



MELLIE GEORGE

RENEGADE

BAD BLOODED REBEL SERIES #3

Renegade

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By Mellie George

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Once again, this book is dedicated to all the readers that have fallen in love with Ryder, Everleigh, Danni, Jessie, and all the boys of Bad Blooded Rebel as much as I have. I love telling their stories and thank you for loving them enough to let me keep doing it!

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Chapter 1

Ryder

“You’re sure that he’s stayed away from the house since the incident?” I asked Kip, one of our bodyguards, holding my phone to my cheek with my shoulder as I opened the door of the cab. I tossed a few bills at the driver, much more than the ride from the studio cost me, and nodded a goodbye.

“Eric’s been tailing him night and

day. Trust me, that asshole can't even blink or take a shit without us knowing about it. Trish is being protected, Mr. Matthews, I promise," said Kip.

"Okay, well thanks for the update. You and Nate keep watch on the house and call me if anything happens, no matter what. If that fucker even thinks about looking at the house you call me," I growled through gritted teeth.

"I will, sir. Goodbye," he said, and the line went dead. I blew out a frustrated breath and shook my head as I walked to the front door of my building, determined not to let any thoughts of that crazy fucker ruin my night.

"Welcome back, Mr. Matthews," said the doorman as I walked into my

apartment building out of the snowy January winds. “How has your day been?”

“Long,” I shrugged, brushing off my coat. The days I’d spent in the recording studio seemed longer and longer to me lately. “Is she back yet?” I asked, shaking freshly fallen snow out of my hair.

The doorman smiled at me. “Of course she is. I think she mentioned something about having dinner ready for you when you came back tonight.”

She was cooking for me tonight? My mouth watered and my stomach growled. “Well, on that note, I am getting the fuck up there,” I said, and he

laughed. “Have a good night, man.”

“Same to you, sir,” I heard him say as I jogged to the elevators. I punched the button to my floor and as soon as the doors opened I walked inside and made the long ride to the top floor.

It had been three weeks since I came to New York with my band brothers Kris, Jude, and Beau to finish recording our band Bad Blooded Rebel’s latest album and we were close to being finished. I had also asked my beautiful girlfriend Everleigh Stone to make the trip with me to New York from her hometown of Muncie, Indiana.

Shortly after I went to her hometown to find her after we met back stage at one of our concerts, Everleigh

had gone through some majorly traumatic life changes. Her father, Max, lost his battle with pancreatic cancer and then shortly after her psychotic ex boyfriend Scott Adams attacked and tried to rape her in a public bathroom of a night club we'd gone to.

While she was getting checked out at the hospital that night (and my rage toward Scott was barely containable after I'd beaten him half to death) I'd received a call from the band's manager Steve Roberts informing me that the guys and I were being forced by the label to record the remaining tracks for our album in New York City. Stanley and Rick Isaacs, the two asshole brothers

that owned our record label, wanted to be able to “keep an eye on us” and made us come here. I wasn’t about to leave Everleigh there alone and vulnerable after Scott attacked her so I asked her to come with me and thankfully she agreed. Plus, I am a selfish bastard. What man wouldn’t want the girl he loved sleeping beside him night after night?

I leaned my head back on the wall of the elevator and smiled to myself thinking about her. Everleigh was hands down the most incredible woman I’d ever known. On top of being drop dead gorgeous she was caring, sweet, and *amazing* in bed. As the lead singer of a rock band I’d had plenty of girls in every conceivable way but none of them held a

candle to Everleigh. She was so perfect in every way that every time we slept together was better than the last.

My dick started to twitch at the thought of her hot curvaceous naked body but my thoughts were interrupted when the elevator dinged, letting me know I'd reached my floor.

I'd bought my penthouse apartment in New York City years ago while we were recording our third album. I hated living in hotels when we were here and I wanted a place to call home in case we were ever in town. As soon as the penthouse went on the market I snatched it up for a good price and always stayed here when we came back to the city.

I stepped out of the elevator and walked to my front door. I put the key in the lock and turned it, letting myself inside. The smell of heaven hit my nose when I walked through the door. “Ryder, is that you?” I heard a sweet voice call out.

“Yeah, gorgeous, it’s me,” I said, taking off my leather jacket and hanging it on the hook by the door.

“I’m in the kitchen. Dinner’s almost ready,” Everleigh called out. I smiled and walked through the spacious living room into the kitchen.

Everleigh was standing in front of the stove, stirring a small pot of what looked like gravy. I leaned against the

door frame as she put the finishing touches on our dinner. She had her long midnight hair pulled up into a messy bun with a few curls falling down her long neck. She was wearing her “naughty teacher” glasses, had on a pair of jeans that hugged her curvy hips, and one of my Bad Blooded Rebel tee shirts that she loved to wear tied at the waist. She looked so sexy that I almost started drooling.

Just as she took something out of the oven, she looked up at me and smiled. “What is it, rock star?”

“Nothing. You just look so fucking adorable in my shirt that I’m having trouble keeping my gun in the holster.”

She giggled and smiled. “Well,

you are going to have to because I made a pot roast, homemade mashed potatoes, asparagus, and fresh yeast rolls. Dinner first, sex later,” she said.

“You promise?” I asked, closing the distance between us and placing a kiss on her neck.

She shivered and I grinned. “I promise. Come on, let’s eat.” She gave me a quick kiss and picked up the bowls of potatoes and asparagus and walked into the dining room.

I picked up the basket of rolls and a chilled bottle of wine that was sitting on the counter and followed her. “Is there anything you want me to do?” I asked, placing everything on the table

that was set like we were at a restaurant.

“Oh no, I’ve got this. Just sit down and get comfortable while I go get the roast.”

I groaned and shook my head.

“Everleigh, you aren’t my waitress. You don’t have to do everything, you know. I do have two hands, I can help,” I called out as she disappeared into the kitchen.

She quickly reappeared carrying the roast, which smelled incredible, and after she placed it on the table, she said, “I know you can, but I like to do this. I cook and you clean. We both win.” I smiled at her and I held out the chair for her to sit in. “Thank you. Besides, it keeps me busy while I’m here since I don’t have a job to go to now.” She

looked at me over her glasses and half smiled.

I took my seat across from her and said, “Everleigh, you still have a job. You know Deuce said your job is safe until you go back to Muncie.”

“I know that, Ryder. I just get bored here while you’re in the studio all day. Danni’s still back in Muncie for now so I can’t hang out with her and Jessie will be in Cincinnati for a few more days before she comes here so I’m all alone most of the time.”

“Evie, baby, if you want to get out of the penthouse you can. You can go anywhere you want as long as you-”

“Take John with me. I know, I

know,” she sighed. “It’s just a little embarrassing that I can’t go anywhere without a bodyguard.”

I frowned at her. I wish that the girls had come to New York with us so Everleigh wouldn’t be alone but I also had my own reason for wanting them here. When we all came to New York we all assumed that Danni would be coming along as well but, surprisingly, she didn’t.

Danni had told Everleigh that she and Beau had both agreed to keep this a casual thing and she decided to stay in Muncie. Beau was being Beau and was too proud to admit that he’d fallen hard for Danni, and she was apparently doing the same thing. They both were totally

into each other but neither wanted to cave and admit their feelings had went any deeper.

Jessie and Kris's wedding was a few months away. They were planning on getting married in our hometown and there was a lot to do on that end. Since Kris couldn't be as involved as he wanted to be the burden fell on Jessie. It was up to her to handle the planning and she had a few things to finalize in Cincinnati before she flew to New York.

We both added food to our plates and I moaned as I took my first bite. I loved Everleigh's cooking almost as much as making love to her...almost. "Evie, sweetie, you know you can come

with us into the studio. I'd love for you to be there and see us record."

"I'd love that too but I am afraid I will be a distraction for you."

"No, you will be motivational for me. Not only would I get to impress you with my awesome skills but I'd be motivated to hurry the fuck up, get you back home, and then get your sexy ass naked," I said, and she giggled. "I hate that you are here alone all day. Promise me you'll think about it?"

"I will, I promise. Now eat before I have to punish you," she said, grinning.

It took all the self control I had to keep the fork in my hand and not clear off the table and fuck her right then as she winked at me and took a bite of her

food. She moaned as she slowly pulled the fork out of her mouth, licking her lips. I narrowed my eyes playfully at her and told her, “You’re in fucking trouble, gorgeous,” and I took another big bite of my food.

She repeated her slow bite again and said, “I hope so, rock star. So how was your day?” We sat at the table eating our dinner like a normal couple, making conversation and just enjoying being with in each other.

I loved this...having a nice, quiet dinner with my beautiful Everleigh as the snow fell down on the New York City streets. I was also a little sad because our album was almost finished

and we would be leaving the city sometime in the next few weeks. I'd been so busy in the recording studio that I hadn't gotten to show her the sights and I knew she was bored here in the penthouse all day.

I knew Scott wasn't in New York but I still wasn't taking any chances with Everleigh's safety so every time she went out she left with John. She felt embarrassed to be out with him. She didn't think it was necessary so she hadn't left the penthouse much while we'd been here. Tonight, I was off early enough that I planned on taking her out and showing her a good time.

Once we were finished eating, Everleigh stood up and started to clear

the plates. When she reached for mine, I grabbed her wrist to stop her. “What is it, Ryder?” she asked me.

“Clean up can wait,” I said.

“Dinner’s over so now I want my dessert.” I took the plates from her hand and carelessly set them on the table. I led her around the table to face me.

“Come on, don’t you want to at least clear the table first?” she asked me, biting her lip to hide her smile.

I grinned wickedly at her and stood up. I turned to face the table and with a long swipe of my arm I sent all the dishes flying. I heard Everleigh gasp as dishes went soaring through the air before crashing to the floor. I cocked my

head to the side and grinned at her.

“Table’s clear,” I said and before she could move I picked her up and set her on the table.

She squealed as I nestled my waist between her legs. “You are so bad, rock star,” she said, playing with the bottom of my tee shirt.

“But I’m about to be so, so good, gorgeous,” I said. I removed her glasses before I hungrily crashed my lips to hers. She whimpered into my mouth and our tongues met, gliding in perfect unison.

I broke from her lips for one moment to trail kisses down her neck. “Evie, you look so fucking hot in my shirt. You know what would make it look even better?”

“Hmm?” she moaned.

“If it was in a pile on the floor,” I said, right before I stripped the shirt off her body and tossed it to the ground. She smiled as my eyes took in her gorgeous full breasts that were barely contained by an emerald green lacy bra. “Damn you’re beautiful,” I said, then I leaned in, burying my face in between her perfect heaps and began kissing her soft as silk skin.

She leaned her head back and moved her arms from my shoulders to find the strap on her bra. She quickly unfastened it and her beautiful breasts sprang free as she slid out of the bra. I moved my mouth in search of one of her

perfect nipples but she stopped me.

“Wait,” she stopped me, “I want to try something.”

I grinned at her. “And what’s that?”

She shoved against me and stood on the floor. She moved me around to the table and gave me a gentle shove so I was now sitting. “There’s something I’ve always thought was hot and I want to try it. Is that okay?”

I laughed. “Evie, you can do whatever the fuck you want to me,” I said, and I kissed her for a moment before she broke away from me. I took my shirt off and threw it next to the other shirt on the floor.

“Lie back,” she whispered, and I

did as she asked. I watched her as her hands found my belt buckle and she quickly undid my pants. I growled and balled my fists as she tugged my pants down and grabbed my cock which was already rock solid. Ever since we'd gotten to New York going commando was the only way to go. This way my gun could be locked, loaded and ready to aim at a moment's notice.

“Fuck, Evie,” I said as I watched her stroke me up and down with both hands. I watched her with wide eyes as she looked at me and smiled before lowering her mouth to my dick and taking me in as far as she could.

I leaned up a little and watched

her sucking my dick in and out of her mouth...it took all I had now to come right then. She must have felt me start to thicken and she let me go suddenly. Standing before me she slowly unbuttoned her pants and slid them down, taking the emerald green panties she had on with her. She was standing before me completely naked and beautiful and my cock twitched at the sight of her.

I thought she would climb on top of me, one of my favorite positions since I got to watch her grinding on my cock, but she didn't. Instead she leaned down in front of my dick and moved her breasts close to me. "Touch me, Ryder," she whispered, guiding my hands to her

breasts.

“You’re so fucking beautiful, Evie,” I said, kissing her for a moment and kneading her soft curves with my hands. She moved from me and guided herself down to my cock again. I watched her with my mouth slightly open as she grabbed her breasts and wrapped them gently around my hard dick. I moaned loudly as I watched her move my erection between them.

She closed her eyes and moaned as my dick moved up and down between her breasts. I didn’t think I’d been that hard in my life watching her pleasuring me this way. “Do you like this?” she whispered.

“Fuck yes!” I groaned out, thrusting my hips up and urging her to go faster. I felt a bead of pre come start to seep out of the head of my dick and I felt like I was getting close. I was about to pull away and put her on the table and fuck her hard but before I could move I watched her mouth lower and she took the tip of my dick into her mouth.

As fucking amazing as it felt, I knew if she kept it up I was going to empty myself inside of her mouth. I gently shoved against her and she leaned up, a pout on her face. “Why do you always stop me, Ryder? Maybe I want to feel you let go...I like how you taste,” she said, a blush creeping across her

beautiful face.

“I know, baby, and we will do that soon, I promise. I just can’t take another minute without being inside you,” I said, scooting off the table and sitting in the chair. “Come here, gorgeous.”

She moved over to me and I guided her leg over my waist. She moved on top of me, straddling my waist. “Ryder,” she panted, “I want you inside me.”

“Still taking your pill?” I grunted, wanting to be buried inside her with a desperate need. I knew that sex with her using protection would be just as incredible as it always was, but since we’d been sleeping together Everleigh was always on the pill so I tossed all of

my condoms out. I was so hard and ready for her right now that it would kill me to have to stop.

Everleigh nodded and panted, “Yes.”

The corner of my mouth turned up into a smile and I said, “Then take what you want, baby,” I said, shifting her hips and gently pushing inside of her.

She screamed out in pleasure as she slid down my cock until I was deep inside her. She shifted her hips to get comfortable and when she started to move I almost blacked out. “God, Ryder! You feel so good!” she yelled.

“That’s right, baby, ride it,” I growled and guided her hips faster as

she moved around on my dick. “You love fucking me, don’t you?”

“Yes!” she screamed.

“Tell me you love it,” I said, my teeth gritted. *Fuck* she felt good.

“I love fucking you, Ryder!” she cried out. In the past three weeks I’d gotten Everleigh to open herself up so much more when it came to sex and I finally got her to start being more vocal of what she liked and didn’t like. I almost blew my load too soon the first time she told me to fuck her hard. It was the hottest thing I’d ever heard her say.

She continued to rock her hips into me and I felt her start to clench around my cock...she was close. “Oh God, keep going, Ryder! I’m going to come!”

“Come on my dick, baby,” I growled out and released one hand that was gripping her ass and gave her a hard smack. Her eyes went wide and looked into mine and for a moment I thought she might be upset but she wasn't. Her eyes rolled back in her head as she cried out in pleasure.

“Oh God, I'm coming!” She threw her head back and I sucked on her neck while her body was shaking from her orgasm.

“Fuck yes,” I moaned, “That's right baby, I want it all.” I was close to my own orgasm and seeing her moaning and panting from riding me that's when I completely lost it and exploded.

“Ryder, yes,” she whispered as I came hard inside her. “I love when you come inside me.”

Breathing heavily I said, “Me too, baby. I love you so much.”

Her deep whiskey colored eyes locked with mine and she said, “I love you too, Ryder.” She kissed me passionately for several moments, showing me the depth of her love for me. “This was so amazing.”

“Never had sex in a chair I take it?” I asked, smiling.

She grinned at me. “You know I haven’t. There are a lot of things I haven’t tried until I met you,” Everleigh said.

“Trust me, baby, there’s so much more I want to show you.”

“Oh yeah? Like what?” she asked, smiling.

I had already planned on taking her out and showing her some fun but I actually had a surprise for her and I wasn’t sure how she was going to react. I guess there was only one way to find out. “Well, would you be up for going out with me tonight?”

Her face lit up. “Of course I would! Where did you want to go?”

“Actually, I remember something about you wanting a tattoo...” I started and I never got to finish my sentence because she gasped loudly and leaned in

to kiss me.

“Really? Did you make an appointment?”

“Hell yes I did. This guy has done most of the memorial tattoos I have for my parents so I knew he was the only guy that would get your tattoo right,” I said. Just after we came to New York, Everleigh had mentioned to me that she wanted to get a tattoo and she wanted her first one to be a memorial piece for her father Max. She’d mentioned maybe having his first guitar he played in high school on her right hip with a saying around it. When I took the idea to my guy he nailed it right away.

“Oh my god, I’m so excited! When is the appointment?”

I looked at the clock on the wall.

“In about forty minutes,” I told her.

“Shit! Let me go get cleaned up and I’ll be right back,” she said, standing up slowly. Before she went to our room to get changed she leaned down to me and said, “Thanks, rock star,” and kissed me before she excitedly ran down the hallway.

I smiled and ran my hands through my hair. As I stood up I took in the sight of the mess I’d made of all the dishes and left over food. My instinct was to clean it up but seeing how excited Everleigh was to get her first tattoo made me shake my head and say, “Fuck it, it can wait,” as I followed her down

the hall to get some clothes and grab a quick shower myself.

An hour later Everleigh and I were at Ink Dungeon waiting for Jake Riggins, a bad ass tattoo artist and a good friend, to come out and take us back. I had made the appointment for Everleigh but I didn't tell her I'd made one for myself as well. I really hoped she wasn't going to freak out but I planned on getting "rock star", her nickname for me, tattooed across my knuckles and her name tattooed on the inside of my left ring finger. Everleigh was my heart and soul and even though I told her often enough

how much I loved her hopefully this would show her.

Everleigh was bouncing back and forth in anticipation. “You okay?” I asked her, smiling.

