably with guilt for all the sexually deviant shit he'd done while his old lady sat in a cage rotting.

"Pfft. Don't feel guilty, Hap." She spoke knowingly, her words thinly veiled with sarcasm. "Prison clause right?"

Happy ground his teeth as she gave him a sarcastic grin before throwing out her parting words, "Tell your family I'll keep their gash outta trouble."
Harlowe sat down on her bunk after returning from visitation room, her mind a swirling mess from seeing Happy again. It'd been close to 12 years since she'd seen him last, the man was just getting better with age. When they first met he'd had thick black hair, that she used to love to run her hands through. He had ink but not nearly as much as he probably had at present if she went by the snake tattooed to his now bald skull. She couldn't deny what his palpable gaze did to her, the ache just a look from him caused. It was just like old times, when he'd walked into the bar she worked at all those years ago.

At twenty seven Happy was just a couple years older than her, but he'd seemed so much older. The life he led as a teenage delinquent and then as a Son definitely aged him, but he used to have this crazy spark in his eyes when he looked at her. He'd seemed like a kid at times when they'd eat take out and watch cartoons in their underwear. Harlowe was pretty sure not one of his brothers knew he spent Saturday mornings eating cereal and watching kid's programming.

Happy didn't seem to have that same spark in his eye when he sat down behind that plexiglass asking her for help, but he was still that roughly handsome man she'd fallen in love with.

"Asshole." She huffed, closing her eyes as she pictured him again for one long weak willed moment. Harlowe tried to keep from thinking about the outside world. It was the only way for her to survive prison, forgetting what was beyond the walls. It kept her sharp and free from self destructive thoughts about what could've or should've been. Harlowe focused on the present and near future, it kept her alive.

"So who was it?" Her celly asked from the top bunk, her head hanging over the edge. Freddie aka Fredrique Gonzalez was a petite brunette with tight cornrows and several gang tattoos on her neck and face.

Harlowe opened her eyes and looked at the younger woman she'd been housed with for the last few years.

"My ex." She replied blandly, sighing as Freddie instantly hopped down from the top.

"Your ex?" Freddie repeated with wide eyes, the inked tear at the corner of her eye rising with the motion. "Like the Ex?"

"Yep." Harlowe answered, flopping down onto her stiff mattress. "The Ex."

"How'd he look?"

"Sexy as fuck." Harlowe spoke with a sly smile, her green eyes flicking to Freddie's. "It's completely unacceptable."

Freddie chuckled, sitting down next to her on the bed. The pair of women grew close after the first year of bunking together, it's hard not to when you spend near twenty-four-seven with someone. Freddie was inside for armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon. She'd been caught up in gang life far before her last arrest, her career of crime with Los Muertos spanning her whole adolescence and teenage years. After beating a man into a coma, Freddie robbed his store front with her then old man, Marcos. The couple was caught a few days later smoking the last of their
meth. Freddie had a couple strikes against her already, which landed her in Chino Women's without a crew. It wasn't a full day until she received a beating that landed her inside the medical unit.

Freddie ended up in the kitchen after she recovered from the brutal beatdown by the rival gang housed in her unit. She was transferred into Harlowe's cell to prevent another incident. The pair struck up a friendship because of their joint hatred for the rival gang running rampant between the bars.

Harlowe had been working herself into a position in the kitchen, her goal of running contraband through the food deliveries falling into place with Frankie. It all started when she recognized the delivery driver from her days of bartending, the man having worked for the liquor supplier years ago. Harlowe saw an opportunity and took it swiftly by befriending the man who used to know her. With Freddie's connections outside the walls, the pair developed a steady flow of contraband. Mostly they brought in the little extravagances that women missed inside, makeup and food. Drugs happened across their throughways but Harlowe tried to keep her operations free of it. She didn't want to add more violence to the prison by fueling women with heavy narcotics.

"So what he want?"

"A favor." Harlowe grunted, scrubbing her face. "I gotta babysit some fresh meat."

"Seriously?" Freddie grumbled, standing up to pace the room a bit. "So what? Someone's old lady?"

"Probably." She sighed, sitting upright to watch her friend stressing. "He didn't say who's bitch she was."

"Fuck." Freddie grumbled, "that mean a cell change?"

"Maybe." Harlowe groaned, scratching at her own French braided hair. She'd learned very quickly when she entered prison that long flowing hair, that people can grab onto, was a detriment. "They might pull strings for that shit. If they got any in here."

"Man." Her celly whined, stomping her feet a bit. "This is bullshit, Lolo."

"Yeah well, it's not like I have a choice." Harlowe scoffed, part of her knowing she could've said no. She still wore Happy's ink but it'd been a long time since they were in a relationship. It would be near impossible for him to really do anything about her refusal and if she really thought about it, Happy wouldn't force her hand to help. However, with his sudden return after so long, Harlowe couldn't help but agree to it. She still loved the bastard, which was not much of a surprise to her.

"Sure you do, tell that sexy asshole no, you've already done enough for his boy's club. Fuck 'em."

Freddie ranted, throwing her hands up in the air.

"Har, Har." She muttered, "You and I both know that ain't how it works. He's my ol' man."

"What's he gonna do? Hire some bitch to shank you? No. He's just gonna go bitch to his boys and hump some gash and get over it."

"Fred." Harlowe sighed, giving her a desperate look.

"Fine but it's shit. How're we gonna keep shit moving in, if they fuck up our system?"

"We'll figure it out, now will you sit the fuck down? I need a goddamn moment to think." Harlowe
growled, laying down to process the torrent of emotions she was experiencing.

"You okay?" Freddie asked, noticing the pained expression on her friend's face.

"No." Harlowe groaned, rubbing her face roughly. "It's not fair."

"What?"

She sighed, her green eyes prickling behind her closed lids. "Still loving someone that ruined your life."

"What am I supposed to do, Lowe, just leave you here?" Happy snarled into the phone, while slamming his fist into the glass stretched between them. "I can't do that."

"Just tell yourself I'm dead, Happy. Cause I am or I will be. Feels like the only way I'm getting free from everything is in a body bag." She stood from the stationary metal stool, her green eyes glossy with tears.

Her cuffed hands held the receiver as she spoke softly to him. "I love you, Happy Lowman. Ever since I first laid eyes on you killer, it's always been you. If you love me too, you won't come back here, Hap. The outside can't exist now remember? An expert in this prison shit told me that once."

She placed her hand over the clenched fist pressed into the glass before hanging up and walking away.

"Goddamnit Lowe!" He shouted, slamming the phone into the glass. The guards shouted at him to stop as he threw it onto the counter in frustration. "Harlowe!"

Happy woke from the nightmare torn straight from his memory, a cold sweat chilling his feverish skin. He pushed himself upright and scrubbing his stubbly head and face roughly.

"Fuck." He huffed, digging his thumb and forefinger into his eye sockets to rub away the prickling he'd deny existed.

It'd been awhile since his last nightmare about Harlowe. Mostly he had warped sex dreams of her doing the deviant shit he'd gotten up to in the last handful of years. Having Tig as his wingman had probably been a poor life choice in hindsight, the two not leveling each other off in the slightest. More like spinning already spun tops. Freak circle indeed.

Climbing from bed, Happy stretched and groaned his way into the bathroom for a piss and a shower. He did the normal regimen mechanically, every movement similar to the morning prior and so on.

He figured that his habitual nature for grooming and his tidy surroundings probably had to do with the somewhat chaotic life the club led. It was also probably why he was so drawn to Harlowe in the first place. She'd been a girl next door type of woman, without the drama that club gash drowned themselves in. Happy met her one evening while on a run with his brother's. The cute early twenty something bartended at a shithole in Northern California that was often frequented by SAMTAC on their way to the south.
Happy had recently patched into Tacoma, his sponsor Poe having just secured his SAA position took a special interest in him. Full of young bravado and pride for the kutte he wore, Happy was reaping the benefit of all the easy pussy being thrown his way.

When he laid eyes on Harlowe though, it was like every other chick in the joint disappeared. He was captivated.

Her brunette hair was twisted up into a ponytail showing off her soft pale neck. There was an appealing softness to her curves that hooked his gaze whenever she'd walk passed. He'd stared at her easy smile and light green eyes as she chatted up customers. She seemed to light up the dreary bar with her big grins and loud laughter. Happy wasn't a big talker but he liked listening to her, even when it was about fuck all. She had a pleasant rhythm and when she laughed...fuck, Happy could listen to that all day. It was wide and free, full of some kind of light he hadn't known he was missing in his life.

He hadn't thought he'd have a chance with her but fate handed him the perfect opening in the form of a drunk asshole with too many hands. The asshole cornered her that evening and Happy intervened, but not before she'd been backhanded by the prick.

After beating the shit out of the bastard behind the bar, Happy joined her in the kitchen to wash his bloody hands.

Harlowe had a towel filled with ice pressed to her cheek as Happy washed up. He slid his dark eyes to the girl and found her staring back with those vibrant green eyes. He expected fear, but all he saw was concern.

"Are you hurt?" Harlowe asked, her eyes creased in worry.

Happy couldn't stop the loud bark of laughter erupting at her question. "That pussy couldn't hurt me."

Harlowe frowned and winced when it moved her cheek. "Well, he hurt me."

The sentence might as well have slapped him in the face. Happy stepped forward and pulled the makeshift ice pack from her cheek. She was right, the bastard had hurt her and the sight of the bruise forming had his blood pressure rising again.

"Shoulda killed the fucker." He growled, his thumb brushing gently across it. "Bruised you real good."

"Yeah, doesn't feel too great." She murmured, chewing her lip nervously as she looked away from his penetrative stare. Happy was used to people looking away from him when he stared, his black eyes off putting to most. It was the first time he couldn't stand the sight of someone being afraid of him.

Happy leaned forward and lightly kissed the vivid purple marring her soft skin. "M'sorry he hurt you."

When she tilted her face up, Happy took the opportunity to press his lips to hers. Harlowe froze for a moment before her hands landed on his chest, curling into his kutte as her mouth opened willingly. Happy moaned with delight as her greedy tongue twisted with his.

"Fucking hell." He growled as he grabbed a handful of her ass aggressively. "Been eyeing this ass all night."
"It living up to expectations?" She gasped as he hiked her up, wrapping her legs around his waist.

"Yes it is." Happy replied, flashing her a Cheshire grin after smacking it.

The memories of that evening tumbled through his head all morning, only to be shoved away when he sat down with a distraught Jax.

"I can't get Tara into your old lady's cell." He growled, lighting up another cigarette to add to the growing pile in the ashtray before him. "Our only inside man is sayin' shits tightly controlled."

"I can see if she has any pull with the guards." Happy offered, his heartbeat accelerating at the idea of speaking to her again.

"Was she open to that?"

Happy shrugged a bit to the question, not knowing if she had agreed because she wanted to or if she only felt obligated. "Probably obligated." He thought to himself resignedly.

"I'll reach out and see."

"Thanks, Hap." Jax rasped, scrubbing his face. "I don't know how you did this shit."

"What?"

"Watchin' your ol' lady go inside." Jax replied, stubbing out his spent butt.

Happy clenched his fists and replied, "ain't no easy way, brother."

"I hear you." Jax muttered, shaking his head slightly in thought. "How'd you cope when she cut you off? I couldn't handle that shit when she went to county. Now she's goin' into hard time and I can't get my fuckin' head straight with it."

Happy shifted in his seat, uncomfortable with speaking about his personal shit. He wasn't one to gossip and bitch about the things in his life. He usually bottled it up and used it for later on people that deserved it, but his President was facing some hard times and he couldn't leave a brother hanging. The club and his brothers came first over personal feelings.

"It'll be hard at first." Happy began, his eyes crinkling as he thought about the first few months of her incarceration. "You'll forget she's gone and look for her. Then you get pissed, pissed that she's in there and pissed that you can't just fix it. If she stops seeing you... eventually you get numb to it. Numb to missin' her and numb to the anger of her cuttin' you out of her life. You'll fill your days with club shit 'n easy pussy to forget that you had somethin' real. Somethin' worth the risk. Ain't no easy way through it, brother. You just gotta do your time. Just like she does."

Jax nodded a bit at his words and rasped, "You should've told us, Hap."

"Not anyone's business but mine."

"Maybe we could've done something."

"Ain't nothing to do." Happy grunted, pushing himself up from his seat. "Just hope she's got a clean enough record to get paroled in a few years."
thank you all for your kind words. Xoxo
Chapter 3

Harlowe stood near the entrance of her cell watching as the new inmates were led inside the unit. The twenty-four cell unit housed forty three women at the moment but five women shuffling inside would fill the remaining beds. Harlowe had spoken to Officer Rodriguez, the guard who happened to be married to Freddie's cousin. He was making sure Tara was placed with Dolores, the senior citizen of the group. The eighty year old was convicted of murdering her husband with rat poison. She claimed he fucked her sister back in the nineties and deserved it. Harlowe was pretty sure she'd be safe with the crazy lady for at least the evening. Once she got to see the woman face to face, Harlowe would decide just how helpless the bitch was. She had no way of knowing if she'd done time before or was some naive idiot like Harlowe had been oh so long ago. Happy hadn't told her much with the limited privacy they had.

"That the puta?" Freddie asked, tipping her sharp chin to the skinny brunette being shown her new digs. Harlowe nodded, watching the woman with calculating eyes.

"What're you thinkin'? She gonna be a problem?"

"Probably." She muttered back, watching as the brunette stood inside the cell with her arms wrapped tightly around her middle. Harlowe chuckled as she watched Dolores screaming at the guard about putting someone in her cell.

"Shit, She won' last a night with Crazy D sleeping under her."

"She's harmless." Harlowe scoffed, "unless you fuck her sister, then don't eat the cookies. That ain't powdered sugar."

Freddie cracked up, nudging her with her elbow. "So you thinkin' she'll get in our way?"

"Don't know. I gotta talk to her, see who she is. Who her old man is."

"Why?"

"If he's got a seat near the top then I'm gonna need to room with her." Harlowe knew her celly was going to have a problem with news, she was trying to soften the blow by framing it as a possibility rather than a definite.

"Damn, Lolo." Freddie huffed, sitting down on the bunk with a groan. "Man, this is bullshit. You know how all those other bitches piss me off."

"I know." Harlowe sighed, sitting down next to her friend. They were close after living in such small accommodations; it was hard not to become acquainted with a roomie when living in what amounted to a broom closet.

Harlowe knew that Freddie probably had deeper feelings for her but she never pushed up on her. They both knew Harlowe was still stuck on the dark-eyed devil she refused to speak about.

"At least you and Dolores get along alright." Harlowe offered with a grin.

"Fuck you." Freddie growled, shoving Harlowe to the side. "Asshole."
"I'm sorry." Harlowe sighed again, holding Freddie's hand between hers. "I know this sucks but I said I'd do it and you know me, I always follow through."

"I know." Freddie grumbled, brushing her thumb across her knuckles. Harlowe chewed her cheek as she allowed her friend a moment.

"We still get chow and yard time." Harlowe comforted, "ain't like I'm going anywhere."

Freddie sulked the rest of the evening while Harlowe kept her eyes on the cell across the unit floor. She could see Dolores sleeping in bed while the other woman sat against the wall, her legs folded to her chest.

Harlowe had a short call with Happy the day prior where he told her to do what she had to, to get Tara in her cell. They'd tried to pull strings from the outside but couldn't swing it. Harlowe did her best, but on short notice Officer Rodriguez could only influence her initial placement. He explained that he could only move inmates around if they posed a threat to the cellmate. In order to do that, Tara either needed to be threatened by Dolores or vice versa. Harlowe was hoping Dolores would keep playing along. It'd only cost Harlowe a family size pack of Hostess Twinkie's to get the older woman to turn up the crazy for a day.

Harlowe followed closely behind Dolores and Tara as they walked in a line to mealtime. Freddie kept pace with her watching her back as Harlowe spoke low to Tara.

"Stick with me and Freddie."

"Who're you?"

"You not talkin to your old man?" Harlowe sneered.

"I'm verifying who you are." Tara retorted as her lip curled snidely.

Harlowe narrowed her eyes and growled, "I'm the bitch who got drafted to protect your lily white ass. So shut your mouth and listen."

Tara smirked, her arms crossing as they stopped to wait for the gates between hallways to be opened. "I didn't believe you were his old lady but I see it now."

Harlowe felt her jaw ratchet shut with such intensity her teeth creaked. "So you know I'm only helping you because of the thinnest thread of loyalty. Personally, I could give a rat's ass if you make it past yard time. Hell you might take a shiv over Tuesday's mystery omelets. You want to make it out alive, you do as I say."

Tara paled a bit as they entered the half full room facing another forty-eight women from unit B.

They stood in line silently waiting their turn at the dispensing counter. Harlowe stayed close, her eyes scanning for anyone eyeballing the fresh meat. She immediately caught Lottie looking Tara over with interest. Harlowe remembered her first encounter with the violent woman years ago.
Day 3 of incarceration

Harlowe was backed up against the bars, a hand clutched tightly to her long hair holding her in place. She yelped as the inmate behind her tugged hard, slamming her head into the metal bars as her partner punched and kicked Harlowe from the front. She did her best to protect herself but after a few heavy hits to head from both fists and the metal bars behind her, Harlowe could barely see straight.

"This is my unit, bitch." The voice growled into her ear as she slammed Harlowe's cheek into the cold metal.

When they stopped attacking and released the grip on her hair, she collapsed to the ground like a broken doll. Her chest heaved as she huddled against the floor when they placed a few more vicious kicks to her ribs before leaving. Her body was left trembling with adrenaline. Harlowe had never been in a fight before, she'd gotten hit but never to the extent she'd just experienced. She thought about Happy in that moment.

He loved fighting. Violence, both committing it and receiving it. She had no idea how he could thrive on such a thing when she felt like she was dying.

Pushing herself up on shaky arms, Harlowe spit blood from her mouth as it also dripped from her nose. Her eyes fluttered trying to wash away the dark spots but she couldn't clear her vision completely. She realized her eyebrow was split and blood was blurring her eyes.

"Need medical in east wing holding." A voice echoed, the crackle of a radio following it. Harlowe flinched as a set of hands approached her but realized it was a guard.

"Easy inmate. Let me see your face."

When Harlowe tipped her face up she met the eyes of the guard who'd done her intake. Her eyes hardened at the sight of her and she spoke into her radio again, "we'll need to call doc in for this one."

"I see you didn't stay out of trouble." The guard commented, putting rubber gloves on before helping Harlowe to a seated position.

"Always been my problem." Harlowe rasped, her dry chuckle sending jagged pain to rip across her side. She hissed in pain while holding her ribs gently.

"You're gonna need to learn how to in here or you won't make it out alive." She replied, motioning for the guards heading towards them. "Can you walk or do we need a gurney?"

"I can walk." She croaked, as they helped her to her feet.

Harlowe glared at Lottie as the memory faded, unlike the scars. Turning slightly she muttered, "Keep your eyes away from the ugly bitch two tables over."

"That just makes me want to look." Tara snarked, her dark brows rising as she peeked over her shoulder.

"Don't be so obvious." Harlowe growled, bumping her with her elbow.

"Well, what do you expect?" The brunette scoffed, going back to eating the sad excuse of a
breakfast. Watery powdered eggs with flecks of mystery meat and a few sides of mushy veggies. The only salvageable item being the slightly burnt slice of toast.

"What's her deal?"

"She's a bitch, just steer clear." Harlowe offered while chewing her food slowly. "Your celly is going to throw down tonight."

She watched as Tara's head spun in her direction, mouth open to question her.

"Shut up and listen." Harlowe interrupted, scooping up the last of her eggs on the sliver of leftover toast. "She'll draw a little blood but she isn't looking to maim. It's the only way to get you placed with me. Listen to Rodriguez, he's good people."

"Okay." Tara muttered, pushing her food around without eating.

"You should eat, you're gonna need it." Harlowe muttered, tipping her chin towards the plate of food.

Happy watched as Lyla directed a couple porn actresses on the scene they were filming. He was perched on a barstool waiting for Jax to finish with his phone call to Tara's lawyer. The moment he'd entered the chapel to talk to her his voice had raised and he began pacing the room. Happy kept glancing over at the door anxiously waiting to know what had happened inside. He couldn't stop the tightness building in his chest as he thought of the possibilities of what could have transpired. He hadn't thought about what he was truly asking of Harlowe when he coerced her into protecting Tara. He couldn't stop the tightness building in his chest as he thought of the possibilities of what could have transpired. He hadn't thought about what he was truly asking of Harlowe when he coerced her into protecting Tara. It meant she was in the line of fire if someone came aiming at Tara. He felt a new kind of dread fill his head as he realized he could've just put a target on his old lady's back.

The door was thrown open after another long moment, Jax storming out towards the bar.

"Thought you said she'd keep her safe." Jax shouted, shoving a surprised Happy roughly from his stool. Happy stumbled but caught himself before facing off against his President.

"What happened?" He rasped, blocking Jax's angry shoves.

"Tara got her ass beat by her cellmate." He growled, pointing a finger in his face. "Your old lady is full of shit."

Happy ground his teeth at his brother's words and suppressed the urge to bash his face in for insulting Harlowe's commitment. "I'd watch the next words out of your mouth, brother." Happy rasped calmly but the fire in his eyes spoke volumes.

Jax paced away before throwing out, "I'm meeting her. I got to see Tara tomorrow and I'm seeing her too."

"No." Happy growled, his fists tightening at the idea of Jax meeting Harlowe. Happy wanted to keep her away from the club, as silly as it was to think it was possible when she was surviving time because of it.

"I don't give a shit what you want, Hap." Jax snarled, "She's supposed to be protecting my wife and Tara is laid up in med unit, so excuse me if I want to know what the fuck she's gonna do about it."
Happy growled lowly at the news before replying, "Fine. We'll go together. She won't take you coming in bossing her around well."

"I don't give a rat's fucking ass what she likes." Jax shouted, throwing a beer bottle from the bar across the room. "She'll do as I fucking say."

Happy shoved Jax into the bar, pinning him with two heavy fists as he spoke in a voice that was reserved for people on their way to a hole in the desert. "You won't be doing shit to my ol' lady. You even raise your voice to her and I'll cut your tongue out, President or not. You got me."

Jax ground his teeth, as Tig came over to separate them. "My old lady ends up with another set of bruises because yours isn't handling her shit and we're gonna have problems, Hap. Brother or not."

Harlowe stood in line to be led into the visitation area with Tara. She was sticking close to the woman now that they were cellmates. After Dolores played her part, Tara ended up with some superficial bruises and a new cell assignment. Freddie was now housed with the older lady while Tara settled into Harlowe's top bunk. She'd just laid down when the pair were pulled away to see visitors.

Harlowe figured it was a status download from Happy, but was surprised when she was led to the cubicle while Tara was kept in the waiting area.

"You first. She can see him after you."

"Him who?"

"I don't know Wentz. Just fucking move." The guard snapped, shoving her towards the exit.

Harlowe looked over at Tara and gave her a strict look to hold her shit together.

"I'm fine." Tara huffed, standing next to a couple of women waiting to be pulled in for visitation.

"Eyes open."

"Got it."

Harlowe was shown to the last cubicle and found herself facing Happy and a blonde man with a deep scowl. She suppressed a frown when she realized what exactly was happening, they'd heard about the incident the evening prior. It didn't look like Tara's old man was very pleased by the situation.

Sitting down she tipped her chin in greeting to Happy while picking up the receiver.

"The fuck happened to you protecting my old lady." The blonde growled into the phone instantly.

"Nice to meet you too." Harlowe snarked, her eyes sliding to Happy who looked just as pissed at the greeting.

"I'm the guy who's gonna make your life hell if you don't protect my old lady." He snapped, his blue eyes blazing and teeth bared. The aggressiveness he was throwing out did nothing but piss Harlowe off.

"Oh yeah?" Harlowe sneered back, "and by hell you mean, something worse than serving thirty years for your boys club?"
"You got no idea what I'm capable of, darlin'."

Harlowe snorted, her angry eyes sliding to Happy's as he seemed to simmer next to his President. She could tell he was probably biting his tongue to keep from disrespecting his brother in front of her but couldn't help but hate him for not standing up for her.

"Thanks for the back up here, Hap." Harlowe growled, her attention turning back to the blonde man before her. "She's fine and in my cell now so don't worry your pretty little blonde head over it, Princess."

Happy spoke low and rough into the second receiver. "You got a plan in there Lowe?"

"Obviously. How the fuck do you think I got her where I want her?" She snapped, her lips curled angrily. "You think we get to pick and choose where we sleep in here? We just have pillow fights and braid each other hair? No. Only way to get reassigned is if there's a cause for concern."

"You're goddamn right I'm concerned."

Harlowe rolled her eyes and spoke low, "It was all planned. No real harm done and now she's sitting pretty."

"I want to know what your plan is to keep her safe."

"Too fucking bad." Harlowe hissed, her green eyes blazing. "If you thought she was gonna come in here and get out unscathed you're delusional. This is prison, not a fucking day spa. Now if you're done tryin to scold me, you're old lady is sitting out there with no goddamn protection because you wanna throw a fit over some bruises."

Harlowe slammed the phone receiver down and shoved herself away from the table. She refused to even look back at Happy, her temper flaring at the aggressive words his President threw at her.

She was so goddamn sick of the men in the club trying to control her life. She missed the days of solitude when her only visitor was her state assigned lawyer. The club was nothing but trouble, Harlowe wished she'd learned her lesson all those years ago.

The Sons would always lead to her destruction.
Chapter 4

12 hours in custody

Harlowe chewed her thumb as her lawyer and Desi, the SAMTAC President, entered the interview room. The heavyset man unbuttoned his suit jacket and sat down with a groan, his face and neck flushed and sweaty.

"We got about fifteen minutes before they notice you're back here." He spoke lazily, his breathing heavy.

Desi slid into a chair and gave her a small smile. "Hey honey. How ya doin'?"

"What's going on Desi? Where's Hap?"

"Club shit, honey. You know how it is." Desi replied, patting her handcuffed hands. "Now this is Tom, he's the club suit. Listen to him, he'll run everything by me first so you don't have to worry, just do what he says."

Harlowe swallowed thickly, her gut screaming against agreeing but merely nodding her head. Happy always told her to trust the club, they were family. Desi was his president, his brother and if there was anyone who would protect his family, it'd be him.

"Okay." She nodded as Desi's hand gripped her hunched shoulder.

"The stuff they have, hun... well it'd be real bad for your old man if it fell on him." Desi informed with a scowl, his eyes dipping to catch hers. "He's got priors you get me? They won't be easy on
him."

Harlowe nodded, realizing that whatever evidence they had for the murder would lead back to Happy. With his record he'd end up inside for a very long time, if not forever. Clenching her fists, she began to realize just what Desi was saying. She would have to take the fall or lose Happy, possibly forever.

"Okay." She dropped her chin, her eyes burning. "What do I do?"

"You're a good old lady, Harls." Desi drawled, squeezing her shoulder. "Happy's real lucky to have you."

"Yeah. For how long?"

"We're doin' everythin' we can to clear this up, hun. Everythin's gonna be okay. You just gotta sit tight for awhile." Desi assured, stopping her from wringing hands.

"Does Happy know?"

"He knows you're here."

Harlowe nodded, chewing on her thumb nail. "Everything else?"

"He can't know everything else, Harls. You know what he'd do... we can't let him do it." Desi explained gruffly, "the club needs him out there to handle the shit going down. I need him out there, not in here sacrificing himself."

"Because I'm dispensable." She muttered, her eyes burning as she thought about what she was facing.

"Far from it, sweetheart." Desi gripped her shoulder, his head dipping to look her in the eye, "you're savin' your old man's life. If he ends up in here he won't come out."

Harlowe wasn't sure how much of what Desi said was true but she couldn't risk it, not if it meant Happy's wellbeing. Desi was right, Harlowe was a good old lady. She loved Happy. She'd do anything for her old man, even life behind bars.

"Just tell me what to do."
Happy and Jax sat on their bikes outside of the prison, both smoking a cigarette before hitting the road. His mind was torn between understanding Jax's frustration with the situation and wanting to beat his fucking face into the ground for speaking to Harlowe like he had. He wanted to talk to her again, to make up for not stopping his president from berating her. She'd already experienced her unfair share of abuse from his brothers. Her stay in prison was orchestrated by one and now another was threatening her with violence if she didn't comply.

Happy ground his teeth as the anger building started to fill every crevice of his chest and ribs, rage oozing into every tendon and pore. Anger at himself for not being the old man he'd promised to be for her. Not then, not now.

"Look, brotha," Jax began, blowing out a large lungful to the side. "M'sorry for how I handled shit. I was pissed but I should've waited to talk to Tara first."

Happy glared at him, the hatred for himself turning on the man next to him. Jax's jaw clenched as he caught the look in his SAA's eyes, a normal man would break under such pressure. Happy's fist tightened around his handlebar as he tried to reign in the savage hostility consuming him. He couldn't lose his shit on his president, no matter how close they were.

"Next time I'm up to see Tara, I'll see her and apologize." Jax offered, flicking his cigarette butt away before adding. "Only, if that's cool with you."

Happy shook his head a bit and looked away from his brother and friend. "I don't deserve a say in her life. Didn't hold up my end after inking her. She wouldn't be in there if I had."

"How did all that shit shake out anyways?" Jax asked, leaning on his gas tank.

Happy popped a toothpick into his mouth to worry, while he spoke rather openly considering the man. "Was on a run over the Canada border when Poe called me. He said they picked her up on her way home from work. Told me that it was a club hit."

Jax lit another smoke, his ringed knuckles cuping the flame as he inhaled deeply. "Was it one of yours?"

"Yeah." Happy sighed, scrubbing his stubbly head in frustration. "Had prospects clean up and one was a junky I guess. He took some of the guy's jewelry, pawned it for dope. Fucking shit was engraved the dead prick's name."

"Fuck." Jax huffed, his head shaking at the stupidity of it.
"The missing person guys found that shit and picked up the kid. He started spilling stuff about the club and where the body was. When they found the dead guy they found out Harlowe had been his girlfriend's roommate at one point and used the connection to try to get club shit out of her. The little worm didn't know shit but she was an old lady. They knew she'd know more."

"So how'd it get passed just a 72 hour hold? How'd they even charge her without a weapon and motivation?"

"The ATF fucker planted blood and hair in her place and car." Happy replied, flicking his toothpick into the road. "He told her flat out that he had, that she was going down for it unless she flipped on me and the club. She wouldn't do it."

"But she didn't go to trial? you said she pled."

"Desi told me that she took the plea deal to have a chance at parole in 15, otherwise it could've been life." Happy sighed, slumping a bit as he continued, "Later I found out he pushed her to take it so I wouldn't step up and take the heat for her. He coerced her and had the club lawyer push for a speedy hearing while I was being shipped all over the west coast on bullshit runs for him. He didn't want to lose a Son, even if it meant my old lady's life."

Jax scowled at the information, his eyes going distant for a moment before he spoke, "Brother, I'm sorry for how all this shit went down. I feel even worse for the shit I just pulled with her."

"Yeah." Happy grunted, shaking his head as he peered up at the grim looking building. "Me too."

Harlowe walked the circuit around the prison yard, her eyes scanning the other inmates in the area for threats. She could feel Tara glancing at her every few minutes, her shoulders tightening after every pass over. The two women were still getting used to each other, especially after Harlowe's incident with Jax. Tara had straightened everything out but Harlowe wouldn't hear the apologies that she brought back from the bastard. She wouldn't forget the threats he threw at her, nor the dead silence Happy sat in, while another brother treated her like garbage. It started to bring up a lot of old painful memories, Harlowe's evenings now filled with nightmares torn from memories.

"What?" Harlowe snapped after another eyeballing from Tara.

"You're not what I was expecting." the brunette offered with a lazy shrug.

"So." Harlowe muttered, her narrowed eyes landing on the trio of black girls heading their way. "Stay on my left."

"Are we in danger?"

"Bitch, where do you think you are? A spa resort?"

"Hey Wentz, who's the new snatch?" Lottie questioned, her gaze malicious as she looked over Tara like a new chew toy.

"Mind your own, Lottie." Harlowe snapped, her shoulders rolling forward as she glared at the other woman. "Steer fucking clear. Hear me?"

The dark skinned woman chuckled, rubbing her chin thoughtfully. "I think I hear but I don't think I give a shit."
Harlowe stepped closer and growled, "keep pushing me, Lot, and I'll knock your fucking gap teeth out."

"Inmates. Break it up." A voice hollered from above in the guard tower, the sound of a shotgun racking a rubber round following it.

Harlowe stepped back, while keeping eyes on the other women. One thing she learned about prison was keeping her eyes on threats at all times, even when guards were around holding weapons. If someone wanted to hurt you bad enough, they wouldn't give a shit if there were armed witnesses.

Tara and her followed their path back to the main building now that recreational hour was over. Harlowe could feel the other woman's eyes still burning into the side of her face as they walked.

"What?" She snapped.

"You remind me of him." Tara replied, her arms held close to her sides to avoid a row of new inmates being led through the prison hallway.

Harlowe frowned, her arms crossing as they entered their cellblock. She knew exactly who she was referring to. The worst part was, that now that it was voiced, she felt awkward in her own skin.

Harlowe couldn't help but wonder if she'd subconsciously adapted into some warped mirror image of the man she loved. She'd experienced him being locked up before, not for more than a few months, but she'd seen him in the environment before. The harshness he'd carried when they sat in the visitors area at began to wonder if maybe she'd slowly developed into a caricature of him to survive.

Once inside their cell Tara leaned against the dull metal sink, her manicured brow raised, "How'd you meet him?"

"Do you ever stop talking?" Harlowe snapped, sitting down on her bed with a huff. She hadn't planned on what protecting the president's old lady would entail but gossiping hadn't even crossed her mind. Harlowe was used to the other women she considered friends in the barest of the sense, they kept each other alive. Only Freddie knew about Happy and that only occurred because she'd seen a picture she kept under her mattress.

The photo showed up in her mail the week after she told him to never come back. It was a shot taken by Poe, Happy's sponsor and closest friend. They were perched on Happy's bike, Harlowe's arms draped over his shoulder and her temple resting against his. They both had large grins and bright eyes. Harlowe could barely look at it without falling down a rabbit hole of broken dreams but she couldn't get rid of it. The evidence of Happy smiling was too rare to not be treasured.

Harlowe didn't talk or try to think about her past because that was just what it was, the past. It was gone for good and nothing good came from pining for what was and what could have been. Prison was hard enough to survive without sabotaging herself with a weakness like sentimentality.

"Maybe if you do half of the talking, it wouldn't feel like it." Tara quipped, cocking an eyebrow while smirking. "All we've got is time."

Growling under her breath, Harlowe muttered, "He owes me for this shit."

"What are they paying you?"

"You're joking right?" She asked, huffing out an almost amused laugh. "You think I'm being compensated for this shit? Maybe if I was a friend of the club but I'm not a friend. I'm a pawn."
"You're an old lady."

"I was an old lady. " Harlowe scoffed, her eyes turning cold and hard. "You think Happy's out there waiting for me? I got another three if I get paroled, fifteen more if not and that's if I even make it out at all and by the time I do get out, there won't be anything left of the me he once knew. Don't kid yourself thinking you mean shit to your old man other than property, why do you think they slap their names on our asses?"

"You don't think Happy loves you?"

"The only thing Happy loves is his club and his ma." Harlowe replied laying back to look at the underside of her bunk. "Story time is over now, shut the fuck up."

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1 year before incarceration.

Harlowe rolled over to see Happy leaning against the headboard, his hand lazily sharpening his knife.

"Well nothing says good morning like a well honed blade." She rasped sleepily, her lips curling up as Happy grinned devilishly at her.

"My thoughts exactly." He rasped, showing off the edge. "This'll go clean through someone."

"Anyone in particular?" Harlowe asked, pushing herself upright.

"Friend of the club s'got some trouble. Gonna sort it." He replied vaguely, sliding the knife into its sleeve and setting it aside. Happy pulled her into his chest and leaned back into the headboard, his hands smoothing up and down her body. She felt him nuzzle into her hair, his lips pressed to the crown, while inhaling deeply.

"You sniffing me."

"Mmhm." His voice rumbled under her, the sound and feeling made her burrow further into his chest. She kissed along the snake coiled in the center, her tongue coming out to taste him.

"Why?" She mumbled against the warm skin below her cheek.

"Like it." Happy answered simply, his shoulders shrugging underneath her while his hands massaged her thighs and ass. She could feel his dick hardening below her but they made no move to take it further, both enjoying the feeling of the other so close.

"What do I smell like?"

Happy shrugged again, his hand brushing her hair back as he rasped, "Reminds me of a road from Monterey and Big Sur."

"Why?" She asked with a cocked brow, her finger tracing the worlds along his collarbone.

"There's these huge fields of flowers. Acres and acres of it. Reminds me of that. Salty air off the ocean, the sun and those purple flowers. I like it."
Harlowe peered up at him as though he were a stranger, yet still the man she loved. There were so many layers to Happy that it seemed like she would never know them all. The same man who casually talked about taking care of a problem using violence, also said the most romantic thing anyone had ever said to her.

"I love you, Happy Lowman." She murmured, her wide eyes watching as he seemed to absorb the words slowly. At first his eyes narrowed and scowl deepened. She feared she'd made a grievous error, but after a few seconds his face relaxed. It was as though he had to figure out if she meant it.

"You sure?"

Harlowe nodded, her lip quirking at the gruff question.

"How do you know?" He asked, his finger playing with the end of her hair. She bit her lip in thought and shrugged her shoulder much in the way he had earlier. "I don't know, I just do. I feel it when I look at you, when I touch you. I can't see my life without you, Hap."

Happy nodded slightly at that and chewed his cheek while looking off at the ceiling for a second. His pitch colored eyes slid back to hers and he only stared for a moment before speaking in that heavenly rasp she loved. "Guess I love you too."

"You guess?" She quipped, her lips pulling into a crooked grin as she poked him in the chest.

Happy jutted his chin up proudly and bobbed his head. "Yes I do."

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Chapter End Notes

Super stoked everyone is enjoying this fic so much. It is something that I have been writing off and on for the better part of a year. I hadn't come across a similar type plot before and thought it might be interesting to explore.

Also, I don't normally like the how flashbacks thing but it seems to be working for me on this one, hopefully you all don't mind a little back and forth with time frames.

ENJOY!
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1 week after arrest.

Harlowe sat across from her lawyer, the ill-fitted suit doing nothing for the man's overweight shape. She watched him wipe his brow with a Kleenex, his eyes shifting from her to the mirrored window. Something was off about the situation but there was nothing Harlowe could do about it. She was at the mercy of her shady lawyer and the crooked cops.

"It's looking bad here, Ms. Wentz. I'm doing the best I can but short of giving them the testimony against the MC that they want, this is your best option."

"30 fucking years is my best option." She hissed, her handcuffed wrists yanking at the metal table. "I didn't do it."

"Be that as it may, all the evidence is pointing at you. The witnesses are pointing at you. We won't win at trial. This plea takes life without parole off the table."

Harlowe ground her teeth angrily, her eyes going to the window. "I wanna talk to my old man first."

"Can't be done, Ms. Wentz. They want an answer now."

Shaking her head, she chewed her lip until she tasted blood. Harlowe was stuck between a rock and a hard place. There was no winning. She was going to prison. She wasn't a rat, she wouldn't flip on the club her husband called family. Harlowe would never do that to him, even if they were responsible for her currently predicament.

"Fuck." She hissed, wringing her hands together. "Fine. Give it here."

Harlowe gripped the pen with white knuckles, her teeth clenched so tight her skull ached. She scanned the document before flipping to the last page, her trembling hand signing away her life. Tears burned her eyes as the door opened and police officers came in to transfer her to a holding cell.

She was pulled passed a line of detectives and Agent Roberts, his wicked grin turning her into a raging animal.

"Fuck you." She snarled at the man responsible for her frame up. "You prick!"

"Have a nice life, Ms. Wentz."

Harlowe struggled against the officer, her legs kicking out as she screamed obscenities at the ATF agent. The police station door opened and Happy strode in followed by three of his brothers. A group of police officers held back her old man as they dragged her down the hallway.

"Don't fucking touch her!" His voice rumbled through the station. "Harlowe!"

"Happy!" She shouted, her eyes connecting with his as they tugged her backwards. "Happy!"
Harlowe stood against the wall with Tara as the guards tossed their cell for contraband. She ground her teeth as C.O. Hendricks pulled the picture from underneath the mattress and mocked, "Aww, who's this?"

Harlowe tightened her hands into fists on the wall but stayed silent. She knew the type of guard Hendricks was, the bully from high school all grown up. He was the type to grind his elbow into the back of someone's neck when frisking. He didn't need an excuse to use brute force. It was safer to submit and take the hits, than show any sign of fighting.

The stocky baldheaded man rose from his stooped position and crowded Harlowe into the wall, his head dipping to get in her face.

"I asked you a question *inmate.*"

"Old news." She muttered, holding back a wince as he balled it up and tossed it towards the toilet.

"That's right." Hendricks growled, his words hot against her temple. "Because you're a piece of shit murderer. Anything you had out there, is *gone* now."

Harlowe clenched her teeth as he pat her cheek heavily, the smack of it close enough to a slap to leave her skin stinging and red.

"Good girl." He murmured, looking around the room of destruction. "Now clean all this shit up."

"The hell is that guy's problem?" Tara huffed, while making her bed after they left.

"Just keep clear of him if you can." She replied, smoothing out the picture with a frown. It was folded in lots of spots, having been hidden over the years, the new creases only adding to the vintage feeling of the image. It looked and felt ancient.

"He had hair!" Tara gasped, looking over her shoulder at the picture of Happy and her on his bike.

Harlowe smirked, tracing the thick locks with her finger. "Yeah, real wavy if it got long."

"Damn, I've never seen him with more than stubble and that head tattoo."

"The snake was new, but didn't surprise me. Always had a thing for 'em." Harlowe offered, slipping the photograph inside her pillowcase. "Guessing he's probably added quite a few over the years."

"If his whole body is more, then yeah." Tara scoffed, stacking a pile of books back onto the small built in desk.

Harlowe turned a pair of narrowed eyes onto the other woman and replied, "His *whole* body, huh?"

Tara's head spun back and she opened her mouth several times before excuses poured out, "Not like that! I had to fix a knife wound to his side once."

Harlowe huffed at the words, a strange jealousy developing that her roommate had been closer to her old man than she had been in years.

Turning her back to the other woman, Harlowe organized the last of her belongings on the tiny ledge near her bed. She felt her mind wander back to the last time she'd been close to Happy, that weekend before she was arrested felt like an eternity ago.
They'd celebrated one of his brother birthdays at the clubhouse, both having drunk too much to ride home. Harlowe remembered the night being a tornado of torn clothing and desperate hands. Happy had gotten so hungry for her that he took Harlowe against the bedroom door the moment they entered his dorm room. She remembered clutching his hair as he ate her out, her leg thrown over his broad shoulder while he peered up at her with those black eyes.

Harlowe's stomach clenched painfully at the intensity of the spike of lust. It had been years since she'd even felt a mild sense of that emotion. Now that she'd seen him again, she'd begun to remember just what kind of effect Happy had on her.

"What happened between you two?" Tara asked, sitting on the stationary stool. "No one even knew he had an old lady."

"Cuz I'm not his old lady anymore." Harlowe sighed, taking a seat on her bunk. She smoothed out her blanket as she explained, "I ended up in here and the best thing for both of us was if he moved on."

"Why was that best?"

"Because the only thing it'd do is distract both of us from keeping ourselves alive." Harlowe drawled, shaking her head as she looked out the bars to see the other women cleaning up after the cell toss. "I wouldn't be able to concentrate if I had to see him every other week. He would end up fucking up out there if he was stuck on what was happening to me in here. Get himself killed. It had to happen."

Tara pursed her mouth and leaned against the desk, "I get it, I guess. I wouldn't see Jax when I was in county. I was pissed at him mainly, but I didn't want him to see me like this. I still don't."

