

OMEGA'S DESTRUCTION BOOK ONE



BROKEN

EVA DRESDEN

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Excerpt](#)

Broken
Omega's Destruction Book One

By Eva Dresden

OceanofPDF.com

Broken - Omega's Destruction Book One

©2019 Eva Dresden

All rights reserved. This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, businesses, companies, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Cover Design by Eris Adderly

OceanofPDF.com

Thanks to everyone who made this happen

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 1

The press of naked flesh, slip-sliding, grinding, brazen.

Sweat from so many bodies was enticing as her body moved to the rapid time.

Like a war drum, thumping out a raging surge, hearts thundered with the deep bass that tempted.

Faces upturned with the maws of their smiles ecstatic, otherworldly under the staccato pulse of lights flashing bruise tinged hues.

She danced. The expanse of male chest sidled up from behind, melting against her, wide and thick. Great paws of strength settled over bouncing hips, hooking over bone to wrench her undulating body flush. The grind of plumped flesh against the small of her bared back thinned lush lips, indigo stained lips becoming a slash of disgust.

Always with the idiots who thought being a dancer at Wicked meant they could touch as they wanted.

The subtle sidestep of denial ignored, the heavy body following the movement with an urgency that curled her lips into a delicate grimace. The solid heel of her boot fit well against the male's instep as she threw her weight down onto it with the next roll of her hips.

The roar of rage caught attention, just as she'd intended. Multiple bodies clothed in grim sooty shades wove an unerring line through the bouncing tide of dancers towards her. She stood pliant in the giant's grip, impassive to all the rumblings in a never-ending stream of curses at her back. He hadn't even noticed the bouncers moving in.

Idiot.

The pale golden gaze of a bulky male caught hers, eyebrow canting up in unspoken question. She thought she recognized the bouncer, his name something short and sweet. The smallest shake of her head given in response, her chin lifted to show the red band at her throat.

She knew how this would go. It took less time than usual for the male to be distracted from his pursuit of her to challenge those closing in. She was free of his grip in two seconds flat, the male on the floor in less than five.

Wriggling her fingers in a wave of thanks, she slipped unnoticed into the crowd and wandered a snaking path to the bar.

“You okay, Quinn?” Lennox, ever diligent, saw all that happened in what he considered his domain. No matter his name was nowhere to be seen, the floor was his when he tended the bar.

“Fine.” A twitch of narrow shoulders was made, affecting an apathy she didn’t quite feel. The slow ache at her hips promised bruising, and this was just her second night on the main floor after proving herself on the balconies. “Can I get some water?”

“You should be more careful,” Lennox said, pitching the roughness of his voice from a near scream to a shout over the music by leaning across the polished expanse of oak.

“What else was I supposed to do?” She would have spat the words but yelling just to be heard over the grinding beat ruined the effect. Soot shaded lids lowered over pale smoke irises in disbelief.

“Keep your eyes open and make sure they see the red band.” The voice that tickled against her ear was gravel rough, pitched just loud enough that Quinn flinched. It was the exact reaction he wanted, the warmth of a too large palm settling over her shoulder as Elijah Beaumont pulled her in to his chest. As co-owner of the club and in charge of the *entertainment*, as he liked to call them, she didn’t dare pull away. “Unless you’ve changed your mind...”

Quinn had managed not to resort to selling her body so far in life, but only just. Between waitressing and dancing shifts at the club, she could barely make rent and often went with the barest minimum of luxuries like real food. There was housing offered to all the club’s employees, but it came with the sticky, tangled spider web of strings attached. Sure that’s how the owners preferred things, Quinn had yet to apply even if it would mean three square meals and a warm bed at night.

“Go up to the balconies where you’ll stay out of trouble, little girl.”

“Yes, sir.” Quinn ducked her head and squeezed her way past him, trying not to touch more of the Alpha than she had to.

Ever mindful of watching eyes, Quinn kept the slow sway of her hips and the sultry stride she’d been taught. Working the edge of the dance floor, she made her way to one of the tight circular staircases that led up to the second floor. There was the elevator but the thought of being packed in with so many bodies had a shiver crackling down her spine, turning the fine sheen of sweat coating her clammy. Her thighs trembled as she started up, the

brief reprieve of a glass of water lost as she moved up through the gyrating lights.

The balconies weren't her favorite. She felt like a display of meat with the platform raised high enough that her hips were at eye level with the people sitting at the tables sipping on their wine and cocktails. It wasn't too far from the truth, but it didn't mean she had to like it.

"Sit still," Marina hissed as she attempted to glue on the false eyelashes to Quinn's fluttering lid as she prepared for yet another night of slinging drinks and smiles.

"I'm sorry," Quinn whispered through a clenched jaw, straining to keep motionless. It was just as impossible to control a nervous flutter of her eyes as it was to call this female her mother.

It wasn't that Marina was cruel to her daughter. In fact, Quinn was certain the woman felt nothing qualifying as strong towards her. They spent no time together beyond infrequent interactions such as these, and her hands were no more or less sharp or angry at Quinn's fidgeting than anyone else's.

Quinn still did not understand how she had come to be. Oh, she knew the story of how a single drunken night and a broken condom had been the catalyst. Quinn's grandparents even had a softer, gentler version for her. Why Marina hadn't taken care of it when she didn't want or need a child in her life was the question. One Quinn had asked only once. Marina had given her mean, drunken sneer of a smile and asked if Quinn really wanted to know. They had dropped it after that.

Perhaps that was why Quinn had followed in Marina's footsteps. A vague attempt to feel closer to her mother. She didn't think so. Thought it more likely that she'd seen the faded, water stained papers advertising waitress positions when Quinn had gone to the club to let Marina know she'd lost another job.

"For fuck's sake, Quinn! Learn to do this yourself. I'm not helping you anymore."

With that hissed declaration, Marina stalked away on the dangerous points of her tall heels, furious curves and lush anger wrapped up in a glittering red dress that showed more than it hid away. Canting her head to

the side, Quinn realized just how little she looked like Marina. The luscious waves of Marina's dark golden hair were heavy curls of platinum for Quinn. The former left long and unbound, the latter cropped short and never left to its own devices. The crystalline blue eyes of the mother were a pale gray for the daughter. Even beyond the dissimilarity of coloring, Marina was lush in all the ways people desired while Quinn was... not. All sharp angles and firm jaw, Quinn would never be soft in the ways Marina was.

It had become clear somewhere around her tenth birthday why people gravitated to Quinn and not Marina when they were together. Well, not people—males, Alphas in particular, though there were the odd females.

Being an Omega was the only thing that attracted anyone. Not her face or her eyes, not her personality. It had been the sticky sweet scent that hung around her in a cotton candy cloud that drew them in like flies.

Suppressants had dulled her responses to bearable levels, the addition of a near toxic cocktail of more chemicals dampening her fragrance to almost imperceptible. As far as most people were concerned, she was just another Beta. Only once or twice a year did she have to endure the sheer agony of a heat put off for far too long.

Leaning closer to the mirror in the dressing rooms above Wicked's dance floor, Quinn applied the metallic blue and gray eye shadow, accentuating her almond shaped eyes. The shadowy colors brightened the pale shade of her irises, turning them luminous. In the flash and glare of the lights, they glowed. Rolling her lips together to smooth the shimmering blue-black of fresh lipstick, Quinn leaned back to inspect her costume. Tight, tiny, and tinted to a steely blue, the shorts were obscene. Her top was little more than straps with the smallest scraps of fabrics to keep her decent. Three-inch heels—which still didn't let her look many people in the eye—were more of the same. Short cuffed boots with their thin patent leather ties crisscrossing up the length of her legs to just above her knees.

She was sex on wheels, right?

Quinn snorted a laugh and gave her reflection wide eyes. A true smile slipped out before the cacophony of roll call tumbled through the chaotic room and stripped it away.

It was time to work.

“Four black labels, two whiskeys neat,” Quinn shouted over the thrumming squeal of some electronica beat. She didn’t know if this DJ was a regular, but he was off to a rough start. It was far too early to be playing something so frenetic, most of the dancers still imbibing their courage and drowning inhibitions in the shadowy booths and tables.

Lennox arranged the drinks on her tray with a nod and then rushed on to the next woman waiting to call in her order. There were a lot of inhibitions to drink down tonight.

Delivering the orders was easy enough, though chatting up anyone for a tip or two was impossible over the shrill wail of instruments blasting from the speakers. Making do with flirtatious smiles and the sway of her hips, she’d made a whole three bucks in as many hours. There was still time, but she’d be dancing the latter half of the evening and no tips then. No matter appearances, Wicked was *not* a strip club.

Quinn wanted to eat tonight.

“They need a girl upstairs.” Daniel Rey, the other owner, yelled at her side as he pulled Quinn up short of a group of fresh-faced college students waiting to place orders.

“I’m already dancing up there for a split shift,” Quinn shouted back, too aware of his gripping her arm. Something had agitated him. Alphas were dangerous when they got pissed off.

“The private rooms, not the balconies.”

It didn’t matter that Quinn had frozen in surprise. Mr. Rey dragged her along, leaving her to enact a mincing half run to keep upright. The elevator was empty and cool as he pulled her inside, punching the button for the third floor. The doors swished closed with the bright peal, the grating music quieted to a dull roar.

“It’s a private party of businessmen. Just serve drinks, nothing else. You don’t hear a damn thing and you don’t see a damn thing, understand?” Releasing her arm, he pulled at the pristine cuffs of his shirt, shrugging the wide breadth of shoulders to settle the dark jacket. The man was a muscled giant, and she felt small and insignificant trapped in the metal box with him.

“Y-Yes, sir.”

“If you’ve got something worked out with Elijah, I don’t care, just not on the property. You get them back to their hotel before you do your shit.”

“I’m not a prostitute!”

Mr. Rey took a breath to say something, full lips already curling up into a smirk, but paused to face her. Dark eyes made an unhurried scrutiny of her appearance, taking in everything from the stiff mop of curls high on her head to the tips of her shiny boots. A low rumble issued from his chest, a not quite growl of consideration.

“Well then, I guess I don’t have to negotiate a price.”

The doors opened onto the far quieter third floor with that ominous statement. Taking her arm in a gentler grip, he tugged her to the left where an alcove swarmed with other women.

“Here’s the sixth one, Jackson. Remember to keep it clean, their glasses full, and be discreet. If you fuck this up, you’re no longer an employee here, got it?” Mr. Rey looked down the aquiline slope of his nose at them, the warm lights burnishing the rich ochre of his skin to a deep copper, glossing the inky blackness of his hair.

Quinn caught her lower lip between her teeth before the waxy taste of lipstick reminded her not to. It would be all right. It was just serving drinks, nothing to worry about. Still, her heart picked up its already racing pace and slammed around the delicate cage of her chest as she lined up with the others.

“Tasha, fix your skirt. Lisa, I don’t want to see you getting handsy,” Jackson, one of the managers, said as he paced down the line to inspect them before they were presented.

Quinn could just hear the low rumble of male voices from the other side of the hall through the double doors. Another chill slithered down her spine, gooseflesh prickling the backs of her arms as her jangled nerves went into overdrive. Why did they need six of them to serve drinks? How many men were in that room? Imagining the space of dark hardwood floors and buttery leather sofas overflowing with massive Alphas and aggressive Betas, Quinn had to swallow back a sudden mouthful of thin saliva. There wouldn’t be just no dinner tonight, there would be no money for things like electricity and gas, and most importantly no rent money if she screwed up. Her hands were already shaking.

“Marina, you know the rules. Not on the property.”

Jerked from her racing thoughts so hard she jostled the woman next to her, Quinn’s pale gaze careened down the line to where her mother stood. A dismissive flick of a feminine hand, bronzed to a golden glow from the sun, met Quinn’s utter shock.

Marina was here... and she knew the rules.

The revelation wasn't surprising but somehow all the more paralyzing because Quinn would have to be in the same room as her mother worked the men. The times Marina had stumbled home in the small hours reeking of whiskey, sex, and male were innumerable, but it had remained in the darkness never to be revealed in the light of day. Never spoken of, even in anger, it was a slap in the face to bear this witness.

"Hey, you all right, kid?"

"M'fine." Quinn mumbled through numbed lips, averting her eyes from the line. If Marina had any reaction, she didn't want to see it.

"Listen, if you're going to puke..."

"Really, I'm fine."

"Then why are you turning green? Fuck, someone go get me another girl!"

"She's never been up here, Jacks, cut her some slack." Clara, a bastion of warmth and smiles, came to her rescue. A small hand smoothed over Quinn's back, brushing away the clammy shroud of anxiety as if it was nothing but cobwebs.

Gaze sliding to the side, Quinn let the smallest of thanks perk her lips up before she squared her shoulders and faced Jackson head on.

"I'm okay, just a little nervous. I didn't know my job was going to be on the line when Mr. Rey pulled me off the floor."

"Fuck me," Jackson grumbled under a sigh, wiping a meaty hand over his bald head. Addressing them all as he straightened, he waved at the bar tucked into the alcove manned by a waif of a Beta male. "Everyone grab your trays and head in."

"You good, sweetie," Clara whispered behind Quinn as they turned.

"Yeah, I'm good," Quinn said over her shoulder, giving a real smile this time.

The double doors swung open, the roar of male laughter flowing out in resonating eddies and rumbling waves to greet them. Filing in one by one, the women all paused just inside the entry to give their audience a smile and a wave before moving in some pattern Quinn didn't understand. At first it seemed it alternated right and left until it didn't anymore. Some went to the far reaches of the back, some stood in the middle. Quinn had no idea where she was supposed to go.

“Hey, kid,” Jackson said, calling Quinn over to him. His hand tapped on her shoulder, an awkward reassurance. “Just don’t spill a glass on anyone and you’ll be okay. You’re the new girl, so stick to the perimeter and leave the middle ground to the experienced girls, all right?”

“Yes. Thank you so much.” The shuddery exhale of relief wasn’t feigned as she accepted another uncomfortable smack of his palm to her arm. Following in Clara’s wake, she sucked in a steady breath before pasting on a plastic smile and heading through the doors.

Hours passed of an endless monotony of filling and refilling glasses. Whoever these men were, they could put away some alcohol. Feeling uncertain and somehow demeaned in the press of wool suits and immaculate dress shirts, Quinn kept her interactions to the bare minimum. Clara had told her she’d get an increased hourly wage for the time spent up here, so she tried not to be so concerned about the tips. It was hard not to see the once crisp bills fluttering from a wide variety of hem and waistbands on the other women though. Clara had a single hundred-dollar bill tucked in her cleavage, sticking up like a little flag. Quinn hadn’t dared to look at Marina.

“Hey you!”

Smiling through a clenched jaw, Quinn turned towards the summons. Hand already reaching for the man’s glass, she paused with her arm extended when she noticed it was still half full. A flick of her gaze upwards showed a Beta, recognition dawning as she noted the scruff of beard he attempted to maintain. She’d only just given him that drink a minute ago.

“I’m sorry, did you need something else?”

“Yeah, I sure do.” The lecherous grin was even more disgusting for the way the patchwork of his facial hair played peek-a-boo with it. The dull, dingy brown of his gaze slid over her, a slimy ooze that made her want to gag.

“What can I get you, sir?”

A string of curses lit up in her thoughts, bright as Christmas lights, as she kicked herself for the utter stupidity of her phrasing. Knowing what the response would be as soon as the last syllable slipped past her lips, Quinn fixed her server’s smile and tried not to show the edge of her teeth in a snarl.

“You naked and bouncing on my cock,” the male said, chest puffed and eyes gleaming with heat. His cronies were already letting loose their

drunken guffaws and chortles, slapping each other and the Beta on the back in raucous victory.

Idiots.

“Sorry, the bar doesn’t carry that. Let me get you another bourbon instead.”

The smile was becoming painful to hold, flesh cracking under the strain of cheery politeness and powder. Already turning away, she didn’t see the hand that shot out. There was no time to maneuver away before fingers closed around her arm, hauling Quinn backwards into the crowd of Betas. Giving an indelicate squawk, she fell against the high table, pain crackling through her spine as it collided with the bruising edge.

“You think you can just brush me off, bitch,” the Beta hissed in her face as he leaned over her supine form. His breath was an acrid wash of alcohol that made her eyes water and Quinn could only hope he thought the brightness of her eyes was fear and not anger.

“I’m sorry, sir, but we’re not allowed—”

“I’ll do whatever in the fuck I want. Do you know who I am?”

“David Johnson, junior associate at Rhodes and Bassett.”

The new voice was deep, rough as a rockslide, and conversational. The effect it had on the males surrounding her was electric. Hands that had strayed towards more undesirable locales jerked away as if slapped, their spines snapping straight as they jumped away from her and turned towards the new male in a move that almost seemed choreographed.

Finding herself freed, Quinn had to grab hold of the table and haul her weight back onto the spindly heels of her boots. There was nothing graceful about the save. All flailing arms and knocked elbows, she felt her cheeks warm as the male before her watched on.

An Alpha, Quinn surmised in a glance. Muscles and broad shoulders, head far above the Beta males, and arrogant as all get out. Any thanks she might have felt soured in her stomach when she saw the flat dullness of boredom on his face.

Mumbling the appropriate words, Quinn sidestepped the looming bulk of him and walked away with a confident purpose she didn’t at all feel. Her back had been tangled up into a thousand knots and each step sent a jagged pulse of brilliant magenta pain searing through her brain.

Clara’s heart-shaped face filled her field of focus, worried brown eyes hiding behind a smile sweet enough to be spun sugar.

"You okay? Do you want me to get Jackson," Clara asked in a faint whisper as she leaned in and sent a soft, warm hand down Quinn's cold arm. From an observer's standpoint, it no doubt looked sexual.

"I'm fine, I just need to go and fix my makeup." It surprised Quinn that her voice came out as steady as it did, patting herself on the back for remaining calm as the long muscles of her back screamed.

Clara pulled back, tucking her lower lip between her teeth in a sensual pout that made Quinn feel uncomfortable. She'd already had one aborted assault, but if they thought she and Clara had some sort of thing going on, it would be endless comments and jibes about two women and playing out the basest male fantasies.

"C'mon, stop that. I'll be back in a minute," Quinn whisper-hissed and slipped around Clara towards the doors. As soon as the heavy oak shut, closing the boisterous activity inside and leaving her in the calm of the corridor, Quinn felt like she could breathe.

"Where's your tray, kid?"

Fuck. She'd forgotten about Jackson prowling around.

"I have to run to the bathroom for a sec." She'd intended to make it a statement, but her voice betrayed her, rising in question.

"Okay, just make it quick. It's down there, past the fourth door on the left."

Quinn was already heading to where he pointed, halfway down the hall before giving a brisk nod in recognition of his order. Hurrying into the echoing room, Quinn drew a ragged breath and bent over the line of sinks to press her hot cheek against the cold marble.

Taking the boots with the punishing heels off wasn't an option. She concentrated on working the shrill ache from her back. With careful twitches and mincing steps, she stretched out her arms and stepped back from the counter so she could flex and relax the muscles. Gritting her teeth against a whimper as the undeniable flare of brilliant purple pain from a bad bruise forming flashed across mid back, she clung to the cold slab for support.

Heavy warmth slid up the bare line of her back. The scream of surprise was more of a pathetic squeak. If a hand hadn't pressed her flat to the long counter, she would have done herself more injury. Pale eyes wide and rolling, she tried to glimpse who was behind her in the expansive mirror.

"You'll have a mark here." A thick, callused finger traced along the width of her back just under the shoulder where she had fallen against the table. It was the Alpha, his voice just as indifferent as it had been before. He could have been reading the phone book for all the interest he showed.

"Yes, thank you," Quinn stammered out around the violent tirade that had lodged in her throat. Caught so unaware by his presence, she felt just as much at fault for the situation, but her anger zeroed in on the male with laser like intensity. A mantra of bills to pay echoed through the livid red wash before she could snap at him. "Could you let me up, please?"

"I could."

Waiting a beat before realizing he hadn't said he *would*, Quinn grimaced and pushed against the counter and in turn the male's hand only to be flattened back to the marble. It hadn't seemed to take him any effort at all. Doubt began gnawing at her. How long would it take Jackson to get there if she screamed? Would she even be able to get the scream out before the Alpha stopped it?

"Sir, as I told your associates—"

"They're not my associates."

"Fine. As I'm sure you heard me say, we're not allowed to fraternize with guests."

"And if I wasn't a guest?"

"That's beside the point! Will you let me up," Quinn snapped as simmering heat reached a rolling boil, overflowing to cancel out the chill that had crawled up her spine. Eating tonight be damned, she was *not* going to converse with an Alpha while bent over a row of sinks.

Making a considering noise, the hand that had continued to explore her exposed back smoothed across her hips as the one at her shoulder gripped and pulled upright. Ready to shriek in pain and alarm, Quinn could only blink when strained muscles didn't even twinge.

The male smiled at what must have been an expression of wonder on her face. The curl of his lips was lopsided with a too sharp edge that made her shiver. Eyes the deep rich green of twilit forests looked down at her with a calculation she didn't understand.

Large hands tightened over her back and brought her flush. The heat of him washed over her like a blast furnace as the fine wool of his suit sighed against her skin. Tension ratcheted through her, pulling shoulders tight as she tried to shy away with a jumbled mess of syllables.

Whatever she wanted to say, scream or plead, was lost under the rich rumble that resonated through her bones from his chest. Joints knocked loose from the force of it, she sagged in his embrace as strong fingers worked along the length of her spine and eased away the aching knots.

The groan she gave was obscene and guttural.

His touch assailed jangled nerves, plying flesh with heat and pressure until it gave way under his assault. Feeling like sun-warmed taffy as not just the pain of her encounter but every little crick and cramp was ushered away, she melted into the rich spicy musk of him and basked in the comforting attention.

“Much better,” the male said through the lengthy purr, hands now working her to sway into him in a slow, almost familiar rhythm. “Now tell me something, little bird.”

“Mm?” Quinn struggled to put thoughts and actions in order. She shouldn’t be letting him touch her. Shouldn’t have let any of this happen, but it felt so damned *good*. Jackson would be angry by now, wondering where she was. There would be hell to pay if he found her like this.

“How much?”

“What?”

“Name your price, little bird.”

The slow rocking movements were now defined, underlined, and highlighted. Quinn sputtered a string of curses and untangled from his limbs, stomping toes and slapping hands without prejudice. Staggering back against the sinks, she drew herself up to a most unimpressive height and glared.

“I’m not for sale, sir,” Quinn hissed, emphasizing the last with every drop of venom she possessed.

“Oh, come now. Everyone has a price.” So sure of himself, so arrogant and snide she wanted to slap the smirk right off his face. Maybe even pull fistfuls of glossy black hair from his head.

“You can’t afford me.”

“Try me.”

“Ten million dollars.” Offering a sticky-sweet smile, Quinn crossed her arms over her chest.

“Are you a virgin?”

“What?” Quinn squawked and dropped her arms to take a hopping step away from him. “That’s none of your business!”

“It is if I’m going to be paying ten million for it.”

“You’re not—no one would—but you can’t,” Quinn said, words stumbling over each other as her thoughts swerved and crashed into a pileup that exploded in confusion. The number had been arbitrary, and there was no way this man would pay that much, let alone be able to pay that much. The calm of his eyes, the way the smirk never even flinched, made her wonder.

“No, not even if you were a virgin,” he said with a rockslide of a chuckle. Moving towards her, he blocked her retreat, invading her space until he had Quinn pinned against the counter between two sinks. Before she could do more than open her mouth to protest, his hands were at her hips, lifting her until the cold stone kissed the backs of her thighs. “But it proves you can be bought.”

Pale gray gaze darted towards the door leading to safety, pleading with the empty air to be filled with an angry Beta telling her to get back to work. The Alpha moved closer, pushing her legs wide despite how she tried to clench them together. A shrill whine erupted from the back of her throat as the back of his hand grazed the skin of her inner thigh, fingertips edging under the tight hem of her shorts.

“Let me go.”

Shushing her, he thought to soothe with a rough purr and talented fingers. Hands moved to her back, working at the muscles as he edged even closer. His heat cocooned them in a web of his thick scent and her acrid fear. Each delving touch sought to push the tension away, the low register of his purr working its way through her veins to blunt her anger.

Desperation and outrage warred. Drawing her hand back, she sent it arcing towards his stubbled cheek. The resounding slap of skin meeting cracked through the too close air, pain pulsing up through her wrist and arm at the contact in crimson waves.

The Alpha only smiled. And then he gave a growl that upended her world and decimated her senses.

The call shouldn’t have affected her as it did. The multitude of pills she choked down every day by ritual should have seen to that. Yet the subterranean darkness of it pulled at her spine, bowing the length of her towards the thundering resonance. The first flutter of warmth danced and writhed low in her belly.

“S-Stop, let go of me!”

"Tell me you don't want it," he whispered against her temple before calling to her again. The sound so close, so loud, had the breath she'd drawn for a scream stuttering out on a shaky cry. Small hands scrabbled over the breadth of his shoulders, neither of them sure if she was trying to push him away or pull him closer. Her pussy pulsed, a deep-seated ache to be filled by that sound making her grow wet.

"I can't hear you, little bird." Worming their way beneath the too tight shorts, fingertips teased against the constricting fabric that held him back from her sex, pushing at her flesh through the barrier. The sound he made was unadulterated pleasure, a rumble of sheer lascivious intent. Slick dripped from her lips to soak through the fabric cupping her pussy, the sweetness of it flooding the space between them.

"Please don't. I have to ride the train," Quinn stammered against his shoulder, muffled against the wool of his jacket caught between her teeth. How was *that* the only complaint she had?

A moment's pause was all the reprieve given before he redoubled his attack. He jerked her shorts down her hips, the slinky cloth catching at her knees and holding her legs close together. The kiss of cold stone against the too hot skin of her ass and thighs was just another layer in the turmoil. The tinkling chime of his belt was loud in her ears, but for all the wrong reasons.

Grabbing her hands, he pulled them to his burgeoning cock, wrapping small fingers tight around him. Covering her grip with his to guide her movements, he forced her to stroke his length. The chaotic scramble of her thoughts had her jerking her hands back, but it only stoked his pleasure as he pulled them back.

Everything slammed to a crashing halt in her mind as he sent a hand between her thighs and shoved two fingers deep.

Biting back a cry of pleasurable pain at the stretch, she squeezed his throbbing shaft. A chain reaction of pleasure-pain-pleasure began, each of them spurred to greater heights as the other reacted. His fingers twisted, curled, and found a spot that spilled a sound she didn't recognize as her own voice from her throat. Heel of his hand mashing against her clit, he worked her with a skill and ease that stole her breath in more ways than she wanted to count.

Panting against the male's chest, drawing his scent deep into her lungs, she trembled at the edge of an orgasm within minutes. Instinct had her wanting the male to take what he promised with every thundering

resonance. The last fragments of common sense told her that wasn't a good idea. Inexplicable desire had one hand swiping through the copious slick that flowed from her before wrapping around his thick girth once again. The slippery slide of her hand was met with a low groan that had her eyes rolling back in sheer bliss.

Finding herself empty, Quinn stared in a daze as he shoved her hands lower. Small fingers were squeezed around the swelling knot building at the base of his cock. He used his other hand to stroke the length with a brutality her muddled thoughts and aching pussy demanded he give to her.

It only took the span of a trebling heartbeat.

Face pressed against her neck, sucking deep breaths between quiet roars, he came. Thick and milky, he released across trembling thighs. One spectacular surge coated her breasts with the heady warmth. From neck to knees she was plastered with his scent and pearlescent fluid. It seemed it would never end.

And then it was done.

He was already pulling away before the last of it trickled from his tip in a watery spray, coating her hands in the sticky mess of it as he left her cold and alone on the counter. Tucking himself away and setting his clothing to rights, he didn't even look at her.

Quinn stared in slack jawed horror. The trembling heat shifted to an icy shiver as she watched with rounded eyes when he reached into his back pocket. The wallet he opened was fine, smooth leather, the bills crisp and new.

"Take a cab instead," he said as he tucked folded bills into the strap of fabric that went over her shoulder. It didn't escape her notice it was one of the few places not coated.

He was gone before she could even think she should respond.

Sliding down to unsteady legs, she shook hard enough that her teeth chattered. Quinn grabbed onto the counter to hold up under the ton of guilt and shame that settled on her shoulders. The sight of the broken female covered in cooling white smears, the pale ring of gray just discernible around dilated pupils of desire reflected back at her was no comfort.

Movements slow and jerky, she turned the water on at the nearest sink. Paper towels were grabbed from the dispenser by the crumpled fistful. Salty humiliation flooded her eyes, but she blinked fast and hard to hold back the tide of disgust.