She nodded. “I am more than okay. I know this is going to hurt but I am just so freaking excited,” she said, grinning like I’d never seen her grin. “This was something Daddy and I always joked about doing together. I always complained about the needles but he told me to stop being such a baby about it. He would have been so proud of me right now,” she said with a nostalgic look on her beautiful face.

“He *is* proud of you, Evie,” I said.

“I hope so. You know what the best part of all this is?” she asked.

“What, baby?”

“I get to pay for it,” she said, grinning.

I cocked an eyebrow at her. “You think so, huh?”

“Oh, I know so. I got a thousand dollar tip at my job about a month ago from this really hot lead singer in a pretty famous rock band so I can definitely afford it,” she said, grinning.

I smiled at her. “Shit...I was hoping you’d forgotten about that,” I said, referring to the first day I showed up in Muncie and left her a one thousand dollar tip with my phone number tucked

inside the money as a way to get her to call me.

“I’m a girl, Ryder. I don’t forget,” she said, smiling.

“Come on Evie. You hardly ever let me buy you anything. Let me do this for you,” I said.

“Think of it this way. Whether it’s this money or not, either way you are paying for it, rock star.”

I grinned. “Yeah, I guess you’re right. Well played, Miss Stone,” I said, giving her a quick kiss.

Just then the curtain pulled back and Jake came walking toward us, a big goofy smile on his face. “Well if it isn’t the second sexiest motherfucker in the world!” he shouted. “What is *up*, man?”

How the hell have you been?” Jake was a good looking guy and got about as much action as I used to and was giving Jude a run for his money. He had jet black hair that he wore kind of long and shaggy (I loved to tease him and call him an Emo bitch boy with a tattoo gun), *really* blue eyes, and an eyebrow and lip ring like I did. In addition he also had a bull ring through his nose along with two dermal piercings in his cheeks.

“I’ve been good, bro, I’ve been really good,” I said, shaking his hand and pulling him into a back pounding hug.

As soon as Jake released me his eyes flicked to Everleigh and he gave

her a quick once-over before he turned his eyes to mine. “Yeah, I can see that,” he said, a big smile on his face. “So, this must be your girl, huh?” He cocked his eyebrow and stared at her like she was the hottest thing he’d ever seen.

“Eyes in your head, tattoo boy,” I said, slapping the back of his head and he laughed. “Jake, this is my girlfriend Everleigh Stone. Evie, this is Jake Riggins. He’s the one that’s doing your tattoo tonight. That is if I don’t break his fingers.”

Jake laughed and held his hand out to Everleigh. “It’s nice to meet you Everleigh. Sorry to hear about your dad,” he said and Everleigh smiled sadly. “I’m actually really honored

Ryder asked me to draw this up for you.”

“Well, I am glad that you are willing to do it. I’ve seen Ryder’s tattoos and they are really beautiful. I can’t wait to see what you came up with.”

Jake held his hand out and pointed to the curtain. “Well, step into my office and let’s take a look,” he said, showing us the way. Everleigh went first and I heard Jake whisper to me, “Damn dude! How did a shithead like you get a smoking hot chick like her?”

I grinned at him and whispered back, “Easy. I have a monster sized cock,” I joked, and he laughed.

“Seriously, man, she’s fucking killer. Hang on to her because I might snatch her up if you two ever hit the skids.”

“Okay, joke time is over. You are about to tattoo her naked hip. I was serious about breaking your fingers, dude,” I said, patting him on the arm a little harder than I probably should have.

“I’m just messing around. Come on, let’s look at the drawing,” Jake said and we all went back to his tattoo room.

Chapter 2

Everleigh

Once we were back in Jake's room, he wasted no time in showing me the picture he drew up of my tattoo. When my eyes landed on the intricate picture he'd drawn of my dad's old guitar surrounded by clouds with the words "Love Is The Most Important Thing" above the clouds I started to cry. I can't believe Ryder remembered one

of the last things my Dad said to both of us and the fact that he made sure that Jake got the design just right...I loved this man beyond words.

“So, I take it the tears are a good sign?” Jake asked me.

Ryder put his arm around my shoulders and I said, “It’s beautiful, Jake. It’s exactly what I wanted.”

“Great. Ryder said you thought about getting it on your hip?”

I nodded. “That’s right. I was thinking about maybe having it here,” I said, lifting my sweater and tugging on my jeans to show the spot barely on the front of my right hip where I wanted the tattoo.

“Nice placement, Everleigh. It’s

going to look awesome when we're finished. Plus, you're pretty fair skinned so your skin will take this like a dream," he said. "Why don't you lie down on the chair while I get set up?"

"Okay," I said, suddenly getting nervous. God this was going to hurt. Thank God Ryder was with me otherwise I'd be chickening out.

I took my place in the chair and Ryder sat in a chair next to me. "You nervous?" he asked me, smiling.

"Just a little bit. Can you hand me my cell phone? I want to call Danni really quick."

"Sure thing, Evie," he said to me and gave me my phone. I quickly dialed

Danni's number and she picked up on the second ring.

“Ev? Hey girl, what's up?”

“Oh, I'm just chilling. Guess where I am right now?”

“In bed with Ryder's dick in you?”

I scoffed and laughed. “God, Danni, no. I'm at a tattoo parlor.”

She gasped. “Shut the fuck up! You are not!”

“I am. I'm losing my tattoo virginity,” I said, smiling.

“I promise I'll be gentle,” I heard Jake call over his shoulder and I giggled.

“Shut the hell up, dude,” Ryder said.

“Who was that?” Danni asked.

“That was the tattoo artist. His name is Jake.”

“Is he hot?” she asked, and I rolled my eyes.

“I guess so,” I answered, “but he’s no Beau.”

She sighed. “Ev-”

“He misses you, Danni. Why are you two being so stubborn?” When we all came to New York I had assumed Danni would be coming with us but to my surprise she decided to stay behind. She told me that since this was a just a fling with Beau that she didn’t want to be too clingy so she stayed in Muncie while we all left for New York. I know

that Beau was being just as stupid when it came to Danni...they both missed each other and neither of them was going to be the first to budge. It was irritating.

Ryder had convinced her to come and spend the last few weeks here in New York City with all of us and I was so happy. He said he wanted her here so I wouldn't be alone but the truth of the matter was we were all sick of Beau's mood swings. Hopefully seeing Danni would make them both snap out of their self inflicted grouchiness and they would be together again.

“Because this thing between us was just a week long no strings deal, Ev. We both knew that. I bet he doesn't miss me like you think,” she said, sounding

like she was trying her hardest to be defiant.

“I bet you’re wrong. I see him all the time, Danni. He’s been moping around and being kind of a dick to the guys. I am the only one he seems to be nice to.”

“I doubt it has to do with me. I’m just some girl from Indiana and he’s a sexy rock star. There is no way he’d give that all up for a small town girl like me.”

“Daniella Elizabeth Sharpe!” I yelled. “How can you say that about yourself? You are so beautiful and funny and smart...Beau’s an idiot if he doesn’t fly back to Muncie and bring you here.”

“I appreciate all of that, Ev, but it is what it is. I’m fine, really. I’m okay being his friend. So, enough about me. What is your tattoo going to look like?” she asked, effectively changing the subject.

I sighed. “You know what? I am going to make you wait until you get here this weekend to see it since you are being a brat.”

“Hey, I’m ready whenever you are,” said Jake and he lightly tapped me on the arm.

“Okay. Danni, listen, Jake’s ready to get started so I have to go. I’ll see you soon,” I said.

“Good luck, Ev! I’ll see you

Friday! Love you, babe!” she said.

“Love you too, girl,” and I hung up the phone. I had never gone this long without talking to Danni and I couldn’t wait to see her.

As soon as I put my phone away Jake immediately got to work and rubbed something that looked like an antiperspirant stick on my hip. Next he placed a piece of what looked like tissue paper on my right hip and asked, “Is this where you want it?”

I nodded at where he put the paper and said, “Yes, right there.”

“Okay then, let me just get this on here,” he said, and after about twenty seconds he pulled the paper away and I saw what looked like a temporary tattoo

on my hip. Jake held up a mirror to show me the design on my hip. “Do you like the placement?”

I looked at the temporary tattoo and got misty eyed...this was going to be beautiful. Nodding, I said, “It’s perfect.”

He picked up his tattoo gun in one hand and held a wet folded paper towel in the other. “You ready, Everleigh?”

I took a nervous deep breath. I grabbed Ryder’s hand and looked into his gorgeous blue eyes. “I’m ready.”

Ryder smiled at me and said, “Just squeeze my hand when it hurts, okay baby?”

I nodded and quickly squeezed my eyes shut as I heard the buzzing of the

tattoo gun. Jake stretched my skin slightly and said, “Here we go,” and I felt the first sting of the needles as they touched my skin. It burned and stung but it wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be.

I opened one eye and looked at Ryder, who was smiling wider at me. “What is it?”

“I was just thinking I hope I can still play my guitar tomorrow after this,” he laughed, and I opened my other eye and looked at the hand I was holding. My knuckles were white and his fingertips almost looked purple from how hard I was squeezing him.

I released my hand and said, “Oh, Ryder, I’m sorry. I didn’t realize I was squeezing you that hard.”

He leaned in and kissed my forehead. “It’s okay, gorgeous. How are you doing? Does it hurt?”

“Hell yes it does,” I said, laughing and he and Jake chuckled. “But it’s not as bad as I expected.”

“Well Jake’s the best around and he’s pretty quick which is a good thing for him right now because he can’t stop peeking at your rack,” Ryder said, shooting a playful look at Jake. I felt heat rise in my cheeks as I heard Jake laugh.

“I’d deny it, Everleigh, but who the hell am I kidding? My eyes have a mind of their own. Nice, by the way,” he said, laughing. I knew that Jake must be harmless because Ryder hadn’t punched

him but I still felt a little uncomfortable at the fact that the guy tattooing my bare hip had been staring at my tits.

“Dude, knock it off,” Ryder said, flipping him off.

Jake shook his head and laughed as he kept working on my tattoo. I found myself chuckling at the two of them... they really had a strange friendship.

About two hours later the tattoo was *finally* finished and I was thanking every God there was that it was over. Jake had just finished wiping the leftover ink and blood from my skin before he and Ryder helped me stand up.

“Okay, Everleigh, you’re all finished. Go take a look and tell me what you think,” he said.

I stood in front of the full length mirror in Jake’s room and once my eyes landed on my new tattoo, I broke down in tears. The tattoo was breathtaking...it was the most beautiful thing I’d ever seen. It was done in all black and gray and a little bit of white. My dad’s guitar was perfect right down to the last detail, the clouds looked strikingly real, and the words stood out so perfectly that it made my chest ache to look at it.

“J-Jake...this is...p-perfect,” I said and before I could stop myself I wrapped my arms around his neck and

hugged him. “Thank you so much.”

He hugged me back for a minute and laughing he said, “You’re welcome, beautiful.”

I released him and fell into Ryder’s arms. “Thank you for bringing me here Ryder. I love you so much,” I said, crying hard. I hadn’t really cried like this since the day of my dad’s funeral but seeing this tattoo in all its perfection had made something shake loose.

He held me tight as I cried for what felt like forever. I cried for my dad and for what we’d never get to do together...giving me away at my wedding, dancing with me at my reception, becoming a grandfather for

the first time, watching my babies grow...it all hit me in that moment.

After I cried out everything I had been bottling up, I pulled away from Ryder's tear soaked shirt and looked at him. "I'm so sorry, I ruined your shirt."

"You didn't Evie. Don't apologize. And I love you too, gorgeous," he said, and he kissed me.

He was wiping the tears from my cheeks when Jake cleared his throat. "Sorry to interrupt, bro, but are you ready?"

He smiled at me and said, "Yeah, I'm ready."

Blinking away a few more stray tears, I asked, "Ready for what?"

“You’re not the only one getting ink done tonight, sweetheart,” he said, winking at me and taking a seat in Jake’s chair.

I sat down in the chair next to Ryder and asked, “So, do I get to know what you are going to get?”

“Yes and no,” he said.

I stared at him, dumbfounded.

“Well, which is it?”

“I am getting two tattoos but I’ll tell you one of them,” he said. When he told me he was getting “Rock Star” tattooed across his knuckles I grinned brightly. “The other one is a surprise.”

I leaned in and kissed him deeply as Jake changed the needles out and got

everything ready for Ryder's tattoos. "I can't wait to see what it is."

"Love you, baby," he whispered to me.

About forty five minutes later Ryder's knuckles were finished and they looked beautiful. He'd had them done in Old English script and with his other tattoos on his arms it worked well. I loved that he'd gotten something that reminded him of me.

Jake and Ryder made me turn my back as they did his other tattoo but they both promised me it would only take about ten minutes to do. I was nervous as

to what it could be and the anticipation was giving me butterflies in my stomach.

“Come on you guys! Aren’t you done yet?” I asked, tapping my foot.

Ryder chuckled and said, “Okay. Turn around gorgeous.”

I spun in my chair to find Ryder holding out his left hand. I thought for a moment he wanted me to hold it but then my eyes landed on his ring finger. I gasped as I read “*Evie*” in beautiful cursive script spelled out in fresh ink on the inside of his finger.

“Ryder,” I whispered, my eyes filling with tears again.

“Do you like it?” he asked.

My fingers instinctively reached

out and lightly touched his newly tattooed skin. “It’s beautiful. I can’t believe you did this,” I said, my voice cracking.

“Why wouldn’t I do it? Everleigh, I love you so much. You’re it for me. I wanted Jake to put your name on my ring finger to show you that you are my whole world, gorgeous.”

Tears were still spilling from my eyes as I leaned in and kissed him. I didn’t care that Jake was watching and snickering...I couldn’t believe he did this. I had always thought when someone got a tattoo of their significant other names it was bad luck, but seeing my name on Ryder’s ring finger in beautiful black script made my heart feel so full.

“I love you so much,” I said.

“Love you too,” he repeated.

Jake cleared his throat. “Okay, are we done with the PDA? I need to clean up and that’s kind of hard to do with you staring at Everleigh like you’re about to knock her up in my chair,” he laughed, nudging Ryder’s arm.

I pulled back from him so Ryder could stand. “I’m sorry, Jake,” I said.

“Don’t apologize to that ass clown, Evie,” Ryder said, smiling. “You ready to head home?” He looked at me with eyes full of desire.

I shivered. “Definitely,” I said, and he cocked his head to the side and grinned. “But first I need to pay Jake for

my tattoo.”

Jake shook his head and held up his hands. “Oh no, babe, this one was on the house. Ryder’s my boy and even though I’ve been teasing the shit out of him all night I’m happy to see him settled down with a sweet girl.”

“Oh no, Jake, I can’t do that. You took time out of your schedule to do this for me. Please let me pay for it,” I said, holding out the cash Ryder had given me a few weeks ago. “Take it.”

Jake smiled and shook his head again. “No way, babe.”

I turned to Ryder and stared at him with my mouth hanging open. “How hard is it for someone to take this damn money from me?”

“Why are you trying so hard to get rid of it?” Jake asked me, laughing. I told him the story of how Ryder gave it to me as a tip with his cell number stashed inside it and he laughed even harder. “Damn dude, you must have been off your game. Sounds a little desperate to me.”

“Fuck you, Jake. Evie’s not a groupie or a rock slut. I had to do something a little out of the ordinary to get her to call. Who the hell cares anyway? It worked, didn’t it?” he asked, pulling me into his side.

I looked up at him and smiled.

“Yes it did.”

“Hey, listen, we all need to get

together and hang out while you and the guys are still in town,” Jake said, and he reached out his hand to Ryder. I stepped to the side and let them have their man hug.

“Definitely, bro. Thanks for getting us in tonight.”

“Not a problem. You know you are at the top of the list, dude.

Everleigh,” Jake said, turning to me, “it was really nice to meet you. Thanks for letting me do your tat. It looks bad ass on you.”

I leaned in and gave him a friendly hug. “Thank you for making it special. It’s perfect, Jake.”

He gave me a quick squeeze.

“You’re very welcome, beautiful. Don’t

forget your aftercare instructions. I'm sure Ryder can help you out if you need it," he said.

"Thanks again, man. I'll call you soon," Ryder said, giving Jake another back pounding hug and we left the tattoo studio arm in arm.

Later that night we were lying in bed together naked and wrapped in each other's arms. The snow was still falling outside as our breathing returned to normal. It had been tricky to make love when both of us had brand new tattoos but we managed just fine.

“So,” I asked, lying on my side and tracing one of the tattoos on his sculpted chest with my fingertip, “you and Jake seem to have a strange friendship. How long have you known him?”

Ryder chuckled and kissed my hair. “I’ve known Jake for six years. We were touring with Eternal Down at the time and their lead singer Jagger is Jake’s cousin. I was looking to get a piece done for my dad and Jagger suggested I check him out, so I did. The rest is history.”

“Do you two usually joke like that? I’m surprised you didn’t punch him when he admitted to checking out my

boobs,” I said, feeling redness creeping into my cheeks.

Ryder sighed and ran his fingers through my hair. “I wouldn’t worry about him, he’s harmless. Whenever we were in New York we all used to hang at clubs together. Jude, Jake, and I all had a little rivalry going when it came to how many girls we could get in one night. Jake and I used to try and land the same girl and made it a competition to see who could get her first. He’s a really great guy but he was just trying to push my buttons since I’m off the market,” he said.

“He seems cool, but I have to admit it made me feel a little weird. Ever since the incident with Scott-”

“Shh, Evie,” Ryder said. “We don’t have to talk about him. That prick will never touch you again.”

“I just...ugh, I don’t know. I just feel like even though we are here in New York Scott can still get to me somehow.”

Ryder sat up and looked at me. “Everleigh, he is still in Muncie. He cannot get to you. Trust me on this,” he said.

“I do trust you. I just know that even though he’s still there he’s out of jail. Danni is there alone and Trish is by herself at my house. I’m sure he knows by now that I’m gone and I have a feeling he might try and find me. It

wouldn't be hard," I admitted.