"Yeah, well your old man doesn't seem the type to take no as answer." Harlowe scoffed, her arms folded behind her head.

"He's just determined when it comes to family." Tara replied, her lip curling slightly. "To the club you mean."

"Same fucking difference." Tara quipped, before shaking her head. "Jesus I sound like Gemma."

Harlowe smirked, "Oh, I remember the stories about the queen. I was told if I ever met her to shut up and do what she says."

"Yeah, that's a safe bet." Tara huffed, crossing her arms tightly. "Psycho bitch."

"Not fond of the in-laws huh?"

"Uh considering she attacked me before I came here for thinking I was ratting and his stepdad tried to have me killed a year ago... Yeah. No, I am not fond of the in-laws."

Harlowe's eyebrows raised and she stared at her with a gaped mouth. "Seriously?"

"Yeah, seriously."

"Damn." Harlowe chuckled dryly, "Your old man take care of that?"

"Yeah. Daddy dearest is dead and she's been blacklisted."
"Good on him." Harlowe muttered, picking at her nails as she thought about how things would've been different if Happy had been able to save her. She shook her head at the thoughts. The only way for him to save her was for his life to be taken. That was something Harlowe couldn't let happen, even if it meant her own.

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*1 week after arrest*

Happy sat across from Desi and the club's lawyer, both men breaking the news with somber faces. His old lady was doing time, hard time in a federal prison.

"It was the only way, Hap." Desi tried to pacify him, his voice gruff and firm. "Now I know that this rubs you the wrong way, but you got bigger shit to worry about, your club, your brother's need you to have your head on straight."

Happy's fists clenched on top of his thighs, the metal of his rings cutting into his fingers. He'd never felt such confusion when it came to his President or his orders, there had never been hesitation for the club needs.

"Are you straight, brother?" Desi asked, his head dipping to catch Happy's dark eyes.

He could tell the older man was beginning to question his loyalties and he couldn't allow anyone to question his word. The only problem being, Happy had given Harlowe his word too. He'd promised to always protect her and he'd failed.

"We'll keep her safe, killer." Desi added, gripping his shoulder. "I have leads on friendlies inside. Now I need you to sniff out a rat down in Reno."

"Reno?" Happy grunted, squirming in his seat at the news. "Her hearing is tomorrow. I've got to be here."

"There's nothing for you to do." The lawyer muttered, stacking his papers before sliding them into a briefcase. "She's signed the confession. We'll do the plea and she'll be processed."

"I ain't leavin' without seeing her." Happy growled, slamming his hand on top of the table. He jabbed a finger at the fat man. "Don't fucking say another word to me or I'll cut your goddamn tongue out."

"Easy, Hap. No need for that." Desi warned, his eyes pinning the younger man with an icy glare. "You've got 'til the end of her hearing, you leave for Reno right after. Got me?"

"Yes." Happy grunted, shoving away from the table to exit Desi's office.

"And Hap?" The older man spoke as Happy yanked the door open. "You tell your old lady she's done good, yeah?"

Happy ground his teeth as he nodded once, the fury the words caused him burning him up from the inside. He left the room without any destination, his boots thumping through the clubhouse doors and into the parking lot. Poe was sitting nearby on one of the benches along the clubhouse wall, the man's jet black hair pulled back into a ponytail.

"Happy." He called out as the man strode by, his face full of fury and body coiled for violence. "Wait up, what happened?"
"Leave it." Happy snarled, swinging his leg over his bike, while turning it on with a loud rumble.

"What's happening with Harls?"

"I said leave it." He snapped, jabbing a finger in his face. "Where were you when they snatched her? I told you to watch her when I was gone."

"Brother, there was nothing I could do."

Happy knew his best friend was telling him the truth, nothing good would've come from Poe trying to stop officers from arresting Harlowe. He just couldn't see passed his rage though.

"Should've done something. She's fucking gone now." He growled, revving his engine. "Don't follow me."

He peeled out of his spot, his tire almost clipping Poe before spitting gravel at him. Happy roared down the road towards the freeway, his direction unknown. He raced through traffic, zigzagging in and out of cars with little consideration to his safety or others. There were horns honking as he cut off trucks and nearly sideswiped a mini van. Happy could feel his throat tightening with every mile passing underneath him, the knot inside growing with every second ticking by. His eyes were burning and soon he had to pull off onto a dirt patch near the beach, his vision too blurred to make out the lines on the road.

Happy flung himself off his bike, the beast falling to its side haphazardly. He stumbled down the dune, tripping on beach grasses on the way down. His chest was heaving with the intensity of his heartbeat, the steady thrumming becoming too painful to withstand.

He collapsed at the edge of the water, his jeans soaked instantly as the tide rolled in. His knees sunk into the sand as the water was dragged back out, the roar of the waves drowning out the brutal sob released from his raw throat.

Happy pressed his closed fists into the coarse sand in front of him and let his head hanging between broad shoulders. He cried for the first time of his adult life until it turned into stomach emptying heaves. He choked on bile and tears, his throat burning from overwhelming sorrow.

The tide was almost to his stomach when a pair of arms pulled him backwards. Poe's voice was barely registering as Happy began to struggle away from the hands holding him.

"Easy, Hap."

"Fuck off." Happy grunted, slamming his head back into the other man's face.

"Shit." Poe choked on blood as his nose broke. "Goddamnit, Happy."

The two stumbled backwards onto the beach, both falling in a soaked heap as Happy still tried to release himself from the his friend's grip. Eventually Poe wrapped an arm around his neck and held him tightly. Happy's hand clutched his leather-covered arm before he finally gave up, his body still racked with cries.

"I got you, brother." Poe mumbled, spitting blood to the side. "Dumb fucker."

"She's gone." Happy croaked, his chest heaving once more as he sucked in a jagged breath. "I fucked it all up."

"This isn't your fault." Poe rasped, wiping his nose with the back of his hand.
"It's my kill." Happy muttered, finally tugging away from him. He sat back on his ass, his knees drawn up and his arms resting on top them. "It's on me."

"It's on that little rat. We find him, kill the fuck out of him and the case is over, brother."

"They got blood evidence." Happy informed, his dark eyes sliding to his sponsor. "That agent planted shit to try to get her to flip."

"Jesus."

"I told you. She's gone. She's taking a plea tomorrow to keep life off the table. 30 years."

Poe's face darkened at the news, his eyes sliding to the crashing waves in front of them. "I get you trying to drown yourself now."

"Nah, deserve something painful." Happy rasped, swiping his hand over his wet face and through his hair. "She's doin at least 15 because of me. You'll need your kit."

Chapter End Notes

I am glad everyone is enjoying this fic. I am enjoying writing something different. Also want to mention I am not a lawyer or judge for that matter. Everything I know about the law and trails is from Law& Order.

Dun. Dun
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Six months after incarceration

Happy stood in the surgical waiting room with his brother's, all of their faces were stoic as the doctor confirmed their worst fears. Davies was dead and Poe was crippled, the beast of a man paralyzed from the chest down. The men were caught in front of a Niner's barrel and were shot down the evening before.

The gang was selling drugs within Tacoma's charters zip codes. The groups were fighting a turf war for years, but after a round of overdoses in Tacoma high schools, the Sons increased their attacks three fold. SAMTAC President, Desi, was on a warpath to destroy the Niners when his sisters kid died on bad heroin. They were taking out a manufacturing warehouse when the Sons were ambushed by a larger than expected number of gangbangers.

Poe had blocked what would've been a kill shot for Happy when he'd been too caught up in his head to protect himself. His last conversation with Harlowe had destroyed whatever hope he had left in his cavernous heart, the woman refusing to even speak with him on the phone, let alone visit. Ever since, Happy hadn't been able to concentrate and now guts were twisted with guilt because a brother took a bullet for him.

"Can we see him?" Lee asked from Happy's right, the man's voice more hoarse than usual.

"Just two of you and for only a few minutes. He needs to rest and the nurses need to work." The doctor informed, motioning for them to follow him back.

Happy instantly followed, brushing passed his brothers knowing no one would stop him. They could figure out who else wanted to go, but Happy was first.

Poe was stretched out on the tall hospital bed, his larger than life body somehow smaller. His shadowed eyes were sunken and dark, compared to his pale skin. Half of his head was bandaged, the second gunshot having grazed his forehead and temple. Happy stood to the side with Lee looking over their brother and mentor. Poe sponsored both men a decade apart, the older biker teaching them everything about club life.

"We need a new SAA." Lee rasped, his eyes rising to Happy's. "Desi is gonna ask you."

"No." Happy replied, stepping forward to murmur softly. "Sleep well, brother."

"Hap." Lee started, his hand rising as Happy tried to brush passed him. "this isn't your-.

"Stop." He growled, his eyes pinning his VP with an angry glare. "Don't say it."

"Okay."

"I'll find these fuckers." Happy commented before striding out of the hospital room on a mission. The guys who pulled the trigger got away and he would make them pay in horribly painful ways. He would use every trick Poe taught him, to show them what a poor life decision they made pulling that trigger.
He motioned for newly transferred patch named Kozik to follow him. "You ready?"

"Hell yeah, bro." Kozik drawled cracking his knuckles with a wide grin. "Let's find these pricks."

Happy pulled up to the low lying ranch in a small suburb of Tacoma. It wasn't the type of place he pictured his long time friend and club sponsor to be living, but he wasn't the same man he used to be.

Poe was retired from the club. He still retained his kutte but seeing as he no longer rode, the older man could no longer vote. Even though he could sit in on some church meetings, Poe rarely made it in to the clubhouse. Logistically speaking, it was too difficult for him to pull off more than once a month, if at all.

Happy walked up the long ramp leading to the large front door and knocked firmly. He stepped back some and watched as the door opened slightly.

"Hello." A woman wearing scrubs greeted, a kind smile on her face.

"Hey." Happy rasped, his chest tightening at the woman's presence. "Poe available?"

"Yeah, I was just getting him lunch. Let me show you in." She opened the door further and guided him through a large living and out onto a patio in the backyard. Poe was sitting at a large wood patio table next to a pool.

"Holy shit." Poe chuckled, turning his head towards Happy. "Am I seeing ghosts or is that my shithead brother?"

"Yeah, it's me." Happy drawled, leaning over to hug his brother and mentor. "How's it goin'?"

"Livin' the dream, brotha." Poe snarked, raising his thin arms to pat Happy's back slightly.

Happy stood back up and looked his friend over, the years turning his hair gray and beard white. He was no longer the stack of muscles he once was, his body now atrophied from a sedentary life. The tall backed electric wheelchair kept him upright with numerous straps and braces, the joystick control giving him some freedom to move around.

"Have a seat, Hap." Poe offered, glancing up as his live in nurse returned with a tray of food. "Could you grab an extra cup of coffee, Annette?"

"Sure." She nodded, setting a plate down with eggs and peppers.

"Thanks." Happy rasped as he pulled out a chair next to Poe. "Nice place you got here."

"Yeah." Poe agreed, his right hand gripping a spoon with a curled fist. The joint was stiff and unmoving but useable with a brace. "Been a few years since I bought it. Better that the other place with all the stairs, couldn't do shit there."

Happy clenched his jaw at the comment but nodded in agreement, his eyes flicking to the nurse returning.

"Thanks."

"You're welcome." Annette spoke easily, her eyes scanning Poe. "You good? Everything hot
enough."

"It's perfect. Thanks Annette."

"Just holler if you need something."

"You know I will." He laughed gruffly.

Happy drank his coffee while Poe ate, his eyes scanning the backyard lazily. He wanted to apologize for so many things but he couldn't seem to cough the words up.

"You've been to see her." Poe commented, his utensil set to the side as he finished eating in silence.

"How'd you know?" Happy rasped with a furrowed brow.

"I can see that look in your eye again." Poe replied, while sipping his coffee. "Plus she told me."

"You talked to her?" he asked, setting his mug to the side as the news stunned him. "Since when?"

"Since she went away." The older man stated matter-of-factly with a slight shrug. "She calls once month or so, depending on shit happening. She's a good girl, always was."

"The fuck, Poe?" Happy growled, standing up to pace the patio. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"When?" Poe asked, resting his stiff hands on the armrest of his chair. "You stopped coming around when you went nomad."

"I had to go nomad." Happy grumbled, leaning against the porch rail. "Ma's sick. Besides I didn't go nomad until a couple years after she got locked up. You lied for that whole time."

"I didn't lie about shit, brother." He grunted, leaning back in his chair. "I just didn't tell you I was keeping an eye on our girl."

"You should've told me." Happy rasped, crossing his arms over his chest. "I deserved to know."

"You don't deserve shit when it comes to that girl, Hap." Poe growled, his eyes flashing angrily. "She's always been too good for this life. Damn girl is a saint to put up with our bullshit and she's in there doin' your time and you walked away."

"She told me to go!"

"Yeah and you just do what everybody says usually right?" Poe scoffed, his face angry but eyes full of resignation. "She's just like you, always doin' what she thinks is best for everybody. Stubborn assholes."

"I always listened to her." Happy sighed, looking away from the man he admired, paralyzed from the chest down because of him. "And you."

"I told you to go back."

"I know. I just… couldn't at the time and the longer I stayed away, the easier it was to not go back. I began to think she knew what she was doin'."

"Like I said, stubborn assholes." Poe grumbled, taking a sip of his coffee.

Happy and Poe stayed silent for a long moment before curiosity got the better of him. "So what do
you talk about?"

Poe chuckled, his eyes crinkling with amusement. "If you want to know who your old lady is now, go visit her."

"I have."

"To ask for shit, not actually see her."

"She say that?" Happy grumbled, popping a toothpick into his mouth anxiously.

"She didn't need to say shit to me." Poe replied, crossing his arms. "She said you came by and I knew it was gonna be about the club."

"She's keeping an eye on my President's old lady." Happy offered, rolling the chewed wood between his fingers.

"Putting your old lady in the line of fire now, huh?" Poe grunted, shaking his head as he looked out at the bird feeders hanging in the trees. "Sometimes I wonder if the club is worth all the pain it brings us."

Harlowe pinned the dark skinned woman to the floor, her knee pressed into Lottie's sternum as she kept a sharpener screwdriver tucked under her chin.

"I own this fucking route. You use the laundry or shop, I don't give a shit but if I find you in the kitchen again I will slit your fucking throat." Harlowe sneered in her face before punching her square in the nose, breaking the fragile bone.

Freddie and Coral shoved the woman they'd been holding to the side, as Harlowe stepped away from Lottie.

The three of them exited the kitchen area, bypassing the hallway that contained a guard station. They were back in the cellblock before the counts began. Harlowe lay in her bunk, her fingers drumming on her stomach as she ran through the scenarios of possible backlash from her strategic move.

Lottie deserved payback for being a pain her ass since her incarceration. She also needed to be put in her place, her hold on the unit was spreading too far into Harlowe's. It was only a matter time before she made a move against her.

If Harlowe controlled the contraband coming through the kitchen, she would have the power and protection of the women working there. She would still be watching her own back, but she would have another layer of protection from Niners and the Mayans. It seemed old ladies were loyal in all realms of club life.

The Sons actions beyond the walls were always affecting her, their beefs with other crews bled between the iron bars, leaving her drowning in drama. All she could do was roll with the punches and hope that eventually everyone forgot she was once an old lady to a Son.
Harlowe stood under the showerhead, her hands raked through her dark hair and scratched her scalp with a satisfied groan. It felt good to have her hair free from the constant braid she wore for safe keeping.

She pretended the water pressure was actually sufficient and the temperature wasn't lukewarm, while blocking out the constant chatter from the other women cleaning up. Shower times were the highlights of her week. The twenty-minute assigned time was allotted every other day. She used it to clear her mind of everything and pretend she could wash away everything weighing on her, down the drain.

Freddie usually watched her back as they took turns washing up, but now Tara was her cellmate. She would have to settle for the fresh fish to keep an eye out. Harlowe was struggling to relax without the one person she trusted for the last four years. Freddie's loyalty was a huge asset in a place like prison.

"So the skull and snake, is that your old lady ink?" Tara asked from behind her.

"You're supposed to be watching my back not staring at it." Harlowe muttered, glaring at Tara until she returned her eyes to the rest of the shower room.

"We have crows." The other woman commented, flashing her lower back.

Harlowe sighed at the conversation, her hands smoothing away the soap from her skin. The images stretched across her left arm, shoulder and collarbone. They were designed and inked by her old man. The black and gray piece featured a snake wrapping a skull, surrounded by roses.

She had the skull ring he wore on his left hand made to match it, the same smiley face carved in its forehead that she wore inked on her shoulder.

Harlowe had loved it when Happy had shown her the drawing, the man prouder than she'd ever seen him. He'd taken several sessions to complete it to his liking, his obsessive tendencies shining through.

Nowadays, Harlowe could barely look at it in the mirror. Her eyes usually avoided that side of her body completely.

"Hey Lolo." Freddie greeted, her dark eyes glaring at Tara as she and Dolores entered the stalls across the way. Harlowe nearly smiled at the sight of the woman.

"Hey." She tipped her chin towards her, squeezing her hair out and switching spots with Tara. Harlowe wrapped herself up with a towel and stood next to Freddie as their cellmates washed up. She kept her eyes on the room as Freddie updated her about their supply routes.

"My cousin has some good shit coming this way, burners and ciggies." The Hispanic woman informed, her brown eyes flicking to Tara. "She gonna be a problem?"

"Nah." Harlowe replied, glancing back at the woman in question. "I'll explain shit. If she wants protection she's gonna play along."

"If she talks-.

"She won't talk." Harlowe shook her head, despite her own doubts about the woman. Tara was
green when it came to serving time, she didn't know shit about the ins and outs of prison. Harlowe
would need to keep a tight reign on the woman or she'd cause drama.

"A'ight, if you say so." Freddie sighed, bumping her elbow against Harlowe's with a smirk. "Miss
me yet?"

"Nope." Harlowe joked, her lip pulling up as Freddie scoffed.

"Lyin' puta." She huffed, shoving her playfully.

"Yeah, yeah. Fine" Harlowe sighed, crossing her arms, as she shivered from standing in the shower
room. "You're a better roomie."

"Yeah, see I knew it." Freddie's eyes crinkled as she smiled, the tattooed tear rising as she did.

Harlowe and Tara entered the kitchen as Freddie was accepting a delivery from their outside
source.

"Wait here." Harlowe ordered Tara, sauntering to the delivery driver with a smirk. "How'd it go
Marcus?"

"Good, Harls." He replied, handing off a paper with their totals. She looked over the numbers and
silently asked with a raised brow.

"I put your cut in the safe deposit like you asked."

"Good." She remarked, glancing over the boxes he'd brought inside. "The stuff I requested?"

"All here." He replied, tapping on box with his shoe. "This one."

"Cool." Freddie clapped her hands together. "Did you get that shit I wanted?"

"Yeah, but seriously, that shit will rot your teeth, chica." Marcus remarked with a grin, his silver
capped teeth flashing at the woman's bad junk food habit.

"Like you should talk, bendejo." Freddie chuckled, opening the box to find her candy bars.

"Get shit sorted and hidden, Fred. We'll do distribution later." Harlowe instructed, shaking
Marcus's hand once more before returning to Tara.

"What's that about?" Tara asked, her eyebrows rose as the man left and the kitchen staff began
working on hiding the contraband.

"Nothing for you to worry about."

"I thought you weren't involved with club business." Tara commented, putting on an apron she
handed her.

Harlowe chuckled, walking away from the storage closet to the front of the kitchen. "I don't. This
is my business."

"Seriously?" Tara asked, scanning the woman in front of her with new eyes. Harlowe could tell that
the woman was truly surprised at the news.
"I bring in shit people want." She replied, sliding on a pair of plastic gloves.

"Like drugs?"

"Occasionally. Mostly just shit they miss though. I try to steer clear of things that make this place worse. I leave that to Lottie and her bitches."

"So you can like.. get me stuff if I want?" Tara asked after a few moments of working on the food preparation they'd been assigned.

"Depends. You got money?" Harlowe asked with a smirk.

"I can pay you back once I get out."

"Right." Harlowe scoffed, washing off a large batch of potatoes in the huge sink. "I've heard that before."

"Seriously. I'm good for it." Tara huffed, her envious eyes going towards Freddie who was happily munching on a king sized candy bar.

"What do you want?" Harlowe grumbled, leaning against the counter top with crossed arms.

"I'd kill for some real coffee and Godiva chocolate."

"I doubt it." Harlowe remarked, her eyes sliding over the room in thought. "But I'm sure one of these other bitches would take you out for some French roast and yuppie chocolate."

"I'll pay you back. Hell, I'll have Jax bring you cash next time he visits." Tara was desperate, her hands clamped in front of her. "Please?"

"Alright, alright." Harlowe sighed, pulling out the small slip of paper from her pocket to scratch down her request. "Won't be until late next week and that shits expensive, there's no club member discount."

Tara nodded as she got back to work, stirring a huge pot of broth and noodles. "So how'd you get into the contraband trade?"

"I saw an opportunity and took it." Harlowe remarked, peeling one of the dozens of potatoes piled in front of her. "It's the only way to survive in this shithole."

Chapter End Notes

Feedback has been amazing for this fic. Thanks so much, I apologize that I don't respond to every review but they are all very appreciated! This is my way to unwind and its great that others enjoy my hobby. If only I could do it for a living. XOXO

ENJOY!
Chapter 7

Day of sentencing

Harlowe sat stiffly in the defendant's chair, her eyes on the judge as he looked over the plea deal. She clenched her jaw as he smirked at the prosecutor, before speaking.

"Well, it looks as though we have come to an agreement. All that's needed is the verbal plea by the defendant."

"Please rise." The bailiff ordered, his voice echoing in the courtroom.

Harlowe rose on shaky legs, the heat of her old man's eyes on the back of her neck. She couldn't even look at him when she entered, it was killing her to be in the same room and not be able to touch him.

"How do you plea to the charge of first degree murder, Ms. Wentz?" The judge spoke as though he'd asked the question already. Her lawyer cleared his throat signaling her to speak up.

"Guilty." She croaked, her fingers knotted in front of her.

"Excellent. As per the agreement signed by both the prosecution and the defensive, the great state of California sentences you to 30 years with a chance of parole in 15. You'll serve your time in the women's federal prison in Chino. Courts adjourned."

The gavel resonated in Harlowe's head, the sound tightening her throat into a knot. She couldn't breathe as the bailiff approached and asked for her hands. She put them in front of her, the large guard clicking the metal bracelets on tightly.

"Harlowe." Happy's voice rasped nearby, his hands gripping the wood barrier separating the audience from the defendants. She knew she looked wrecked when his face just about crumbled at his first direct eye contact with her. He would never show so much emotion unless he was barely holding on.

"Can my client say goodbye to her spouse?" Her lawyer asked the guard.

"No touching." He grumbled, stepping back as Harlowe stepped forward.

Harlowe clenched her hands as she approached the man she'd thought she'd grow old with, the man who'd won her over and stolen her heart. An unlikely perfect partner in the shit world they lived in.

"Lowe." Happy rasped, his jaw muscle twitching as he ground his teeth. "I'll get you protection okay. We'll keep you safe."

Harlowe nodded numbly, her eyes slowly filling with tears. "Okay."

"Gotta watch your back though, Lowe. Protect yourself. Chin up, eyes open."

"Okay."
"We'll figure this out, baby." Happy vowed quietly, his fingers curled into the wood barrier. Harlowe could see the vein in his temple that pulsed when he was near his breaking point. She couldn't even try to calm him because she was right there with him. It was the end of life as they knew it.

"There's nothing to figure out." Harlowe spoke hoarsely, tears spilling over her flushed cheeks as she peered up at him. "It's over, Hap. This it."

"Time's up." Her guard started pulling her along as Happy followed next to the short wall as far as he could.

"Harlowe." He growled, his dark eyes pleading with her. "Baby."

"It's over, Hap. Live you life."

"I love you, Lowe. I'm not going anywhere." Happy snarled, his eyes burning holes into her. "We aren't over."

"Goodbye Happy." She rasped, her tears dripping on the white button up shirt she wore. The guard shuffled her into the back of the courthouse, through the heavy wooden doors and into the holding cells. She was placed on a bench and a chain was hooked from her wrists to the floor. Her eyes were still filling, as though her supply were endless. She wished it would just stop. There had to be an end to the sorrow crushing her heart.

Happy's face kept flashing through her mind. She'd never seen him look so upset before, not even at a brother's funeral had he shed tears. His starless eyes had never looked so glassy. The image was making her breath come in jagged gasps, her limbs trembling enough to rattle the chains holding her in place.

"Ms. Wentz." A voice spoke in front of her bringing her eyes up from the dirty gray tile. It was a female security guard, her hair blonde back into a neat bun. She had kind eyes but her words were practiced. "We are going to be placing you on the transport to the women's processing. From there they will confiscate all personal belongings."

"Okay." She croaked, her chin dropping to her chest as she sucked in a few steadying breathes. Harlowe hadn't ever done time, but her recent experience staying in county, no matter how brief, taught her that a game face was everything.

She remembered what Happy looked like the first time she saw him behind bars, she needed that kind of armor. That's what he'd tell her if he had the chance.

"Chin up, eyes open. Protect yourself." She repeated the inner mantra as they moved her from the courthouse to the prisoner van.

They pulled out of the gated lot and onto the street. Harlowe's eyes were watching the streets fly by knowing she wouldn't see any if it, any time soon. There was a roar of motorcycles behind them causing her head to spin around. Following the van was a group of five riders, Happy in the front of the pack wearing his patented scowl. The sight had her heart pounding rapidly, the desire for him to rescue her flooding her eyes again. She almost wished he would do something crazy, something so very illegal, to take her away.

It wouldn't end well, nothing like that ever went as planned and running for the rest of her life sounded like just another type of prison.

"Your friends better not be thinkin' of doin' shit, cops are on their way." A voice grumbled from the
Harlowe shrugged, her eyes still glued to the convoy following them. Soon a set of flashing red and blue lights joined the group, pulling the bikers over. She saw Happy punching his gas tank, his face livid at not being able to see her all the way there.

Turning away as the sight became too much for her, Harlowe tried to pull her shit together. She needed to be strong, she needed to be focused. She wouldn't die behind bars.

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Happy was seated in the now familiar cubicle at the women's facility in Chino. He watched as the inmates were led inside, Harlowe near the end of the line. Tara passed by, her lips tipping up a bit as he nodded in greeting. She looked pale, but otherwise healthy. He was thankful they didn't seem to be having any issues yet.

Harlowe took her seat and picked up the phone, her eyes sliding over him curiously.

"I got new orders?" she asked with a huff.

Happy's throat dried at the question, a chill going down his spine at the idea that it was her first thought for him showing up. He shook his head a bit and leaned forward. He rested his elbows on the tiny countertop and nearly pressed his forehead against the plastic to be closer to her.

"No orders." He rasped, his voice impossibly rough as he stared at her.

"Okay." Harlowe drawled slowly, leaning forward as well. She didn't come close enough to touch the glass, but he could see her so much clearer, his breath hitched in his throat. The group of freckles on her nose was achingly familiar and the speckle of gold in her eyes comforting. Happy had begun to finally realize just how much he'd missed every iota of her.

He'd shut himself off for years and took his job as an Unholy One very seriously by using that numbness to do the things other men couldn't stomach. Happy had already had the proclivity to violence with a mild case of sadism, but after Harlowe was gone and Poe had been shot, he'd stopped feeling anything.

"What's going on Happy? Is it your ma?"

"Nah." he shook his head and looked her over closely. "How'd you get that scar?"

Harlowe's face hardened slightly and she leaned back in her seat. "Why?"

"I want to know my ol' lady again." He replied, his fingers touching the barrier. "C'mere."

The woman in front of him didn't seem very close to softening, but after a beat she leaned forward again.

"What's going on with you, Hap?" Harlowe murmured, her green eyes flickering over his face and posture. "And don't say nothing."

"I missed you." Happy confessed, his hand pressing flat against the glass before he corrected gruffly. "I miss you."

Harlowe looked stunned, her eyes widening at his words. She hesitated for a second before she pressed the phone between her shoulder and ear, while she tentatively touched her fingers to the
glass below his. He swallowed thickly, as the knot in his throat grew with her gesture.

Visitation time was ticking away and he was taking what Poe said to heart. Happy wanted to know whom Harlowe was now, he needed her even if it was through an inch of plexiglass and iron bars.

"How'd you get the scar?" he repeated, his dark eyes sliding over the white line cutting through the apple of her cheek.

"Got jumped by this bitch a week in." She finally replied, her soft green eyes rising to his head. "When did you get the head tat?"

Happy smirked a little at her question and confessed, "About ten years ago after a bottle and half of tequila."

The crooked smile that he once woke up to everyday graced her face at the confession, her eyes shining a bit brighter. "I always said Jose would be your downfall, Hap."

Harlowe sat next to Tara in the cafeteria, her spoon lifting to her mouth, while watching the room. Her head was swimming ever since Happy's visit the day before. She kept finding herself daydreaming about him and his gruff voice telling her, he missed her. Of all the things she expected to come out of his mouth, it wasn't that. If pressed she would've guessed she was getting new marching orders from his president, not confessions of longing.

Harlowe would be a liar if she said it hadn't yanked at the hardened muscle residing in her chest. Happy hadn't ever been one to talk freely about his feelings, so to have him confess something so vulnerable was overwhelming.

It wasn't just his words that had spun her top. With his return came all the memories of their past, the good and the bad. Her mind kept drifting to her trial and the day she cut things off. She began to question if she'd made the right decision of shutting down to survive. Maybe she could've had both. Maybe he could've been in her life all this time. A strength, rather than a weakness.

"Hey Lolo." Freddie spoke from next to Tara. "You cool?"

"Yeah." She muttered, pushing her tray away while leaning forward. "You handle distribution today?"

"Sure but what's going on?"

"Nothin'." Harlowe replied, her eyes scanning the room to avoid her friends knowing eyes.

"Right. This have anything to do with that tall, dark and sexy asshole who's been visiting?"

"His name is Happy." Tara added, while chewing.

Harlowe glared at her before moving her eyes to Freddie's. "No."

"You've been off since he started comin' round." Freddie remarked, tipping her chin towards Tara. "Ever since princess arrived."

"I'm not a princess. Just because I was a doctor."

"Ain't about your occupation outside, princess." Freddie muttered, "It's about the stick you have
"I do not have a stick up my ass."

"Stop." Harlowe interrupted, her eyes turning dark as they bickered. "Enough. I'm fine, stop asking and stop fighting."

Freddie glowered at her before remarking. "You know I'm right."

"I don't care. Stop digging." Harlowe warned, leaning forward to speak quieter. "Whatever is going on with me and him is my business. Stay out of it."

"I'm just worried, chica." Freddie muttered back, her eyes hurt at Harlowe's gruff tone. "You lose your head in here you die and I'm not around to watch your back."

"I've got her back." Tara offered, crossing her arms as Freddie chuckled.

"Yeah, you're a real bodyguard." Freddie hissed, her eyes going to Lottie who was watching the discussion. "That why you haven't noticed Lottie eyeballin' the shit out of us?"

"Did I not say stop it?" Harlowe growled under her breath, jabbing a finger at the table. "When were in here, we're together, you get me? That bitch sees a weakness and she'll aim for it."

"Okay, okay." Freddie conceded, her hands rising a bit in surrender before she leaned forward and spoke quietly. "I heard you but… if you need to vent."

Harlowe rolled her eyes. "I know where to find you."

"That's all I wanted to say."

C.O. Hendricks stopped Harlowe and Tara in the empty kitchen, the stocky man crowding them both in the walk in pantry. His partner stood watch as he bullied them into the tiny room.

"Saw your visitor the other day, inmate." He jeered, his icy eyes looking over Harlowe lasciviously. "You like it rough don't you. Datin' an animal like that."

Her teeth were creaking under the pressure as he grabbed a handful of hair and backed her into the harsh metal shelves.

"Hey." Tara exclaimed, stepping forward to intervene.

"Don't move." He barked at her, his other hand pointing his baton at her. "Another step and I'll lay you out."

"Leave her alone." Tara growled.

"Tell your girlfriend to back off, inmate or I'll welcome her to prison real hard."

"Stop." Harlowe rasped, her eyes flicking to Tara's. "Stay out of this."

"Good girl." Hendricks mocked, leaning closer to speak in Harlowe's ear while tugging her head back sharply. "You like that huh?"
"No." She grunted as he yanked again for an answer.

His lips pulled wide and he flashed a predatory grin before yanking her hair even harder. "Good."

Her eyes were blurring with tears from the action. The sharp pain in her scalp was suddenly her last concern when he shoved her to her knees. She struggled to get away but the grasp he had on her hair and neck kept her right where he wanted her.

"Stop." Tara gasped, her hands in fists as she fought to stop herself from jumping in again.

Harlowe shook her head slightly and began to realize what was about to transpire. She felt the sudden and sharp adrenaline rush from her fight or flight response. Her instinct was to fight her way out of the situation, to bear down and dig in to destroy the threat. Harlowe couldn't follow her instinct though, he was a C.O. and that gave him the upper hand. He had all of the power.

"That's it." Hendricks chuckled deeply as she stopped pulling away. "You know it's happening either way. No reason to fight the inevitable right inmate?"

Harlowe's breathing was shallow and fast, her nails digging into her palms as he began to unbuckle his belt.

She felt her stomach lurch as he did, her body backing into the shelf behind her making it rattle.

"Easy." He grumbled grabbing her head again. "Don't fight it."

A knock on the door jolted all three of them and his partners voice broke the tension. "We got company."

Hendricks growled, fixing his belt before yanking Harlowe from the ground. He shoved her towards Tara and snarled, "Not a fucking word."

Harlowe was as stiff as a board, her body frozen in shock as the door opened and C.O. Rodriguez walked in with dark eyes. She watched him look her over critically before he asked, "The fucks going on here?"

"Inventory."

"Oh yeah?"

"The fuck do you care, Rodriguez?" Hendricks snapped, his face red and hands fisted.

"I care because these inmates should be in their cells for count in ten minutes, not inventorying the kitchen stock."

"Fine, you take them. I've got better things to do than watch these bitches count." Hendricks growled, shoving passed Rodriguez to leave the kitchen with his partner.

"Are you okay?" Tara asked her quietly, but Harlowe only nodded stiffly while collecting herself. It wasn't the first time she'd been manhandled by a guard. Years ago there had been another dirtbag on staff that liked to grope women. However, it was the first time she'd almost been sexually assaulted and it was making her off-kilter.

"What'd he do?" Rodriguez asked gruffly.

"Nothing." Harlowe rasped, motioning to the door. "Can we go now?"
"He's almost-" Tara started explaining.

"Enough." Harlowe snapped, her hands tightening into fists. She didn't want to talk about it, she wanted to forget about it and shove all the roiling emotions she was experiencing as deep as possible. The only thing talking about it would do was destabilize her further.

"Let's go." Rodriguez replied, holding the door open for them to pass through.

They'd finally been placed in their cell when he spoke, "I'll do my best to keep him away."

"Don't worry about it." She muttered, her eyes flicking to his tense expression. "Just make sure he doesn't disturb the route. I'll handle everything else."

He seemed conflicted but nodded just the same, "Hey, uh… watch your back. I heard Lottie's been talking mad shit about you and your celly."

"Fuck her." Harlowe grumbled sitting on her bunk with weak legs.

"Just sayin." He drawled before locking up and leaving.

"Are you okay?" Tara repeated, sitting down on the cell's stool.

"Said I'm fine." Harlowe growled, untangling her hair to re-braid the mess he'd caused.

Tara was quiet for a long moment before she began talking. "I dated this guy a while ago, before Jax and me got back together. He was ATF.

Harlowe's eyes widened at the statement, but she stayed silent and combed her fingers through her hair. She grimaced as her scalp screamed in pain from his brutal grasp.

"He was normal at first but slowly he got obsessive. Wouldn't let me do anything or talk to friends. He started tracking my every move and eventually he got violent. I left Chicago and went back to Charming when my dad died. I thought I'd be safer there... secretly I think I knew Jax would help if I needed it and I thought maybe the guy would leave me alone if I was across the country."

Harlowe paused her movement as Tara came over and offered, "Let me braid it? It'll be easier."

She hadn't trusted anyone but Freddie to sit behind her, it was a sign of trust to turn your back on someone. She hesitated, but eventually let her work, wincing as she pulled at the tender spots.

"Sorry." Tara murmured when Harlowe gasped in pain.

They were quiet a moment as she worked before Tara continued her story. "He followed me to Charming and started digging into the club. Stalking me and breaking into my place. He wouldn't stop. Then one day... I came home and he was there. He... he had music playing and kept saying that we were meant to be together. He attacked me, he tried to..."

Harlowe turned her head slightly as she heard her sniffle. "You don't have to talk about this."

"I want to." Tara assured quietly, her fingers weaving Harlowe's hair gently. "He had me on the bed and he hit me and then he tried to... rape me. We struggled and then I got his gun."

"You kill him?"

"I shot him in the stomach." She rasped, shaking her head at the thought of that evening. "He was in the bathroom bleeding and I freaked out. I called Jax. He uh... took care of it."
Harlowe chewed her cheek as the other woman finished braiding her hair and leaned against the wall behind them.

"Even though he didn't get to do what he wanted, it still messed with me. I'd have nightmares about him actually doing it. I'd have flashbacks of shooting him and of Jax... it sticks with you."

Harlowe turned a bit to look at her cellmate a moment before she offered, "I'm sorry that happened to you."

"I'm sorry I couldn't do anything to stop him." Tara replied, her eyes ashamed.

"It's better if you don't." Harlowe muttered, looking up as a guard strolled passed their cell. "Nothing good will come of you assaulting a C.O."

"Are you gonna tell Happy?"

"No." She replied, shaking her head at the thought. "He can't know."

"Why?"

Harlowe snorted, picking at the seam of her uniform nervously. "Because the idea he can't protect me in here will drive him insane. It'll only distract him when he needs to be taking care of himself."

"You always do that." Her cellmate drawled, her eyebrow raised.

Harlowe furrowed her brow and scowled. "Do what?"

"Protect him." Tara explained, her lips quirking up a bit as Harlowe tried to play it off.

"No I don't."

"Yeah, you do. You're a good old lady."

Harlowe flashbacked to her conversation with Desi when she'd decided to take the heat, the man saying the same thing.

"Yeah, so I've heard."

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading and reviewing the last chapter. I am glad that I am writing a plot that seems to be new to avid SOA readers. I was hoping for that.

ENJOY!!
Happy sat on his motorcycle while Jax stood nearby lighting a cigarette. They developed a habit of visiting their old ladies on the same days to make sure they were never split up inside. It worked well seeing as Happy's job was to protect his president's back. He watched the blonde inhale a deep drag, his movements slightly twitchy and eyes anxious.

"What?" Happy rasped when Jax's eyes landed on him yet again.

"Tara told me somethin'." He exhaled a lungful of smoke with the loaded sentence, rolling his cigarette between his fingers thoughtfully.

Happy scowled at the statement and waited for him to explain. He could feel his guts twisting like coiled snakes at the dark look in his brother's eyes.

"There's a guard causin' some problems for them." Jax finally explained, his thumb fidgeting with his heavy rings.

"What kind of problems?" Happy could tell by the man's invasive eyes that his next words would probably infuriate him.

"He's pushin' up on your old lady. He tried..." Jax drawled, stepping forward as Happy rose from his seat to enter the prison gates again. "Easy, Wait."

"He touch her?" Happy's voice was cold, his mouth deeply scowled as he glared at the guard patrolling the fence line.

"Tried to. Roughed her up a little but he got interrupted."

"Name?"

"Hendricks. I'm gonna have Juice look into him when we get back." Jax explained, clapping Happy on the shoulder. "We'll take care of it, killah. I promise."

"He's mine." Happy growled, his dark eyes peering up at the prison with unveiled rage. "She's suffered enough, I won't let some fucking pig hurt her."

"We'll get him and he's all yours, bro."

They climbed onto their bikes and were about to take off but Happy couldn't help asking, "Why didn't she tell me?"

"Tara said she didn't want to worry you." Jax replied, buckling his helmet after sliding his sunglasses on. "Didn't want you distracted by shit out here."

Happy grunted at the explanation, his gloved hands tightening around his handlebars. "She needs to stop protecting me."

"Havin' your back is what good ol' ladies do, brotha." Jax remarked, flicking his cigarette away.

"I don't deserve it. Never did." Happy shook his head and turned his motorcycle on with a loud roar drowning out Jax's response.

They rode the long drive back to Charming, Happy planning all the ways he was going to make the
prick guard pay. His kit was going to expand to new levels for the creative objects of torture he was conceiving.

During the ride he also thought of all the things he wanted to say to Harlowe. He needed to apologize, something he didn't do frequently but knew she deserved. Harlowe should never have ended up behind bars, that was on him. Happy wanted her to stop trying to protect him. It was his job to protect her and he'd been failing at it for far too long.

Harlowe glared at Tara while standing in the yard with Freddie and Coral. Her cellmate had just told her that she'd informed Jax about the incident the week prior.

"I told you not to." Harlowe snapped, her fist tightening.

"They can stop him." Tara replied, crossing her arms as she raised an eyebrow. "Or do you like gambling with your life? The guy isn't stopping."

Harlowe swallowed thickly as her mind flickered to the evening before. Hendricks had cornered her after their shower time, his hands in places they didn't belong. She was only saved by a group of potential witnesses coming around the corner.

"I know." Harlowe growled, her eyes flicking around the cement patio they were allotted to. "But I don't want him risking shit out there."

"Whatever he does, he'll have the club. Trust him, it's his job."

Harlowe growled under her breath, her head a mess at the idea of a Happy getting picked up for acting out some revenge in her behalf.

"You don't get it, sometimes shit just goes wrong." She rasped, pacing away from the women to lean against the cement wall. Her eyes slid around the large patio filled with cliques of women, her mind on Happy. She hadn't wanted her old man to find out about the guard pushing up on her. It was bad enough that she was confined, but if he knew that a C.O. was targeting her, Happy would lose it.

The last couple visits had been learning experiences for them both, Happy asking questions and Harlowe watering down the answers. She couldn't stop herself from trying to protect him, it seemed to be hardwired inside her.

"Time's up inmates!" a harsh voice called, the sound of a baton slamming against metal tugging her from her daydreams.

Harlowe joined the lines with Tara, Freddie and Coral standing behind them. She could feel Freddie's palpable concern, but ignored the woman's stare. Things were unbalanced ever since Happy's return and Harlowe knew that Freddie's concern for her state of mind was completely warranted.

They were walking the long hallway to their unit, a line of approaching inmates on their way out to the rec area. Harlowe's eyebrow rose as she saw Lottie and her crew walking towards them. She could feel her back tightening in anticipation as the other woman made eye contact with her. The look of determination she saw put her on edge.

Lottie's celly was almost at Harlowe's side when a flare of movement behind her took her attention.
A woman lunged at Tara, her hand brandishing a makeshift shank of melted plastic and razor blades. She grabbed Tara, pulling the woman out of the way as Freddie jumped in front of Harlowe blocking the weapon.

Harlowe looked on with wide eyes as she watched a sharpened toothbrush sinking into Freddie's ribs and chest repeatedly. Vivid red splashed the dirty white tiles and beige walls. A sharp howl escaped her throat, as all hell broke loose. Sharp weapons were pulled from hiding spots and blood was spilled around them.

Harlowe kept Tara behind her, punching Lottie's cellmate as she charged. The sounds of guards shouting and the blaring riot alarms filled the narrow hallway. Soon the stomping sound of boots coming had Harlowe and others dropping to their stomachs. Tara was next to Harlowe's side, her knuckles bruised and lip split from being fighting.

Harlowe looked back at where she'd last seen Freddie and found her looking back with wide eyes, a pool of blood growing around her. Guards in riot gear began cuffing the wrists of inmates caught with weapons.

"Hold on Fred."