She was still trying to clean it from her chilled skin when Jackson came through the door. He averted his eyes, but there was no mistaking the way he scented the air before drawing himself back. The sickly sweet scent of Omega slick permeated every particle of air in the space. They'd have to bleach the whole room down to even begin to get rid of it.

"Come on, you'll go out the back way," Jackson said as he stepped back and pushed the door wide.

"My things," Quinn asked, already crumpling in on herself, arms wrapped tight around her middle. It was over and done and she had no one to blame but herself.

"Outside."

Quinn raised and lowered her head once in acceptance then fell into step behind the bulky Beta when he walked stiffly down the hall. Not daring to look around, she ignored the sibilant hiss of whispers from further back where this horrible night had begun.

The tense silence invaded her limbs as he led her down the dark staircase at the end of the corridor. There were no excuses she could give, no lies she thought she could sell, to make this better somehow. Hell, at this point she didn't even think sleeping with Beaumont and Rey both would save her this job. Tension and pain knotted and writhed their way through her, leaving her aching and on the verge of tears all over again.

Reaching the ground floor at last, Jackson opened the heavy metal door that let out onto a narrow strip of alley. She expected the Dumpster and an array of litter. Daniel Rey standing under the orange sodium light and an idling sleek black sedan were not expected.

Without a word, Mr. Rey opened the back door of the car to reveal pristine leather interior with dark wood accents under the soft illumination of the dome light. Her purse and a plastic grocery bag with her street clothes sat out of place and lonely against the coal black seat.

"Get in," Mr. Rey said with the same careful aversion that Jackson had displayed, even taking a step back from the car door.

Beyond confused, she looked to Jackson for an explanation, but met the rigid line of his lips and a clenched jaw. A muscle in his cheek jumped as his nostrils flared. Then it all came together.

She reeked of slick and Alpha. This was her worst nightmare waiting to happen.

The first step was too quick, both males jerking towards her. Instincts told her to run, theirs told them to chase. Mr. Rey put a solid, heavy hand to Jackson's chest, easing him back towards the building door and giving his own back to Quinn.

With an air of calm she didn't at all feel, she took the four steps that seemed to take decades to the car with a measured pace and slid inside. Slamming the door shut, the locks engaged with a dull clicking thump. With slow and deliberate movements, she pulled the lumpy mass of her worn purse into her lap. The satisfying rattle of the pepper spray bottle soothed in a way nothing else could.

The solid slap of flesh met the window. Darkness invaded the car as something huge blocked the weak orange light. Looming close and all too real, Daniel Rey's face appeared close to the glass with eyes far too intense for comfort, tracking her every twitch with a predatory interest.

"Driver's got your address. Call the office in the morning," he said with one last long look at her. Standing to his full height, his hand slapped against the roof of the car in a quick rhythm that brought the idling car roaring to life.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 2

If she looked out of the single window of her apartment at just the right angle, Quinn could see a sliver of sky around the buildings packed in like cows awaiting slaughter. It had been a stroke of luck that the perfect position was where she'd built her nest in the shoebox sized apartment. Staring at the band of flinty sky, she waited for the sun to make some kind of appearance.

Though she'd arrived home exhausted, the rest of the night was spent staring at the dark ceiling after scouring herself as clean as she could get. Grand displays of dramatics were Marina's bag. Quinn chose the path of silent observation.

There was a small chance that her last pay from Wicked would be enough to cover her rent if she combined it with the money the man tucked into her top. Any other expenses would be impossible. Another month with a roof over her head could give her the time she needed to find a new job. The choices would be even slimmer than they had been before.

"Maybe it's time to revisit that 'I'll never do that' list, my girl," Quinn whispered to the lightening sky. A glance at the clock showed it was 6:30. Someone should be in the office by now.

Rolling to her back in the false safety of her nest, Quinn palmed her cell phone from the floor beside her and punched in Wicked's number.

"Who the fuck is this," Beaumont snarled by way of greeting.

"It's, uh, Quinn."

"Who?"

"Quinn Ivers," she said, making a face in the gloom at the question in her voice. As if she didn't know her own name. "Uh, Mr. Rey told me to call this morning."

"Wait a sec." A staticky crackle filled her ear followed by muffled male voices. Beaumont's grew louder until he came back on with a vicious laugh. "The Omega slut who thinks she's too good for the rules. Now I know who you are, bitch. What the fuck do you want?"

"Mr. Rey told me to call..."

"Well he isn't here right now, so you get to deal with me. What do you want?"

"I guess I need to know when I can pick up my last paycheck."

“Wait a minute.” There was a series of clicks and beeps then the hollow clatter of a receiver being tossed into the cradle. “Say that again.”

“I need to know when to pick up my last paycheck.”

The hollow echo of her voice made Quinn wince. She was on speaker phone, the humiliation of it driven home as several males chuckled and laughed.

“You want,” he began, giving a mean-spirited snicker, “to know when you can come pick up your paycheck?”

“Yes, I do.”

“You’ve got some nerve, you little cunt! After the shit you pulled—” Beaumont’s enraged rant was swallowed under the roar of another male. The insidious din of heavy objects falling and smaller items sent flying clawed into Quinn’s ear through her phone. Holding the rectangle of plastic at arm’s length, she stared in horror at the bright screen.

“I’m sorry,” Quinn whispered, trying to find the button to end the call through a haze of watery misery and shaking hands.

“Quinn! Quinn, don’t hang up, honey. She had damn well better still be on that line, Beau, or so help me,” Mr. Rey’s deep voice bellowed from her cell phone, making her drop it in an instinctive flinch from all that anger.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Rey,” she said, hoping he hadn’t heard her weak response. Far easier to pretend she had never called and made such a mess of everything. How had she been so *stupid*? She’d make do, find a couch somewhere. It wouldn’t be the first time she’d scraped by on next to nothing.

“Quinn, I can’t hear you. Come on, hon, it’s all right now.”

Swiping the tears from her eyes with rough hands, she snatched the phone from the rumpled sheets. Edgy and approaching angry at the purring tone, she slapped the phone to her ear.

“I made a mistake, but Mr. Beaumont has made that clear. I’m sorry to have bothered you.”

“Don’t listen to his bitching, girl. Now come on, what happened? You forgot your pills or something?”

“I never forget them!”

“All right, calm down. Just the girls said you never react to a male, so maybe that or you got a bad batch.”

“No, I... I don’t think so.” The seed planted, the thought snarled on her firm belief that her meds were pure and pulled it into murky doubt. Could

that have been what happened? It would be so easy an explanation.

“Okay, so get yourself to your doctor and see what’s going on. Do you have money for a cab?”

“Uh, no, but I can walk. Mr. Rey what—”

Mr. Rey’s voice was muffled as he said, “Hey, Mike, go get Lana and tell her I need her to make a run for me.”

“What are you doing,” Quinn all but squawked into the phone.

“I’m sending over cab fare.” Another muffled conversation ensued, a higher pitched voice joining into the fray. Mr. Rey growled something which made everyone else go silent. Quinn didn’t like it one bit. “Now I want you to get checked out and let me know what’s going on. We need to make sure everything’s legit before you go dancing on the floor, yeah?”

“I still... work there?”

“Of course you do, honey. When’s your next shift?”

“Tomorrow—I mean tonight.” Quinn wriggled further upright in the nest, leaning back against the cold, damp wall. She still had a job. She wouldn’t be homeless.

“Well, that’s not happening. I’ll move some girls around and get you back on the rotation next week.”

“O-Okay? I mean, thank you, Mr. Rey.”

“You got something to write with? I want you to call me direct when you know what’s up.”

“One sec.”

Scrambling from the nest, Quinn jogged to the kitchen. Scrawling the number he listed off on the back of a worn out receipt and promising to call as soon as she knew what was going on, she felt a sudden rush of relief so strong that her knees went watery. Uncertainty crawled in so close on its heels it had her gripping the counter to stay upright.

“Mr. Rey... why are you doing all of this for me? I’ve seen you fire girls for less and I’ve only been there less than a year.”

“Let’s just say your admirer made it real clear how unhappy he would be if we got rid of you over what happened.”

Eyes rounding and lower lip trembling, she gripped the counter tighter. She made the right sounds to Mr. Rey as he gave last-minute instruction, but damned if she heard any of it. Shame was a corrosive wave against the back of her throat. Ice floes of anger etched through her veins, chilling her to the core.

The man who had treated her like a cheap whore and left her standing cold and covered in his disgusting slime in a nightclub bathroom had saved her job.

Another garbled number came through the crackling P.A system, far too many ahead of Quinn's little ticket for her to even bother listening through the din of crying, coughing, and cursing. She huddled in the uncomfortable plastic chair and watched the rain pelting the windows of the clinic.

Even after scrubbing her skin raw with the exorbitant soap made for the purpose, she caught the faint smell of her slick and the Alpha's musk. It would have been more than enough to cause problems. Though Mr. Rey had been good to his word and sent the paycheck and even extra cash for a cab, she'd need all of it to keep the apartment and to see the medico. Even walking the quiet streets of early morning had more than enough people to notice.

Swimming in borrowed clothing from her neighbor's teenage son (*poor woman, to deal with this funk daily*) she had made the almost two-mile trek to the nearest low income clinic, taken her number, and now it was just a waiting game. All while praying no one caught a whiff of her under teenage male stench.

Hours passed. Quinn gazed with undisguised longing at the vending machine with its glittering cornucopia of illuminated packages. She stared just like everyone else when a bristling, massive male strolled in with a gunshot wound in his shoulder as if nothing in the world was wrong. The tight knot of Omegas that had squeezed themselves into a single corner also interested the impatient mass of people.

They should have known better. Don't group together was one of the first things you learned when your status was confirmed at the onset of puberty. It was easier for a wandering eye to think you a small Beta, or even a teenager, if you are one among a crowd. To have several diminutive bodies so close to compare, they might as well have put up a neon sign. They weren't young enough to be new to the cat-and-mouse game Omegas were forced to play, but maybe they weren't old enough to have had a good scare knock some sense into them.

Part of her knew she should say something, tell them to scatter. That would have been the right thing to do. There were too many eyes staring at

that group of women though. She was nervous and warm. They'd know what she was the moment she got near the other females. Smelling of slick, they'd grab her first. If there was a single strung out Alpha in the mess of sick and wounded crowded into the dingy clinic, she'd be fucked. Literally.

"Now serving number four-oh-eight. Number four-oh-eight," the crackling voice said over the ancient P.A system.

Quinn glanced down at her ticket and muttered a curse. Scrambling up from the hard plastic chair, legs half numb and aching, she made a stilted jog around the perimeter of the lobby towards the bored looking nurse waiting by the desk.

"Ticket," the nurse said through an impatient huff of air, arms crossing over the drab gray of her scrubs.

"I'm very sorry to bother you ma'am, but could someone go and talk to those women," Quinn asked the bleary-eyed receptionist while showing the nurse her ticket.

"Someone will take care of it," the receptionist mumbled, staring at her monitor with a hand cupping her chin.

"This way," the nurse said, pivoting on the heel of her squeaky shoe and striding towards the doors leading back into the examining rooms as if she were being chased by rabid dogs.

"When might they take care of it?" Quinn took a couple of steps away from the desk, trying to look in every direction at once. The nurse wouldn't wait for her, the receptionist couldn't even bother to look at her, and there were two males who had stood up and started through the crowd. One of them was the gunshot victim, and his watery blue gaze rolled over Quinn as she stood frozen in the open space.

"You need to come with me now or let the next person who is ready get called," the nurse snapped.

"It'll be handled, miss," the receptionist said, flicking a glance at Quinn and then to the group of Omegas.

There was nothing more she could do. If she lost this spot, she'd have to come back tomorrow and do it all over again. Her sigh was one of resignation, but she quick-stepped towards the nurse.

"Little sluts just want to cause problems. They always do this shit," the receptionist muttered under her breath just as the nurse opened the door and pushed Quinn through.

Fuck.

"And you've used these, uh, suppressants for how long," the medico asked from where he perched on the rolling stool by the low counter.

Quinn had asked for a Beta woman, so they had given her over to an old grandfather type with a balding pate and wispy strands of gray hair around his dome. Either he didn't know what medications an Omega took—which seemed ludicrous considering they were given out in this same clinic—or he had opinions on the Omegas who took them as she did. She wasn't sure which yet.

"I picked up my prescription on the eighth—"

"No, dear, I mean in total."

"Since I was twelve, I guess. It should have been on my form."

"Yes, yes, but not every Omega takes it on such a... consistent basis. And you remember to take them daily? A pill missed here or there can create all sorts of trouble for those around you."

The tone was one of patronizing condescension, a smug male who thought he knew more about her dynamic than she did. So, it was the latter that was his issue. She held her breath, counting down the seconds to the lecture she heard often. She made it to three.

"You realize that these pills, they're doing things to your body that are unnatural. Suppressants used to provide a calm workplace environment for your coworkers is one thing, but they shouldn't be taken to such excess as this. And the other medications you take... Well, it's no wonder you've had such a reaction as this. Your body is trying to tell you something, Miss Ivers."

"Yes, it's telling me that the medications are either a bad batch or my prescription needs to be adjusted." Quinn sat up straighter as the old man slid his dull brown gaze towards her. The smile she offered was polite, but her chin cocked at a challenging angle.

"Perhaps you should just allow your body to cleanse itself of all this," he said with a cool edge to that fatherly voice. "Allow your estrous and I'm sure things will be just fine. It is what your body is built to do."

"Maybe you should just adjust my prescription."

The medico stood and sent the stool banging into the cabinet, no longer warm. Quinn bristled under his disapproving gaze. She refused to give in to the temptation to snarl and shout at the male. It would only get her escorted out with no solution.

“We’ve no reports of faulty suppressants on file. To adjust your prescription, we would need to do blood samples and they will take seven to ten business days to process.”

“Seven to ten days? That’s ridiculous!”

“You are free to go to the hospital or your regular physician of course,” the old man said, and the sneering contempt was as plain as a waving flag. It was obvious that those weren’t options if she was sitting in this dingy little room in the first place.

“Fine, do the tests,” Quinn said with a stiff smile. Already rolling up her sleeve, she presented her arm.

Quinn clutched the borrowed hoodie tight to her chin against the pounding rain as she stumbled from the clinic. The stale funk of teenage male, sweat, and Gods only knew what else was making her feel ill. Add to that a long, sleepless night and no food and she was a walking zombie.

That was the excuse she made for herself when she noticed the black car following her. Once she had even realized it was there, she still did not connect the dots until a cab took a corner where she was crossing at high speed. The out-of-place car, with its gleaming paint job and tinted windows, pulled over when she was forced to stumble back onto the sidewalk and wait for the light. As Quinn started across the street again, she watched the dark car around the edge of her dripping hood as it eased from the curb and slipped into the slow-moving traffic.

Wondering which deity she had pissed off to deserve this kind of day, she quickened her steps. Slogging through soggy trash and streaming gutters, she wound her way through the hurrying crowd. There were some benefits to being smaller. Ducking under arms, squeezing between buildings and bodies, she moved almost unimpeded.

Panting, she swiped a hand through the rain streaming down her face and glanced around at another cross street. The car waited.

Panic crackled up her spine in a bolt of pure electricity. It gave her a renewed energy and pushed her from a fast walk to an outright run. Darting through the crowd with legs pumping, she tried not to look back. It would only serve to trip her up, but she could swear she felt the owner of that car already breathing down her neck.

Questions without any clear answers whirled through her thoughts at breakneck speeds. Who could be following her and why? The car was almost familiar, but why would Mr. Rey or his driver be following her after he sent her cab fare? She was no one and nothing, so if someone else was tracking her, it had to be because they caught her scent at some point.

Distracted as she was, the inevitable happened. Quinn went flying onto the sidewalk after colliding with a brick wall of flesh and limbs. Concrete scraped layers of delicate skin from her palms, knees slammed into unforgiving stone.

“What the hell is wrong with you,” a male snarled above her.

Adrenaline had her scrambling back up onto her feet before the pain even registered. Already spinning away with the worn-out soles of her sneakers sliding on the slick pavement as they sought purchase, she was unprepared for the hand that grabbed her arm and hauled her back.

In a shrieking tangle of limbs, Quinn landed on her ass in a puddle. Searing pain blossomed up her spine to the base of her skull where it exploded in sizzling technicolor. A breathy whimper scratched its way past clenched teeth. Nails ground against the pavement as she fought the scream that wanted to follow. Hunched and making shallow pants, she watched the large male legs spread in challenge before her.

Just. Fucking. *Great*.

“I asked you a question, you little shit,” the male said in a restrained roar. Alpha anger was thick and acrid on the back of her throat even through the slackening rain. It rolled off of him in waves, sucked into her lungs with the misty air.

He thought she was a teenage boy. On the one hand, this was what she had wanted. On the other hand, she couldn’t take a hit like a lanky male could.

Shit.

Ducking her head and hoping to hide her face, she mumbled out an apology. It could pass for a teenager’s squeaky, hormone laden tone, right?

“You look at your betters when they speak to you.” The Alpha moved in. Quinn squawked out a pained cry when a beefy hand grabbed hold of her hood and hair in a punishing grip and jerked her head back. The Alpha’s surprise was transient, a minuscule widening of dark brown eyes before they narrowed with predatory glee. Nostrils flared wide, seeking her scent

through the foul odor of her clothes and the general stink of the city. “You’re no boy.”

“So good of you to notice,” Quinn said with a snarl. Slapping at the hand still tangled in worn cotton and pale strands of hair, she struggled to get free of the man and on her feet. Halfway up to dignity and a fully-fledged tirade about abusing people on the street, her legs crumpled and sent her back to the cold, wet sidewalk. Trembling with exhaustion and chilled to the bone, her reserves were depleted.

With a rumbling chuckle the Alpha crouched, invading her personal space with his scent and heat. People continued to stream past. A wide berth was given to the man and his apparent prey, nothing more than a sidelong glance given to Quinn and her predicament. This was so unfair!

“You seem to be in a hurry, little one.” He gave another rumbling sound from deep in his chest. While it wasn’t quite a growl to entice her, it wasn’t too far from it. Intentions made clear, he pushed the hood back from her face and fingered the damp curls revealed. “Perhaps I could give you a ride?”

Quinn opened her mouth to tell the male where he could shove it, only to shut it again with a snap of teeth. Standing over the crouched man was a Beta. Rich brown skin a stark contrast to the impeccable white of his shirt, the tailored lines of his black suit fit the surprising bulk of his frame like a glove. Unlike Jackson and some of the other Beta males at Wicked, this man didn’t seem unnatural in his bulk. It was as suited to him as the short goatee framing his full lips. The chilling glare in the dark umber eyes trained on the Alpha had words wasting to ash on her tongue.

“Miss, I wish you would have waited. You’re soaked and chilled to the bone,” the Beta said with gruff concern. With an ease she envied, he sidestepped the Alpha and boosted Quinn to a shaky upright position before either could protest. His hand at her elbow kept her there. “Come, I’ve the car waiting just over here.”

“And who the hell are you supposed to be?” The Alpha stood to an intimidating height and squared off with the strange Beta, his murky shadow skimming over Quinn and making her shiver.

“I’m her driver. Was there some issue here?” The Beta slipped his free hand into his jacket pocket, the warm ivory card snapped out towards the Alpha. “Please, take my employer’s card. I’m sure he’d be interested in what happened and offer compensation for any damages.”

The Beta turned and led her off, but not before Quinn saw the Alpha glance at the card and blanch. Deciding in favor of discretion for the moment, she let the Beta take her across the street to the parked sedan that had been following her. Not only had she been right, but the lead feeling in the pit of her stomach was telling her she was in a lot more trouble now than she had been with just the Alpha to contend with.

“Listen,” Quinn began in a quiet hiss, trying not to make a scene just yet. “I appreciate the save, I do, but I’ve had more than enough manhandling. So, you’re going to let me the fuck go, and I’ll be on my way. And you can stop fucking following me, too.”

“I’m afraid that’s not an option.” He reached out and opened the back door. Giving a small nod towards the too familiar interior, he made it clear what he expected.

There was no way it was possible. It was just a similar car. That was all it was. This was not the same vehicle that had driven her home. Just because her fingers itched with the memory of the stitched charcoal leather still meant nothing. Not even with the spicy musk of the Alpha that seemed burned into her senses laced with her own sweetness swirling from inside through the updrafts of exhaust.

“This isn’t Mr. Rey’s car.” It was a statement and a weak one at that. It had surprised her to see an actual car and not a cab the previous night, but she had somehow convinced herself Mr. Rey had loaned his own transportation for the purpose. Not that she’d ever seen his car, or that there had been any reason for him to do such a thing for a dancer he was firing. But it would have made sense. More sense than the idea that the male who had used her had left a safe way home for her.

“It is not. Please get in, Miss. It’s going to start raining again soon.”

“I’m not getting in there.”

“Miss, either you get in and I can drive you in comfort back to your apartment or I follow you while you catch your death. I might add that my employer will not thank either of us for the latter.”

“I don’t give two shits about him! He assaulted me and almost cost me my job.”

“It’s my understanding he saved your job.” The Beta sniffed, the pinch of his lips suggesting something sour. His dark gaze flicked to the side, drawing her attention back to the car. “Get in, Miss.”

“No.” Quinn jerked her arm free and cursed a violet streak as she stumbled straight into the gutter. Cheeks warm with embarrassment as her shoes filled with murky water, she strained towards some level of dignity. Sneakers sloshing and slapping against the pavement, she cut across the street to resume her trek.

As if the Beta’s words had been a promise, the sky split open again the minute she reached the opposite side.

“I’m so sorry, Mr. Rey,” Quinn said as she hiked the clothes basket higher on her hip and continued up the stairs. The last hour had been spent doing laundry and her already straining legs were crying out in protest of so much abuse.

“Seven to ten days.” There was no mistaking the grumbling anger in his tone.

“I understand if you need to fire me—”

“I couldn’t even if I wanted to, kid.”

Hating the rush of relief that gave her and just as unable to stop it, Quinn hunched her shoulders and soldiered on. “I’ll do whatever I can to make it up to you, Mr. Rey.”

“Ah, honey,” Mr. Rey said before giving a throaty chuckle that was anything but chaste. “Don’t go making promises you can’t keep. Just call me when you can come back in.”

“Okay. I really am so sorry about everything.”

“Just be glad it was him.”

Before Quinn could ask who this mystery man was, Mr. Rey disconnected the call. Short of calling back just to demand that tidbit, there was nothing she could do. Cheeks puffing out with her sigh, she slumped down the hall to Nora’s door.

“My Gods, Quinn you look awful!” Nora wrapped Quinn in a suffocating hug full of bountiful breasts and motherly care redolent with the scent of cloves and Beta. “Have you been eating? You’re nothing but sticks.”

“I’m fine, just tired. I have Colby’s clothes for you.”

“You didn’t have to wash them, sweetheart,” Nora said as she bounced around the living room in a flurry of activity. She was getting ready for work, the orange and green striped uniform of the late-night diner doing

nothing for her complexion. “Gods know that boy doesn’t. I swear his underwear could crawl away all on their own.”

“Well, I didn’t want Leah to get jealous because she smelled me on him.”

“Leah was last week, this week it’s a sweet little Beta named Rita. I give it a week before she rips his head off.” Nora stopped to lean against the wall, sighing and looking a good ten years older. “No one ever tells you how hard it is to raise an Alpha, especially now that he’s all raging hormones and opinions.”

“But I still love my mama,” Colby said in a deep bass that didn’t match the tall, skinny boy that ambled out of the kitchen with a paper bag. Stooping to give Nora a kiss on the cheek, he grinned when she ruffled his hair. Turning to Quinn, he eyed the basket. “Are those my clothes?”

“Yeah, your mom loaned them to me. They’re all washed and folded. I had to use the blue stuff to get the smell out. Sorry.”

“I don’t mind.” A roll of bird thin shoulders that seemed too wide was given, a twiggy arm reaching out to pluck dark sweats from the top of the stack. “It’ll thrill Rita that I smell like laundry.”

“Ten o’clock, mister.”

“Mom, come on! It’s a long weekend and I—”

“And you’re sixteen years old without the sense the Gods gave a goose!”

Quinn pursed her lips hard to keep from laughing, giving a stilted wave before making a quick retreat. Their argument followed her back down the hall towards her own apartment and the family bickering gave her a warm, fuzzy feeling. A pang of sadness swept her up, tumbling her through a lonely childhood where hugs were a scarce commodity and the only time Marina was willing to touch her was when she was crying drunk.

Sniffling back the burn of ridiculous tears, she leaned against the wall and moped her way down until her doorjamb thumped into her shoulder. Fishing keys from the basket, she unlocked the door. The stomping of multiple shoes made her pause halfway through the threshold. As heads appeared over the top of the stairs, she ducked inside and threw the two deadbolts, rolling her eyes even as she slipped the safety chain into place.

She was becoming paranoid. Leaning back against the door with a shake of her head at the state of things, Quinn berated herself for being so edgy. She doubted the Alpha from the club would send people to accost her in her own home.

The rapid-fire knock at her back wrenched a shrill scream from her throat as she leapt away from the vibrating panel. Laundry flew, the cheap plastic basket clattering across the floor. Catching herself against the entry corner with hands splayed to hold her up and tether her to the moment, Quinn drew in a ragged breath. Panic sluiced through her veins, fear scrabbling up her spine to dig its jagged claws into her neck.

There was no pretending she wasn't home after that klaxon wail.

"Delivery," a voice called through the door, young and male and friendly. It was also unfamiliar.

She had only received a single package at this address in the time she'd lived there. It had been delivered to the wrong apartment. All manner of scenarios embarked on a wild journey through her thoughts. Panic turned to terror in the span of a stuttering heartbeat.

"I didn't order anything."

"Well," the voice drawled, the scuffing of boots against the worn carpet coming clearly through the thin pane of wood. "This is the correct address, ma'am. It's all bought and paid for. If you don't accept it, it all gets tossed out."

Curiosity piqued, Quinn strained up on tiptoe to look through the peephole. In a watery fisheye view, she saw four men, all young, all in the same green jacketed uniform. She didn't recognize anything about them or the bags they carried.

"What is it?"

"It's food, ma'am. You understand you can't hold us to the hot delivery guarantee if you make us wait out here much longer, right? It's all automated so they know where we are at all times."

"You have got to be kidding me." Quinn slid the deadbolts free but kept the safety chain on. Peeking through the cracked door, she canted her head towards the one that seemed to be in charge. "What restaurant?"

"It's from Carmela's, ma'am. We're up on Fifth and Archer, best Italian food in the city."

"What the hell are you doing all the way down here?"

"Ma'am, are you going to accept," the man asked with a glance back at the others waiting. Holding a large plastic bag in each hand, the name Carmela's was indeed blazoned across the side in fanciful script. She'd read about the restaurant in the newspaper just like everyone else. It had been an

instant success in Alderbrook, and critics raved about it. She'd never even thought about eating there. Four people seemed a little much for a meal.

Groaning a sigh, Quinn closed the door and slid the safety chain back. This was a terrible idea, and she knew it. She also knew she was starving and there was only a lone pack of crackers in her cabinet. Swinging the door wide, she eyed the deliverymen with obvious distrust. Teeth clenched against the sudden pool of saliva in her mouth as the heady aroma of tomato sauce and garlic punched into her empty stomach.

"Who paid for it?" Quinn asked as she directed the men to leave the bags just inside the door. While Omegas in general were territorial, Quinn didn't mind people in the small area dedicated to entry, kitchen, and dining. Something well beyond the fact these men were strangers nagged at her though, making her skin itch and her lips feel a need to curl in a snarl at the idea of them coming much further into her space. Maybe she was just beyond exhausted and the Alpha prick was making her paranoid.

"It doesn't say, ma'am. Only that it's been paid for. Could you sign here?" A fancy digital pad was held out to her, the glowing screen inviting her to accept the delivery.

Squinting as if that would somehow make it easier to allow this insanity, Quinn scrawled an approximation of her name on the line. Closing the door and engaging all the locks once the males filed out, she turned to stare at the bounty spread out on her floor. Seven massive plastic bags, each emanating a mouth-watering aroma all its own. Each passing their silent judgment on her weakness.

Growling low in her throat, Quinn snatched up the first bag and unloaded its contents. Her eyes grew wider with every box unpacked onto her postage stamp of a counter. Gaze sliding towards the other sacks as if they were now somehow dangerous things, she crept back to them. One after the other, she unpacked the cartons from each bag. Her stomach began a litany of complaints as she denied it.

A veritable mountain of food was displayed across her counter and stove, even taking up residence on the narrow sink. There was more food than she could eat in a week. Hell, she couldn't eat it all in a month!

With a crooked smile on her lips, she decided to give it a try.