"Let him come. If he so much as tries to touch you again he will be going back to Muncie in a body bag," he said, his jaw clenched. "Let's not talk about that fucker anymore. I want to spend the rest of the night getting lost in you." As Ryder began to kiss his way down my neck all thoughts of Scott were tossed out of my head. I really hoped Ryder was right and that Scott couldn't hurt me anymore but I couldn't shake the feeling that the attack in the club was just a sneak peek at what was to come.

Chapter 3

Ryder

The alarm on my cell phone went off and I groaned. I could feel Everleigh's gorgeous body wrapped around mine and I smiled before I even opened my eyes. I was about to turn my alarm off and say fuck the recording studio and spend the day rolling around in bed with her but before I could I felt her moving. "Come on, time to get up rock star," she whispered, kissing my

bare chest.

Everleigh started to sit up but I held onto her. “No...just ten more minutes. Don’t make me move,” I whined like a child.

“Don’t be a baby. You have to be at the studio by nine so you need to get a move on. I’ll go start the coffee,” she said, wiggling out of my arms and climbing out of bed. “Is there anything you want for breakfast?”

As I watched Everleigh move to the dresser I’d bought for her I sat up and rested my head against the headboard. “Yes. I want your sexy ass back in this bed. I want you lying on your back with those awesome legs in the air and my face between them,” I

said, looking right at her.

She shivered and I could see goose bumps starting to form on her skin. “Ryder...we can’t. Come on, don’t say things like that, you know what it does to me.”

“Of course I do...you know I never play fair. Come back to bed, baby,” I pleaded. “Let me get a taste of you before I have to go.”

I could see that she was tempted but she also wasn’t one to be swayed when it came to my music. She had become so supportive of the band lately and wanted this album to be finished as much as we all did. However, judging by how she was glaring at me I wasn’t

going to win this one. “Ryder, we have all the time in the world for that, just not this morning. If you get there early enough maybe you guys can be finished in enough time for us to have some fun later,” she said, winking at me.

As she slipped into a pair of black panties and one of my old tee shirts I knew I wasn't going to get lucky this morning. I groaned in defeat and dragged my ass out of bed. “You don't have to make me breakfast this morning, Evie. I'll just grab something on my way to the studio.”

Her brows furrowed and she frowned. “Are you sure? It's really no trouble.”

“I'm sure, but thanks,” I said,

walking to her and kissing her lips lightly before I grabbed a pair of boxers from my top drawer. “You know, there’s still time for you to get dressed and come into the studio this morning.”

She walked into the bathroom and pulled out a toothbrush. After she put paste on it she ran the toothbrush under cold water and said, “I don’t know, Ryder. I told you that I am afraid I’ll be a distraction.”

I turned on the shower nozzle and as I waited for it to get warm I said, “Evie, I’m telling you that you won’t be. In fact I really want you to hear the new stuff we’ve been working on.” I stepped to her and stuck my bottom lip out.

“Please?” I was actually desperate to get her out of the apartment today because I had planned on surprising her at the studio.

Everleigh thought Danni was flying into New York City this weekend but I knew she'd been lonely in the apartment so I had arranged for Danni to fly in today. Her first stop after leaving the airport was going to be the recording studio. Hopefully her arrival would not only make Everleigh happy but Beau as well. One more day of his whiny attitude and I was seriously going to punch him.

She quickly finished brushing her teeth and spit out the paste into the sink. Sighing, she said, “Okay fine, but if I'm in the way you have to tell me.”

I crossed my finger across my chest in an X shape. “I promise to tell you if you are being a pain in the ass.”

“Thank you. I’m going to let you get your shower and I’ll go get ready,” she replied as she quickly kissed my lips.

“You know, you could join me. It would save time and conserve water,” I said, cocking an eyebrow.

Her mouth turned up in a smile and she said, “Yes and it would make you about fifteen minutes late to the studio because you wouldn’t be able to keep your hands off of me.”

“I don’t give a shit if I’m late, Evie. Let them wait a few minutes,” I

said, my voice lowering an octave. I grabbed her hand and pulled her toward me. Before she could protest I pulled my shirt from her body and tossed it to the floor.

I thought she would try to convince me to be a good boy and be on time to the studio. Instead she quickly slipped out of her panties and pressed her beautiful curvaceous body against me as she slid my boxers down my waist. I grinned and pulled her into the large walk-in shower where we made love against the cold tile walls.

An hour later I was in the

recording studio getting ready to record my vocals for one of the last songs that would be on the album. I wrote it a few days after I first met Everleigh and I was nervous for her to hear it. It was called “Haunting Me” and it was the first ballad that Bad Blooded Rebel would be releasing.

Rick and Stanley had expressed concern over us “going soft” but I didn’t give a shit if they liked it or not. The only person in the world I wanted to impress was Everleigh.

Before the guys and I headed into the recording booth, Everleigh gave me a kiss. “Good luck rock star. Just pretend I’m not here,” she said. “I think

I'm going to call Danni while you are busy.”

I touched her arm to stop her.

“Wait, Evie. Can you listen to the song before you call her? I kind of wanted your opinion on it.”

Smiling brightly, she answered, “Really?”

“Of course. Go take a seat at the mixing board and when it's over tell me what you think,” I said, kissing her forehead before I walked into the booth.

The guys were already waiting with their instruments and Jude gave me a smile. “So, you finally got her in the studio, huh? How many times did you have to lay the pipe on her to get her to agree to come?”

I flipped Jude off. “Shut the fuck up, man. I didn’t need to do that. I just simply asked and she said yes.”

Kris looked in Everleigh’s direction and smiled. “She looks like she’s doing okay,” he stated. “She seems happy here with you.”

I grinned at him. “I hope so, man. There are no words to describe how much I love that girl out there.” I stepped toward the microphone and placed the headphones around my neck. “I actually have a good reason for bringing her here today though.”

“Yeah? And what’s that?” Beau snapped, irritatingly plucking a few strings on his guitar.

I sighed at his shitty attitude. One more day of this and I was going to kick his ass hard. “Well, I know she’s been bored and hasn’t wanted to leave much because I make John go with her everywhere, so I am flying in a little surprise for her today.”

“What’s the surprise?” Kris asked.

I looked at Beau, who was still strumming his guitar and not paying a bit of attention to me, and said, “Danni.”

In an instant his head shot up. “W-what did you say?”

I fought back a smile. “I’m flying Danni in today. She was planning on coming this weekend anyway but I know Everleigh has been lonely so I called

Danni and we decided to surprise her.”

Beau shifted in his seat and I saw a mixture of happiness and nervousness in his eyes. “Well, that’s good. For Everleigh, I mean,” he said. He stood and took his usual place at my side with an air about him I hadn’t felt for three weeks. “So, are we doing this song or what?”

I exchanged hopeful looks with Kris and Jude. Hopefully seeing Danni would bring Beau out of his funk and he’d stop lying to himself about how he felt about her.

“Yes, let’s do this thing. Lyle, we’re ready when you are,” I called out to a chubby man sitting next to Everleigh at the mixing board.

He pressed the button for the microphone and said, “Ready out here. Let’s do this.”

Thankfully I had already recorded my guitar solos for the track so all I had to do was sing. I blew a nervous breath as I looked at my beautiful Everleigh. She was watching us with interest and when our eyes locked, my heart jumped. I smiled and mouthed “*I love you gorgeous*” before the guys started to play behind me.

As soon as I started to sing I could feel Everleigh’s eyes on me. I didn’t want to crack so I just closed my eyes and let the words pour out of me.

*I've been haunted by those eyes
Since they ripped through my
soul
And tore down all the walls I'd
built
Around my heart and now I need
more*

*I've been haunted by that smile
And the brightness that it brings
How I long to taste those lips
And for you this song I sing*

*Since I came to know you
You became mine
You've been in my dreams every
night*

Your face stopping all time

*Since I looked into your soul
I know now who I'm meant to be
I need to make you see
That you are haunting me...*

As soon as the song was over I opened my eyes and found Everleigh's. They were full of tears...tears I'd gotten to know well over the past few days. They were happy tears...she was touched.

I felt a hard clap on my back and Jude said, "I think you nailed that shit, bro."

"Thanks man." Standing up, I took

off my headphones and placed them on the stool I had been sitting on. I didn't waste another second as I walked out of the recording booth to Everleigh. I grabbed her hand and pulled her out of the chair and into my arms. Without saying a word I leaned in and kissed her lips, which tasted sweet from her lip gloss and salty from her tears.

“Ryder,” she whispered when she caught her breath, “that song...”

“Did you like it, Evie?” I asked, kissing the tip of her nose.

“It was beautiful,” she said, sniffing. “Did you really feel that way when we first met?”

“Of course I did. You took my breath away that night, baby. I swear my

life changed the second you rolled your eyes at me,” I said, and she huffed out a laugh.

“Mine did too, Ryder. I loved that song. It was amazing, really.” She leaned up and kissed me.

The door to the recording booth opened and I heard Jude’s voice say, “What about me? Where’s my kiss?”

Everleigh giggled and smiled. Stepping away from me she wrapped her arms around Jude’s torso and hugged him. She gave him a quick kiss on the cheek and said, “You were good too, big guy.”

“Thanks, sis.” He kissed the top of her head and let her go.

Kris and Beau joined us and Everleigh said, “Seriously, you guys, that song was so incredible. You are all so talented. I can’t believe this is the first time I’ve heard you all play since the concert in Cincinnati.”

“Hey, that’s right,” I said. “So, is it safe to assume you are a Bad Blooded Rebel fan now?”

She smiled at me and answered, “For the rest of my life, rock star.”

Two hours later we’d hammered out two more songs and we all decided at that moment to break for lunch. It was

perfect timing because when I checked my cell phone I had a text message from Danni letting me know that her cab had just pulled up and she was on her way inside the studio. She also told me that she was bringing a surprise of her own for Kris. It just so happened that she'd run into Jessie at the airport once she got off the plane and they were coming together.

“So, where do we want to go for lunch? We can try that deli on the corner we had last week,” Jude suggested.

“Or we could have Chinese,” Kris said.

“What about you, Everleigh? What are you in the mood for?” Beau asked, seemingly more chipper now than he'd

been since we came here.

Everleigh smiled at him and said, “Um, I don’t know. Whatever you guys want is fine by me. I’m not picky.”

I wrapped my arm around her waist and made sure her back was turned away from the door so she really would be surprised. “Come on, baby, there has to be something you are in the mood for.”

I looked up and at that moment the door opened as Danni came walking in with a bright smile on her pretty face. “Well, personally, I think Italian sounds good,” she said.

Everleigh’s eyes went wide and she gasped. Smiling at me, she spun

around to see her friend standing at the door. “Danni?” she squealed. “Oh my god, girl, what are you doing here?” She broke away from my embrace and ran to hug Danni.

“Ryder flew me in early to surprise you, Ev! Isn’t that awesome?” Danni answered excitedly. I noticed that she seemed to be struggling not to sneak a glance at Beau, who was standing in the corner of the room looking anxious.

“That is so awesome! I’m so glad you are here, I’ve missed you so much,” Everleigh said. After she broke apart from Danni she came quickly back to me and threw her arms around my neck. “I can’t believe you did this! It’s amazing, Ryder, thank you,” she said, smiling so

brightly that I thought the lights in the room would dim.

“Well, I know you’ve been lonely here and you’ve missed her so I just thought I’d fly her here early. Are you surprised?”

“Very surprised. Thank you, Ryder.” She pulled my head to hers and kissed me, quickly sliding her tongue past my lips and touching it to mine.

“Ugh, God you two, get a room,” Jude joked and our lips broke apart. Everleigh backed away with a smile as Jude turned to Danni. “Hey, Danni, nice to see you again.”

Danni smiled at him and said, “Nice to see you too, Jude. Beau,” she

said politely, “it’s good to see you as well. You look good.”

Beau swallowed hard and said hoarsely, “You too, Danni. You look amazing.”

“Thanks,” she said timidly. They stared at each other for a second, their eyes full of a mixture of both desire and conflict. After a quiet moment her eyes reluctantly left Beau’s and she looked at Kris. “Kris, it’s nice to see you too. How have you been?”

Kris grinned at her. “I’ve been okay. You know, doing the drummer thing and waiting for Jess to get here. I can’t believe I’m actually jealous of this fucker over here, having his girl here with him every day,” he said, smiling at

me and giving me a playful shove.

Danni and I both glanced at each other and she smiled at me. “Oh, hey, that reminds me. I left something in the hallway. Hang on,” she said, and opened the door. She motioned her arm inward and said, “Look who I ran into when I got off the plane.”

The door opened wider and Jessie stepped through smiling. Everyone grinned at her but Kris immediately shoved past me, taking a few wide steps to her. Before she could get out, “Hey baby,” he pulled her into his arms and planted his lips on hers in a very steamy kiss.

Smiling, I chuckled as they were

kissing and moaning. “And you said me and Evie needed to get a room,” I joked to Jude.

Kris flipped me off as Jessie pulled away from him, smiling. “You surprised, babe?” she asked him.

“Hell yes I am. I’ve missed you so much,” Kris said, pulling her into another kiss. Breaking from her only for a moment, he said, “Um, I think we are going to skip lunch today. You guys go ahead,” he murmured, pulling her out into the hallway.

Jessie giggled and called out, “Hi Everleigh! Bye Everleigh!” as Kris dragged her down the hall.

Laughing, Everleigh yelled back, “Bye Jessie!”

I wrapped my arm around her waist and kissed the top of her head.

“Okay, well, how about just the five of us head out to lunch?”

Hugging me around my torso she said, “That sounds like a plan.” Then she kissed my neck and whispered into my ear, “I can’t believe you did this for me. Just wait until I get you home, rock star.”

I felt my cock twitch at her words...I couldn’t wait to get her back to the apartment and let her thank me properly.

Chapter 4

Everleigh

“So, Danni, how’s everything been back home? Is the diner still standing?” I asked, taking a bite of my lasagna.

“Everything has been great. It’s been busy, but not as busy as it was when these guys first showed up in town,” she said, taking a sip of her wine. “It’s kind of died down lately.”

There was something I was dying

to ask her about but I knew Ryder would try and stop me because he didn't want me to worry. I figured I was safe in a group of people so I took a deep breath and just bit the bullet. I squeezed Ryder's hand and smiled at him before asking, "And what about Scott?"

Ryder's head snapped to mine but I couldn't look at him. "Evie..."

"Come on, Ev, we don't have to talk about him. That asshole is back in Indiana and we are here away from all that crap," Danni said.

I shook my head. "No, I need to know what's going on. Ryder has Trish watching my house and after what he did I don't feel comfortable knowing she's there unprotected with him out on bail.

Please tell me.”

Ryder shot Danni a warning look and now I was even more suspicious.

“Ryder, she needs to know what’s going on.”

“Danni, don’t,” he warned.

Fear shot down my spine and I turned to Ryder and glared at him. “What happened? Ryder Matthews, you better tell me what’s going on right now or I’m leaving.”

He exhaled sharply and ran his hand through his hair. “Damn it, Danni,” he said, looking frustrated at her. “Fine. About a week after Trish came to the house to watch it Scott tried to break in. She wasn’t hurt but he threatened her and

it scared her enough to call the police. We have security watching the house now around the clock.”

I tossed my fork down on the table and turned to face Ryder. “He tried to break into my house two weeks ago and you didn’t tell me?” I questioned, my voice loud.

At that moment Jude scooted his chair from the table and stood up. “Listen, maybe we should give these two a minute. Danni, Beau, you guys want to come with me?”

“Sure,” Beau said, standing and immediately moving toward Danni and pulling out her chair. “We’ll be right outside,” he said, motioning for Danni to follow him.

Once they were out of sight, Ryder spoke. “Evie, don’t be pissed at me, okay? I didn’t want to stress you out any more than you have been.”

“And you thought keeping something like this from me wouldn’t stress me out? Did you think I wasn’t going to find out?”

“I knew you would find out eventually but you’ve been more relaxed and you’ve seemed so happy here that I didn’t want to do anything to mess that up. Nothing else has happened since the incident and I have people watching Scott too. He’s not come anywhere near Trish or the house since that happened.”

I knew Ryder was trying to protect

me and make me feel better but if anything I felt even more terrified. Not only had Scott tried to break into my house, he obviously had been looking for me and now he knows that I'm gone. I nervously ran my hands through my hair. "Ryder, did he hurt her?"

"No, he didn't. Ever since Scott attacked you at the club," he paused, sucking a harsh breath through his gritted teeth, "Trish decided to keep a gun with her and as soon as he saw it he freaked and took off like a little bitch. My guys that are tailing him check in with me every day and he's laying low now so he won't get arrested again. I promise you he's not going to do anything to hurt her and he can't get to you. Do you trust me

to keep you safe?”

“I do trust you, but-”

“No buts, baby. I will do anything I have to do to keep that cock sucker away from you. He will never hurt you again, okay?” he said, taking a strand of my hair and twirling it in his fingers.

I nodded my head, still uncertain that I was truly safe. I think until Scott was permanently behind bars I wouldn't be able to relax and feel at ease no matter how hard Ryder tried. “Okay.”

“Listen, I think our recording session is pretty much finished for the day. Do you want me to take you and Danni home so she can get settled?” he asked me.

I nodded again. “Yeah, that sounds fine,” I said with a frown.

“Okay,” he said, tossing a few large bills on the table. “Let’s go tell everyone we’re going to head back home.”

I scooted out of the booth and as soon as I stood, I felt a cold chill race down my back again and the hair on my neck stood on end. I quickly turned my head around, looking for what could have caused that reaction but I found nothing. It almost felt like someone was watching me but I didn’t see anyone. I was getting paranoid...I needed to calm myself down.

After Ryder helped me into my

coat, we walked outside where Jude, Beau, and Danni were all standing in a group. “Hey you two,” Danni said, “everything okay?”

“Yeah, it’s fine. Listen, we were going to head back to the apartment and get you settled in. Are you ready to go?” I asked her.

Beau looked like he obviously didn’t want her to go and looked at Jude, almost pleading for a reason to keep her out. “Actually, since this is Danni’s first time in the city, I was thinking maybe Beau and I can show her the sites while you two have some alone time,” Jude said, winking at me.

“Come on, we have alone time every night. I’ve missed my best friend!”