The medical team wasn't allowed to approached until all the inmates were cuffed and ready to be returned to their cells.

"Help her." Harlowe shouted, while a guard pressed their knee into her back. She was watching the blood grow below her friend as the officers did little to help her.

"She's dying. Help her!" She screamed, struggling with the guard when no one moved to stop the bleeding.

"Shut up, inmate." The man pinning her down growled, slamming his baton into her ribs to keep her from struggling further.

"I will, I will. Just... please help her." Harlowe coughed, as Freddie's eyes met hers before going empty. She was gone before the medical team was given the go ahead to administer first aid.

Harlowe ground her teeth as she was tugged to her knees, her hands cuffed behind her as they got Freddie covered with a sheet.

Tara was kneeling next to her, her own hands cuffed. She was silent as Harlowe stared at the closest thing to a friend she had in the world be left to lie in congealing blood.

"I'm sorry." Tara murmured next to her, voice hoarse and eyes watery.

Harlowe's turned to her, the mask she'd developed for inside the walls just barely holding on. She caught the sight of Lottie in the background, the woman smirking back at her.

"Fucking bitch." Harlowe growled, under her breath. She looked at Tara, her anger near boiling over at the consequences from her agreeing to protect the woman. Harlowe wanted to turn back time and tell Happy to go fuck himself.

"You want to make it up to me?" She asked, glancing up as Officer Rodriguez approached her. His face was grave at the loss of his wife's cousin to the brawl. Harlowe added, "later."

"Who was it?" He asked after pulling her upright to led them to their cell. Tara walked in front of her while the guard held her arm.
"You know who."

"You gonna take care of it." He growled, after placing them both in the cell. Harlowe backed up to the gate and allowed him to uncuff her through the bars.

"I'll finish what she started." She replied coolly, her jaw setting tight at the thought. She'd never killed anyone before, but she had defended herself. There was even a few occasions where she was the aggressor, but she'd never taken a life.

"Tell me when and where." The man growled, "I gotta break it to Maria tonight. Her and her brother are gonna want this done."

"I'll deal with it." She snapped, sitting down on the bed with tight fists. She wanted to break something, but had nothing that would satisfy the urge.

He paused a moment as he looked at her, his mouth opened to say something but he swallowed it back before muttering. "Get some rest."

Tara stood off to the side for a long moment, the woman just in Harlowe's peripheral. "Will you sit or something. I need... I just need to think."

"Okay." Tara replied, climbing onto the top bunk. She was quiet for an hour before she offered, "I really am sorry, Harlowe. I.. I know this happened because of me."

"This happened because Lottie has a grudge against me. She found an opportunity and took it."

"Because of me."

"She went for you because she knew we would intervene and take the hit. She'll get hers."

"How do I make it up to you?"

"I don't know, I'll tell you when I figure it out."

"This is the place." Juice informed from the driver's seat as he motioned to the small ranch home in Bakersfield. "No neighbors on the left and the right is an elderly man so we shouldn't have any eyes or ears this time of night."

Happy eyed the property while sliding his gloves on. He wore all black, a ski-mask ready to wear as they extricated the dirtbag target. The van was filled with several of his brother besides Juice. Jax crouched behind him, his forearm leaning on his seat to look out the windshield. Tig, Chibs and Quinn were seated at the back doors waiting for word to exit. They were backup muscle and lookouts to hopefully make the kidnapping run smoothly.

Happy was taking him to the cabin with a couple days to spare to work. He wanted it to last, the idea that the pig had tried to force himself on Happy's old lady fueling his desire to make him hurt. He had a lot of plans for the prick.

"Ready, killah?" Jax rasped next to him, a cruel smile curling his lips.

"Yes I am." The harsh gravel of his voice crackling inside the enclosed space.

"Keep it runnin', Juicy." Chibs drawled before opening the back door.
Happy hopped out, taking lead to the side gate with Jax. They jogged along the low fencing and found themselves at a sliding glass door. Happy removed his tools, picking the lock with ease.

"That's just scary how easy it is for you, man." Tig remarked behind him.

"Practice makes perfect." He rasped, flashing him a wicked grin below his mask, before tugging the door open quietly.

He crept through a living room, his silenced handgun out in front of him. His brother's followed him in, the group moving through the home looking for Hendricks. They found him sleeping in the master bedroom, the stocky man oblivious to the dangers creeping inside.

Happy circled the bed, his gun pointed at the man's head while the others got in place. He waited for the signal before pressing the harsh metal into his skull.

"Wake up motherfucker." He growled, pushing the end of his gun against his temple.

The man's eyes shot open instantly, his arm lashing out only to be stopped by Jax.

"Don't move or you die." Jax ordered, his own gun pressing to his gut.

"Make a sound and I'll visit your sister Linda's house." Happy rasped, cocking his head to the side. "After that I'll ride to Reno and see your ma."

"Nod if you understand." Jax drawled, his gun jabbing in the ribs.

Hendricks nodded, his teeth grit and eyes angry. They bound and gagged him quickly, dragging him out of the home and into the van. Happy sat him in the back his gun pointed right between his eyes. He kept his blackened gaze on him, the prison guard squirming under the heat of it.

"Do you know who I am?" He asked as they drove to their location, the deep timbre of it shattering the silence.

Happy watched him shake his head slowly, his eyes narrowing to try and figure it out with his mask on.

Slowly he pulled the knit fabric from his head and watched the realization settle onto him like a wet blanket.

"Yeah." Tig nodded slowly, tipping his chin towards him. "You know how fucked you are now huh?"

Hendricks mumbled under the gag, his eyes wide and worried.

"Shut." Happy growled, pushing the gun to his forehead. "Up."

The rest of the ride was silent as Happy stared holes into the bound man, his gun pressed into his skull the entire time. Happy wanted the bastard to be crawling with nerves by the time he found his way to his workshop. He couldn't free Harlowe and he couldn't really protect her while inside, but he could do this. He could make someone suffer for harming her. He'd take great pleasure in it, he always had.

One year before incarceration
Harlowe leaned against the bar top waiting for their drinks, her eyes flicking back to the pool tables. She smirked as Happy and Poe talked shit to each while playing.

"Hey there." A gruff voice pulled her attention from the men, to a tall twenty something next to her. His blonde hair was shaggy and hanging in a styled yet messy look, his blue eyes bright as he looked her over slowly.

"Hi." She replied, turning her eyes towards the bartender as he gathered the pitcher of beer and shots she'd ordered.

"Thirsty?" The guy chuckled.

"Obviously." She rolled her eyes, picking up the pitcher to escape the idiot.

"Just making conversation, no reason to be a bitch." He remarked, scoffing as she tried to brush passed him only to be stopped by a large hand on her wrist.

"Let go, asshole." She snapped, tugging at his grip only to be yanked back towards him, spilling her drinks to the floor.

Harlowe felt like time sped up because one moment she was far too close to the blonde asshole and the next she was tucked behind Poe. She watched as Happy grabbed the blonde by his throat and slammed him against the bar top.

He bent him almost backwards, knocking bar stools and glasses to the floor.

"There a reason you have your filthy fucking hands on my ol' lady?" Happy rasped, his voice so even and cold Harlowe shivered.

"No..no. Sorry man, I didn't-.." Happy's hands tightened as he yanked him upright to snarl, "Didn't touch her?"

"Didn't kn-know s-He was y-ours." He choked, struggling at Happy's tight grasp.

"Take this shit outside, killah. I lose anymore glassware and its goin' on your tab." The bartender snapped, her wrinkled face turned into a deep scowl.

Happy wasted no time, dragging the man out the back door followed by a couple of hangarounds and Davies.

"Poe?" she murmured, her hand clutching the back of his vest.

"He's alright, Harls." He commented, motioning for her to join him at the pool table.

"He's not gonna..."

"Probably not." He shrugged, lighting up a cigarette before motioning to the wrist she was cradling. "He hurt you?"

"Nah." she replied, her eyes flicking back to the door Happy had exited. "You sure-.."

"He's fine." he chuckled, pulling her into his side. "You worry too much."

"I worry enough." Harlowe scoffed, her eyes finding Happy as he came inside with bruised knuckles. His eyes met hers instantly, his path direct and quick.
Harlowe swallowed thickly at the look in his eyes, the way his shoulders were rolled forward aggressively and forearms flexed. She bit her lip as he reached for her, his large hand bringing her wrist up for inspection.

"Fucker." He growled at the slight redness in the joint.

"I'm fine." she offered.

Happy didn't reply, only placed a hand on her lower back and steered her towards the bathrooms. She felt her heart rate kick up as they entered the women's bathroom and he flipped the lock.

"Hap?"

"C'mere." He rasped, going to the sink to turn on the cold tap. He motioned for her hand, holding it below the cool water to soothe the eventual bruise. She smirked as he brushed his fingers across the skin gently.

"Thank you."

Happy looked up at her and leaned in, kissing her firmly on the mouth, his hand sinking into her hair.

"No one gets to touch you." he rasped against her lips, his teeth nipping her bottom lip before sucking it into his mouth. "Mine."

Their kiss deepened, Happy's fist curling into her hair securely. She moaned as he lifted her onto the bathroom counter and roughly pushed her skirt up her thighs.

"Say it." He rasped into her neck, his mouth sucking on her pulse point.

"M'yours, Hap." Harlowe gasped at the increased suction and scrape of his teeth along her collarbone. Her hands dropped to his belt, sliding the worn leather out of the large metal Reaper buckle. She popped the buttons and tugged both his pants and boxers down just enough to grip him tightly. She reveled in the sight of his head thrown back and teeth bared at the mere touch of her.

"Fuck." He cursed, pulling her panties aside while pushing into her tight walls without pausing. Harlowe's fingers curled into his leather kutte and clutched his forearm as he pumped inside her.

"Tell me." He ordered, his dark eyes pinning her as firmly as his hands. Most people were frightened when they met the dark gaze, but Harlowe always felt as though she were falling down the rabbit hole like Alice. She loved those coal mine eyes swallowing her.

"I'm yours." Harlowe panted, licking her dry lips. "Only you."

Happy moved her leg to his forearm, spreading her open as he rocked against her deeply. His voice was hot and wet against her neck, his tongue making long swipes, as he tasted her. She felt her walls flutter with every thrust, the sensation of him repeatedly nudging the deepest recesses of her triggering her orgasm.

"Happy." Her throaty moans filled the room, her fingers tangled in the front of his shirt and digging into his neck.

"Yes." He rumbled against her as he practically folded her in half to kiss her roughly, while thrusting. His blunt fingernails clenched the curve of her ass, his hipbones bruising the backs of her
thighs.

Harlowe groaned into his mouth as he pushed and pumped a quick rhythm, her ankle making it's way to his shoulder. The pull in her leg was almost excruciating but the rough thrust of his dick overshadowed it.

"Cum again." He nipped her bottom lip harshly, his thumb making its way to her hood to grind a firm circle around it.

"Oh my-." Her voice cut off, as she broke apart at the seams, her head bouncing off the mirror. Happy pulled her away from the surface while rapidly pumping until his dick seemed to swell to twice it's size. Harlowe moaned deeply at the sensation and writhed against his tightly pressed hips feeling him pulse inside her.

"Yes." He panted, his hands sliding all over her body as he buzzed with his climax. Harlowe nuzzled into his neck, her lips and tongue tasting every available inch.

"I don't like anyone touching you." he rasped, out of breathe from the exertion.

"Me neither." Harlowe murmured, sliding her hand along his sharp jaw to cup the back of his neck.

There was a loud knock on the door, Poe's voice calling out. "You two rabbits done fucking? We didn't finish our game yet."
"Why didn't you tell me?" Happy asked immediately as Harlowe picked up the phone receiver. He'd spent the better part of the week treating the prison guard to a close up view of what the Tacoma Killer was capable of before burning his remains in a deep pit in the desert. Only Tig could stomach the things he did and even his fellow sociopath stepped out for a breather.

In the beginning, Hendricks talked shit, his mouth running about all the things he'd done to Happy's old lady. By the end, he was mumbling toothless pleas for mercy and forgiveness. Happy gave him half of his request in the form of a gunshot between his eyes.

"Didn't need you worrying about shit I could take care of."

"Oh, how were you planning on taking care of it?" He scoffed, rubbing his head roughly. "Can't do shit in there unless you wanna stay in there forever."

Harlowe glared at him, leaning forward to speak quietly. "It doesn't matter now does it?"

"Nah it don't because I took care of it." He growled, his fist pounding on the counter before pointing at her. "You should've told me."

They were silent for a moment, both stewing over the other's actions. Happy clenched his teeth and fist. He was overwhelmed with the desire to read her the riot act over hiding shit but knew they had limited time on their hands.

"Thank you, Hap." Her voice quietly broke the tension, her eyes shifting away when he stared intensely at her.

"Don't keep shit from me." He replied, shifting in his seat uncomfortably at her gratitude. He didn't feel as though he deserved it, not when she was in the position to be taken advantage of because of him.

"I'll try."

Happy's glare only resulted in her rolling eyes in return. She was always so stubborn. Shifting forward he asked, "He hurt you?"

"Not really. Did he hurt you?" she quipped, her eyes going to his bruised knuckles.

Happy smirked, shaking his head at the thought of all the terrible things he did to the pig. It only brought up the memories of what Hendricks told him when he was still able to talk.
"Told me some shit."

"Most likely bullshit." She muttered, her scowl deepening.

Happy grimaced at the memory of the sick claims the man made as he pulled teeth and fingernails from his body. "Mentioned your tattoos in detail."

"Showers are pretty public in here Hap. Don't listen to the shit he flung." Harlowe sighed, moving towards the glass. She met his eyes, the soft green flecked with gold, "I'm okay, Hap. Promise."

Happy grunted a bit, shaking his head to rid himself of the poison the dead guard oozed into his brain.

"How'd you get that bruise," he asked, noticing a slight discoloration on her temple.

He could see her eyes darken and watched her tense up at the question.

"Same shit, different day."

"You sure?"

Harlowe scowled, her head dipping a bit as she confessed, "Was a bit of a brawl, lost someone."

"Who?"

He could see her swallowing thickly before she replied. "A friend."

"You okay?"

"Gotta be." She huffed, looking towards the guards as they brought more inmates in for visitation.

"Anything I can take care of?" He asked, scanning her over closely.

"Nah." Harlowe shook her head. "I'm gonna take care of it."

"Don't do anything stupid, Lowe."

"I won't."

"I know." Happy his eyes flicked over her as she smiled a bit at the statement. He chewed his cheek a bit before asking the question that'd been distracting him since his visit with Poe.

"Why'd you keep in contact with Poe but tell me to fuck off?"

Harlowe's mouth dropped open as though she was going to speak, but she stayed silent.

"Why didn't you call me." Happy grunted, sitting back up to look her over with a scowl. "Why him?"

She shook her head slightly, "Talking to him wasn't as hard as talking to you. I couldn't keep my head on straight after seeing you. Those few times in the beginning were too much. It was for the best."

"It wasn't what was best for me." Happy growled, his anger bubbling up too fast to control. "You fucked me up more by cutting me out. Poe got shot because of it."

Harlowe gaped at him and his statement, her eyes wide as the guards called time. Happy clenched
the phone receiver until the plastic creaked under the pressure.

"What do you mean?" she asked, ignoring the guard's presence over her shoulder.

"I was so fucked up that I didn't have my back, I didn't have his either. He took a bullet for me and is in a chair for life now."

"Time's up inmate." The guard barked next to her. "Don't make me hang that up for you."

Harlowe seemed to swallow thickly, her green eyes filling with tears at the knowledge. "I didn't know."

"You were warned inmate." The guard yanked her from her seat and slammed her to the ground, his knee pressing her into the cement.

"Hey. Ease up." Happy barked into the phone, watching helplessly as Harlowe was cuffed and handled roughly by two guards.

She was pulled from the ground and marched away, her bloodshot eyes meeting his before they pulled her through the iron bars. Happy growled, slamming the phone down before leaving the prison with Jax. The other man glancing over at him warily.

"What happened?"

"Fucked up." Happy grumbled, shaking his head as he popped a toothpick into his mouth. "Blamed her for shit I shouldn't."

"Gotta keep that shit under lock and key, brother. While she's inside anyways."

"Yeah." Happy grunted, sitting down on his bike with a groan. "Just pisses me off that she kept in contact with Poe when she cut me out completely."

"You ever think maybe she kept in contact with him to try and still be close to you?"

Four years into incarceration

Harlowe stood at the row of public phones, the receiver pressed into her ear as the robotic operator droned in the background. She heard Poe pick up and accept the call from an inmate from Chino Women's.

"Hey, Harls." he rasped, his voice a deep comfort to the woman locked away from all that was familiar.

"Hey, Poe." she replied, leaning her shoulder against the wall while her eyes watched her surroundings.

"How's it goin', you need anything?"

"Nah."

"Money in your commissary?"
"Nope. I'm flush now." she confessed, her finger twirling around the wire.

"How's that? You finally call your old man?" Poe asked, his tone hopeful.

"Nope." Harlowe scoffed, tipping her chin up in greeting to Freddie as she joined her in the common area. "No, I got some stuff coming together in here."

The phone was quiet a moment before he asked, "You aren't getting yourself into the weeds are you, darlin'? You know I don't have pull in there if you get too deep."

"I'm fine. I got a crew and some ventures that'll pay out. Don't worry about me, Poe." Harlowe explained vaguely. "Never mind that shit. How're you doing?"

"Why don't you ask what you really want to ask?" Poe chuckled, his laugh bringing a smile to her face despite what feelings the words brought up. She tried to not ask about Happy but most calls ended with a short update.

"I'd rather talk about you." The statement was an outright lie. Harlowe wanted to ask about Happy. She wanted to know if he had moved on yet, if he had a new old lady or if he was just working his way through every sweetbutt on the west coast. She imaged what he looked like, if he let his hair grow out long and curly again or if he'd finally gotten that ink he'd been planning. She was bursting with questions about the man but she never asked. Poe would divulge information to her, but she never inquired out right.

"He's gone Nomad." Poe began, his sigh telling her all she needed to know. Happy was struggling. A nomadic life was a hard life. Most travelled alone and did the jobs others wouldn't or couldn't do. It left them vulnerable to attack without having brothers to back them up and put them on the frontline of the most dangerous situations. It wasn't a life she wanted Happy to lead but knew he would always do what he had to.

"It pays well and his mom is sick." Poe went on to speak about Happy's last visit and the places he'd gone. He never divulged details but he gave her a vague idea of what Happy's life was like outside.

"Otherwise he looks alright. He's still kickin'."

"Good." Harlowe's only response was short and croaked out, her eyes burning a bit at the conversation. The robotic voice chimed in that their time was almost up, breaking Harlowe from the painful reverie that overtook her mind in the quiet times.

"You keep your nose clean, Harls. We can't lose you."

"I'm already gone, Poe." She remarked, her eyes scanning the room. "I'm not the same person anymore."

"No, you aren't but that don't mean we don't want you back here with us." He replied, his voice rougher. "We miss you, darlin'."

"Miss you, Poe. You take care of him for me, yeah?"

"I'll do my best." he chuckled before adding, "Love you, kid."

"Love you."
Harlowe stood in line next to Tara, her eyes narrowing as Lottie and her celly strode towards them. She gripped her tray knowing it made a pretty good weapon if need be.

"Eyes up." She muttered to Tara as the got closer.

"Your pet pussy is looking fine, today *Lolo*." Lottie sneered, her eyes scanning Tara lewdly. Her use of Freddie's nickname caused Harlowe's back to stiffen. She cocked her head slightly and sneered, "Move along, *Latisha*."

Lottie stepped up close to Harlowe, her mouth pursed as she looked her over. "You think you're better than me?"

"Dog shit is better than you." Tara snarked, her lip curled into a cruel smirk.

Harlowe swallowed a laugh, her eyes sparkling with humor as Lottie snarled. She shoved Harlowe but was instantly reprimanded by a nearby guard.

"Break it up, ladies!" The voice thundered, the giant of a man tapping his baton on the metal counter. "Move along."

Harlowe and Tara grabbed their trays and collected their meals before sitting in the usual spot. Coral and Jo greeted them, both looking across the room warily.

"That was funny shit but you need to watch your mouth." Harlowe chuckled, her lip curling up as Tara smirked back.

"What? She's such a bitch."

"True but you start something and I've got to finish it. I'd like to make parole in a couple years."

"How long have you been here?" She asked, chewing a bite of the dry chicken they'd served that evening.

"Twelve years, seven months." She replied keeping her eyes moving around the room while eating. When there was no response, she glanced back at Tara and saw nothing but pity.

"Jesus." Tara huffed, leaning forward. "Did you even do what they said you did?"

"You think that matters?" Harlowe scoffed, scraping up the last of her soupy mashed potatoes.

"Jax said you're here for the club." She spoke a moment later, "something about the president in Tacoma."

"You should stop talking." She muttered, looking around. "This ain't the place for this shit."

"Fine but seriously? You were what, in your twenties when you were convicted, you like 35 now?"

"37."

"God. I don't know how you've done it."

"I didn't have any other choice." Harlowe replied, balling up her napkin and tossing it on top of her empty tray. "You do what you gotta do in here."
Happy leaned against the bar top, a bottle gripped loosely in his fingers as he watched a blonde sweetbutt twirl around the stripper pole. He was watching her long limbs move and her curves bouncing as she danced, but he saw none of it.

His mind was stuck on Harlowe, the brunette was firmly the center of his attention. He'd indulged in blowjobs for the last few months since visiting her, he'd even take a sweetbutt or two back to his dorm but as he bent them over, faces hidden from his sightline, he imagined Harlowe. Being with other women hadn't bothered him since after she was first sentenced. Now it was all he could do to fight off the skin crawling feeling he had when the club girls touched him. Ever since he sauntered back through those prison walls to ask her to do another favor for the club, he hadn't been able to escape her green eyes and soft lips. It was all he saw when he closed his eyes at night.

"Still can't believe you got an old lady." Tig commented, plopping down on the barstool next to him.

"Killer's got an old lady?" The prospect asked, his eyes wide.

"Fuck off." Happy growled, slamming his beer down. "Go clean a toilet or something."

Tig chuckled as the prospect stumbled away, grabbing cleaning supplies from under the bar. Happy sneered at his friend and brother, his dark eyes doing nothing to smother the man's amusement.

"Oh come on, Hap. Gimme something." Tig whined, throwing back a shot of whiskey. "She's gotta be somethin' special with the treatment you gave that pig. I'm picturin' a blonde with big ol' titties."

"Stop." Happy growled, sipping his beer to keep from smashing it against Tig's big dumb face.

"She kinky? I bet she was, you got wild tastes." He added, smoothing down his goatee in thought, "Gotta like it rough."

"Shut up." He rasped, tossing the beer bottle into the trashcan behind the bar. "I'm not talking about this."

Tig huffed, reaching for the bottle of liquor to pour himself another shot. "Why? This shit is gold. You don't do relationships. Inquiring minds gotta know."

"Maybe he doesn't do them because he already had one." Quinn offered, joining the conversation.

"You holding out for her, Hap?" Tig asked, wiggling his eyebrows. "Using your prison clause for easy pussy, just not settling down."

"Fuck off, both of you."

"I bet she's hot as fuck." Tig hypothesized. "Like Amazonian blonde with plump dick sucking lips and a tight slice."

Happy stood up quickly, his stool flying backwards onto the floor as he gripped his brother's kutte in tight fists. "Say another word about my ol' lady and you'll shit your teeth tomorrow."

"Easy, easy." Tig chuckled, patting Happy's broad shoulders. "I'm just playing, brother."

"With fire." Quinn muttered while, lighting up a cigarette.
Harlowe gripped the mop, pushing it along the floor of the kitchen to sop up the water from the plumbing issue. Sometime during the dinner rush a pipe broke under the industrial dishwasher causing a flood of water into the kitchen and cafeteria. The maintenance team resolved the situation but the floors were still laden with puddles of still water. Harlowe, being kitchen staff, was given the task of cleaning up with Tara. They'd worked for an hour when the guard tasked to watching them began acting squirrelly. Harlowe noticed immediately as he paced near the gate, his eyes on his watch and then the hallway leading to unit B.

She kept an eye on the man as she dumped another bucket of dirty water into the drain. Her survival sense telling her something was coming.

Tara was nearby, wiping down the stainless steel counter tops.

"Somethin's up." Harlowe murmured as the guard opened the gate and walked away without a word.

"What ar-.." Tara began but choked on the rest of the sentence as Lottie and her celly, Amber, strode inside. Harlowe noticed the blade in Lottie's hand before seeing the pipe in her friends.

"Stay behind me." Harlowe murmured, gripping the mop handle tightly, while unscrewing it from the mop head.

"Lookie, lookie what we found, Amber baby." Lottie crowed, wiggling the sharp makeshift weapon in her hand. "I been waitin' for this for a long time."

Harlowe's jaw tightened as the two women approached, spreading out to circle them both. She backed up to Tara and whispered, "Keep your back to mine."

"Aww they're so cute." Amber sneered, swiping at Tara with the metal object.

Harlowe tried to concentrate of Tara's well being but the first stab of Lottie's weapon pulled her focus immediately. She blocked several of her attacks, the mop handle serving her well until the woman caught her knuckles with the blade. Harlowe gasped in pain, her hand reacting to the injury by releasing the wood stick. Without the protection, Harlowe dodged the weapon just barely, while throwing a fist at the woman's face.

She'd fought some over the years behind bars but she was far from a fighter. It just wasn't in her nature. However, as Lottie pinned her to the ground after she slipped on the wet floor, Harlowe began fighting for her life desperately.

She clutched Lottie's wrists as she shoved the blade towards Harlowe's neck, the tip nicking her skin sharply. A guttural growl ripped through her chest as she used every bit of energy left to buck the woman off with her hips.

She twisted her wrists sharply, jamming the point of the deadly weapon under Lottie's chin. She hardly registered what she'd done until blood poured from the other inmate's mouth and neck.

"F-fuck." Lottie's choked, yanking away while cupping her punctured throat. Harlowe watched numbly as the other woman stumbled backwards onto the floor, a pool of blood mixing with the dirty water. She coughed a mouthful of blood onto the floor before falling flat, her eyes fading to blank slates as the red liquid spread out across the tiles.

Harlowe spun around as she heard a grunt of pain. Amber was oblivious to her friend's fate as she slowly choked Tara to death with the pipe across her throat. Harlowe looked down in her hand to see the bloodied weapon still clutched in her palm. She felt a surge of protectiveness race through
her as Tara's feet kicked out weakly.

Grabbing Amber's hair, Harlowe jammed the bloody weapon against her neck and growled, "Let her go now."

Amber flailed back, the pipe smashing into Harlowe's ribs with a loud crack. Harlowe yelped in pain but instantly attacked. She'd buried the sharpened slab of metal into Amber's ribs, the tip angled upwards. The woman scrambled to get away from her, but Harlowe felt something snap inside her. Every bit of rage she had at the world flowed through her blood covered hands as she twisted the knife deeper and harsher.

Amber coughed up blood onto Harlowe's chest but she still did not relent. It wasn't until the body fell to the floor that Harlowe seemed to snap out of her anger filled haze.

"Son of a bitch." A voice came from behind her.

Dragging her eyes from the corpses in front of her, Harlowe watched as Rodriguez approached. Behind him was the guard who'd obviously been paid by Lottie to allow the confrontation to happen. Harlowe clenched her teeth and hands as reality began to hit home. She'd just murdered two women with eyewitnesses, witnesses that were officers of the law.

Harlowe hadn't realized she had any hope left in her until it was once and for all truly wiped from existence.

She was never getting out. She would die behind bars.

Chapter End Notes

*Hides behind the sofa.*

I know, I know. I am a terrible person. Forgive me for all the angst.
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

As an apology for the cliffhanger, here is a swift update! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"You." Rodriguez growled, pointing at the guard responsible for the havoc that just unfolded. "Get spare uniforms."

"But-." the over weight man huffed, his beady eyes flicking to Harlowe and Tara.

"This shit is on you. You want me to go to the warden and tell him you're takin' bribes? That you set up a prison hit?"

"Like you haven't."

Rodriguez stepped forward and stood nose to nose with him. "Sure but its your fuckin' hand that's caught in the cookie jar. Not mine. Get the clothes and bring the maintenance schedule with you. Now."

Harlowe stood nearby, her hands shaking as the blood began to dry between her fingers. Her breath was coming in short pants, the edges of her vision blackening as shock settled in. She'd just murdered two human beings. It was justifiable self defense, she didn't regret it but it was still system shocking.

"This isn't how I thought you'd handle this bitch." He growled once the other guard left, his eyes scanning the scene critically as he pulled on rubber gloves.

"Yeah, well I wasn't given a choice." She huffed, looking over at Tara as she felt her bruised neck.

"She was protecting me." The woman croaked, her arms crossing tightly. "Doesn't that count?"

"I'm fucked either way." Harlowe grunted, sitting down while holding her aching ribs.

"Nah." Rodriguez replied, pulling the weapon out of Amber's ribs before wiping the handle of the makeshift knife clean of prints. He walked to each woman and wrapped their fingers around it, making sure it seemed as though they'd both handled the blade. Harlowe watched numbly before she asked, "What're you doing?"

"Well seems like these two got in a fight and stabbed each other."

"How's that work?"

"Well obviously one hurt the other worse before they both died." Rodriguez offered, tipping his chin to Harlowe's hand. "You bleedin' at all?"

"She nicked my hand and neck."
"Alright." He grunted, wandering into the kitchen and coming back with two bottles of floor cleaner, pouring them onto the floor and the nearby bodies. Harlowe watched as he worked, her brow furrowed as he added some to the mop bucket.

"Why are you doing that?" Tara asked, her mouth downturned.

"Contaminating the scene in case her DNA is lying around." He commented, looking up as the other guard returned with a stack of clothing and clipboard filled with maintenance records. Rodriguez glared at him. "You know what'll happen if you speak a word of this shit."

"Man I don't care which two of these bitches gets blamed as long as I don't get brought up."

"These two," he motioned to Tara and Harlowe. "We're never here. Change the record to the dead ones. They took each other out."

"And where was I?"

"Taking a leak."

"I'll get written up." He tossed the clothing on the table.

"Better you get written up than have the Sons of Anarchy tearing your ass up." Rodriguez threatened, picking up the clothing.

Harlowe's eyes widened at the remark, her head turning towards Tara.

"What're you talking about?" The guy muttered, his face paling at the statement.

"You got no idea who these two are?" Rodriguez huffed, motioning to Harlowe and Tara. "Not only did you try to get the Sons President's wife killed but have you ever heard of the Tacoma Killer? No? Well it's not just a fun nickname. She's his old lady."

"Fuck."

"Yeah. So you might want to start helping me cover this shit before you end up sliced and diced in a hole in the desert. You got me?"

"Yeah, yeah I got it."

"Cool."

Harlowe left the cafeteria and entered the kitchen with Tara and Rodriguez. He set the new clothing down and instructed, "Strip and give me those to burn. I'll put them in the incinerator."

The man wandered into the supply closet to collect a garbage bag and extra towels as they worked.

Harlowe moved to the sink and washed her hands and arms, yanking off the soaked T-shirt. She scrubbed herself clean and then dressed in the new uniform. Tara stood nearby, her arms folded as she worked.

"Are you okay?" Harlowe asked, her eyes going to the redness on the woman's neck.

"Yeah." Tara rasped, her voice hoarse from the abuse. "You?"

"Yeah." She grunted, probing the newly forming bruising on her side. "Think this rib's broken."
"I'll look it over when we get back."

"Okay, both of you never left your cells." Rodriguez informed, motioning for them to follow him. "Whatever injuries you got you need to hide. Anyone questions you, you heard nothin', saw nothin'. Got me?"

"Yeah." Harlowe muttered, glancing at the bodies behind him. "What happens when her crew comes knocking on my cell door?"

"Let me worry about that."

"How'd you know about our old men?" Tara asked as they strolled towards their cells.

"After Wentz pulled strings to get you in her cell, I did some research. My wife's crew has an agreement with the Mayans, who have a truce with the Sons. We keep out of each other's ways. I'm keeping the peace."

Harlowe sat down on her bunk with a groan as the guard locked the cell door.

"Stay out of trouble." He grinned widely, before adding. "I'll let my wife and her brother know you took care of the issue."

Harlowe merely nodded, the adrenaline from the attack turning her into a shuddering mess. Tara waited for him to leave before motioning for her to stand up.

"Let me see."

"Don't worry about it. We don't need people noticing."

"Stand back here." She motioned to the end of the bunk bed where the toilet sat. "They can't see us."

Harlowe stood in the small sliver of privacy, lifting her shirt for Tara to inspect. She flinched at the touch but stayed still as the former doctor examined her injuries.

"Not broken, deep bruising." She remarked, looking over the tiny cuts on her knuckles and neck. "These don't need stitches but we should wash them out with soap. You don't know how dirty that blade was."

"K." She muttered, moving over to the sink to clean out the superficial wounds. As she worked, Tara stood nearby with concerned eyes.

"You could've been locked up forever, maybe even death row."

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"That's what the club wanted." Harlowe rasped tiredly. "Protect the Queen, right?"

"I guess." Tara huffed, crossing her arms. "It's not right though."

" Doesn't matter if it's right. It is what it is."

"Thank you." Tara replied softly, her eyes troubled. "For saving my ass and risking your own."
Harlowe sighed, laying down on the bunk bed while cupping her ribs. "You're welcome."

Harlowe sat down stiffly, her side throbbing from the bruises left behind by Lottie and her cohort. She picked up the phone receiver and finally made eye contact with Happy. His face was stormy, the obsidian of his eyes gleaming with a fire she remembered all those years ago. The rage that used to burn him up inside, like glowing embers on black ice.

"You okay?" Happy asked, leaning forward to get a better view of her pale face.

"Nothin' I can't handle." She rasped back, her eyes narrowing a bit at the pain in her side.

"The fuck happened?" His voice was low and gruff, his words heavy with concern.

"Nothin' I can't handle." Harlowe repeated, her eyes going to the guard walking passed.

Happy leaned away, his jaw rocking back and forth as though chewing on all his questions. He finally settled on telling her that he would be out of town for at least two weeks but he put his phone number on the list for her to call. She nodded along but felt detached from the conversation. Ever since the attack she'd found herself staring off thinking of the sound Lottie made when she stabbed her. She could still feel the blood between her fingers and slick on her palms.

"Harlowe." Happy growled, his finger tapping on the glass.

Harlowe blinked hard and returned her attention back to Happy. She could tell he'd been trying to get her attention for a while now.

"You been to medical?" He asked, concern for her creasing his forehead. Harlowe shook her head a bit and finally gave him some kind of reaction.

"Tara looked me over." She replied, smoothing her hair back some. "I'm fine. Just... tired. Look uh... be safe on your run, I'll call if anything changes."

"Yeah." Happy rumbled, scrubbing his shaved head while looking away from her. "I'll send Jax to see you when he visits Tara."

"Don't bother." She scoffed, brushing her thumb across the cuts on her knuckles. "Rather be in the SHU than talking to his majesty."

Happy smirked, leaning closer to the glass. "He's not that bad. He's just a hot head when it comes to his old lady."

"Hmph. Sounds familiar." Harlowe drawled, a smile tugging at her pale lips.

Happy flashed her an elusive grin and tipped his chin up a bit, an obvious pride for his violent nature despite his words of denial. "No idea what you're talking about."

"Right." She chuckled, her hand cupping her ribs at the action.

"Time." The guard barked near the door.

"I'll see you later, Hap. Ride safe, yeah?"

"Yeah." He rasped, bobbing his head a bit. "Take it easy in there. Try to stay clear of the shit."
"Will do." She snarked, rolling her eyes.

"Hey." He muttered before she hung up. "Call me even if nothing changes."

Harlowe's brow furrowed at the request but nodded after a second of hesitation. "Okay."

Happy dipped his chin and hung up the receiver as Harlowe was escorted out of the visitation area.

Normally she wouldn't look back, the sight of him watching her walk away too much to bear, but this day she kept her eyes on him until the gates closed. She could tell he noticed the change in habit, his eyes soaking up every second of eye contact.

"You have a call from an inmate from Chino Women's Federal Penitentiary," The robotic voice crackled into his ear before Harlowe's voice cut in. "Harlowe Wentz."

"Do you accept the charges?" the automated voice asked.

"Yeah." Happy rasped, leaning against the leather seat of his ride. He was parked at a rest stop, several of his brother milling about in the background. They were on a protection run from San Diego to the Canadian border. They were escorting several semi trucks carrying a few dozen high-end vehicles and motorcycles. It was a completely legal transaction between dealerships, but also a huge target for thieves. Both owners were friends of the club and cashed in on their friendship by using the Sons to guard their product.

It was easy money and it gave him a lot of time to think. Jax had gotten the lowdown on what happened inside to have Harlowe stiff with pain. There'd been an attempt on both their lives and Harlowe had used deadly force to end it. He was both proud and saddened by the news. Happy never wanted her to be in the position to need to kill but he was thankful she had.

Jax pulled him aside and vowed that no matter what happened, Happy's old lady would be taken care of. She'd earned her weight in gold by killing to protect Tara, she was the closest of family now.

"You alright?" Happy asked, his rasp a low rumble as he watched traffic pass by.

"Yeah." Her words were quiet. "How're you?"

"M'good."

He could hear her breathing but neither said a word for a full thirty seconds. Happy closed his eyes as she started talking, her voice pulling him through a memory.

"Last night I dreamt about the first night we met. You were leaning near the pool tables in that shithole I was bartending, your kutte was brand new and you had this cocky grin on your face. You were talking to Poe and when you looked up I felt like the air was sucked from my body and my heart kick started. I could barely string a sentence together."

"You had on that yellow tank top and those little jean shorts that showed off that tight little ass." He added, his voice hoarse with the sharp longing he still had for his old lady.

"Yeah." She breathed, "You may have mentioned staring at it all night."

"Couldn't help it." Happy grunted, shifting in his seat uncomfortably as his dick hardened at the
"You saved me from that asshole and then we went for a ride. It was the most fun I'd had in my life."

Happy glanced over at his brothers. "Sounds like you don't need saving anymore."

Harlowe didn't speak for a moment, her breath even but elevated. "Yeah."

"You did what you had to."

"I know."

"You're still the best person I know." He rasped, knowing what would be troubling her. "Doing what you've got to, doesn't change that."

A sniffle had his throat tightening, his own eyes burning a bit as she croaked, "Thanks, Hap."

"Just words."

"No, Hap… they're not.. I needed that."

"I know." Happy murmured, squinting as the sun reflected off the chrome of a passing vehicle.

"When will you be back?" Harlowe asked over the chatter of other inmates in the background.

"Couple days. I'll come by as soon as I can."

"Good." She spoke cautiously. "I uh.. I miss you."

Happy's heart clenched painfully at her statement, the confession completely out of the ordinary for her. "Miss you too, Lowe."

"Hap, brotha." Jax called out from the chapel, the tip of his chin gesturing him forward.

Happy's face was an empty facade but inside, his arteries pumped hard and heavy at the sight of the club's lawyer. The last time he'd sat down with Lowen he was told he'd be spending 14 months behind bars, but that wasn't what had him popping a toothpick into his mouth to chew anxiously. It was the memory of Desi's dirt-bag lawyer explaining that Harlowe was going down for his club kill.

"Sit brotha." Jax instructed when Happy stood waiting for the other shoe to drop.

"Tell me." He grunted without taking a seat, his black eyes landing on the lawyer.

"When we found out about Ms. Wentz."

"Harlowe." He hated that she wasn't a Lowman, he should've married her the day he inked her.
"Harlowe." Lowen amended, opening a leather binder. "When we were informed of her connection to the club, we looked into her and the case that was brought against her. Upon this investigation we discovered the ATF agent involved in her prosecution is currently under indictment for witness coercion and evidence tampering amongst a myriad of other charges."

"The prick was Stahls training officer." Jax informed, lighting a cigarette with a flick of his zippo.

Happy growled at the mention of the agent who'd nearly destroyed SAMCRO by shady tactics. The woman whose actions led to Opie's wife's death and the years of downward spiral that event caused.

"Agent Roberts cases are all under scrutiny now due to the IA investigations. I'm confident that if we file an appeal for the courts to overturn Harlowe's conviction, I could have Harlowe out with all charges dropped within a month."

The heavy drum of his pulse kicked up as the words sunk in, Harlowe could be home sooner than expected.

"File them." Happy growled.

"Hap." Jax's voice pulled his stare from the lawyer, to his brother's regretful eyes. It took a second before the pieces clicked together and Happy realized why Jax didn't look enthused by the news. Harlowe's earlier release would leave Tara unguarded inside.

"No." Happy growled, his right hand clenching into a fist.

"Hap, just give us six months. Tara will be out-." "No." He cut his brother off, his eyes turning sharp.

"When we have Tara's release day secured, I'll file the appeal." Lowen began.

"No." Happy snapped, slamming his hand onto the chapel table. "We're not waiting."

Jax's jaw was tight, the muscle flexing as he chewed on his response. "She agreed to protect Tara for her whole sentence. She's got under six months left."

Happy clenched his teeth, his chest rising and falling rapidly at his President's statement. He wasn't sure if he was referring to Tara's or Harlowe's at that point. Her agreement to help the club might as well be considered a prison sentence now.

The lawyer cleared her throat and offered, "What if we informed her, let her choose?"

Jax sat forward, ashing his cigarette into the overflowing bowl on the table and shook his head, "We tell her and she'll walk out."

"She doesn't belong there in the first place." Happy roared, throwing one of the chairs against the wall with a loud clatter. He could see some of his brother's watching from the bar, their faces concerned at the outburst. "We aren't keeping her locked up to serve the club anymore."

"Hap."

"I'm telling her." He growled, his tone final. "She's my ol' lady. She's getting a choice. If she wants out you're filing the damn appeal."

"Wait. Hap." Jax called out as Happy stomped out of the chapel and into the bar. He grabbed a
bottle of tequila and headed towards his dorm room.

"Hey killah, what's goin on?" Tig asked as he shoved passed him roughly.

"Ask Jax." He rasped, slamming his door shut in his brother's face.

Happy sat down with a groan, popping the top off the liquor to chug a mouthful. A knock on the door had him growling a response to fuck off but it only happened again.

"What?" He snapped at Lowen as he opened the door.

"I can get you a face to face with Harlowe."

"What'd you mean?"

"I'll pull a couple strings. It'll cost us a bit because legally you aren't her spouse but I can get you in a room with her. It might make explaining it easier."

"Make it easier for her to shank me for even suggesting she stay inside for the club."

"It's up to you, Mr. Lowman, but I'll need couple days to get it arranged."

"Do it." He rasped, his heart kicking up at the thought of being in a room with Harlowe with no glass partition. "Whatever it costs."

Chapter End Notes

Coming up: Happy and Harlowe without the bars.
It was sometime between lunch and dinner when their cell door opened. Two guards handcuffed Harlowe and escorted her out without any explanation. She gave Tara one last look, before she was pushed along several long corridors, every step feeling like her last. They'd passed through another set of locked gates when she felt cold dread trickle down her backbone. They were entering the private visitation area reserved for legal visits.

"Why am I here?" Harlowe asked, her feet slowing as her mind tripped over all of the reasons she could be pulled for a legal representation visit. If they discovered she'd killed Lottie and Amber they could be informing her of the new murder charges. Her breathing kicked up at the thought of never leaving prison, a deep ache inside growing stronger.

"Go." The guard behind Harlowe shoved her forward as she stuttered to a stop.

"Why am I here?" she repeated, looking back the way they came.

The other guard pulled out his keys, the clattering of sounds, loud in her ringing ears.

"Lawyer visit." He replied.

When the door swung open, Harlowe saw a tall brunette woman in a blue pinstriped blazer and skirt. She had her briefcase open and a spread of files and paperwork in front of her. The sight alone was nerve wracking, but as Harlowe stepped inside she realized the women wasn't alone. Happy sat next to her, his arms crossed over a plain black hoodie. His eyes were consuming her, the dark irises peeling back her layers like old times. She could only hear her own heartbeat pounding in her ears, the loud thump drowning out the guard's instructions.