Chapter 3

Three days later and Quinn regretted ever accepting the damn food. No matter how incredible it had been to go to sleep full and sated for the first time in what felt like ages, it hadn't been worth the increasing frustration of the Alpha's arrogance. Out of the three males that knew her address, it had to be him. She doubted Mr. Rey and Beaumont would go to such excess.

Quinn remembered being courted even if it had only been the once. She could look at fond memories of cheap roses, taste the painful sweetness of even cheaper chocolates. The way Tom had been so eager to see her pleasure in the little gifts he brought her. While the whole endeavor had failed, it had been sweet at the time for a sixteen-year-old girl.

This was not sweet or kind on any level. Every few hours brought another pounding knock on her door, each one grinding her sense of safety under its heel until she was jumpy and agitated. She snarled at the delivery people now, not even attempting to be polite as she turned them away. Thin fingers were a constant presence in the tangles of short hair, worrying at the soft strands until they became a puffy mass of disquiet. Everything was refused, yet still more came.

Unable to sleep, she sat hunched in the nest in a sort of half aware daze. Threadbare sheets would be snatched up and wadded between her fists when the smallest sound from beyond her door made her jolt awake, heart slamming around the delicate cage of her ribs. Even the sounds of the city beyond her window were enough to incite a rushing wave of panic that seized her insides in a brutal grip.

It was untenable.

By the fourth day she was a complete wreck and had become unhinged. Unable to even eat from the way stress had twisted her insides, Quinn just lay in her nest and hid. Every piece of bedding she owned was piled on and burrowed under. She was little more than a quivering lump under the mass of tumbled linens.

And then it all stopped.

At first she didn't trust it, the agonizing wait for the next invasion shredding what little composure remained to her. When the entire morning passed without a single disturbance, she began to hope. By midafternoon she had managed to reconstruct her nest into something beyond a bulwark

and as the sky lit up in brilliant reds and golds of sunset, she was dead to the world in a sleep that refused to be denied.

With a disgruntled groan, Quinn burrowed deeper into the blankets shrouding her and sought out the pocket of heat that had shifted. Pressing cooling toes against solid warmth, a sleep broken hum tumbled from her lips.

A chill rippled down her spine though her skin felt feverish. Half aware, she wondered if she was getting sick. All the stress of the past week would be a likely culprit if she were. Despite the sluggish weight of her limbs, she was comfortable and couldn't bother to wake enough to examine her state closer.

Turning her head into the wad of sheets that served as a pillow, she pulled the fog of sleep back over her. Light was invading the nest, but she wanted no part of it. All she wanted was this glorious heat and the comforting smell of lavender and something spicy. It was like chilies and dark chocolate sticking to the back of her tongue.

Pale brows crept down over the bridge of her nose, a deep wrinkle forming between them. Lavender made sense. It was her favorite scent and a perfect pairing for the soft violet hues she surrounded herself with. The other...

“How the hell do you sleep like this?” The rough voice was familiar, the spicy musk placed just seconds after. The deliveries had stopped, but now he had invaded her home, her nest. It was his heat invading her limbs, and she felt fouled by it. His scent assaulted her senses.

He had violated her single remaining sanctuary.

Scream shrill with rage, Quinn lurched up and away. Clawed hands shredding through the mass of fabric to be free, she only managed to sit upright before she was shoved flat with his hand on her chest. The weight of him crushing her into the floorboards pushed the last air from her lungs. Pinned under his bulk, she kicked and flailed. In an instant he had even that fit of temper curbed, limbs tangled in hers.

“Not a morning person, eh? That’s all right.” The male had the gall to purr to soothe away the vibrating tension from her body as he set his nose to her exposed neck. Each inhale was followed by a louder rumble of pleasure as the Alpha took in her scent where it was strongest. The purr changed.

Deeper, rougher, he growled. "This won't take too long, little bird. I have a meeting soon, and once I'm finished, you can nod right off."

Gray eyes went wide as saucers, pupils contracting down to pinpoints as acrid fear swamped the close heat between them. Too large hand covering her pleas, Quinn shook her head in denial to the heavy thigh wedging between her legs.

"We both know you need this." Another enticing growl slipped down her spine, knotting along delicate vertebrae to twist it to his devious intentions. Base chemistry had her pussy flushing with heat, folds growing slick as her traitorous body answered the call. He demanded that she open for him. Her legs trembled with the strain of holding him back.

Keening against the palm he held across her mouth, she fought. Tangled up in her as he was, his angle was all wrong to force her wide around his hips. Either he released her for a better hold elsewhere or he struggled against her thrashing, both knowing one wrong move could break her.

Decision apparently made, he let go of Quinn's hands to take hold of her hip. Pushing her to the floor he fought for space between knees clamped together and held rigid. While her hands were small, the bones of her fingers delicate, they could inflict an unholy pain when she needed them to. Now free, they grabbed at his hair and pulled, scratching down his face and shoulders. The bastard was naked, bare and pulsing against her thigh despite her anger and fear.

"Spread," he said in a snarl at her ear. His hand tangled up in pale curls to wrench her head back on a stiff neck.

"No," Quinn wailed, equal parts rage and terror as she used every ounce of her strength to hurt the Alpha above her. She gave a vicious bark of victory as her nails scored his cheek in livid crimson lines.

The world went spinning. Her body flew through the air, coming to a lung crushing halt on the sticky linoleum of the front half of her apartment.

He'd thrown her.

Several feet away lay the tangled remains of her nest. Mouth working like a fish out of water, she struggled for breath that refused to come.

His weight covered her back. Bucking and writhing, weak though it was, she refused to give in. The back of his meaty paw met her cheek, slamming her head into the cold floor and knocking stars across her vision. Quinn was so stunned she couldn't even offer a token resistance when he parted her legs. Hot tears slipped over her lashes and down frozen cheeks.

The growls he pressed against her neck, vibrating through his chest and into her back, had the desired effect. Instinctual in response, her ass rose to present the dominating male with the weeping slit of her pussy that the engorged head of his cock already probed.

Slick flowed no matter the turmoil of her thoughts. He took no care for the tightness of a long unused opening. Shunting into her, pulling a ragged squeal from a throat already hoarse with low sobs, the Alpha seated himself with a vulgar moan. The way he filled her was perfect. His heat and musk surrounded her. The low growl continued to shudder through her bones, sweeping away all but the lowest of needs.

Feeling as if she was about to be split open, Quinn braced for him to rut into her with the same violence he had already shown. Instinct would see her through the ordeal and would leave her at least physically whole to pick up the shattered pieces. Eyes squeezed shut, she mumbled an incoherent litany of affirmations against the inside of her arm.

She would survive. She would endure.

Instead of the rough slap of hips against the upturned pillows of her ass, he shifted his weight and forced a hand under her hip. Thick fingers dipped between stretched lips to gather the copious sweet lubricant before finding the pulsing bundle of nerves without error. Rough pads traced slow circles around her clit. Heat bloomed through her pussy, threading its way to her veins where a slow burn etched its way into her limbs. Flinching away from the unwanted pleasure, she took him deeper.

Quinn's eyes snapped open inches away from the faded blue and white squares. He wasn't even all the way inside her yet. He was going to tear her apart.

Mewls pleading for mercy were met with a softening of the dangerous resonance, a soothing thunder that calmed and agitated her by turns. At least riding the high of his call, Quinn wouldn't notice the damage. She'd cry out for more of it. The false calm of the purr would make her supple to his demands. Horror tangled with a desperate need, an icy crackle filling her bones as blood turned molten in her veins.

As if he could read her thoughts, the Alpha strummed her clit. His other hand wedged under her ribs, fingers wriggling between floor and her breast until he could cup malleable flesh. Her nipple tightened against the rough skin of his palm no matter how she ground her teeth and snarled. The hardened nub was caught between his fingers, pulled and twisted. A shock

of sizzling need tore through her body, spreading trembling heat in its wake as it shot down to her pulsing pussy.

Quinn's hoarse cry was broken, but not defeated. Even as hips bucked to take more of that impossible thickness and her body writhed, she refused. As pleasure clawed a bloody path through her resistance, she hissed through her teeth and breathed through the rising tide of forced bliss. She would not come. Not for him or anyone else, not like this.

"Stubborn little thing, aren't you," the Alpha rasped against her cheek. To her complete shock, there was no anger in his tone, only a throaty chuckle that zipped down her spine and spread through the cradle of her hips. Callused fingers grinding over the throbbing nub of her clit pulled a sound deep from within her chest she didn't recognize as her own voice.

Deft fingers plucked and played, pulling at the response Quinn fought against. Body betraying her with every pitiful moan and squeaking cry, slick flooded her pussy and seeped around the painful girth stretching her to drip onto the floor. Shuddering, muscles squeezed his length and ushered him further inside.

Keeping her flat to the tacky vinyl, his knees spread her wide, wider, until her legs trembled with the strain. Dragging the sharp edge of teeth down her back brought forth a squeal and another rush of slick as she pushed back. Flesh met with a soft slap and a guttural groan.

"That's it, little bird. You'll sing for me yet."

Losing any sense of self in the lust filled haze, she shook her head against the floor. He couldn't make her like this. Not before the overwhelming power of hormones and chemistry pulled her under. The sure touch of his fingers against her throbbing clit drove her too close to that edge even as she shrieked her denial. If she didn't force his hand soon, she'd be lost.

Dropping flat and any pretense of resistance, Quinn reached her arms back to grip the male's ass. Delirious, she marveled at the sculpted muscle under her fingers for a long moment. Small fingers traced over the contours of the swell of firm flesh. For a brief second, he lost his tight control and uttered a low growl of pleasure that swept through her body with the force of a wildfire. Before he could check his response, she dug her nails in and pulled with a throaty purr.

The Alpha went wild above her. His call was a roar against her ear as he snapped his hips forward, not even bothering to withdraw before trying to

get deeper. A ragged sigh slipped over Quinn's lips as the fight left her limbs, suffused with a mind-bending pleasure in its place.

His hand at her breast abandoned its skilled manipulation to wrap around her shoulder. Hips rolled, pulling that thick length from her clinging depths to slam forward, arm pulling her back into the savage thrust. Instincts took control and crushed coherent thought under the brutality her body craved from the male.

Trilling cries and thundering growls tangled with the wet sucking sounds of her pussy and the slap of sweat slicked skin as he impaled her again and again. A primal symphony made all the more heady by the overwhelming scent of an Alpha in rut. Spiced musk flooded her senses, brought her lips to his arm where a delicate pink tongue could lick at the salty sheen of his skin.

Insides battered, craving more, Quinn pushed back into every brutal thrust. Orgasm building in jerky snaps to the rhythm of his pounding, muscles fluttered, squeezing his cock in a plea for what her body needed. Humming low in her throat, her back struggled to arch just a little higher. She tempted him to greater heights.

Bellowing, the male reared back and took her with him. Trunk like arms held tight, pinning her to the resonance that came from his chest as he worked her up and down that thickening pole. Moans growing higher, longer, she let loose a torrent of shrill cries as he worked the beginnings of his knot in and out of her tight entrance.

It was awful. It was perfect. Trembling with the force of the building explosion working its way from the roiling heat in her belly, jagged bolts of pleasure seared through her limbs. Every muscle began to draw tight, tighter. Her hands darted, free to touch what they could. Nails scraped over male flesh earning her more violence, more pleasure.

"I'm going to knot you so good, little bird. So good," he hissed through clenched teeth. Quinn could only make whining moans of agreement in response. "That's right. Sing for me, sweetness. Tell me how much you want it."

She was crushed against the floor once again. Bulky arm under her shoulders, he held her still for the punishing weight of one, two, three more thrusts before he ground the swelling knot inside her. The base of his cock inflated. A heartbeat not her own pounded against oversensitive flesh,

pushed against a spot that had a guttural tone clawing its way from her throat.

The male's fingers found her clit. Thumb rubbing rough circles around swollen flesh, Quinn screamed.

She exploded. Shattered into a thousand glittering pieces, light seared across her vision and blinded her. Pussy contracting, slick walls rippled up that impossible length to urge forth the seed she wanted.

“Going to fill you up. Take it. Take it all!”

The first frothy spray of scalding heat that bathed her insides had her screaming all over again. She had what she craved, what she *needed*. By the third she was flailing against the floor, senses overloading with too much sensation as the male ground the knot in even deeper. Still his fingers worked over her abused clit. He pulled at her orgasm until each twisting contraction was a searing pain she never wanted to end.

She collapsed to the floor, shaking, dazed.

“Good girl,” he said before offering a soothing purr that ricocheted down her spine, knocking every joint loose and sending her deeper into the blissful haze.

Quinn's hum was languid at the dream that followed her into waking. The sensation of being swamped in downy softness and snuggled deep into a luxurious cloud were so real she didn't want to open her eyes. Limbs reaching and back arching, she stretched the delicious ache from her muscles with a satisfying crackle before falling limp into a fantasy sea of warmth. Even her toes were toasty in the dream and the scents of garlic and chicken teased at her. Saliva pooled in her mouth, begging for just one taste of rich, decadent food now that her stomach had untangled from all the anxiety.

Other smells began to filter in through the murky fog of half awareness. Betas, warm and earthy and female, their sweat and fluids were subtle but too present in the mixture invading her palate. Disturbing as that was, the candy sweetness so much like her own, each with their own particular perfume, pulled her lips back into a snarl. A growl rattled in her chest, territorial and full of menace. Heavy lids struggled to become unglued to find the culprits.

Above it all the rich spice of an Alpha who had become familiar reigned supreme. Solid, heavy, and too big, a hand cupped her shoulder and rolled Quinn to her back. Heat enveloped her as the length of his body came close. The impressive bulk settling against her side made her jump, fingers smoothing over her cheek causing a flinch. Abandoning her attempts to open her eyes, she squeezed them shut to shun the sight that waited.

“You are so damned expressive,” he said in a rough whisper against her shoulder where his lips traced the tensed muscle to her neck. “I bet you’re awful at poker. We’ll play a hand later, shall we? I think you’ll like the stakes.”

“Get off of me.” She hated the quiver in her voice, despised the way her skin prickled with unbelievable sensation as the rough scrape of thick stubble rasped across her collar bone. Cursing her biology as her pussy clenched over empty air and just how much she wished it to be filled, she tried to squirm away. The Alpha caught her with ease. In an effortless move, he had her sprawled atop him with the heavy band of an arm low across her hips to keep her there.

“I don’t mind you being on top again, little bird. All you had to do was ask.”

“I don’t want...” Words turning to dust on her tongue, she trailed off. Pale grays narrowed to suspicious slits. Jabbing the sharp angles of her elbows into his ribs, she pushed up to see the male’s face. “What do you mean again?”

“This would be the third—no, the fourth time you showed your teeth and demanded it. You are a feisty little thing when you want your way,” he said in a satisfied rumble that had Quinn squirming for all the wrong reasons.

With his hands flexing in a slow, controlled way across her back that gave Quinn no doubt of the strength contained within them, she realized what her senses had been screaming at her. Linoleum wasn’t stuck to her skin in uncomfortable patches. The destroyed nest on the floor of her apartment was nowhere to be seen. Sounds of traffic and other tenants were no longer present. Instead the man held her in the middle of a bed. It was massive, covered in saturated hues, stained with the scents of others.

Turning her head, she saw what felt like miles of a shaggy dark rug before it ended at a window that spanned an entire wall. The scene framed in the glass was of a moon dark sky, littered with bright stars. The hazy glow of Alderbrook was only a suggestion on the horizon.

Mind coming to a screeching halt, her thoughts piled up into a massive explosion that spelled out one thing. A moment of insanity took hold, finding the far smaller female fighting the Alpha for all she was worth. Nails raked across flesh, teeth bit into muscle. She felt none of it, saw nothing. Until she blinked and found herself standing quivering, panting, alone with a sea of soft evergreen curling between her toes.

“You do realize you’re going to pay for that,” he said through a low growl, fingering the side of his jaw where three small dots were blooming into vivid blush. It took Quinn ages to figure out it corresponded with the piercing ache in her knuckles.

“You can’t do this,” she said, a frail whisper that begged for all of this to be a lie.

“The hell I can’t.” Flat. Dead. The deep green eyes that had so intrigued her that first night were frigid and hostile as he challenged her.

“This is kidnapping. It’s rape! You can’t do this,” Quinn tried to scream through the cottony knot of fear clogging her throat. Seeking more space between her and the dangerous predator, she edged behind a chair flanking a fireplace.

“The only time you’ve struggled in the past two days is when I wasn’t fucking you hard enough.” Hefting his weight up the bed, he leaned against the headboard with legs splayed and hands cradling the back of his neck. Exuding arrogance and pheromones that combined to make Quinn feel nauseous, he regarded her like an insect under glass.

“It can’t have been.” Quinn hugged her middle and tried to hide behind the chair. It was hard to argue with him when she could see and feel the evidence for herself. She’d been well fed and well cared for. The gnawing hunger pains she lived with daily were nonexistent, and the concavity of a stomach long abused still bulged from a large meal. Every inch of her was scrubbed rosy clean, and it wasn’t the familiar scents of cheap bath products on her skin. Light and airy, whatever he’d used did nothing to hide the sweetness of an Omega. Even her hair was decadent, smooth and soft where it tumbled over her forehead in glossy curls.

“Despite all your efforts, you’re going into heat, little bird. Anything I do to you in that state is considered a legal act.” He rose from the bed, shameless in his nudity, to stalk her. He matched her mincing retreat, coming closer despite her attempts to draw further away.

“I’m not in heat!” The gasp was almost a shriek when the chill glass of another window met her back. Cornered like the frightened prey she was, the looming monster pinned her in with an ease that was ludicrous. Straining lungs gulped air that was too thick with the male’s musky spice. Every sense was on high alert.

“Not yet, but soon,” he said, a low rumble of sound that vibrated through her every bone. Too near, his presence rolled into her like waves of heat off of asphalt.

Knuckles grazing her cheek sparked sensation across jangled nerves. Unable to meet that predatory gaze as she shivered, Quinn sucked her lips between her teeth and bit down hard. The flash of pain and the coppery tang of blood on her tongue did nothing to ease the heat building under her skin. An itch she couldn’t scratch, something his potent aura promised only he could appease.

“You’ve already lost the majority of two days, little bird.”

In a show of strength and speed, he lifted her to his chest. Limbs tangled around him in a move she swore to herself was just to keep from falling. Proving the lie almost as soon as it coalesced in her racing thoughts, her pussy throbbed, folds growing wet.

She whined as he brought their bodies flush. His cock was hard and caught between them, pushing into the soft skin of her belly to leave a slick trail as he rocked against her.

“How much longer do you think you can hold out?”

Quinn remained strong for all of three languid rolls of his hips before the twisting pain of a long overdue heat pulled her double. The rush of slick that bathed the male was obscene. His answering roar of intent was glorious. The violence he showed as he shoved his cock into the hilt even more so.

Pupils blown and snarling when the male thought to retreat, Quinn gave in to the inevitable. Clinging to broad shoulders, she undulated, working the ache from her pussy as he carried her back to the bed.

Jolted from the blackness of sleep to complete awareness, Quinn gave a growling whine of confusion. Though no immediate threat could be found, the lingering scents of other females were coarse sandpaper against raw nerves.

The male thought to tuck her back against his side. She bit him for his trouble, sinking her teeth deep into a muscled forearm. Freed, she crawled around the edge of the bed to sniff at the air. Turning back to the Alpha, she snarled and snapped her teeth, a feminine display of force that brought a smile to his kiss reddened lips. Distracted as her pussy pulsed, begging he fill her again, she traced their fullness before an unknown sugary tang brought her back.

Pushing him flat, she prowled over the male. Mouthing his neck, taking in his scent at his chest, she found no others. She shoved away his hand when it tried to tangle in her hair as she moved down his body until she could slide lips and tongue over the fullness of his swelling cock. No scent but hers marked that splendid bit of flesh. She gave a satisfied hum, deep and throaty and full of a possessiveness she would never have admitted to in her right mind.

Something was still wrong. Though her cunt had slick trickling down her thighs to announce she was ready once more, Quinn shied away from the Alpha when he rumbled a call and reached for her. Each breath was more agitated than the one before it. Wide, dilated eyes darted around the room.

Everything was wrong.

The deep growl changed pitch and smoothed into a luxurious purr. He moved around until he could cover her back with his heat and strength, pushing that glorious resonance deep into her bones. One hand playing at the swell of her hip, the other pushed something forward.

Softness came under her fingers. A veritable treasure of blankets and sheets waited beside her. Dragging the corner of a duvet to her face, she made a careful sniff at the fabric. Not a single scent tainted it. Fresh and clean as the day it was made. Quinn inhaled through smiling lips and flowed into motion.

The nest was not so much built as it came alive under her hands. Movements sure and decisive, she tucked sheets this way, blankets that way. A pillow here and there created a sense of safety and security nothing else in the world could compare to. Even the Alpha warming her back could not compete with the solace held within those soft hills and valleys.

Catching the male's wrist, she tugged at his arm with a playful growl. Falling back into her construct, she made a show of spreading wide for him. She smiled as she pulled him down, angling her hips to take him in as he settled against her.

It was perfect.

Things took a different turn several days later. With no end of her heat in sight, there were no more teasing touches and flirtatious growls. Large hands gripped and pulled, pinning and bruising the far smaller female beneath the massive bulk of him. Nails dug into the muscled flesh of the male, teeth sinking deep until the flat iron of blood stained air and sheets as much as their fluids.

Violent and fighting as much as she was fucking, Quinn lost the thin thread between pleasure and pain. Bruises were kisses, the glide of his tongue rough slaps. The Alpha was no different. He roared above her, a myriad of gouges patterning his chest and shoulders as he slammed his hips against her. His cock swelled, thickening as her eager pussy clenched on his length, her fingers clawing at his hips.

A flicker of cold fear sparked into existence as he turned those dark eyes down to her. They were wild, raging with the heat of his rut, and something in their depths had her screaming. Need, fear, desire, pain—it all coalesced as he shifted that painful grip to hold her flat to the bed.

He kept her gaze as he lowered, using his whole body to keep her where he wanted her. Legs high on his hips and body bent double, she could do nothing but take the brutal pounding and stare up into that feral gaze.

No, not feral. There was awareness there. He knew what he was doing, moving her wrists to one firm hand and tucking his knees under her ass. She couldn't even raise her hips to meet him, the angle too deep as he stabbed into her. It didn't matter. Pleasure was already rocketing through her veins, seizing up every muscle. All but his eyes were hazy in the impending storm of her orgasm.

Just a little more.

His hand stealing between their bodies to thumb her clit in rough flicks, he moved to keep her eyes as Quinn thrashed and wailed at the too much sensation. The delicious ache slammed into her stomach, holding her back from the perfect bliss of release. The feminine howl, light and airy from too little air, twisted with his aggressive thunder.

“Mine.”

Before the word could register in that small coherent place deep inside of her, Quinn felt him plunge deeper than ever. The knot swelled, stealing her

breath on a pained gasp as he locked them together before she was ready. The steady thrum of his digit across her swollen nub became perfect.

Every fiber of her being contracted as utter bliss seared through her. Vision sheeting to white, she shrieked and convulsed. Her pussy gripped the impossible girth of his knot, squeezing, twisting. The first fiery spurt of his come filled her.

Head knocked aside, she didn't even feel his lips at the stretch of skin between neck and shoulder until it was far too late. Flesh tore under sharp white teeth, the grinding agony scattering down her chest and arm in violent violet pulses as he bit down harder.

Sobbing though there were no tears, her mouth opened wide as he continued to pinch and pluck at her clit. The second orgasm coming too soon after the first and on the heels of so much pain, she let the darkness take her when it offered its soothing embrace.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 4

The sound she made was something between a whimper and a groan. No light filtered through her closed eyelids. Lashes refusing to part, Quinn concentrated instead on breathing through the myriad of aches and agonies that assaulted her body. The impression of softness surrounded her, assuming a nest and the bed she almost remembered. No other input came to her available senses.

She was alone. Again.

With the sting in her eyes as motivation, she scraped together the last of her shredded dignity and laid all the self-recrimination and disgust aside for further scrutiny at a later time. Forcing her eyes wide, her lip curled before she clamped them shut over the urge to scream. Bedding soaked and sticky, it clung to her skin in sucking drifts. Peeling it all away, she kicked the smothering blankets off to tumble from the side of the bed.

Sitting up, she viewed the nest she had created with contempt. It was far easier to look at the bedding she would take great joy in shredding than it was to see the crusted remains of the male's scenting of her.

Reaching out with her left arm, she shrieked in agony. Falling into the bed didn't help. Clutching at her bicep to quiet the shattered sensation that scraped down her entire side, she whispered a vicious litany of curses to the ceiling gone blurry with unshed misery. Fingers moved to the throbbing source, finding a bandage as large as her palm taped to stinging flesh. The fucker had savaged her!

The knock was quiet and downright respectful. Quinn hated whoever it was even more for the polite pause before the door was opened.

"Good to see you awake, Miss."

It took several hitching breaths to recognize the voice, but clarity came when he drew close enough for her to see him in profile against the dusky sky before golden light bloomed through the dim space. The suit was a pinstripe gray this time, but it was the Beta who cleaned up the Alpha's messes.

Well, this would be one mess he wouldn't have to clean up. Quinn was perfectly capable of doing that for herself.

"My clothes," Quinn asked, wincing at the hoarse croak that emanated from the general region of her throat. Scooting towards the edge of the bed,

careful not to knock her arm, she turned a bland stare to the Beta who wasn't doing half as good a job of hiding his thoughts as he believed he was. Derision and repugnance lit up those dark eyes while he tried to make a show of not looking at her as she stood.

"I'm sorry, Miss, but the things you were wearing when you came here —"

"You mean when I was kidnapped after he raped me in my apartment."

"Were rags and have been thrown out," the Beta finished as if she hadn't interrupted him. Moving to a set of doors, he opened them wide to show a closet about as big as Quinn's last apartment. "Mr. Kahler asks that you—"

"Who?"

"That you help yourself to anything in the wardrobe until other arrangements can be made." Tone razor sharp, the Beta paced to another set of doors that let into a bathroom that neared the size of her current apartment. "Do you have any requests for dinner? Mr. Kahler wishes you to have anything you desire."

"Well, whoever that is, all I want is access to a phone."

"Perhaps, after you've refreshed yourself with a shower and a meal, we can discuss that, Miss."

Features going slack, Quinn stared at the Beta with all the seething anger she could muster. With the enraged tenor of her shoulder and a strange pressure in her chest, it wasn't half as impressive as she'd wanted it to be.

"He wishes you to remain here until he returns." Delivered in a flat monotone, the Beta stared back with unsympathetic eyes.

"That's just too bad. I want a phone."

"I'm afraid that's not possible, Miss."

"No, this is not okay! I'm not in heat anymore. You cannot keep me in this fucking house."

It was obvious that they both wanted to be anywhere but in that room, and just as apparent that neither was going to back down on the issue. Lush lips thinned as the Beta expanded his chest in a deep inhale.

"I'll ask the cook to prepare roasted chicken for you then, shall I? You seemed to enjoy it before."

Before Quinn could so much as twitch in his direction, the Beta had gone out through the door and shut it with a decisive thud. The snick of metal driving home clattered through the room. With rounded eyes and parted lips, Quinn stared at the door. He couldn't have just locked her in.

Edging towards the door as if it was an unknown animal, trembling fingers lightly touched the doorknob. When nothing untoward happened, like a few hundred volts zapping her unconscious or a pack of rabid dogs giving up a cry of alarm, she wrapped her hand around the brass and turned. Even sure as she was that it wouldn't open, she still gasped and scurried back when it caught and held.

All she could do was stand there and stare in disbelief for the longest time. spiteful plans to destroy the nest, his bed, anything she could lay her hands on were swallowed up in a rising tide of something dark and terrifying. Ranting screams and wailing tears were smothered under it. The lightest breeze would have knocked her over.

She'd been with Alphas before, knew their ego and aggression well enough to have gotten this far unscathed. Having dealt with the overbearing, the possessive, even a violent Alpha or two, she thought she could manage all that they threw at her when she was at her most vulnerable. This had all the hallmarks of insanity though.

Staggering under the turbulent current of her thoughts, she looked around at the lavish room. Leaden steps took her to the window past unseen measurements of wealth so she could look out into the darkness beyond. Manicured lawn stretched for untold ages before meeting a fortress of trees. Unobtrusive lights illuminated tasteful garden beds closer to the house. Pressing her forehead to the cold glass, she looked straight down. Three stories up, not a single bush was to be found that could break her fall if she thought to jump.