I whined.

Danni smiled at me. “Ev, you look tired and I’m guessing that no matter what Ryder said to you in there you’re still worried. Go back with him to the apartment and let him take your mind off of everything,” she said, nudging me. “Jude and Beau will make sure I get back to you both safely.”

“Well, let us take your luggage for you then so you don’t have to lug it around all afternoon,” I said and she nodded.

“Okay, thanks, Ev. I won’t be gone long, okay? I’m sure we have a lot to talk about and I still want to see that tattoo of yours,” she said, grinning.

Jude's eyebrows shot up. "You got a tattoo? Virgin skin isn't so virgin anymore, huh? What did you get? Where is it?" he asked.

Ryder flipped him off.

"Somewhere you will never see, ass wipe. You have fun today," he said, nudging Danni on the arm. He turned to Beau and said, "Make sure she gets to the penthouse in one piece."

Beau looked pointedly at him but before he could answer, Jude interrupted. "Yes sir," Jude said, saluting Ryder. He held out his arm and Danni weaved her arm through it. "Let's go, little lady. We've got some sightseeing to do."

Looking thoroughly annoyed, Beau tapped my arm and gave me a wave. “See you later, Everleigh,” he said before walking after Jude and Danni.

Ryder turned to me and held out his hand. “Are you ready, baby?”

I furrowed my brows together and reluctantly placed my hand in his. “Yes, let’s go,” I said, letting him lead me to find a cab.

As soon as we were at the penthouse, I walked through the door then Ryder closed and locked it behind me. I had barely unbuttoned my coat

before I felt his big warm hands sliding it off my shoulders. “Evie, you haven’t said anything since we left the restaurant. Please talk to me, baby,” he said, kissing my hair as he took my coat the rest of the way off.

I shrugged my shoulders and said, “There really isn’t anything to say.”

“I know you are upset with me for keeping the break in from you, but-”

“Upset?” I said, my voice a little more shrill than I had intended. “I’m not upset, Ryder. I’m terrified,” I admitted, my bottom lip quivering. “My friend who has become a second mother to me was at my house when my ex boyfriend broke in. If she hadn’t been carrying a gun he might have attacked her and done

God knows what to her and you felt like you didn't need to tell me just to keep me happy. Well, news flash, rock star. I'm not happy." Angry tears started to fall down my cheeks.

Ryder moved closer to me and tried to wipe my tears but I backed away. Frowning, he said, "Everleigh, I was only trying to protect you. I know I should have told you but in the past month you have lost so much and I didn't want you to lose anything else. I only want to make you happy."

"Ryder, if we are going to be together, you have to know that you can't keep secrets from me, no matter how big or small they are. I would never keep

something like this from you,” I said.

“I know, baby, I know. I’m so sorry if I hurt you by not telling you. I promise I will tell you everything that happens with Scott from here on out, I promise,” he said, sounding a little desperate. “Please forgive me, gorgeous?” He took a step toward me again and instead of backing away, I stayed still.

As he closed the distance between us I whispered, “Don’t lie to me again, Ryder. Please. I love you and I will always be honest with you. Please give me the same respect from here on out.”

Wrapping his big, strong arms around me, he pulled me as close as he could and leaned into my lips. With his

lips barely touching mine, he murmured, “I will. No more secrets.” Then he softly covered my mouth with his own.

As scared as I still was and as much as I wanted to resist him in that moment, my body gave me away and I just couldn’t fight him. Ryder was so intoxicatingly sexy that I had no strength around him. He owned me, body and soul. I opened my mouth to him, inviting his tongue inside. I whimpered as his hot, sweet tongue danced with mine and I felt myself melting into him.

“Evie,” he groaned, breaking our kiss for just a moment, “let me make love to you?”

Panting, I nodded. “Please,” I

answered him, gripping his shirt with my fist. At that moment I wanted nothing more than to forget about Scott, at least for a little while.

He swallowed hard and in one swift movement, he lifted me into his arms and carried me to the bedroom. As soon as we were inside, he carefully placed me on the bed. Gently nudging me back, he covered my body with his hot heavy one and placed his lips on mine again.

Our sex life had become very hot and vocal lately but the way Ryder was being with me right now, so sweet and loving, was already making me drenched. It was like he was apologizing not only with his words but with his

body as well.

As his fingers slowly traced the curve of my breast, I felt my nipples pebble beneath my bra. It was suddenly very confining and I couldn't think of anything but getting it off. I let go of Ryder and started to pull my shirt up but he stopped me.

“Let me,” he said, his voice animalistic. He leaned up and I automatically raised my arms. He slowly pulled my top off and tossed it to the floor. I reached back and unsnapped my bra and quickly tossed it to the floor next to my shirt. I started to pull him roughly back to me but he laughed softly and said, “Slow down, gorgeous. We have

all afternoon.”

“I know, but I want you. I appreciate that you want to take your time with me, Ryder, but my body is screaming for you right now and I can’t stand it. I need you,” I moaned.

He smiled a crooked smile at me and sighed. “Okay, I think we’re at an impasse here, so I say we compromise.”

I blinked at him in confusion.

“Compromise?”

“You want this fast and hard and I want to go slow. How about we both get what we want and experiment with something new? Something we’ve never tried before?”

Tingles shot down my spine and I felt like I was going to start drooling.

“Like what?” At this point I was so turned on and wanted him inside me so badly that I would probably agree to pretty much anything.

He smiled and walked to the nightstand. “I bought a few things when we first got here and I’ve been waiting to ask you if you might want to try them. Do you trust me?”

“You know I do, Ryder,” I answered quickly. “I know you would never do anything that would hurt me.” Taking a deep breath, I asked, “What did you want to try?”

He pulled out a little black bag from the nightstand and brought it back to the bed. Sitting beside me, he took

each item out of the bag one by one while I studied them. There was a bottle of personal lubricant, a black silk blindfold, a pair of handcuffs, something that looked like a massager, and something else that looked like a silver bullet with a handle on the end. “What... what is all of this?” I asked, my mouth watering at the sight of everything. I squirmed in my seat, my body already burning with desire.

He picked up the one thing I didn't recognize and said, “Well I'm pretty sure you can figure out what most of this is but this,” he said, holding up the little bullet-looking toy, “is an anal plug. I know that you are very inexperienced in most areas of sex but I will admit to you

that this is something I really want to ease into trying with you.”

I gulped and took another deep breath. “H-have you ever done this before?”

He looked down for a moment before his eyes met mine and he said, “Yes I have, but it’s been with women that have had anal sex and were experienced. I’ve never done this with someone that hasn’t done it before. If you don’t want to try this you don’t have to, but if you do this little plug will help you get a feel for what it will be like with me when the time comes.”

My cheeks felt hot and I reached out and took the little plug into my hand.

“So, obvious question here, but how will you fit? You are a pretty big guy,” I paused and he smiled, “and most of the time you have to make me come in the middle of sex just for you to fit right. Won’t that hurt?”

He tucked my hair behind my ear and said, “I won’t lie to you...it will probably hurt and burn when I first go in, but that’s what the plug and the lubricant will help with. I can use my fingers to loosen you up and then when I slide the plug in it will help stretch you even further. Then, if you like the feel and you want to continue, we can try full anal sex. Once you get past the burn and it’s all the way in, it will be the most intense pleasure you’ve ever felt.” I shifted even

more...just talking about this was making me so wet I was about to explode. “We don’t have to do anything at all, Evie, and the decision is yours. If you don’t want to, then the plug and the lube are gone and all talk of this is over and won’t be brought up again. But, if you want to try, we will start slow and ease into it. I promise I will do everything to make this as easy and pleasurable for you as possible.”

I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that Ryder would never, ever hurt me and he was always trying to make sex incredible for me (in which he was always successful). I trusted him completely and I wanted to make him as

happy as he'd made me. I bit my lip shyly and said, "I want to try."

He raised his eyebrows. "Really? You're sure?"

I nodded and stood up. Unzipping my jeans, I pulled them down along with my panties until I stood naked in front of him and said, "I'm sure. I'm already yours, Ryder, and I want to be in every single way. I trust you with my life and I want to try this with you."

A feral growl escaped his lips and he pulled off his shirt. He stood in front of me and shrugged out of his pants and soon we were both naked and panting, his strong length bobbing up and down between us. He pulled me to him and I gasped at the feel of our warm bodies

pressed against each other. He moved me back to the bed and I crawled backwards toward the middle, lying on my back and my legs falling apart.

He wasted no time in getting things going and he touched me around my wet folds before quickly moving his mouth down and pressing his tongue hard onto my clit. “Mmm, I’ll never get tired of the way you taste. Best I’ve ever had,” he moaned between licks.

I twisted the blanket on the bed in my fists and arched my back. I cried out as his sinful tongue kept moving faster and faster until I was on the verge of collapse. “Oh God...”

He slid two fingers into me and

started to move them around. “Let go, baby. Come for me,” he said, and his words were my undoing. I exploded in a strong orgasm and he moaned loudly and lapped up every bit that erupted from me. “So responsive to me. We’re off to a good start, baby,” he said, his breath against my sensitive skin giving me goose bumps. I started to grab for him, unsure of what I wanted him to do next, but he said, “Turn over.”

My legs felt like jelly as I rolled my satisfied body over until I was lying on my stomach. I felt his hard, hot body cover mine and just as I turned my head I felt his lips kissing their way from the base of my spine all the way up until he reached my lips. He thrust his tongue

into my mouth and I groaned as his body rubbed against mine, his hard cock nestling right above my ass. “Are you still sure you want to try this with me?” he asked, carnal desire in his voice.

“I’m sure Ryder,” I breathed, wiggling my hips into his body.

He moved off me for a moment and I heard him say softly, “Lift your hips.”

I did as he asked and raised my hips into the air, keeping my head down on the bed. His hands found my ass and he massaged my cheeks sensually for a few moments. “I love you so much, baby,” he said to me. He leaned down and I could feel his breath on the small

of my back. “It means the world to me that you trust me so completely.”

“I will always trust you, Ryder. I love you too,” I panted.

I waited with bated breath for him to make his first move and when I felt his hot wet tongue glide between my ass cheeks my eyes rolled back in my head and I moaned so loud I almost shouted.

“You like how this feels don’t you, gorgeous?” he murmured, continuing to lick up and down around my ass.

“Y-y-yes, oh god yes,” I moaned. I couldn’t believe how incredible it felt to be tasted in such a seemingly forbidden place. It was intoxicating.

“I’m going to try and stretch you

with my finger. Are you ready?" he asked, his voice husky and full of want.

I nodded into the blanket. "Yes, Ryder, I'm ready. Please," I begged as I clawed at the bed. He must have picked up the bottle of lubricant because I heard something squirt into his hand and something warm roll down around my ass. He massaged me for a few moments before I heard him say, "Here we go," and as his strong rough finger started to enter me in a place no one had ever been my eyes shut tight as pleasure overtook any nervousness I had.

Chapter 5

Ryder

As my finger found its way into Everleigh's perfect ass I felt her start to shake...she was already enjoying this and we'd barely begun. I wanted this so much with her...to claim another part of her that hadn't ever been touched by anyone but me. When she agreed to try this with me I almost came off looking like a pussy and shed a tear. For her to

trust me with something this huge meant everything to me.

My dick was so painfully hard feeling her responding to my touch that I was having a hard time not coming right then and there. My finger slid in and out of her with ease and when I was bold and added a second finger, the lubricant worked well and I had no problem helping her stretch more. “Oh my fucking God, Ryder!” she screamed out as I moved my fingers in a back and forth movement.

Once I had her good and stretched out, I said, “Okay, I’m going to insert the plug. You ready, baby?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” she yelled. I smiled to myself as I put more lubricant

on the plug and as soon as I withdrew my fingers quickly and slowly eased the plug into her.

Everleigh went still for a moment before she cried out and leaned into my body. I thought she would collapse down on the bed but she shot up onto her knees and brought her arm back, wrapping it around my neck and pulling me into a hard and desperate kiss. She grinded her ass into my dick as I moved the plug gently in and out of her. “This feels good, doesn’t it?”

“God yes,” Everleigh cried out. “Please, Ryder, I want you. I want to try.”

“Not this time, baby. You need to

be eased into this slowly and even after this you might be a little bit sore.”

She moved and shifted, obviously needing some kind of release from the pleasure. I moved around her so I was in front of her and I lay back on the bed, taking her with me and moving her on top of me. “Ryder, please,” she begged again. “I need...I need you.”

With my hard dick in my hand I guided her closer to me. “The pleasure is building, isn’t it, gorgeous?” I roamed my hand down and skimmed my fingers across her swollen clit and she gasped.

She nodded her head and bit her lip. “Yes, I...I can’t take it, I don’t know...I need you so fucking bad!” she screamed.

I smiled at her and guided her until the tip of my dick was resting right at her entrance. I sat up and looked at her in the eye. “Then I’m going to fuck you until you come, baby. Right before you let go for me I’m going to take the plug out and you will have the most amazing orgasm of your fucking life,” I growled. Her beautiful brown eyes went wild as I thrust my hips up and slammed my cock into her searing heat.

She threw her head back and whimpered, “Yes!” as I moved her hips with mine. Everleigh was on the verge of another orgasm already and seeing her losing control for me like this had me on the edge of my sanity. Everleigh moved

and grinded around on my dick as I continued to thrust in and out of her, my fingers gripping her curvaceous hips as if I were holding on for dear life.

“Please, don’t stop, I’m almost there,” she cried out.

I was about gone myself so I reached around and without warning gently slid the plug out of her. At that moment she was lost and she screamed out as I felt her orgasm flood her entrance and roll down onto me. I had never felt her have such an intense orgasm and knowing it was because of something she trusted me to make her feel sent me over the edge and I came hard inside her.

She collapsed on top of me in a

boneless heap as we both came down from our orgasmic highs. “Oh lord, Ryder, that was incredible,” she said, breathing heavily and trying to catch her breath.

“Hell yeah it was. You were so fucking sexy the way you responded to everything. It’s going to be mind blowing when we finally try the real thing,” I said.

She traced one of my tattoos on my chest and said, “Why didn’t you want to try that this time? I know you talked about starting slow but I really thought we would have at least tried it.”

“As much as I want to this was your first time doing anything like this.

Like I said, you might be a little sore this time and you really have to ease into something like this, especially since my dick is a little bit on the bigger side,” I said, grinning with pride.

She giggled and sighed. “Well, thank you for being considerate of me. That really felt unbelievable.”

“I’m glad you loved it, Evie. There are so many more things I want to try with you.”

She propped her head on her elbow. “Oh yeah? Like what?”

“Well, there is the blindfold and the handcuffs. I’d love to watch you get yourself off with that massager too,” I said, and she blushed. “But one thing I would love to do with you is role play.”

“Role play?” she asked, cocking an eyebrow and smiling. “Like what, me in a French maid costume?”

I laughed. “No, not like that. Kind of along the lines of you are a vixen in a bar and I am a mysterious stranger that picks you up and takes you back to my place for a night of passion. That kind of thing.”

Everleigh laughed. “Well, I don’t know about that, rock star. That seems a little strange to me.”

I smiled at her. “Well I’m sure that what we just did might have seemed strange to you at some point too but you were willing to try and you ended up loving it.”

“True,” she said, nibbling on her bottom lip and smiling.

“Look, we can talk about that later. One thing at a time, gorgeous,” I said, wrapping my arms around her bare back and rolling us onto our sides. I kept my arms around her beautiful body and just held her against me as we both drifted off into a nap, our bodies completely relaxed and sated.

I woke a while later to the sound of Everleigh’s cell phone ringing. I felt her stirring as she moved to grab the phone that was resting on the nightstand.

I threw my arm over my eyes as she answered her phone. “Hello?”

Groaning, I decided to go ahead and get up, knowing I should probably get dressed since Danni would be coming to the penthouse at some point. I picked up my phone and looked at the time. Everleigh and I had been asleep for nearly four hours. Just as I was putting my phone back down and readying myself to stand, I got a text message. It was from Jude.

Bringing Danni back now. Feel like hitting the gym with me and Beau?

I ran my hand through my hair and sighed. We all worked out to keep our

bodies in shape but usually if Beau did it he was working through some of his past demons with his father or sexual frustration. Knowing that he had feelings for Danni and apparently neither one was about to budge, I knew that he was probably looking to somehow calm his libido that had been on standby since we left Muncie. I also knew that Everleigh was dying for some time with her friend so I decided to meet up with them and get in a good workout. I answered him back with,

Sounds good bro. I'll meet you there in a bit.

As soon as I put my phone back down, I heard Everleigh hanging up hers as well. “Everything all right?” I asked her, standing up and stretching.

She looked at me and smiled before standing up and grabbing her panties off the floor. “Yeah, that was Danni,” she said, sliding into them before she grabbed her bra. “She’s on her way here.”

“I figured. Jude just texted me and asked if I wanted to hit the gym with him and Beau. He probably wants to work off some of that pent up sexual energy,” I said.

As Everleigh continued to get dressed, and shook her head and snorted

out a laugh. “Probably. I know Danni misses him but she won’t admit to it. ‘It was just a week long thing,’” she said, mimicking Danni’s answer. “I wish those two would get it together. She thinks that he doesn’t want her as bad as we all say he does, but she doesn’t understand what he’s been like all this time without her.”

I slid into a pair of sweat pants and pulled a tank out of my dresser. “I know. He’s been a whiny bitch.”

Everleigh looked at me, her eyes narrowing slightly. “Ryder, don’t be mean.”

“Come on, he’s been a pain in the ass, admit it. Beau could have probably any girl he wanted to take Danni off his

mind but he hasn't been with one girl since we left Muncie. Why is that? Because he's fallen for her and he doesn't *want* to take his mind off of her.”

“I think you're right, Ryder, but there is nothing we can do about it. They have to work it out on their own,” Everleigh said, pulling on her shirt.

“I know,” I sighed. “So, are you two going to be okay here while I'm gone at the gym?”

Everleigh rolled her big brown eyes in the way I loved so much and smiled. “We will be fine. It's just going to be the two of us talking about you and Beau,” she laughed.