Harlowe stood numbly next to the chair as they uncuffed her wrists, her body feeling as though it were on a different plan of existence. As they went to attach one wrist to the table, the lawyer spoke up. "No cuffs."

"Ma'am she's a convicted murderer."

"No cuffs." She repeated coolly, her eyes narrowing until they conceded and left the room. "Have a seat Ms. Wentz, did you want something to drink? I can have the guards bring something back."

Harlowe ignored the statement and slowly lowered herself into the seat, her eyes pinned to Happy for some kind of clue as to why they were there.

"What's going on?" she croaked, her gaze sliding to the woman before returning to him.

"This is Lowen, the club lawyer." He rasped lowly, his face empty of any clues to what was about to transpire.

Harlowe clenched her teeth and fists, the reaction purely instinct. The last club lawyer she'd dealt with was a dirt bag.

"I understand you've had some poor counseling in the past. I assure you that it won't be a problem now." Lowen spoke as Happy and Harlowe stared at each other.
"Just tell me what they're charging me with now." She sighed, her tight fists resting in her lap.

"There are no more charges, Ms. Wentz."

"We got some news, Harlowe." Happy drawled, leaning forward in his seat. "The ATF agent that framed you is in deep shit. They got him on evidence tampering."

"Okay." Harlowe muttered, looking towards the lawyer for further explanation. "What's that mean? I'm already convicted."

"All of Agent Roberts cases are under investigation. With the sheer amount of them, it is taking them a while to process the scope of corruption. To speed the process up I can file an appeal to have them reevaluate your case. I'm very confident that we can have you out before your parole comes up, with all charges dropped. You'll have a clean record, no parole or felony standing once you walk out those gates."

Harlowe's breathing became shallow, her heart bruising her ribs with how hard it was working. She pulled her eyes from the lawyer and returned them to Happy. As she took in his expression, the man's scowl firmly in place and eyes hard chunks of coal, she realized that he wasn't celebrating the news. It took a long moment for her mind to catch the reason for his stoic face, but as it did, her heart sunk into her stomach like a stone.

"That being said..." Lowen explained, clearing her throat awkwardly. "I can file the appeal and secure your earlier release, but I won't be able to do the same for Tara. She will need to complete the five months left of her sentence."

Harlowe ground her teeth, her body leaning back in her seat with crossed arms. There it was, the truth about the visit. It was just another club demand for personal sacrifice.

Happy stayed silent as Lowen began to detail the steps that she would take to secure a release date for Tara and how her firm would work to have Harlowe released within a few days of that date.

"Now you have a choice to make, Ms. Wentz." Lowen finished up, closing the folder she was looking at.

"Oh I get a choice huh?" she scoffed, her head shaking at the thought. "Since when do I get a choice in my life?"

"As your legal representation, I can file this paperwork now and have you out within the month or I can wait to file it once I have secured Tara's release date. It's your choice, not the club's." The lawyer spoke without remarking on Harlowe's question. "I'm going to step out and give you and Happy some time to speak about it. We have this room for another hour, so take your time."

Harlowe sat quietly, her face blank of emotion as the lawyer stepped out of the room. The tall brunette gave her a grim smile before shutting the door on the couple's discussion.

Harlowe wasn't sure what she expected, but she knew Happy always chose the club. She knew what his advice would be and dreaded being right.

"Say somethin', Lowe." His voice was a hoarse rasp in the too quiet room.

Harlowe inhaled and exhaled slowly trying to relieve the tension before asking, "What do you want me to do?"

She watched his whole body tense and then buckle on itself. He leaned forward and rested his
elbows on the table as he spoke, his hands flat on the metal surface in surrender. Harlowe focused on the heavy metal on his fingers, the reaper ring she'd had made for him still on his left hand.

"I want you out."

"But?" Harlowe's voice was hollow, her tone brittle.

"Jax wants Tara to make it out too."

Harlowe felt her throat tighten at the words she was expecting, her chest cracking open just the same. She swallowed thickly, a heavy blanket of dread weighing her down. The small kindling of hope she'd gotten from the news was snuffed out before it could even grow into a flame.

"You're really asking me to stay."

"I don't want you to." He replied, his hand reaching out for hers.

"But." She snapped, pulling away from him to demand he say it out loud. "Say it, Hap."

"I'm not asking you too, it's your choice but... it's my president's old lady."

Harlowe scoffed over a sob and folded her arms tightly across her chest to try and hold herself together. She felt gutted at the statement, a fissure opening up inside her spilling all the emotions of the last thirteen years.

"What about me, Hap?" Harlowe asked, her voice hoarse as she tried to contain what was bubbling up. She couldn't tell if she wanted to cry or scream, maybe both. "When's it gonna be about me?"

"Lowe." Happy sighed, rubbing his head roughly in frustration.

"Yeah, that's what I thought." She rasped, her eyes looking away for a long moment.

"Five months." He tried to assure her.

"Hopefully right." Harlowe replied, her eyes sliding back to his. "As long as I don't end up on the end of shiv by then."

"Don't."

"Don't what, Happy?" Harlowe growled, anger overflowing for all those years locked up for a club she wasn't even a member of. "State the obvious? I almost died last week! That isn't even the first time!"

"Don't make this harder."

"For who, you? Because guess what, it'll always be harder for me. Always!" She shouted, rising from her seat to pace the tiny room. "Years, Hap. Fucking years and it's not enough. It'll never EVER be enough."

"Harlowe." He growled, his eyes going over the door. "Sit down. Don't give them a reason to come back in."

"Fuck you, Happy Lowman." She screamed, her face red and furious. "Fuck you and fuck your club."
Happy rose swiftly, pinning Harlowe to the wall and staring at her with rage filled eyes. "Take it back."

"No." She hissed, shoving at his chest with no effect. "I do this last thing and I'm done. With the club and with you!"

His fingers curled into her biceps, his whole body thrumming with tension as he fought the urge to shake her violently. "I'm not done with you."

"Well I am." Harlowe growled, trying to pry her arms free from his grasp. "Let go."

"No." He rasped, stepping closer and dipping his mouth to her ear. "You're mine, this ain't over."

The sharp sting of her hand landing across his cheek had his fingers clutching her wrist firmly.

"Let go." Her breath was choppy as he glared at her, his cheek tingling from the harsh slap. Happy's stomach clenched painfully as he took in how beautiful she looked filled with hellfire. Despite the pain of her dismissal, Happy was lusting over her furious expression.

He couldn't resist the temptation of her being so close any longer and dove into her mouth hungrily. Harlowe shoved at his chest for the first ten seconds before she sunk into him, her fingers curled into his hoodie. It was the first time he'd kissed his old lady in almost thirteen years and she still tasted and felt the same.

They devoured each other's mouths, tongues twisting and deep moans muffled by greedy lips, until Harlowe ripped hers away. Her lips were parted as her chest heaved, lungs desperate for air.

Another sharp sting jolted Happy, his cheek throbbing at her open palmed slap. He tasted blood in his mouth from the cutting edge of his teeth.

"Woman." He growled grasping her wrists and tugging her into his chest as she tried hitting him again and again. Pulling her arms to her sides, Happy leaned all his weight against her to keep her still and calm.

He didn't want to hurt her but he did want her to listen and stop slapping him. His mouth nipped her neck and jaw, his teeth scraping along the pale skin. "Stop hitting me."

"I'm done, Hap." She gasped, her head cocking to the side as he kissed and licked the skin below her ear.

"You don't feel done." He growled, his hand sliding up her shirt to cup just below her breast. His thumb slid over the curve to the stiff nipple, flicking it enough to make her gasp.

"Stop, Hap."

"You sure?" He growled, sucking on her pulse as he kneaded her breast, turning her into putty below his hands. It was just like old times, the two spots that always had her weak in the knees.

"Fuck." Harlowe moaned, her hands rising to unzip his hoodie and slid inside along his chest.

He groaned at the heat of her hands under his shirt and the sensation of her fingers tracing the waistband of his jeans.
Happy took no time to hoist her against the wall, wrapping her legs around his waist. Her sharp gasps and low moans at his rolling hips and greedy mouth had him desperate for more. Turning around, he placed her on the table and curled his fingers into the waistband of her pants.

"Tell me no." He rasped, his black eyes absorbing every subtle shift in her expression. His heart was hammering against his sternum, the beat throbbing in his temple and his dick. He wanted to bury himself so deep inside his old lady that she'd always feel him.

Her chin dipped and she lifted her hips up to help his frantic hands. Her pants and shoes were on the floor and Happy's belt and jeans were peeled open before he plunged his tongue back inside her mouth. He groaned as her hand encircled his dick, her movements rough and greedy. Without waiting to remove her panties, Happy pulled them aside and pushed his way into her tight walls.

Harlowe yanked her mouth away to moan at his insistent thrust. Her green eyes were wide and glossy, the skin flushing pink up her arched neck. She was so goddamn beautiful when he filled her full. It took his breath away.

"Fuck." He hissed through clenched teeth when he sunk completely inside her. He secured her legs around his waist and watched her intensely, pulling out to the cusp before slamming back inside.

Happy bared his teeth at the sharp sting of her nails digging deeper into his neck and ribs with every thrust. He curled his fingers into her inner thighs to splay them widely, his hips snapping sharply between them.

Their movements were harsh and desperate, their breathing panted into each other's gaping mouths.

"Hap." She gasped as his thrusts sped up and deepened as her walls fluttered. "Oh god."

"Come on, Lowe." Happy gritted out through clenched teeth, his eyes pitch black as he watched her falling part underneath him. His thighs dug into the table edge as he pumped a quick rhythm, his fingers bruising her hips and neck as he shoved her onto his dick.

"I wanna..." She gasped, throwing her head back as he pressed a thumb to her clit, rubbing it furiously while thrusting hard and shallow.

"Come on, baby. Cum."

Harlowe's breath cut off suddenly and a low keen filled the room as she came undone below him.

Her lips tightened into an almost impassable wall as he pumped through her climax. Tears ran down her flushed cheeks, her lips bruised from his harsh kisses. She was so gorgeous taking his dick that Happy couldn't hold on any longer. His balls tightened and head swelled, before he unloaded inside her warm, wet hollow.

"Fuck.. fuck, baby." He growled into her neck, his teeth bearing down on the meat of her shoulder as he came in long thick pulses. Harlowe's hand clutched his shirt and neck, her hips rocking against his as he slowed.

Happy panted against her sweaty neck, his tongue coming out to taste her salty skin. They pulled apart, Harlowe pressing her thighs together. Happy gripped the back of her neck and yanked her mouth to his, kissing her deeply and thoroughly. Their teeth clacked together and nose bumped clumsily, the pair drunk of each other.

"You're mine." He rasped, nipping her lip and kissing her jaw. "You'll always be mine, Lowe."

"No." Harlowe panted, pushing back against his chest to hop off the table. Happy watched as she
tugged on her pants and shoes, her movements choppy and unsteady.

"Yes." Happy replied, tucking his wet dick away with a grimace as it stuck to his boxers.

"No, Hap." She muttered, her angry face back on. "This doesn't change anything. When I'm done
inside here, I'm done with the club, with you. It's over."

"Harlowe." He growled, stepping forward as she backed away.

"No Hap. I'm tired of always being last. It's always about your brother's, your club. I've lost so
much time doing what needed to be done for you, for the club. When I'm out, I need to do what's
right for me."

Harlowe walked to the door, pounding on it to let the guards know they were done.

Lowen stepped inside with the guards, her eyes widening a bit at the sight of both of them.

"File them when you have Tara's date, I'll stay until she's out." Harlowe informed while she put her
hands out for the guard to cuff. Happy could see the others eyeballing her closely, their judgmental
gazes returning to his for a moment. Harlowe looked roughed up, her hair messy and bruises along
her neck from his greedy mouth. His own neck was scraped raw and lip bloody from her sharp
teeth.

"Lowe."

"Bye, Hap." She rasped, her eyes avoiding his as they exited.

"Harlowe." Happy snapped, stepping into the doorway to watch her be led away. "This isn't over."

"It's been over for a long time, Hap." Harlowe replied without turning around and then she was
gone.

"Fuck." Happy growled, slamming his fists down onto the table he'd just fucked Harlowe on for
what could be the last time, if she had her way.

"I'll do my best to get her out as soon as Tara is released." Lowen spoke next to him, her voice
sounding hesitant. "I'm sure once everything is done she'll change her mind."

"No she won't." he rasped, shaking his head without looking at her. "This was her saying
goodbye."

Harlowe's mind was a jumbled mess by the time she was returned to her cell. She stood there
numbly as they removed her cuffs and slammed the door closed.

Tara was staring at her with a deeply furrowed brow and downward turned lips. "Where'd they
take you?"

"Legal." She rasped, moving to the sink to wash her face and hands. All she could smell and taste
was Happy. She couldn't stop licking her lips to chase the last of it before splashing cold water onto
her face. Flashes of his hungry eyes and greedy hands flickered behind her closed lids. She felt her
heartbeat quicken and skin flush at just the thought of him.
"Well?" The other woman prompted, jumping down from the top bunk.

Harlowe turned around and leaned against the sink. "It was the club's lawyer. Apparently the agent that arrested me is under investigation. His cases are all being appealed and overturned."

"Seriously?" Tara's mouth dropped open and she stepped closer. "That's insane."

"Yeah." Harlowe nodded, swallowing around a knot in her throat.

"What? You're not happy?"

Harlowe snorted at the women's wording, crossing her arms. "No but uh... I just *did* Happy."

Tara's eyes widened at the crude comment and gasped, "What?"

"He was there, probably cost him an arm and a leg." She pursed her lips to stop the smirk from curling them. "We fought and fucked and then I broke up with him... again."

"Jesus Christ." Tara chuckled, sitting down on the lower bunk next to her. "And I thought me and Jax had drama. What'd you fight about?"

"Nothin'. Just same ol' shit." Harlowe found herself lying. She didn't want to talk about the real reason for their argument. It was too raw and painful to discuss.

Besides, she didn't want anything as distracting as guilt to get Tara off her game. They just had to make it through five more months. Harlowe was more determined than ever to keep them both out of trouble. She began to wonder if turning the contraband route over to someone else wouldn't be prudent.

"So... how was it?" Tara smirked, her eyes dropping to Harlowe's neck. "You look like you were mauled by a rabid dog."

Harlowe bit her lip and reveled in the tenderness she felt between her thighs. It'd been so very long since she'd experienced sex, let alone desire. She'd had that part of her mind jumpstarted when he'd begun to visit, but being in the same room. Tasting and feeling him inside and all over her. It was otherworldly. She couldn't resist Happy once he'd started touching and kissing her. The man knew just what to do, to have her melting under his hands.

"That good huh?" Tara laughed when Harlowe merely gazed off with a hazy look in her eyes.

"Yeah... just like old times."

Chapter End Notes

Worth the wait?
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

It's finally here...

ENJOY!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thirteen years, 2 months and 16 days since incarceration.

Harlowe walked out the final locked gate of the women's federal penitentiary, her hand up to block the blinding California sun from her eyes. She wore the clothes she’d been sentenced in, the white button up shirt and gray dress pants far too big on her now. The threads felt as foreign as the freedom she was just handed.

It took three days for them to process her release after the overturned verdict. In that time she spent it alone in an empty cell, Tara having been released the week prior. She tried to get her head on straight in that time, but it was a lost cause. She had no idea how she was going to function outside a correctional setting, the sheer immensity of it had yet to sink in.

Harlowe looked over the long line of shiny black motorcycles and men in leather kuttes parked along the curb in front of the prison. Happy stood with crossed arms in front of them, his broad shoulders adorned with club patches.

It'd been five months since she found out she would be released, five months since she'd broken things off with Happy.

Harlowe refused to see him again after their desperate tryst in the visiting room. She knew she'd hurt and angered him by cutting him out of her life yet again, but couldn't stop herself from doing it.

Deep down Harlowe was scared of getting close to the man. As much as she loved him, meeting Happy had sent her life spiraling out of control. A path that she'd been forced to take, but now she had a choice. She needed to figure out who she was now that she was going to be outside the prison fences.

Happy walked away from the line of men and approached her slowly, his face tense and dark eyes piercing. She could tell he was trying to figure out her reaction to him and his entourage. He wasn't used to Harlowe hiding everything she was feeling behind a mask of indifference.

"Hey." Happy rasped, as he stopped directly in front of her. His hands slowly clenched at his sides as though resisting the urge to reach for her.

Harlowe swallowed thickly, her eyes scanning the group of men watching the reunion. Her spine stiffened and hands balled into fists at all the eyes looking back. She wasn't expecting a crowd or even a ride. She truly thought she'd walk out and climb aboard the nearest bus to catch a ride to anywhere but Chino prison. She hadn't even thought Happy would show up after their last interaction.
"Harlowe." He encouraged, pulling her eyes from the onlookers. "C'mere."

Her jaw clenched as she stepped forward and let him pull her into a hug. The group of men wolf whistled and clapped, as the tension seemed to break. Happy wound his long arms around her and pressed his mouth to the side of her head as she stood stiffly in his embrace.

"We'll work shit out later, Lowe. Let's just get you out of this hellhole for now. Okay?" He looked her over cautiously. "Unless you got plans."

Harlowe huffed out a dry laugh and shook her head, "Nah, Hap. I've got nowhere to be."

"Yeah, you do." Happy's knuckles nudged her chin up. "You got a welcome home party to go to."

"I don't have a home anymore, Happy." She replied softly, pulling from his arms to see Tara approaching. Happy's face was grim as he stepped away and allowed the two women to speak privately.

"Hi, Harl." Tara smiled, hugging her briefly before pulling away. "Good to see you outside the fences."

"Yeah, you too, doc." Harlowe rasped with an emotional tremor she couldn't hide. She tipped her chin to the blonde man behind Tara holding one of their kids. "Your old man's prettier than I recall. No wonder you wanted out so damn bad."

Tara laughed, her eyes going back to her family unit. "Yeah they all are. You ready to be a free woman?"

"Only thing I'm ready for is a strong drink and a real goddamn meal." Harlowe replied, flashing her a tenuous smile while watching Happy shuffle behind them.

"You and Happy are gonna be okay." Tara murmured, as they approached the men.

Harlowe's lip curled wryly. "That your official diagnosis?"

"Yeah. You just need some time."

"I've done enough of that."

"My bitch mother-in-law would say an ol' lady's job is never done."

Rolling her eyes, Harlowe glanced at Happy for a moment before returning her eyes to Tara. "Bitch is probably right."

"Come on, Lowe." Happy gestured to his bike. "Ride with me."

Harlowe hesitated, her urge to distance herself from him still in the forefront of her mind. As he sat and held a hand out in her direction though, she couldn't stop from taking it. She swung her leg over the seat and sat behind him, her body notching against his like old times. Her arms encircled his waist and she felt his hands resting on her thighs, his fingers squeezing them affectionately.

Harlowe felt transported back in time, to long summer days of riding with her old man up the coastline. She inhaled the familiar scent of leather and smoke, an undercurrent of his aftershave melting into something comforting. Her fingers curled instinctually into the soft fabric of his gray t-shirt below his kutte and her eyes closed in pleasure and with relief. She pressed her face between his shoulder blades and willed away the tears burning her eyes. Harlowe's chest heaved once before
she stuffed the sob down, blinking away the blurry vision.

"Hold on tight." He rasped before his engine roared to life, followed by a dozen other bikes behind them.

The pack rode the long path back to Charming, Happy and Jax in the front with their old ladies on the backs of their bikes. A van with Tara's kids and a prospect followed behind the group. There was a nostalgic feel to riding with the club, it brought back bittersweet memories of the old days.

Harlowe let her eyes fall shut to feel the air rushing past and the sun beating down. It'd been so long since she'd experienced anything nearly as thrilling. She couldn't even remember the last time she felt the wind blowing through her hair or the sun beating down on her neck.

When her eyes finally opened, she watched the scenery fly passed, ocean on the left and rolling hills on their right. She hadn't seen anything but concrete and iron for over a decade. She could feel more tears stinging her eyes at the beauty of their surroundings. The pure vibrancy of colors other than gray had her chest aching. Harlowe squeezed his waist tighter as the ride continued, the sharpness of her emotions clenching her throat and speeding up her heart.

Happy's hand left his handlebar and came to rest of her knee, his thumb brushing back and forth to soothe her.

"You good?" He hollered over the roar of the rushing air, his sunglass covered eyes meeting her's in the tiny side-mirror. Harlowe nodded, while blinking the tears away under her borrowed riding glasses, giving him a watery smile.

"Almost there." He assured, circling his thumb around her kneecap.

Happy’s stomach clenched at the feel of Harlowe's fingers curling into his T-shirt. He hadn't been too sure what her reactions was going to be when she exited the prison, but he was glad she was just going with it. Jax wanted the club to welcome her home. He'd sat Happy down the day they found out her conviction was overturned and explained that he wanted to show Harlowe she was family. Happy had tried to explain that she didn't want anything to do with the club or her old man. His President assured him that if all else failed, Tara would get her to play along. Since coming home, Tara had explained that the two women had grown close after spending a year in a cell together. Jax was determined to show Harlowe the club wasn't all bad and that the time she spent behind bars without ratting was worth it, if only by a little. Happy was pretty doubtful it would all work out smoothly.

Half way through the ride, Happy could tell Harlowe was overwhelmed with the change in scenery. He could relate, having spent time behind bars. Never to the length that she had but he got it. He dreaded what else was to come for her, the adjustments to living without cuffs and locked doors. The mental and emotional damage done behind bars was hard to overcome.

Her arms tightened further as they followed the coast, the path he'd insisted on when planning the ride. He'd wanted her to experience the freedom on a familiar path, the drive taking them passed all those purple flowers they loved.

Happy reached down and squeezed her knee when she pressed her face against his back again. He wanted to close his eyes at the feeling of her flush against his back but couldn't remove them from the winding road ahead.
Happy wasn't sure what would happen, but he knew in that moment there wasn't anything he wouldn't do to get Harlowe back. She was part of him, he could feel how she fit with him. She was his and he was hers. When they finally passed by the 'Welcome to Charming' sign, Happy was determined to do whatever it took to remind her of how good they were together.

Harlowe climbed off the back of Happy's bike and cringed as the people waiting for the group's return whistled and clapped loudly. There was a 'Welcome Home' banner stretched above the clubhouse doors framed with balloons. She glanced at Happy who shrugged, sinking his hands into the pockets of his worn jeans.

"Welcome home, Lowe."

Swallowing thickly, Harlowe walked next to Happy as they approached the building. She couldn't help but be on guard, her eyes flicking over the group as she would if entering the yard or mess hall.

"No one will fuck with you here." Happy's gruff voice pulled her gaze from the weapons she'd spotted on just about every person nearby.

Harlowe made a rough sound in the back of her throat in response, her eyes returning to the group of people. She wasn't going to be able to turn off the muscle memory survival skills that got her through the last thirteen years.

The pair stopped under a large patio, Happy introducing several of his brothers to her. Harlowe tried to keep up, but it was all too overwhelming to remember what name belonged to what stranger. Embarrassingly, she found herself looking to Happy for direction on what to do and where to go. Without the strict bark of a C.O. over her shoulder, Harlowe was lost. She cringed at her own weakness, but couldn't help floundering a bit in her new surroundings.

They entered the large warehouse that SAMCRO called home. It also housed the club porn production company and newly opened specialty motorcycle fabrication shop. Harlowe had gotten the low down from Tara before she was released. She hadn't asked but her cellmate became increasingly anxious as her release date approached. Tara wouldn't shut up near the end.

"Hey kid." A familiar voice called out from the grouping of tables near the bar. Harlowe's eyes jolted to Poe's grinning face, his stiff hand waving her closer.

"Hey Poe." She rasped, striding forward to see the long time friend. Harlowe bent to hug him, her eyes burning at the drastic change from the virile wild man she'd last seen, to the man bound to a wheelchair. Sitting nearby was his nurse, the forty something blonde looking out of place in her scrubs amongst all the biker leather.

Pulling back, Harlowe smiled shakily at him, "I can't believe you left your secret lair to see me."

Poe laughed, patting Harlowe's shoulder as she stood back up. "Anything for you, Harls. You're our girl."

Happy joined them, his jaw tight and eyes pinning Poe with a glare as he held her hand too long.

"Hap." Poe greeted, his grin only taunting the green monster in Happy's dark eyes.

"Don't start." She muttered, crossing her arms as Happy growled lowly.
"Hey, Harlowe." Tara spoke from nearby, interrupting the unneeded alpha stand off. "I brought you clothes and stuff. You wanna clean up?"

"Yes." Harlowe sighed, pulling at her shirt. "I'd like to burn this shit too if possible."

"Come on." The brunette laughed and motioned towards the hallway. "Follow me. Hap, we're using your room."

Harlowe followed Tara, glancing back at Happy to find him watching her leave. He tipped his chin encouragingly, "I'll be right here."

Harlowe stood under hot water, her palms on the cool tiles as the heat beat against her back. She was in a locked room by herself showering for the first time in thirteen years. Swallowing her jagged sobs was nearly impossible. She bit her lip and curled into herself as she choked back the tears.

"Stop it." She growled, scrubbing her face before washing her hair briskly.

The salon grade toiletries were a treat, the soothing scent filling the room. Her shoulders relaxed as she took in several deep breathes, clearing her body of the emotions. She packed away her feelings just like inside prison, stuffing it deep down.

'Keep your shit together.' She growled inwardly, shaking out the nerves.

Harlowe's hands moved mechanically as she dried off, her eyes avoiding her reflection in the steamy mirror. She couldn't even recognize herself any longer. The shadows under her eyes like two dark half moons and visible ribs made her seem undead. She was a specter of who she once was.

Twenty minutes later Harlowe exited the bathroom, her hair dried and pulled back into ponytail. She wasn't ready to wear it loose yet, but figured it was close. She took advantage of the makeup, covering some of the unrested look and lining her eyes in soft kohl.

Tara had given her clothing to choose from, all new and freshly washed. She found herself burying her face into the fabric and inhaling to enjoy the familiar fragrance fully.

Harlowe picked a pair of dark wash jeans and a navy blue top, her half sleeve tattoo on display with its narrow straps. She hesitated when she realized how much of her old lady ink was showing but a knock on the door ended her internal debate about changing.

Tara called out from behind the barrier. "You hungry?"

Harlowe opened the door and waved her hand around, "Is this okay?"

"Yeah." Tara nodded, smiling at her genuinely. "Looks good. A little big but I guessed on sizes."

"It's good. Thanks."

"No problem. It's the least I can do."

"I don't need to be paid back."

"I know."
Harlowe rolled her eyes as the other woman just smirked and wandered back towards the party.

"Come on. The burgers are done."

"Thank god." Harlowe mumbled, her stomach clenching hungrily. "I hope it's better than the mystery meat this morning."

"God, don't remind me." Tara gagged, before laughing and knocking Harlowe with her elbow. "Remember Cora and the bandaid chili?"

"Oh Jesus." Harlowe shoved Tara playfully. "Damn why'd you bring that up. Lost my appetite."

"Whatever." Tara laughed as they reached the grill. "That's a lie, you're always hungry."

"Fuck off." Harlowe grumbled, taking a plate from the prospect serving food.

"Here you go, Ma'am."

"Don't call me that." Harlowe glared, taking a burger and helping of mac n' cheese.

"Sorry, m-. Er. What should I call you?"

"Her name ain't your concern." Happy snapped next to her, his hand grazing her lower back. "C'mon. I got you a seat."

Harlowe rolled her eyes at his posturing and followed Tara to a large patio table with Happy right behind her.

She felt a few too many eyes watching their progress but kept her chin up and eyes aware. The seat Happy showed her was on the outer edge of the group, the back facing the wall so her eyes could be on the crowd and anyone approaching.

Harlowe paused a moment as he gave her a meaningful look, the man knowing she needed that security. His thoughtfulness surprised her.

"Thanks, Hap." She murmured.

"I got you." He rasped, tipping his chin to the plate. "Dig in. Better than that dog food they serve inside."

"Better than bandaid chili too." Tara commented across the table, her eyes playful.

"I'll cut you." Harlowe snapped, pointing a finger at her while ignoring Happy's inquisitive look.

Tara laughed loudly, wiping her mouth with a napkin.

"She thinks I'm kidding." Harlowe muttered, biting into her burger with a moan. "Oh god."

Happy smirked at her while chewing his own food. "Good?"

"Yes." She mumbled, through another mouthful. "Gonna need a second one."

"Finish the first one. You're eyes are bigger than your stomach." Happy commented, sipping his beer.

"Shush." Harlowe scowled. "I'm making up for all the damn burgers I missed."
"Gonna get sick." He huffed, rising to his feet to grab another.

"Shut up, dad." Poe mocked, his chair rolling up to the table.

"Yeah." Harlowe laughed, hugging the man again. "What he said."

Happy gave her another plate of food and beer. "You puke and he's holding your hair."

"She's fine, brother." Poe drawled, "Leave the girl alone, she's skin and bones. Gotta put meat on you, kid."

"M'fine." She mumbled, chewing a bite of pasta.

Happy was scowling at her, scanning her with a critical eye. Harlowe rolled her eyes at the two looking at her.

"I'm fine."

"There's pie." Happy replied standing before she could reply, making Poe laugh next to her.

"Not funny, you guys are going to make me obese."

"Little girl, it'd take you a decade to get obese." Poe replied, looking her over.

"Hap." Harlowe gasped he sat down a whole pie with a container of whipped cream. "That's too much."

"We'll share." He spoke gruffly, taking her empty plate.

"Can I take like five minutes to digest?" She grumbled as he pushed a plate in front of her. "Unless you really do want to hold my hair back."

"Fine." Happy nodded, leaning his elbows onto the table.

They sat silently, both watching the other people hanging out drinking and laughing. Poe eventually left for the evening, commenting that he would be in town for a couple days before heading back to his property in Tacoma.

"Got a place set up." Hap rasped once the table was empty of others.

"A place?" Harlowe cocked an eyebrow, eating a bite of apple pie.

"An apartment." He replied, peeling the label off his beer bottle nervously. "Paid up for while. You'll need stuff but it's got all the basics."

Harlowe's mouth opened but she wasn't sure what to say.

"It's close by so if you need anything..." he trailed off, shifting his shoulders a bit uncomfortably. "I'll show you later."

"It's uhhh.. it's for me?"

"Yeah." Happy nodded.

Harlowe could tell he wanted to add to the statement but refrained in doing so. "Okay."
12 hours after release

Happy found Harlowe sitting on the tailgate of the shop's pick up truck, her head tilted back as she stargazed. He stood still watching her for more than a few minutes before she finally noticed him. She was as beautiful as she had always been, her eyes aged from time but beauty still strong.

When he'd seen her return to the party, freshly showered and changed, he'd fallen for her all over again. The ink on her arm was not as vibrant as it once was, but it had held up, the image he'd etched into her skin all those years ago showing the world who she belonged to. His dick was hard at just the sight of it on display for his brother's to see.

He wanted her and he needed her but he knew it would be slow going. He wanted to show her that even though everything had gone to shit for them, that they could get back to what they once were. Before prison, before she'd killed for the club. Before she'd lost so much of who she was. Happy wanted to show her that she could trust him, that she could depend on him for more than just ruining her life. He wasn't the young newly patched asshole he once was. He could protect her better and he was determined to do just that for as long as she would let him.

"Hey." He rasped, worrying the toothpick between his teeth.

"It's been awhile." She replied, her eyes returning to the starry sky above. Happy glanced up realizing she probably hadn't been outside in the evening in years. He shuffled his boots across the pavement and asked, "Alright if I sit?"

Flicking calculating eyes over his face and body, Harlowe nodded once and returned her gaze upward. She sat silently for a long moment, her voice coming out hoarse when she finally spoke. "I... I keep expecting them to show up with paperwork saying they fucked up.... That it's time to go back."

"It's not happening." Happy replied, leaning forward to place his elbows on his knees. He fiddled with the toothpick in his mouth, his dark eyes watching her carefully from his peripheral. Happy could hear a brittleness in her words and the way her arms were wrapping her folded legs screamed fragile. It was the first time since getting out that her facade began to slip in front of him.

"Fucked up part?" She rasped with a sad smile. "I kinda want them to... I don't know how to live out here anymore, Happy."

"Just like inside, baby. A day at a time." The term of endearment slipped out, his love for her still heavy inside his heart.

"There's too many rules out here. Shit's simple in there." She sighed, her hands pulling her hair from the tight ponytail. Happy clenched his jaw as her soft locks unraveled in waves. He used to love sinking his hands into the dark locks and pulling her mouth to his. Happy clenched his fists to keep from reaching out to sweep the hair behind her ear.

"There's a lot more shit to worry about inside." He offered, his head cocking as he caught the sheen to her eyes. "Lowe, look at me."

"Nah, Hap." She muttered, shaking her head while avoiding his eyes "just leave it."

"It's better out here. You'll see." He assured, his hand resting over her wringing ones. "Harlowe. Look at me."

When the light green irises landed on his, the tears she'd been holding back rolled over the edge
and down her cheeks. Happy cupped her face before he could stop himself, his thumb wiping the endless tears away.

"Everything's gonna be okay, Lowe." He murmured, wrapping an arm around her shoulders to pull her against his side. "I promise you."

Harlowe was quiet next to him, her body shuddering as she got her tears under control. Happy rubbed a hand up and down her back before asking, "You wanna head to the apartment I was telling you about? Get some real sleep in a real bed?"

Nodding a few times, Harlowe spoke softly, "Yeah, that'd be nice."

"Alright. I just gotta talk to Jax real quick and we can head out."

"K." She replied, her hands scrubbing her face. "Sorry."

"About what?" He asked.

"Weeping like some pussy."

"Well from what I remember you have one so..." he said, flashing her a smirk.

Harlowe rolled her eyes, reminding him of old times. "Shuddup and talk to your pretty boy President."

"He is pretty isn't he?"

"Much prettier than Desi." She muttered, her hands gripping the tailgate.

"Desi was a fucking rat. You can trust Jax. He's a real brother."

"Desi was supposed to be a brother." Harlowe huffed, looking away from him.

"He was a liar." Happy replied, stepping forward to stand between her legs. "You can trust Jax. You ever need anything, you go to him. Alright?"

Harlowe nodded, her eyes rising to meet his. "Go do what you gotta. I'm tired."

Happy didn't give her a chance to deny him, leaning forward to kiss her gently on the forehead. He inhaled the soft scent of her skin and clean hair, the warmth of her body like a siren to his own. Pulling back just enough to speak, his lips brushed her skin as he murmured gruffly, "Be right back."

Chapter End Notes

Harlowe's out! Long overdue? I apologize for the lack of Hap/Harlowe private time, next chapter should have them working through some of their issues.
"Jax told me what you did." Tara blurted out while handing Harlowe a mug of coffee, the morning after her release.

Happy dropped her off bright and early at the Teller residence when he was needed for club business with Jax. They still had to discuss just what was happening between them. By the time they'd arrived to the apartment Happy had secured for her, she was dead on her feet. She'd looked around for mere seconds before crawling into bed. Happy slept on the couch, the man offering before she even asked.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Tara asked when Harlowe stayed silent.

"It wasn't important."

"On what planet is that not important?" She scoffed, leaning against the kitchen counter with crossed arms. "You stayed inside that hellhole for me."

"Yeah well..." Harlowe muttered, shrugging a bit. "A few months is nothing to the years I could've had left."

"Still."

"Stop." Harlowe shook her head. "It's what I said I was going to do. I keep my word."

Tara picked up her youngest son as he wander in from napping. "Hey kiddo. You sleep good?"

"Ungry."

"You're hungry huh?" She asked, rubbing his belly while putting him in a booster seat next to Harlowe. "I'll make you breakfast while you visit with Auntie Lowe."

Harlowe rolled her eyes at the title but smiled at the kid nonetheless. "He looks like you."

"Yeah, it's kinda uncanny." Tara glanced over at her son. "His brother is his father's clone. I'm dreading his teens."

Picking up a fallen sippy cup, Harlowe chuckled, "uh yeah, I doubt you can tame a Son's son."

They lulled into a silence until Tara joined her at the table, sliding a plate of muffins to the center.

"How's things with Happy?"

"How'd I know you were going to ask that shit." Harlowe huffed, picking up a muffin. "Just because we're out here doesn't mean the rules don't apply. I don't wanna talk about it."

"Come on, Harls." Tara sipped her coffee, her eyebrows raised. "Have you talked?"

"No." Harlowe growled, setting her mug down with a loud thump. She grimaced as the kid startled at the sound. "Sorry."
"Why not?"

"I was sleep walking last night by the time we got there. I'm still on lights out time."

"Yeah. That was an adjustment."

"Yeah, try it after a dozen years. I ended up on the floor, the bed was too soft."

"Seriously?"

"I..." Harlowe paused, her jaw tightening and eyes burning at the sudden emotional tsunami. "I uh.. kept feeling like I was sinking... couldn't breathe in all those covers."

"Oh." Tara murmured, her hands cupping her mug. "So when you talk, what're you gonna tell him?"

Harlowe picked at the muffin on her plate, her throat suddenly dry. "I love him... I still do but."

She hesitates, her eyes prickling painfully. "I don't know if I can let myself be with him. After everything... I can't risk being involved with the club."

"It's better now, it's legitimate business, yeah it porn but they aren't running guns anymore."

"They'll always be a target, the law doesn't give a shit if they aren't in the game anymore. They'll pin anything they can, fake or otherwise. It's how it works and there's always collateral damage."

Tara frowned, her eyes drifting to her son. "You're scared?"

Her first urge was to deny it, to puff up and play the hardened criminal but the panic rising up in her throat couldn't be contained. "Yeah." She croaked, her hands tightening into fists.

"Harlowe, that won't happen again. I can promise you these guys protect their own."

"They can't stop the law."

"Happy would get you into Canada or Mexico before they could touch a hair on your head."

"I thought he would before but there was nothing he could do."

"Because of his corrupt president."

"Aren't they all?" Harlowe scoffed but sunk into her chair at Tara's glower.

"No." She snapped, "they aren't."

"Sorry." Harlowe sighed, scrubbing her face. "Just past shit. I shouldn't take it out on the pretty boy."

"He's not bad, I don't agree with him hiding the fact that you were sitting in that hellhole for me but it was to get me home to these guys."

"Yeah, well. You're welcome and shit, now can we not talk about things."

"Fine but all I'm saying is you need to get to know each other again. Learn to trust each other."

"I trust him with my life but some things are just out of his control." Harlowe muttered, taking a sip of her coffee.
"Look, I've never wanted to be involved in the club. I hated my mother-in-law's constant harping on the brotherhood and the role of an old lady. Everything it stood for wasn't my life. I was a pediatric heart surgeon, I wasn't some biker bitch."

Tara cleaned up her son's messy hands as she spoke. "I wanted out, I was planning on taking the kids and running. I started making plans after I got arrested for that shit, me and Jax were on the outs and everything was crumbling around us."

"How'd you end up staying?"

"A whole lot of shit but in the end, Jax got the club clean of the poison killing it. I never thought I'd say it, but the club really is family now to me."

"Ya know your ol' lady ain't what I was expecting." Tig commented, taking a sip of his beer while watching Happy take a shot at the pool table. The clack of the cue ball filled the silence as Happy kept his mouth shut. He watched them sink into the corner and side pocket before aiming for his next shot.

"Yeah." Juice chimed in from the barstool against the wall. "I was picturing somethin' different."

"I mean you always go for blondes." Tig drawled on, taking his own shot as Happy glared back at him. "Big titted Barbie dolls, the dumber the better."

"S'pose tha's why boys." Chibs jumped into the conversation as he sauntered over with a croweater under his arm.

Happy's jaw clenched at the Scotsman, his eyes darkening as the man nailed it on the head. Every croweater or one nightstand he fucked was the exact opposite of his old lady. He never went for the petite brunettes; they reminded him of everything he'd lost. His hookups didn't need to be smart or remotely interesting because they were just warm bodies to him.

"He already ha' the cream o' the crop, boys." Chibs slurred, his scars deepening as he grinned. Happy ground his teeth, his hand tightening around the pool cue until the wood creaked.

"Easy, boys." Jax drawled, sauntering over with a easy grin. "You want Hap to kick your ass's already? Party ain't even started yet."

The sound of the door opening and slamming shut brought the group's attention to the women entering the clubhouse. Happy's throat dried out and his hand ached with how hard he gripped the pool stick in his fist.

"Holy shit." Juice muttered behind him, the collective grunts around him turning his blood to liquid fire.

"Looks like the girls went shopping." Jax rasped, his eyes sliding down his own wife's body.

Harlowe wore a skirt that should be illegal in all fifty states, the hemline hitting just below her ass. The long line of her legs ending in a pair of fuck me heels. The thin material of her top was stretched across her breasts, which were pushed up by the black lace bra peaking out of the deep plunging shirt.
"Fuck me." Happy cursed under his breath when her eyes found his, the heavier makeup making the soft green pop. Her lips were slick looking, the red perfectly painted on. Happy wasn't sure how he was going to keep his hands to himself with her body on such enticing display.

"I think that's what they were goin' for, brotha." Jax rasped next to him, smacking Happy on the shoulder with a toothy grin.

"You sure this isn't too much." Harlowe huffed, looking down at her skirt and tighter than normal top. Her feet were in a pair of pointy black heels that made her legs seem miles long. It wasn't even something she would've worn in her twenties, let alone approaching forty. Harlowe was pretty sure she looked like she was trying too hard.

"Nope." Tara smirked, glancing over as they approached the clubhouse. "I don't normally meddle, it's more Gemma's style but I don't think there's anything Happy won't do for you when he sees you like this."

"God you're relentless."

Tara flashed her smile before pulling the door open to lead Harlowe inside.

She felt his eyes on her immediately, the pitch colored irises scorching a slow pass down her body. Harlowe noticed his gaze focusing on several spots before landing on her face, his bottom lip pulled into his mouth thoughtfully.

Tara murmured, "I think he's drooling."

"Shut up." Harlowe huffed, her cheeks heating at the look on her old man's face.

Happy shoved the pool cue in his hand into the chest of a man with tattoos on his head, as he swaggered over to her. His chin tipped to Tara before his stepped up close Harlowe, his eyes sliding down her body again.

"Hey." She murmured, tilting her head back as he moved another step into her space. His scent filling her nose and the heat coming off his broad chest caused her skin to flush.

"Hey." Happy rasped, his body swaying closer as he placed a large hand on her hip. "You look good, Lowe."

"Yeah?" she asked, her own hand coming to rest on his stomach.

"Yeah." His voice was gruff and hot against her temple as he lay his lips there for a moment. "Jack and coke?"

Harlowe hummed in response and followed his lead to the bar, his arm draped over her shoulders. Her hand slid beneath his kutte, her palm resting on his lower back with such familiarity her heart clenched. It may have been a different clubhouse but it felt like old times hanging out with his SAMTAC brothers.

"I see you ladies had fun today." Jax greeted, kissing his wife with a smirk.

Tara chuckled as he gave her a dramatic once over. "Yeah, well I hadn't been shopping in a while, I
figured Harls could use some clothes that actually fit her."

"Think you forgot half of it at the store." Happy grumbled under his breath, his hand sliding down to her hip to pull her between the bar and him. She smirked as he blocked her body from the other men's eyes.

"Just say thank you, Hap." Jax quipped, his smug smile making Harlowe roll her eyes.

Poe entered the clubhouse soon after the girls arrived and the group found themselves reminiscing about the old days. Harlowe was sitting next to Happy, his body still angled towards her to shield her from his brother's wandering eyes. His glare was heavy and threatening, the toothpick in his mouth chewed down to a nub.

"So Happy never told us how you two met." Ratboy voiced from behind the bar, his eyes widening as Happy's dark eyes turned on him.

Harlowe snorted, taking a sip of her beer, "Why am I not surprised?"