Rubbing at her chest where the suffocating pressure was increasing with every strained breath, Quinn stumbled to the bathroom. A cursory glance brought a glimmer of recognition. She hadn't been lucid, but she remembered the open space with echoing white tile. Maybe she could think if she could just get his scent off her. Maybe she could keep a hold of her sanity. Keeping her head low, she managed to avoid her reflection in the large mirror as she climbed into the massive glass walled shower.

Scrubbing her skin raw and red, she ignored the scrape of bites and the pulsing of bruises. The agony at her shoulder wouldn't quit. The bandage was soaked, leaking sluggish crimson trails to swirl down the drain. Whatever the bastard had done to her, the uneasy somersault of her stomach refused to let her peel back the sodden gauze to look at it. Raking the sharp

edge of nails against her scalp, she let the slow burn distract her for the moment.

Digging out a space of calm in the black hole of her thoughts, she examined the situation. Locked up in a stranger's house and miles from the city, it wasn't likely that she'd be able to just walk out the front door. There was also the fact she was as weak as a kitten from Gods knew how many days of a delayed heat. Taking the time to regain some strength would be the smart thing to do.

The idea of remaining there for even a minute longer was enough to make her skin grow clammy and prickle with goosebumps under the steaming spray.

Shaking off the sensation, Quinn cut off the shower and climbed out. Once draped in a towel that could wrap around her body twice, she went to the closet in search of something resembling actual clothing to wear. It was a good thing she hadn't been expecting much.

Miles of shirts with stiff collars and impeccable taste cast their judgment down at her as she wandered through the space. Dress slacks and suit jackets spurned her from their territory along the back wall. The center aisle was crowded with watches and ties, cufflinks and other male paraphernalia. Tipping her head forward, Quinn stared at the organized drawers tucked under racks of glossy shoes with pale grays narrowed to vicious slits.

Folded boxers stared back, mocking the sneering curl of her lips. An array of crisp white undershirts taunted her with their thin fabric. There wasn't a single casual t-shirt to be found, no sweatpants that could be adjusted to her far smaller frame. Everything was tailored to the male and his ridiculous size.

The heel of her hand dug into her sternum. Seeking to dislodge the weight of a bull elephant from her chest, eyes closed to concentrate on filling starved lungs with air not tainted by the Alpha. Whatever was wrong with her now, it was all his fault. That much she knew at least.

Pale lashes parted, her eyes silvered in the neutral lighting. She turned in a slow circle, eying the rows of costly attire. Stepping back, Quinn let a smile spread her lips wide.

Why not make the best of it?

"This chicken's not half bad, Beta."

"Would you care for another napkin, Miss?"

“Nah, Beta. I still have one.” Quinn hid her victorious sneer against the billowing sleeve of the dress shirt. No longer pristine, the glowing white forever marred with garlic sauce and the juices of the rather delicious chicken. Wiping her mouth on the back of the sleeve once more, she turned her attention to the potatoes gracing the plate. Holding a forkful to her lips, the vibrant pink of her tongue touched the golden flesh. The warm yellow dressing had the spicy tang of mustard. That would leave a glorious stain on the pale gray trousers and rug.

“My name is Curtis, Miss.” Each word was bit out around clenched teeth, the fullness of his lips compressed to a strained line. Every muscled angle of the male was taut with aggressive displeasure.

“Oh, am I supposed to call my captors by their names now?” A twitch of her hand sent the well sauced potatoes tumbling from her fork. Feigning just the right amount of exaggerated dismay, Quinn watched them pitch down her thigh to land with a wet smack against the plush rug. “Oops.”

“What do you think you are doing?” Curtis snarled as he dropped to a knee, snatching the unused napkin from Quinn’s loose grip to blot at the creamy, saffron hued mess.

“Eating, as I was commanded to do.”

“You are acting like a child, throwing a temper tantrum because you aren’t getting your way.”

“So what I’m hearing is that not only is he a rapist and a kidnapper but also a pedophile?”

The tight, jerky movements of his hand as he scrubbed at the dark green nap were a warning she decided not to heed with a twitch of a narrow shoulder hidden beneath the Alpha’s shirt. Looking around the table, she examined the elaborate spread that the Beta had arranged with studious care atop yet another blinding white piece of linen. Pale gray eyes didn’t just gleam, they damn well sparkled as they lit upon the bottles of wine. There had been some nonsense about the red not going with the chicken, but he’d offered it all the same.

Stupid man for not getting it out of her reaches sooner. Deciding it was his own fault for not thinking ahead, she slipped the cork free as he continued to mutter and growl beside her chair. Another feigned gasp preceded a waterfall of thick crimson washing over the edge of the table as she knocked the glass over. The leg of the trousers was soaked through, the

dusty scent of fermented grapes billowing through the air as the wine made a delightful splash against the floor.

"Oh, dear. I seem to be all thumbs tonight." Delivered in a flawless deadpan, Quinn stared at him from only inches away. A tic started at the corner of his left eye, rich brown irises promising a world of agonies.

Curtis stood with mechanical strain. Glancing down, he brushed at the growing stain of vermillion on his pant leg. Without a word, he spun on his heel and marched from the room, bearing straight and tall.

Quinn let out a slow, shaky breath as the door closed with too much care. She might have pushed him a little too far. The bitter scent of his anger clung to the back of her throat like hot ashes and she washed it away with a long gulping drink of water.

Seconds ticked by as she waited for the storm to erupt. He'd come back enraged, taking it all out on her. As she began to wonder if she had pushed too hard with some stupid wine, she realized she hadn't heard the lock engage. The door had been almost silent as it closed, but there hadn't been the hard snick of a key turning.

Jumping up from the table, she rushed to the door and set her fingers on the knob. Turning it, she had to swallow the furious howl of victory when it rotated. She had wasted precious seconds waiting for the Beta to return with his impotent fury. She had to hurry.

Within the space of a few trembling breaths, she had the shirt and pants in enough order she could run if she needed to. There was nothing to suffice as shoes, so she would just have to go barefoot. She gave a longing look to the half-finished meal, the instantaneous rumble of her stomach reminding her she hadn't eaten in Gods knew how long.

With a groan, she stuffed a handful of chicken and potatoes into her mouth before running out of the room.

Laid out in an almost sterile design, it was easy to navigate to the lower levels. How she'd managed not to be seen was a mystery until she found herself on the ground floor. The house was massive, ostentatious, and all of it was dark. Not a single soul seemed to occupy the space as Quinn drifted from one shadowy room to the next. Curtis had claimed there was a cook, yet silence seeped through the darkness until every ragged breath she took was a booming thunder.

Pressed against the wall of what might have been an office, she clutched at her chest. The relentless pressure writhed. It twisted deeper, stealing what

little breath she managed in its vice like grip.

She had to get out of there.

Stumbling towards a glass door with her vision throbbing red, Quinn was less careful than she ought to have been. Paper scattered to the floor in a shuffling hush that had her backpedaling. A low table caught her at the knees and pitched her to the ground in a mess of flailing limbs. With a graceless squawk, Quinn went sprawling.

Straining through the pounding in her ears, she waited for the muscled Beta to come barreling through the door. Perhaps unseen males would rush her instead. When nothing happened, she struggled to her feet and slammed into the door, fumbling the lock until it slid free and sent her out into the cold night.

Fresh air that should have given her a rush of elated freedom seared her raw lungs and turned the relentless pressure into stabbing knives.

Indecision caught her up and held her on the threshold. Nerves scraped raw, thoughts tumbled over one another in a mad dash that refused to make sense. A disturbing part of her wanted to return to the room that promised safety. It was warm and quiet. A comfortable bed and delicious food would still be waiting for her there.

Quinn scoffed at the notion. Those comforts had never driven her to such lengths of madness. To remain under the Alpha's thumb was dangerous in ways too plentiful to enumerate. No matter how the vision of her tangled nest gnawed at her now, calling to be set to rights and burrowed into. To be wrapped safe and warm in the Alpha's scent.

Eyes showing far too much white, panic began to scrape at the back of her neck. Launching herself out into the darkness with legs pumping, she sprinted across the perfect lawn towards the shadowy trees.

Whether she was being allowed to run or if she had slipped the leash, Quinn didn't care. No cry of alarm went up and no lights flooded the night. She ran as fast and as hard as she could as the woods swallowed her up. She didn't even think of stopping.

Well after dawn found her staggering down a filthy backstreet in a wavering line. Shaking with exhaustion and chilled to the bone, the wet slap of her bare soles against asphalt echoed up the towering buildings that seemed to lean in and watch her with their blank eyes. Uncertain of how

many endless miles she'd travelled through the long night or how she'd gotten there through the stumbling gray haze, only the hulking brick beasts proved she'd managed to get to the far side of the city. Much further and she'd be at the docks with the ocean beyond, and even then, she wasn't sure it would be far enough away. The ache in her chest had become sheer agony with every step, spreading until it throbbed through every inch of her body. Even her toes hurt with the violent pulse of it.

There was no real destination in mind. There was no going back to her apartment. Marina would be of no help. The few people that would even think to take her in now would be even less prepared for any of this than she had been. Braced against crumbling brick, she only knew that she couldn't stop. If she did, she might not get back up again.

The sweat coating her body was clammy, gooseflesh prickling over the back of her arms and legs, yet she felt like she was burning alive. Pulling at the limp front of the male's shirt where it stuck to damp skin, Quinn managed to raise her bleary gaze from the dangerous path littered with broken glass and shattered hopes. A sign swung in lazy arcs from the false breeze created by traffic funneling through the alley.

"Fuck," Quinn ground out between chattering teeth as the lettering resolved into something she understood. It was the absolute last place she would have chosen, but some instinct had brought her there. An imagined safety that would see her through this new horror. Years of her life had played out there, time spent under the rule of an Alpha who had never met a challenge he couldn't defeat. He'd said he loved her once. Then she'd run. Away from him, his cruelties, his cages.

And now she was back.

Only then did she realize her feet had stopped their forward momentum.

The fall was inevitable.

As the world tipped sideways and sent her plummeting into the frozen waters of delirium, she saw a thing she had never thought to lay eyes on again. Shadows and darkness stained in intricate patterns she knew all too well swooped down to pluck her from the gritty pavement.

Broken snippets of grumbling male voices filtered through the suffocating haze surrounding her. Even rougher hands divested her of the ruined clothes. Surpassing shaking, she quaked as she was held against a broad chest and scrubbed with cheap soap. All pride shunted aside when she wrapped herself around his thick body as he began to purr.

Agony receding in slow fits, she let him tuck her in a bed that smelled of sage and him, tangled in heat and comfort. Exhaustion welcomed her with open arms, holding her as it dragged her down.

“Thank you, Alton,” she mumbled against the rich vibration pressed against her lips.

“Go to sleep, baby girl.”

She did.

“Who the fuck is she?”

The shrill quality of a woman’s voice wrenched Quinn into awareness, as effective as a cold bucket of water. Spun sugar soured by black market suppressants had Quinn groaning. She was not up for a fight she didn’t even want to have, not with the clawing pain burgeoning in her chest again.

“Keep your fucking voice down.” The giant beneath her rumbled a growl, heavy hand smoothing down Quinn’s bare back under the thick blankets to settle her.

“But, Rip,” the Omega whined, hesitant footsteps shuffling closer. “Why is she here, huh? You don’t need that cunt. You’ve got me, right?”

“Keep it down, Cherry.”

“I’ll stop taking them. I’m sorry! Just get rid of her and we’ll have some fun like you like.”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake,” Quinn said with a disgusted groan. Even with her brain feeling like scrambled mush inside of her skull, she remembered the rules. Gentle fingers tapped against his chest, head turning aside when he nuzzled at the spot just below her ear.

Jostled, the sound of flesh meeting cracked through the air. Multiple dull thumps followed a hard thud. Quinn could envision a small body crumpling to the floor after slamming against a wall. Pained whimpers bubbled from Cherry’s likely bleeding mouth.

“I told you to be quiet. Get out.” If only the command was directed at her instead of Cherry, Quinn thought, as Alton rolled her under his bulk. The calming purr came at once, pressed against her so she felt the resonance through every fiber. Quinn was hard pressed to register the sniffling whines Cherry made as she crawled out. Lowering his voice to a whisper, he said, “Someone’s been a very bad little girl.”

“I didn’t mean to be.” The smirk tugged at her lips before she could grasp the full gravity of her predicament. His deep rumble sluiced all the dents

and bruises away, mashing her senses into a watery soup of languor. “But that was always my problem, wasn’t it?”

“I always knew you would come back to me, baby girl,” Alton said in a muffled groan against the top swell of her breast. Hands that could break bone slipped over the soft curves of her body almost reverent.

“It hurt so bad... I didn’t... I just.” Pale brows drawing in, she tried to hold on to the thread of her thoughts. Something was different, incredible and almost horrifying, as he cocooned her in his body and heat. The ghost of something rattled around in her chest, screeching like a banshee but making no sense.

“I could fix it for you. Make it all better.” Lips trailed down the line of her jaw and neck to the dull throb at her shoulder. The tight itch of the bandage was long gone. His mouth moved over tender flesh, tasting tongue making Quinn hiss a surprised breath through her teeth.

“Fix it how?” Feeling as if she was doggy-paddling in a vicious riptide, Quinn clung to the massive Alpha that rubbed his body against her. Tipping her head forward, she struggled to focus, concentrating on the smallest minutia to keep her from drifting off into murky waters.

More ink had been added to the smooth ochre of his skin, the mellow brown accented in sweeping whorls and jagged lines of new patterns she couldn’t quite make out in the uncertain light. How many times had she traced those lines with her lips and tongue? Countless.

“I could take this from him, make it mine. Make you mine.” Oblivious to the way she’d gone still or refusing to acknowledge it, Alton continued his exploration. The rugged texture of his callused palm slipped up her side. Her nipple drew tight as he mounded soft flesh, his satisfied sound scattering in a wash of humid air across her cool skin. “You liked being mine, didn’t you, baby girl?”

Small hands smoothed their way up to his jaw and traced the rough edge of his beard. It’d been larger, fuller, when she’d seen him last. Meeting the ever watchful golden brown of his gaze was a painful thing. Chest constricting in a violent grip, she turned pale gray eyes up to his hair and followed the path with her fingers. Long dreadlocks tipped with gold were gone, cropped to leave rich umber curls just long enough to tangle her fingers in. Rubbing the coarse strands between her fingers, she sought out the nagging itch of wrongness.

"Wait, Alton... What do you mean? Take what from him?" She scratched at the surface of her thoughts, scraping away the unnecessary detritus. There was something important under his words. Things she should understand sifted through her fingers as the writhing ache behind her sternum became a whiplash of agony that stole her breath.

"His claim, baby girl," Alton said against her collarbone. The soothing purr came as Quinn stiffened. Teasing hands turned comforting to ease the disquiet from tensed muscle.

Clarity came on the loudest rumble. Her fingers clenched in his hair, drawing Alton's face down into her neck so he wouldn't see her horror. She realized what was so off. The purr was a comfort, but no more than that. She knew his heady scent permeating every particle of bedding, but it didn't excite her. Feeling no more for the man that had destroyed and rebuilt her than she would her own father, Quinn placed the last of the pieces in the muddled puzzle.

"I won't let him hurt you, baby girl," Alton continued with vicious thunder, trunk like arms wrapping around her. Mistaking the astringent bite of her fear, he thought to give solace with the muscled body she knew he could use with deadly effectiveness. "Just say you want it. I'll get you the good stuff and it'll be just like old times."

Just like old times. When she spent more time on her back than anything else, waiting for the stick of a needle because he liked an Omega in heat. The dark days of rules and punishments that seemed to have been created just for the purpose of Quinn to fail at. Cold and slimy, memories worked their way down her spine. Gooseflesh prickled across her skin.

"I have to eat and rest. I put it off too long this time. I don't even know how long it lasted." The words were flat, a robotic speech as she watched from a far-off place inside her mind. Her hands petted at the rippling shoulders, cheek rubbing at his temple to calm him. He was eager, ready, the evidence of it pushing at the soft skin of her thighs and leaving a pungent smear.

Trailing kisses down her chest ended in a smooth chuckle. The flat of his tongue slid up from the shallow valley between her breasts to nip at her chin. "You are such a bad, bad little girl. We'll have to go over the rules again, make sure you remember them."

"Yes, sir," Quinn whispered as he rose above her. Even knowing what was expected and what depended on it, she still hesitated. It was only a

fraction of a second, but it felt like a lifetime before she put her hands out to feel the firmness of his chest, to flex her fingers over his hips. “I look forward to my lessons.”

Golden gaze hooded, he observed her as he stood and pulled on tattered jeans. The smallest misstep under those watchful eyes could bring a world of pain. She’d always been body shy, but it was one of the rules. She clenched her fists into the sheet to keep them from pulling the blankets up. When he only continued to stare, panic seeped in through the cracks of her composure. What had she forgotten?

“I’m happy you’re back, baby girl,” Alton murmured as he leaned down and cupped the back of her neck. A pleased sound reverberated from his chest as he looked down the line of her body. Fingers tightening, crimping over delicate vertebrae, he lifted her from the pillows. “Don’t think I’ve forgotten how you left me though. Every action...”

“Has consequences,” Quinn said, finishing the sentence through clenched teeth. Though shoulders hitched to her ears, she remained pliant in his grasp. Much like with a ravaging bear, playing dead was the best course when Alton felt the need to reprimand. Except on those rare occasions where he wanted a fight though he hadn’t given her the subtle cues to tell her so.

“Good girl.” Easing her back, he tucked the heavy covers up around her chin. His palm smoothed the tangled fluff of her curls away from her forehead where he kissed her. “I’ll be right back with food.”

Quinn didn’t hesitate this time. Snuggling down into the bed that wasn’t too hard or too soft, yet still uncomfortable, she let her lashes drift to half-mast. A soft smile turned the corners of her lips up. For all intents she was a contented woman, basking in the bed of her Alpha.

Too bad she felt anything but.

Chapter 5

It was two days before Alton would let her leave the room.

Hours were spent arguing her case. Her need for rest before he induced another heat was real enough. Putting his hands on the washboard quality of her ribs, letting him feel the hard shelf of her hips, had done more to sway him in the end.

Lying in bed alone for hours on end wouldn't help her get any stronger either. Not with the hollow ache in her chest reminding her that everything was terribly wrong. Alton's plans for her would change it all, but it was a price Quinn wasn't sure she was willing to pay. There would be no slipping out in the dead of night this time. There was no sanctuary out there for her should she try to escape his hold again.

Even after she had convinced Alton to let her into the large space that served him and his people as a gathering place, it was at the end of the leash of her arm. Though she wasn't allowed to interact with anyone other than him, it was nice to see faces other than his. It was even a treat to hear the myriad voices and accents that flowed through his doors again. The two weeks she'd been in his care would have been an endless agony otherwise.

As it was, fourteen days with him had the opposite effect than what she had thought would happen.

Sleep was a fitful thing, marked by the hours of tossing and turning until Alton pressed her into the mattress with his body and purred loud and deep. Upon waking, she needed his closeness and the comfort he gave even in front of his people. The purrs and warm touches calmed the fraying strands of her sanity in a way nothing else did. The appetite she would have sworn was ravenous upon her arrival waned until every bite was a struggle no matter how he soothed her.

A decision had to be made. The Alpha's concern grew daily, his possessive hold on her flourishing under her need for him.

Perched now on Alton's thigh, Quinn faced the main area as he conducted a meeting in what might have been German. She never had figured out how he'd become fluent in so many languages or how he managed to rule over so much of the seedy underbelly of Alderbrook. Alton Rippin's hands seemed to be in everything and everyone seemed to owe

him something. Drugs, guns, tech, humans—nothing was sacrosanct if money could be made from it.

“What the fuck do you think you’re looking at?”

Startled from her thoughts, Quinn cringed away from the violent timbre of Alton’s voice only to change direction at the last moment. Unsure of whom or what had provoked him, it was always a good idea to appease him. Pivoting on the bench of his leg, she tucked her body tight against his chest. It wasn’t until his arm came over her back, the fingers of his other hand kneading her thigh that she realized someone else had the full strength of his ire.

“S-Sorry, Rip, I just... No one told me it was for her. I have the stuff.”

The pain was as instant as the voice was familiar. Lucas. The Beta who had been assigned to watch over her while Alton was off on some business dealing the night she’d managed to get out. Quinn was surprised he was still alive, let alone still working for Alton. She had felt a world of guilt over the idea someone else had suffered for her like that. Seeing—well, hearing—that he was alive and well was a balm for the angry scars that marked her soul.

From the corner of her eye she saw the vials set down on the table, clinking together as Lucas’ hand shook. Thick, milky fluid bubbled and crested. Ice sluicing through her veins, Quinn suppressed the shiver that tugged at her spine.

“It isn’t,” Alton said, pulling Quinn tighter against him so he could nuzzle at her ear. “Not yet, anyways.”

The hand pushing her to her feet was unexpected. Quinn stumbled a little, bare feet skittering across the worn floor until Alton’s hand came down to pin her in place. She had a front row view as the women from the other side of the room were called forward from their tight huddle.

“Cherry, Teresa, come here.”

They came. They always came to his call. Teresa, hiding behind layers of heavy makeup and a smirk that didn’t quite reach the dull shine of her eyes sauntered towards him like it was an honor. Cherry, with her namesake hanging in a clumpy fringe around fresh bruises and long shattered dreams, scurried like a beaten dog. Quinn couldn’t watch, couldn’t bear witness to the heart wrenching tragedy of it, even if it would have been the right thing to do. They wouldn’t appreciate her sympathy, would hiss and spit at her pity. Cherry would rather claw Quinn’s eyes out.

Turning her attention to the table as Alton told the women what was expected, she watched as Lucas pawed through his pockets, turning them inside out and dumping the worn, dirty contents out onto the table. His pack was next. Curl-edged papers, stained clothes, a multitude of packets and vials all upended onto the smooth wood surface. The tension washed from him in heavy waves. Things were going to go badly in a minute.

“Lucas.”

Name bit off like a chunk of meat, the Beta flinched with the impact of the sound. Shaking hands turned palms up, showing their emptiness. “I thought I had the syringes, Rip. I can go get them right now.”

The sun rose in Quinn’s thoughts with searing brilliance. It filled her chest with indescribable warmth that seeped through her limbs. It illuminated all the dark places, swamped in muck and filth in glorious sunshine. She was already moving, turning so her hands could tuck themselves into Alton’s belt. Thighs fitted around his leg, a gentle tug given to the strip of thick leather for his attention.

“You are a worthless piece of shit.”

“I thought I had another pack, Rip, I swear. I can be back in five minutes.”

She gave another tug to the belt. Not too hard, but not soft enough to be ignored. Squeezing her thighs around him, she tried to make it more difficult to be dismissed.

“What are the rules about interrupting, little girl,” Alton snarled as he leaned down to bring their faces close.

His hand tangled in her hair, wrenching her head back until Quinn struggled for the thinnest breath to fill frozen lungs. The shock of hot and cold made her feel fragile, breakable. Tears welled, turning soft gray misty. A faint tremble came to her lips as all that light dimmed. “I’m sorry, sir.”

“Words are cheap, aren’t they, baby girl?”

“Yes, sir, they are.”

“Go back to the room and think about the consequences of your actions,” Alton said, pushing her away as if she was nothing more than an annoying, yapping dog.

Nerve crumbling and gut twisting, Quinn had to stop herself from doing just that as he turned his attention back to Lucas. She hung her head low, feet sliding in a quiet hush to point towards the hall that led to the private rooms. Grasping at the shifting sands of her resolve, she took a slow breath

and turned back to face him. It was an epic effort of will to lift her chin, to bring the strong lines of his face into her view. Starting and stopping half a dozen times as the rise and fall of his vicious tone beat at Lucas just as his hands did, she managed to say it, too loud and cracking, “I’ve made my decision.”

The sudden stillness was nerve wracking. Even Lucas’ wheezing breaths from where Alton gripped his throat were muted. Golden brown gaze slid sideways, fixing her with a calculating stare that almost undid her.

“Have you now?”

“Yes, I’ve made my choice. He can get mine while he’s out.”

“There’s plenty of the shit right there. If you’re so sure, why wait?” Cherry’s sneer was almost as bad of a decision as her speaking out had been.

Alton was already standing tall, shoulders rolling as he released Lucas and turned towards the woman. Quinn didn’t even pause to think.

“You think I’m just a good fuck for him,” Quinn asked on a low, mocking purr. Her hands drifted around Alton’s waist as she caught him, pressing her body against his side. Head canted, she fixed Cherry with a disdainful smile. “That shit, as you so eloquently called it, is for the toys, honey. Things he loans out, things he doesn’t care about. He’s not about to put that into his mate.”

It was a hard thing to stand proud and unfeeling in the face of such destruction. Watching as what little light in Cherry’s eyes had survived to this point shattered and died felt more wrong than anything Quinn had ever done. Even reminding herself it had to be done didn’t help.

Alton’s satisfied rumble was her cue. Nuzzling his chest, she made sure every inch possible was touching him as the two women were led off to be readied. Her answering purr was quiet, soft enough she prayed he wouldn’t hear the rattling fear in it.

“Do you understand, Lucas?”

Already scrambling to gather his things, Lucas made the appropriate sounds in a tumble of mashed syllables. From under her lashes, she watched him give a jerky nod before running off as if being chased. Alton had already dismissed the underling, his hands roving over Quinn as he moved them in the direction of the hall. He’d want her in bed as soon as possible, to hell with waiting for the cocktail of hormones. She didn’t have to be high on a forced estrous for him to begin.

It was now or never.

“May I ask for one thing?” Expecting the tension that pulled heavy muscle rock hard, she was already moving to subdue his anger. If the heat lodged between her lungs had begun life as a candle flame, it was building into an inferno. Dainty hands stroked over available skin, sliding under the sleeves of his shirt to scrape her nails over muscled flesh. Mouth pressed against his chest, she waited for permission to speak further.

Silence stretched until it became thin and brittle. Before it could shatter, Quinn strained up on tiptoe. Notching her hips against his, she climbed Alton’s body to get as much contact as she could. Seconds continued to tick by. Not until his hand came down to her ass to hold her steady when her calves trembled did she dare to so much as breathe.

“And what is it you want now?”

“I’d like to go out.” If possible, the biceps under her fingers grew even harder. She rushed to add on, “Just over to Kauffman’s. I want a bagel.”

“Rip, the guys from the docks are here.”

Frustrated with the intrusion at first, Quinn would have done back flips of joy when Alton seemed torn. Whoever these people were, they were important enough for it to distract him from pressing her.

“I’ve got business. I’ll take you to get your sandwich when it’s done.”

The matter resolved in his mind, Alton pulled her back to the table by the length of her arm. Three men were being led over, their casual evil slung over their shoulders like badges of honor. One inspected her without even trying to hide it.

“Please, sir,” Quinn whispered against Alton’s arm as she hid behind his bulk. Fear and revulsion weren’t feigned. Words little more than a controlled breath when he turned to her with narrowed eyes, she added, “I’ll be back by the time you’re finished. I’m yours forever as soon as Lucas gets back. Let me do this just one last time. Let me say goodbye, please, Alton.”

They both knew what she spoke of. It had been the reason she had run the last time. She saw the recognition of that fact spark a dark flame in the depths of his golden gaze until it burned like sunlit honey. He’d locked her away before she was ready once, and it had sent her bolting out into the night like a terrified rabbit. She swallowed hard against the rotten lump of emotion that stuck in her throat.

“You’re not going alone.”

The decree turned her bones to water as relief flooded through her. He was going to let her go. Head bobbing as she widened her gaze and glanced at the other males standing near. Lesser Alphas with a few Betas mixed in for good measure, they would have been the obvious choice.

“Not them,” Alton said in a ragged snarl, jerking Quinn off her feet to crash against his chest. Held suspended, she bounced as he strode with absolute purpose to the other side of the room. Addressing unseen people, his voice was downright vicious, a promise of pain and death. “You go up to the corner and back. You don’t stop anywhere else, you don’t talk to anyone. If anything happens to her...”

Murmurs of assent swelled behind her before Alton put her back on solid ground. Palm cupping her crown, he tipped her head back to accept the greedy assault of his lips and tongue. By the end of it she was clinging to his shirt, teetering on the brink of collapse as she panted and shivered.

“I don’t think I have it in me to forgive you a second time, my little Quinn,” he murmured against the corner of kiss bruised lips before he righted them both. Tucking a platinum curl behind her ear, he scrutinized her as if memorizing every angle and messy curl.

The force of his gaze was taken away so that Quinn almost staggered after him. Almost ran to his side to say she’d changed her mind and that she would wait. Surrounded before she could make a fool of herself, the press of feminine bodies buoyed her from the room. Shoes were found to fit her, the half-dozen women nervous and fidgeting as Quinn laced them.