“I'll bet. Well, if you girls do

decide to leave, make sure you-”

“-take John with us. I know, I know,” she answered, walking to me and giving me a quick kiss on the lips. “Have fun on your little bromantic date at the gym.”

I chuckled and kissed the top of her head. “Thanks, and you have fun hanging with Danni talking about kissing boys and make up and pantyhose and shit,” I said, and she laughed out loud.

Just as we broke apart from our embrace there was a knock on the front door. Everleigh’s face lit up and she smiled brightly. “That’s probably Danni,” she said, and I laughed to myself as she happily took off down the hallway toward the front door.

I followed her down the hall and smiled as I saw her open the door and pull Danni into a hug. “Hey girl, I’m glad you’re here!” Everleigh said, pulling Danni into a hug.

“Me too, girl!”

“How was your afternoon out with the guys?” Everleigh asked her.

“Oh well, it was...you know,” Danni said, smiling politely and shuffling her feet. The way she was looking at Everleigh meant that it was time for some girl talk, so I took that as my cue to head out.

“Okay well I’m going to go meet the guys. You have fun with Danni,” I said, pulling Everleigh to me. I leaned

down and kissed her lips, making sure to shamelessly slide my tongue past her lips.

“I will,” she answered breathlessly. I loved that I could still get that reaction from her from just one kiss.

“Make sure to let me know if you girls decide to head out, okay?” I asked.

Danni smiled at me. “We will, Dad,” she laughed.

I ruffled her hair with my hand. “Bye, smartass,” I said, and I kissed Everleigh one more time. “I’ll be back soon, gorgeous.”

“Take your time, rock star,” she said and I walked out the door with a wave.

About fifteen minutes later I arrived at the gym where Beau and Jude were already working out. I placed my bag in my locker and quickly found Jude lifting weights and Beau lifting barbells next to him. “What’s up guys?” I asked, sitting at the weight machine next to Beau and getting started. “You been here long?”

“Not too long. Maybe twenty minutes or so,” Jude said, grunting as he kept a steady pace with the weight machine. My eyes drifted over to how much weight he was lifting...two hundred and fifty pounds. Fuck, I better

remember to always stay on his good side. He could probably knock my ass out with one punch.

“So, did you both have a good time with Danni today?” I asked, starting my weights out at one hundred pounds.

Jude laughed. “Well, I had fun with her. Beau on the other hand...” he trailed off.

“Shut up, man,” he growled, keeping pace with the barbells.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Nothing,” Jude said, shaking his head. “Beau barely spoke to her and when he did he sounded like a fucking idiot.”

I took several deep breaths as I kept up my pace. “Beau, seriously, what

the hell is up with you man? I know Danni's not some random girl but we've all never seen you act like a pussy over a chick. What's going on?"

Beau stopped lifting the barbells for a second and took a deep breath. "I'm not acting like a pussy. This is just the first time I've been with a chick longer than a day or so and I don't know how to do the 'after' thing," he said. "It's kind of pissing me off."

Jude and I exchanged looks and we both stopped lifting weights. "Danni's a great girl, bro. Why does that piss you off?" I asked.

Breathing heavily, Beau said, "I don't know. I mean, I like Danni a lot

and I've definitely missed hanging with her but..."

"But what?" Jude asked, grunting and starting to lift his weights again.

"Before we left Muncie I was starting to see myself doing the relationship thing with her and it freaked me out. I guess I should be glad that she decided to back out while it was still pretty new but everything feels fucked up now."

I kept my pace with my weights as I said, "I guess I get what you're saying. I wanted Everleigh from the moment I met her and it really freaked me out. I tried to fuck some random groupie the night of the concert but I couldn't keep my dick hard. Ever since that night it's

just been Everleigh. If Danni is that girl for you, grab her and hold on, dude.”

Beau shook his head and picked the bar bells back up. “That’s just it though, man. Danni’s beautiful, funny, sweet, and incredible in bed but I don’t think I’m ready to be a one woman guy yet. This whole thing is just crazy,” he said, lifting the weights again.

“Well, why don’t you do what Ryder tried to do? The only way to know if she’s the one you want is to hook up with a girl.”

I glared at him. “Jude, what the hell? I did that *right after* I met Everleigh thinking I’d never see her again, not weeks after we’d already

slept together. I honestly was just looking to get off to try and shake the feeling Evie gave me but it didn't work.”

“Exactly. Finding a girl and hooking up might help him see what he really wants. If he can't go through with it he'll know for sure that Danni's the one,” Jude said.

I started to protest, not wanting Danni to be hurt by Beau just going out and fucking some random girl, but before I could Beau opened his mouth and said, “You know, that's not a bad idea.”

I stopped lifting weights and glared at both of them. “Are you serious? You would really risk something with her just to get laid?”

“It's not just about getting laid,

Ryder. It's a test to see if he can go through with it. If he can't then he will know if he's really in love with Danni," Jude said.

"But if he does go through with it then he's not only going to fuck up a good thing with a good girl, it's going to piss Everleigh off and I'll have to beat his ass. I told you whose side I'd be on if it came down to this. I love you like a brother, Beau, but Everleigh is my entire world and something that hurts her hurts me too. Are you willing to risk this?" I asked.

Beau put the bar bells down again and sighed. "Look, it's worth a shot. I'm not going to sleep with anyone, okay? I

just need to know if this thing with Danni is lust or...something more. If I feel like hooking up with a girl tonight then I will still stop it, at least until I talk to Danni. I promise, okay?" he said. "Everleigh has become a good friend to me too and I don't want to do anything to hurt her. I just need to know."

Shaking my head, I stood up.

"Well, you two are on your own because I think that this is going to be a disaster. I'm going to take a shower and head out. Let me know if I need to kill you next time I see you," I said, picking up my bag and heading to the showers. Damn Jude and his big fucking mouth.

I showered quickly. After I was dressed I checked my phone and saw I

had a message from Kris.

So Jess was dying to see Everleigh and Danni so I'm currently going stag, ha. U wanna grab a beer, maybe shoot some pool?

I wasn't ready to head back to the penthouse yet because I wanted Everleigh to have time with her friends so I sent him a text back.

R: U asking me on a date, big boy?

K: as sexy as you think u are, u really aren't my type, ha

R: think? Shit, I know I'm hot,

bro, haha. Where do u wanna meet?

*K: The Rock Steady? I think
Eternal Down is in town playing there
tonight.*

*R: sounds good, meet you there in
ten.*

I grinned as I dialed Everleigh's number to let her know where I was heading. It would be nice to see Jagger and the guys again and hopefully make me forget about Beau's dumb ass plan.

Chapter 6

Everleigh

“Okay, Ryder’s gone. Tell me what happened with Beau today,” I said to Danni the minute Ryder walked out of the apartment.

“Geez, can I at least take my coat off?” Danni laughed, shrugging out of her coat and smiling.

“Come on, Danni, don’t keep me waiting. You two haven’t seen each

other in three weeks and you have both been miserable since then. Tell me.”

Sighing, she placed her coat on the hook by the door and motioned toward the couch. “All right. It was fine,” she said, following me to the couch and sitting beside me.

“Fine? What does that mean?”

“I mean it was just fine. He really didn’t talk to me that much, it was mostly Jude. We went all over the place. They took me to Central Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square...”

“What do you mean he didn’t really talk to you?” I asked with a frown. “Danni, he’s really been a jerk since we left Indiana. He misses you, I’m telling you.”

Danni shook her head and huffed out a laugh. “He didn’t seem like he did. Honestly he seemed like he would have rather been anywhere than with me and Jude.”

“Maybe he wanted to be alone with you.”

“Ev, I don’t think so. He’s had three weeks to call me. Hell, before we actually hooked up we talked almost every single day on Facebook. He’s gotten what he wanted and now he’s moved on. We both knew it was going to end that way. I just chose not to cry over it, that’s all,” she said.

“Danni, you’re my best friend in the world. I know you’ve cried over him

whether you want to admit it or not.”

Before I could continue, she smiled at me and said, “Oh let’s forget about him. Do I get to see your new tattoo or what?”

Sighing, I started to stand to show it to her but my phone rang. “Hold that thought,” I said and I smiled when I pulled out my phone and looked at the caller ID. “Hi Jessie,” I said.

“Hey Everleigh, how have you been?” she said sweetly. “Sorry about earlier. Kris gets a little hornier than normal when we’ve been apart for a little bit.”

“Oh it’s okay, girl, I understand. I’d be the same way if I was away from Ryder for even a day.”

“So, listen, I don’t want to impose or anything but Kris wanted to go check out Eternal Down at The Rock Steady and I really didn’t feel like tagging along...”

“Come over then! I haven’t seen you in three weeks either, girl! How soon can you get here?”

I heard a knock on the door and I smiled. “Pretty quick.”

I ran to the front door and opened it. Jessie was standing at the door with her long brown hair pulled back in a ponytail and a smile on her pretty face. I put my phone in my back pocket and I hugged her. “Hey Jessie,” I said, “it’s good to see you.”

“It’s good to see you too! This wedding is starting to stress me out. I needed to see my girls. Hey Danni,” she said, waving at her.

“Well, get in here and tell me all about how beautiful this wedding will be. We need something to talk about since Danni won’t talk to me about Beau,” I said.

“Ev, don’t,” Danni said, shaking her head. “There’s nothing to talk about, I promise. Besides, I believe you were about to show me your new tattoo.”

Jessie’s face lit up and she smiled. “You got a tattoo? I want to see!”

I rolled my eyes and grinned. “Okay, hang on,” I said as Jessie hung up

her coat and quickly joined Danni on the couch. I lifted my shirt slightly and unzipped my jeans.

Jessie giggled and said, “You know Jude’s head is about to explode somewhere right now,” and we all laughed.

I pulled my jeans down slightly and showed them the tattoo that Jake had done the night before. “What do you think?”

They were both silent for a moment before Jessie said, “Everleigh...that is absolutely gorgeous. Did Jake do it?”

I nodded, emotion forming a lump in my throat. “He did a great job, didn’t he?”

“He really did. Jake might be a total horn dog but he’s so talented,” Jessie said. “He did my memorial tattoo for my grandmother.”

I looked at Danni and asked, “Danni? What do you think?”

She looked up at me, tears glistening in her blue eyes. “It’s so beautiful Ev. Max would have loved that you got his guitar,” she said, and I swallowed that emotional lump as best as I could. “What do the words mean?”

Taking a shaking breath, I said, “They were some of the last words he spoke to me and Ryder. Jake really got it right and made this perfect.”

Sensing things were about to get

really emotional, Danni sniffed and asked, “So tell me, just how hot is this Jake? Maybe I should have him do some ink on me.”

“Come on, Danni, stop it. This thing with Beau needs to be worked out before you go throwing yourself at someone else in their circle,” I said.

“Hey, Beau doesn’t want me and I’m not waiting around for him to figure it out. If I want to hook up with another guy I will and he can’t say anything to me. If he wanted me he could’ve had me,” Danni said defiantly.

“Danni, come on,” I said but she shook her head.

“Listen, I don’t want to talk about Beau anymore. Let’s get out of here,”

Danni said.

“Danni, you *just* got here and you were out all day. Why do you want to go back out again?” I asked.

“Because this is my first time in New York City and I want to go out on the town with my ladies,” she said.

“Maybe we can crash the boys’ night at that club and have some fun. I love Eternal Down and I thought Jude said they were playing there tonight.”

“Yeah they are. Kris is there right now and he was going to call and see if Ryder wanted to hang out,” Jessie said.

Just as I was about to ask about that, Ryder called me. “Speak of the devil,” I said, smiling. “I have to take

this, hang on.” I quickly answered my phone. “Hey rock star,” I said.

“Hey gorgeous. You having fun with Danni and Jess?”

“Yeah, Jessie just told me you might be hanging out with Kris at some club tonight?”

“Uh, yeah, that’s why I was calling. Jake’s cousin’s band is in town and Kris wanted to know if I wanted to go check them out and maybe shoot some pool.”

“That sounds like fun, Ryder. You need a boys’ night.”

“I know but I just didn’t want to leave you alone.”

“Ryder, I’m not alone. I have Danni and Jessie with me. We were

actually thinking of going out tonight too.”

I could feel his apprehension over the phone. “Evie, baby, promise me you will take John with you if you go anywhere.”

“I will. In fact, I’ll call him as soon as I hang up with you.”

“Good,” he said, breathing out heavily. “So where are you thinking of going?”

“I’m not sure,” I said. “I think Danni wants to crash your boys’ night though. She’s looking to move past Beau but I think it’s a bad idea.”

He sighed. “Yeah, Beau is thinking of doing the same thing. Why are they

both being such dumbasses?” he asked and I laughed.

“I don’t know but we’ve done all we can do. They need to figure it out for themselves. Anyway, it doesn’t matter. Wherever we go I will be sure to let you know, okay?”

“Okay. I love you, baby,” he said.

“I love you too.”

“You know, you could come crash our boys’ night if you wanted to.”

“Well then it wouldn’t be a ‘boys’ night’ now would it?” I laughed.

“Think about it. We could start the whole role playing thing tonight. You can be the sexy bar fly and I can be the broody stranger and we can totally have sex in the back room,” he said and I

laughed harder.

“I don’t think so, Ryder. I’m going to let you go and hang out with Kris and listen to some music.”

“All right,” he sighed. “But if you change your mind let me know. I’d love for the guys in Eternal Down to meet you. They aren’t all as bad as Jake, I promise. They won’t be hitting on you because they know I’d rip their dicks off if they tried.”

“My protector, how sexy,” I laughed. “Go have fun with your friends. I love you!”

“Love you too gorgeous,” he said and we both hung up.

“So, how is the rock god?” Danni

smiled.

“He’s fine,” I smiled. “He was just telling me that he’s going to that club with Kris. He also told me that we should crash tonight. He wants to show me off to that band that’s playing.”

Danni smiled and stood up. “Well then what are we waiting for? Let’s go!”

“Danni, I thought we would just have a girls’ night tonight,” I said. “I want to hang out with you girls without the guys for once.”

“We can still have a girls’ night and be around the guys. I know you ladies are taken and all that, but I am single and I’m in New York City. I want to have a good time tonight,” she said. Before I could protest she grabbed one

of her suitcases and took off toward the nearest bathroom. “Give me fifteen minutes!” she called out.

I sighed and shook my head at Jessie. “Well it looks like we are going to The Rock Steady tonight,” I said. “I’d better call John before we get ready.”

“Look, I know we are going to end up there but I’ll be damned if we spend the whole night being arm candy for the guys while they drink and shoot the shit with Jagger and the band,” she said, obviously referring to the guys in the other band. “We are going to go and have dinner first and then we are going to walk around and find some of the sidewalk shops with the ugliest jewelry

ever and then we are going to load up on tacky souvenirs to celebrate our night out.”

I grinned at her. “Thanks, Jessie.”

“Listen, why don’t you go ahead and get ready and I’ll call John for you?” she offered. “I’m already as ready as I am going to be.” She tugged at her tight fitted tee shirt and jeans that hugged her curves. Even in simple clothes Jessie Monroe was stunning.

“Okay, thanks so much. I won’t be long.” I walked down the hall toward our bedroom to pick out an outfit to wear tonight. I shook my head and sighed as I thought of how I was going to have to keep a close eye on Danni tonight.

“Hey, I thought we were going to that bar. Why are we stopped at a Chinese restaurant?” Danni asked.

“Because, Danni,” Jessie said as she opened the back door of the SUV, “before we crash the boy’s night at the bar we are having a little fun, just us girls.”

Danni sighed and smiled. “Okay, okay. Let’s go eat. I am actually starving,” she said, following Jessie out of the back of the car.

As I started to climb out I turned to John. “Are you coming?”

He smiled at me and shook his

head. "I'm going to wait out here and let you three have some time to yourselves," he said as he pulled the SUV into a parking spot.

I frowned. "John, it's cold out here and you need to eat too. Please come and have dinner with us?" I asked, sticking my lip out and pouting. "My treat?"

"I will come in but you are not paying for me. Understood?" he said, trying to sound tough as he grinned at me.

"Oh all right. At least you are coming out of the cold and eating with us and that's all that matters. Let's go," I said. John shut off the engine and the four of us went inside the restaurant.

We ate, talked, and laughed for the next hour. Even though it was frustrating to have to have a bodyguard everywhere I went, I actually had a great time hanging out with John tonight. I had liked him since I first met him and I was having a blast getting to know the man behind the “bodyguard” image.

I found out while chatting with him that he was thirty seven years old and had been married for three years before he and his wife divorced. He'd worked private security ever since then and had been with Ryder and the boys for the past five years. He never had any kids and like I did, he considered the band his family. John in bodyguard mode

made me feel safe and protected but John in a relaxed environment was funny, charming, and a blast to hang out with.

After we finished dinner, we paid the check (well, I paid for the girls and John used his own debit card) and headed back out onto the New York streets. “So, what do we do now?” Danni asked, shivering.

Jessie looked down the street and when her eyes landed on a couple of sidewalk shops that looked like they had some gaudy jewelry, her eyes twinkled and she smiled. “Let’s go buy some hideous jewelry.”

As we started walking toward a little shop Danni asked, “Why do we

want tacky costume jewelry that will more than likely break before we can even put it on?”

“Because the things that people think are the most unattractive are often the most beautiful and mean more than anything,” Jessie said, nudging her as we reached the shop. “Ooh, let’s see what they have.”

My eyes instantly landed on a horrid fake gold chain with a big black mustache charm on it. It was the ugliest thing I’d ever seen...I loved it. “Hey, Jess, look at this thing,” I said, holding it up. “It even has matching earrings.”

She laughed and held it up. “This is hilarious, let’s each get one.”

Danni was holding up a huge owl pendant with matching earrings as well. “Oh god, this thing hurts my eyes,” she said, taking in the bright artificial gold owl with turquoise eyes.

“Aw, those aren’t so bad,” I said. “I like owls, they’re cute.”

Danni rolled her eyes and giggled as she continued to look through the ugly jewelry.