The men chuckled at her dry comment, everyone knowing Happy wasn't one to share personal shit with anyone.

Happy's hand rest heavy on her neck, his thumb brushing along her skin. She tilted her head towards him and smirked as his scowled.

"Don't encourage them." He rumbled, throwing back a shot.

"He just doesn't want you boys to know he played knight in shining armor the first night they met." Poe taunted with a grin.

"Oh man, I gotta hear this story." Tig crooned, rubbing his hands together.

"Shuddup." Happy grumbled next to her, his eyes narrowing as his brothers hassled Poe for details. Harlowe smirked at him before rising from her seat. "I'm gonna hit the bathroom while Poe embarrasses you."

"Thanks a lot." He growled as she sauntered away with Tara.

"Just because you're out doesn't mean he's done with me." The bleach blonde sneered, her painted lips curled up meanly.

The words were thrown at her as they'd exited the hallway, Harlowe and Tara stopping in front of the slurring blonde. She was in something even more risqué than Harlowe's getup, her giant breasts nearly hanging out of the bottom of crop top.

"Candy, don't." Her friend hissed, grabbing the blonde's wrist as she got in Harlowe's face.

She was taller than Harlowe by a couple inches, her hooker heels giving her leverage. Her tank top was thin and skirt short, the woman's outfit leaving nothing to the imagination.

Harlowe felt a slow rolling heat run through her veins at the statement, her fists turning to lead weights. She wanted to put them through the tanned bitch's front teeth but she restrained herself
until the croweater spoke again.

"He'll be beggin' for my pussy by next month."

Harlowe's control snapped at the claim, her hand lashing out to grab a handful of blonde extensions. She twisted Candy's arm behind her back while slamming her face first into table. The woman screamed out, her hands and legs flailing as she was shoved off balance. Harlowe placed an elbow across the women's shoulders and pressed the croweater to the flat surface, her free hand snapping a fork off an abandoned plate.

"You should really consider who you're speaking to." The ex-con growled, placing the metal object below Candy's eye. The woman was trembling underneath Harlowe, her eyes wide and panicked.

The room was deadly silent suddenly, but she could hear feet shuffling closer. Harlowe figured she had only a few seconds before the men broke up what was nearly transpiring. She wasn't about to do anything but she knew what she needed to do to put the club whores in their place. It was just like prison, they needed to know they weren't to fuck with her.

"I could take you out with this fork and not one person here would stop me." Harlowe spoke coldly, her voice not raising a decibel. "You think you'd be my first? You think I was sitting pretty in a cell for thirteen years. I've done things that would make you piss your crotchless panties."

Harlowe twisted her arm just enough to make her yelp in pain.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

"Yes you are." She rasped, pressing the fork just a little closer to making her whine. "You're a sorry piece of trash who thinks their loose pussy and fake tits are enough to hold a man like Happy but you're sorely mistaken. You tell all your little skank friends. Hands. Off. You got me? You sluts so much as think about touching what's mine and I'll shove this fork through your fucking skull. You got me, cunt?"

The croweater could only dip her chin in agreement, the fist Harlowe had curled in her hair and the sharp object below her eyeball, keeping her frozen solid.

"Lowe." Happy rasped nearby, his shape filling her peripheral. "It's done."

Harlowe flicked her eyes to his dark gaze, the man eating up the sight of her manhandling the trashy girl. She wasn't sure if he meant her aggression or his whoring ways but regardless she relaxed her grip.

Harlowe pulled the fork away from Candy's eye before slamming it into the table, the sharp prongs buried into the wood a few inches from the girl's face.

"I'm gonna need you to say it." Harlowe rasped at the women, her eyes still on Happy.

"I..I g-got y-you." The blonde stammered.

"I. I g-got y-you." The blonde stammered.

Harlowe stepped away and walked towards Happy, anger still needling the underside of her skin. She wanted to smack the hell out of him for sleeping with such vapid whores, but also consume his mouth to mark her territory. Behind her the woman stumbled away, one of her friends collecting her to leave for the night.

Happy's hand gripped Harlowe's hip before she knew what was happening, her old man tugging her against his broad chest. She could feel how much he liked the show, his dick hard against her
"What's mine?" He repeated her words, his voice impossibly low and hoarse. Harlowe tipped her chin up and murmured, "Problem?"

Happy cracked a rare grin and squeezed her ass possessively. "Never."

Harlowe smirked as he turned around and all but hauled her out of the clubhouse bar. She heard some wolf whistles following their departure but focused on staying upright in the pointy heels.

Harlowe pulled him to a stop when Happy tried to lead her into one of the dorm rooms. She shook her head, "I'm not fucking you on some mattress you fucked that whore on."

Happy's jaw tightened at her statement, his hand pulling her forward. "It's clean sheets."

"I don't care."

Growling under his breath, Happy tugged her further down the hall and into a surprisingly clean bathroom. Harlowe bit her lip as he shut the door and flipped the lock with a loud snap. His eyes were sliding down her body like slow moving molten lava.

"You're fucking sexy." He rasped, his steps forward matching with her steps back. She smirked as he growled at her retreat.

"The outfit or the yard aggression?" Harlowe asked, her cheeks heating as he cornered her against a wall.

"Both." Happy's voice was rough, the gravelly feel of it giving her goose bumps. Harlowe wasn't sure if it was just the booze or all the reminiscing but she wanted him. She wanted him just as badly as she had all those years ago.

"Hap." Her voice broke and her eyes fluttered at the tight grasp of his familiar hands.

"Fuck." He growled against her neck, his body pressing her into the wall. "Lowe."

"I need…"

"I got you, baby." Happy rumbled, his hand dropping to cup her core and rub her through her panties.

"Hap." She gasped as her body became a live wire from the firm pressure. Her hands grabbed onto his neck and shoulder when her legs buckled.

His fingers tangled into her hair and pulled her head back to kiss her, his other hand sinking into her panties.

Happy swallowed her deep moan, as she contained his own hungry growl at her tight, wet walls. His fingers pumped into her as his thumb swirled firm circles on her clit.

"Fuck." She gasped, her head tilted back giving Happy her neck to devour. It was like old times, the man knowing just where to go and what to do.
"Baby, you're soaked."

"M'Hap."

"That's it." His voice was hot against her neck, his teeth nipping along the soft skin. "Cum, sweetheart."

Harlowe's body obeyed, her legs slamming shut around his thrusting fingers. Her pussy clenched and fluttered while he continued to stroke her, his eyes holding her gaze.

"Beautiful." He murmured, kissing her forehead, temple and cheek before landing on her lips. Harlowe moaned as he slid his hand from under her skirt, his tongue invading her mouth greedily.

Happy backed her into the counter, his fingers digging into the curves of her asscheeks. Her skirt was shoved up to her waist as he sat her on the edge. His thick fingers curled into the thin band of her panties before the damp lace was dragged down her legs. She stared into his pitched colored eyes as his rough palms skimmed her outer legs before gripping the backs of her knees. His gaze only left her face when he spread her thighs, a rough growl emanating from his broad chest at the sight.

Harlowe gasped as he dropped to his knees and buried his face into her lap. His hot wet mouth kissed her bare core. His tongue curling through and around every inch.

"Hap." She moaned, her hands gripping the counter and the back of his head. Her mouth dropped open as he sucked and nibbled her greedily. The deep knot inside her tightening with every flick and rough pass.

Happy growled hungrily as he ate her, his fingers curled into the pale flesh of her thighs. He pushed her legs up and open, flinging one over his shoulder to free a hand. Harlowe's head flew back as his finger sunk inside her. He gave her the briefest of warm ups before he was squeezing a second inside.

"Fuck." Harlowe groaned, her fingers digging into the back Happy's neck at the overwhelming sensation after cumming moments before.

"Relax." He murmured before licking her clit lazily as he slowly rubbed her inner walls. She took several slow breathes before gasping at his explorations.

"That's it." Happy rasped deeply, his black eyes watching her from between her thighs. His hand moved faster, his fingers curling up and in, setting off a steady pulsing heat. The sounds of wet flesh were barely covered by her throaty moans as she gushed. Everything felt just as good as it always had with Happy.

"Cum, baby." Happy murmured, sucking her aching clit into his mouth. Thrusting his fingers deep and hard.

"Oh god." Her voice reverberated off the tile walls and floor. Her body spasmed in Happy's arms, her legs tightening around his neck. She could tell her nails bit into the back of his neck and skull, crescent imprints left behind.

Happy rose swiftly to his feet, his hands cupping her face to kiss her sloppily. His lips and cheeks were damp from her core, the smell of her smeared across his skin. At one time she was embarrassed when he did it but realized quickly that he enjoyed doing it. He also liked to make her taste afterwards.
"Taste just as good." His hoarse voice was hot against her chest as his hand tugged the front of her shirt down far enough to see the translucent lace push up bra. His teeth nipped along the edge before he pulled it down to free her breast. A warm slick tongue circled her perky tit, his mouth covering it completely. The intense suction had her writhing and clenching in anticipation.

Harlowe unbuckled his belt, her fingers tugging open his jeans as he sucked on her breast. She was panting against his neck, her teeth nipping the hot skin and her tongue tasting the salty surface.

"Get inside me." She moaned, her hands struggling to push the fabric out of the way. Happy helped her instantly, his larger hands shoving his jeans and boxers down just enough to expose his dick. Harlowe watched as he aimed with one hand as his other spread her open.

"Look at me." He growled as he pushed inside her.

Harlowe's mouth dropped open and her skin flushed hot. She stared at him as he sunk into her insistently, only to pull out to the cusp. The dramatic sensation of being filled and suddenly vacant was repeated over and over, her walls clinging to him whenever he returned.

"Jesus." He growled into her neck, his fingers curling into the backs of her thighs as he pumped between her legs. "So tight, Lowe. Damn."

"Happy." Harlowe's head was thrown back as the tension he'd ratcheted up inside her broke. Her fingers curled into his ribs, pulling him close enough to kiss. His mouth invaded hers, his tongue sweeping inside as moans filled her throat. His hips snapped harshly between her spread legs, his dick sinking hard and deep until he followed her over that precarious edge.

"Fuck." The word was growled into her ear, before Happy's teeth bit into the meat of her shoulder. All she could hear was the heavy drum of her heartbeat and the rough breaths they were both panting.

"Damn." He muttered gruffly, his large hand coming up to brush the sweaty hair back from her forehead. "Tryin' to kill me?"

Harlowe huffed out a laugh, her eyes bright and lips swollen from his kisses. "Never."

Happy leaned forward and pressed his forehead against hers, kissing her vigorously. His hands buried in her hair and gripping her jaw.

"Love you." He rasped against her tender lips, his breath hot on her skin. Harlowe peered up at him, her hands curled into his T-shirt. She took in the softness in his eyes, the dark gaze hesitant as he waited for her response.

Harlowe slid her hand up his stomach to rest on his chest as she spoke, "I love you too, Hap."

"You gonna stay then."

Her mouth opened but she didn't know what to say, she was still unsure what she wanted. She didn't even know who she was.

"I don't know."

Happy's jaw rocked back and forth as he chewed on his response. He pulled back to get dressed, leaving Harlowe to slide off the counter on limp legs. They both were dressed shortly, Harlowe watching as Happy's walls raised, brick by brick.
"Hap, wait." She grabbed his wrist as he went to leave without another word.

"No." He grunted, his eyes flashy hot. "Not if you don't know."

"I've been out for like forty eight hours, Hap. Gimme a break." Harlowe snapped, her cheeks now flushing from anger rather than lust. "I think I deserve some goddamn time to find right side up."

The sharp tone did nothing to smother his obvious anger but they did stop his departure.

"I don't know who I am anymore, Hap. How do I shake off a decade of conditioning to keep others away from me? How do I stop looking over my shoulder and sleeping with one eye open? I'm not the same person I was when I went inside and I can't be the person I was inside, so who the fuck am I?"

His shoulders dropped as she stared back at him completely exposed, the total emotional upheaval blatant in her shadowed eyes and tense posture.

"I don't know what I'm doing or where I'm going or if I'm going."

He tensed up but she reached out and gripped his forearm and spoke earnestly, her green eyes soft and wide open. "But I do know that I love you. It's the only thing I do know."

Harlowe leaned into his chest and felt his hand sink into her hair at the base of her skull. His fingers curled into it as he brushed his thumb along her jaw. She rested her chin in his calloused palm as he tilted her head up.

She felt her heartbeat speed up the longer he peered into her eyes, his penetrative stare twisting up her insides. The man always had the ability to make her squirm with a look.

"You tell me if you're leaving. Don't just disappear." He rasped after a long silent moment.

"I will."

Happy pulled her closer and kissed her roughly on the mouth before asking, "You hungry?"

She smirked, patting him on the stomach. "The pit's empty huh?"

"Always."
"Thanks for coming down to see me." Harlowe murmured into Poe's shoulder as she bent to hug him. The man was leaving for home after having stayed in Charming for a few days. His nurse needed to get back for a family engagement and traveling had taken a lot out of him.

"Of course." He rasped, patting her on the back before she pulled away. "Remember I have a guest room if you ever want to visit."

Harlowe digested the invite and asked, "what if it was longer than a visit?"

The question had him looking her over carefully, his eyes flicking to Happy who was watching from the sidelines.

"What about you're ol' man? I thought you guys were working things out."

"We are... I just. I need... time."

"You didn't get enough of that in there?" he asked with a scowl.

"You know what I mean." Harlowe huffed, her arms crossing.

Poe sighed, glancing over at Happy again. "Well, you know where to find me, just promise to discuss it with him. I don't need a pissed off Killah on my doorstep."

"I will." She smiled, kissing him on the cheek before stepping back towards Happy. They watched as he was loaded into the large wheelchair accessible van, the man waving as they pulled out of the clubhouse parking lot.

"What was that about?" Happy asked, as everyone wandered off to do what needed to be done for the day. He seemed tense, as though he knew what they'd spoken about.

"Just saying goodbye, Hap." She told herself she wasn't lying. She'd tell him if she decided to take Poe up on the offer, there was no reason to upset Happy if it wasn't happening.

"What's you're day like?" Harlowe asked to change the subject, her head titled back to look up at him.

"Was goin' to visit Ma." Happy rasped, his hand reaching out to squeeze her hip. "You comin' with me?"

"Uh." Harlowe hesitated, pulling her lip in her mouth to chew. "She know I'm out?"

"Yeah, told her about it last week. She'd like to see you."

Nodding at the news, Harlowe sighed. "Yeah, I guess I should then, huh?"

"She's always liked you, Lowe."

Harlowe rolled her eyes and look towards the clubhouse. "She liked me when I was a normal girl, settling down with her wild ass son. I don't think she'll like the convicted murderer shacking up
"You ain't a murderer." He huffed, walking closer to her. "Charges got dropped."

"We both know what I've done inside. I didn't belong in there when I went in, but I do now."

"You did what you had to, to survive." Happy rasped adamantly, his eyes going to an approaching lowrider pulling into the parking lot. The vibrant purple paint job and shiny rims sticking out amongst the motorcycles.

"The fuck is this?" Tig grunted nearby, joining the couple watching as a trio of Hispanic men and one woman stepped out of the vehicle. Happy moved Harlowe out of the way and joined several of his brothers to greet the men approaching. Harlowe's eyes narrowed as she looked over the woman standing behind the group, she looked familiar but she wasn't positive how she knew her. She could've served time with her but if they hadn't interacted, Harlowe could've forgotten. There had been a lot faces passing through the women's facility over thirteen years.

"Lowe." Happy rumbled from his position in front of the gangbangers. "You know a Freddie?"

Harlowe's jaw tightened at the question and her eyes skimmed over the woman again, seeing the resemblance. Her ex cellmate always said her cousin, Maria, looked like a sister.

"Yeah." She murmured, stepping towards the group of men only to have Happy step in front of her. "Try anything and I'll slit your throat." He growled into the face of one of the gangbangers, his tattooed throat drawing her eye. The man merely grinned back, his chin rising to the threat.

"I got you, papi." He rasped back at Happy, his shit-eating grin only growing as Happy scowled back.

Harlowe watched the other men step back and the woman approach. She stood next to the cocky guy with the throat tat, her curled hair and heavy makeup a sharp contrast to Freddie's cornrows and inked face. They did look similar but their styles were remarkably different.

"You're Lolo?" Maria asked, her thinly painted on eyebrow rising as she crossed her arms.

"Yeah." Harlowe replied, her jaw tightening at the nickname Freddie had coined. She slid her eyes from one to the other, taking in the resemblance between the two. "You're Maria and Rico, Freddie's cousins."

Rico smirked at her, his eyes moving lasciviously down her body before returning to her face. He licked his bottom lip as it pulled into a flirtatious grin.

Rico smirked at her, his eyes moving lasciviously down her body before returning to her face. He licked his bottom lip as it pulled into a flirtatious grin.

Harlowe felt her cheeks flush at the blatant attention to her figure, the hot gaze nothing short of lewd. She could feel Happy looming over her shoulder, tension vibrating off his wide frame.

"Gotta say, I didn't picture no blanca when Freddie talked about you." Rico drawled, his voice a bit more gravel than silk, his smile equal parts boyish and filthy.

Harlowe pulled her eyes away from the inked man and focused on Maria. "What're you doing here?"

"We heard you got out, thought we'd stop by to personally thank you for taking care of Freddie's killer." Maria replied, her hand smacking her brother's shoulder. "Oye, deja de ser irrespetuoso, estúpido. I'm sorry, my brother is a cabrón."
"He needs to keep his eyes to himself." Tig snapped next to Happy, his wild gaze drilling holes in Rico's grinning face. The man merely cocked his head and rolled his shoulders forward showing off his wide frame. Harlowe ignored the male posturing and spoke Maria, "You're welcome. Are we done here?"

"Nah see, we got some business t'discuss wit you." Rico drawled, his grin still present but more subdued. His tone was serious, the amusement in his eyes turning harder. Harlowe felt Happy's hand come to rest on her hip, the man poised to pull her behind him.

"The fuck are you talking about." Happy growled, while maneuvering himself in front of Harlowe.

"Personal business." Rico rose to his full height, his dark eyes meeting Happy's head on. "Between us and your ol' lady."

"If it involves my ol' lady then its my business." Happy sneered, only stopping from taking the first swing when Harlowe's hand pressed into his chest.

"Easy, babe." She murmured, pulling his eyes from his target for a brief second before he honed back on the other man."You'll be in eyesight."

"No." He barked.

"Hap."

His low growl had her lips twitching before she could smother it. He was the same protective man he'd always been, but instead of ignoring her as he once would've, he backed off. Harlowe stepped away from him and stood with Maria and Rico just out of earshot.

"Your ol' man don't like me."

"Get to the point." Harlowe snapped, her teeth clenching.

"A'ight. Calm down mami." Rico chuckled, rubbing an ink covered hand over his amused grin. "So look, it ain't like we ain't happy you out, but it's fucked my cash flow."

Harlowe's eyes narrowed and her jaw tensed at his words. "If you're here for cash you're shit out of luck."

"Nah, darlin'. I'm here to offer you a job. You made me a lot of green behind bars, I can't wait to see what you can do outside."

"No thanks."

"You ain't even heard the details yet." 

"I don't need them." Harlowe replied, taking step away from the pair. She felt Happy approaching instantly, his hand finding her lower back.

"You know you need the pocket change, give you some actual freedom." Maria threw her own advice in, her eyes going to the group watching them. "Unless you like being a piece of pussy."

"You should leave before I cut your tongue out, bitch." Happy rasped, his hand resting on the giant knife on his belt.

"C'mon, Maria." Rico drawled, his lips tipping up. "Blanca needs to think it over. Right, sweetheart?"
Harlowe kept her hands wrapped around Happy's wrist as the group climbed into their lowrider and drove off. She could feel the tension thrumming through his body as he watched the car disappear around the corner.

"You had to get in business with those pricks?" He growled, tugging his wrist from her grasp.

"You said it yourself Hap, I did what I had to." She snapped, her arms crossing. "You rather I spend my days getting my teeth kicked? I needed eyes on my back."

Happy released a frustrated rumble from his throat before he strode towards his bike. "C'mon. Ma's waiting."

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Happy sat at the tiny formica table in his mother's kitchen watching Harlowe and her finish dinner. They were chatting about her garden and the new greenhouse Happy installed the summer before last. A heavy feeling filled his chest, a deep ache that felt like a longing being satiated after more than a decade. He had spent years missing the sight before him and now that it was unfolding he could hardly stand it.

Harlowe never should've been behind bars, she never should've missed all those years with his mom.

They'd been close from the very first time they met, Harlowe with a healing bruise on her cheek from the run in with a rough customer. Elena Lowman had always helped the kids in the neighborhood with rough homes. He hated it growing up and if he was honest he still did, but if only because it put her at risk. However, it was what made his mother so special. She was all heart and backbone.

"Muy buena hija." His mother complimented, after tasting the sauce she'd put Harlowe in charge of.

"Thanks, ma." Harlowe smiled softly.

Happy realized it was the first time he caught a glimpse of the woman before the bars turned all her edges sharp. Her eyes were bright as she explained the spice blend she used, her dimple showing as she laughed at some comment his mother made.

"Happy, be helpful and set the table." His mother pulled him from his head, her soft wrinkled hand patting him on the cheek as though knowing he was a tangled mess inside.

"K, ma." He rasped, rising to grab dishes from the cabinet near Harlowe. He kissed her temple as he reached above her, his hand squeezing her hip affectionately as he pulled back. He'd been forcing himself to not hesitate in touching her, pushing the fear of rejection away. He knew she was still on the fence about staying in Charming with him.

Happy had caught her looking out windows as though contemplating taking off at any moment. Her soft conversation with Poe was more than a little suspicious. Happy hoped that if he showed her with actions how much he wanted and needed her, he could avoid all the actual conversations they needed to have.

"So are you planning on settling in Charming with Happy?" his mother asked making Happy's eyes
roll in frustration.

"Ma." He grunted, shaking his head as his mother opened the can of worms he'd been actively avoiding.

"What mijo?" she replied with a scowl. "A mother wants to know where her daughter will be living."

"Ma." He growled, his hand tightening around his fork. "Can you not meddle?"

"Hap, its okay." Harlowe chimed in as his mother began a strand of Spanish too quick for even him to understand.

"We haven't even talked yet, she doesn't need to be fucking stirring up shit."

"Watch your mouth at my table." His mother scolded, pointing her finger at him in that way that had his shoulders dropping in regret.

"Sorry ma." He apologized, scrubbing a hand over his stubbly head. "She just got out. We haven't talked everything through yet."

"Well, what's stopping you. Talk." Elena demanded, her eyes just as dark and steely as Happy's. "There's no time like the present."

Harlowe's mouth opened, but nothing came out before it snapped shut. Happy smirked, as she seemed to search for her words.

"See, we need time, ma. Just leave it."

His mother ranted a few more times throughout the meal, but dropped the subject as soon as Harlowe started asking her about the neighborhood gossip. They chatted for another hour about her friends and their kids, as well as his mother's latest church rummage sale coming up the following weekend. Harlowe agreed to help her sort the garage full of junk to get it ready to drop off for donation. He sunk back into his chair and just enjoyed listening to the pair talk about banal shit. The knot in his chest slowly loosening as the day went on. He wished that it could stay the way it was, the idea of keeping the three of them in some kind of bubble where time didn't pass far too appealing. If only it could be that easy.

Harlowe settled into the sofa at the apartment Happy had rented, her tired eyes sliding over the bare walls and minimal furniture. Happy had some club work to deal with leaving her to entertain herself for the day. He'd given her a laptop that his club's intelligence officer no longer needed and told her to have fun. Harlowe didn't have a lot of experience with technology however, being sentenced to prison before the things were as commonplace as they were now. She used a few while in prison, the library having a few ancient desktops with very limited access to the Internet. She would not consider herself knowledgeable with the technology.

She was getting cabin fever though, so she set the thing aside and pulled on her sneakers. She needed air and distance from the claustrophobic feeling suffocating her.

Harlowe walked down the small residential street and took in a few deep breathes, her eyes
scanning the little homes lining her path. She passed a man walking a large retriever, his chin
dipping in greeting as they walked by each other. Harlowe couldn't help but glance over her
shoulder every so often, looking for someone about to jump her. She couldn't lose the ingrained
habits she'd developed inside. The edgy feeling as persistent as Happy's mother was the day before
at lunch, wheedling information out of her. The older woman wanted to know if she was sticking
around, or if she was leaving her son. She loved her but Elena was as stubborn as Happy was when
looking for answers.

Harlowe came to a stop at the edge of the huge grass field, the sun warming her bare arms. The
large park was just within walking distance of the apartment, its center almost two city blocks
wide.

The huge soccer field and playground looked fairly new, the stretch of emerald looking freshly cut.
Harlowe sat on the nearest bench and removed her sneakers and socks, her eyes scanning the
empty park before stepping onto the tiny blades of grass. Her eyes closed in pleasure as her toes
curled into the prickly surface, digging them into the earth below.

Walking through the thick, plush surface, Harlowe wandered further into the field. She tipped her
face up, feeling the sun warm her pale skin and achy muscles. It'd been over decade since she'd
been able to feel grass between her toes, the simple action bringing tears to her eyes.

Finding herself in the middle of the grassy knoll, Harlowe sat down and stretched her legs out in
front of her. She laid back, her arms folded behind her head as she soaked up the heat from the sun.
The breeze felt cool on her skin and the grass below seemed softer than her prison bunk. She took
in a deep breath, inhaling a couple lungfuls of that appealing fresh cut grass scent. Soon her eyes
felt heavy and she faded into a light doze. It wasn't until a shadow crossed over her eyes that she
realized she wasn't alone any longer.

Harlowe blinked quickly, her eyes jumping to a young boy standing over her, the sun behind him
leaving him a shadowy figure.

"Are you okay?" He asked, while hugging soccer ball against the stomach of his bright green
jersey.

Harlowe cleared her throat, slowly pushing herself upright. "Yeah."

"You looked dead."

"I'm not." She replied dryly, glancing behind him to see a few other kids with the same uniforms
on.

"Kyle." A voice hollered from nearby, the boy's coach sauntering up to the pair. "Sorry, I told him
to not bother you."

"It's okay." Harlowe rasped, slowly putting her shoes back on. "Probably good he woke me. I'll
turn into a lobster if I sleep any longer."

"You looked peaceful." He commented, ruffling the kid's hair. "Figured you must be tired to sleep
in a field like this."

"Just been awhile since I felt grass." The words slipped out before she could stop them. Shaking her
head, Harlowe kept her eyes away from the pair watching her while rising to her feet. "Sorry if I
was in the way of the game."

"Nah. Field's big enough for soccer and beauty sleep."
Harlowe chuckled, her eyes meeting the man's before glancing away.

"I'm Ryan, this is Kyle."

"Harlowe." She replied, her hands sinking into her jean pockets.

"Go help set up Kyle." He instructed, motioning to the other kids. Harlowe watched the little soccer player jog away after giving her a toothy grin and wave.

"So uh..you live around here?" Ryan asked, his eyes moving back to hers after the kid left. "Haven't seen you here before."

"I'm not homeless if that's what you're askin'." She scoffed, crossing her arms defensively.

"No, that's not.." He laughed awkwardly, stepping closer with friendly smile curling his lips. "Damn I guess I don't do this that often."

"Do what?"

"Flirt with pretty girls." He replied, his dimples deepening as she stared at him blankly. "Looks like you're not used to it either."

Harlowe rolled her eyes at her blushing cheeks and replied, "Yeah it's been awhile."

"Find that hard to believe." Ryan chuckled, stepping within arms reach. "Girl like you."

"You don't really know me." Harlowe muttered, her shoulder's stiffening as he got too near.

"How about we get to know one another then. We could get coffee or drinks sometime."

"Lowe." A deep voice spoke over her shoulder, pulling her gaze from the man in front of her to the angry one sauntering towards them. Harlowe turned back to Ryan and replied to his comment.

"Sorry, I got to go."

"You shouldn't be here by yourself." Happy growled, motioning to his bike parked at the curb.

"Let's go."

"She's not by herself." Ryan interjected, his eyes narrowing as Happy seemed to hone in on him.

"Hap." Harlowe spoke knowing he was about to lose his shit on a civilian.

"What?" Happy snapped, his eyes still pinned to Ryan's. "You want to stay here with the white-bread soccer dad?"

"No, come on. I was just taking a walk."

"She was fine until you showed up." Ryan threw out much to Harlowe's dismay. "Maybe you should just go, buddy."

"You sayin' you know more about my old lady than me?" Happy growled stepping into Ryan's personal space, his fist taking a handful of his shirt. "Huh? You tryin' to fuck my wife in a park with your kids watchin'? That your plan, bitch?"

Ryan's eyes bugged out at the words, his tongue tripping over itself to make excuses now that an angry biker was in his face. "Hey look, I didn't know she was m-married."
"Happy, please can we just go." Harlowe begged, pulling on his arm. "Let it go. We were just
talking."

"Yeah, a'ight I'll let it go." Happy growled, shoving the man away causing him to stumble
backwards onto his ass. "Stay away from my old lady or I'll cut your fucking tongue out."

Harlowe noticed the kid's coming towards them with a worried expressions as she pulled Happy
away. "Hap, Stop."

"I'm sorry." She apologized to Ryan and Kyle as they walked away, her eyes blurring as she caught
him comforting the player who'd spoken to her. "I'm really sorry."

Happy slid onto his bike, his jaw muscle tense and eyes dark. "Get on."

"We were just talking." She muttered, taking the helmet in his outstretched hand.

"You shouldn't be walking anywhere by yourself."

"I needed fresh air."

"Yeah and some random fucker hitting on you. You get his number?"

"I was just enjoying the park." Harlowe snapped, shoving the helmet into his chest. "I'm gonna
walk."

"Get on the fucking bike, Lowe."

"Fuck off, Happy." She growled, her jaw tight and hands fisted. "You have no idea what this is
like."

"I've done time, darlin'. You ain't special."

Harlowe felt fire surge through her veins at the comment, her eyes burning holes into the man
sitting before her. She could tell Happy regretted the words but knew he wasn't going to apologize
anytime soon.

"Surprisingly, I know that all too well." Harlowe hissed, turning on her heel and walking away.

"Lowe." He called after her. "Harlowe, come on. Just get on the fucking bike."

"Nah." She turned around to holler back. "I'd hate to think I'd be special enough to ride bitch to
you. Maybe one of your club whore's can keep it warm for you."

"Goddamnit, Harlowe." She heard him growl, but her kept stomping down the sidewalk towards
the apartment. She was cursing under her breath with every step, her fingernails digging into her
palms and teeth grinding. All she'd wanted was fresh air and room to breath and all she got was
Happy lashing out at her and random strangers.

When she was almost home, his bike pulled up next to her. It's loud engine rumbled as the man on
it spoke louder for her to hear him.

"C'mon, Lowe. I'm sorry okay? Just get on, we can get dinner."

"I'm going home, Hap."

His bikes engine cut off abruptly and he jumped off it to stand in front of her, blocking her path.
"Stop." He rasped, his hands reaching out towards her. "I'm sorry I was an asshole."

Harlowe clenched her jaw and fists, her eyes blurry with frustrated tears. "I haven't touched grass in thirteen years." Her voice was hoarse as she spoke with her eyes in the distance. "Haven't been in a space that wide open in just as long. All I wanted was to feel the fuckin' sun on my skin, grass under my feet and to smell fresh air."

"I'm sorry, Lowe. I was a dick."

"Yeah, you were." She replied, blinking hard causing the tears to overflow. "We were just talking."

"He was flirting with you." Happy grumbled petulantly, his hand rising to wipe the moisture away from under her eye.

"So?" She croaked, looking up at him. "You don't trust me to tell guys to fuck off when they ask me out?"

"Yeah, I do it's just..." he huffed, leaning forward to press his forehead against hers.

"What?"

"Maybe one day you'll decide not too."

Harlowe leaned into his chest and wrapped her arms around him. "I told you, I love you."

"I know."

"That it's the one thing I do know."

"I know."

"You gotta trust me." She murmured into his neck, kissing gently. "We got to trust each other."

Happy's arms tightened around her, his large hands seeming to consume her small frame. "I trust you, it's everybody else."

"Can we just go home now?" She asked tiredly, pulling back to see his face.

"You gonna ride with me?" He rasped, his lips twitching a bit.

"Maybe."

They were seated when he spoke again, his hand squeezing both of hers as they wrapped around his stomach.

"I was lying earlier."

Harlowe stomach dropped at the statement, her body turning stiff behind him.

"You are special." He rasped, his head turning slightly to see her face over his shoulder. "You always have been."

Her arms tightened around his middle, squeezing him closer as she stretched to kiss his neck. "I'm not changing my mind about you, Hap. I won't."

"Good." He grumbled, his hand going to turn his bike on. "I'd have to kill every motherfucker in
this state if you did."

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading. Please review!

Ps. I don't speak spanish so apologies if things are incorrect, blame google translate.
lol
Chapter 15

Harlowe sat in a booth near the front window of the coffee shop, her eyes on the little bit of traffic moving through town. She was on her own for a few days while Happy did a run to Arizona for the club. Most of it she spent in the apartment either cleaning or watching movies but she'd needed air. Happy hadn't told her she'd needed to drag a patch along with her everywhere, but he had instructed her to use his truck and to stick with places inside Charming. She wasn't sure if there was any club threat or if he was just being protective.

Her mind was just wandering to what to do with herself for the day when a body slid into the seat across from her.

"Hey Blanca." Rico greeted with a wide smile, his boyish charm offset by the heavy tattoos on his neck and hands. "Beautiful day right?"

"What're you doing here?" She asked, glancing outside for his flashy ride.

"Parked around back, you know, keep our meeting on the down low. Don't need no old man interrupting us again."

"I'm not interested in what you have to say." She snapped, but clenched her jaw shut as the waitress approached their table.

"Can I get you some coffee?" Her voice was overly sweet, her heavily painted eyelashes batting as Rico gave her a charming smile.

"I'll take black tea if you got it, hermosa." He rasped, his eyes trailing over her as she flustered under his attention.

"S-sure.. Yes. I'll be right back."

"Thanks, sweetheart."

"Is that the normal reaction to your whole." Harlowe waved her hand in the direction of his face and posture. "Act."

"Act? Baby, this is all me." Rico drawled, licking his lips, as he looked her over lewdly. "I like women, they like me."

"Sure." Harlowe scoffed, sipping her coffee as the waitress returned with his tea.

"Here you go. Would you like anything to eat... we have really good pie."

"I bet you do, hermosa." He flirted, biting his lip in thought. "Maybe later, yeah?"

Her giggle made Harlowe's eyes roll as she set her cup down loudly making the girl startle. Once she wandered away to ogle the man from afar, Harlowe asked, "What're you doin' here?"

Rico only smiled in response, the hardened gang member sipping his tea with his pinkie out and everything. "So, were those two bitches inside your first?" He asked after a moment of awkward silence.

Harlowe ground her teeth and clenched her hand around her mug. "I don't know what you're talking about."
"Right, right. My mistake." He chuckled, leaning forward to speak to her quietly. His voice was low and gruff, his expensive cologne tickling her nose. "Just between you 'n me though, it's pretty fuckin' hot thinking 'bout you taking those putas out. Just... stabbin' 'n stabbin' 'n stabbin', til they ain't movin' no more. It gets mi sangre bombeando."

"Are you going to get to a point sometime today?" Harlowe interrupted, leaning back to distance herself from him.

Rico grinned widely, rolling his shoulder with a lazy shrug. "I wanted to talk to you about workin' with me without your old man givin' me stink eye."

"I'm not interested in working for you."

Rico's amused grin turned harder as he rasped, "See, I don't really give a shit, blanca. You were a solid earner inside and now that you're out, you're gonna earn even more."

"I'm not sure if you have a hearing problem or if you're just used to bitches doing whatever you want, but either way, listen closely."


Shoving her cup to the center of the table, Harlowe rose from her seat only to be stopped by a large inked hand. His grip was not painful but firm as he held her in place.

"Sit. Down."

"Fuck. Off." Harlowe growled back, yanking her wrist from his hand and jostling the dishes. "Come near me again and my old man giving you stink eye will be the least of your worries, comprende?"

Rico's jaw rocked back and forth, his eyes dark as she glared at him for a solid second before storming away.

As she exited, she passed the waitress and spoke loud enough for Rico to hear. "Make sure he double bags it, sweetheart. I hear he gets around."

Harlowe exited the coffee shop and headed straight for the truck, her back burning with the glare on Rico's face as she passed the window he sat at. She pulled out of the spot and headed back to the apartment, her day of relaxation ruined by the handsome but annoying gangbanger. She wasn't sure why he was dead set on her working for him, but she knew she would have to tell Happy about the visit. He was bound to find out through the grapevine of small town gossip. After pulling into her designated parking spot, she pulled out her phone and called him before he heard of the confrontation from someone else.

"You okay?" Happy asked instantly, his voice raspy over the sounds of chatter in the background.

"Yeah." She replied, sinking back into the driver's seat. "Just had a visitor though, figured I'd tell you sooner than later."

"Who?"

"Rico."

"That gangbanging fuck came to the apartment?" Happy growled viciously, the sounds in the background fading as he moved away from the noise.
"No. I was getting coffee at that place on main."

"What'd he say?"

"Wants me to work for him."

"Doing what?"

"I didn't ask or wait to hear about it. I told him to fuck off."

Happy laughed in the low gravelly way that caused her stomach to clench pleasurably. She smiled and leaned her head back against the headrest as she pictured the rare grin she probably pulled out of him.

"You really tell him that?"

"Yeah." Harlowe smirked, glancing in the rear view mirror. "I told him you giving him the evil eye would be the least of his worries if he contacted me again and then I left him with my tab."

"You're trouble you know that." He spoke gruffly, his voice low and hoarse but not angry. "Now I gotta reach out to the Mayans and see if they can get this fucker to back off before I make him back off."

"Sorry, baby. I'll make it up to you." Harlowe flirted, her lips quirking up as he growled low and throaty.

"Fuck, I wanna bend you over something."

"Oh yeah?" She couldn't hide the breathlessness of her voice.

"Yeah." Happy's voice rumbled into her ear causing a steadily growing heat between her thighs. "Maybe smack that ass red for being such a pain in mine."

Harlowe laughed lowly, her cheeks flushing at the image. "Maybe when you get back."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"Good." He drawled, before a voice spoke to him in the background. "I gotta go. I'll take care of this shit when I get back. Meanwhile stay at home, okay? Keep a gun on you. If you gotta go somewhere, give the clubhouse a call and they'll send someone with you."

"It's fine, Hap. He wasn't threatening me or anything."

"Yet." He growled, "Just do it, Lowe. For me."

"Okay, Okay. I don't have any plans to do anything but I'll call if I do."

"Good girl."

"Mmmhm."

"Talk to you later, baby."

"Ride safe, handsome."
Happy growled in irritation, shoving his phone into his pocket before heading back into the SAMTAZ clubhouse. They'd landed in Tucson the evening prior and had just gotten out of church when Harlowe's call came through. Those gangbanging pricks were stabbing at Happy's last nerve and if he didn't handle it with the club's backing he could start another war with the Mayans. Rico and his crew were affiliated with them, if Happy did what he wanted to do, Alvarez wouldn't be pleased.

"Hey, Prez." Happy called to Jax, tipping his chin to the exit. "Got a minute?"

"Yeah." Jax joined him outside, the pair wandering towards their bikes away from the others hanging out. The clubhouse sat in the middle of nowhere, surrounded only by long stretches of desert with scruffy mesquite trees. The day was hot, the sun blaring down at the two as they settled against a low cinderblock wall.

Jax cupped a cigarette with heavy ringed hands and lit the end, smoke puffing out as he rasped, "S'up brotha?"

"Harlowe just called." Happy growled, his arms crossing over his chest after popping a toothpick in his mouth "Los Muertos paid her another visit."

"Fuck. She okay?"

"Yeah, was just that prick Rico."

Jax rolled the smoke between his fingers, while watching Happy gnaw on the sliver of wood. "What'd he do?"

"Just said he wants her to work for him. She didn't tell me everything, probably knows I'll lose my shit. Prick is pushing up on the wrong man's ol' lady."

Jax chuckled, smoothing a hand over his bearded grin. "Yeah, it ain't the smartest choice."

"She told him to fuck off and stiffed him for her restaurant tab." Happy grinned, shaking his head at the thought. "Girl is gonna get me in trouble."

"Yeah, me too." Jax sighed, raking a hand through his shaggy hair. "We gotta meet with Alvarez on our way back. Do this proper before we start a shitstorm."

"As long as it's gonna be handled. I wouldn't turn down the chance to get my hands on that little cocky fuck too."

"I'll do my best, brotha." Jax grinned slapping his shoulder. "We'll get it sorted, yeah?"

"Yeah."
hug and loud pat on the back. The group of bikers were exhausted from the long ride but a pit stop at the Mayans headquarters was a necessity. Happy was gnawing at the bit to take care of Rico and if he wasn't careful he'd start another bloody war.

"You too, ese." Marcus rasped, glancing over at Happy with a raised eyebrow. "What's got killer looking so pissed?"

"That's why we're here." Jax explained, tipping a chin towards Happy. "Someone's causing some shit with his ol' lady."

"Someone I know, I'm guessing." Marcus sighed, taking a seat while gesturing to the chairs across from him.

Once seated, Jax answered, "Yeah, an associate of yours. Guy from Los Muertos, calls himself Rico."

Marcus pursed his lips and asked, "How's she mixed up with them?"

"She just got out from a long stretch in Chino Women's. Apparently she was running contraband inside for them."

"Damn, she was their contact?" Marcus huffed out a laugh, shaking his head. "I heard it was a cousin of something."

"The cousin was her cellmate. She got killed inside and long story short they are pushing her to work for them now that she's out."

"And she's not looking to extend that contract."

"He's aimin' for shit that ain't his." Happy growled, leaning forward with a scowl.

Marcus sighed, smoothing a hand over his slicked back hair and looking off for a second. "Look we got shaky truce goin' on with the LMs. I want to say I'll handle it but shits been tense around here lately."

"Anything we can help with?" Jax offered, leaning forward. "Maybe we can lend a hand and in return you can handle this Rico fucker."

"That's just it, Rico, he's got a lot of friends, people all over the state and across the border. It's not just Chino Women's he's running product through, he's got lines into every penitentiary on the west coast and into Mexico. We take him out and we'll be dealing with cartel handlers within a week."

"Shit." Jax huffed, glancing at Happy who seemed even more pissed off. They'd just gotten free of the cartel and now they were inadvertently pulled back into the line of fire.

"Yeah." Marcus muttered, his hands flat on the table. "Look I'll reach out, see if I can get him to back off, maybe throw him a bone. I got a few contacts inside Chino, maybe getting his contraband route running again will get the heat off your ol' lady."

"Thanks, Marcus." Jax rasped, rising from his seat as Happy followed. "Anything you can do would be appreciated."

"I'll do my best, just... don't do anything stupid, yeah?" Marcus instructed, shaking Jax's hand while looking at Happy. "I know you wanna spill blood for him pushing up on your ol' lady but it'll kick off a bunch of shit if you take him out."
Happy ground his teeth angrily, the idea of not being able to protect Harlowe turning his stomach into hot coals. He wanted to string the bastard up and use every tool in his kit to make him realize what a stupid mistake it was to just speak to Harlowe.

"Stay outta trouble." Marcus added, giving Happy a handshake.

Days passed by and Harlowe barely noticed, her mind still in some kind of stasis while her body was now free of bars. Happy seemed to hover a little bit more and skip out on runs if they weren't important. He'd even filled her in on their meeting with the Mayans, something he normally wouldn't talk about unless she asked. Rico would be told to back off by Alvarez, but it sounded as though there might be some problems with actually enforcing it. She'd only nodded when he told her, before going back to stirring dinner.

She knew he was worrying, especially when he skipped runs but she couldn't seem to get out of the funk she'd fallen into. It wasn't until she scalded her hand while pulling a pan out of the oven that he spoke up about it.