The glare of brilliant sunshine blinded her for several panicked seconds before squinting eyes adjusted to the change in light. The familiar roar of the city was in full swing as afternoon bled into evening. The pulsing heat wedged in the center of her chest would have given the intensity of high noon a run for its money.

Her smoky gray gaze flicked every which way as they walked, cataloging every detail as they came into focus. Within ten feet, she had Plan A to Plan Z ready at her fingertips. A map of the city unfolded in her mind’s eye with every alley, byway, and backstreet on the way out of the West district and on to safety highlighted. She might not have a single place to run to, but the warren of streets could be a sanctuary all their own.

Held static at a crosswalk as they waited for the light, the searing illumination dimmed to the burnished golden-reds and darkling purples of

sunset, allowing other thoughts to slip from the shadows. On impulse, she examined them.

Why was she so eager to run again? A horrid betrayal and five years later, and the man still knew she liked bagel sandwiches from the little deli up the road. He remembered she hated the taste of mint toothpaste and had provided a berry flavored tube that first day. She could complain about the way he kept her under lock and key, but no Alpha let their Omega run free as a bird. He had still taken her places with him in the old days, not just forced her to languish in his bed. Once mated and under his sole control, it might not be any different.

Unaware she rubbed at her chest as they crossed the sun warmed asphalt, Quinn sunk deeper into the morass of speculation.

Alton had always been good to her in his own way. Never one to beat her because he could or to inflict smaller cruelties as was his right. He'd been faithful, which had been a hell of a shock at the time. After watching a different woman come stumbling from the back rooms every week, monogamy had never even crossed her mind until he'd told her in no uncertain terms. She could still remember how careful he had been with her when he'd first taken her to his bed. And it had been his bed, not one of the rooms that reeked of sex and pain and dangerous males.

This time had been no different. No other woman's scent marked his body or his bed these past two weeks. Even if she'd forced herself to doubt it, the growing spite and jealousy of the other females would have proven her wrong. During all this time, he had touched and teased, but not once had he forced her to spread for him. The slightest flinch from his touch as the pain built to a frantic crescendo was met with nothing but gentleness.

The rules, though. Had they been all that bad? She'd been young, full of spite and bravado when he'd first taken her in. After the rampant freedom of Marina's utter lack of concern, Alton and his rules had seemed like a millstone around her neck. Impossible feats she could never even hope to attain. Had she ever *really* tried to follow them, or had she bucked under the hand of authority? Older now, with an understanding that could only come with the past hard years, she couldn't say that any of it was so unfair as to be impossible.

Feeling flush and disoriented, Quinn tripped over a seam in the sidewalk. One arm flailed. The other clawed at the now bruised and broken skin of her chest. Seeking out the rupturing agony lodged under her ribs.

“Michelle, go get Rip,” one of her escorts shrilled. Hands grabbed at her, pulling Quinn up between them and off to the side where she could be propped against a building. She melted down the soft brick, smears of dusty red staining the back of her shirt and hair.

Colors faded into a gray wash of confusion. Shivering in violent fits though flames sizzled underneath her skin, the sounds she made were alien. The low keens of an animal in pain scratched at her throat and burst forth from lips shredded under the gnashing of teeth.

Quinn collapsed to the sidewalk. The panicked shrieks of her entourage were nothing like the fierce howl building at the base of her skull. Unfurling inside her head, it crowded out thought. Amplified in the shell of bone, louder and louder, nothing but the savagery of it could be discerned.

On hands and knees, her gaze was drawn up through the crowd of legs that caged her. What shouldn’t have been there was.

It should have been impossible. It *was* impossible. Yet her gaze was caught and held, pinning her there to the rough concrete.

In vivid, living color, it came at her with the quick stride of the killing strike.

Chapter 6

Beta females shrieked and scattered in the face of that crackling aura of rage. Later, when she was capable of real thought, Quinn would pity them for the price they would pay for the action. For now with her head tilted back at a painful angle, deep evergreen shaded eyes held her captive.

The frantic pulse in her chest lessened. As they continued to stare at one another, the erratic jumble smoothed, calmed, and Quinn was able to take a shuddering breath that wasn't released on a scream. And it was her screaming that had set the Betas to panic before they'd even seen the man. As the ragged sounds died in her throat, the battered ache told her it had been loud if not long.

Standing close enough for her to imagine she felt the heat of him, she watched his lips part to show the edge of sharp, white teeth. She saw the glittering promise of violence in the depths of those dark eyes. There was nothing she could do, neither run nor beg or fight, under that piercing gaze.

Crouching with a speed and determination that had her toppling back onto the concrete, the Alpha hovered. He sniffed at the air around her, the curve of his lips pulling back into a snarl that was matched by a low rattle of fury. She didn't think she had flinched, heard no sound other than his rage, but he acted as if she had tried to run.

The weight of him crashed down into her stomach with a knee, one hand shoving her flat when Quinn tried to curl around the sudden pain. His other hand grabbed at her hair, twisting her head aside to grind her cheek into the pavement. Merciless fingers caught the neck of the oversized shirt, scraping over skin and half healed scabs. Fabric ripped in his haste to bare the mark he'd set there. Not until her entire shoulder was bare, the weeping wound in plain sight, did he stop the violent tearing.

Whatever he saw appeased him somewhat. The crushing burden was removed, and he allowed her to curl onto her side against his bent leg. Wheezing breaths shuddered into her lungs as she gulped at too thick air. If she thought that it was over, that he would calm now, she'd been mistaken.

The hands that she had relished while in heat pulled and jerked at the rest of the shirt. The fabric rent, shredded, falling away in ragged pieces until she hugged her knees to hide her nakedness. Thick welts and jagged lines of crimson bloomed on pale flesh. Something thundered in the distance, but

she was too distracted by those savage hands as they went to work on the loose pants that hung from her hips. Even as the thought of fighting back entered her mind, her world spun and sparkled with dark stars as the back of his hand connected with her cheek.

Reeling from the strike, Quinn was pliant as he ripped away the baggy sweatpants. She stared dumbstruck at the dark figure barreling up the street, scattering people before him and leaving chaos in his wake. Face twisted, muscles bulging, Alton ran towards her with rage in his eyes.

Fear dumped adrenaline into her system, sweeping away the sticky cobwebs of pain as she looked up at the Alpha rising to meet the challenge. Squinting against a jagged bolt of white-hot agony that seared through her skull, she tried to remember his name. Hysterical laughter bubbled at the back of her tensed lips when she realized after everything, she still didn't know the man's name. What had the Beta called him? Carl? No... Kahler was his name. He wasn't as large as Alton, didn't look as if he knew the way of a brawl, yet the deep green of his eyes held nothing but death in them.

"You get the fuck away from her! I'm going to rip you apart, you sorry shit," Alton roared, a bare foot away when he came to a stop. Thick legs spread and shoulders held wide, he seemed impossible and huge. Menacing and enraged, corded muscles flexed.

"So," Kahler said with a calm that crackled like thin ice down Quinn's spine. Head canted, his green gaze swept over Alton. It was his voice, though—the smooth, moderate tone—that terrified her as he continued. "So, you are the one that thought to touch what's mine."

Seemingly forgotten, Quinn was left to shiver on the sidewalk as Kahler paced around Alton. There was no bristling fury or violent posturing from him. His strides were slow and measured, shoulders held easy and arms loose at his sides. It was a stark contrast to Alton who seemed to grow bigger and more rigid with every furious breath.

"She's mine." There was no question to Alton's conviction. The possessive gleam in his eyes was a balm to the ragged edges of her soul. All her worries withered and died under all that dominating thunder. He would take care of the bastard, grinding him into the pavement. He would take her back to the warehouse and his room, would hold her and tell her everything would be all right as he slipped the needle deep into her vein. Then, she swore to herself, she would be everything Alton had ever wanted her to be.

Heavy and warm, fabric met her back and slipped around her to hide bare skin. The spicy musk of Kahler wrapped around her just as his hands had. Startling hard enough for her teeth to snap together, biting her tongue with a quick flash of coppery panic, Quinn turned terrified eyes up to see this new threat. His attention wavered only a moment towards the impending fight before Curtis focused back on Quinn. The long coat was arranged around her huddled form, his hands guiding her into it. Careful of wounds old and new, he ushered her further away from the street. Further away from the dangerous men. Once settled against the building's wall, he stood in front of her, facing the circling Alphas.

Quinn chanced a look around. A multitude of people had paused in their daily routine to watch. Alton's people had poured out from the warehouse after him. In this part of town, the police wouldn't be called, and never on Alton. Faces she knew were picked out from the crowd. It took a bare moment for her to realize only Curtis had approached. Not even one of the Beta women who had brought her this far had even bothered to fling a jacket in her direction once the men squared off. Only he had even thought to move her out of harm's way.

She couldn't say why her eyes burned with the knowledge or why it seemed to matter so much.

"Do you know who I am," Kahler asked, sounding nothing if not unconcerned.

Kahler didn't want her. She wasn't even sure he was angry that someone else might have played with his latest toy. It was just the dishonor of it, another male stealing away his possession before he was finished with it. The tears welled bitter and hot in her eyes though she blinked hard to hold them back. The claim was a mistake, she was sure of that. Something he didn't even mean to do. She'd put her heat off too long and it had overwhelmed them both. Shamed and full of suffocating remorse, Quinn berated herself for ever having refused Alton. He would have cared for her, would have kept her safe. Alton had always wanted her. Making an even smaller target, the tears won out. Muffling quiet sobs against arms holding her knees, she watched as Kahler came to a stop facing her.

"You're the sad fuck who's gotten in my way." Alton scoffed, lush lips smirking at the other male in derision. Names didn't matter to him.

Kahler's gaze slipped to her for the barest second. The twist of his lips resembled a smile, but it was as dead and lifeless as his soul as he walked

straight past Alton towards her. Thrown over his shoulder, he didn't even pause as unhurried steps brought him closer. "I'm Tobias Kahler. Continue and you'll wish you were dead by the time I'm done with you. As it is, you have your uses, so I'm willing to be lenient just the once."

The unease was immediate. Alton, along with the half dozen Alphas and Betas standing at the ready behind him, seemed to diminish. Confused, Quinn didn't react when Kahler snapped his fingers hard in front of her face, followed by a flick of fingers directing her up.

Feeling slighted as Quinn stared at Alton's stillness, the hand that came down on her cheek was hard and unforgiving. The shrill cry was more one of surprise, feeling numb as everything moved far too fast for her to make sense of it. Somehow her eyes were wide open, and they saw Alton rock on his heels.

No forward movement was made.

Kahler's hand was in her hair, clenched tight against the scalp as he pulled her straight up from the pavement. By some vague miracle, the coat remained closed as she scrambled to her feet clinging to his wrist.

Quinn's gaze never faltered as she stumbled backwards beside Kahler's purposeful strides. When her legs fell out from under her, he didn't stop. Dragged along by his grip in her hair, Quinn shrieked at the tearing pain.

Alton only continued to stand unmoving. Rigid, vibrating with tension, he didn't come to help her.

"Stare all you want," Kahler said in a low hiss. "Did you think he would keep you hidden away? That he'd fight for you? You look at him and see that you mean *nothing* to him."

The angry words hit too close to home. In a blinding moment of lucidity, she remembered who she was. Careless of the ripping sensation tearing across her scalp, she twisted in Kahler's grip and lashed out. Though every blow landed, the Alpha marched on as if she was no more than a gnat.

"Alton!" She hadn't meant to call for him. As the dark car loomed ever closer with Curtis already holding the back door wide, she had panicked. Fighting against the far larger man was getting her nowhere. She needed help. In a sea of bystanders, only one face showed its concern, and she had reached for it.

He hesitated. A single step forward was taken back at once.

Betrayal punched her hard in the stomach, knocking the air from her lungs in a disbelieving whine. She couldn't even struggle when Kahler

jerked her up into his arms and climbed in the car. Looking through the back windshield as Kahler pulled her to straddle his thighs, she saw the familiar angles of Alton's features twisted into raging grief. She wanted to scream a litany of epithets and curses at him. What good was all of his supposed love when he was willing to stand by and watch her be carted off by a monster? Where were his promises now when she needed them? The fact that the monster was right burned through her stomach like acid.

In the next moment, it didn't matter. Nothing mattered.

While busy having her heart crushed and soul battered, Kahler had freed his cock. Her pussy dry and too tight, he spat into his palm to slick the already pulsing shaft enough to force his way in. Every inch burned and ached, her shrill cries ignored. Not until he was buried to the hilt, stretching her wide and far too deep, did he call to her.

The deep resonance tripped down her spine. Joints loosened, muscles easing from quivering tension to warm languor. Hurting in too many ways, her whole world upended and crushed, she let it happen. Melting into the male as he continued to push that subterranean darkness into her, she made a delighted gasp at the first jerky snap of his hips.

Slick began to drip from where their bodies joined, staining the fabric of his pants. Wet sucking sounds filled the back of the car as he rocked his thick cock into her. The close air was heavy with musk and sweetness.

It was merciless, the way he took her as the sedan cruised through the busy streets. His hands enveloped the swell of her hips, moving her at the rhythm and pace he wanted. Her wants and needs were nothing. Every angle of her hips to get the much needed friction against her clit corrected. The touch of her hands met with a warning growl.

She wasn't meant to enjoy this.

At her first breathy moan, the provoking rumble ceased. Snapped from the sexual haze, she blinked at the male beneath her. Clarity returned, razor sharp. In the next breath his hands brought her weight down. The broken cry of anguish scattered across his shoulder as she pushed up to ease the ache, only to be brought down twice as hard.

She wasn't ready for the treatment he demanded. Her shattered whines knotted with the loud slap of their bodies meeting.

When tears flowed as generous as her slick, Kahler slouched. Long legs angled out, filling the backseat from one side to the other, spreading Quinn around him. Hips shrieking in complaint, he began to rut up into her in a

rhythm matching the hands that still moved her. She tried to fall away. Without the chance to become delirious in the call, with no pleasure to dull her senses, everything only hurt.

“Where the hell do you think you’re going,” Kahler said through clenched teeth. He growled and grabbed her hair. Bowed back over a trunk like arm, Quinn could only struggle for shuddering gasps and stare. Miserable agony blurred everything in watery smears. She could just make out the shadow of Curtis’ profile. Eyes straight ahead on the road, he ignored every cry, every weeping plea for the Alpha to stop.

Feeling the knot begin to swell, Quinn bucked and jostled. As the pain mounted, her body had stopped the ample flow of slick. Each stabbing thrust was tacky, a stuttering jolt before his hips met hers once more.

The impossible girth of his knot would tear her apart.

Her high-pitched cry grew to a howl. Slapping and clawing at the male earned a cuff to the temple that would have knocked her into the front seat had he not been holding her so tight. Her face throbbed with the staccato pace of her heartbeat as he bent her further back.

“You take what I give you,” Kahler said in a voice straining with his impending release. “You’ll take it and you’ll like it!”

Rhythm lost, his hips moved in frenzied jerks. The knot expanding as he shoved it in and wrenched it back, Quinn shrieked and convulsed at the fire that ripped across delicate flesh. His cock jumped with her spasms.

The monster was excited by her pain.

“I’m going to knot you... so good. Remind you... who this pussy belongs to. Fill this... tight little cunt up. Take it!” His words trailed off into a roar that shook the windows of the car. Hands bruising and tearing, he pulled Quinn down into one last brutal thrust. Fully formed and thick as his fist, the knot was rammed into her.

Mind bending agony crackled through her bones. There wasn’t even breath for the scream that had her mouth gaping wide at the dark upholstery of the car’s roof. Tortured flesh felt him pulse, the first potent surge burning like acid.

Then it all changed.

The growl came, fierce and unrelenting as she slammed into the male’s chest. Crushed against him to feel the insidious sound all the better. Fingers found her clit between lips stretched taut, the nub of flesh left vulnerable.

Thumbing the bundle of nerves, he rocked the still throbbing knot against a spot that seemed connected to her clit with a ragged bolt of electricity.

Pleasure exploded under her skin, primal and raw. A live wire of overwhelming sensation, she twitched and jerked.

“That’s it, squeeze my knot. Show me what a good girl you are,” Kahler whispered, a hoarse rush against her ear. Lips descending, he took the stiffened point of her nipple into a hot, wet mouth. Teeth scraped and bit at tender skin. His other hand stole up to maul her other breast, squeezing and pinching.

Wanting to deny every excruciating shock of bliss, unable to stand against it, Quinn moaned through clenched teeth. His fingers pinched at the pulsing nub of her clit, twisting it.

She was lost.

Shrill and keening, she came. Pussy clenching around his cock, gripping, she writhed on that incredible thickness. Urging another creamy surge from him, she grinded in delirious bliss as it bathed her battered insides. Twisting contractions had him releasing more liquid heat in powerful jets that made her wail. His lewd groans and growls snarled on her breathy cries.

It seemed to go on forever. His fingers plucked and played, drawing it out for far too long. Pleasure tumbled into pain with no respite. Too full, too stretched, too much.

Her fists pummeled at the Alpha’s shoulders. Tears cascaded down reddened cheeks in a fresh wave of torment. The moment she thought it would stop, he would begin again. Over and over until all she could manage was to give a broken sob as he forced her over the edge once more.

The licentious growl he used to force her through the last of it softened into a husky purr. His jerky thrusts, the ceaseless grinding of the knot, came to a blessed end. There was no comfort in the sound for her, no soothing for the hurts he had inflicted. It was only the satisfied rumblings of a male as he stretched beneath her.

She collapsed against Kahler regardless, stomach aching and thighs cramping as she whimpered. Glazed eyes turned to the window where she watched the city falling away. Not knowing where they were or even bothering to care, she drifted in a darkling haze that buffeted her with downy wings but refused to offer any true respite.

Shivering with exhaustion, twitching at every movement of the man below her, Quinn prayed for unconsciousness that never came. Even her

own mind refused to give her the comfort she needed.

Instead Quinn watched the tall buildings fade away into the more decent housing districts. Modest homes with postage stamp yards giving way to larger dignified residences before it was all left behind.

The encroaching woods that surrounded the long stretch of road were familiar, even from this unfamiliar angle. She knew that the whip-like grass would cut your shins and leaf litter hid a great many stabbing things. The creaks and groans of old wood had haunted her through much of that panicked sprint.

Neither male spoke. Kahler's immediate use for her was finished. He seemed content to keep her spread wide until his knot diminished. She supposed she should be grateful he didn't try to rip it out of her as some would. Pressed against him, his heart thumping against her cheek, she almost wished he would.

Time stretched and bent. It felt like it had been hours since he had stolen her from her last sanctuary, ruined her, killed off every inch of calm she had ever possessed. Only seconds ticked by between the sedan turning off the highway and down a road she recognized. Decades before she caught sight of the low wall that surrounded Kahler's home. Had it only been two weeks since she had scrambled over the thing in the backyard?

As the painful swelling of the knot lessened, slipping free of her abused cunt, the car meandered up a crushed gravel drive. She took little notice of the house itself, her eyes still turned towards the trees that ran thick and forbidding just past the ordered lawn.

Before Quinn could even think of making overwrought muscles move, the door was flung open, and her body dumped out on the cold drive. Shards of stone stabbed into soft flesh. The bruised side of her face came alive with violet pulses that blinded her when it met the craggy terrain. Kahler's shoes came into view with a sickening crunch and all she could think of was how, even after all of this, they remained polished and impeccable.

A hand descended, taking hold of her arm in a grip that could snap her bones with the same ease as it was bruising her. Jerked up to her feet, Quinn gagged on a shriek and forced her legs to stumble into a shaky run at Kahler's side lest he be tempted to exert any more pressure.

"Where is he?" The words were bit out, smothering the turbulent breeze of shock and dismay that erupted when he burst through the door.

Head heavy with a multitude of torments, Quinn couldn't bear to face these new people. The scurrying quality of all those feet told her they were his anyhow. People who wouldn't dare to help her in any way.

Not that the ones she had believed in had rushed to her aid.

Tears turning caustic, burning pallid cheeks, he marched her through one hall after the other after a mumbled reply was directed to the monster. She took as little notice of her surroundings as she had the last time she'd traversed this place, just an impression of space that meant nothing.

Catching herself on the heavy desk when he shoved her into a final room, Quinn stared bleary eyed at the old man seated in one of the chairs opposite. The monster's coat hung open on her, she reeked of sex and his slimy fluids coursed down her thighs. Judging by the man's expressive face and focus though, her face was an awful mess.

Shaking legs turned to water, sending her crashing to the floor. Bent over his leather case, the old Alpha paused but soon returned to the shuffling of papers. Curling up on her side, knees tucked tight under her chin, Quinn muffled her cries as much as she could. For once, she wanted to be invisible.

She heard nothing of what they said. There was only the rise and fall of their voices, the controlled violence of Kahler's tone pushing her to curl up ever smaller. At one point the stranger moved to sit closer. Some part of her knew the male was speaking to her, that he was droning on about something. It was important judging by his tone, something she should listen to. She couldn't.

The monster didn't try to force her to her feet again when the old man ceased his long-winded chattering. Instead he grabbed the back of her neck, hauling her up to kneel. A broad knee shoved between her shoulders to pin her to the desk. A pen pressed into her hand by soft, weathered fingers, a stack of papers slapped down in front of her. Black blurs across pristine white wavered as fresh anguish welled.

There was a chance it wasn't what she thought it could be. It was small and weak, the hope that tried to flicker into being within her chest. Foolish to the end, she prayed, because the alternatives made no sense.

As she blinked away the tears to make out the first lines, she felt the last bit of her world crumble and die.

"Sign it," Kahler said on a low growl. It demanded obedience and promised a fresh hell for defiance.

Her hand moved without thought, the wavering scrawl of her signature half finished before she realized it. Sobbing outright, hysterical at the last, the final curves of her name were signed.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 7

Quinn didn't remember how she had arrived in the room. A gray haze had descended as everything shattered inside of her, obliterating even the sound of her own screams. It was only the fresher throbs of pain that told her a vague tale.

The mattress she lay on was small and narrow, hard and uncomfortable. A single sheet and thin blanket were all that she had. Despite the aching cold that permeated her to the core, she didn't wrap herself in those scant offerings. Shivering in near violent fits, teeth chattering, she could do nothing more than remain prone on the bed where she had been tossed. Naked, bruised and still bleeding in places, she stared without seeing.

There would be no comfort here.

There were no windows, no clock, nothing to discern the passing of time. No other furniture was in the small room, only the mattress lying in uncomfortable perfection smack in the middle. All this she took in from her position, seen by the dim glow that managed to seep between the cracks around the door. She could only assume they locked it. There was no urge to try it.

Breaths hitching through the raw ruin of her throat, Quinn watched the shadowy corners expand and recede with the heavy blows of her pulse. Sounds drifted into the darkness, voices and the general clatter of life continuing on as if she'd never existed.

It was fitting.

Quinn Ivers no longer existed, not in any real way. She no longer had a name or voice beyond his. There was no place in the world for her now. The moment she had set pen to paper, the growling demand of the Alpha controlling her in a way she didn't understand, she ceased to be. Everything that was her was now his. Quinn was nothing more than his... whatever he made her to be. Just another possession, to be used and discarded at will.

It wasn't all just on paper. The bond was growing stronger with every breath she took, every faltering beat of her heart. Here in his home, the walls bleeding his presence, she was doomed. That sense of otherness lodged in her chest wrapped tighter and tighter around the shattered pieces of her soul. It smothered her, drowning the small voice that was hers alone. At least hiding in the West district, the separation had offered her a painful

reprieve. If she had accepted Alton as soon as she had realized what had happened, she wouldn't be here now. If Kahler had made any other choice, there might have been some small sliver of hope.

None of it made any sense.

Footsteps tread near the door. Unable—or perhaps unwilling—to give a damn about anything beyond the shadowy interior of her new prison, the cottony film of apathy was pulled close. Blinding light seared the back of her eyes, but she didn't bother to close them. Squinting would have taken too much effort. She watched the dark blur framed in all that brilliance become large before a pale sun was unleashed in the small space.

High brows and round cheekbones resolved into the now familiar features of Curtis' face. The white of his shirt wasn't as crisp as it had started out in the beginning of the day. With the dark tie loosened and top button undone, he looked unkempt.

The short bridge of his nose scrunched at the miasma of her suffering infusing the room, but he was careful not to stare as he looked down at her once the door was shut behind him. Two long steps brought him near. The tray in his hands was set on the floor beside the mattress with studious care.

Food had been brought. Thick sandwiches, neat sticks of carrots, and a bottle of water sat waiting on the slim piece of wood. She understood that the vague sensation of clenching emptiness in her stomach was a warning it had been too long. She was already growing weak, sliding into that precarious gray area where starvation and survival mingled. There was no room for emotion of any kind in the sticky black haze that filled her to the brim. Quinn continued her endless stare, unseeing, uncaring.

"You need to eat." Stating the obvious, Curtis shifted in well-polished loafers. Bending down, he unscrewed the cap with a crackling twist and set it back with care.

When Quinn only continued to look through him, the Beta expelled a harsh sigh and crouched.

"If you do not eat, I'll have to fetch him."

Was it a threat or a warning? Slow blinks had the man's agitated movements playing out like a jittering movie in her view.

"He's tying up your personal affairs now. He'll be irritated if he has to drop everything to come to you."

How long did it take to end a life? What about one as paltry as hers? An apartment, a job, and—*poof!* – she had never been. Marina was her only

living family that she knew of. There would be no argument from that quarter. There were no males to appease for his actions. Not that she thought Kahler would bend to even that social nicety. He had already paid the fines for taking an Omega in heat before acquiring her agreement. The sum for her life hadn't even amounted to her rent.

In the end, the monster would come for her no matter what. Did it matter when it happened?

Abandoning the tray, Curtis stood. Standing over her, the swift, small movements he made were an impression of annoyance. He sighed and left the room though he left the overhead light burning.

Seconds, years, entire eras passed before the door opened again. It was flung open hard enough to slam into the wall though even it did not dare to swing back into the Alpha's path as he stormed in. All rage and fury, his footsteps seemed to jar her where she lay upon the floor. The bared skin of her back prickled as if electricity was crackling through the air.

"Eat."

The command was like a slap to the face, her whole body jerking from the force. Her arm was out, hand smashing the sandwich into a sticky mess. Fingers clenched through bread and meat as it was brought to her lips. Saliva pooled thin and caustic in her mouth as she opened to take a bite. Stomach twisting, it was already rebelling at the thought of the food coming for it.

She was going to be sick.

The clumpy mass muffled the first choking gag as she continued to shove it at her face. Tears coursed down her cheeks. Throat tightening on a sob, she tried to swallow.

She had to do it. He'd ordered her to.

A bark of dismay came from the doorway as she retched onto the floor in a watery heave. Some small part of her was glad she'd somehow managed to miss the mattress itself. Quinn doubted she would find herself with clean bedding should she ruin it.

Still, the command remained, so she gagged and tried to stuff the remaining sandwich that clung to her fingers into her mouth.

"Enough," Kahler said on a growl, slapping the ruined thing from her hand.

Tucking her knees to her chest, Quinn turned her face into the bed and waited for the beating that was sure to come. As if it were her fault that he

had done this to her, made her his thing, so dependent upon him that her survival was in his hands.

The length of him was at her back so fast she couldn't figure out what it was at first. Heat engulfed her in a crushing embrace followed by the heaviness of his hand as it landed on her shin. Tucked close against him, Quinn felt the first meager flicker of sensation.

"I'll get something else, sir," Curtis muttered as he cleaned away her sick and snatched up the tray. He was gone, leaving her alone with the monster whose hand followed the curve of her leg down to her thigh.

"I thought you were just being difficult, that you were pouting," Kahler said, whisper quiet, against her shoulder as his hand moved to work over the knotted muscles of her lower back. "That seems not to be the case."

Each firm drag of skilled fingers left her a little more alive. Moved inch by inch back into awareness, into feeling, tears tumbled down her cheeks. Every moment he lavished her with his touch and attention, she hated him all the more for making her feel. She hated that it was him that made her thoughts tumble from the sludgy fog, flesh warming as she responded. All the hurts and betrayals welled, suffocating, burning her inside out. She was alone, she'd been betrayed, and a monster had made her his.

Deft and sure, he soothed away every sniffle and quiet sob.

Firm massage turned to seeking touches and almost gentle caresses. He explored her body, bringing it alive with every glancing blow of warmth and attention. Heart stumbling into a stuttering rhythm she didn't want, helpless to stop it, her blood ran molten. Tears had already begun to dry as he worked his way to her shoulders and played with the soft, fine hairs at her nape.