Jessie found a set of rings that were really cheaply made. Each had a word engraved in it, ranging from words like “wisdom” to “love” and everything in between. I was about to move to look at the tee shirts when something caught my eye.

It was a set of key chains. One was a silver heart and the other was a tiny key and when you put them together the key fit into a groove carved into the heart. It was cheesy and cheap but I wanted it. I knew it was corny but I loved the symbolism of it. Ryder owned my heart and I knew I held the key to his...there was a never a question if I would buy them. I picked them up and quickly paid for them, smiling to myself.

Once we were finished with our little shopping adventure, we finally caved to Danni's playful whining and made our way to The Rock Steady to crash Ryder's boys' night. As soon as John stopped the SUV, Danni hopped out

first. After she fluffed her hair and smoothed her shirt under her coat she turned to me and said, “Let’s do this!”

Jessie and I just rolled our eyes and snickered at her as we were led to the door of the bar by John. We paid our cover and quickly ducked inside.

The sound of hard rock music quickly filled my ears as my eyes scanned the bar for Ryder and Kris. The place was crowded with all different kinds of rock fans ranging from men that looked like bikers to Emo college kids to slutty groupies looking to be invited into one of the rocker’s beds. I shivered at the thought, knowing that it had once been Ryder that women lined up to sleep with. Hell, for all I knew they probably

still did but one thing I knew for certain was that although they may want him, I was the girl he came home to.

“Do you see them anywhere?” I asked, trying not to cough from the thick layer of smoke in the air. It smelled like a mixture of smoke from cigarettes and pyrotechnics of the band on stage.

“No but if I know Kris he’s probably at the pool table in the back,” Jessie said and she tugged on mine and Danni’s arms. “Let’s go.”

I followed closely behind her and Danni was right on my heels as we walked past a group of college guys who looked like they belonged to a fraternity. One of them looked at me and I made

eye contact, not meaning to. He had a look on his face that said “I want to devour you” and I picked up my speed. I was always uncomfortable when men looked at me that way but ever since Scott tried to assault me that feeling intensified times fifty.

I felt like all eyes were on me and I was about to bail on the evening and ask John to take me home but I heard Jessie say, “See? I told you,” and she pointed toward a large pool table in the back of the bar. My eyes roamed for a moment before they settled on Kris, who was leaning over the table and lining up his shot, Jake, who was sitting on a stool by the wall, and Ryder standing next to him. He was holding his pool cue

upright in one hand and taking a drink of his beer in the other. Seeing him relaxed, laughing, and having a good time with his friends made me feel happy. It also made me a little sad...ever since he met me he had devoted almost every waking moment to me and suddenly I felt guilty that he'd been missing out on 'boy time' with his friends.

Looking up from the game, Ryder's eyes locked with mine and he winked. "Hey gorgeous!" he shouted over the music. "Get your sexy ass over here and be my good luck charm."

I smiled and walked over to the pool table As soon as I reached him he pulled me close, bent me backwards,

and planted a deep kiss on my lips. Once we were upright again, I giggled and said, “Hi there rock star.”

“Hey Evie,” he answered, kissing me quickly one more time. “Did you have fun with your girls today?”

“I did,” I answered. I turned my head toward Jake and said, “Hi Jake. It’s nice to see you again.”

“You too, Everleigh. How’s your tat healing?”

“It’s okay. It stings a little but I’ve been applying my A&D ointment regularly, I promise.”

He smiled and his lip ring caught the light. “Awesome.” His eyes roamed around and when they landed on Danni, his mouth split into a wide, seductive

grin. “Who’s the cute blonde?”

I felt myself tensing as I watched him undress Danni with his eyes. He was exactly the kind of trouble she was on the lookout for...the kind I needed to keep her away from. “That’s my best friend,” I answered in a warning tone.

Ryder barked out a laugh. “Dude, are you really going to try to get into her pants a day after you were checking out my girlfriend’s tits while you were doing her tattoo?”

Jake’s eyes widened and a look of mock innocence crept across his handsome face. “What? I know I don’t have a snowball’s chance in hell with Everleigh because she’s taken so why

not go for her hot as hell single friend?”

My eyes narrowed at him. “What makes you think she’s single?”

“The way she’s looking around the room like she’s looking for trouble,” Jake answered.

Before I could reply, Danni came walking over to us. “Hey, Ryder,” she said smiling at him. Her eyes landed on Jake and she smiled even wider. “Who’s your friend?”

“Danni,” I protested.

Jake stood up off his stool and towered over Danni’s tiny frame. He held out his hand and said, “Jake Riggins. What’s your name, beautiful?”

Danni placed her hand in his and said, “Danni Sharpe. Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too.”

“So, are you the ‘Jake’ that did Ev’s tattoo last night?” she asked, slightly cocking her hip and twirling the end of her hair.

“Guilty as charged,” he said, winking at her.

“She showed it to me today. It’s beautiful, you are very talented. Maybe you can tattoo me sometime.”

“Absolutely,” he said, taking a step closer to her. “Guys, play on without me.” I started to move toward them but Ryder held onto me as Jake continued talking to Danni. “Do you want to come with me and check out the band?”

“Sure, I love Eternal Down,” she said. He placed his large hand on the small of her back, leading her toward the stage.

When they were gone I turned to Ryder and poked him in the chest.

“Ryder, why the hell did you do that? I thought we were on the same team here!”

“We are, Evie, but Danni is a grown woman and can take care of herself. Besides, I don’t think she’s the kind of girl that will sleep with a guy the first night she meets him.”

“You don’t understand. She was on a mission tonight to find a random guy so she could try to get past her feelings for Beau. I was trying to stop her and

you pretty much just shoved her into Jake's arms!"

Ryder pulled me into his arms and kissed the top of my head. "I'm sorry. I want things to work out for Danni and Beau just as much as you do but there's a real chance that this isn't going to end well for them. Who knows? Maybe if Beau finds out that she was flirting with Jake it might awaken some jealous feelings in him and he'll fight for her."

I shrugged my shoulders and said, "I hope so."

"Listen, the band sounds like they are winding down their set, so why don't you sit down on this stool and watch me kick Kris's ass in pool? Jagger and the guys will probably come chill once they

are finished and I can finally show you off,” he said with a grin and I smiled.

I took his beer from his hand and downed almost the whole bottle before I sat down. “All right, fine,” I said. He leaned in and kissed me passionately for a few moments before he returned to the game.

I sat on the stool and Jessie leaned against the wall next to me for the next thirty minutes while the guys played pool. Before I knew it I heard loud laughing and a group of tattooed men came into the back of the bar followed closely by Jake, who had his arm draped around Danni. I frowned and wanted to say something to her, but before I could I

felt Ryder's arm snake around my waist and lift me up against him. I squealed as he twirled me around and pulled me into a hot steamy kiss.

“What was that for?” I asked him.

“Do I need a reason to kiss those beautiful lips of yours?” he asked.

“Not at all. In fact, I demand you do it as often as you want to,” I answered, leaning into his lips again.

Before we could really get into the kiss I heard someone say, “Jesus, Matthews, we all know you have a steady chic now but can you not make babies with her right near the pool table?”

My cheeks flushed red and I heard Jake say, “Oh this is nothing, Jag. I

thought they were going to make one last night in my tattoo chair.”

I was getting more and more embarrassed by the minute but before I could pull away and hide in a corner Ryder laughed, “Whatever, you asshole. You’re just jealous because you can’t get a girl as hot as mine and you’ve only had your hand to keep you warm on that tour bus.”

The guy that Ryder was talking to smiled and laughed along with him. Ryder let go of me for just a moment so he could embrace him. “What’s up, Jagger? How have you been, man?”

“I’ve been good. You know, still rockin’,” he said. Now that he was

closer he looked a lot like Jake...this guy was obviously his cousin. He had the standard rocker boy Mohawk, gauges in both ears, two full sleeves of tattoos, and surprisingly no piercings in his face. I never really liked when a guy would had piercings in his face until I met Ryder. I couldn't imagine kissing him without that little bite from his lip ring.

As Ryder and his friend were talking they were flanked by the three other guys. The guy named Jagger looked at me and smiled. "So, are you going to introduce me to your girl?" Ryder pulled me into his tall hard frame, smiling with pride as he began to introduce me to his friends.

Chapter 7

Ryder

As I pulled Everleigh into my side, I kissed the top of her head quickly before I said, “Jagger, this is Everleigh Stone, the love of my life. Evie, this is Jagger Riggins, the lead singer of Eternal Down.”

Jagger held his hand out to Everleigh and shook it gently. “It’s nice to finally meet you Everleigh. To say it’s

a surprise to see Ryder settling down with someone is a huge understatement.”

“Um, I don’t know if that’s a compliment but thanks, I think,” Everleigh said, smiling at him.

Jagger grinned and laughed. “It’s a compliment, sweetie, trust me.”

I nudged him with my hand and pointed to the other guys in the group. “Evie, the rest of the crew here is Cash Raines, Logan Davidson, and Zayne Wesley.” They all nodded and took turns shaking Everleigh’s hand.

“So, what do you all play in the band?” she asked them graciously.

Cash said, “I’m the lead guitarist, Logan plays the drums, and Zayne is our bass player.” All of them had the typical

rocker look. Cash had dark eyes and dirty blonde spiky hair. Logan kept his hair buzzed short on the sides and over long on the top, combing it sharply to one side. The contrast of the haircut made his pale green eyes stand out. Zayne kept his hair buzzed down just enough to cover his head and he had a pretty well groomed beard. It was just long enough to give him stubble so he had that “I don’t care what I look like and you still want to fuck me” look about him that drove their fans crazy.

“Well, I’m sorry to say I missed most of the show but from what I heard back here you guys are pretty good,” Everleigh said politely. “I do have to

apologize though, I've never really been much of a rock fan.”

Jagger snickered at her and said, “So, what are you then? A Bieber fan or some shit like that?”

Everleigh rolled her eyes. “Oh hell no,” she said, and the guys laughed. “I listen to mostly country and classic rock.”

“Classic rock? Like what kind?” Cash asked, his interest clearly peaked. Cash was practically a classic rock historian.

“Like Credence Clearwater Revival, Lynard Skynard, AC/DC, KISS, The Eagles, Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, the list is endless. You name it, I love it.”

Cash cocked his eyebrow and said to me, “That’s impressive. Your girl’s got taste, Ryder.” Turning back to her, he said, “You don’t look like the type of girl who’d be into classic rock.”

Everleigh smiled at him. “Well, I was lucky enough to be raised by a pretty bad ass rock fan and he had great taste in music,” she said, and I gave her a gentle squeeze.

I held her tight against me and kissed her forehead as Zayne said, “Right, we heard about your old man on the news. That sucks, I’m sorry,” he said, for once actually sounding sincere. Considering that Zayne was about ninety percent asshole most of the time, the fact

that he was already being nice to Everleigh spoke volumes about her. She was just such an endearingly sweet girl that it was impossible not to fall for her innocence and charm right away.

“Thank you. It’s been really hard but I’m lucky that I’ve had Ryder to help me through it all,” she said, snuggling into me.

Jagger chuckled and clapped me on the back. “I never thought I’d see the day when a slut like you would ever settle down,” he said, grinning and I elbowed him in the ribs.

“Dude, my girl’s right here,” I said.

“I’m just busting your balls, man. I’m happy for you. Seriously,” he said

sincerely.

“Thanks, man,” I answered. At that moment I heard commotion coming from the entrance to the pool room again. I looked over and saw Jude and Beau walking in and giving man hugs and handshakes to Jagger, Cash, Logan and Zayne.

After he said hello to the guys, Beau’s eyes did a quick scan of the room and when they landed on Danni tucked underneath Jake’s arm, they narrowed and he looked angry. I felt Everleigh tense beside me as Beau glared at the two of them. I could feel Everleigh’s nervousness and anxiety over the situation radiating off her. I decided that

right then I needed to distract her.

As Logan and Cash were talking about starting up another pool game with Kris and Jude, I leaned in and nibbled on Everleigh's ear before gently grazing it with my tongue. I felt her shiver and I heard Jagger laugh. "Dude, get a room," he teased.

I looked up at him and winked. "I was thinking the same thing, bro," I said, and I took Everleigh's hand and led her off toward the bathrooms before she could protest. Once we were in the men's room I locked the door behind us and turned to face her. She had a surprised expression on her face and a blush in her cheeks. I pulled her body into mine and kissed her nose. "Hi," I

said.

“Hi yourself,” she replied.

“You look so sexy tonight, gorgeous,” I said, my eyes doing a quick scan of her body. She was wearing skin tight jeans, a pair of calf high suede boots, and a hot pink sleeveless top that hugged her breasts.

“You look hot too, rock star,” she said, toying with my belt. “I like these jeans.”

“Yeah?” I asked, my breath catching when her fingers dipped into my pants and grazed my stomach right above my dick which was almost rock solid. She looked into my eyes seductively for a split second before she

backed me against the wall, fell to her knees, and started to unbuckle my belt. As my hands found her hair I asked, “What are you doing?”

“What you never let me do. I am taking over this time, Ryder, and I want to taste *all* of you,” she said, unzipping my pants and roughly pulling them down to my knees. My dick bobbed up and down in front of her before she took my length in both of her hands. I growled as she stroked me up and down and not another word was spoken between us before she lowered her mouth down and took me in.

“Oh fuck!” I shouted as she slowly took more of my cock into her mouth until she couldn’t take any more. She

gagged slightly as the head of my dick hit the back of her throat and it took all my strength to not come right then. This was what she wanted, for me to completely let go inside her mouth. I would let her have what she wanted this time just like I promised.

I felt pre come start to seep out the top of my dick. She moaned at the flavor of me as she moved my length in and out of her mouth. She licked the tip and swirled her sinful tongue around it before pulling me back inside. One of her hands was stroking me up and down while the other one was cupping and teasing my balls. The sensation felt incredible and I loved that she knew just

what to do and exactly how I liked it.

Everleigh increased her speed with her hand and my dick started to thicken in her mouth. I was really close... “Shit, Evie, I’m going to come,” I croaked, the sensation of my cock deep inside her mouth felt so good to the point where it was almost unbearable. “L-last...chan-ce...” I warned.

Everleigh shook her head, and I moved her hair away from her face so I could look at her when she finally got what she wanted from me. As soon as her whiskey colored eyes met mine I completely lost control and the first spurt of my release hit the back of her throat.

Her eyes rolled back in her head

and she made a gentle humming sound as she kept sucking and stroking, draining me of all I had to give. I couldn't find my voice from the sheer pleasure she was giving me. When I was finally spent, my knees gave out and I had to stop myself from falling to the floor.

Everleigh let me go and giggled, licking her lips. "So, did I do that right?"

I fought the urge to roll my eyes and sank down on the floor, meeting her at eye level. "There was no way you could have done that wrong, Evie. Jesus, that was fucking incredible," I said, pulling her into a kiss and not giving a fuck that I could taste myself on her tongue.

“That was so hot,” she said, moving from her knees to straddling my lap. Grinding herself against my dick she said, “I am soaking wet right now...I want you so bad, Ryder.”

That sentence alone had me going from semi flaccid to ready to go again in no time. “Well, I’m never one to disappoint my girl,” I said, as I pushed up with my legs and once we were standing I turned her around and this time I backed her against the wall.

Her jeans were practically painted on and with her boots I could see that sex against the wall was going to be impossible without removing everything she was wearing from the waist down.

She must have had the same thought because she shoved me back a little bit and pulled her pants down quickly. She kissed me quickly before purring into my ear, “I want you to fuck me from behind.”

I growled at her words. She was finally relaxed enough to tell me exactly what she wanted me to do. I spun her around and she leaned over with one hand gripping the edge of the sink and the other reaching for me. I moved closer and I took my dick into my hand and positioned it right at her entrance. Without warning I entered her roughly and she screamed out in pleasure.

“Too hard?” I grunted through my teeth. She was dripping wet and felt

amazing.

Everleigh shook her head and moaned, “No, feels so good. Harder, please.”

I gripped her hips with my hands and said, “Hold on,” and she cried out in ecstasy as I drove into her. I went as hard and fast as she wanted before I felt her start to arch her back and her inner walls clenching around my dick.

“Keep going, Ryder! I’m close!” Everleigh cried out as she kept pace with me.

I was close to another orgasm myself but I wanted us to finish together. I reached my hand around to her swollen clit rolling roughly in my fingers. In that

moment she shattered and came hard against my dick as I followed her over the edge, coming inside her.

After a few moments of catching our breath, I pulled out of her and zipped back up as she pulled her jeans back up and fastened them. Turning and falling into my arms, she said, “That was perfect. God, what is it about us and bathrooms?”

I laughed and kissed her. “I don’t think it’s the bathroom. It’s the thrill of getting caught.”

“Well whatever it is, it’s something I don’t mind repeating over and over,” Everleigh said, grinning playfully. I pulled her close to me after she zipped her jeans.

I brushed a few strand of hair away from her face and said, “So, are you ready to go back out there?”

She bit her lip and smiled at me. “It’s going to be hard to convince people we didn’t have sex in here.”

“Do you really care if they know or not?”

With a slight blush in her cheeks, she grinned and said, “Not really.”

I kissed her beautiful mouth once more, then we unlocked the door and walked out of the bathroom to rejoin the group.

After spending a few more hours drinking, shooting pool, and catching up with Jagger and the guys, I felt more like myself than I had in a while. Everleigh had laced herself into every part of my life, including charming the pants off my friends and I loved it. It was nice to have a girlfriend that everyone you cared about loved as much as you did.

After laughing at something Logan said, I looked back and noticed Everleigh yawning. I checked the display on my phone and it was almost one in the morning...that meant it was time to head back to the penthouse. She was sitting on one of the stools against the wall when I approached her. “You

tired, gorgeous?”

She smiled at me, her eyes sleepy.

“Just a little bit.”

“All right, just let me say goodbye to the guys and we can head home.”

“Okay, I’ll go get Danni,” she said and stood up. She kissed me quickly and walked away in search of her friend.

I turned and walked toward the group, who were all gathered around the pool table. “Well, you guys, this has been fun but I think I’m going to call it a night.”