"What's wrong with you?" He grumbled, holding her palm under the cold faucet. Harlowe hissed at the contact, shrugging her shoulders at the question.

"You've been off since I got back from Tucson." He continued, while spreading burn gel on her injured palm.

"I don't know why." Harlowe huffed, her brow furrowed. "I'll find myself just staring off and I'll realize I've been sitting there for hours."

"You're heads still inside lock up." He rasped, leaning against the counter as she sat down heavily. "In there you had to spend a lot of time in your head with nothing else to do, its habit."

Harlowe chewed on her lip but nodded a bit, "I guess that makes sense."

"You just need time outside fences, maybe find shit you like to do. You used to bake." He smirked, "Remember that birthday cake you made me, the cherry chocolate thing."

"Black Forest gateau."

"Yeah, that thing."

Harlowe chuckled and waved her hand at him. "Does this look like I should be operating an oven right now."

"Good point." He rasped with a scowl. "Gotta be more careful, baby."

"I'll just have to leave all the cooking to you."

"You think you're funny." Happy growled while tugging her closer, wrapping his arms low around her back. She laughed as he palmed her ass, his fingers squeezing it firmly. "Hap."

"Yeah?" He murmured into her neck as his mouth barely skimmed the surface.

"What about dinner?"
"I'll order something in after I eat out." He growled, hoisting her up by thighs to sit on the countertop.

"Hap!" She squeaked as he tugged her tiny shorts off, tossing them over his shoulder.

Harlowe gasped as Happy dropped to his knees and buried his face into her lap. His hot palms spreading her legs wide open.

He growled into her wet core, his teeth gently scraping down the hood as his tongue soothed it. Her head tipped back, her mouth slack and knuckles curled around the edge of the counter. She panted heavily, her hooded gaze falling to Happy's face between her thighs. He stared up at her with greedy eyes, his stubble covered chin wet with her juices.

"You gonna cum?" He rasped lowly, sinking two fingers inside her. "Let me feel you cum."

"Hap." Harlowe moaned, her hips bucking against the curl of his fingers and flick of his tongue. "I'm gonna…"

"Do it, girl." He growled, his fingers pumping hard and fast. "Cum for me."

Harlowe tried to slam her legs shut as she came, but Happy's wide shoulders and free hand stopped her.

Her head knocked loudly into the cabinet behind her as her hands gripped Happy's shoulder and neck. "Happy." She moaned and writhed as he kept stroking her walls and sucking her rhythmically.

Her body was vibrating with tension as he built her back up to another crest before he rose swiftly to his feet. His belt was opened and pants barely lowered as he sunk into her hard and persistent.

Harlowe shouted out, her fingers scratching at Happy's chest and neck. Nails bit into the back of his baldhead as he fucked her into the butcher-block countertop.

"C'mon." He growled, his sharp hips bones snapping between her trembling thighs. "Cum on this dick, baby."

"Oh my g-." Harlowe choked on her words, her teeth latching onto Happy's ink cover collarbone. Her body shattered in his arms, her stomach coiling tight and limbs clawing at his firm body.

"Yeah." Happy groaned, his hands leaving finger shaped bruises along her thighs and ass. "So tight and hot when you cum."

"Hap." She murmured, her hands sliding over his sweaty shoulders. "You gonna cum for me too?"

"Yes." He hissed as his hips sped up, the loud smack of skin barely covered by their groans.

"Do it." Harlowe purred, her tongue following the vein straining along his neck. "I wanna feel it."

"Fuck." Happy growled aggressively, his hand rising to hold her neck as his other grabbed her ass. "Gonna fill you up."

"Yeah?" She moaned, her breathing hard and shallow as his hand tightened.

"Yes." He snarled, his hips snapping violently before he lost all rhythm. She could feel him swell exponentially before his spasmed and pulsed, his orgasm triggering another for her.
"Oh god." Harlowe moaned, her face buried into Happy's neck as he clutched her to his chest. His hands began a soothing path over her entire body, his fingers massaging spots he'd just been abusing.

"I hurt you?" He asked when she winced as he pulled out.

"Tender."

"Shit." He rumbled, his hands smoothing her hair back and squeezing her hip gently. "M'sorry."

"I'm okay. It's a good tender."

"Hmm." Happy didn't seem too convinced but didn't say anything further as he tucked himself back into his jeans.

"So. What was this about you ordering food?" Harlowe asked as she slid her panties on, her lips quirking up. "I'm starving now."
"You sure you're okay with it?" Harlowe asked for the dozenth time.

Happy rolled his eyes and drawled, "How many times I gotta say it?"

"I just thought you'd be pissed about it, not encouraging me to take off." She huffed, her arms crossed as he approached. His hands gripped her hips and he tugged her against his front, pinning her arms between them.

"I know you'll be coming back."

"I don't know, maybe I'll run off with Poe." She teased, laughing as he growled against her neck and clutched her sides.

"I'll find you." He rasped threateningly, his teeth nipping at her jaw and neck. "Can't hide from me, little girl."

"So romantic." Harlowe laughed, sliding her hands up his chest to wrap around his neck and stroke his shaved head. "Love letters from the Tacoma Killer."

Happy chuckled gruffly against her hair and pulled back to peer down at her. "Gonna miss you."

"You're sure..."

"Yes. Damn, woman." Happy growled, curling his fingers into her sides causing her to writhe and squeal with laughter. After a moment, he pressed his forehead against hers and confessed. "Shits getting complicated with Los Muertos. They got cartel ties."

Harlowe's face paled at the information and she tried to step away. Happy pulled her back and cupped her cheek. "Don't freak out."

"I didn't know, Hap."

"I know." He rasped, tucking hair behind her ear. "We're working shit out but I think you getting out of Cali might be good."

"I'm sorry." She murmured, pressing her face against his chest.

"We'll figure it out. It's what we do."

Harlowe wandered out of her room at Poe's house and entered the living room. She found him watching another war documentary, his eyes glued to the discussion of artillery. She'd been staying with him for the last few weeks and despite being exactly what she wanted, Harlowe was going stir crazy. It was nowhere near an eight by ten cell but it felt just as confining.

"I was thinking I'd head into town for some groceries. Is there anything you need?" she announced, while slipping a hoodie on to combat the wet chill of the overcast coastline.
"You know you shouldn't go, let Annette take care of the shopping, just give her a list." Poe commented, glancing over at her with raised eyebrows. "No reason to be seen out by someone and it getting passed along the grapevine."

"It's been three weeks Poe. I'm getting claustrophobic." Harlowe huffed, her arms crossing over her chest anxiously.

"You have a whole house, backyard, swimming pool and fifteen acres of land t'fuck around on. How much space do you need, kid?"

Harlowe merely glared at the man, her jaw set stubbornly.

Poe rolled his eyes and sighed heavily, "Fine let me just call the clubhouse then, I'll get a patch to watch over you while you shop."

"No, Poe. I'll be fine."

"No, Harlowe." Poe barked, his voice just as deep and commanding as she remembered. "That's the only way you're goin' into town. Take it or fucking leave it."

"Forget about it." Harlowe growled, walking into the kitchen to grab a cup of coffee. She cursed under her breath the entire time, her teeth grinding as she ranted to herself about the injustice of it. She headed towards the back door, "I'll be on the patio if you need anything."

"I just need you safe, kid. That's all I want." His voice was gentler but just as firm.

Harlowe sighed, stopping next to him on her way out. She gripped his shoulder and leaned down, kissing him on the temple. "I know, I'm sorry. I just get antsy now."

"I get it, but I want you alive and so does your old man."

Harlowe tucked herself into a lounge chair with a book and her coffee. She peered out into the woods surrounding the back end of the property, the thick green foliage a welcoming sight to someone who'd spent so much time inside walls. She needed to be thankful she had the surroundings she had. House arrest was a fair cry from prison bars. Harlowe knew Poe and Happy were only protecting her and made a silent promise to stop giving them such a hard time.

"Nice crib you got here." A raspy voice spoke from her right, causing the mug to fall right out of her hand and shatter on the ground.

"Shit." She cursed, her eyes flying to Rico's as he sauntered across the lawn towards her. He wore dark jeans and a black hoodie, a gray beanie covering his head from the light rain coming down.

She watched his smirk grow, as he looked her over with hooded eyes. Harlowe was in a loose sweater, its wide collar hanging off her inked shoulder and a pair of clingy leggings. She hadn't expected any company, let alone the flirtatious asshole. She felt exposed and vulnerable.

"Look good, mami." Rico greeted, stretching out in the chair next to hers. His presence filled the patio, his expensive cologne tickling her nose.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Harlowe growled, her eyes flicking to the sliding glass door.
She was trying to decide if she could make it inside before he could stop her when he spoke.

"Don't need to run away, darlin'. I'm not gonna hurt you." Rico drawled, leaning forward to speak even lower, "'less you into that sort of thing."

"I don't get you." Harlowe spoke with a furrowed brow. "I'm nothing special, I ran contraband. That's it. I don't have any new contacts for you or any idea of how to be a criminal. I was a fucking bartender before prison. Why're you trying so hard to get me to work for you?"

"Don't know." He rolled his shoulders lazily, as he cocked his head back. She looked over the intricate ink mapping his throat, her eyes tracing its path before meeting his eyes again. He grinned slowly, his tongue swiping across his bottom lip.

"Maybe it's those looks you give me." He commented, scanning her slowly for effect. "I think you're interested."

"I'm not interested."

"Your fuck-me eyes and pink cheeks don't lie, baby." Rico laughed, wiggling his thick brows. "You wanna taste. Your ol' man's not givin' you 'nuff dick?"

Harlowe tried to stand up but was stopped by his large inked hand, his fingers wrapping tightly around her wrist.

"Blanca, you ain't leavin' 'til you listen to what I have t'say. When I'm done, you can go."

Harlowe grumbled lowly, her eyes going to the door in hope that Poe hadn't noticed their visitor yet. She didn't want him getting involved or causing anything to escalate.

"Easy, mami." Rico purred, tugging her back into her seat, framing her legs with his own. He kept his hand wrapped around her wrist but loosened his hold. His thumb brushed a comforting path along the underside, causing an uncomfortable shiver to run up her spine. Her teeth clenched as he smirked knowingly at her.

"Yeah, see. Those looks."

"You mean the ones where I'm thinking about smacking the shit out of you?"

"Yeah, baby." He rasped deeply, licking his lips. "I like bitches with backbone. Not many people look at me like that 'n live to talk about it."

"I guess I'm just special." Harlowe mocked, tugging a bit at her hand only to have him tighten his grasp again.

"You gonna listen or what?" Rico growled, his hand crushing her wrist bone painfully.

"Yes." Harlowe replied through her clenched teeth, the ache in the joint becoming more than a little uncomfortable.

"Good girl." He praised, smiling at her cockily while slowly releasing the pressure he'd applied. "I need someone managing the route into Chino from the outside."

"I'm sure you have plenty of people."

"Nah, not anyone who knows the route or the guards." He replied, his thumb tracing the red marks he left now lining her wrist. "See, things were smooth while you were runnin' it, now shits gotten
complicated. I need you t'work it out with the driver 'n I need you to figure out how to get in more volume."

"I don't know anything about getting shit inside, I only knew what to do with it once it was there." Harlowe replied, her other hand clenching into a fist. "Can you stop touching me?"

"Why, mami?" He asked, looking over her flushed cheeks. "You like it too much."

"Maybe because I'm going to blow your fuckin' head off." Poe's gruff voice spoke behind them, followed by the very familiar sound of the racking of a shotgun. Harlowe glanced over and saw Poe holding a sawed-off shotgun modified for the stiff grip of his hands.

"I may not have the best aim anymore but at this distance I can turn you inside out, asshole. Now back away from her and get the fuck off my property."

Rico smiled slowly, his chin tipping up to the threat. "I hear you, old man. I was about to go anyways, right sweetheart."

Harlowe tugged at his grip but was only let go after he pulled it to his mouth to kiss her knuckles. She felt her stomach clench as he did, his hooded eyes twinkling as though he knew his effect on her.

"Leave." She muttered, yanking her hand away from him while rising from her seat. She moved towards Poe and watched as Rico sauntered away.

"See you soon, Blanca."

After he'd wandered around the corner, they heard a car engine start before the tires crunched the gravel driveway.

"The fuck was that?" Poe growled, his eyes angry and teeth bared. "Why was he touching you?"

"Because he likes pissing me off." Harlowe snapped, stomping her way into the house. "You think I want that fucker showing up."

"Looked awfully comfy out there."

"Fuck off, Poe." Harlowe hissed, a sharp feeling of guilt running through her chest. "I'm not interested, in him or the stupid fucking job he wants me to do."

"What does he want?"

"He wants me to run product into Chino. Says he needs someone facilitating it from the outside now that I'm not inside." She opened the fridge and grabbed a bottle of water. She wanted more coffee but knew it would only make her nerves worse. Harlowe couldn't believe he'd shown up at Poe's. She knew Happy was going to lose his shit.

"I gotta call, Hap." Poe grumbled behind her, his chair's motor humming as he rotated it around.

"I'll call him."

"No." Poe barked, his chair moving into the living room. "I'll call, you're supposed to be safe here and that fuck just got his hands on you."

"He didn't get his hands on me." Harlowe huffed, her arms crossing over her chest tightly. She knew it was a blatant lie but felt the need to deny it.
"Oh really? I didn't see you two holding hands and him kissing you then?"

"He wasn't kissing me! He was kissing my hand and he did it to piss you and me off. Don't act like I was out there sucking face with him." Harlowe did not what Happy to get the impression anything remotely reciprocal happened. She was not interested in Rico, no matter how charming he could be.

"I don't like it."

"Neither do I." She growled, pointing an angry finger at him. "You think I want to be dealing with this shit? You think I want some gangbanger hunting me down and causing shit in my life? I just want to be fucking normal for once, not a goddamn criminal. I'm not a fucking criminal."

Her breathing was coming in angry pants, her eyes wild. She had a strong urge to run away, to get in a car and drive away from everything and everyone she knew. She just wanted a normal life without all the illegal activities and threats of death and violence.

Poe sighed heavily, waving her closer, "C'mere, kid."

Harlowe moved next to his chair, his hands taking hers between his stiff fingers.

"Sorry, I yelled." She mumbled.

"Sorry I accused you of bullshit." He huffed, "I didn't like him touching you."

"Me neither." She swallowed through a lump in throat, the words only slightly feeling like a lie. She could deny it all she wanted but there was an attraction between the two of them. She could feel the electric buzz of it when he touched her, but it wasn't something she would ever pursue. If anything it made her even more determined to not work for the man. Rico wasn't the type to live and let live though, if he wanted something he was going to go after it and she was dreading what that meant for her.

"I'm gonna make the call. Be prepared to deal with an angry killa by morning."

Happy sat on the coffee table in front of Harlowe, as Jax stood behind him. She was giving them the download on the encounter with Rico, as Happy simmered with rage. He'd sent her away to keep her safe, when apparently he should've just kept her close. He wouldn't make that mistake again. Harlowe was coming home as soon as he could get her on his bike.

"So he just wants you to keep doin' what you were doin'?" Jax asked, when she finished speaking. Happy felt his back stiffen at the way Jax asked, the tone leading somewhere it shouldn't. When he looked at Harlowe he could tell she knew just where Jax's head was. "No." She replied before he could even voice the question. "I'm not doing it."

"Darlin', we didn't start this shit." Jax drawled.

Happy's hands tightened into heavy fists as he stood up to face Jax. "Not another word, brother." He threatened.
"Well, I've got some words." Harlowe snapped behind him, stepping away to see Jax and the other patches listening in. "I'm only in this shit because of the club. I was inside because of your *brotherhood*. I had nothin' and no one in there. You rather I'd gotten shived that time in the hallway? Maybe get my head bashed in, in bathroom five years ago? No? That shit didn't happen because a Freddie and her crew."

Harlowe voice cracked on her friend's name, her jaw tightening to stop the tremble. "She took what was meant for me and died in that shithole."

Happy wanted to pull her into his chest but she kept her distance.

"They wanted me to take care of the people responsible and I did. I think that means I bought out my contract. I don't owe them shit."

Jax's voice turned serious. "We don't need the cartel in our backyards because of this guy. And I get it, you did what you had to do inside. We've all been there, darlin'. Now you gotta do what you have to out here. For the club, for family."

"The club isn't my family. I'm not loyal to the club." Harlowe scoffed, her arms crossing over her chest. "The only family I have is Happy and Poe. I'm loyal to them. If either one of them asks me to do it, I will. But I'll never *ever* do another thing for this fucking club. Don't mistake my tolerance as allegiance."

Happy couldn't help the anger that roiled up inside him at her hateful tone and words, his dark eyes meeting her fiery ones. He wanted to defend the club but she was his old lady and he knew personally how much she'd suffered because of the kutte. As much as he wanted to agree with his president, he just couldn't do it this time.

"Well there ain't a chance in fuckin' hell I'm asking her to do it." Poe chimed in from the back of the room as his chair rolled towards Jax. "And if you're the type of president that asks his brother's old ladies to put their lives at risk, I'm not sure you're welcome in my fuckin' house or at my table."

Happy's eyes widened at the statement, his gaze turning towards Jax. The man stood with crossed arms, his feet spread wide as he glared at Poe.

"I don't have a vote since I don't ride but SAMTAC is still my home, I say the word and they'll back me. Harlowe's got protection under my roof."

"Easy boys." Chibs stepped in, his hands up slightly. "Le's all take a step back. No ones makin' the lass do anythin'. No reason to draw any lines in the sand."

"She ain't doing it." Happy rasped, his eyes connecting with Jax's as he said something he never thought he would. "I'm sorry, prez but I can't back the club on this. Not over my old lady."

Happy felt Harlowe's hand slide into his, her fingers squeezing as she leaned against his arm. He kept his eyes on Jax as the blonde nodded, pulling out a cigarette as he headed for the front door. "A'right. We'll figure something else out."

*Fifteen years ago*
Harlowe curled up against Happy's chest tracing the words framing his collarbone bones. "I Live. I Die. I Kill For My Family."

"Am I included in this now or is it just the club?" She asked, her shoulder throbbing from the ink he'd embedded earlier that evening.

Happy nodded against her head, his hoarse voice rumbling against her ribs. "Have been for awhile but now it's official."

Harlowe hummed at the statement, her fingers walking along his collection of happy faces.

"Club's still first." Happy added, pulling back to look down at her with dark eyes. "You're my old lady, but if the club needs something I gotta be there. I gotta choose them always."

Harlowe bit her bottom lip and nodded, her mind tripping over all the situations that could come up to pull Happy away from her. She didn't want to lose him now that she'd found him.

"Can you promise you'll be safe?" She asked, her hand laying flat against the coiled snake on his chest. "Don't do anything crazy to get yourself killed or locked up?"

"Babe." He sighed heavily and brought a hand up to bury in her hair. She felt him massaging her scalp in that way that soothed both of them. "Can't promise shit. You know that."

Harlowe let out a resigned sigh and rest her forehead against his shoulder. "Yeah, I know."

Happy was silent for a long moment, his fingers still scratching along her scalp and stroking her neck. "I'll do my best. That work?"

Harlowe propped her chin on his chest and smirked at him. "Yeah that'll work."

"Good. Now c'mere n' ride your old man."
The sharp buzz of his cellphone woke Happy from a deep sleep, his hand finding the annoying object before his eyes opened fully.

"Yeah." He rasped into the phone, his hand scrubbing his face as he sat up.

"Got a problem, brotha." Jax's voice sounded both exhausted and frustrated.

"What's up?" Happy grunted, rising to get dressed before even hearing what was happening.

"Boys doin' surveillance overstepped."

"How bad?"

"Lockdown bad." Jax grumbled. "Shit went south and until we get it cleared up, I don't wanna lose anybody, gonna wanna bring Harlowe in."

"Fuck, okay. We'll be there in twenty."

"Ugh, don't tell me we have to go to the clubhouse." Harlowe mumbled into the pillow, her voice rough from sleep. She'd come home after the failed attempt at keeping her away from the trouble and they'd settled into a good rhythm. It was amazing to wake up next to her, heaven even. He dreaded fucking up a good thing by breaking the news.

"Sorry, babe. Lockdown. Pack some shit."

"How much shit?" She grumbled, drowsily pushing herself upright.

Happy circled the bed and cupped her face, brushing messy bed hair from her eyes. "Just plan for a few days, we can get more if we need to."

Harlowe leaned forward, pressing her face into his stomach. "This because of me?"

"Don't know details, shit just popped off tonight." His fingers sunk into her hair and massaged her scalp, bending down to kiss the crown of her head. "Come on. You can crash again when we get there."

Happy collected a few weapons and ammunition from the trunk he kept under his bed while Harlowe packed clothing and toiletries. She smirked as he worked, her arms crossing and hip cocked to the side as she watched.

"How come all your necessities can either fire bullets or stab things?" She quipped, as he zipped up his duffle bag of gear.

"My only necessity is putting down threats, babe. Can't do that with a toothbrush and some pajamas."

"Oh I beg to differ." Harlowe scoffed, her teeth flashing in a feral way he hadn't seen before. "I can make you a grade A shank with a toothbrush that could take down just about anyone."

Happy cocked an eyebrow at her statement, while rising to his feet. He cupped her hips and yanked her against his front and rasped, "if we didn't have to leave, I'd fuck you so hard right now."
His mouth lowered to hers hungrily, his teeth nipping at her lips and tongue delving in deep. Her hands curled into his T-shirt and she tugged him as close as possible.

"You sure we don't have time?" She panted as he moved his greedy mouth to her neck, sucking a path along the soft curve. He groaned as Harlowe rubbed herself against his growing hardon, the drag of friction turning him desperate to get inside her.

"Nah." He grunted, forcing himself to pull away. He smacked her ass hard, making her yelp before bursting into laughter. "Later."

"Fuckin' tease." Harlowe chuckled, her eyes bright as he grinned back.

"Soon as we get shit squared, I'll fuck you out, baby." Happy vowed, his eyes sliding down her body. "You won't walk for a week."

The clubhouse was filling up by the time Harlowe and Happy arrived. She greeted Tara and gave Chibs and Tig a hug after heading to Happy's dorm room to drop off her bag.

Happy gave her a quick kiss on the temple, his arm squeezing her close before he ducked inside the chapel doors. She wasn't sure what happened but she caught a few of his brothers looking at her cautiously.

"Any idea what's up?" She asked Tara as she directed a few crows to get breakfast started for the guys before they headed out to deal with whatever happened.

"Sounds like someone fucked up." Tara commented, balancing Thomas on her hip. "Jax was cussing up a storm when the call came in."

Harlowe sighed, taking her hair from her neck to twist into a messy bun. "I have a bad feeling about this shit."

"Whatever it is, the guys will handle it." Tara assured, motioning to her son. "Could you hold him for a bit? The girls can't cook worth shit."

"Uh.." Harlowe mumbled, taking the kid as Tara left her with no option to refuse. "Okay."

"Thanks."

Harlowe bounced him a bit, her eyes scanning the room awkwardly. She hadn't spent much time at the clubhouse since her release and even less due to her stay at Poe's. Her gaze landed on a few women who were obviously club girls, her teeth clenching a bit at the sight of their skimpy clothing and exposed skin. She'd always hated the idea of women being passarounds but it was part of the club. Most of all, she didn't like the idea that she was staying in a place with a bunch of women Happy had fucked.

"I hate this place sometimes." Lyla commented, her slim arms crossed as she looked over the women hanging around the pool table. Harlowe knew that she'd been married to one of the Samcro boys who'd passed. She also knew that her and Quinn spent quite a lot of time together know that he was heading Redwoody security.
Harlowe covered Thomas's ear as she drawled, "Why because everyone of those bitches would stab us in the back for the chance to polish our old man's chrome?"

Lyla chuckled, her head bobbing, "That blonde one never came back after she mouthed off to you and you owned her ass."

Harlowe smirked at the memory but also felt a sharp jab of guilt for her actions. She'd been fresh out of bars and given the frame of mind she was in now, she wasn't too sure she would've taken it so far.

"How're you and Hap doing?"

"Good." She replied easily, her lips curling up a bit. "Hap is Hap."

"Has he always been so scary?" Lyla asked.

"When I met him, he had long wavy hair and a wicked grin that hooked me instantly." Harlowe sat Thomas in a high chair and gave him snack bag from Tara's diaper bag.

"Long hair?" She scoffed, her chin perched on her palm. "I can't even picture it."

"I have photographic proof that he'd kill me for showing off." Harlowe laughed, her mind sinking back to that time in their lives. "We were young and head over heels crazy for each other. We went zero to sixty, I was his old lady before we'd known each other a month. Everyone thought we were rushing shit but I knew we belonged together."

Lyla sighed, her eyes going to the large board of mugshots and memorial photos. She was eyeing one in particular when she spoke, "I thought Opie was that for me but everything was so messed up right before he died. I think I just wanted him to be that for me and he was missing his wife."

"Sometimes it doesn't have to be forever to be meaningful. You're taking care of those kids like their your own. And you got Quinn now."

The blonde blushed, "You know about that?"

"Everybody knows about that." Harlowe chuckled, "I'm not even around here and I do. Hap snitched on you guys to me weeks ago."

"For a guy who never talks, he sure as shit has loose lips." Lyla huffed, her narrowed eyes going towards the chapel doors. Harlowe laughed, pushing Cheerios toward Thomas as he smacked his hands on the table. "You know as well as I do that these guys are like teenage girls when it comes to gossip. Plus I think he's just happy for Quinn and you."

"Happy's happy huh?" Tara asked while taking a seat. "Why's that?"

"Because Quinn and Lyla are k.i.s.s.i.n.g." Harlowe mocked, avoiding the woman's playful smacks.

Tara laughed, her eyes twinkling as she added, "oh yeah, Jax has been telling me all about it."

Lyla growled, her arms tightening around her chest as she glared at the door. "I'm gonna give Quinn such shit for spilling to his brothers, I told him I wanted to keep us quiet."

"Why?" Harlowe's eyebrow cocked at the information.
"Well, Opie was... everybody loved him." She began, her voice cracking before she cleared her throat roughly. "I was worried the guys would think he was taking advantage."

"It's been years Lyla." Tara assured, her hand resting on the other woman's forearm. "No one expects you to be a grieving widow forever."

"I know that but you know how the guys can hold onto shit."

"Well, now you know, if Jax can be okay with it, everybody else will fall in line." Tara replied, squeezing her arm before letting go.

"Thanks guys." Lyla smiled, her cheeks heating uncharacteristically. "So now that you both know, can I brag about how goddamn hot he is in bed?"

"Shit popped off last night while the prospect and Rat were doing surveillance." Jax rasped, tapping his cigarette on the ashtray to his left. "The kid got jumpy when a couple of LMs confronted them for hanging out."

"Jackie boy, kid got more than jumpy," Chibs exhaled a cloud of smoke. "Boyo killed that bangers sister, making a giant target on all our ol ladies backs."

"Harlowe especially." Happy growled, his rings digging into his fingers as he balled his hands. "That little prick dealt with?"

"We're waiting for their demands, not sure if they're gonna want him handed over."

"Are we actually gonna hand him over?" Juice asked, his eyebrows raised.

Jax's jaw tightened at the question as he lit another cigarette. "We'll do what we have to."

Happy ground his teeth, his shoulders ridged and tense. "We gotta get ahead of this, brother. That banger has a hardon for Harlowe as it is."

"I know." Jax sighed, rubbing his eyes tiredly. "Tara too, he'll want to make a statement. We're gonna be on lockdown til we settle this shit. I'm reachin' out to Alvarez to get a meet set up."

"You think he's willing to mediate?" Chibs asked, puffing away on a joint.

"Here's hoping." Bobby grumbled through his own exhale of heavy smoke. "Maybe he can calm the vato down before he kicks off."

Happy returned to the clubhouse after several meetings with Alvarez and his Vice President. He was exhausted from the lack of sleep the last few nights and the long hours they spent waiting on the Mayans president. With no progress made on squaring away the accidental shooting of Maria Rodriguez, the Sons retreated to the clubhouse for some shut eye.
Happy found Harlowe reading in bed, her bare legs exposed as she lay in just one of his T-shirt's.

"Fuck." He rumbled at the sight. "You look good in my clothes."

Her lips curled at his comment, her body stretching to make the fabric rise enough to flash him her little red panties.

He could feel his dick swelling at just the sight of her, the woman flipping his switch like no other.

"Take it off." Happy ordered, his own clothing slowly being removed as she squirmed under his intense gaze. He folded his kutte and rest it in the dresser, removing his wallet and gun holster.

"You horny, baby?" Harlowe asked coyly after shedding the shirt, her lips quirking up as he growled at the sight of her bare breasts.

"Fuck yeah." He rasped, yanking his T-shirt from his body to show off the massive ink covering his skin. His hands went to the heavy belt buckle, loosening the leather to drop his pants to the ground. He watched as her body bowed off the mattress, her legs falling open for him to see the damp lace between them.

"Touch yourself." Happy knelt on the end of the bed between her legs, his eyes drilling into the vision before him.

"Hap." She moaned as her hand slid inside her panties, the fabric stretching around her knuckles as her fingers swirled.

"Fuck." He growled, leaning forward to mouth the pale skin of her thighs and inhale deeply. "Take 'em off. I wanna see you fuck that wet pussy."

"Hap." Harlowe groaned at his filthy words. "Touch me, baby."

"Not yet." He muttered, his mouth watering at the sight of her fingers dragging though wet pink lips. "Make yourself cum first."

"I want you to make me cum." She whined, her fingers working harder to chase the feeling.

"You first." He rasped, his own hand wrapping his aching dick as she writhed in front of him. "I wanna taste you after you cum."

Harlowe squirmed, her thighs spreading wider as they trembled under the rising sensation inside her core. Her fingers pumped in and out, as her other hand joined to stroke her clit. She was panting heavily, her eyes going to Happy's hand stroking his dick quick and efficiently.

"Do it." He growled, his teeth bared as he held back his own orgasm. "Cum on those little fingers."

Harlowe's hips rose off the bed as she came long and hard, her hands losing all coordination as she stroked herself. Happy growled at the sight of her writhing under her own fingers, his hand tightening around his dick. He grabbed her hand and sucked her fingers into his mouth greedily as he continued to pump the head of his dick quickly. Soon the heat building up broke, his dick spilling all over her heated core as he sucked the taste from her fingers.

Harlowe's hand stroked his chest when he leaned forward to kiss her deeply. His tongue delving into her mouth hungrily, the wet smacking muted by their delicious moans.

Happy pulled back a bit, his teeth nipping her bottom lip before swiping it with his tongue. "Taste
"Yeah?" She sighed, her hands stroking his chest and shoulders.

Happy caught one of her hands when he noticed the bright polish on her nails, his lips curling up at the sight. "What's this?"

Harlowe rolled her eyes and lay her hands over her bare breasts to show off the new additions to her nails. The bright yellow happy face decals staring back making him chuckle lowly.

"Lyla thought she was funny surprising me with them, they were supposed to be flowers."

"I like 'em." He rasped, leaning forward to kiss her sloppily. "They'll look good wrapped around my dick."

They'd been at the clubhouse for over a week when Tara came to her with an anxious look in her eyes.

"I need to go to the hospital, will you come with me?" The brunette asked, her arms crossed and foot tapping.

"What's wrong?" Harlowe opened the dorm room door allowing Tara inside. She watched the woman pace a moment before she spoke, "I think I'm pregnant. I want to get a blood test done before I say anything to Jax... awhile ago, I fucked things up and I need to get the lab paperwork for proof."

Harlowe cocked an eyebrow at the statement and asked, "he wouldn't believe you?"

"I lied about shit I shouldn't have."

Feeling that there was more to the story but unsure if she wanted to open that can of worms, Harlowe commented, "We'll need patches, no way were getting out of here unnoticed."

"I already asked, Tig and Quinn are going to take us."

"Smug bitch," Harlowe scoffed, grabbing her jacket and purse. "Did you tell them why you need to go?"

"I told them it's female shit."

"And I'm going with because...?"

"Because it's female shit."

Harlowe huffed out a laugh, "well, you're not wrong."
Harlowe leaned against the brick wall, a cigarette perched on her lips as Tig spoke into his burner. She watched traffic pass, her mind racing with the pregnancy news Tara had just received. The idea of motherhood had not crossed Harlowe's mind in years. Inside prison, it wasn't a day to day concern like survival was. Before prison, she'd been a twenty something bartender without a lot of plans for her future other than living and loving everything Happy. She'd met him and fallen hard, their worlds colliding and merging into something wild and fun. Responsibility for another living being, other than Happy, hadn't crossed her mind.

Now, at almost forty, Harlowe was wondering if that was something she wanted and if so, was it too late for her already.

"Didn't know you smoked." Tig commented, his thumbs hooked in his belt as they waited for Tara and Quinn to return from the pharmacy.

"Don't get through lock up without catching some bad habits." She commented, dropping the smoke to grind below her tennis shoe.

Tig snorted with a nod, "Yeah, I got ya there doll. Caught me a nasty case of scabbies my last stint at Stockton."

Harlowe rolled her eyes at his quip and opened her mouth to reply when gunshots rattled off nearby. She ducked slightly as chips of brick rained down from above her. Harlowe's eyes shot over at the cry of pain as she crouched next to a cement bench. She realized Tig had been shot in the thigh and shoulder before he fell into the entrance way to the hospital.

Harlowe tried to follow, only to be tackled by someone from behind. She struggled with the thick arms curling around her waist but found herself thrown into a open van door. Her elbows landed against their ribs and her head cracked against their face but they were unrelenting.

"Fuck, stop bitch." The voice growled, a hand shoving her face against the harsh metal van floor. She kicked and struggled, her muscles trembling from exertion. Nothing she did freed her. Eventually a heavy hit to the back of her head slammed her forehead into the ground and knocked her out instantly.

Twelve hours after abduction

Happy stood looking down at the box that was delivered, his hands in tight fists. They'd just got word that Tig made it through surgery, his leg saved but the man facing months of rehab from the shattered femur. Everyone had been out looking for Harlowe when the prospect called Jax with a nervous stutter, "W-we just got a p-package, boss."

Now as Happy glared down at the cardboard box, he couldn't bring himself to open it. The thoughts of what could be delivered in such a nondescript box paralyzing him.

Jax reached out, his knife slicing the tape, the tip carefully opening the flaps. When he saw there wasn't anything explosive, he pulled the cardboard open to peer inside.

"Shit." Quinn rumbled next to Happy as they all stared down at the black and white bandana folded neatly inside, the fabric stained red by the severed finger lying atop it. The bright yellow happy face decal a sharp contrast to the deep red blood.
Happy's chest rose and fell evenly, but deeply. His teeth ground together, the sight ignited feelings inside him more savage than he'd ever felt. A rage filled his chest like molten coals, his lungs scorched with every heavy panted breath.

"Hap." A voice cut into his mental thunderstorm.

"He's got to die." Happy rasped in response, his dark eyes meeting Jax's. "Slow and hard."

"He will brother, he will."
Happy stood with his arms crossed over his chest, his sunglass covered eyes glaring at the empty dirt lot. Jax was nearby, his expression just as irritated as he spoke to Mayans' president, Marcus Alvarez. The two club presidents had worked a miracle, brokering a deal with Rico's cartel bosses. The club would provide them with a contact for a pipeline through the pier for their drugs and they would get Rico to return Harlowe alive and without further injury.

The meet was scheduled for the following day, which had them stood up in the hot sun waiting for the cartel brothers and Rico's arrival.

"They ain't showin', Jackie boy." Chibs drawled, his fingers pulling at his goatee.

"Yeah." Jax growled though an exhale, while fidgeting with his cigarette.

Alvarez sauntered towards Jax, his expression dark. "This doesn't seem right, Teller. Those two, they're all about the numbers. A contact at the ports is worth more than a grudge. Their boy is resisting."

"We don't know where their base is." Quinn rumbled nearby, his hands tucked under his arms. "Fuckers been keeping a low profile."

"Good thing I slapped a tail on the brothers before they left." Alvarez replied, his chin lifting proudly. "They're in a chop shop near Stockton."

"Let's go." Happy grunted, striding towards his bike without a glance back for followers. He wasn't waiting. With or without anyone else, Happy was getting inside to find his old lady.

Harlowe's head was throbbing from the few punches she'd taken, not to mention the blood loss from having her finger cut off with bolt cutters. She still couldn't believe they'd actually done it, the whole incident was something out of a horror movie. She knew that the club had definitely received a care package with her missing pinkie. Which meant that Happy was most likely going scorched earth on all of California looking for her.

All Harlowe could hope for was that he didn't get himself killed or locked up before he found her, because he would. She knew he would find her.

Harlowe grunted against the gag in her mouth, while she watched the two men assigned to babysit her. They were perched at a folding table, each holding a handful of cards as they played some kind of game. She understood some Spanish being thrown back and forth, mostly insults as they talked shit to each other.
The shipping container they sat in was hot and dusty, the lack of windows forcing her to lose time. She had no idea how long it had been, but the hunger pains were getting worse by the second and her throat felt raw with thirst.

Rico hadn't been to visit since the finger incident, the man merely watching as he instructed one of his goons to sever the digit. She'd screamed her throat bloody through the gag as it was done, her eyes burning holes into the man who'd been so adamant she work for him. His sharp jaw raised, the heavy ink on his throat as dark as his furious eyes. She knew he'd lost his sister and she also knew this was part of their world.

An eye for an eye.

She just wished the person who'd actually killed Maria was tied to the rusty chair, instead of her.

The heavy metal door opened, revealing Rico and several of his boys. He tipped his chin to the men sitting nearby, rattling off a few instructions in Spanish. She watched them all exit, leaving Rico and his right-hand man, both men staring at her intensely.

"Didn't have to be this way, Blanca." Rico rasped, his voice hoarse. "Maria... she shouldn't have gone out like that."

Harlowe clenched her jaw until it ached. She had nothing to do with Maria's death. It was as though she'd been transported back in time and there she was being persecuted for the club's crimes again. She wanted to scream and yell and tear her wrists from the plastic restraints.

"You only had to work for me." Rico growled, his jaw rocking and hands fisting. "I woulda treated you right. Given you a shit ton more respect than some biker bitch. You coulda been somethin', a real player."

Harlowe glared back as he approached her, dragging one of the folding chairs behind him to settle directly in front of her. He straddled it, his tattooed arms resting on the back as he stared at her. She watched his gaze fall to her injured hand, the bandage darkly stained and crusty. The sheared joint pulsed with a steady throb, the burn of it only growing as time passed.

"Suppose that shit wasn't exactly called for." He drawled, his shoulders rolling in a lazy shrug. "Maria always said I was a hothead."

"No shit." Harlowe mumbled as best she could with a gag tightly wedged in her mouth.

A slow grin spread across Rico's face as he leaned forward to tug the cotton from between her chapped lips. "Lose a digit and you're still talkin' shit."

"What's the point of this?" She choked through her parched throat, her voice a rough crackle. "What're you aimin' at?"

"The Sons muling H border to border."

Harlowe rolled her eyes while responding, "they're out of that shit."

"Yeah, well they're gonna be in it 'less your ol' man wants t'collect pieces of that ass for the next month." Rico drawled, his hand reaching out to touch her injured hand. Harlowe couldn't help but flinch away, her wrist yanking at the restraint in a failed attempt to avoid his reach.

"Easy, baby." He purred, his inked fingers gently stroking the back of her hand. "I don't wanna hurt you."
"You've got a funny way of showing it." She spoke through clenched teeth, her body on edge waiting for him to lash out. Harlowe didn't expect him to tilt his chair on two legs to cup her face, his thumb brushing across her lips.

"Been thinkin' bout this mouth for a while." He murmured, his lips parted as he looked over her bruises. Harlowe's breath caught as he pressed a hot, wet kiss to her mouth. His tongue delved in as his fingers pressed firmly into her neck.

Harlowe tried to pull her head back but felt his fingers curl into her hair at the base of her skull. Feeling suffocated, Harlowe resorted to sinking her teeth into Rico's plump bottom lip until he yanked away with a pained grunt. Blood ran down his chin as the deep bite from her incisors gushed. Harlowe spit blood from her mouth onto the floor, the heavy copper taste turning her stomach.

"Shit." He growled, probing his lip with his tongue. "We need a safe word, mami."

"Fuck you." She snapped. "Touch me again and I'll bite something off."

The loud snap of his palm against her cheek seemed to echo in her head as the chair rocked to the side from the force of it. Rico tugged the gag back into her mouth roughly, his glare scorching straight through her.

"Maybe I'll send 'em your teeth next." Rico rasped, his dark eyes holding the promise of brutality as he licked the blood from his swollen lip.

The tense moment was broken by the door screeching open and two men joining the tight space, both eyeing her speculatively. The pair wore expensive suits, their wrists and hands coated in gold jewelry.

She didn't recognize them, but she could tell they were Rico's bosses. The man himself stood up and looked mildly surprised before he covered it with a facade of calm.

They spoke in rapid Spanish as she watched through tired eyes, her head bobbing with exhaustion. Their voices became raised and Rico seemed to be on the losing end of the argument as his face screwed up in anger.

The larger of the two visitors stepped into Rico's chest, their noses practically pressed together, as he snarled out an obvious threat. Harlowe was tense in her chair, her breathing coming in muffled pants as she waited for the inevitable explosion from Rico. Slowly he backed up, the waves of irritation dissolving into something like resolution. Harlowe didn't trust his sudden acceptance. He wasn't someone to back down.

The calmer of the men stepped up to Rico, his tailored black suit too pristine for a rusty shipping container. He clasped a gold coated hand on his shoulder before glancing at her directly.

A chill ran down her spine at his dead eyes, the blackness of them making her gaze drop away. She had thought that maybe things were going to go her way. That maybe they were calling him on his shit, but now she had a horrible feeling they were telling him to just get rid of the problem.

They were exiting the shipping container when Rico and his man drew their weapons and began firing. Harlowe screamed as gunfire rattled off the metal nearby as they shot back.

She crouched into the chair to avoid the bullets flying, the deafening ping of slugs hitting steel too close for comfort. It was only moments before the cartel men were killed, gunned down by Rico and his right-hand man.
Harlowe was gasping into the cotton gag, her eyes squeezed shut as her ears rang painfully. When she opened her eyes, she watched as Rico left through the door. His exit was followed by more gunfire, the rapid sound of semi-automatic rounds filling the air. She realized Rico had just gone off the rails, killing who she assumed were his bosses. Any hope she had for surviving whatever was going down began diminishing by the second.

The chop shop was located in an industrial neighborhood surrounded by scrubby dirt lots and condemned hovels. The Sons and Mayans parked several blocks away to approach stealthily in the long shadows of the setting sun. Happy took lead, his gun out and tightly held in his gloved covered hands. His fingers throbbed with the anxious grip he kept on the handle as he scoped out the tall barbwire fences surrounding the junkyard. The inside was only visible through the chain-link gate, it's opening framed by a couple of Rico's men. The sound of heavy machinery inside drowned out the sound of their approach, the silencers on the ends of their guns suppressing the two rounds they placed in the guard's heads. The gate was rolled open and they streamed inside the lot, ducking through the aisles of rusted wrecks and stacks of rotting tires.

A giant compactor was crushing a shiny Escalade, its windows shattering under the pressure. The sound of screeching metal and breaking glass was deafening but thankfully concealed their presence.

Happy and the Mayan's second in command took point as they approached the main building. It was there they discovered the first few bodies, all of them dressed in the dark clothing choice of the cartel crew.

"Shit went down." The Mayan muttered next to him.

"Prick's off his leash." Happy rasped, stepping over the fallen body to peer around the corner of a twisted metal bumper. It was just a split second before gunfire pinged off the fender next to his head. Ducking back under cover, Happy signaled the men behind them. They needed to circle around to check for another way inside.

The sound of gunshots filled the silence between sporadic machinery, the other group having found more of Rico's men. Happy used the rusty metal nearby to take cover, while shooting at the men guarding the giant metal workshop.