Quinn was sun warmed taffy by the time he rolled her to her back. Head lolling, a stupid half smile on still raw lips, she peered up at him with soft eyes. Drunk on the rich spice of him, she gave a broken hum. The shattered pieces of her soul knit together with his quiet sounds of pleasure as the thread. Bruised fingers reached up to trace along the contours of him, relearning his curves and angles. She didn't know why her hands were so red and raw, why her nails were so ragged, and couldn't concentrate on them long enough to care.

The male above her had her full attention.

Misty gray gaze inspected the man who had claimed her as his mate, taking in the heat of his dark green eyes like a flower in the sun. She

caressed the sharp angles of his cheeks and jaw, fingers testing the rasping stubble there. He wasn't pretty, but so exquisitely formed that even the bump on the bridge of his nose seemed only to add to the rugged beauty of him.

The hum shivered its way into a lilting purr as her gaze followed the path of her hands down to the broadness of a well-muscled chest. Exploring every hill and valley, she dared to reach up to taste silken skin. The heady musk of him coated her tongue, slipping down her throat like warm syrup to settle low in her belly.

Whining low in her throat, she reached out as he pulled away.

Kahler chuckled, the sound dark and sinuous as it writhed across heated flesh. Her hips twitched as it caressed her. Kneeling tall and proud above her, his hands made quick work of the belt. Dark trousers fell open to free the burgeoning length of his cock.

Her hands knocked away, the Alpha crawled up her body to sit heavy on her chest. Fingers gripped the tangled mess of curls, pulling her up to meet the gleaming crown caught within his fist. Pale eyes rounded as she was forced to stretch her mouth wide. The first taste of him melted across her tongue as he fed her his throbbing shaft. She began to suck.

The sounds of his pleasure were a symphony to her senses as she swallowed the salty taste of him. Heat slipped down her throat, coating the rawness in stinging bliss. It soothed the angry turmoil, her stomach hungry for much more than just a small sip of the decadent fluid that slid over her tongue with his slow thrusts.

Dark green gaze fixed upon her, eyes wide in what could have been wonder on anyone else's face, the Alpha slipped his heavy shaft deeper. Lips stretched taut, jaw aching, Quinn hummed around him. Soon there was no space for her tongue to lick over heated, silken flesh. Still she tried to take that much more of him, pliant in his grip despite the discomfort. He pressed deeper still, nudging at the back of her throat. A gurgling cough signaled her limits. Lips curling to show the edge of his teeth, he shuffled forward.

One arm bracing against the floor, he pushed Quinn flat, easing further into her mouth. Ignoring her stifled sounds, he pushed inexorably forward until tears slipped free from the corners of her eyes and pale cheeks grew flush.

“Swallow around me, sweetness,” Kahler whispered on a purr, relentless in his desire to see his cock hilted between her lips. Soothing fingers trilled over the column of her throat. “Do it. Do it for me.”

Muscles worked around his thickness. Quinn coughed, gagged, and then swallowed hard.

The Alpha’s groan was incredible. It ratcheted down her spine, pulling it taut until she arched up into the glorious sound. Her pussy was wet and aching, clenching over air as her throat worked to take all that the Alpha gave to her.

Rhythm slow and steady at first, he plunged in and out of the wet heat of her mouth. Loud and long, he praised her as she took it all.

Hands clutching at him, glassy eyes struggled to keep the male’s face in view through the watery haze. Slick flowed from between her legs as she clenched her thighs together, seeking any kind of friction she could get.

Within minutes the bulge of his knot bumped against her lips, squashing them against her teeth until traces of pink tinged the spit slicked length of him. She didn’t care. All she felt was the way he twitched and pulsed against her tongue, the taste of him growing heady and thick. The edge of her teeth scraping across sensitive flesh only spurred him on.

“You going to be a good girl and swallow all this Alpha cream,” Kahler asked, words rasping into a growl. His hips jerked, lines of strain appearing on his face as he pulled her hand up to grip the growing swell at the base of his cock.

He needed no verbal reply. Her hands, looking so small and delicate against him, clenched around the knot, holding tight as she twisted her grip to simulate the feel of an Omega.

Jerking back from the tight ring of her throat, the Alpha roared as the first thick jet of come flooded her mouth. Swallowing fast, she still choked and coughed, milky fluid trickling from the corners of her lips as he continued to release in hard, body shuddering spasms.

Quinn snarled when he pulled away, his shaft jumping as it continued to pump hot, pearlescent fluid across her chest.

The world spun. Breath leaving her in a wet huff as she landed on her stomach, hands scrabbled over the mattress for leverage before he covered her back. Knuckles grazed her inner thigh. Thick and wet, he seated against her entrance. Abrupt, delicious in the burning stretch, he was inside of her.

He thundered above her. Rolling hips had the knot straining against too tight flesh as he pumped his throbbing length into her. Losing whatever thin thread of sanity she had managed to hold on to, Quinn keened as she arched and presented to the agonizing thickness.

Drunk on the taste and feel of him, the deep resonance of his primal yell sent dilated eyes rolling up in bliss. Shunting into her, the knot stretched tender flesh before she opened to him. Already on the razor edge, her pussy pulsed around his still spurting cock.

Callused and rough, his fingers clawed at her hip. The first coarse swipe against her clit undid her.

There were no moans or trills. Only shrill cries that elongated into a breathy scream poured from between swollen, red lips. Violent pleasure snapped through her body, whip lashing over abused synapses as she shuddered and jerked through the devastating climax.

She gripped his knot and ushered it deep, pussy twisting around the throbbing girth. Dark stars sparked across her dazed vision, the edges brimming with blackness as the Alpha ground against her upturned ass.

Darkness came for her as she gave one final cry, the Alpha's breath hot across her shoulder as he bit down hard on the still healing wound of his claim.

Quinn came aware in increments. The low rumbling at her back resonated through her, shivering through her bones to trip her heart into a stumbling patter that made her recoil in disgust. His voice did things to her nothing should be able to do. Wanting to scream and rail at him, to spew violent profanities in his beautiful face, she melted under his hand as it pulled her back.

She cursed the Gods as she felt her abused cunt pulse around him. The tight ball of his knot was lodged in her, holding in every last trace of his come that hadn't spilled down her throat or coated her body. It couldn't have been that long since she'd passed out.

Blinking her eyes open, she cleared the gummy feel of old tears from her lashes and looked around. Curtis stood within arm's reach, looking uncomfortable.

Cheeks growing hot, mortification soured the sweet warmth that had kept her soft and pliant. Pain seeped in to replace it, bitter and icy cold. A myriad of aches made themselves known, not the least of which was

centered between her thighs. Too aware of the male behind her, she flinched away from Kahler with a hiss that hurt almost as much as everything else.

“Good, you’re awake.”

Her jerky movements earned her a sharp slap low in the cradle of her hips, his broad palm jerking her back into place. Lips at her ear, he rumbled a low warning in his chest when she fought for even a breath of space.

“Are you hungry now, little bird,” Kahler asked as his lips grazed over the fresh ruin of her shoulder. The hand over her stomach pressed harder, his knot rocking against that spot that made her body sing. Her pussy clenched, nipples drawing tight for the entire world to see how the fucker affected her.

Refusing to acknowledge the reaction of her traitorous body, Quinn jostled her shoulder to move the male away. The tray was there, just out of reach. If she could just get the male off of her...

“I asked you a question.” He caught her hair, fingers tight against her scalp as he jerked her head back until the line of her throat was exposed and vulnerable.

Jaw clenched, lips pursed, she glared. Of course she was hungry, and he damn well knew it.

“Not hungry for food? I can feed you something else I know you enjoy.”

“Fine, yes, I’m hungry,” Quinn said, hissing through a strained breath. Fingers curled over the edge of the mattress so she wouldn’t claw his eyes out. “I want food. Just get the fuck off of me.”

“I’m tending my Omega.” Tilting her head further back until she had to fight for every thin breath, cold green eyes bore into smoky gray.

“I want *nothing* from you.”

“You’ll relish the attention I give you. You’ll be grateful for the care you were so desperate for.”

Demanding what he had no right to, she sneered. Quinn couldn’t stand it. She couldn’t bear the feel of him inside of her, still tight with the promise of pleasure a simple twitch away. The way his presence, so close, made her want to purr and hum. Tightening her grip on the mattress, she pulled, lurching away.

Searing violet pain throbbed against the back of her eyes, exploded through her as she managed scant inches from him. Still hard and thick, the knot tethered her to him. Delicate skin began to tear, insides wrenched into

agonizing disorder. Arms shaking, weak as water, she collapsed back onto the bed.

Panting, sweat covered her in a clammy film. Kahler's snarled words were lost in the crushing darkness of his rage. Half aware of rushing feet, the slam of the door seemed to come from a long way off. She would have screamed if she'd had the breath to when he rolled, covering her with his bulk, shoving his cock home.

"You'll take what I give you." The words were a promise delivered on a harsh, rattling call. His hand was already shoving under her hip, nails scoring flesh as he sought out her clit. Like a flower opening to the sun, the delicate nub was swelling and pushing free of its hood, pulsing with her erratic heartbeat.

Head whipping in denial against the mattress, Quinn shrieked and bucked, fighting to ignore the brutal pleasure that zapped up her spine.

There wasn't even a hope of a chance. Rumbling against her back, he pushed the dark resonance into her body until Quinn's struggles diverged. Arching her hips up into his, a jumbled mass of sounds that tread a fine line between pleas and fury tumbled from her lips.

"That's it, sweetness," he said through the aggressive growl. His weight pushed her flat, stilling her writhing to erratic twitches. Grinding his hips against her ass, his arm looped tight around her shoulders, pressing against her throat to stifle her breath. "You take everything I give you."

The last strands of coherent thought disintegrated under his determined violation, spider silk in the morning sun as skilled hands played her body like an instrument. Again and again, he brought her to the brink, refusing to allow her to tip over the edge into oblivion. Not until the knot abated enough for him to fuck her.

Knowing she was moaning, that her loud wanton cries were praising the Alpha and his mastery of her, Quinn still couldn't stop the sounds she made. The pleading whines for him to take what was his, to give her what she wanted, what her body *needed*.

When the knot came again, forcing her body to stretch and rearrange to accommodate him, she screamed and sobbed. There were tears, but she couldn't say if they were relief or desperation.

He only allowed her to drift for a short while before he began his game again.

Another blanket had been brought for her when Kahler left. While it smelled of him, it also bore the unmistakable fragrance of her slick. Quinn had tried to distract herself from the increasing need to nest on the narrow mattress covered in far fresher scents by speculating on that. Huddled in the corner as far away from the stomach churning miasma as she could get, gray eyes fixed on the floor to avoid seeing it all together.

Fingering the velvety nap, she tried to call up some memory of the throw. There was nothing clear. The dusty blue color and velvety softness of it was neither familiar nor unfamiliar. It was impossible to dismiss the fact that, with the prominent musk and sweetness, it had been preserved from any laundering.

He had saved it from her previous nest. To what end?

Realizing she was already crawling across the floor towards the bed, Quinn snarled and threw herself back into the corner. Knocking her head against the wall, the disorienting shiver that rippled across her vision was all too brief. The dull throb in the base of her skull only made her want to go to what would offer serenity and comfort all the more.

There wasn't even the twisting hunger to concentrate on anymore. Kahler had fed her from his fingers, little bites of succulent meat and crispy vegetables slipped between slack lips as he purred and encouraged her to eat. When she grew too lucid, he had swiped the thick mess from between her legs, coating lips and tongue with the taste of them both. Every bite had been like manna from the heavens.

Whatever his ploy, he'd seen that she'd fed until she was full. Not until she whined and tried to snuggle in his arms had he stopped. It wasn't long after that he'd quit her.

Raw and swollen, her pussy ached with the remembered feel of him pulling free. Still hard, the full swell of his knot still thick and pulsing, he'd made a show of brushing at the stains covering his pants before pulling them on. As if even that paltry claim disgusted him. He'd grumbled something about laundry to Curtis as one left and the other entered. The blanket had been dropped without ceremony by the mattress, tray retrieved. She'd been left alone once again.

Tears welled, wavering before spilling over her lashes. There was no one to see how low she'd fallen, how miserable she was. Omegas had no rights, no claims, nothing. It didn't matter that she needed to feel... well, anything. She didn't have to be strong just now.

Quinn didn't correct her path when she found herself nearing the mattress once more. Instead she dragged the blanket to the sad mess with her. Hands shaking as she struggled to shift the few items into something that broke her heart more than it soothed, she cried ugly tears and didn't care who heard her.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 8

There was some game going on, and Quinn was certain she didn't know what it was. She was just as sure she was losing.

The passing of time was measured by how many trays Curtis brought, but there were instances where it felt he came much too soon and others where he took ages to reappear. It might have been a month, but it could have been more or less.

At least she didn't have to have the awkward and horrifying conversation regarding basic needs with Curtis more than once. An unnoticed pocket door led into a bathroom adjacent to her small room. It also had no windows, or anything else of real use. It did, however, contain plenty of mint toothpaste. Quinn would have gone without if she hadn't had to scrub the taste of the Alpha from her mouth so often.

More blankets had been brought over the past however long. Some were fresh and new, others tainted by her long ago heat. At first, she justified it by telling herself it was cold, and that was why she arranged each new item into her first sad creation. She was, after all, denied any clothing. By the fourth duvet, she refused to take anything else. Huddling in her corner on the bare floor after destroying her construct, she tried to stay awake until exhaustion could pull her under right where she sat. It never worked. No matter how much she didn't want to, she always found herself snuggled deep into a fresh nest when she woke.

Kahler always came to her in the room, visits sporadic. Just as Curtis and his trays appeared to be on some timetable she couldn't quite grasp, she only knew that she could count on Kahler appearing when she grew edgy and agitated. She didn't know what he wanted or expected of her. There was never any conversation. He'd mount her, sometimes until she was hoarse and limp. Others only until she cried out his name and the knot released him. He never remained in the room longer than he had to.

There was no rhyme or reason to any of it.

There was also nothing to do.

Never having been so quiet and still, she felt stagnant. The hours stretched for eternity, broken only by the brief appearances of Curtis and lost all together when Kahler came. There was no job to rush to, no rent to scrape for, not even a single battered paperback to entertain her.

Solitude was one thing, but this forced isolation was breaking her down, too.

Curled up on the mattress, she stared at the ceiling. There wasn't a single crack in the plaster. She'd checked multiple times. In fact, she had inspected every inch of the room. A single shallow dip in the floorboards in the corner was the only imperfection. Maybe that was why she called it hers.

Wrapped up in a sheet that held Kahler's scent the strongest, Quinn bolted upright as the door came open. The disappointment that racked her when she saw it was Curtis had her stomach doing uneasy somersaults.

Uncertainty soon replaced it, clogging her throat with panic. There was no tray in his hands.

"You're to come with me." Almost curt despite this sudden change, he stepped further into the room to reveal a length of slinky black fabric draped over his arm. He held out the thing, waving it at her with a hard jerk of his arm when Quinn hesitated.

Trepidation crawled down her back with scratching pincers as she pulled the material to her lap. It was a dress, sort of. Thin and slinky, it whispered over her skin with a hushed sigh as it settled around her. With an impatient flick of Curtis' fingers directing her, Quinn stood in an awkward scramble to let the short gown skim over her hips to tickle her thighs. She clutched the sheet in her hand though she let it fall away from her body.

Looking down at herself, the dress was little better than lingerie. A slip of silken fabric that clung to every curve, the swell of her breasts defined. Her lips thinned when a shiver drew her nipples taut, poking at the soft material. Just... great.

"Leave that," Curtis said with a hard snap of his fingers at the sheet she still held tightly to her chest.

"What's going on," Quinn asked, nose scrunching at the gravelly texture of her words. Had she spoken more than what Kahler forced out of her mouth in the form of moans and screams?

Curtis' features fell into a bland mask, one she had begun to recognize. It was the face he donned when he didn't want to let on how he was feeling about what was going on around him, she supposed. It seemed to serve him well, but she had been downright docile for far too long. If this was going to be her life, then so be it, but she was tired of being nothing but the master's fuck toy to the single person who interacted with her.

He'd spoken to her before, treated her like an actual person. Not realizing how much it mattered that he do so again, her anxiety scented the air in a bitter wash as the silence stretched.

"You are to come downstairs at once."

She waited a beat, but he didn't explain any further. They stared at each other for another handful of seconds before Quinn tried to prompt him for more. "And...?"

"There are things for you, and you will eat."

It was like pulling fucking teeth. Rolling her eyes, Quinn expelled a hard sigh that puffed her cheeks. Fidgeting, trying not to notice just how full and round those cheeks were now, Quinn directed her attention to the issue at hand. The click of her tongue seemed loud as she faced Curtis again, struggling for a serenity she didn't feel. She didn't think she'd ever feel it again. "What things?"

Looking pained for the briefest moment, Curtis seemed to come to some decision. His shoulders squared, his imposing form taking up too much space in her small room. That nervous itch to have whatever semblance of a friend she could transmuted into something much different.

There was a large male—threatening and growing angry—in her space. And he was far too close to her nest.

In normal circumstances, Quinn was downright lax in her need to have space and how protective she was of it. Whether it was a product of nature or nurture was anyone's guess. In this small room, forever invaded by the Beta and Alpha whenever they pleased, she had cultivated that aggressive need to defend what she perceived as hers.

Invisible lines had been drawn, the few things she could control held close in the midst of all the uncertainty. She could not stop Kahler from violating her nest and her body, but Curtis never came too close to either.

He gave no warning before stepping forward, his hand out to grab at her arm. If he had done almost anything else, perhaps even asked once more in his stiff, polite manner, things would have been different. As it was, Quinn reacted in what could only be determined as badly.

Small and light, she wasn't quite half the size of Curtis, but it was obvious that she would never beat him in a fair fight. It was a good thing that she didn't fight fair.

Springing forward, she launched herself at him with fingers hooked into claws. The nubs of her nails that had only just started growing back raked

down his high forehead, scraping over one eye.

Vivid and wet, blood welled in the deep scratches. The sound he made was one more of surprise than pain as she fell back.

That did not suit Quinn at all.

Her knee shot up into the Beta's groin. The high-pitched groan punched from his lips was a savage song that called to her. Bent double around the pain in his balls, he was the perfect height. A quick step forward brought her within striking distance, arm whipping through the air to slash at his face once more.

Curtis stumbled back. Hand held to his cheek where it dripped a fresh wash of bright crimson, he gaped at the snarling Omega, the wall holding him up.

Her false charge pushed him closer to the door. Crouching low over her nest, she bared her teeth and stared back in challenge.

Neither heard the stomping feet, but Curtis bore the brunt of the door's weight as it was flung open.

"What the..." Kahler's anger died as he came to a jerky halt just inside the room. He stood still and quiet, eyes scanning over her as if searching for something. Quinn growled—far more aggressive and large than seemed possible—rolling her weight on the balls of her feet in readiness. Cautious dark green gaze sliding over to Curtis, he took in the myriad of flesh wounds and the rumpled state of the other man.

"Sir, I don't—"

The sound Quinn made was sheer rage. With contracted pupils seeing nothing, far too much white showing around smoky gray, she lunged at the source of the rumbling bass.

Vision now full of the large Alpha, Quinn came up short of touching him. The Alpha would not be caught out as the Beta had been. Her way blocked, her feet found a careful path back several paces until the softness of a sheet slipped across her ankle.

She seethed, watching the two males. Vibrating with tension, blood humming with the need to wreak violence, she waited for the smallest misstep.

Kahler angled his chin towards the door, his eyes never quite leaving Quinn. Growl rattling in her chest, she focused the full breadth of her fury on Curtis as he slid along the wall towards the opening. Head cocked, she

moved only enough to keep both men in view until Curtis managed to slip around the corner, hiding his bulky body behind the jamb.

The open door antagonized her as much as the Alpha who had yet to tuck tail and run as the Beta had. These four walls were hers. What was beyond was strange, foreign... dangerous.

She was losing her grip on the frayed thread of logical thought. Lungs working like bellows, she sucked in too thick air that refused to sate her need for oxygen. Her skin crawled, every hair standing on end in warning.

She felt under attack from all sides.

The faintest creak of a floorboard beyond the portal and Quinn screamed. It was a desolate noise, the sound of a broken soul slipping through the cracks. Wrenching at her hair, she fell into a crouch over her nest.

She didn't even notice the tears that flooded her eyes and washed down ashen cheeks.

Movement from where Kahler stood had her hissing, trembling body tucked tight to bent legs. Hunched over her last bastion, she warned him off.

The too large male eased down to one knee and then the other, every action controlled. He never took his eyes off of her.

There was no compelling purr offered as Kahler sat back on his heels with his hands palms up on his thighs. Shoulders loose and not a hint of discontent on his angled features, he almost seemed smaller though he was as straight and tall as ever. They watched each other, deep evergreen as calm as any twilight forest as he waited.

It was a long time before Quinn unlocked from her defensive posture, one foot sliding back until she balanced on her knee. She wasn't anywhere near calm, but she no longer held herself ready to attack at the slightest provocation.

Ages passed before Quinn stopped staring the male down, quitting her silent challenge. Still watching him from the corner of her eye, she lowered her other leg until she mimicked his stance.

Still, Kahler waited and whatever he might be feeling, it wasn't broadcasted in his scent. The scalding burn of his anger she had become so accustomed to shading his particular fragrance wasn't even hinted at. Only his spicy musk drifted to her on the faint currents of air. An experimental sniff, a deep inhale, brought the confused jumble of a household she didn't know from beyond the still open door.

The Alpha didn't even blink when Quinn pushed back up to her knees, the edge of her teeth showing in a silent snarl.

She managed to once more unfold to sit cross legged amidst the soft terrain of sheets and blankets, legs prickling from the first hints of numbness. Only then did he dare to move.

It was slow, methodical, the way he shuffled forward. Just a few inches, his gaze cataloging every twitch and flinch, the way the thin flesh around her eyes tightened into a not-quite scowl. He stopped as soon as her hands clenched into fists.

The scene continued to play out. Kahler creeping forward, ever gauging her reactions, until his heat and scent were all that Quinn could breathe in. Making no move to touch her or to further invade, Kahler sat back with his hands on his thighs. Even with the height the mattress afforded her, he loomed.

Growing nervous at the disadvantage, she shot up to her feet. As if she was an equal to his strength, she stepped close. Leaning further into the male's space, eyes narrowed, she challenged him with a defiant growl.

Kahler didn't rise to the bait. Remaining stoic in the face of the aggressive Omega, he only tipped his chin up to keep her in sight. There was no ground given. Even sitting flat on his ass, nose level with her chest, he was impassive and steady as a rock.

Things began to filter in through the blind rage of her defenses. Slow at first, actions sifting through the dampening blaze, she realized she'd just challenged a man several times her size... and that was after she'd attacked his Beta underling. Not just an Alpha, no. She had thought to attack the male who had claimed her.

Whatever showed on her face, perhaps the fear that welled in her eyes, pushed Kahler into motion. Actions swift and decisive, the mattress met Quinn's back before she could sputter out the watery apology sitting on her tongue.

Hands pinned above her head in one great paw, Quinn sucked her lips in and waited for the response he had held back. It would hurt, but maybe he wouldn't damage her. Thus far, he'd done no lasting damage when he'd punished her. She hadn't gone after him after all. Curtis couldn't be that bad off if he'd walked upright and steady from the room.

Kahler shushed her, privy to some sign of Quinn's thoughts she wasn't aware of revealing. His nose met the soft skin under her ear, his breaths

long and slow as he took in her scent. Nuzzling her neck, his lips grazed the sensitive patch of skin over and over. As if he wanted nothing more than to breathe her in.

At the first sign of the tension leaving her shoulders, his soft mouth drifted down the column of her throat. Gentle kisses trailed across her collar bone, his nose nudging the thin strap of the shift aside to bare all of her shoulder to his questing lips.

It was the sweetest of assaults. Everything was quiet and soft though he kept her hands pinned above her head. Even that was little more than a careful pressure. There was no urgency to his other hand as it stripped the slinky fabric from her body. He didn't rush as he caressed the curve of her hip.

By the time he nudged her thighs apart, Quinn was a wet mess of breathy moans and shivering gasps. She spread, eager and wanton. The aggressive call he used was unnecessary. Her legs were already hooking around him, angling her hips to take him deep. Pale lashes spread wide when he slid down her body. That delicious, evil mouth peppered heated flesh with kisses and the flick of a hot tongue.

Holding her hands to her thighs, Kahler held her still as his head dipped lower. The scrape of his teeth low across the cradle of her hips had a confused squeal slipping past her lips. A man between her legs like this was not unknown, but not outside of estrous. Every male wanted to taste an Omega in heat, but that was all it was, a taste. Brows scrunching towards the middle of her face, she strained up to look down the line of her body.

Green eyes glittered with his amusement as they moved to meet her gaze. Top lip just visible above the swell of her mound, Quinn sucked in a surprised breath when his mouth opened. Slow and treacherous, his unseen tongue laved through slick folds.

Falling back into the mattress, Quinn's mouth fell open around a shuddering groan. As skilled as his fingers had ever been on her body, his mouth was unlike anything she had ever known. He moved as if he would consume her. Like a man half starved, he devoured, sucking at her lips and lapping at her folds. Collecting the copious slick, he raised his head enough for her to see the clear fluid shimmering against his pink tongue before he closed his lips. Savoring it, his groan was salacious and loud before he swallowed and settled back to continue his determined invasion.

Threads of pleasure worked down her legs, drawing the muscles of her thighs taut until they trembled. Unable to grip anything else, she clung to her legs until she was opening them wider, holding herself open to the Alpha.

The addition of a finger undid her. Squeezing around him, she whined at the sensation of being filled as he worked it in until the backs of his fingers pushed hard against her ass. Rough and callused, his fingertip slid around slick walls, probing, searching. Lips wrapped around her clit, tongue flicking over the pert nub as he sucked at the swollen flesh. When his finger found what it sought, Quinn's breathy cry stuttered in her throat.

Heat suffused her, crackling across her synapses with the roar of wildfire as he stroked that spot. His mouth tensed, sucking hard as his tongue began a frantic rhythm set to the beat of her heart.

Breaths shuddered into her lungs, body trembling as every muscle drew tight. Molten bliss pooled in her belly. The overwhelming sensation lifted her higher and higher, carrying her to a floating precipice.

It began as a warm rush of pleasure, a ripple of heat up her spine that gained force until she bowed under the strain. Violent pleasure crashed into her, a riptide of sensation that wrenched her moans into ragged cries.

With the first sucking contraction of her orgasm, he pushed three fingers deep, stretching her open. Forcing her pussy wide, pulsing around the thickness that was perfect and wrong all at the same time. Bucking and writhing under the whiplash of his tongue, she cried out for him to give her what she needed.

Gripping her hips, he held her to his mouth. There was no escaping the press of his lips, the forceful suction that had her cries growing ever shriller. He forced her higher, pushing her up the steep hill to another release that bathed his mouth and chin with a fresh wave of her pleasure.

He rode her pussy until Quinn collapsed to the mattress, shivering with the aftershocks. Licking over the swell of her, sucking the heady fluid from her thighs, he made soft sounds of satisfaction. He acted as if he had been the one under her hands and mouth, not the other way around.

Quinn could only twitch and groan when his tongue dipped lower, a confused jumble of sensations rioting through her as he lapped at the tight ring of her ass where her juice had collected.

He gave her peace, rising to his knees tall and proud above her. Dreamy, Quinn thought of the males of old, the kind from the picture books her

grandmother had given her as a child. Kahler was no knight, she knew that, but as he almost crawled up her body, it was difficult to think of him as evil.

The hated thing in her chest twisted deeper, sticky tendrils unfurling to wrap her heart in a dangerous embrace. An embrace she mimicked, her hands sliding around the male's neck to pull him to her. She shivered at the first taste of herself on his tongue, moaning as he invaded her mouth as he had her body.

The smooth wool of coat and trousers chafed skin that wanted to feel him. Cautious at first, uncertainty darkening her gaze, she moved her hands to the shiny buttons of his shirt.

Pushing up to his elbows to give her space, Kahler smiled. It was full of warm approval, the skin around his eyes crinkling as it broadened when she grew bolder.

Aided by the male, she shuffled his loosened pants down to his feet until he kicked them away. When he pressed her into the mattress, the full length of him bare against her, Quinn hummed.

It was her hand that slipped between them, stroking his hard cock, smearing the thin fluid collecting at the crown down along his length. She was the one who angled him towards her pussy, still wet and tight, eager for the promise that already thickened the base of his cock.

Kahler refused to be rushed. He slid into her by the agonizing inch, stretching her around him. Entering her like an untried virgin, he paused often to kiss and fondle, waiting until she moaned and begged for more. And oh, how she begged.