Cash snickered and said,

“Already, bro? It’s not even one in the morning yet.”

“Well, if you were going home with a fucking hot ass girl like Everleigh

knowing you were going to get laid you'd cut the night short too," Logan said, tipping his beer toward me.

"Uh, thanks," I said, chuckling.

"Where did your hottie go anyway? I wanted to say goodbye," Zayne said, grinning.

"She went to find her friend Danni so we can head out. She just got into town today and is staying with us."

"Oh, the smoking little blonde? I saw Jake leading her off to the back room a little bit ago," Cash said. I tensed and looked around for Beau, hoping he hadn't heard that. I didn't see him anywhere so I relaxed.

That relaxation didn't last long

because suddenly I heard a commotion coming from down the hallway leading back to the bathrooms. The next thing I knew I saw a distraught Danni running toward the front door of the bar with Everleigh in tow. I started to follow but before I could get close to the door Jessie beat me to it. "I'll check on her, go find out what happened."

I tapped her arm and said, "Okay, thanks, Jess." I walked back toward the bathrooms. As I made my way a petite bleach blonde girl came running out of the men's room passing me as she ran toward the door. Once she was gone I looked up and someone else was coming out of the bathroom behind her, buckling his belt...Beau. I walked up to him and

narrowed my eyes. “What did you do?” I growled.

“Shit, shit, shit!” he said, zipping his fly. “I have to talk to Danni. Move out of the way,” he said trying to push past me.

I shoved him and he fell back against the wall, surprised. “You’re not going anywhere, Beau. What the fuck did you do?” I yelled.

“I fucked up!” he shouted, shoving me back. “I got pissed at Danni and I fucked everything up! Is that what you want to hear?”

“No, what I wanted to hear was that you kept your word to not fuck some other girl until you talked to Danni first!

You looked me in the eye today, Beau, and you told me that you were going to try and see if this thing with Danni was just a passing fling. Now I see you coming out of the bathroom zipping up your pants. What the fuck happened?”

He collapsed back against the wall and ran his hands through his long hair. “I saw her with Jake tonight when Jude and I first got here and I was pissed. He had his hands all over her and I was so jealous I couldn’t see straight. I wanted to grab her away from him and tell him to back off but I didn’t. Then when I saw him leading her off toward the back by the bathrooms I...I’d never felt such rage in my life. I wanted to kill him,” he said. As he spoke his

eyes became a mix of crazy and distraught.

“So you decided to just fuck some random chick? What the hell is wrong with you?”

“No, I followed them down the hallway. I was going to stop them and tell Danni that I’d been a dick and that I wanted her but when I found them, Jake already had his tongue down her throat,” he said angrily. He blew out a frustrated breath and continued, “After that I just saw red. I thought if she was moving on then I would too...so I did. I found the first girl I saw and took her into the bathroom. We hadn’t been in there long before Danni walked in on us.” For the

first time he sounded ashamed.

“Why did she come into men’s room?” I asked.

“She was looking f-for me,” he said, his voice breaking. I was so pissed at Beau right then but it was hard to be completely angry when I saw his expression. He looked destroyed and on the verge of tears. I’d never seen him like that before. He slid down the wall and dropped his face into his hands. “I’ll never forget the look on her face...I can’t believe I fucked this up.”

Kris and Jude came out into the hall at that moment. Jude asked, “What’s going on?”

I looked from Beau to Jude and glared at him. “What’s going on is that

he took your shitty advice and Danni walked in on him fucking some bitch!”

Jude held his hands up and said, “Hey, you don’t need to get shitty with me man! Beau is a big boy and he fucked this up all by himself. I just suggested it. I didn’t force him to do anything. Besides, he told us both that he was going to wait to fuck anyone until he talked to Danni.”

“Well he didn’t,” I said, my anger rising. I repeated the story to Kris and Jude. I know that it must have seemed like I was overreacting to the whole thing, but the truth was that Danni was already family to me: if she was hurting I wanted to kick whoever’s ass was to

blame. Unfortunately that happened to be someone I'd loved like a brother since I was five years old.

I heard a tortured sob coming from Beau and I looked down at him. He'd sank down to the floor and had his head in his hands. "Her face..." he mumbled.

Kris tapped me on the arm. "Let's get him out of here and back to his apartment. There are still people here with camera phones and I'm sure he doesn't want this on the news later," he said, and I nodded. As we helped Beau up off the floor and took him out the back door, I texted Everleigh and let her know that I'd be home late and to have John take them home. I put my phone in my pocket and we all left the club.

Once we were all piled in the cab, my phone rang. I pulled it out to answer it, expecting it to be Everleigh, but it wasn't. It was Kip. Getting a call from him at one in the morning wasn't good. Dread immediately spread through me as I answered the phone and got the worst news I could have possibly gotten...the news that I was afraid would cause Everleigh to finally break.

Chapter 8

Everleigh

“Danni, wait up! What happened?” I asked, already knowing the answer to my question judging by the look on her face and the unstoppable tears pouring down her cheeks. I followed her out of the bar into the cold. Beau had broken her heart, just like I was afraid he would do. She was sobbing uncontrollably as I approached her and wrapped her coat

around her shoulders. “Was it Jake?”

“No,” she cried, “you know it was Beau.”

“What did he do?” I asked as Jessie came out of the bar and joined us.

“Danni, are you all right?” she asked, and Danni shook her head.

“I can’t believe he did this,” she said.

Jessie turned to me and asked, “Beau?”

I nodded silently and we both looked at Danni. “What happened?” I asked again.

Wiping tears from her cheeks, she said, “I didn’t know he would be here tonight but that really didn’t matter to me because he didn’t seem like he wanted to

be anything other than friends now. I mean, when I saw him again this afternoon at the studio I wanted to tell him that I missed him so bad, but he just acted like he didn't care anymore. When Jake started hitting on me tonight I decided to just go with it because hell, if Beau didn't want me why shouldn't I go for it with a sexy guy that was into me, right?

“Well, of course Beau shows up here looking so sexy that it literally hurt me to look at him and the minute I saw him my heart skipped a beat. I knew we needed to talk and try to work this thing out, but every time I looked at him he was glaring at me and Jake. I was getting

sick of it so I asked Jake if he wanted to go out back with me to get some fresh air, hoping Beau might get jealous and actually fight for me but of course he never came.

“When we were outside, Jake kissed me but I pushed him away before it went any farther than that. The truth is that I love Beau,” she said, and I gasped. I’d never heard Danni say she loved any guy before...ever. “I know it’s stupid and you tried to warn me, Ev, but I didn’t listen and went ahead and fell in love with him anyway.

“I told Jake that I wanted to be with Beau and he backed off, telling me that Beau was his friend and he wasn’t about to try and come between us. I

came back into the bar to find him and tell him what I'd been to chicken shit to admit and asked the bartender if he'd seen him. He told me that he'd just seen Beau go into the bathroom," she said, crying harder.

I immediately knew what had happened before she had to say it. "Danni," I said, putting my arm around her.

"He was fucking some girl against the wall," she sobbed. "He didn't even lock the goddamned door. That's when I ran out...I couldn't even look at him after that."

At that moment my cell phone pinged and I looked to see that I had a

text from Ryder. He told me that he and they guys were taking Beau back to his place and that John was going to take us back to the penthouse. I decided to text him back later as John pulled up in the SUV and we all piled into the back in a much worse mood than we were in when we got here a few hours ago.

The ride back to our apartment was quiet but once John's cell phone rang it was also tense. Judging by the way his face changed as I watched in the rearview mirror my worry was quickly shifting from Danni's broken heart to whoever he could have been talking to

that made him look worried. John never got worried about anything; he was always so calm and collected.

Something was seriously wrong...I could feel it.

As we stepped off the elevator I noticed John walking very close behind me. I looked at Jessie, wondering if she might know something, but she just shrugged her shoulders. As I got my key out and unlocked the front door, I asked, "Okay, John, what is it with you? Why do you look so freaked?"

"We should get inside and wait for Ryder, he will be here in about five minutes," John said.

"I thought he was going to Beau's

place. Why is he coming back here already?" I asked, my eyebrows drawing together. I was getting more nervous by the minute.

"I'm not sure but don't worry, he's probably just wanting to check on Danni," replied Jessie.

The way John was looking at me wasn't sitting well. He was smiling and trying to look comforting, but something was very wrong and he obviously was trying to distract me until Ryder got home to give me bad news.

We walked into the apartment and as soon as we were all inside John quickly locked the door. Shaking my head, I led Danni into the living room. We sat on the couch together after I

handed her a tissue to wipe her tears. Thankfully a few minutes later, I heard the front door open and Ryder called out, “Everleigh?”

“We’re in the living room,” I replied, anxious to know what was going on. I was wringing my hands together as Ryder walked into the living room. Instead of the relief I usually felt when he was around, I felt my stomach flip as I saw his expression. It was a mixture of anger and fear. “Ryder, what’s wrong?” I asked, terrified.

John stood and said, “I’m going to take Jessie home and then I will be back. Keep the door locked until I return,” he said, and Ryder nodded at him. He

hugged Jessie goodbye and John's eyes lingered on me for a moment before he turned and left.

As soon as they were gone, Ryder came and sat on the coffee table across from me. "Danni, are you all right?" he asked her.

She shrugged and said, "I'll live. What I want to know is why the hell John was acting so weird and why you just came in here looking like your dog died," she said. "We know something's up, Ryder, and you need to just tell us what's going on." I was so glad to have Danni there in that moment. Sometimes her bluntness really was a good thing.

Ryder blew out a hard breath through his lips. "Evie, I have something

to tell you and I need you to stay calm, okay? Can you do that for me?” he asked, talking to me like I was a child again.

I sat up straight and ran my sweaty palms on my thighs. “Ryder, I am starting to get scared. Please tell me what’s going on.”

He looked down at the floor for a moment before he looked back up at me and took my hands in his. “Okay,” he said, taking a deep breath. “I got a call from Kip after I left the bar. Scott broke into your house this morning Evie.”

My heart dropped into my stomach and fear prickled down to the base of my spine. Danni shouted out a few

obscenities and I gasped and said, “How did he get in? I thought you had security watching the house!”

“It happened while Kip and Nathan were getting some rest. Apparently the other guy they had keeping a lookout wasn’t doing his fucking job and Scott managed to slip past,” he said angrily.

My thoughts went to one person... Trish. I was terrified for her safety. “What about Trish? He didn’t hurt her, did he?” I asked, my heart pounding.

Ryder squeezed my hands tightly in his and my palms started sweating even more. “She was out getting groceries when he broke in,” he replied quietly.

“Oh thank God,” I said, breathing a sigh of relief. “Then she’s all right.”

“Everleigh,” he said, his tone serious. My eyes flicked to his and my relief completely washed away when I saw his face.

“She’s all right, isn’t she, Ryder?” I asked, my voice raising an octave.

“Listen to me,” he said, trying his best to keep me from freaking out. All it was doing was making me freak even more. “I have to tell you something and I need you to stay calm.”

I felt tears burning my eyes and I said loudly, “Please tell me she’s all right, Ryder!”

“I wish I could but...I can’t. She’s

gone, Evie,” he admitted. I shook my head in disbelief as an ache in my chest like I’d never felt before knocked the breath out of me.

“Gone? What do you mean, she’s gone?” Danni asked, wrapping her arm around me.

Ryder lowered his head again and when his eyes found mine they were glassy. “Trish is dead. Baby, I’m so, so sorry.”

Danni gasped and cried audibly and I screamed, “No! No, no, no, she’s not dead!” I felt faint and the room started to slowly spin. This wasn’t happening...

“Evie, I’m so sorry,” he repeated, getting on his knees in front of me and

pulling me into his arms. I completely broke down and the tears started pouring from my eyes.

“What the hell happened?” Danni asked, her voice shaking.

“Apparently Scott broke in while she was out and he was still there waiting when she got back to the house. I don’t know any details yet but I guess by the time that fucking asshole who was supposed to be watching the place knew anything was wrong, Scott had beaten Trish and left her lying on the kitchen floor. She was already dead by the time Kip and Nathan got back and by then Scott was long gone,” Ryder said.

My whole world was destroyed. I

barely registered Danni and Ryder saying anything else because all I felt was crippling fear and agonizing guilt. Trish should have been away from my house and living with another patient right now. She should have been safe from Scott and not been a sitting duck for when he made his move. Everyone was so busy protecting me that no one thought about the dangers they were all in as well.

“This is all my fault,” I said, barely able to form the words through my cries of despair.

Ryder shook his head and said sternly, “Everleigh, look at me.” I shook my head, not wanting to face anyone but he raised my chin with his finger until I

was forced to look at him. “This is *not* your fault. You didn’t do anything to cause this.”

Danni sniffed and said, “He’s right, Ev. Scott is a crazy fucker and he would have done anything-”

“To get to me. He murdered Trish in cold blood and left her to die alone because of me. Stop lying to try and make me feel any less guilty because nothing either of you say to me will change the truth,” I sobbed. “Now she’s d-dead and he’s probably on his way here right now to find me.”

Ryder growled and pulled me back into his arms. “He’s not going to get to you, Everleigh. After everything

he's done that sick fuck will be dealt with once and for all," he threatened.

"How can you say that? He won't stop until he gets what he wants from me."

"Scott won't lay a finger on you, Ev. You are so protected that he won't ever get within a mile of you," Danni replied.

I rolled my eyes and said, "Yeah, just like Trish was 'so protected'. He had to have been watching and waiting for his chance to get her. As far as actions Scott might be stupid but he's not a complete idiot. Hell, for all we know he could be in New York City right now looking for me."

Danni was about to say something

but her cell phone started ringing. She looked at the caller ID and frowned. “I’m going to take this, I’ll be right back.” It was obvious that Beau was calling her since the truth about Trish was more than likely out now. Even though he was probably the last person she wanted to talk to right then, I know she left the room and answered the phone so Ryder could try to comfort me.

He stood up from the floor and took Danni’s vacant seat next to me, pulling me back into his arms. “Everleigh, I know you are terrified right now and after what Scott has done there probably isn’t much I can say to take your fear or guilt away,” he said,

practically reading my mind. “All I can really do right now is just keep you close to me and do what I can to help keep you safe.”

I should have felt safe after hearing his words, but I didn't. The truth was no matter what Ryder, John, or the rest of the guys tried to do to keep me protected nothing would stop Scott from ultimately getting to me. I knew Scott was an asshole and possibly had some kind of mental health issues, but I truly never thought he would ever be so desperate to actually murder someone, especially a completely innocent woman.

I was so wracked with grief and guilt that I didn't even have the strength

to reply to him so I just did what I did best and cried a river of tears. What the hell had I ever done to deserve this? None of this would have happened if I hadn't gone with Danni to that concert and met Ryder. I found a deep, pure love in the most unlikely of places and because the ghosts of my past wouldn't let me go, Trish was dead and all of our lives were in danger.

For one split second I considered running away from all of this, from the only family I had left and the one man that I loved beyond measure just to keep them safe but I knew I would never be able to do that. Kris, Jude, and Beau were my brothers. Danni and Jessie

were my sisters. John was the protective uncle I never had. And Ryder...he was my soul. I knew that I'd be broken without the rest of our little family but without Ryder I may as well be dead. Besides, if I left to keep them safe Scott would attack them anyway as a way to hurt me. I knew I was safer, if I could even really call it that, if we were all together.

I lost all track of time and everything else around me as Ryder held me in his arms, stroking my hair, and letting me cry. The last thing I remember before exhaustion finally took over was hearing him humming a song into my ear in his deep, soothing voice.

The next thing I knew I was waking up on the couch wrapped in a blanket and I couldn't feel Ryder anywhere near me. Panic was starting to set in and as I opened my eyes I heard John saying, "I don't want Everleigh to be afraid but I really don't know what to do here. No one has seen Scott since before he broke into the house yesterday and that was over twenty four hours ago. He very well could be in New York City by now."

"Let that fucking prick try to get her. He won't get far, trust me," I heard Ryder say in a terrifyingly calm voice.

“We are all going to do what we have to do protect Everleigh but this isn’t just about her anymore, man,” Jude said. “As long as Scott is out there roaming the streets, Jess and Danni aren’t safe either. The fact that he went after Trish, who was nowhere near Everleigh when she was killed, makes this whole thing *really* fucked up.”

“Jude’s right. Until Scott is caught we have to not only up security but we need to pull the *whole* family together,” Kris said. Something in his voice made me take notice.

I opened my eyes and peeked at the five of them all sitting around the kitchen table. I eyed Kris looking at

Beau with a hard stare. Beau's eyes widened and he snapped, "Who, Sadie? No fucking way."

"Beau," Jude began but he was quickly cut off.

"Scott is already a danger to Everleigh, Danni, and Jess. He probably doesn't even know Sadie exists. Why would I intentionally fly my little sister here and into the path of a psychotic killer?" Beau asked.

"Beau, we're a famous rock band. If Scott wanted info on us all he would have to do is get on the internet and search. Sadie is safer here with us than in Chicago, you know that," Jude said.

"She's in her final semester of college, Jude. How can I force her to

fuck up everything she's worked for only four months before her graduation?

Besides, have you met Sadie? She's not just going to do what anyone tells her to do, even if it's for her own good. How am I supposed to convince her to come here now?" Beau asked.

Jude nudged his arm and said, "You're Beau fucking Cavanaugh. You will do anything for her, including throwing her over your shoulder and bringing her here kicking and screaming. Don't stress, man. Sadie might be stubborn but she's not stupid. If you tell her the truth about what's going she'll be here with no hesitation."

I felt even guiltier now. Beau's

sister, whom I've never even met, would have to fly here and might have to miss out on her remaining few months of college now because of me. She was having to uproot her life for a girl she didn't know. She would hate me because of this. The thought made me want to start crying yet again.

Ryder looked at Beau and said, "Call Sadie and tell her to pack whatever she can and to get on the next plane out here."

"Fine," he grumbled. He took out his phone and started to dial her number but stopped. "I swear to God Ryder, if anything happens to our girls..."

"It won't," Ryder said. "I am going to do whatever, and I do mean

whatever, I have to do to stop that fucker before he even blinks in their direction.”