Harlowe listened to gunfire start up after a long silence, a sporadic rattling of ammunition being traded. Having no idea what was happening, Harlowe began struggling with her binds frantically. She couldn't sit and wait another second, the knowledge that Rico was no longer being controlled by cartel turned her desperate.

She rocked the chair back and forth, the rusty legs creaking under the pressure.

Harlowe groaned as it tipped over, her shoulder and head smashing into the metal floor. Luckily the weakened bolts holding the thing together snapped, allowing her to yank her limbs free. She moaned as her injured hand was pinned below her prone body, the bloodied stump throbbing in
Pushing herself to her feet, Harlowe tugged the gag from her mouth and looked for some kind of weapon. Her eyes scanned the metal space, her gaze catching on a pile of crates near the back corner. She dug her fingers under the lids, yanking at the boards to see what was inside. With a few struggle filled moments, the lid popped open. Harlowe found nothing but car parts. Clutching a hunk of metal that appeared to be some kind of gear, Harlowe moved to the door to the shipping container. She stepped over the dead bodies of the cartel men, their blood slowly spreading along the metal floor. She swallowed thickly at the overwhelming taste of copper that flooded her mouth, her stomach twisting painfully at the smell.

Harlowe gripped the lip of the metal door and slowly pushed it open, her eyes peeking out the tiny slit to look for Rico and his men. Finding the area free of everyone but dead bodies, Harlowe slipped out of the container and into the junk yard. She crept along the stacked metal and piled scrap, her hand throbbing around the makeshift weapon in her grip. The sudden sound of gunfire had her ducking between fenders, her body crouched low and hidden as voices caught her attention. She heard Spanish being rattled off, before the loud sound of gunfire suppressed it. Harlowe knew she needed to find the nearest exit before a stray bullet took her out.

She slid between a couple aisles of junk, her eyes catching on a hole in the chainlink fencing. Her heart raced as she reached the escape point, her hands curling into the wire to tug it open further. She'd just squeezed her shoulders through the opening when a pair of hands yanked her from behind. Harlowe struggled to get free, elbowing her captor furiously. A hand gripped her face, a hot sweaty palm smashed across her mouth as she screamed underneath the unrelenting hold.

The shootout lasted far longer than he'd anticipated considering all of the cartel men seemed to be dead. It wasn't until Alvarez and Jax cornered Rico in the shop's office that they gained control of the situation.

Happy's shirt was soaked in blood from carrying a bleeding Rat to the group's van, the man shot in the stomach and leg. Chibs' expression had not looked promising as the army medic climbed inside the vehicle with him.

"Where is she?" Happy snarled, his hand clutching the front of Rico's hoodie.

"Fuck you." Rico scoffed, spitting blood down his chin as Happy punched him yet again. Harlowe hadn't been in the office part of the junk yard or any of the out buildings nearby. The group of Sons and Mayans were searching the rest of the property but had yet to find her. The more time that passed without finding her, the harder Happy's hits became. He was slowly unravelling with every pity filled look from his brothers.

Happy was landing another vicious hit to the man's smug face when the Mayans prospect stepped inside the room.

"We found her." He exclaimed, his nose gushing blood down his chin. "But she's ain't happy about it."

Happy clenched his jaw and landed another brutal hit to Rico's bloodied face before leaving the room. He stomped after the prospect, his hands in aching fists at his sides.
"You touch her?"

"I tried to stop her from going through the fence line. She wouldn't listen, just kept freaking out." He replied, his voice nasally from the gush of blood and swelling. "She's got hard ass skull. Broke my fuckin' nose."

Happy turned a corner and found himself frozen in his spot. Harlowe stood with a Mayan on his knees in front of her, a jagged piece of metal tucked under his chin. She looked wild, her face bruised and clothes filthy. There were several Sons and Mayans surrounding her, all trying to talk her down but it wasn't until she saw Happy that she tossed the weapon aside.

The Mayan at her feet crawled out of the way as she ran towards Happy. He caught her as she jumped into his arms, her face tucked into his neck as he held her against his chest.

"I got you." He rasped against her sweaty neck, his forehead pressing hard into cheek. He could feel her tears soaking his T-shirt and feel the sobs rattled through her body. "I got you."

Tipping his head to the others, he motioned for them to give them privacy. He held her against his body, his thick arms wrapping her tightly against his chest as she broke down.

"I didn't trust them." She rasped minutes later, her voice hoarse and brittle. "I couldn't. I'm sorry I hurt that kid."

"You did good." Happy murmured, his hand weaving into her tangled hair. He kissed her forehead and pulled back to look her over, his gaze catching on the bloody bandaged hand resting on his chest. His teeth ground loudly as he gently lay his hand over her injured one. He could feel the spot a digit should be, the sheared nub feeling like Happy's biggest failure.

"He's gonna pay for this, Lowe." He vowed, his eyes filled with fire and voice strained with rage. "He'll die hard and slow for touching you."

"Good." Harlowe replied, her throat bobbing as she swallowed back tears. "Can I watch?"

"No."

"Hap."

Sighing deeply, he pressed his forehead against hers and stared into her pleading eyes. "Why?"

"I need closure from this shit." Harlowe explained, her eyes squeezing shut a moment before they opened with a whole new set of tears. "I need to know it's over."

"You can see him now but then you're leaving to see Tara. You're not watching me work."

"But."

"No." Happy barked, his hand holding her jaw and cheek. "You don't need to see it happen to know it's over. You got my word on this shit, Lowe."

Her body slowly relaxed from its tense position and she nodded, "okay."

"I'll take care of it. It's over okay?"

"Okay."
Harlowe looked down at Rico, his wrists tied behind his back as he sat on his knees. His face was swollen and bruised, blood coating it and the front of his shirt.

She clenched her teeth and gripped Happy’s hand as Rico grinned up at her. Despite his position, he was still talking a big game.

"Coulda been good, Blanca." Rico muttered through split lips, his eyes hooded and bruised. "Coulda worked well together."

"No." She growled back. "It wasn’t ever happening."

"Maybe." He coughed, spitting blood to the side. "Never know now, baby."

"No, no we won’t." Harlowe replied, her voice turning cold. "And it’s all on you. All of this shit is on you."

"Nah." He laughed hoarsely, blood spattering his shirt. "See, you belong in this shit, mami. Look at you, you ain’t backin’ down, even missin’ that finger, you spittin’ nails back. You in the life, baby."

"No." Harlowe’s voice was firm but still brittle. "And neither are you. Not anymore."
Chapter 19

One year before incarceration

Harlowe traced a finger around the latest addition to Happy's abdomen, the tattooed score card growing quite a bit over the last year. She rested against his chest, her head rising and falling with his slow steady breathes. His hand was buried in her hair, his fingertips massaging gently into her scalp. Harlowe wasn't sure if he even realized he was petting her but she nuzzled into his ribs in return. Kissing the snake on his chest, Harlowe asked, "does it..."

"Does what?"

"Does it bother you?" She asked, her finger circling the first smiley face he acquired.

Happy scowled, his large hand cupping her neck as he thought about her question. His thumb brushed along the shell of her ear as he rasped, "It bother you if it doesn't?"

Harlowe chewed her lip at the question, her head shaking against his ribs. "No but..."

"But what?" He asked gruffly, his body tensing as he waited for her answer.

"I worry about you, about what happens after all this."

"What, like the afterlife?" He scoffed, his dark eyes meeting hers. "Been fucked for a long time when it comes to my soul. Besides Ma is the catholic, not me."

"No, I mean..." she huffed, pushing herself upright to look at him proper. The sheet fell from her body leaving her naked, her hair messy and loose around her face.

"I mean, after the dust settles. When you're old and gray and thinking about the things you've done in life.. you don't think you'll have regrets?"

"Never goin' gray, babe." Happy joked, his hand squeezing her hip.

"Hap." Harlowe sighed, raking a hand through her hair. "You know what I mean."

"Only regrets I'll have, will be if me not taking some dumbfuck out caused my club or you trouble. I can live with the blood on my hands, Lowe. Can you?"

Harlowe sighed, her legs folding up to her chest and she hugged her arms around them. "Yeah, I just... why's it always gotta be you taking care of problems?"

"You seen my kutte, Lowe. I earned my unholy one patch. They don't give those out to everybody. I do what others can't and I can live with that. You gotta decide if you can too."

"I can, I just worry that later on you'll regret giving up so much of yourself. Every life gone at your hands.. it's gotta take something from you too."

"I like it. Being the one to do it, making fuckers pay, watching that light fade away. I like it." Happy replied gruffly, his jaw setting as he waited for her to reply.

"Oh." Harlowe murmured, her eyes crinkling as she looked away.
"I'd never hurt you, Lowe. You know that right?" He rasped as she continued to avoid his eyes.

"I know." She turned towards him, her palm sliding up his chest to cup his jaw. "I trust you, Hap."

"Even with what I do? Even if I like it?" Happy's voice rumbled, his eyes flicking over her face. "A lot."

Harlowe leaned forward to press her forehead against his. "As long as you like me more."

"Like you the most." He rasped, his thumb brushing along her chin.

Happy's fist landed on Rico's face once more, brass knuckles splitting open the man's cheek even wider. The bound man was a bloody mess, the chest of his wife beater soaked red. Happy wanted to make it last, his tool bag opened up on the table nearby to make it as painful as possible. There was only one thing holding him back from ending the man's life, the cartel.

Jax and Alvarez both agreed they needed to keep Rico alive until the cartels existing connections showed up looking for the dead brothers. They knew eventually their uncle would want to know what happened to his nephews. The Sons and Mayans couldn't risk taking the blame, it would cause an all out war that could destroy them.

"Ease up, Hap." Jax drawled nearby, his cigarette perched between his lips. "Need him breathin' for a little while longer."

Happy scowled at the comment but pulled back from the lax body tied up in front of him. He wiped his blade off on the unconscious man's jeans, the new cut across his chest oozing blood down his front.

"Anything on Rat?" Quinn asked from his perch along the workbench.

Jax shook his head, his eyes dark and mouth frowned. "He didn't make it."

"Shit." Bobby muttered, shaking his mop of curly hair. "Kid was finally growin' on me."

Happy clenched his fist again, the urge to pummel Rico for his transgressions. If he'd just given up, turned Harlowe over, they wouldn't have lost a brother. The Mayans were also missing a man, his head spread out across the crumbled concrete outside. They'd wrapped his body up and sent it away in the back of a black van, his brothers just as pissed as the Sons.

The man tied to the battered chair had started everything that had unfolded and if it weren't for his lust for Harlowe, no one would've died.

"We got a call into Hernando?" Jax asked Alvarez. "This fucks not gonna last another day if Haps got his way."

"I reached out." Alvarez replied, his snake skin boots scuffing along the dirty concrete. "His man wrote back that they were rollin' our way."

"They say anything else?"

"Nah. Just that they expected answers on why their boys went awol. I didn't tell 'em the full story
yet, figured it'd be better in person."

Harlowe scrubbed her hair as best as she could with one hand, her injured one wrapped in a plastic bag to keep the bandages from getting wet. Tara cleaned her wounds but seeing as her finger was cut off days ago, there wasn't much she could do to salvage the nub. She'd written a script for antibiotics and pain meds, which was filled and down Harlowe's throat before they'd even allowed her to shower.

Her mind kept skipping over the last few days, her jaw held tight at the memories and feelings overwhelming her. She had known Happy would find her but it didn't mean she hadn't felt hopeless when bound to that chair.

The fear was still surging through her body, causing trembles to shake her limbs and curl her back. She wanted Happy to come home, she needed to have him close. Even if it was just until she were able to sleep. She needed that security, but knew he had to do what he needed to do before he could return to her. knowing that didn't stop the ache though.

A knock on the door had Harlowe turning the cooling water off.

"You good, love'?" Chibs lilting voice rumbled through the door, his concern for her since they'd arrived obvious.

"Yeah." Harlowe croaked, rubbing a towel over her bruised body. "Be out in a minute."

"Take your time." Chibs rasped, "just checkin on ya."

Steamed billowed out of the door when Harlowe exited. She found a him sitting on the chair in the corner of Happy's dorm room, his elbows pressed into his knees.

"Feel better, love?" He asked, his gaze raising to meet hers.

"Yeah." She replied, her voice hoarse from dehydration. "Anything from Hap?"

"Jax called, they're still clearing shite up with the cartel." Chibs relayed, raking a hand through his shaggy hair. "Probably won't be back til mornin'. Should eat and sleep."

"I'm not sure I could stomach anything just yet."

"You'll feel better, sweetheart. Just something lil."

Harlowe sat on the bed, her teeth gritting at the pain that blossomed from her hand as she used it to brace herself.

"Another pain pill wouldn't hurt either." Chibs added, tipping his chin to the wrapped appendage. "Deserve some relief for that shite."

"I won't fight you on that." She grumbled as she scooted back awkwardly, to rest against the headboard. "Hurts more now than it did when they cut it off."

"The shock wore off." He commented, swiping a thumb across the scars along his cheeks. "Did' feel these lovely lasses 'til mornin'."
"Must've been horrifying."

"Aye. That sounds 'bout right." Chibs huffed, roughly scrubbing a calloused palm over his cheek before it dropped away.

"Sorry that happened to you." Harlowe muttered tiredly, her head drooping as exhaustion began to hit her.

"Lay down, love." He instructed, pulling the blankets out from underneath her. "I'll get ya somethin' when ya wake up."

The bed dipping behind her, woke Harlowe from the dead of sleep in the dark dorm room. On instinct she threw her elbow back, hitting a hard stomach and causing a masculine grunt. Her body twisted around, pain spreading up her ribs as she swung her fist towards the sound.

"Lowe." A rough voice growled, large hands gripping her wrists to keep her from punching him. "Easy. It's me."

"Hap?"

"Yeah, sweetheart." He replied gruffly, his hands loosening around her wrists only to tug on them. "C'mere."

Harlowe curled into his chest, pressing her face against the warm skin below his jaw. His long arms were wrapped possessively around her, his fingers pressing into her sore muscles. She inhaled deeply, the scent of his soap and dampness of his skin telling her he'd just showered.

"Sorry I hit you, I'm still a little on edge." Harlowe murmured, her voice rough from sleep.

"Don't apologize for protectin' yourself."

"Don't worry, it won't happen often." She scoffed, a lump growing in her throat. "Seems I'm shit at it."

Happy's hand cupped her neck and brought her forehead to his. "You did good."

"I sat there and let him cut pieces off, Hap. I didn't do anything."

"You sat tight and waited for me. I bet you didn't give him shit, either. Even with him cuttin' pieces off." His voice was a hoarse rumble in her ear, the familiar gruff sound soothing her.

"I didn't tell him anything."

"I know." Happy rasped, kissing her temple while gently combing through the hair at the base of her skull. "He touch you?"

Harlowe froze at the tense question, her jaw tightening at the memory of Rico's tongue and lips on hers.

"He kissed me." She replied softly, her hand pressing into Happy's chest. "I bit him back."
"Good girl." His hands squeezed her closer, the tight grip turning almost painful on her sore body. Feeling her flinch, Happy eased his grasp and began stroking her back and sides instead.

"Thought I lost you." He confessed against the crown of her head. Harlowe pulled back to look at him, the nightlight in the bathroom giving off just enough glow to make out his shaved head.

"I knew you'd find me." She responded, her breathe knocked out of her as he kissed her firmly. Happy pulled back slightly, his hand brushing along her jaw and cheek to curl into her hair. He pressed her forehead against hers and rasped into her bruised lips. "Always."

"Fuck me." Harlowe whispered, her fingers curling into his neck. The need to feel him against her, in her, was overwhelming.

"Lowe." His voice was wrecked, the sound a rough crackle against her lips.

"Please, Ha-" he cut her off with his mouth and tongue in a filthy kiss. His hands cupped her neck and skull, pinning her in place as he devoured her. Sharp teeth nipped and pulled her lips into Happy's mouth, the man sucking until she moaned desperately.

"Fuck." He panted slack mouthed against her cheek as she gripped his hard on. "Babe."

"I need you." She pleaded, her hand tightening around his dick for a second before she was rolled flat on her back. His body was hovering closely above hers, the heat of it flushing her cheeks and chest. He settled between her thighs, the hard shape of his dick pressing tightly against her core. A slow rock of his hips had her keening, her fingers curling into his shoulders and neck.

"Please, Happy."

"I got you." He panted, his hand pushing his boxers down as she squirmed out of her panties. Rough fingers gripped her knee, pressing it up and open. She felt the head of his dick pushing inside her just as his tongue delved into her mouth.

"Oh god." She gasped, her mouth torn from his as he began a thorough, deep plunging pace. "Hap.. god."

"Fuck, baby. I feel you." He growled, nipping her jaw as his hand slid down her body to grasp a handful of her ass. He lifted her to get a better angle, his dick sinking even deeper as he thrust harder. Every snap of his hips brought her closer to the edge, her body arching to chase the feeling.

"Gonna cum for me." Happy demanded breathlessly into her ear, his fingers digging into her asscheek as she seemed to unravel. "Do it."

"Fuck." Harlowe cursed, her eyes clenching as the tension broke almost too fast around his aching dick. She shuddered and trembled with the intensity, goosebumps breaking out across her skin. "Happy!"

"shit." Happy snarled, his teeth sinking into her shoulder while pushing as deep as he could. She felt him swelling and pulsing inside her, his hips stuttering as she clenched around him. "God, woman… killin' me."

"So good." Harlowe panted, her tongue swiping across her dry lips as she blinked away the stars from her eyes.

Happy framed her face with his large palm, his thumb pushing against her lip before he kissed her thoroughly again.
"Always." He rasped after leaving her breathless, his dark expressive eyes saying more than the single word could. Harlowe stretched her neck to kiss him soft and tender like, their lips barely moving as they tasted each other.

"Always." She whispered in return, her eyes prickling as she stared up at him.

"Are we good?" Harlowe asked when they woke the following morning, her head pressed against his ribs. "With the cartel."

Happy lay his hand flat between her shoulder blades feeling the soft skin rise and fall with her steady, even breathes. "Yeah, we're good."

"What happened?" She asked, her finger tracing the snake coiled on his chest. "To him."

Happy couldn't help but tense at the mention of the man who'd dared lay a hand on his old lady. He clenched his teeth at the residual anger still boiling him up inside, despite having taken care of the problem.

The cartel had shown up just after sunset, the uncle of the brothers killed by Rico followed by a dozen heavily armed men. After a brief tension filled argument about weapons, the Sons and Mayans presidents sat down with Hernando Ruiz. The situation they found when invading the junk yard was explained and soon the criminal syndicates leader stood in front of a beaten Rico.

Happy gladly applied some encouragement to the bloodied man, a sharp blade and small ballpin hammer turning the man into a fountain of information. He'd confessed to killing the brothers which signed his death certificate in the uncle's eyes. Happy was given the go ahead to end it, bringing his fun to a close. He could still feel the warm, thick blood flowing over his hands as he slit Rico's tattooed throat from ear to ear. Happy would've kept working him over for days if given the opportunity but Hernando wished to see it and he had a private plane to catch. The body was added to the growing collection in chigger woods.

"He ain't bothering you anymore." Happy rasped, his lips pressing against her temple.

The answer wasn't satisfying, Happy could tell by the tension still in her body, but she didn't push any farther.

"But you're okay right?" Harlowe peered up at him. "They aren't gonna come after you for dealing with it?"

"Nah." Happy shook his head, his hand sinking in her hair to pull her closer. "Got the order from the top. We're square."

"Good." She murmured, her lips pressing over his heart in a way that made his throat tighten. "Just don't want you putting a target on your back."

"Already got a target, Lowe. The Reaper will always bring heat."

"Yeah, I know but you know what I mean."

"Don't worry about it." Happy replied, pressing his face into her messy hair to breath her scent in.
The warmth of her body and steady beat of her heart against his ribs turned the heat up in his veins.

The reunion the evening before had been great but his hunger for her had yet to recede, especially after talking about the asshole who'd tried to take her away. He wanted to erase the fucker from every plane of existence.

"Mm." Harlowe hummed as his hands began to explore her back and ribs, her knee sliding up his thigh. He could feel the wet heat between her legs as she rocked her hips against him, the sensation curling his fingers into her curves.

"You want somethin', babe?" He rasped lowly, a smirk curling his lips as she writhed.

"Hap." She murmured, peering up at him. "Come on."

"Say it." Happy rumbled, tugging her leg over his hips so she sprawled across his front. Harlowe laughed at the abrupt move but then winced as she rest too much weight on her injured hand.

"Shit, sorry sweetheart." He rolled over to place her on her back, bringing the bandaged hand to his lips. Kissing her bruised knuckles, Happy finally let his eyes fall to the short stub now framing her delicate hand. He grit his teeth against the violent impulse to dig up Rico's body to torture it more.

Harlowe brought her other hand up to cup his jaw, her thumb scraping across the stubble on his chin.

"I'm okay." She murmured, tipping his head up to catch his gaze. The words did little to extinguish the ache he had to destroy someone or something, to right the wrong, but he could only blame himself. All the bad that happened in Harlowe's life stemmed from her involvement with him. If he wasn't such a selfish bastard he'd let her go, cut ties and allow her to have a life without violence and pain.

"Stop." Harlowe instructed with a scowl, pulling her wrapped hand from his to rest over the happy face score card on his abs. Her finger gently touched the fresh ink, the line work heavier than usual. It's smiling face inked blood red, unlike all the others. "You settled the score."

"Ain't enough." He grunted, his jaw rocking tightly. "Fucker took somethin' from you."

"But I'm alive. I'm still 99.9% whole." She joked with a slight grin. "I'll be fine."

"No one's ever gonna touch you again, swear it, Lowe." His voice was gravely, the words rough but sincere. "I'll fucking gut 'em all."

Happy grinned wolfishly before latching onto her mouth, his tongue prodding the seam. A guttural moan had her lips parting, the uncontrollable sound of it turning him desperate. He growled against her hot, wet tongue. He nipped her lips, pulling them into his mouth to suck on. Happy couldn't ever get enough.

Her fingers curled into his ribs, her legs rising up around his hips. Her little toes stroked the backs of his thighs while her heels nudged his ass.
"Fuck me, Hap. Please."

"Shit." Happy cursed, reaching down to shove his boxers out of the way before gripping his cock. He pressed it against her slick pussy, the head swelling painfully at the wet slide of it as he rocked his hips.

"Oh god." She moaned, her body opening wide for him while she clung to him. "Please, stop teasing me."

"Don't worry, sweetheart." Happy pushed passed the tight opening of her lips, groaning into her neck as she sucked him inside. "M'gonna fuck you hard."

Heat enveloped his dick, a spine tingling drag of slick skin on skin.

"Fuckin' hell, baby." He groaned, his neck and shoulders straining as he sunk inside her. He could barely control himself from slipping over the edge at just the heat of her. Harlowe was the only person on the planet that could wreck every ounce of his self restraint with just a look, let alone the tight sleeve of her body.

"Don't fucking move." Happy panted, his fingers bruising her hips and waist to keep her still.

"Only if you fucking start to." Harlowe smirked as she rocked her hips against his teasingly. "Please, Hap."

"Fuck." Happy groaned as he pulled almost to the cusp before slamming back inside with one solid thrust. She gasped loudly at the move, her body curling into the heavy rhythm and depth. A grin slid across his face as she began to unglue all too quickly, her lips trembling around the desperate sounds he pulled from her. He never grew tired of feeling her unravel underneath him.

"Gonna cum for me." He grunted, hiking her ass off the bed while pumping into her spread legs. "Do it, baby. Lemme feel you squeeze my dick."

"Hap!" Harlowe called out, her fingernails digging into his ribs as she shuddered violently below him. The rhythmic squeeze of her hot walls had Happy losing all control of his movements, his hips stuttering as his teeth sunk into her neck. He came with almost violent pulses, his dick shooting off inside her wet hollow.

He could hear her moaning and sighing as he sucked a vivid bruise into her neck, the bright blood rising to the surface of her smooth skin. Happy smirked at the sight of it as he pulled back slightly.

"So good." Harlowe murmured, at his weight pressing her into the mattress, her hands sliding over his back.

"Mm." He rumbled, rolling onto his side while scooping her up close to his chest. He sunk a hand into her hair and cupped her neck, his dark eyes tracing over her flushed face. The words spilled out before he'd even really thought about them. "Wanna buy a house with you."

The smile that broke out across her lips had him smiling in return, an unfamiliar loose feeling in his face.

"Oh yeah?" She asked with a breathless laugh in her voice. "What made you think about that?"

"Tired of hearing other people fuck." He remarked as the sound of a headboard slamming into another dorm room wall started up. "only wanna hear you getting fucked by me."
"Okay." She smiled softly, her finger tracing the words on his collarbones. "Then maybe we can get a dog?"

Happy smirked at her question, tugging her even closer to nuzzle into her neck. "Yeah, a'right. We can get a dog."
Six months later

Happy backed Harlowe into the tiny storeroom, the metal shelves lined with extra shop supplies. He pinned her against the back of the door and ducked his face into her neck. Ever since he’d taken the part time gig in a tattoo shop in Oakland, Harlowe would come down for lunch. More times than not, the pair ended up messing around in the closet like a couple of horny teenagers. He couldn’t explain it, but the idea of his woman driving across town to bring him a sandwich got him hard.

She smelled of vanilla from baking all day, her hair dusty with flour. Harlowe landed a job at a new bakery in Charming, filling her time up when Happy was out of town. Ever since, he couldn’t get enough of the sweet scent along her pulse point.

His groin twitched eagerly as he mouthed the salty skin below her jaw.

"Oh." She moaned, her head cocking sideways to give him room to work as her hands spread wide against his stomach below his T-shirt.

His lips pulled up into a hungry grin, his canines flashing before he nipped the curved edge of her jaw.

"Hap." Harlowe clung to his ribs, her fingers scraping along his skin as her hips rocked against his groin. "I want you."

"Turn around." He growled into her ear, biting the lobe sharply. "Gonna fuck you but you gotta be quiet, don’t need Stan hearing you cum."

"Okay." She panted, her hands braced on the shelf in front of her. Happy rumbled with a deep growl of satisfaction at the sight of her ass grinding against his aching dick.

"Horny little bitch." He rasped, sucking that sweet spot on her neck until she clawed at the shelf.

His hands slid around her hips, his fingers caressing the bare skin just below the hem of her t-shirt. Teasing goosebumps across her skin.

He plucked the button to her jeans and yanked the zipper open roughly. With a sharp tug, he had her pants down and her hips canted just right to slid inside her. Harlowe released a moan before she could bite it back, her head hanging and her ass pushing back against his groin.

"Shhh." He warned gruffly, his own moans and groans muffled against her neck. "Gonna hear you baby."

"I’m trying." She whined, glancing over her shoulder at him. "Feels too good."

Happy hummed, his tongue tracing the soft curve of her neck before biting down harshly. He pumped into her hard and fast, with a tight grip on her hip.

He placed a hand over her mouth as she released a throaty moan, his actions too overwhelming for her to keep quiet. Happy felt the vibrations of her groans below his palm as he ground out a fast rhythm into her core. His eyes drifted down to their connection, his teeth grinding at the addicting sight of his wet dick sliding inside her tight body.
"Fucking hell." He growled against her neck, nipping and sucking her soft skin. "So tight 'n wet. You have any idea how fucking good you feel."

Harlowe groaned under his hand, her teeth biting at his fingers as he snapped his hips sharply. Happy released his hand slowly with a warning, "Gonna be quiet."

"Yes." She panted, her head thrown back against his shoulder as he fucked her thoroughly. "So good."

Happy held onto her hips, pulling her onto his dick while pushing even further inside. He felt her walls flutter around him, the velvet of her clinging to the swelling head with every plunge. She was just slipping over the edge of her orgasm when a solid knock on the door had him snarling.

"Fuck off."

"Clients here, Hap. Might wanna finish up."

"Fuck. Off." Happy barked loudly, before releasing a quick round of deep plunges pushing Harlowe off her precarious edge. She writhed in front of him, her hands scrambling to hold onto the shelving as he fucked her straight through her orgasm. Happy chased his own right after, his breathing heavy and panted against her shoulder as he ground himself off inside her.

"Fuck." She gasped, her temple resting on his arm braced against the shelf.

"Goddamn." Happy kissed her neck several times before pulling out. Harlowe hissed at the action and slowly moved herself upright.

"You okay?"

"Just sore." She muttered, rubbing her lower back. "I strained it at work."

"Shoulda told me." his hand going to rub out the tension. "Could’ve rubbed it instead of fucking you."

Harlowe scoffed, her eyes playful. "Who says I wanted a back rub instead of a good fuck?"

Happy grinned down at her, his hand sinking into her hair to cup the back of her head. He pulled her swiftly to his mouth, his tongue plunging filthily inside as she clung to him.

"Fuckin’ love you, woman." He rasped against her bruised lips.

"Mm.. love you too, handsome." With a sigh, she kissed him softly on the chin.

"Hap." A voice barked from the hallway, the receptionist losing her patience. "Stop fuckin and starting inking or I’m handing your client to Stan."

"Jesus, I’m coming." Happy huffed, glancing down at Harlowe with a wolfishly grin.

"See you later baby." she replied, popping up on her toes to kiss the underside of his jaw.

Harlowe pulled into a driveway in front of the modest home in the outskirts of Charming. Happy and her bought it several months prior, the couple settling in after some remodeling work was completed. She hadn’t realized how much she needed a real place to call home until they began
personalizing it. It was the first time since before she was imprisoned that she felt truly happy and content. A new flame seemed to have ignited for the couple as well, the deep connection they’d had all those years ago only strengthening.

Climbing out of her vehicle, Harlowe grabbed the few grocery bags from the trunk before entering the home. She unlocked the front door and stepped inside. Her arrival was instantly met with the huge white body of their Staffordshire terrier named Opie. She’d never met the brother Happy lost several years back but the dog reminded him of the deceased Son. He was a gentle giant with the ability to take a man down if need be, just like his namesake. Happy was hoping he’d be a good security dog, but Harlowe was beginning to think he was more bark than bite.

"Hey big guy." She greeted, patting him heavily on the flank. "You been a good boy."

The deep bark was accompanied by a wildly wiggling body and nubby tail.

"Yeah you are." She cooed, grinning as he bounced towards the backdoor. Harlowe let him out to relieve himself while she put the groceries away. She was unloading the dishwasher when her cellphone rang, the device vibrating across the countertop. Harlowe grabbed it, sliding the answer button as Tara’s name flashed.

"Hey, how’s the little one?" She asked when she picked up. Tara had given birth the month prior to a little girl who they named Hannah Marie after Tara’s grandmother. She was afflicted with the same heart defect as Abel and had surgery to repair it.

"Good. They said she can come home this weekend."

"That’s great Tara." Harlowe replied with a sigh, "really great. Do you need anything done to get ready?"

"No, no. Jax has been home with the boys. They were making a banner for her while he got the nursery ready finally." Tara sounded exhausted, with good reason. Her pregnancy was not easy, the complications only compounded when they discovered the baby’s heart defect. The mother of two was put on bedrest which resulted in a lot of things falling to the waist side.

"Well let me know. I can cook you some meals maybe? Then you don’t have to worry about feeding the monsters."

Tara laughed, her mood lightening. "Yeah they’ve been handfuls lately. Jax caught Thomas on top of the shed yesterday with a blanket. He was about ready to jump off the damn thing."

"Jesus." Harlowe huffed, her eyes rolling at the idea of having to worry about a kid climbing on a roof. "Why?"

"He was testing his parachute." Tara chuckled with little amusement. "I swear that kid is turning my hair gray."

"I don’t blame you. I can barely handle a dog and Happy, I couldn’t do handle a mini version of him."

"You get used to it." She replied distractedly. "Shit I got to go. I’m working some hours before I take my leave."

"Okay. Let me know what the boys will like."

"Thanks, Lowe."
"No problem. Talk to you later."

"Yeah, see ya."

Happy pulled his bike into the spot next to Harlowe’s cage, the loud rumble cutting off abruptly. He was removing his helmet and gloves as he walked up the pathway to the front door when it opened. Harlowe smiled at him as their dog rushed out, it’s huge paws planting on his chest and shoulders.

"Hey big guy." Happy rumbled as he rubbed and patted the pitbull’s large head and shoulders. "You keep shit square around here huh? You bite any bad guys for me?"

Harlowe chuckled as Opie wiggled all over, barking as Happy moved towards her.

"Honey, I’m home." He rasped as he stepped up to her leaning shape in the doorway.

"I see that." She smirked, her fingers walking up his chest before curling into the front of his shirt. With a quick tug, she pulled him closer and cocked her head back to kiss him. She tasted of wine and something sweet, her lips full and soft.

"Fuck." He rumbled as her fingers curled into his belt, tugging at it impatiently. "Whatcha need, baby?"

"You." She replied, her mouth moving along his jaw and neck, teasing the skin and lighting his body on fire.

"Didn’t get enough this afternoon?" Happy walked her backwards into the house, his boot kicking it closed as he flipped the lock. "Greedy, little girl."

"You sayin’ you’re not in the mood?" She teased while backing away from him, edging just out of reach. "You tired old man?"

"Not too tired to fuck my ol’ lady." His fingers curled into her thighs as he hiked her up his body, her legs wrapping around his waist. He was pinning her too the wall when the sound of a bike pulling up brought his head off the curve of her neck.

"Seriously?" Harlowe huffed, her head thumping against the wall in frustration.

Happy set her down before peering out the curtain near the window. He recognized the giant frame climbing from his bike, his helmet dangling off his handlebars already.

"Quinn." Happy kissed his old lady’s head, "be right back."

He was pulling open the door as Quinn reached the front porch, Opie greeting the man enthusiastically.

"Down, Op." Happy rumbled, shooing him back inside as he asked,

"what’s up, brother?"

"Need some advice." Quinn replied, holding his arm higher. "I brought beer."
"You’re gonna have to suck up to Lowe, we were just in the middle of somethin’." Happy smirked, before entering the home.


"I’d prefer tequila." Harlowe took the beer from him to stick in the fridge. "And rocky road."

"Next time." Quinn flashed her a smile.

Harlowe relaxed in one of the wood adirondack chairs on their back porch as Happy grilled a few steaks. Quinn was stretched out next to her, his long legs cross at the ankles and a beer in his hand. She was grumpy with the intrusion at first but seeing the troubled look on the giant biker had her swallowing her frustrated words.

"You gonna spit it out yet?" Happy, however, had no problem pushing the conversation along, sipping a beer after closing the lid on the barbecue grill. He leaned against the deck railing, his eyes pinned to Quinn as he squirmed.

"Not gonna let a man eat first?" Quinn rumbled, fidgeting with his beanie.

Harlowe blushed as Happy growled, "coulda said the same thing when you rolled up asking for a favor."

"Aright, Aright." Quinn huffed, leaning forward to press his elbows into his knees. "Lyla’s pregnant."

Harlowe’s eyes widen at the confession, her chest tightening a bit at the news. It seemed as though everyone were expecting or having just given birth. Happy and her hadn’t specifically talked about it, but parenthood definitely seemed to not be in their future. It hadn’t been possible when she was young and imprisoned, now at forty it felt too late. Harlowe glanced at her old man. Not many people would notice the way the news shot tension through his shoulders. She could though and it only tightened her chest further. Harlowe knew that being a father was something of a hidden desire for Happy ever since Jax had announced Tara’s pregnancy. He’d spent a few weekends with Jax getting their place ready for a third kid and when he’d come home, Harlowe would see a wistfulness that she’d never seen before.

"That a bad thing?" Happy asked, his voice rough around the edges.

"Depends on who you ask." Quinn scrubbed his face and tugged at his beanie. "Lyla ain’t exactly pleased with the news. Says she’s too old to be starting again with a newborn."

"She’s barely in her 30s." Harlowe muttered.

"You want to be a dad at your age, brother?" Happy’s rasp with deadpanned but Harlowe could see the slight uptick of his lip.

"Fuck off." Quinn sipped his beer. "Least I’m not too old to knock up my ol’ lady."

Harlowe felt her throat close at the jab thrown without a thought. She could barely look at Happy as Quinn seemed to hear what he’d said.
"Shit, Lowe..

"Don’t worry about it." She stood from her seat and cleared her throat.

"I’m gonna get the salad ready.

"Lowe." Happy called after her as she stepped through the open sliding glass door.

Ignoring him, she called over her shoulder, "you want another beer?"

Happy glared at Quinn as the sliding door closed with a hollow thump.

"Shit. Sorry, man." His brother shook his head and rubbed his neck. "I didn’t think."

"No shit." Happy grunted as he stretched out in Harlowe’s vacant seat.

"You talk about it yet?"

"No."

"Why not?" Quinn sipped his beer. "Only way to know."

Happy rolled his shoulders uncomfortably at the personal conversation. He wasn’t one to share but he’d talked to Quinn about the elephant living in his bedroom. Harlowe hadn’t talked outright about motherhood but Happy watched her when she held Tara’s daughter and he’d seen the longing in her face. He needed to know if Harlowe wanted to try for kids but he’d been too nervous to find out the answer.

"And if she doesn’t?" He asked, his head rolling to the side to look over at Quinn.

"You won’t know ‘til you ask."

Happy threw the tennis ball across the yard for Opie, the giant dog bouncing over the deck edge and through the shrubs after it. He chuckled as he loped back, drool hanging from his jowls.

"Need a damn bib." He commented, grabbing the ball from his slobber covered mouth to chuck it back into the yard.

Leaning back in the lawn chair, Happy turned to watch Harlowe exit the house with a bottle of tequila. He smirked as she wiggled it and quipped,

"you need a drink as much as I do?"

"Fuck yes." Happy grumbled as she straddled his lap and sat down. His hands instantly found the curve of her ass, his fingers squeezing and rubbing affectionately. He loved the way she fit against him, her cheeks filling his palms perfectly.
"I know more about Lyla’s uterus than I ever wanted to know." She threw back a shot before pouring him one.

"No shit and I’ve seen her pornos."

"Eww. Hap." Harlowe huffed, pulling away as he laughed and tugged her closer.

"C’mon, don’t be like that." Happy rasped in that low tone he knew she loved, the one that would have her melting into his hands like warm caramel.

"I know what you’re doin’." She murmured as he nuzzled his face into her shoulder, his tongue tracing the soft curve of her throat.

"What’s that?" the gravel of his voice caused a shiver to roll through her body. His smirking lips brushed along her jaw to hover over her mouth. He kept his pitch colored eyes on her soft green ones, the heat in his gaze making her cheeks flush pink.

"You’re distracting me." The words were panted as his hands worked their way under her shirt to cup her breasts. His thumbs circled her stiff nipples, the lacy bra hardening the peaks below. He rolled them tightly between his thumb and finger. The action had her bucking sharply in his lap. Her hips circling.

"Yeah." Happy sucked on the soft skin behind her ear and nipped the shell. "you mind?"

"God no." Harlowe sighed, her hands cupping his neck and head as he began sucking and biting her neck. He growled as her nails bit into his shaved skull, encouraging him to delve deeper. The tangy taste of tequila clung to her lips but the natural underlining sweetness of her tongue had him growling desperately.

"Oh, Hap."

Her moans grew as he pressed her firmly to his lap, rocking her hips against the ache in his jeans. Happy covered her mouth with his, swallowing the sounds from prying ears. They had space between their neighbors but not enough to have his old lady screaming outside as he fucked her.

"You want the neighbors to call the police sweetheart?" He teased when they pulled back to breath. His heartbeat was thrumming hard against his chest. The woman shaking the control he usually mastered.

"I don’t give a fuck." Harlowe panted with swollen lips. "I want you."

"Here." He wasn’t asking but letting her know what was about to happen. With a little maneuvering Harlowe’s shorts and panties were gone. Happy’s jeans shoved down just enough to give them room to work.

His fingers curled into the curve of her ass, his fingertips grazing the wet folds from behind. The sharp gasp she released as he teased her opening had him scraping his teeth along her neck as he growled lustfully.

"Gonna bury this in you." He gripped his dick, sliding the head along her wet core before smacking her clit with the swollen end.

"Do it already then."

She liked teasing reactions out of him when they were working each other over. The kind of words
that hand his hands clutching bruises into her hips and teeth biting at the meat of her shoulder. He licked a broad path up her exposed throat, ending his path at her ear.

"Gonna tear you up."

His words sounded threatening and in any other situation might make a grown man regret ever crossing paths with him. It had Harlowe scratching her nails down his chest and stomach to grip his dick tightly.

"Prove it, old man."

Happy ceased to hesitate and pressed his dick passed the tight lips into the scorching heat between her thighs. His reveled in the shuttered gasp she released at his entry. A broad grin sliding across his usual stoic face. He placed a sloppy kiss on her chest, biting her nipple as he rocked up into her.

"How’s that." He rasped hotly in her ear, not waiting for a reply. "Thick enough for you."

"Yes."

"You’re taking all of it, huh." He smacked her ass sharply before grabbing it to guide her stuttered movement into quick snaps. "Greedy pussy."

"Fuck." She whined as he pressed her even tighter to his lap, driving into her even deeper. His hand slid along her hip to stretch his thumb down over her clit. With every rocked hip, the rough pad brushed at the tip of her hood. The motion dragging sharp cries of pleasure from her swollen mouth.

"Oh god. Oh... Happy." The words were smothered by his mouth and tongue as she came hot and wet all over his lap. He could only thrust three more times before he was pulsing hot and deep inside her.

"Fuck." Happy growled with bared teeth his breath hot on her ear. She shivered in his arms the feel of it making him pull her closer. His hands travelled up and down her thighs and ass. Warming her chilled skin.

"Jesus woman." He huffed out a breath as she relaxed into his chest, her sweaty forehead pressed into his neck. "Gonna kill me one of these times."

"Never."

"Do you want ‘em?" Happy blurted out as they lay in a tangle of limbs, sweaty from their second round indoors. He could feel his heart kick up, the steady thump growing fever pitch in his ear as he waited for her to answer. Harlowe pulled her face from where it was plastered to his chest, her eyes hazy with sleep.

"Want what?" Her voice was hoarse from moaning, her lips swollen and red from his kisses.

"Rugrats." Happy grunted, pushing himself back to lean against the headboard when she rolled onto her side of the bed.
"We’re doing this now?" Harlowe stared at him for a moment.

"Yes." Happy rasped, looking down at her from her prone position. "We keep avoiding it."

"Well it’s not like we can anyways." Harlowe huffed, her eyes dropping away from his, the action had his jaw tightening. He never wanted her to feel the shame flickering across her face.

"I’m probably too old."

"But you would want them?"

"I don’t know. Do you?"

"I asked you first."

"What’re we five?" Harlowe chuckled as she pushed herself upright to face him, her hair ruffled from rolling around in bed. She was beautiful.

"Look I... hadn’t before. Before I went inside I didn’t think about it. We were young, dumb and having fun. Inside... I couldn’t think about it because it was an option for free people and I wasn’t."

"And now?" He cupped her knee, his thumb rushing along the curve of it in some attempt to draw the words from her hesitant lips.

Harlowe sighed, her eyes rising to his. "Now I see everyone having them, I see the way Tara looks at her daughter and I can’t help but think..."

"What?" The gruffness of his voice was softened with his gaze and tender touch on her hip.

"That I missed out, or I’m missing out. I don’t know." Harlowe gave a little sigh before she looked at Happy. "Are you mad?"

"No. Why would I be?"

"I don’t know if you want them."

"I don’t not want them." Happy’s voice went softer, his eyes trailing over her guarded expression. "I think you’d be pretty fuckin sexy all knocked up."

Harlowe’s rolled her eyes and smacked his shoulder playfully, the curl of her lips achieving his goal to lighten the mood.

"Shut up."

"It’s true." He slid his hand up her thigh and over her hip as he rasped. "Be all curvy and soft."

"You just want me to have bigger tits."

"Nah." He nuzzled into her bare chest, trailing his tongue along her breast bone. "But I won’t deny it’d be hot if they got huge."