He took her with slow determination, rebuilding the fire simmering under her skin into a steady blaze. Even when she clawed at his back and hips, Kahler only joined their hands. Fingers linked, he pressed them to the mattress beside her head and kept to his torturous pace.

Mouths held close, they breathed each other in. Blissed out gray and steady green met and held from only inches away. Imagining she saw something other than base need, that he wanted *her*, Quinn clenched around him. Control slipping, he ground into her with every forceful thrust. The deep ache was incredible.

"Please," Quinn whimpered against his lips, trying in vain to entice the male to take her as rough as the dark light in his eyes promised. The time for gentleness was gone. Her body ached from his tender touch, wanting so much more.

“Tell me what you want.” His voice was a rough growl, giving lie to the smooth roll of his hips.

Frustration mounting, her head pushed back into the softness of the nest. The vulnerable line of her throat was attacked, the tip of his tongue tracing the fluttering pulse at her jaw. Her fingers raked through his hair, clenching the dark strands to pull his gaze to hers. She showed the edge of her teeth.

“Fuck me. Knot me.” Said on a whining hiss as he pushed in deep, she tipped her hips up to the sullen pain. Accepting, wanting—needing.

“More.”

Giving voice to her annoyance with a ragged shriek, Quinn writhed. Held back from the blissful plunge into the delirium she craved, she began to struggle. If he wouldn’t give it to her, she would take it.

“Ah, ah, little bird. You take what I give you.” The smile was in his voice, the resonating timbre of it an almost call that shivered up her spine and drew her shoulders taut.

“Fuck me! Fucking take what’s yours, you bastard,” Quinn said in an almost scream as he snapped his hips.

“Tsk, tsk, show some respect for your Alpha,” Kahler murmured against her lips before devastating her with another kiss. Laughter shimmered in the deep green depths of his eyes as he left her breathless and wanting.

Irritated beyond all measure, she still had to purse her lips against an answering smile. Clenching her pussy around his driving flesh, she showed all her teeth in a vicious smile when he groaned.

“Fuck me,” she whispered, sifting her fingers through his hair, nails caressing his nape. “Knot me. Make me fucking sing for you.”

Head hanging, Kahler muttered a curse under his breath. Knees pushing her wider, he thrust into her faster, harder, but only a taste of what she wanted.

“Please... more please,” Quinn whined. Tension stacked up inside her, a teetering structure that promised utter rapture if she could get just... a little... more.

Growling and grunting above her, his sounds excited her to greater heights. In a concerted movement that had her crying out at the sudden change, he hefted her leg over his arm, hiking her ankle up to his shoulder. Spread wide and open to him, the angle was so very different. Everything was tighter, the head of his cock nudging against the end of her with every deep stroke.

"Oh, fuck! Please, knot me good. Make me feel it for days," Quinn babbled around raspy moans. The buildup was too much, the promise too great. The twisting clench of muscles was bordering on painful as she jolted and writhed under his onslaught. On an uneven cry, she pleaded, "Give me your knot and fill me up. Please, Tobias, I need you!"

The reaction was immediate. Roaring like a man possessed, his hips moved into a brutal pace that jostled her across the bed. Hands that had been gentle became delightful and rough, gripping her shoulders to pull her into every thrust.

Driving as deep as her body would let him, grinding in to force her to take even more, the knot swelled. Unbelievable pressure, perfect and agonizing, had her moaning and thrashing under him.

Waiting breathless and tense on the edge, the promised fall refused to come.

"You come for me now, sweetness." The snarled command was joined by a sharp slap over the spread lips of her pussy. Clit on fire, the agony pulsed once, twice.

Quinn screamed.

Every nerve ending shattered at once, a rapid fire explosion that obliterated her senses. Her pussy clamped down on Alpha cock, wringing the throbbing knot with a twisting flutter of muscles. The first forceful jet of his release bathed her insides, setting off shock waves of perfect bliss. Jerking with every breath sucking contraction, her vision sheeted to white.

The last thing she saw was Kahler's deep green eyes.

Drifting for a span of time she couldn't measure, Quinn tried to rouse herself when Kahler shifted above her. She didn't understand what had happened, why everything had played out as it had, but she knew he always left as soon as he was done with her.

He had to be finished after all of that.

Surprise jarred her further into coherent thought when he arranged his body alongside hers. Enough time had passed for the knot to abate, letting him free of her body. The muffled swish of fabric was followed by the weight of a blanket drawn up to her shoulders.

Forcing heavy lids to remain open, her brows crept closer together as she peeked up at the male through a fall of fuzzy curls. Uncertainty invaded when he only smiled down at her, smoothing her hair from her face.

All of it was lost under one of his kisses.

By the time he was finished, Quinn was languid once more. She was delirious when he extracted her arm from under the blanket. Tucking the fabric to her chest, he tried to keep her focused on him.

If Curtis hadn't shuffled back, if Kahler had not tensed, she wouldn't have even realized he was there. As it was, her cheeks flamed an unattractive shade of beet. Resentment settled in her belly, creating a toxic mix with the last vestiges of her contentment.

"Shh, no," Kahler whispered. Curtis' receding footsteps sounded loud but were soon lost under the power of Kahler's presence. Lips and tongue sought to bring back that serenity, succeeding where his quiet admonishments for her to be calm failed.

His hand between her thighs made her forget everything. Worked to a swift and intense climax as he played her body, she was little more than a puddle of blissed out languor when he finished with her.

Head lolling to the side, she watched the needle drive deep into the prominent vein on the inside of her elbow. One brow quirked, wondering that she didn't even feel the pinch. The plunger depressed, startling white fluid pushed into her bloodstream. Tingling and warm, she could swear she felt the minute particles building speed as they floated along with tumbling blood cells. It wouldn't be long before the hormones stripped her down to a primal core, peeling away logical thought as it forced her into another heat. She should have expected it, but her breath still hitched as the liquid fire coiled around her spine.

"Come here, sweetness. I want to hear my name again." Another smile given, another kiss pressed against her lips. Quinn was helpless to resist.

"I want to be on top."

"Only if you promise not to be a greedy girl."

"You like it when I'm greedy."

Kahler laughed. It was a sound she wasn't sure she had ever heard before when it wasn't colored with casual cruelty. Rolling to his back, taking her along for the ride, he settled her right where they both wanted her to be.

Chapter 9

The nest was warm and quiet as was its single occupant. Quinn was only half awake, floating somewhere just under cognizance. She knew she was alone in the bed. She also knew he wasn't that far away.

Large and twisted, the alien presence lodged in her chest could not be ignored. Its creeping threads tangled through her soul, woven around her heart in impossible knots.

It was just as hopeless to ignore the warm flutter that was wedged under it.

“I know you’re awake.”

“I am not.”

He wanted her to eat. He’d said it had been eight days this time. The catalyst he had injected her with had been far superior to anything she had ever laid eyes on, the perfect poison. The induced heat had been extreme, an intensity that had left them both bruised and bloody, and well sated in the end.

Now she was pregnant. The knowledge had come even before lucidity had returned. She wanted to hate it, to hate him, wanted to think all manner of evils that could be done. Even contemplating thinking about such things had her hand darting to her belly, splayed fingers protecting that delicate flutter from her internal diatribe.

The smell of sausage and biscuits won out against the multitude of emotions that tripped over one another. She didn’t want to try examining any of it. It might have been cowardice, but she wasn’t certain her sanity could hold up under too much scrutiny just then.

Pushing back the heavy comforter that shrouded her, Quinn sat up and squinted at the sudden glare. Going back to sleep sounded like a better idea by the second as she looked around. The little room with all its games and hurts was gone. It lurked down the hall she almost remembered, hidden behind a cheery door. At least, for the moment it was gone. He hadn’t mentioned that part yet. For now, she was in his room, surrounded by expensive tastes and lavish expense that annoyed.

“Come sit.”

He didn’t even look up from the table where papers and a tablet were spread out for his perusal. She was expected to obey. Given how she had

crumbled, how soon she had fallen into his arms as his game unfolded, Quinn couldn't blame him.

A nasty comment about clothing lingered on her tongue, sour and vile, but she didn't give it voice. Instead she tugged a sheet free of her construct, muttering and snarling as she righted the blanket that tumbled over when she rose from the bed.

Distrustful and uneasy, she wondered if she should even bother fixing the nest as every instinct screamed at her to do. He'd exile her again, his needs met. Some Omegas were perfectly capable of carrying without the attention of their Alpha. Maybe she was one of them.

Maybe he had evil thoughts of his own.

Wary, Quinn shuffled around the small table after tucking the sheet around her body. Trying to keep out of arm's reach was difficult, but she thought she had managed well enough once she took the chair opposite.

"What exactly do you think you are doing?"

Looking up from where she held the carafe hovering over a china cup, Quinn narrowed her eyes and looked at the dark coffee that swept around the glass container in gentle waves. When Kahler only continued to stare holes into her, she rolled her eyes and offered up the best sarcasm she could dish out before caffeine. "I'm concocting an explosive to bust through the wall there. I saw it on a show once. He may or may not have had a battery and a bit of string though."

The male was not amused. The carafe and mug were taken away despite her protests and placed back on the tray.

"What the hell? You were finished with it. You can't tell me you're squeamish about someone drinking after you when you've had your mouth all over me." Scoffing, arms spread wide, she attempted to be magnanimous. "Fine, tell your Beta bitch to get another cup and I'll drink out of that."

"There is only one cup for a reason. You do not need to drink coffee."

"Like hell I don't!"

"You can drink water, tea on occasion."

"The fuck you say?"

"You will also watch your language. I'm growing tired of hearing it." Kahler stood, stacking his papers and straightening them with a hard snap against the table. "Now eat before it gets any colder."

“Screw you and fuck this,” Quinn snarled as she stood to face him. Chair toppling aside, she scrambled away when his hand rose towards her. “Take me back to my cell. I’m done with you.”

“Are you forgetting how pathetic you were when I first brought you back?” Sneering, all ugly contempt and cruel judgment, Kahler stalked towards her. “You wouldn’t last a day.”

“Yeah, well, maybe that’d be okay. At least then no one would have to see how fucked up this thing you put inside me would be.”

She regretted the words as soon as they fell from her lips. Her first impulse was to cradle her stomach, to murmur soothing words at the little bundle of cells that had no idea what was going on. That she didn’t mean it, that its father was an asshole that goaded her to those kinds of responses. Somehow, she managed not to give in, instead meeting Kahler’s cool stoicism head on.

“If you even think of hurting my child, I promise that you will regret it, Quinn.”

He was gone in a sudden rush, long before she thought to stumble through some response before it registered.

He’d used her name and a very large part of her never wanted to hear it from him again.

Knowing she’d made things more difficult with that first exchange didn’t help Quinn’s outlook on the situation. Kahler was right that she couldn’t make it long without his presence, a fact that was proven by the end of that first day.

When he had strolled into the room at nine o’clock, Quinn had been inconsolable. Curled up in the nest, she’d been crying into his pillow, hysterical. That had been after she’d slept most of the day away, an exhaustion that went to the marrow of her bones. These things were not explained in any real detail to her dynamic. In school, when she’d bothered to attend, they had given her the basic facts, but the bond was something too intimate, too taboo, to be addressed in the crumbling public school system. It was trusted that an Alpha would guide them through it all.

With only the horror stories whispered in dark corners to give her any guidance, she was terrified of the idea that she’d be like that the entire time.

She’d clung to him all night. If his grunts and hard exhales had been any indication, he hadn’t been at all happy with the arrangement.

The next day was only a little easier since he sat with her while she ate, waiting until she had stumbled back into the nest to sleep before he left. She'd fouled it up by taking it upon herself to amend their sleeping arrangement when she woke. Dragging every excess piece of bedding to the corner, she made a shamble of a nest in the hopes of not aggravating him further. He'd be close by and his scent was strong in everything she'd moved.

It should have worked.

Kahler had gone into a rage. He'd destroyed the new nest, flinging blankets and sheets back towards the bed. Then he'd dragged her kicking and screaming, bending her over the bed. After a violent fuck that had bruises marking her arms and thighs for days, he'd ordered her to fix it. Standing ominous and threatening, arms crossed, and legs splayed, he'd watched on as she set things to rights. As soon as the nest had been rebuilt, he'd taken her again. Slow and torturous, making sure she knew who owned her.

Well into the week and the routine was no easier. She found little comfort in the one thing that could give it to her. When Kahler wasn't there, and she managed to be awake, she was nervous, distraught. In his presence, she was anxious and jumpy, his every move sending her skittering away like a beaten dog. Even at night as he slept, she woke often to edge back to her side of the bed with cautious urgency, afraid he'd become angry that she'd plastered her body against his.

The only thing she seemed to be good at was fucking.

The stress was working against her in a multitude of ways. The ravenous appetite that she had started out with began to dwindle. Everything made her sick, but she shoveled it in under Kahler's watchful eyes. As soon as his presence faded from the room, Quinn would find herself on the cold tiles until sheer exhaustion closed her eyes. She'd never thought an en-suite bathroom could be a necessity.

All of this alongside the awkwardness of sharing space with a complete stranger.

It was untenable and Quinn was about to snap.

That was her only excuse for her actions when Kahler next returned. She'd been awake for hours, every faint noise jerking her from a thin sleep at some imagined threat. Having already been sick twice, and on an empty stomach, she was miserable.

When Kahler told her to get up to eat, Quinn shoved the blanket back and rolled to her stomach. Legs spread, presenting to the male, she pushed her face into the pillow.

“What are you doing? You’re somehow managing to lose weight, you need to eat.”

“Just get it over with so I can go back to sleep.” At least she hoped she could sleep. Maybe with him nearby, she could get some real rest.

“What’s wrong with you?” Quinn felt the smallest ease in the tension knotted through her back and shoulders as his voice came close.

“Nothing.” Everything.

“Come and eat.”

“I’ll just throw it up. So just... do it and let me sleep.”

“Why didn’t you tell me you were having morning sickness?” The bed dipped under his weight as he sat beside her. “I’ll call the doctor. If it’s frequent and bad enough, he might be able to prescribe you something.”

“It’s not morning sickness.” She wanted to press against his leg where it angled alongside her. Just wrap her body around him, breathe in the decadent chocolate and chilies spice of him until all the hurts faded away, and she found some peace.

“Are you sick?” Before Quinn could reply, he was rolling her over, smoothing back rumpled curls to press the back of his hand to her cheek and forehead as if checking for a fever. Scowl etching deep lines in his face when he found no hint of heat, he took Quinn’s chin and turned her face left and right.

“No, I’m not. Will you just fuck me already?”

Leaning back, Kahler seemed to look at her for once. He pushed her hair off her face again, the curls tumbling right back down across her eyes. She was in desperate need of a haircut, the short length she preferred having grown out into that annoying stage of unruliness.

“Have you missed me that much?”

Yes. Maybe. “No, I just want to sleep.”

The question had been loaded, a narrow path full of landmines waiting to blow up in her face. There would be no right answer.

Kahler hummed low as if her reply had been expected. Keeping her gaze anywhere but on him, she startled when his warm hand covered her stomach.

“You need to eat.”

Decision made no matter what she wanted, he pulled her up from the bed to the table. The sight of the steak made her stomach plummet. Thin saliva pooled in her mouth as he sat her down in her customary chair before taking his own.

“Please don’t make me.” Whisper quiet, the words were a shaky breath as she turned her head to look out of the large windows at the dark woods back lit by the burning red-golds and purples of sunset.

“Eat what you can,” Kahler said, already turning his attention back to the papers spread out before him. “I’ll call the doctor in the morning.”

Dismissed with the promise of a command hidden in his nonchalance, Quinn swallowed hard. Shifting in the chair, she picked up the fork and tried to stab a steamed carrot.

It only took a single hint of the coppery scent of blood wafting up from the plate to send her stomach into outright rebellion.

Scrambling up from the table, Quinn bolted for the bathroom. Knees crashing against cold tile, she bowed over the bowl of the toilet just in time. Stomach long since empty, she retched thin bile as twisting cramps took hold through her middle.

Knowing he was standing there, watching her humiliation, she began to cry between violent heaves. She had managed this far without letting him witness this particular misery and now she had failed even at that.

Apologies lost in a confused mash of abject sounds, she became more upset. It only made things worse. There was nothing left for her to throw up except her own organs, but she clung to the freezing porcelain instead of falling to the floor.

An inferno met her back, enfolding her quaking body in a heavy blanket of heat. One hand holding her steady at the hip, Kahler pulled her hair back as she hung over the toilet again. The rich resonance of his purr echoed through the bathroom, pummeling her from all sides with the comforting sound. Nausea abated, the tight clench of her stomach eased into a muttering grumble.

Humiliated, face burning, Quinn tried to make herself even smaller. Why couldn’t a giant hole open up under her when she needed it to?

Lifting her straight up from the cold tiles, Kahler carried her over to the vanity. Setting her up on the smooth stone, Quinn recoiled at the harsh reminder of how he had first begun her ruin. He shushed her, toothpaste and brush pulled from their spots.

"Please don't," Quinn mumbled with a groan, turning away to swallow hard. Saccharine sweet and awful, mint attacked her nose. "It's bad enough without that."

Irritation flared in evergreen irises before it was shut away. Kahler gave a grunt of assent, a cup filled with cool water pressed to her slack lips until she took a mouthful to rinse. Taking the glass, she made sure their fingers were in no danger of touching. He lingered over her well after she was satisfied that the acrid taste was gone from her tongue. The purr was quiet, distracted, but present as he watched her with an expression she couldn't even begin to name.

"I'm sorry. You don't have to... I'll go... I'll sleep." Stammering like an idiot, Quinn felt her cheeks grow even warmer. Her chest ached, and unsure of the reason, she tried to squirm free. She'd been desperate for his presence all day, and now she couldn't get far enough away from him. Caught with ease, he held her there so he could inspect the brilliant flush of her skin.

"You still need to eat."

Quinn gawked. Disbelief skittered across her tongue in a jumble of half formed syllables. It all turned tail and ran back down her throat, clogging it with miserable anxiety at his determined glare. Plucked from the counter as if she weighed nothing, he carried her back to the table.

Instead of dropping her into the chair as she'd expected, he put her on her feet. When she tried to sit, he nudged her hip out of his way and took the chair himself. Before she could comprehend this new lunacy, she was perched in his lap facing the table with his arm low across her hips holding her against him.

"What are you doing?" She hated the reedy quaver of her voice, despised how she proved herself as weak as he thought she was. Stiff in his embrace, she only moved to avoid touching him further when he leaned forward to slide her plate closer.

"Try to eat." It was a gentle command, couched in soothing tones, but an order, nonetheless.

Quinn whined as she watched her hand move unbidden, grasping the fork she'd abandoned. It wasn't right, the ability to control another person like this! The worming mass wedged in her chest pulsed, broadening like the first warming rays of the sun. Sending out trickles of heat, pretty poison, that burned like acid as it slipped through her veins.

As she cringed away from her own hand, lips parting to accept the unseen food she'd gathered on the fork, it came. Thunderous and rich, his purr worked through her body in a tumultuous storm. Wrecking her senses, ripping away the last of her defenses, she calmed.

Food passed over her tongue without being tasted, slipping down her throat with the help of the deep resonance shivering through her bones. Unsatisfied to allow his soothing rumble to be all that she took, Kahler moved his hands to her shoulders.

Tension slid down her back like dirty water as he drove his thumbs into the tangled knots. Working away every last trace of strain, his hands moved all over her, concentrating on the tight snarls of her lower back.

Another bite met her tongue, the carrot tender crisp and sweet. Swallowing it down, Quinn would swear she felt it drop into the empty pit of her stomach. Large hands smoothed down her back, his thumbs digging in on either side of her spine. Groaning at the stretch, she waited for the unreliable organ to revolt. When it didn't, she nibbled another carrot.

Belly rumbling with unabashed greed, she ducked low over the plate. Food was shoveled in without a shred of grace, fork not even pausing for her to savor what was likely a delicious meal. Silverware flashed as she worked her way through one bite after the next.

Through it all, he touched. His purr was the perfect pitch, settling her in a way she hadn't felt in what seemed like forever.

Her plate was cleared, fingers swiping up the last crusty remains of the steak.

Mouthing the delicate vertebra of her nape, Kahler leaned them both over to slide his plate in front of her. Fisted cutlery wavered over the cold offering that still managed to look divine. A nagging voice warned her that she shouldn't be putting him out more than she already had. Indignant at being refused, hunger made itself clear with an enraged grumble.

"It's yours..."

"Eat, little bird," Kahler said against her skin. His hand drifted back to her, settling low on her belly.

Heady warmth, glorious and intoxicating, suffused her. Washing through her body, centered where his hand caressed that constant flutter of awareness, she caught herself humming. Stuffing food into her mouth, she silenced it at once.

Kahler noticed. He always did. The careful rasp of his stubbled cheek slipped along her shoulder, prickling over her skin as he leaned into her. Both hands went to her stomach, spreading so that his fingers touched from her thighs to her heart.

Her reaction was immediate. Eyes burning though she blinked hard to contain the threat of tears. Warm palms didn't just touch her, they damn well cradled. Strong and sure, he sheltered the too small thing inside of her. It was a tiny thing, the size of some minuscule seed, but it was there. She felt it, as strong as the heart beating in her chest. As his purr lengthened, deepening into a low rumble of contentment, she could almost imagine she was included in that sound.

A terse jerk of her head shook the idea free. It was a stupid thought, brought on by hormones and sleep deprivation. She was wholly dependent on him, her mind trying to play tricks to ensure a successful pregnancy.

That was all it was.

Hunching her shoulders, she went back to eating. It was far too easy to paint the man in a warm, soft light when she needed his scent and touch like water, like air. He wanted the child, that much seemed certain, but she was only his incubator. She was just a means to an end. It made the fact he'd claimed her all the more confusing. A breeder could have sufficed and without all the other difficulties this whole ordeal was bogged down in. Gods knew enough females, Betas and Omegas both, resorted to that path for him to have his pick.

Perhaps sensing her waning appetite or how the long muscles of her back were winding back into their customary mangled snarls, Kahler plucked the silverware from her fingers. Carrying her to the bed, he settled them both in the middle of the nest.

Shedding only his coat, tossing it towards the nearest chair, he tucked Quinn against his side. The purr had never stopped, keeping her languid if not calmed. Arranging her limbs as he wanted them, the blanket was pulled up until only her nose peeked out. His fingers carded through her hair with her wrapped around him.

A single tear managed to slip free, soaking into the fine cotton of his shirt. Eyes squeezed shut, she prayed for sleep to take her.

Her prayers must have been answered, because the next time Quinn opened her eyes, dawn was peeking through the windows. It took a moment

for her sluggish thoughts to register that Kahler still held her close and that at some point he'd stripped. Skin to skin, it was difficult to even think about moving.

One hand at the back of her knee, he had her leg bent high to his waist. His other arm cradled her spine, leaving his palm to cup her ass to keep her snug. Rising on an elbow, she studied a face that had never looked so serene to her.

Foolish to think him attractive, to find this moment gentle and nearing sweet. He didn't care about her, and how he looked while asleep didn't change that. She had more pressing needs to attend to than her stupid imagination. Trying to pick her way free of his limbs and failing, Quinn wasn't surprised when Kahler took a quick breath. Pulling her back, his eyes opened wide to scan the room. Seeing no threat, his lashes fluttered to narrow slits as he turned his attention down to her.

"What's wrong?" Sleep rough and ridiculously enticing, the quiet words slipped along Quinn's senses. A voice had no business touching a person like that.

"Nothing, go back to sleep." With him awake, she didn't have to be so careful. Wriggling free of him, Quinn scrambled down the bed. The steady burn of his gaze seared along her back, making her even more self-conscious than usual.

Muttering half formed obscenities, she stooped to snatch up his abandoned shirt from the floor on her way to the bathroom. The thing was huge and stiff, but it covered her almost to the knee. His breathy chuckle followed her into the other room.

Avoiding her reflection in the mirror as she washed her hands once finished, Quinn ran her tongue over her teeth and decided some rituals needed to be adhered to no matter what. Taking a steady breath, hoping whatever Kahler had done to her earlier stuck around long enough, she reached for the tube of minty toothpaste.

Surprised as hell she hadn't thrown up, Quinn sauntered back into the bedroom. Kahler had drifted back to sleep, his shadowy bulk disrupting the smooth lines of her nest.

The gnawing itch of annoyance scratched under her skin. An organized person, she couldn't ignore the disarray that met her. A perturbed grumble slipped over her lips as she aimed for the table. Their plates had been cleared away at least, but Kahler's perpetual stack of papers remained

scattered all over the surface. Though she reached out to tidy them, she snapped her hand back just before touching the crisp white sheaves. What if she messed up the order of them? Was there even an order to them?

Wrinkling her nose, she turned instead to his scattered clothes. She hadn't realized how much she appreciated his habits until then. He'd always hung everything up, hidden away behind the closet door. Grumbling under her breath, she picked up the discarded things.

"Leave it. It'll still be there in the morning." Sluggish and warm, even half asleep his amusement was clear.

"It is morning." Quinn bit the inside corners of her lips, refusing to let the smile that twitched at them free. Folding the items as best she could, she draped them over the back of one of the wingback chairs. It'd have to do for now.

"S'not," Kahler mumbled through a wide, dreamy smile.

"Is." Her cheeks ached with the strain to not grin like a complete idiot.

"I say no, my say goes." Kahler yawned, mouth wide as he rolled to his side. Patting the space beside him, he mumbled, "It's cold. Come back to bed, Grace."

He was still smiling that strange, dreamy smile.

Quinn swayed where she stood as ice burned through her veins.

Chapter 10

Having remained awake all night, she knew the precise second he became aware. The muscles of his arm under her hand tensed for the briefest moment before he relaxed. When she'd managed to crawl back into the bed, Kahler had moved close and wrapped her up in the warm strength of his limbs. No part of them didn't touch. Nose pressed against her neck, he'd made sounds of unabashed delight for a long time before true sleep silenced him.

Extracting his arm with careful precision, his hand settled on her stomach. As if in response to an unheard command, the rest of his body withdrew until an impassable space solidified between them.

Quinn continued to feign sleep.

A faint knock at the door pulled Kahler from the bed. With the swish of cloth and a sigh, she pictured him gathering the pants she had folded with reckless abandon, pulling them on as he watched her. She felt his attention blistering her skin.

She didn't even twitch when he pulled the blanket up over her shoulder.

"Good morning, sir," Curtis whispered, only the faint click of the tray against the table giving his position away. "There's more waiting if she wishes it. I'm not sure who you would rather bring it up. Meghan might be a good option, she's a mouse."

"I'll send for it if she wants more." Kahler was less concerned about the volume of his voice, keeping it down to a quiet rumble.

"You will, sir?"

A grunt was his only response before he continued as if nothing was strange about his current behavior. "I've marked the appointments that will need to be canceled. Tell Bauer and Gartner that I'll arrange something with them late next week."

"Yes, of course, sir." Curtis was beside himself, tension vibrating through his hushed tones.

"Curtis," Kahler said after a span of quiet, calling the man back into the room. "I want the sitting room aired out and cleaned."

"The one next to your office?"

"Is there another sitting room in this house that I'm not aware of?"

"No, of course not. I'll see to it at once."

Minutes ticked by after the door clicked shut. Quinn kept her breaths slow and shallow, surprising herself with how well she was managing to pretend. At least, she thought she was doing a decent job since Kahler hadn't called her out on it yet. She could hear him moving about, imagining him getting ready for his day.

The bed dipped as his weight settled beside her. Prepared to counterfeit groggy moans when he woke her, she wasn't expecting the feathery touch across her cheek. Tracing the line of bone up to her temple, his thumb smoothed up the bridge of her nose and over her eyebrow.

She had no idea what he was staring at her for. Her face was the same one in his mirror that had greeted her every other day of her life. Lips in a perpetual pout that were more often called sullen than sexy, eyes spaced just a little too far apart. Her forehead was too big for the rest of her features. The angles of her jaw and cheeks were less pronounced now, the padding of eating well suiting her fine, but otherwise it was just her face.

As if realizing he was fondling mediocrity, Kahler pulled away, even going so far as to stand up. His hand engulfed her shoulder, a light shake urging her awake.

Deploying the feigned groan, Quinn rolled to her stomach to hide her face in the pillow. His quiet chuff of amusement tripped down her spine just before his hand followed the same path.

Surprise widened eyes in the shadowy recesses of fabric, Quinn forced herself not to flinch. He never woke her up this way. In fact, he should be seated at the table, calling loudly for her to get up and eat already. All of it done with a hint of avid impatience that he had to waste precious time on her. He shouldn't be rubbing her back in slow passes as if he would ease her into the waking world.