“This is just so fucked up,” he said, dialing her number. He put the phone to his ear and he walked out onto the balcony.

I realized then I was too tense to try and fall back to sleep so I sat up, throwing the blanket off me. I looked at Ryder and when he saw me he immediately stood up and walked over. “Hey baby,” he said, “did we wake you?”

I shook my head, which was pounding. “No, I woke up on my own.”

He sat next to me and pulled my hair back from my face. He kissed my

temple and said, “Did you sleep okay?”

I shrugged my shoulders and answered, “As good as can be expected, I guess.”

“You want me to get you anything?”

“I need some aspirin. My head is killing me,” I said, leaning against him.

Jude stood up from the table and said, “I’m on it, sis. I’ll make you some coffee, too. It helps me when I get headaches.”

“Thank you, Jude,” I replied and he nodded at me.

“Where’s Danni and Jessie?” I asked.

Kris came over to us and sat in the recliner next to the couch. “Jess is in the

shower and Danni's still sleeping.”

“What time is it?” I asked, rubbing my eyes.

“It's almost two o'clock. You've been out for almost ten hours,” Ryder said.

“I have?”

Ryder kissed my hair and said, “Yeah, you cried yourself to sleep around four and I didn't want to risk waking you so I let you sleep here.”

“Where did you sleep?”

“Right here with you,” he said.

“After what happened there was no way in hell I was leaving you alone so I just leaned back and let you sleep on me.”

“Now I feel bad that you had to

sleep sitting up.”

Ryder shook his head and said, “Evie, don’t worry about it, I slept just fine. I had you next to me. I’m good.”

“Thank you for that, Ryder. You are going to need your rest too for what’s about to come,” I said weakly. I felt tears burning my eyes again and I said, “I’m so sorry about this.”

“Oh, Everleigh, baby, you have to stop-”

Ryder didn’t finish his sentence because just then Jude came back into the room carrying a glass of water and a bottle of pain relievers. “Here you go, sis,” he said, handing me the medicine. He set the water on the coffee table and said, “Coffee’s on. It should be ready in

a few.”

“Thank you Jude,” I said, wiping my eyes with the back of my hand.

Jude immediately sat down and placed his large warm hand protectively on the small of my back. “Everleigh, I’m so sorry about your friend. Listen, we’re going to stop this cock sucker from hurting anyone else, okay?”

The tears started to fall and I shook my head. “I wish I could believe that, Jude, I really do, but this is Scott we are dealing with. He is so beyond mentally unstable that I don’t think anyone can know what he will do next. This won’t end without more people getting killed,” I cried.

I could feel Ryder's anger radiating off him as he said, "Baby, he is not going to kill anyone else. We are going to find him and I will put an end to him once and for all."

I tensed up. "Ryder, you aren't going to kill him, are you?"

"Hell yes I am! If he shows up here after what he's already done and tries to even breathe near you I'm going to blow his fucking head off."

"Ryder, you can't do this. You can't stoop to his level," I begged, afraid that I would lose him too. If he killed Scott he would end up in jail and I couldn't bear to be away from him for even one second.

“Don’t try to talk me out of this, Evie. It’s a done deal. I’ve had a gun for a while now. I’ve never felt the need to carry it because John was always with us but now he’s not enough. I will do what I have to do to protect you and everyone we love, no matter what that means.”

The tears continued to fall as I said, “It scares me so much that you have a gun. I don’t like them and I can’t help that I feel that way.”

“Well, I’m sorry you feel that way, Evie, but what’s done is done. I am going to carry it with me wherever I go and it’s staying on me until this is over. I also had John buy one for you too,”

Ryder said.

I gasped and shook my head. “No, I am *not* carrying a gun, Ryder.”

His jaw squared and he said, “Normally I wouldn’t force anything on you, but I am standing my ground on this. You can hate me all you want but you are going to have a way to protect yourself, Everleigh. End of story.” As I looked into his eyes I almost cowered back. I’d never seen this side of Ryder before. He’d been protective of me since day one, but it always came with patience and understanding too. He was in full warrior mode and it was a little intimidating.

Deciding that this issue wasn’t worth fighting over since he was only

trying to cover all the bases and make sure I had a way to protect myself if I needed to, I sighed and said, “I have never held a gun before and I don’t know the first thing about them!”

“I already thought of that. John got you a G26 9 millimeter handgun. It’s really small and can be easily concealed. It only holds ten rounds and it’s got a pretty excellent firing accuracy,” Ryder said.

I stared at him as if he had just lapsed into Chinese. “I have no idea what that all means. All I understood was ‘really small and easily concealed’. Besides, I wouldn’t even know how to shoot the damn thing!”

A ghost of a smile quickly flashed across Ryder's lips and he said, "We can go to the gun range and I'll teach you how to shoot it. We got you one of the easiest handguns to handle, gorgeous."

I frowned. "Do I really have to carry it all the time?"

"Every time you leave this apartment you will have it on you," he said sternly.

I groaned and said, "I still don't like this."

"Well, believe it or not, I don't like it either but that's the way things are right now. You can't stay cooped up here until he's caught and I'm not about to let you leave here unprotected,"

Ryder said. “Have I ever done anything that I wasn’t sure would ultimately keep you safe?”

I shook my head and sighed. “No.”

“There you go, then,” he said, pulling me closer into him and kissing me.

Jude moved his hand from my back and gave my shoulder a slight shake. “I’m with Ryder on this one, sis. Take your aspirin and I’ll go check on the coffee.” He stood up and walked back into the kitchen.

Beau came walking back into the room while putting his cell phone back into his pocket. “Well, Sadie’s pissed, but she’s on the next flight out here,” he said. Guilt burned through me again as

his eyes landed on my face. “Oh, hey, Everleigh. I didn’t know you were up yet. How are you feeling, sweetheart?”

“Guilty,” I answered honestly.

He drew his eyebrows together.

“Why are you feeling guilty? You know that none of this is your fault, right?”

Ryder sighed, clearly frustrated, and shook his head. Before he could say anything, I replied, “Of course it’s my fault. Scott won’t get over me and just let me go and now because of it I was almost raped, Trisha is dead, and your sister has to leave college for who knows how long.”

“You know about Sadie coming here?”

“I was waking up and I heard you all talking. She’s your sister, Beau, and she’s having her life turned upside down because of my psycho ex. She’s going to hate me for this,” I said.

Beau came walking to the couch and took Jude’s place on my other side. “Sweetheart, she’s not going to hate you. She’s worried about you too.”

I looked at him puzzled. “How can you say she won’t hate me? You just said she’s pissed off.”

“Aw, Everleigh,” he said, taking my hand, “she’s not pissed because of you. She’s pissed off because of Scott. Sadie is very opinionated when it comes to violence against women in any way.

“Our mother didn’t set a very good example for us growing up. She was the kind of woman that always needed a man in her life to make her happy, even if that meant getting the shit beat out of her and then in turn taking it out on me and Sadie. We both tend to get a little hot headed when it comes to things like this, but it affects Sadie a little bit more. Believe me, from what we’ve all told her about you she loves you already.”

I breathed a sigh of relief...my first one since last night. “Good. I couldn’t bear it if she hated me. I love you guys too much.”

“We all love you too, sweetheart,” Beau said, and he looked sad. “Look, I

know Danni's your best friend and this might be bad timing, but I am really, really sorry about what happened last night at the bar."

"Forget about it, Beau. You both have been so stubborn and I knew something like this might happen. I hoped it wouldn't, but it did. Nothing can change it now," I answered. "Don't worry, I still love you."

He gave me a weak smile. We sat quietly for a few seconds before he squeezed my hand and said softly, "I'm in love with her, Everleigh. I know I've fucked this up beyond repair but I hope she knows that I'm not giving up on her. I'll make this right."

"I hope you can," I said.

“Listen, I’m going to leave you two alone and try to catch some sleep before Sadie’s plane gets here.”

“Use one of the extra guest rooms here, man,” Ryder said.

“Thanks, bro,” he said, and they bumped fists. “I’m here if you need me, okay, sweetheart?”

I nodded and said, “Thanks Beau.” As he walked away, I felt a sudden surge of emotions and I called out, “I love you!” with fresh tears in my eyes.

He turned around and his eyes were tired as he answered, “I love you too, Everleigh.” He continued to walk down the hallway and into the spare room to catch some sleep.

With John on the phone, Danni and Beau sleeping in separate rooms, Jessie still in the shower, and Kris and Jude in the kitchen, Ryder and I were left alone on the couch. The quiet in that moment was almost deafening and the reality of everything slammed into me at once. In the past month I'd lost my father, my friend, and now all of our lives were in danger. Everyone was doing what they had to do to protect me but despite all of their efforts and the fact that I was now being forced to carry a gun I still couldn't shake the feeling that Trish's death was only the beginning.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the front door. I immediately tensed up and

Ryder stood up from the couch. “Stay there, gorgeous,” he said, and he pulled out a gun from behind his back. He followed John to the front door and I sat in fear as Jude and Kris came out of the kitchen.

John peeked through the peephole and looked at Ryder, nodding. “It’s the doorman,” he said. “Keep your weapon drawn.”

Ryder kept his gun locked and loaded behind his back as he opened the front door. “Can I help you?” he asked.

“I’m sorry to bother you, Mr. Matthews, but someone just dropped off a letter for Miss Stone in the lobby. He said it was urgent.”

Taking a large yellow envelope

from the doorman, Ryder said, “What did he look like?”

The doorman shrugged and said, “Oh, I don’t know, he was wearing one of those winter hats that made it hard to see his face. Is there a problem?”

“Maybe, we’ll let you know,” Ryder answered, and he bid the doorman goodbye. After he shut the door he turned to me. “Do you want me to open this?” he asked.

Shaking, I stood and said, “No, let me see it. Whatever it is I need to face it head on.”

Ryder reluctantly handed me the envelope and with shaking fingers I tore open the end. It looked like a picture but

it was turned over. The back of the picture had a handwritten note on it...in Scott's handwriting. It read,

See what happens when you try to run from me, baby girl?

I felt nauseated as I held the picture in my hands and when I turned it over, I screamed. It was Trish's beaten and bloodied body lying lifeless on my kitchen floor. My knees gave out and I collapsed to the floor.

"Evie, baby?" Ryder yelled, barely making it over to me before my head hit the hardwood floor. The picture was lying face up on the floor and I followed his eyes as he saw it. "Shit!"

Kris got his cell phone out and said, “Fuck this, I’m calling the police.”

“I’m going to go down to the lobby and have them pull up surveillance, see if we can get his face,” Jude said.

Ryder said, “You got your gun on you?”

“Always,” he said, and he took off out the front door.

As I fought to try and keep from dry heaving, I clung to Ryder for dear life and I naively prayed to anyone who would listen that this would be over soon.

Scott

I could almost hear Everleigh screaming at the picture I'd dropped off at that rich fucker's swanky penthouse for her. I would have given anything to see her shaking with fear, knowing that there was nothing she could do to keep me from getting to her. I took a drink of my coffee and fought back a laugh at the thought of everyone running around in his apartment and making feeble promises to get rid of me.

I had just paid my check and was about to head to my hotel when I saw the

idiot bodyguard's black SUV pull up in front of the building. I saw Beau, the guitar player, get out of the car followed by a smoking hot ass blonde. She looked young...she couldn't have been more than nineteen or twenty. Once I got Everleigh back, I might just have to go back and have some fun with that one. The one thing I had to give to these trashy rockers was that they pulled in some pretty hot pussy.

I tossed a few bills on the table for a tip and pulled my hood up, covering most of my face so no one would recognize me. I'm sure by now someone had alerted the police that I was here... they had to be looking for me after I beat that nurse bitch to death. I wasn't

intending to kill her, but she had it coming. She thought she could pull a fucking gun on me and then not suffer for it?

I had broken in again to try to gather some things I would need when I made my way to New York to take Everleigh back. I was sure that she would want some of her things that would remind her of home so I grabbed a bottle of her perfume, some modest clothes, and a picture of her and her asshole father. I was never happier than when that old bastard finally croaked. That fucker had way too much influence over her and when he made it clear he didn't like me that's when she pulled

that “I just want to be sure that I love you before we sleep together again” shit. However, I was a nice guy and willing to overlook that all now because he was dead and she was free to be with me again. Well, almost free, anyway.

When that nurse came home and I surprised her, she tried to fight me off but then the dumb bitch said that she didn't care if I killed her because keeping Everleigh safe from a “sadistic freak like me” was worth dying for. By then I was sick of hearing her so I granted her wish and bashed in her skull.

I'd never killed anyone before and even though I had never planned on that happening, it was exhilarating to watch someone's life drain away from them. I

wasn't that bad of a guy...I hope that I never had to do it again but if anyone tried to keep me from Everleigh I would have no problem killing them, famous musicians or not.

As I walked out of the coffee shop I stopped as I saw Everleigh in the lobby of the apartment building. She was wearing a tight blue top that made her tits look so hot, a pair of jeans that hugged her full ass, and she had her long hair pulled up into a messy bun. I wasn't a fan of her hair like that and when she came back to me I'd have to make her start wearing how I liked it. As hot as she looked, being around these trashy rockers had her dressing like a fucking

slut now. I'd have to change that.

I watched her as she hugged the sexy little blonde girl and wiped tears from her eyes. Besides the guitarist, the rest of the band was there now and they were taking turns hugging the little blonde. I noticed Blondie's eyes lingering on the big guy with the Mohawk and even from this distance I could tell she was blushing. I rolled my eyes...what was it about these shit heads that had the girls wanting to drop their panties for them?

I watched them all interacting for a few moments before they all started to walk toward the elevators. I watched them all climb inside and go up to their penthouse at the top of the building. The

wind picked up and I shivered. I pulled my coat tighter around me and hailed a cab to take me to my hotel.

I would have to start watching them to find out what their schedule was and when they came and went. If I knew everyone's routine it would be easy to pin down a way to get Everleigh away from them and back into my arms...and my bed.

As soon as I got back to my hotel room I locked the door and checked to make sure I had everything ready for when I took Everleigh back. Everything was all set, including the pictures, clothes, and perfume I had taken from her house...now all I had to do was sit

and wait to make my move. The fucking prick that stole my girl would never know what hit him...literally.

Acknowledgments

Okay, once again, I'm going to make this short and sweet! Thank you first and foremost to all of my readers who have made Ryder and Everleigh's story what it is now! I am honestly in shock over how much you all are loving them and the rest of the BBR crew. I have big plans for the other boys so hold on for that!

Thanks to my street team...Sam, Dawn, Fiona, and Leanne, you ladies keep me going and the pictures you all post keep me going day to day, lol. I

love you girls!

Thank you to the following authors/readers/bloggers that have been WONDERFUL in helping me spread the word of my rocker boys. There have been hundreds of you that have been amazing enough to help a girl like get her books out there and for you all I will be forever grateful! A special thank you to Jennie Wurtz and everyone at BOOK FRIENDS for their amazing support!!

Terri Anne Browning...as always, thanks for the advice in everything! I have taken every bit of it and I'm so glad I listened! Ryder and Everleigh's story is becoming bigger than I could have ever imagined it to be and I owe a huge part of that to you! Thank you for

everything!!!

Thank you to my salon family as always...especially Seth and his “story ideas”. I have noted your possible story ideas, I have logged them away, and I will consider them for future books, hahahaha!

Thank you to my husband and our daughters for supporting me in my writing. It's not been an easy few months but you all have kept things running smoothly so Mom can get it done! Thanks for understanding and having my back no matter what!

I encourage all of you to please

donate to a special trust account set up for my late friend Casey Krebs' children. She was an amazing mother and wonderful friend who was taken way too soon. She would have done anything for her children and I want to help them now that she can't. The information is below...please donate if you can. Do your part to put an end to domestic violence!

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I love, love, LOVE to hear from and interact with readers and other authors, so look me up! I am on Facebook (Mellie George), I have an author page for you to “like” (https://www.facebook.com/pages/Author-Mellie-George/329475417182667?bookmark_t=page), I’m on Twitter (@AuthorMellieG), and I am also on Instagram and Pinterest! Come and stalk me, you know you want to, lol! See you all again soon!

Also available from Mellie George on

Amazon and Barnes & Noble:

Say Yes (Glenbrook Girls Series) Book
1

Back To Life

Rebel: Bad Blooded Rebel Series #1

Rogue: Bad Blooded Rebel Series #2

Coming Soon from Mellie George (in
NO particular order):

Redeemed (Bad Blooded Rebel Series
#4)- coming soon!

Fighting For Us (Sequel to Back To
Life)-coming in 2014/2015

Come Back Home (Glenbrook Girls
Series) Book 2-coming in 2015

Spotlight (Working Title for Beau and Danni's story)-coming in late 2014/early 2015

Watch for Kris and Jude's stories to follow!

Soundtrack

Ryder's Playlist

1. I'll Follow You- Shinedown
2. Enemies- Shinedown
3. New York Groove- Ace Frehley
4. Fake It- Seether
5. Best I Can- Art Of Dying
6. Courtesy Call- Thousand Foot
Krutch
7. My Town- Hollywood Undead
8. Far From Over- Rev Theory
9. Head Above Water- Theory Of A
Deadman

10. All American Nightmare- Hinder
11. Watch Me Burn- Landsdowne
12. The Good Life- Three Days
Grace
13. What If I Was Nothing- All That
Remains

Everleigh's Playlist

1. We Found Love (acoustic)- Tyler
Ward feat. Jess Moskaluke
2. Two Is Better Than One- Boys
Like Girls feat. Taylor Swift
3. All For You- Keith Urban
4. Moonshine- Bruno Mars
5. In Love With The Girl- Luke
Bryan

6. Free Bird-Lynard Skynard
7. Aerosmith- Angel
8. The Best Of My Love- The Eagles
9. AC/DC- You Shook Me All Night Long
10. Led Zepplin- Whole Lotta Love
11. If I Didn't Have You- Thompson Square
12. My Little Girl- Tim McGraw
13. Have You Ever Seen The Rain- Creedence Clearwater Revival