Harlowe purred as he began to kiss and suck at her breasts, her body arching to follow his hot mouth.

"Yeah, you like that." He sucked and nipped at her flushed skin, his tongue lapping at the goose bumped skin across her collarbones.
"Yes." She panted, her fingers curling into his shoulders.

"You want this mouth between your thighs?" His voice was gravelly, the rough sound of it sending shivers down Harlowe’s arched body. Happy smirked as her hands pressed down on his shoulders.

"Please."

Happy obliged instantly, he wasn’t able to say no to his old lady when she begged for it.

Harlowe stared at the ceiling, her legs up in the air with a paper sheet covering her lap. Her doctor was perched between her knees doing an exam of her nethers while his assistant watched from behind him. She winced as the blunt device was removed, a slight ache inside from the hard plastic.

"Okay, all done." Dr. Reese was a middle age male doctor, much to her old man’s discomfort. Harlowe glanced over at Happy who looked as though he wanted to murder the doctor, rather than hear his diagnosis on Harlowe’s ability to conceive.

"Well." Happy rasped, his eyes narrowed as the doctor patted Harlowe’s knee.

"You can sit up and get cleaned up. We’ll move this conversation to my office."

"How ‘bout you just tell us." Happy growled, before Harlowe touched his clenched fist.

"Hap." She murmured, "help me get dressed."

She watched the doctor and his assistant duck out at the distraction, her eyes moving back to a seething Happy. "Calm down."

"Don’t like him touching you." He grumbled, helping her sit up. She wiped away the slick gel between her legs and tossed the paper sheet. Harlowe took her underwear and pants from Happy, dressing quickly as he watched.

"You didn’t need any help." Happy commented.

"I know but it gave them a means to escape you, killer." Harlowe replied with a smirk, "I need him alive if we wanna know if I can bake a kid for you."

"It’s not just for me." Happy pulled her into his chest, "you want me to put a baby in you."

Harlowe felt her cheeks heat up at his gruff words, his mouth nuzzling into her neck. "Yeah."

"Mmhm." He rumbled against her head. "Let’s go see if we can get to work."

Harlowe stood in the kitchen, her eyes out the bay window watching the rain come down. She idly sipped coffee, ignoring the way a Happy was staring at the back of her head. The heat of his gaze
was palpable. It had her knuckles white around the handle of the mug as her other arm wrapped her waist. She wanted to turn around and look at him. She wanted to know if he was as devastated by the news as she was, but worse yet, she feared that maybe he wasn’t. Maybe he was relieved.

"Lowe." His rough voice had a tremor running up her spine, the comfort of the familiar gravel.

"Yeah." She spoke without turning around, her fingers curling into her side anxiously.

Harlowe heard him sigh, followed by the rough scratch of his palms rubbing his stubbled head. She felt a spike of guilt for being difficult but then the words the doctor spoke would scroll along the underside of her tear swollen lids and she would wallow more.

Happy’s hands were cupping her hips and his nose pressed into the back of her neck before she’d realized he’d moved from his seat at the kitchen table. She couldn’t stop from leaning back into his broad chest and firm stomach. He wrapped his arms around her body and spoke low and rough, "he didn’t say it couldn’t happen."

"I think single digit percentages is as close to zero as you can get, Hap."

"That’s everybody else with your condition, Lowe. That ain’t us."

"I just..." she ground her teeth against the tears, she was so tired of crying. "I don’t wanna get my hopes up. Hope just makes it hurt worse when it doesn’t happen."

Happy made a sound of indignation, his lips pressing to the side of her neck. "If it doesn’t happen, if."

"Hap."

"Lowe." Happy turned her around to face him, his hands coming up to her neck and jaw. Harlowe tried to look away but Happy merely tipped her chin up to meet her eyes. "Whatever does or doesn’t happen, we do it together. Okay?"

Harlowe bit the inside of her cheek against the sudden flood of affection she had for the man looking down at her. He was widely known throughout the club for being the hardest, most ruthless of patches but not when it came to Harlowe. She blinked away the tears and gave him a watery smile, kissing the edge of the palm framing her face.

"Okay."

"Good girl."
Happy leaned against the seat of his bike, the group of Sons parked alongside the semitrailer filled with high end vehicles. They were at a filling station halfway home from their destination in Canada. The auto delivery service had been hit several time while making the trip, fancy cars stolen and sent over seas to black market traders.

"Yo, Hap." The new prospect sauntered over with a bag of bottled drinks and snacks. "Thirsty?"

"Water." He replied with an outstretched hand.

He watched the kid fumble with the plastic sacks, his hand shaking as he gave Happy a sweaty bottle of water.

"H-here."

His eyes never leaving the cement before he shuffled off to another group of Sons.

"The fucks his deal?" Happy cracked the bottle and took a long gulp as Tig joined him.

"Donut was regaling the boys about the good ol’ days with the Tacoma Killer."

Happy smirked, his eyes going to the large trailer of shiny vehicles. "What, glorified security guard ain’t scary enough?"

Tig chuckled bumping his elbow with his. "Don’t worry brother, he told them about that Russian you took apart in Reno back in the day. They won’t be lookin’ you in the eye for years."

Happy grunted in response, his memories of Reno were a little cloudy seeing as it happened during Harlowe’s long absence from his life. A lot of those years were just memories of vivid splashes of red and feelings of visceral rage. He was missing a huge part of himself while Harlowe was away. That absence had him embedding himself deep in the club life, deeper than any body he ever hid.

"What’s up, brother?" Tig inquired as Happy stayed silent. "You usually revel in that shit."

"We went to the fertility doc." He rasped while popping a toothpick in his mouth to chew anxiously. He rocked his jaw at the sharp pain the statement caused, his chest aching from the sorrow of it.

"What they say?"

Happy shook his head in response, glaring off in the distance. He didn’t want to even voice the news. All he could picture was Harlowe’s protective walls falling in place as the doctor explained how unlikely they were to conceive naturally. The following speech about fertility treatments and surrogacy went in one ear and out the other, his only focus was the numbness consuming his old lady.

"Might be for the best." Tig offered when Happy didn’t explain further, cupping a flame to light a another cigarette.

Happy turned his heated gaze to his brother and growled, "Fuck you."

"I’m just sayin’." Tig shook his head sadly, sucking a deep drag from his smoke before he exhaled, "take it from me, brother. Brought me nothin’ but pain."
Happy could see the hurt in Tig’s watery gaze, the man’s mind on the two daughters he’d once had. One murdered by rivals and the other cut ties from her father’s life and all the danger it brought.

"Maybe." Happy’s eyes dropped away and he looked back at the road leading towards their destination. "Never know."

"Hold on." Harlowe huffed as another ring of the doorbell splintered through the house. "I’m coming."

First checking the peephole, Harlowe found a woman in a pant suit and a small child standing on the porch. She frowned at the sight before pulling the door open, her eyes on the woman before dropping to the kid. The little boy was no more than seven years old. He wore a pair of worn jeans and a plain blue T-shirt, his dark hair clipped into a buzz cut. She couldn’t get a look at his face, the child’s eyes firmly glued to the ground.

"Is this Mr. Happy Lowman’s residence?" The woman asked dryly, her finger pushing her glasses up after she looked away from her clipboard.

"Who’re you?" Harlowe asked in response, her arms crossing defensively over her chest.

"My name’s Debra Stuart, I’m with the State of California’s Child Services Department. I’m looking for Happy Lowman."

Harlowe’s throat tightened at the statement, her eyes falling to the kid standing stiffly next to the woman.

"He’s not here...." She croaked, pulling the door open wider. "Do you wanna come in? I can find out where he is."

"Sure. Come on, Jack." Debra murmured, her hand on the child’s shoulder.

Harlowe couldn’t seem to swallow passed the lump in her throat, the obvious meaning of the visit of a child services worker. She couldn’t help but feel a shot of pain run through her chest at the idea of Happy having some unknown child with some other woman. After everything they’d just gone through, to feel even more inadequate was unhinging.

"Have a seat. Um.. would you or...Jack like something to drink?" Harlowe stumbled over the question, her eyes flickering to the kid but still unable to make out his face.

"No thank you, I just need to speak with Mr. Lowman."

"Okay." Harlowe grabbed her cell phone and called Happy’s burner. It went straight to voicemail, meaning he was still on the road for the afternoon. Harlowe chewed her lip waiting for the message to stop before she spoke, "Hey Hap, um.. can you call me when you get this, or maybe just come home.. everything’s fine, I’m good, just need you to come home as soon as you can."

She hung up the phone and chewed her lip, her eyes on the pair sitting on their sofa.

"Can you tell me what this is about?"
"I’d prefer to talk to Mr. Lowman, if he would like you present when I do..."

"Okay, I get it." Harlowe muttered, sitting down on the chair across from the sofa. She dipped her head a bit to see the child’s face but he seemed determined to not look at her.

"How old are you Jack?" Harlowe asked.

"He doesn’t speak much." Debra explained, her eyes on her cellphone as she typed. "A god send after the kid I had last week."

Harlowe frowned at the statement and decided to see if she could get at least a glance from the boy.

"Are you hungry Jack? I have some really good snacks, I even got cookies."

The statement had his chin lifting from his chest and the air leaving Harlowe’s lungs. There wasn’t a doubt in her mind that the kid sitting on her sofa was Happy’s son. The stoic expression alone was straight from her old man’s repertoire but it was the dark piercing eyes that clenched her chest.

"Do you like chocolate chip?" Harlowe rasped, clearing her throat awkwardly. "And milk?"

Jack nodded his head, his eyes flicking to the woman sitting next to him.

"Sure. Whatever." She muttered, her fingers still typing on her phone.

Harlowe stood and moved towards the kitchen, her mind racing at the revelation. She was placing the plate and glass on the coffee table when the sound of two motorcycles approaching caught her ear.

"I’ll be right back." She muttered before meeting Happy at the front door. She could tell he was worried, his eyes jumping to her as he removed his helmet.

"You okay?" He asked, glancing at the car which had government plates. "Pigs?"

"I’m fine." She shook her head, glancing at Tig, "You can go."

"Doll.."

"I said go." Harlowe growled, her fist clenching anxiously. She looked at Happy and spoke lowly, "this is personal shit."

"Go, bro. I’ll text if I need somethin’." Happy rasped, rising from his bike and approaching Harlowe. She felt stiff and unsure how to tell him what was waiting inside.

"What’s going on?" He rumbled, glancing at the doorway.

"Just..." Harlowe shook her head, before turning around.

"Lowe." Happy called after her, bringing her eyes to his over her shoulder. "We good?"

"C’mon." She muttered, stepping back into the house to the living room where everything was about to change.
Happy could feel the tension in the air as soon as he pulled up and seen the pensiveness in her eyes. Now that he was stepping inside their house, all he could feel was a heavy sense of foreboding.

Harlowe stood near the living room entrance, her eyes on a woman and child sitting on the sofa. Happy’s brow furrowed at the sight, his befuddlement obvious on his face.

"Mr. Happy Lowman?" The woman asked, standing from her seat.

"Yeah." He rumbled carefully. "The hell is this?"

"I’m Debra Stuart, I’m from the California Child Services department."

"And?" He grunted, his eyes flicking to the kid sitting with his eyes on the floor.

"This is Jack Dovers. You were listed on Jack’s birth certificate..." Debra began before Happy interrupted.

"No." Happy growled, her words causing a sudden bubble of anger to rise up inside him. They’d just gotten some of the worst news, past mistakes would only make it worse. The last thing he wanted was something else causing his old lady pain.

"Hey, uh how ‘bout I take Jack out on the patio while you two talk?" Harlowe spoke up, her eyes glued to the kid before rising to his. He couldn't describe the emotion in her eyes but it had him pausing mid-rage.

Happy watched the kid nod before taking Harlowe’s hand while his other clutched a chocolate chip cookie. They stepped outside, the sliding door close with a click.

"As I was saying."

"I heard you, he ain’t mine."

"We will have to check paternity, but you were listed on the birth certificate as the father."

"Where’s his ma? What’s this about, money?"

"Jack’s mother was killed in a car accident last week. He’s been in foster care for the last few weeks when officials removed him for her care. The home was found to be neglectful."

"Her name?" Happy growled, his fist clenching at the news.

"Sara Dovers."

Happy furrowed his brow and tried to think if he recognized the name. "Where’d she live?"

"She was living in Stockton but she was from Texas. When we looked for close relatives we discovered both her parents were deceased and she was an only child. It wasn’t until we received Jack’s birth certificate from Fort Worth that we discovered your name."

"He was born in Texas?"

"Yes."

Happy rubbed his hand over his shaved head and thought about the last time he’d been to Texas.
It’d been about seven years. Back when he was still a nomad and his skill set was loaned out across the country. It was the years of debauchery that had him fucking anything with tits and spread legs.

"So, what happens now? You need blood or some shit?"

"I have the cheek swab kit with me now, I take that to the nearest lab facilities and we will have a result in seven to ten days."

"And the kid? Where’s he stayin?” Happy glanced at the patio door seeing Harlowe sitting on the porch step next to the kid. He couldn’t stop the tightening in his chest at the sight. He didn’t know if the boy truly was his but the idea of it was stirring up strange feelings inside him.

"Well, that’s the reason I brought him with me. The foster home he was placed in was just found to be unfit."

"So you took him outta a shitty home and placed him with another shittier home."

"I didn’t do anything Mr. Lowman."

"Obviously." Happy muttered.

"I don’t make those decisions, Mr Lowman. I’m doing my best with what I have."

"So what, you want to just drop him in my lap? I don’t know shit about kids."

"You’re wife seems to be a pro."

"My old lady isn’t going to want to take care of some whore’s mistake." Happy growled angrily, his eyes jumping to the door as it closed loudly.

Harlowe’s glare was cutting, her hand wrapped around the boy’s as he looked at Happy with large dark eyes.

A cement truck could have driven over Happy at that exact moment and he wouldn’t have noticed as he looked into the face of who could only be his son.

"We’re gonna use the restroom and then I’ll get the guest room ready.” Harlowe spoke coolly, her eyes moving to the woman sitting across from Happy. "Does he have a change of clothing?"

"I have his bag in the car." Debra replied, rising from her seat. "I’ll grab it and then we can go over a few details and do that swab test."

Harlowe stood still as the case worker stepped outside. She stared at him for a long moment before she spoke evenly, "I’m going to get him settled."

"Lowe, we don’t have t-." Happy grumbled.

"Don’t finish that sentence. " Harlowe snapped, her jaw clenching as she looked down at the kid before her eyes raised to his. "We do and we will."

Happy watched as Harlowe took the boy to the bathroom before they entered the guest room. By then the case worker had taken a very thorough cheek swab from his mouth and had him sign paperwork about Jack being a temporary foster until paternity could be determined. She explained that once it was determined, if Happy was the father he could take custody of the boy or decide if he wanted to relinquish parental rights. He knew that if it was his kid, which he pretty much had no
doubt that he was, there was no way he would give his kid up to a system that was so obviously fucked. Blood meant a lot to Happy, he couldn’t throw that away, no matter how clueless he felt.

Harlowe pulled out spare sheets, blanket and pillow from the closet. She set the pile on the desk before moving to the sofa and removing the cushions and throw pillows. She felt the boy’s eyes watching her work as she pulled on the strap causing the bed to unfold from inside the couch.

"Tada." Harlowe quipped, flashing the boy a smile. "It’s like a transformer."

"Like Optimus?"

"Exactly." Harlowe smirked, spreading out the sheets and tucking the corners.

"It won’t close on me?"

"Nope." She chuckled, "you’re safe and sound. Promise."

"Kay." He murmured, sitting down once she had it made.

"So I was thinking about spaghetti for dinner, do you like noodles with sauce?"

Jack nodded, his eyes flickering to the doorway before they moved to the floor. She could see the stiffness in his little shoulders and the tremble in his limbs.

Harlowe glanced over her shoulder and saw Happy looming in the hallway.

"She’ll call with the results." His voice was gruff, his body all hard edges filled with tension.

"You good with pasta for dinner?" Harlowe ignored his statement.

"I gotta go."

Harlowe snorted, her arms crossing, "Let me guess, you got club shit."

"I didn’t think all this shit was gonna happen when I came home. They need me up north."

"Hap, they gotta have someone else to do whatever it is." Harlowe muttered, walking closer to him. "I’ve never asked... not once, but this time I’ve gotta. Please sit this one out."

"Lowe."

"Hap." She pleaded with her tone and glassy eyes, "you know it’s true no matter how bad you don’t wanna see it right now."

She could tell he knew exactly what she was inferring and see the resignation in his face as he looked at the boy sitting on the foldout bed.

"Please stay this one time, it’s important."

Happy stood there staring at the kid for a solid minute before he pulled out his phone and turned
around. His voice rumbled low and deep as he walked towards the kitchen. "Hey man, gotta sit this one out. Shits come up... no, just need a few days. I’ll fill you in when I know..."

Harlowe crouched in front of Jack and dipped her head to see his familiar dark eyes. She gave him a tense smile. "He probably seems big and scary huh?"

Jack only stared back at her, his stoic expression so familiar it cinched her throat shut. She blinked back tears and cleared her throat roughly.

"You never ever have to be afraid here." Harlowe murmured lowly, her hand reaching out to squeeze his hand. "Promise."

Happy jolted awake when he heard the floor boards in the guest room squeak loudly. He’d always been a light sleeper due to his job and time spent in lock up but with a new person in the house, a kid no less, Happy was on edge.

Glancing at Harlowe, he saw she hadn’t been woken. He smirked at the sight of her curled on her side, her hand tucked under her cheek.

Happy climbed out of bed and slipped out of the bedroom, his gun in hand and ready. He trailed the wall closely, peeking into the bathroom before reaching the open guest room door. Finding the room empty, Happy moved quicker through the house looking for Jack. He swept the living room and kitchen only to come up empty handed.

He felt his heart kick up as the seconds passed, the idea of someone taking him or the kid leaving on his own filling his head. He remembered the tiny shape of him cowering on the bed as he stood in the doorway. Happy knew he was scary, it was good for business but something inside him felt cracked and raw at the idea of the boy being afraid of him.

Happy checked the security alarm and noted that it was still set, the boy hadn’t left the house. Doubling back, Happy entered the guest room and opened the closet door. Finding nothing, he glanced at the bed and noticed the wet sheets.

"Shit." He muttered, his eyes going to the dark shadow below the mattress. Crouching down on his knees, Happy ducked his head to see under the fold out mattress.

"Hey kid." Happy rumbled, making a concerted effort to sound unthreatening.

Jack stayed silent, his eyes pinned to the small quilt he’d dragged under with him.

"You have a bad dream?" He asked, grasping at straws. Happy huffed out a breath of frustration when the boy didn’t respond. He scrubbed his eyes and almost gave up to wake Harlowe when the boy finally made eye contact. He could clearly see the fear in the little boy’s face. His chest twisted so tightly he couldn’t draw breath.

"You don’t gotta be scared." He rasped softly, dipping his head to catch his gaze again. "I ain’t mad ‘bout the sheets, no big deal. Just gotta toss them in the washer. Stay here, I’ll be right back."

Happy took care of the laundry before grabbing several large towels and new sheets. He brought them into the guest room and layered the towels on the dry side just in case he had another
accident. He figured they’d need to get him a real bed anyways, the sofa was old and needed replacing. Shaking his head at the thought of planning like he’d be staying, Happy crouched down again and reached his hand out and waved the kid towards him. "C’mon kid. I got it all fixed up."

Jack stared for a long moment before Happy grew frustrated and growled, "C’mon, kid. Gotta sleep sometime."

When he climbed out from under the bed, Jack was stiff and shaking. It filled Happy with pure rage, not at the boy, but at whomever conditioned such a response.

"You got some other pajamas?"

At the boy’s shake of head, Happy reached out his hand. "You can borrow mine I guess."

Happy got him situated and sat on the edge of the bed after giving him a fresh T-shirt to sleep in. The Samcro shirt was giant on him, the short sleeves hitting his wrists. He looked down at the boy as he curled up on his side, much like Harlowe was down the hall. He smiled a bit before looking away. He found himself talking without much idea of what he was going to say.

"You don’t have to be afraid. Nothing and nobody’s will hurt you here. They’d have to get through me first and that ain’t happenin’, got it, kid?"

Jack was stoic a moment before he nodded in agreement.

"Good." Happy rumbled, his hand hesitantly patting the boy’s balled fist. "Gonna head back to bed, if you need anything come get me, a’right?"

He waited for the tiny nod before leaving the bedroom. When he slid into bed Harlowe rolled over and whispered, "everything okay?"

"Had an accident, got him squared away." Happy mumbled, rubbing his eyes before he spoke. "What if he’s mine?"

"He’s yours, babe." Harlowe muttered, her hand coming to rest on his tense forearm. "Knew it as soon as I looked into his Lowman eyes."

Happy clenched his jaw tightly before asking, "when we get the results... what happens?"

"What do you want to happen?"

Happy growled, rolling onto his side. "I don’t know, that’s why I’m asking you."

"Well, I guess we’ll need to figure out how to keep a kid alive. I’ve heard they need food and water."

"You’re just gonna be okay raising some other bitch’s kid?" Happy growled, sitting up in bed. Harlowe rolled her eyes and scowled, "I didn’t say I’m not pissed off at you."

"So what then?" He rasped.
Harlowe sighed, sitting up against the headboard. "Look... I’m more... hurt than pissed. It’s not like I didn’t know you were fucking every pair of tits that crossed your path while I was inside but seeing living breathing proof of it... it’s hard and it hurts because you have a son and it isn’t with me. And maybe I’m an asshole but it is easier that the baby mama isn’t pounding on our front door for cash. Instead it’s some sweet kid who obviously needs someone who actually gives a shit about him. What kind of person would I be if turned away an innocent kid? It’s not his fault his mom’s dead and his dad’s a horny biker with poor life choices.”

"Shuddup." Happy huffed out a laugh.

"Not a denial." Harlowe muttered through a smile, before adding. "You’re lucky I love you so damn much."

"Yeah I am." He rasped, weaving his fingers through her’s to pull her into his side. "So you want to be his mom?"

"I don’t know." She murmured, her finger tracing his kill count delicately.

Harlowe rose up on her elbow to look down at him, her hand flat on his chest. "It’s weird but when I look at him all I see is you and I just... I want to keep him safe. I don’t know where he was before this but it wasn’t good."

"They took him outta his mom’s place and into some other hellhole. She said neglect but he’s too scared to just be ignored or some shit."

"He had an old bruise." She replied.

"What?" Happy growled, his arm tightening around her back. "Why didn’t you say shit, we gotta take him to the doctor."

"Easy." Harlowe comforted, her hand pressing into his chest. "I checked him over when I changed him into his pajamas."

"You did?"

"Yeah, I just... I wanted to make sure he was okay, he reminded me of the newbies inside. About a week in they all get this look. I checked him and everything. He’s skinny, he needs some steady meals but otherwise he looks okay. I’ll talk to Tara tomorrow, have her look him over officially."

Happy’s body slowly relaxed as she talked, his hand smoothing up and down her back expressing his gratitude while comforting himself. He pressed his forehead against the crown of her head and murmured, "Thank you."

"Thank you for staying."

Happy hummed at the statement and kissed her temple. "Gonna try to stick around for a few days."

"It’d be good for both of you to get to know one another."

"Mmhm." Happy grunted, squeezing her closer. "Sleep, baby. Fuckin exhausted."

"Welcome to parenthood."
Harlowe stood in the doorway leading into the living room, her eyes on the little boy who dropped into their laps the day prior. He was watching television, a kids program with giant foam costumed creatures singing an annoyingly repetitious song.

The boy was quiet. She wasn’t sure if it were the type of quiet that was born from trauma or genetics considering his father’s temperament, but it had her chewing the inside of her cheek anxiously.

Harlowe wanted to ask him all kinds of questions, about his mother and everything that happened to have him end up on their doorstep. But those were adult topics, and despite Jack’s serious eyes and stoic face, he was still just a little boy drowning in one of Happy’s SAMCRO t-shirts.

"You hungry, Jack?" She asked as she came around the couch to sit in the arm chair. "I have a super secret pancake recipe."

Jack’s mouth was frowned slightly but he nodded at the question, his dark eyes flicking to the doorway behind her before quickly returning to the television.

Happy entered while pulling a tank top down his heavily tattooed torso to meet a low-slung pair of sweatpants. She couldn’t stop from smiling at him in lounge wear.

"You got eggs and bacon too?"

Harlowe rolled her eyes and huffed, "How come I offer pancakes and end up making a whole spread of breakfast foods?"

"Because you’re the best ol’ lady around." He rasped against the crown of her head as he kissed her chastely.

"Mmhmm." She rose to start breakfast, smacking his ass when she passed. "Flattery gets you everything, old man."

"I know." He bragged with a cocky smirk as he picked up the remote control. "It’s why I always get my bacon."

Happy sat down on the opposite end of the sofa with the chunky pitbull, his routine thrown off as the kid was in his preferred spot. He felt his body tense in frustration but shoved it away. He was not going to be the type of asshole to argue with a kid over a seating arrangement. That didn’t mean he was going to watch the shit currently playing on the television.

"Don’t know about you but I can’t watch this stuff anymore." He was already accustomed to editing his foul language around the Teller kids, Tara becoming a tyrant when her son repeated something horrific during a game of grade-school kickball.

When Jack didn’t respond, Happy rocked his jaw anxiously and flicked through a few channels before ending up on the Cartoon Network. The morning marathon of old Tom and Jerry episodes
brought his surfing to a stop.

"Now this is good one." He commented, sinking back into the soft cushions as Opie jumped down with the smell of bacon drifting in. "You ever seen it?"

Jack shook his head, his eyes not leaving the screen as Tom chased the mouse through a maze.

"It’s pretty good." Happy chuckled as the cat ran into a giant hammer, his legs and arms splayed out comically. The episode continued with grander escapades, the last failed attempt at catching Jerry landing the cat in his own trap.

"You think he’s ever gonna catch him?" Happy asked as he caught the boy relaxing for the first time since he arrived.

"No." Jack murmured, his head shaking minutely.

"Why do you think that?"

"Cuz he’s faster and smarter n’ smaller than Tom."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yep."

Happy nodded along, his lips twitching as he noticed the way his attention stayed glued to the next episode starting. He used Jack’s distraction to look him over, picking out the little parts of himself he recognized. The profile of his nose and chin, the way his mouth seemed to settle into a scowl. It was surprising how he even had similar mannerisms and expressions despite never being around each other.

Happy felt eyes on the back of his neck and turned to find Harlowe watching them both. Her lips pulled up at his gaze, her eyes a bit glassy as she informed them that breakfast was ready.

"You hungry, kid?" He asked the boy who turned towards Harlowe’s voice.

"Yeah."

"Good, Lowe’s special pancakes are real good." Happy leaned over and rasped, "you wanna know the secret?"

"Hap, don’t spoil the surprise!" Harlowe hollered from the kitchen.

Happy smirked as the boy’s eyes widened when he rasped, "it’s chocolate chips."

The next evening Harlowe was folding laundry on the coffee table as Jack filled in the shapes of his coloring book, his head bowed over his work with a determined focus. It was a familiar position she’d seen Happy in while working on a tattoo.

The sight of him brought a weighty affection, something she’d only ever felt for Happy. It didn’t hurt that the kid was a near carbon copy of the gruff biker with the long silences and pitch colored eyes.
Harlowe was only mildly paying attention to the television show Happy was watching, her eyes bouncing back and forth between the two.

"Stop." Happy huffed, his narrowed eyes flitting to hers before back to the screen. He was petting Opie’s side, the big dog sleeping draped over his lap on the sofa.

"What?"

"You know." His gaze trailed over to the boy who kept working on the page.

"I can’t help it." Harlowe smirked as Jack glanced over at them, curious about the conversation.

Happy’s cell phone vibrated on the table jolting the boy and the dog.

"Hap."

"Dont start, Lowe." He grumbled as he looked at the text. "I’m here ain’t I?"

Harlowe finished folding the rest of the clothes with sharp movements, loading them into the basket to take into the bedroom. She was passing Happy when he reached out to catch her wrist.

"Hey." His voice was low and gruff, "I’m not goin’ anywhere. Tig’s just filling me in on shit."

She bit her lip and nodded, her eyes flicking to the boy who’s own focus was on the hand holding her wrist. Happy’s grasp wasn’t tight and his thumb was brushing along the soft skin affectionately but the boy couldn’t see it from his seat on the floor.

She gave him a reassuring smile, "you hungry for lunch yet, Jack?"

There was a stiffness in his nod and when his perceptive eyes didn’t leave the hold Happy had on her wrist she murmured, "Hap."

He released her arm and then reach for face, gently pulling her to his mouth. She hummed against his lips as he left a chaste kiss on her mouth.

"Not leavin’."

"Thank you." She smiled softly. "How bout you? You hungry?"

"Mmhm." He rumbled lowly, his eyes trailing over the leggings and loose muscle tshirt she was wearing.

"Later." Harlowe kissed the snake tattoo on his head as she passed, before crouching down next to Jack to look over his near completed picture.

"That looks great, Jack." She smiled, her eyes meeting his nervous ones. "Hey, you remember what I said your first night here?"

He glanced over at Happy who was watching silently, his face neutral as Jack shook his head a bit.

"You’re safe here."

Jack seemed to think over the words, his lips scowled slightly as though contemplating just how much he trusted her word.

"Even when I’m by myself?"
"Yep, but you won’t ever be here by yourself." Harlowe gave him a smile, as her heart clenched painfully.

Happy spoke gruffly, "you by yourself at home a lot, kid?"

Jack shrugged awkwardly, his crayon back to the coloring book but unmoving. "Mom worked at night a lot."

"What’d she do?"

"Hap." Harlowe murmured nervously. She could tell the boy was becoming more subdued with every question.

"I dunno." Jack darkened the shapes he’d already filled in. "She just said she had to see her customers."

Harlowe’s jaw clenched at the casual statement knowing it meant his mother was selling herself.

"She bring.."

"I work at a bakery." Harlowe spoke over Happy, interrupting the line of questioning. "We make all kinds of yummy things."

"Like cake?"

"Yep. Every kind you can think of and we have muffins and cookies and bread. You think you’d wanna see it sometime?" She knew that Happy would be back to work soon and they would have to occupy themselves all afternoon.

"Okay."

"And you don’t remember his ma?" Jax asked through a exhale of smoke, his brows raised high.

"Nah." Happy grunted, his eyes on the soda shop window watching Harlowe and Jack sit together. It was Harlowe’s suggestion, a trip for dessert to get Jack used to his brothers. Happy was grateful but also anxious. He wasn’t fond of exposing his personal shit with just anybody, patches or not, a long lost son was as personal as it got.

The dark haired boy was eating a bowl of chocolate ice cream with blue sprinkles, while Harlowe sipped a milkshake. The pair were joined by Chibs, the Scottish man ducking his head to speak to the boy, his scars pulled up into a smile.

"That’s crazy shit brotha." Jax remarked with a shake of the head. "And it ain’t like you can tell what she looked like, kid is like a lil’ Killer."

Happy sneered at the statement, a strange sense of wrongness at the thought of Jack being anything like him. The results weren’t even back yet but he already knew he wanted more for the kid.

Something better than blood coated clothes and broken knuckle bones.

"Could check in with Forth Worth, Arnie’d probably know her." The pair stood on the curb as Jax
finished his smoke.

"No need to. Got no family and don’t need to know shit about the neglectful bitch."

After having the kid in their home for the last few days he could see the signs of neglect and overall poor parenting. Harlowe had caught him hiding food in his pillowcase. When she’d questioned him, Jack eventually explained that he always saved some for later for when they ran out of food or when he wasn’t allowed to leave his room while she had “friends over”.

Happy had to walk out of the room to keep from scaring the kid with his furious glare and muttered curse words.

"Fuckin’ skin and bones." Happy bit out, his teeth bared at the memory of Harlowe striping off his big tshirt when he spilled his milk, his body all sharp angles and deeply indent collarbones.

"I’d take her out if she wasn’t rotting already."

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"How do you feel about it?" Tara asked Harlowe as they watched the boys playing on the jungle gym in the park.

"About what?"

"Don’t play dumb."

Harlowe rolled her eyes at the woman and sank back into the bench with a sigh. "How am I supposed to feel? A few weeks ago I find out I can’t have kids and now we have a seven year old."

"I don’t care how you think you’re supposed to feel. How do you feel?"

"Hurt. Pissed off... jealous." Harlowe chewed her cheek a moment before adding, "hopeful."

"Yeah?"

"I keep thinking that maybe... maybe this is better somehow. Taking in a kid that needs us."

Harlowe watched Jack sit on the thick rubber tire swing, his little feet swaying him back and forth.

"Doesn’t make it hurt any less. Knowing Hap had a kid with someone else and even with her gone, she’s somehow in our lives. I’m just trying to come to terms with it I guess."

"You want to keep him?"

"Of course." Harlowe huffed, a wry smile curling her lips. "You know I can’t resist those damn Lowman eyes."

"You and only you, Harls." Tara sipped her coffee mug with a smile, her foot pushing the stroller back and forth to quiet her fussy daughter.

Harlowe was silent a moment, her mind drifting to the evening before when she looked into those fear filled dark eyes.

"He has nightmares."
"About his mom?"

"He won’t talk about it." Harlowe sighed, her arms crossed over her chest. "Last night though, he mentioned he dreamed he was stuck in his hiding spot and couldn’t get out but wouldn’t tell me what that meant."

"Give him time. He’ll open up when he trusts you more."

"I just want him to feel safe and I don’t want all the shit he’s been through fucking him up for life.” She leaned forward, pressing her elbows into her knees as she chewed her cheek. "He deserves to be a kid for a while longer."

"And he will." Tara reached over and squeezed Harlowe’s forearm. "You and Happy will make sure of it. Kids are resilient. He’ll move passed all the bad shit."

"I hope so."

"How’s Happy handling fatherhood?" Tara smiled at the question, picking up her daughter as she began crying. "He’s always been surprisingly good with the boys."

"He hasn’t talked about it since the first night. I think he’s waiting for the proof before he gets attached or at least admits he’s attached."

"He’s so obviously his kid."

"I know. I knew it the moment I saw him." Harlowe watched as Jack approached trailing behind Tara’s boys. His head down, his eyes on something in his hand

"Mom. Mom!" Abel exclaimed, pointing at Jack hurriedly. "He’s bleeding!"

"What?" Harlowe popped off the bench and rushed over to the boy. Taking his fisted hand, she slowly opened his palm to find a laceration running along his finger, curling around the digit.

"How’d this happen?" She murmured, taking a small towel from Tara to apply pressure to the wound. Jack shrugged at the question but eventually muttered, "the swing."

Tara took over tending to the injury as Harlowe kept close to the boy, her hand holding his uninjured one.

"Does it hurt?" Abel asked from behind his mom, his curious eyes pinned to the open wound.

Jack shrugged again, his brow furrowed and lips frowned. "Don’t matter."

Harlowe touched his chin to bring his gaze up as she spoke. "It matters, Jack. You tell me when something hurts."

"Why?" An expression of genuine confusion creasing his forehead.

"Because you shouldn’t ever hurt. It’s me and Happy’s job to make sure you’re safe."

Jack chewed his lip before asking, "why?"

Harlowe’s lips parted as she stalled on a reason, they hadn’t discussed the situation yet with the boy, both figuring they would deal with it when they had the results. Regretting it now that it had come up she settled on, "because we care about you and want to keep you safe."
"Because he's my dad." It was more of a statement than a question but Harlowe answered anyways.

"He might be, they did a test. We’re just waiting for the results."

Tara finished bandaging up his finger and then handed him a juice box. She packed her bag and headed for the bench with her kids giving them a moment.

"If he is, I get to stay?"

Harlowe smiled and asked, "would you like that?"

"Yeah." Jack nodded hesitantly, his lips scowled in thought. Harlowe let him think, much like she would with Happy when he was struggling to get something out.

"What if he isn’t?" the boy’s voice was neutral but she could see the fear in his eyes, the sight clutching at her heart.

"Then we’ll work something out so you can stay anyways."

Jack stared at her for a long quiet moment, looking for deception much like her old man would. After a long a calculating gaze Jack replied, "Okay."

The results were conclusive, Jack was Happy’s biological son. A 99.9% chance seemed like a sure shot to him, not that anyone had any doubts to begin with. They completed some paperwork and were scheduled for a visit by a social worker in two weeks to check in on the new family unit. Harlowe had arranged delivery for a new bed and dresser for the guest room that day, her shrug when he asked when she’d ordered it an answer in itself. He knew now that even if the boy hadn’t been his, Jack would still have been theirs.

The club decided, meaning Tara convinced Jax, that a welcome to the family barbecue was in order. Harlowe was all for it, but Happy was reluctant to share such personal news so widely. He was a private person and preferred to keep such details about his life to himself. The boy’s excited eyes when Harlowe had mentioned the bounce house Tara rented was enough to change his mind though. It was a rare occurrence that they got such a reaction from Jack that Happy couldn’t ignore the way his chest clenched at the sight. It was that reason that the Tacoma killer found himself standing in Jax’s backyard supervising the delivery and set up of the giant castle shaped bouncy house at five in the morning.

"Jesus." The prospect grumbled rubbing his eyes. "It’s too damn early for this shit."

"You sayin’ my kid’s not worth?" Happy rasped deeply, his dark eyes narrowed and cold.

"N-no. No." He stammered with panic filled eyes. "Of course not. H-he’s real worth it. Totally and yeah, I’ll just um help them with that."

Happy waited for the kid to jog off after the party suppliers crew to let a smirk curl his lips.

"That was just cruel, Hap." Tara commented, her arms filled with a fussy baby.
"Whatcha doin’ up?" He asked as he approached the pair, his dark eyes watching as the baby reached out towards him.

"Little Miss Princess here doesn’t agree with the whole sleep thing. She prefers to scream and cry."

"Ah." Happy reaches out and took the baby from her arms, the girl settling down against his chest. "You causin’ mama problems, huh?"

The girl’s responding gurgle and pudgy hands smacking at Happy’s cheeks had him smirking. Tara laughed under her breath as they both watched the crew begin to air up the giant castle.

"She’s gonna have all you boys wrapped around her finger before she can walk."

"She already does." Happy replied while bouncing her about to get a shrill giggle. "Right princess?"

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"Poe!" Harlowe exclaimed as the electric ramp lowered to allow the man’s wheelchair to exit the vehicle.

"Hey there, Lowe." Poe greeted, wrapping an arm around her shoulder when she hugged him. "How’s my girl doin’?"

"Good, glad you could make it down." She replied walking alongside his chair as they made the trek up the driveway to the backyard. "The drive okay?"

"Yeah." He grinned a bit as he glanced back towards his full time nurse. "Annette’s got a lead foot so we made good time."

"I do not." The woman replied before bending down to kiss his temple. "Stop making up rumors."

When the woman wandered further into the party, Harlowe cocked and eyebrow in Poe’s direction.

"Somethin’ you gotta tell me, old man?"

Poe chuckled with a slight shake of his head, "what’d you expect? No one can resist my charms. It was bound to happen."

"Right, right. Of course, how could I forget you’re the Don Juan of Washington state."

Happy joined them, his body bending down to give Poe a manly hug and kiss on the head. "Good to see you, brother."

"You too. How’s fatherhood treatin’ ya?" Poe inquired with raised eyebrows. "Never thought I’d see the day when Tacoma killer was changin’ diapers."

"Kid’s seven years old, brotha. Ain’t changing fucking diapers." Happy rasped with a tip of his chin towards the boy in the bounce house. He was jumping around with Abel and Thomas, all three laughing as they fell in a heap.

"Damn, he does look just like you. Thought Tig was exaggeratin’."
"Nope." Harlowe smiled fondly at her old man, "he’s even got his patented scowl down pat."

Poe chuckled at that and watched as the boys continued to play. "He seems to be settling in good."

"It’s going okay." Harlowe replied while leaning against Happy’s side, his arm resting heavily over her shoulders. "He’s his old man’s kid so getting him to talk is like a tooth extraction."

"Aint that bad." Happy rolled his eyes at her, his gruff response causing both to laugh.

"Yeah, you’re as open as a bible on a sinner’s lap on Sunday, Hap." Poe remarked with a grin, "Now, who’s grabbing me a beer?"

"Hey Ma." Happy kissed his mother’s cheek as she arrived to the barbecue, her neighbor having driven her up from Oakland for the day. "Glad you made it up."

"What kind of grandmother misses their grandson’s party?" Elena Lowman asked, the scowl straight from Happy’s playbook. "It’s bad enough I missed his first six birthdays."

"I told you, ma. I didn’t know about him until a couple weeks ago." Happy huffed as she scolded him for what felt like the thousandth time.

"That’s two weeks too long." Elena retorted as they entered the backyard, her hand resting on his inked forearm.

Happy sighed at her rapid Spanish scolding until she finally grew silent, her eyes on the little boy standing in front of Harlowe. She was crouched speaking to him, the boy looking on as the other kids played in the sprinklers.

"Oh, Hap." His mother’s wobbly voice brought his eyes away from the scene to see tears flooding her eyes.

"Ma." He sighed in what sounded like frustration but truthfully he just hated making his mother cry. He put a hand on her back, rubbing it comfortingly.

"He looks just like you, mio." Her voice cracked as she spoke, her fingers brushing away tears as she watched Harlowe and Jack.

"C’mon, ma." Happy ushered her further into the backyard towards the picnic table. "Let’s sit down, I’ll get you a drink."

"I want to meet my grandbaby." She grumbled as he got her situated in a patio chair.

"Yeah, yeah. You will, just sit down already."

Elena slapped at his hands as he tried to help her sit. "I can do it myself, Happy. I’m not an invalid."

"Hey, ma." Harlowe kissed her cheek after the boy joined the others in the sprinklers. Happy noticed he was still in his T-shirt while the other kids ran around in swim shorts.

"He okay?" Happy asked as they watched Jack hang back while the other kids played.
"He didn’t want to take off his tshirt."

"Why?" Happy’s mouth was downturned and eyes dark as a surge of protectiveness flared inside him. "They say something to him?"

"No, nothing like that. He wouldn’t say but I think he’s self conscious of being so skinny." Harlowe replied while handing Elena a glass of ice tea. "Here, ma. It’s hot out."

"Thank you, mija." Elena sipped it as they watched the kids slip and slide along the long strip of plastic sheeting.

Jack hung back, his eyes narrowed slightly and downturned lips. Happy felt his chest tighten with a aching need to do something but wasn’t sure for what exactly.

"He’ll be okay, Happy." His mother commented as Jack seemed to decide to take a shot at it, his body slipping across the water slide and into the grass. Happy felt his lips pull up as the boy flashed a grin before running back to the line up for another turn.

"See. He’s his father’s son. Thoughtful and brave." Her warm hand came to rest on his forearm, the skin soft and comforting. Happy cupped his hand over hers, squeezing it gently. "Thanks, ma."

"Hey Jack." Harlowe held up a soft gray towel as the kids dispersed to dry off before they went home. The boy joined her on the patio next to Happy and his mom. His eyes flicked between them, his shoulders not as stiff as when they first arrived but still cautious.

"This is Elena, she’s Happy’s mom. So that makes her your grandma."

"Oh." Jack murmured as he looked at Happy and asked, "are you getting locked up?"

"What?"

"My friend Sam, he went to his grandma’s when his dad got locked up."

"M’not going anywhere, kid." Happy leaned forward so he was eye level with the boy. "I gotta travel sometimes, for work but I always come back."

"And I’ll be here." Harlowe offered him a smile.

"I couldn’t miss your celebration." Happy’s mom finally spoke up, her smile soft and eyes watery. Jack looked confused until Elena explained, "It’s your welcome to the family party."

His brow was furrowed, as he looked back and forth between the three of them.

"Yeah, kid." Happy nodded resolutely, his intense gaze not leaving the boy to hopefully get through to him. "You’re our family now and we’re yours."

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