"Time to wake up now," Kahler said in a hushed tone that was quite different from the one he had employed when speaking with Curtis. She heard him shift, the warmth of his breath washing over her arm where it hid the side of her face. His hand swept upwards, raking through the mass of tangles atop her head to scrub at her scalp.

The luxuriating moan slipped out unbidden. Strong fingers moved to her nape, massaging the delicate column of bone and muscle. With a mental tirade of curses berating her, Quinn turned her head just enough to peek over the top of her arm at the man crouched beside the bed. Bare-chested and sleep tousled, she couldn't quite believe what she was seeing.

A not-quite smile was on his lips, a softness to his features she didn't understand. Pushing up to her elbows, she shrugged his hand away only to have it slip down between her shoulders to settle at the small of her back.

"There're biscuits," Kahler said, dark brows moving in what could only be called a playful bounce. Taking her arm as he stood, he began to extract her from the nest. "Honey and butter, too."

Dubious of this new mood, more confused than ever, Quinn allowed him to move her about like a doll. Seated on his lap at the table once again, he purred and touched her throughout the meal. As soon as the vicious monster of her hunger was sated, he led her to the bathroom.

Hovering over her, he caged her in against the vanity as he supplied her with toothbrush and toothpaste. Mumbling out her thanks, Quinn squeezed the tube and prepared herself to ask him to purr if she had to. He seemed willing. He couldn't become agitated if she requested it.

The pungent sweetness of strawberries flooded the air. Her head snapped up, startled gaze meeting Kahler's in the mirror. The rich evergreen was cautious, nothing near hopeful but—maybe—attentive.

Before she could make a complete idiot out of herself, she shoved the toothbrush into her mouth, trying not to wince as plastic scraped along her gums. Muttering another thanks around the handle, her gaze was kept downcast as she brushed.

Retreating to the shower as soon as she was done, her concentration was fixed on the knobs as she adjusted the water. Not surprised when he slipped into the stall behind her, she made no effort to hide that she was uncomfortable with it.

Not giving her time to work up the courage to complain, Kahler launched his attack. Soft hands and frothy bubbles assailed her. Delicate and floral, the soap he provided for her was kneaded into her skin, hands gliding over her.

Every inch of her body was scrubbed with a care even she had never shown. Fingers sought out and teased the places that made her gasp. Made her sigh. Made her moan. Kneeling, he spread her wide with a foot perched on his knee. Palms sliding up the length of her leg, he leaned in to slip his tongue between swollen lips. Finding her already slick, his low groan reverberated against sensitive flesh. That evil tongue flicked over her clit once, twice, before he sucked it hard between his teeth.

Quinn struggled to hold on to the tiny kernel of devastated horror that had knocked around her skull all night. The name echoed through her thoughts, slamming her into a confusion of reality as Kahler lifted her high and pressed her into the cool tiles.

Grace. It repeated over and over, sizzling and crackling with a fire Quinn didn't understand.

"Wait, no," Quinn whined, meaning nothing of the sort. Her hips were already angling to take him, heels pulling him in as Kahler notched against her slick opening.

"Shh, gently," Kahler said in a rough whisper against her temple. Working into her with slow momentum, spreading her around his girth in a delirious crawl.

He had called for someone else to come to his bed. She had to remember that, had to remember that dreamy smile and serene expression that had never once been directed at her.

Grace.

Was her scent among one of the plenty staining the bed she now nested on? Was she an Omega? A Beta, free to come and go as she pleased?

Kahler groaned, distracting her from the inner turmoil long enough to get caught up in the thick musk and spice of him. The feel of his cock opening her up, and the way her pussy was eager to accept it, as if it belonged there. A shudder rippled down her back, pussy clenching over him in reflex.

Hot and wet, the crack of skin meeting was loud in the stall as he slapped the outside of her thigh. Quinn gave a muffled shriek, startled eyes staring up at him. Muscles locked tight around his shaft as the sensation snapped up her spine, forcing Kahler to a jerking halt in his lazy penetration.

"Always so stubborn and greedy." He was panting, the deep green of his eyes hazy with pleasure. He was already close. His cock throbbed inside of her, just as eager as he claimed her to be. "You want it rough, hm? You want all this hard Alpha cock inside that wet little pussy?"

She had to remember he didn't give a damn about her. She was a possession—a tight, wet hole that was his to use at his leisure.

"Then take it," Kahler said through clenched teeth, slamming Quinn into the tiles as he snapped his hips forward.

Throwing her head back into the wall as he drove into the hilt, her breathless cry shuddered over parted lips. Eyes shut, head lolling, she

wriggled. Grinding the head of his cock against the end of her, forcing the dull ache that she so liked, she let her moans sweep up into the misty air.

“Ah, sweetness, yes,” he groaned against the curls plastered to her crown. His hands slipped down soap slick skin to cup her ass, pulling her away from the wall. Fingers teased along the cleft, a soapy digit playing over the puckered ring as he helped her put force into the rolling rhythm of her hips.

Hands fumbling over his shoulders, she was uncertain if her moan was an appeal for him to stop or a plea for more. As he bounced her on his cock, using her weight to strike deep, Quinn was lost in the strange wash of sensation. Good, bad, it all melded together. Tension coiled up her spine and down her legs, threads of pleasure drawing muscles tight.

The tip of his finger breaching that untouched place ushered forth a senseless babbling of sounds. Nails raked across his flesh. Heels pummeled against his thighs. The sound she made as the digit pressed deeper was a squealing shriek wrapped in a lewd groan. With her toes beginning to curl in the wretched climb to the precipice and all it promised, her pussy tightened over the thick cock that still drove into her with a maddening rhythm.

“One day soon, I’m going to take this as mine,” he said in a growl so deep Quinn swore she felt it more than heard it. His finger slipped back before he pushed even more of its thick length inside of her. “We’ll see how greedy you are then, won’t we? Because like it or not, you will take it. You’ll take all of me and you’ll sing for me.”

Quinn’s eyes screwed shut, teeth bared in a grimace of debauched pleasure. She whined low in her throat, knowing the truth of it. His finger went deeper still, filling her so every breath was a strain. Whether from his words or actions, she felt her face warm, an unbelievable fresh wave of slick bathing his pelvis as they connected again and again. How it was even possible to become so wet, she didn’t know or care, as the thick lubricant was worked to a frothy perfection between them.

Ignoring the continued murmurs against her ear, she concentrated only on the dark depth of his tone. On the next forced plunge downwards, she sought to take some control. It was all too much, and she needed that final explosion of oblivion to soothe raw senses. Hips rocking, she worked the Alpha’s cock into her drenched pussy, grinding the swollen nub of her clit against the slick planes of his stomach. It forced his finger deeper, almost to

the palm, and made her feel every stretching inch of him in both of her holes.

“Ah, sweetness, yes... Fuck!”

Eyes snapping open, she looked at the male through a confused haze of pleasure. Face flushed, jaw clenched, he was on the edge. He never lost his control. Even in the moment of orgasm, he only voiced roars of victory. This was different.

Renewed by the idea she had done this to him, Quinn pushed straining muscles into action. She rode him as hard as the position allowed, offering a shattered purr when his grip aided her movements. Undulating, rising and falling, her thighs shook with the effort to maintain the fierce pace that had the Alpha panting at her ear.

In this moment at least, she wielded all of the power as she pushed him closer to the edge. His finger speared into her ass again and again, the burning friction accompanied by the known bliss of his cock slamming home with every slick drop. Jangled nerves and disoriented senses refused release in any direction, keeping her static in a wet mess of confusion and pleasure.

“Yes.... Yes, just like that. Just there,” Kahler managed through grunted breaths, face transformed with bared teeth and a scowl that had nothing to do with anger. The base of his shaft swelled, his release building fast. His finger slipped free of her tight entrance, grip adjusting to her hips. He pushed Quinn flat to the wall, slamming his hips against hers hard enough to bruise.

“Give it to me,” Quinn whispered on a shaky breath, urging the Alpha on.

“Going to fill you up so good, sweetness,” he groaned against her temple.

“Yes,” Quinn hissed, nails raking down his back.

“Fuck, yes! Take it, take all of me,” Kahler shouted, slamming home one last time. The knot expanded, locking them together. It grew and grew, larger than it had ever been before, until Quinn whined in real pain. Without her orgasm to squeeze the swollen girth and accommodate its size, it wedged hard and painful inside of her.

Kahler threw back his head and roared with the first thick surge of milky fluid painting her insides. His whole body quaked, each shuddering spasm releasing more of the potent cream. With obvious effort, he turned his gaze down to her. He seemed to realize the wet, rippling clench of her pussy was

missing. There was nothing wringing his knot but the innate tightness of a far smaller body.

Grunting through another spasm, eyes squinted as though in actual pain from the strength of his release, Kahler wedged his arm under her to free a hand. Gathering up her slick from the skin of his stomach, he went straight for her clit.

Quinn whined, twitching when she wanted nothing more than to run away. Her ass burned, the delicate flesh feeling like it was on fire. She was still bewildered at the strange wash of pleasure it gave her as his knot continued to throb deep inside of her cunt. It was so very wrong.

“Shh, sweetness,” Kahler said, trying for a soothing tone though his voice was thick with strain as his cock jumped again with another wave of hot come.

“Please, please don’t,” Quinn whispered with another miserable twitch. Uncomfortable as she was, she didn’t dare try to move more than that. The agony of trying to free the knot too soon was still fresh in her memory. She clung to him with arms and legs locked around his torso, watching his hand dip down between their joined bodies.

“Gently,” he murmured, adjusting her weight closer. The knot shifted, Quinn’s sharp cry silenced by his waiting lips. Warm and soft, his mouth moved over hers. The kiss was tender, leaving her even more confused. He did not invade, he did not demand entrance with the spearing length of his tongue or the sharp nip of teeth. Instead it was a languorous assault, wrecking all of her defenses with the careful slide of flesh. Pulling away for just a moment, he whispered against her pinkened lips, “Slowly, my sweet little bird.”

Only then did she realize the small sounds she made, the low mewls. Before she could become ashamed or irritated, he was back with more. When she did not open to him, he brushed his lips against hers in gentle passes before his tongue teased at the seam of her lips. Each leisurely advance met with the gradual melting of her discomfort.

Quinn was putty in his hands.

Hardly feeling the knot when he shifted yet again, the careful swipe of the pad of his thumb around her clit sent a ripple of sensation through her limbs. Avoiding the throbbing nub all together, he kept the mild touch to the swollen flesh around it.

The spray pattered over her back as he turned them, water sluicing away the last of the frothy bubbles from her skin. Her quiet, panting breaths were loud in the sudden silence as the shower was turned off.

Keeping her against him, Kahler maneuvered them to the low bench in the steamy room. Despite the precarious conditions, he distracted her with sweet kisses and slow caresses until he had them settled. Ankles locked at his back, arms wrapped tight around his neck, she looked at the large male through the clumpy fringe of her lashes. Uncertainty brimmed in her pale gray gaze as he watched her.

Angling a disarming smile down at her, Kahler leaned in to take in her scent at the mark that scarred her shoulder. The press of his lips to the marred skin was electrifying. The flick of his tongue sent a bolt of pure energy down her spine.

Trailing light kisses across shoulder and neck, his fingers worked their evil power between her thighs. Each pass of his fingertips refused attention where she needed it. Rough calluses were a breathtaking massage to oversensitive flesh. The orgasm that had stalled in the throes of her agitation recovered with a vengeance. It sent her hips rolling, only to be pinned in place by his arm.

“Not yet,” he whispered against her lips before taking them in a deep kiss, his tongue plunging in and out of her mouth in an imitation of what Quinn moaned for.

Fire crackled through her veins, building from the inferno centered low in her belly. It grew in swollen waves, blistering her senses, as those devious fingers grew firmer and moved with true purpose. Still, he avoided her aching clit, ignoring her low cries and whines as she stammered out pleas for him to finish it.

“Soon, sweetness,” he said in a ragged whisper, keeping his gaze locked on hers from mere inches away. His arm around her back pulled, his hips tilting up from the bench.

Quinn’s scream was a strangled thing. The knot shifted, pushing deeper still within the tight depths of her pussy. So close to the edge, instincts worked against her to bring the Alpha already lodged inside of her. Raking her nails down his shoulders and chest, she bared her teeth at the male. Her whole body shook with the tension that ratcheted through every muscle.

“T-Tobias, please,” she stammered out through teeth that chattered though she was flushed and sweating now. He moved inside of her again,

another scream wrenched from her throat as her head fell back. She stared without seeing at the ceiling as he edged her ever upward. Mouth held open, she voiced low wails when he shifted the thick knot again and again.

“Now, sweetness. Come for me.”

Without further warning, he stroked over her clit with firm pressure. There was no swelling wave of bliss as her orgasm crested. It was an explosion of soundless intensity stealing her breath and sight. Back rising in a painful arch, Quinn twitched and jerked as her world shattered into shards of pleasure that flayed her senses. Raw and sobbing, she was only vaguely aware of his hand tangling in her hair, pulling her up until her blown gaze met with his.

It became so much more.

As if she had to give everything to this man, pour more of herself into the pleasure that was destroying her one fragile piece at a time, she clung to him as the torrid swell sucked her under once more. Her pussy tightened in rippling contractions, somehow growing even wetter, allowing the knot to slide just that fraction further he needed to touch on a spot that upended her world all over again.

She sobbed, broken and raw, as deep evergreen swallowed her soul.

Minutes or decades passed before reality returned. It left Quinn a trembling, weeping thing in Kahler’s arms. The knot had abated at some point, their combined fluids tacky against her skin. An echo of the too much sensation shuddered through her body, a spasm that had her twitching under his hands where they stroked down her back.

“Shh, I have you, Quinn.” His voice was rough as if he had been the one screaming for Gods knew how long.

Tears slipped free, the burn at the back of her eyes an afterthought. Shameless, she tucked her head under his chin and wrapped her limbs tight around him.

Touch never faltering, he kept the passes long and smooth, almost this side of too strong. It was grounding, as if she needed to be kept tethered to this world until she could inhabit her own skin better.

She was supposed to remember something, but damned if she could. The sound of her name on his lips was rich and heady and she wanted to revel in that for just a little while longer.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 11

Quinn came awake with a snarl, bleary gaze cutting towards the door between the office and sitting room as it swung open. Framed in the doorway with the background of rich russets and greens of his office, Tobias Kahler looked just a little magnificent. A small smile crept over her lips, chasing away the irritated curl, as she snuggled back into the warm blankets surrounding her.

“I would have taken you back upstairs if you were tired,” Tobias said, and even with the dismay at finding her cocooned on the sofa wrinkling his brow, the warmth of his gaze as it traveled over her promised what would have happened if she had.

“I’m starving, not tired,” Quinn said on a low hum before groaning her way into a leisurely stretch. She should be in the nest, tucked away in her burrow, surrounded by the heavy scent of them both, but Tobias only allowed her in the sunroom when he had to use the office. She was starved for the sight of something more than four walls and a bed, no matter the view from his room.

In the weeks that had passed since that confusing night and even more unsettling day, the Alpha remained with her. Petting and purring, he gave her more attention than Quinn knew what to do with. He was the one that insisted that she sleep wrapped around him, and he lay with her even when she slept through most of the day. Every meal was shared with him, even after Quinn no longer needed his purrs. The only time he wasn’t within arm’s reach was in those rare moments when business needed his personal attention.

She still didn’t even know what that was. Trying to broach the subject of just who he was, what he did, was met with an immediate change of topic. At first, she had been wary of returning to their uneasy silence, but when she pressed further Tobias fucked her senseless. It was difficult to remember much of anything after he spent hours playing her body.

Clothing for her had arrived in the large closet at some point. She hated what he’d chosen for her, but at least she no longer had to do everything naked as a jaybird. It was all silks and satins, fine wools and other expensive fabrics. Quinn would have given a small, unimportant body part

for a pair of yoga pants and a t-shirt. Even a pair of sweats would have been met with gratitude.

During all this, he'd begun taking her down to the sitting room. Whatever people he had working in his home, they had been cleared out beforehand for every trek downstairs. Not a single hint of anyone other than Curtis had disturbed her time in the expansive space. Windows lined an entire wall looking out onto a little garden that had begun colored in brilliant shades, and now sported a shaggy carpet of dull beige and washed out reds where leaves had fallen. Books filled shelves and comfortable sofas and chairs were arranged just so.

Even Curtis seemed to think that was a bit much, his face kept bland as he served them anything Quinn might want while down there. It wasn't often, but it was a nice change when it did happen.

They had fallen into a comfortable routine and Quinn often found herself looking at the large male as something other than the evil prick who had ruined everything. It was just too hard to remain angry and self-righteous when he kept her so well fucked and fed that she was in a constant state of lassitude. The constant attention, the way he held, caressed, and purred for her were also persuasive.

"And what shall we eat, sweetness," Tobias asked as he came towards her in a lazy prowl.

"Mm, French fries and a bacon cheeseburger—no! A double bacon cheeseburger, with a side of coleslaw and lots of mayo," Quinn said as she squirmed upright to give him space to sit. As soon as he settled against the sofa's arm, she tucked herself in against his chest and hummed when his arm came down around her. Hand overlaying hers, they cradled the faint swell of her stomach.

"Absolutely not."

"I can't control what it wants."

"You're telling me that a fetus is craving greasy takeout?"

"Yes."

Snorting his amusement, his free hand tangled in her hair and wound the unruly curls around his fingers. Pulled in even closer, Quinn set her cheek to his chest, listening to the deep bass of his heart pounding a steady rhythm. It didn't take long for her to drift back into that hazy calm just before sleep, her eyelids growing heavy as she basked in the comforting embrace and scent of him.

“It’s a girl.”

He had pitched his voice so quiet, a breath above a whisper, Quinn almost wondered if she had imagined it. If not for the rise and fall of his chest, the unmistakable rumble of his speech against her ear, she would have ignored it.

“You don’t know that.”

“It’s subtle still,” he said, still not raising his voice as he carded his fingers through her hair to scrub at her scalp. The careful pressure kept her against him as if he expected an outburst and was already trying to soothe her. “It is a girl though.”

Contrary to whatever he might believe, she was more concerned that he wasn’t happy with the outcome. Had he wanted a boy? A heat could be induced within a matter of weeks if he took the baby away, allowing him to try again. Both of her hands slipped under his, acting as a frail barrier between his touch and her child.

Jerking her head away from his hand, ignoring the prickles of pain as strands were ripped free, she struggled to sit up. Swathed in too many blankets and his heavy arms, it was an effort to feel even the smallest measure of stability. She scoffed, an uncertain sneer painted on her lips as she watched him sidelong. “Are you such an expert? Have you been sniffing so many pregnant females you know the difference?”

His dark green gaze intensified, narrowed at her in speculation and the incredibly familiar flare of irritation. The arm she was pushing away from her stomach grew heavier still, rigid under her hand as he hauled her back into position. Hand in her hair, tipping her head back to meet his glare, he showed the edge of his teeth in a silent snarl. “Have a care, little bird, or I’ll begin to think these little forays away from our nest do you no good.”

Whatever Quinn might have said was cut off by a feminine shriek of alarm. The baritone rumble of a male flowed over it, drowning the woman’s babbling as the door to the rest of the house flew wide. A man, an Alpha by the bulk and heft of him, stood in the doorway with a distraught, mousy haired woman trailing behind him before she ran back into the depths of the house.

Eyes wide, Quinn sat dumbstruck. With a speed and dexterity that boggled her mind, Tobias had somehow disentangled from her, pushed her upright and to the other side of the couch. Now standing tall and massive, he blocked the other male’s view of her.

“What is the meaning of—”

“We found that thing you sent us looking for.” The strange Alpha was too arrogant by far, setting Quinn’s teeth on edge as he took a casual stance leaning against the wall. He was slimy in a way Quinn knew all too well, blond hair slicked back and cruel brown eyes. Clothed in worn denim and leather, he looked just respectable enough to pass in polite society. Those eyes and the twist of his smile told a story far different. “You should have told me what it was. It’s been, ah, real interesting.”

“You were supposed to contact me when you found it,” Tobias said through clenched teeth, rage radiating off him in waves that made Quinn feel ill. Making a smaller target with her arms wrapped around her middle and her shoulders hunched, she tried to ignore the heavy pulse of dread in her chest.

“Well, here we are, contacting you.” The Beta female surprised Quinn as she came through the door, but Tobias seemed to have known she was there all along. Unsure if that was comforting or irritating, Quinn struggled with the urge to rush upstairs, lock the door and hide in her nest. This was not safe, whatever was going on. The woman wasn’t much different from the man, only the tightness of the skin around her eyes belying their ruse as equals. Whatever games they played together, she wasn’t often the victor. Quinn had seen faces like that too often in Alton’s warehouse, hard and angry and looking to hurt others just as much as they were hurting.

“Do you have it?” Tobias took a step forward, every line of the body she knew so well tensed. What could be so important he’d send people like these to look for it?

“Yeah, we do.”

“Let me guess, you want more money now.”

“We had to go to a lot of trouble...”

“Fine, how much?”

“Double it,” the Alpha said with a cocky smile that said he knew Tobias would pay it. He was, of course, right.

Tobias gave a curt nod, an impatient flick of his hand demanding the Alpha get on with it.

“Go and get it, Tina,” the Alpha said to the female. A dead eyed stare met the woman’s pout, sending her scurrying from the room.

“Tobias,” Curtis said in alarm as he barreled into the room, the mousy haired female in tow. Panting with a fine sheen of sweat on his brow, anger

flowed from the bulky Beta male.

"I'll deal with you later," Tobias said, dismissing Curtis and the woman with a glare. The thing in Quinn's chest twisted and pulsed, a maelstrom of emotions she didn't even understand bombarding her. Impatience, anger, and a searing thread of hope. Sparing Quinn a bare glance, Tobias turned back towards the door.

What was there was not what she had expected—rather, *who* was there.

Though her eyes were wide open, the mellow honey-gold was glassy, pupils contracted down to minuscule pinpoints. Swaying where she stood as Tina positioned her in the center of the room, her head turned in slow swivels that would have been comical had her grip not slackened on the infant in her arms while she did it.

The baby started screaming as it slipped down from the woman's arms, and if Tobias hadn't been so close it would have been horrible. It was close enough as it was, his large hands fumbling the small bundle in its swaddling of dirty blankets. It continued to wail, and Quinn wanted nothing more than to join the poor thing.

It was at that point when everyone decided to start yelling all at once.

Tobias shouted at the Alpha and his woman, they yelled back, Curtis joined in the melee. The glassy-eyed Beta started to weep and then wail as she stared at her empty arms, her cries outdoing even those of the infant's.

Dragging herself up from the couch, Quinn stood rigid for a moment to gather her nerve. One hand on her stomach, the other gripping the arm of the couch, she drew slow breaths to steady the trembling beat of her heart. The pulsing in her chest eased, soured and twisted into something more akin to those first few days than what she had begun to grow accustomed to. It was slimy, hated, a thing to be reviled. One final breath was let out through clenched teeth.

Then she waded into the fray.

A snarl that was more vicious than anything she had ever uttered slipped over her lips as she maneuvered between Tobias and the others. With a strength contrary to her size, she shoved Curtis out of her way. Gray eyes narrowed, a growl of challenge issued to all of them.

She gave the intruders her back despite all her misgivings. Glaring up at Tobias, she took the tiny screaming bundle from his too tight hands, ignoring his growling and posturing all together. Stiff-backed and

awkward, she started towards the doors only to be stopped by the weeping of the baby's mother.

Hesitant to abandon the woman who was so distraught, Quinn turned back and looked at her. Matted and wild, the Beta's greasy brown hair hung in thick clumps around a wan face that would be gorgeous when not smeared with filth. Drab clothes hung from a small frame and it was obvious she hadn't had a decent meal in far too long. Thin hands, covered in a layer of dirt with blackened crust under the half-moons of her nails, reached out towards the quieting infant.

"Go upstairs," Tobias said, barking the order as if she were some underling to cower at his feet.

"It's her child, Tobias," Quinn snarled back, trembling under the effort to deny the command. With the baby held close to her chest, she reached a hand out to catch the Beta's.

"Tobias?" Sluggish and dazed, the Beta stumbled sideways as she turned towards him. Glazed eyes turned up to him, struggling to focus on the male as he held himself rigid. Stick-like arms cradled air as she slurred in a sing-song, "Ooh, Tobi, my love. Tobi, Tobi, I have him."

"Not anymore you don't." Tobias' growling voice came through clenched teeth, aggression written in every line of his body as the Beta crooned over the emptiness of her arms.

"He's mine, Tobi." The Beta added a slow, staggering twirl as she rocked her empty arms. "You can't take him away from me. I'm his mother."

"The hell I can't." Delivered in a flat, dead tone, Quinn had a surreal moment as past and present overlaid one another. Hadn't his eyes looked just so when he'd said the same thing to her? The Beta could be the prophetic image of what was in store for Quinn.

Swallowing the lump of cold dread in her throat, choking it down along with the acrid taste of bile, Quinn snatched the Beta's arm and pulled her away from Tobias. A quivering smile was offered to the woman's bewildered stare, Quinn uncertain if she was even seen. "Come with me, we'll get you both cleaned up."

"He's mine."

"Yes, I know," Quinn murmured, shuffling backwards as she clutched the baby and woman. Trying to ignore the dominating presence of Tobias as he stalked forward, the rage that seethed inside of her chest, she urged the Beta to hurry.

"You can't have him," the Beta shrieked, snapping out of her dreamy daze. Fingers like claws, she slashed at Quinn's face, raking the broken edges of her nails down Quinn's cheek.

Knees met the floor with a jarring thud. Quinn bowed over the screaming bundle in her arms as fists pummeled her head and back with a strength Quinn wouldn't have thought the woman capable of.

"Grace, stop," Tobias shouted.

This was her. This was the woman. This was Grace, the one he had called for. It felt like it had been years ago, but Quinn remembered everything from that long night as jagged shards of horror slashed through her veins. The blow of hearing another woman's name on his lips, so sweet and tender in a way he had never aimed at her. The dreamy smile and serene expression he'd had as he called this woman back to bed. It made everything since that moment feeble. A clever ruse to make Quinn complacent that had worked well.

Grace was hauled away, kicking and screaming in Tobias' hold. Wide eyes showing far too much white rolled like a feral animal's as she struggled against him. Anything in reach was bitten, clawed, Tobias' arms and shoulder a mess of red as he tried to pin the wild woman in place. The fact the Beta female was able to injure the Alpha half again her size spoke volumes to Quinn as she kneeled shaken on the floor.

"Get her upstairs." Tobias snarled as Grace sunk her teeth into his forearm. The crack of his hand meeting her jaw was loud, the way her head snapped to the side terrifying.

"Quinn, please," Curtis hissed as she shrank from his offered hand.

Quinn scrambled to her feet unaided, clasping the baby to her chest as she stared in horror at the tableau before her. They were going to steal this baby from Grace. Tobias was going to force her to help him do it.

"Tobi, please," Grace sobbed, throwing herself into his chest and clutching at his ruined shirt. Standing on tip-toe she pressed her blood smeared lips to his neck, pulling at the collar of his shirt to kiss his chest. "Please, my love. Forgive me. Why can't it be like before? We'll be happy again."

Quinn felt her lips part, gaping at the sudden change. Something inside of her snapped. The warmth that resided in her chest, ever worming its way deeper, shattered into glittering pieces that threatened to flay her open if she didn't leave.

The last thing she saw as she bolted from the room was Grace falling to her knees before Tobias, nuzzling his stomach in the way he liked. Quinn knew it well. She'd done the same as he'd taught her how he preferred to be sucked off.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 12

“It’s okay,” Quinn murmured to the fidgeting baby as she awkwardly held his head above the waterline. She’d changed the murky water out twice already, and she still didn’t think he was clean. The soft wisps of his dark blond hair stuck up in odd angles as she scrubbed at his scalp with a washcloth to rinse him. The first three squares that would never be white again lay in a sodden pile beside the bright blue plastic of the tub.

She’d only seen the room that was without a doubt a nursery in passing as Kahler had taken her from the bedroom to the sitting room. A scant handful of times, the door had been open, revealing a few simple furnishings and piles of boxes with bright colors and chubby cheeked infants on the sides.

It had been easy to assume he was acting like a proper Alpha, overbearing and ridiculously prepared. Quinn had thought it so sweet that he’d begun readying a room when she wasn’t even showing.

Now she knew the real reason, and it stared up at her with perturbed blue eyes.

After fleeing upstairs, she’d headed straight for this room and its contents. In it she had found a baby bath, all-purpose soap, and squares of thick white cloth labeled as diapers. The diagram included with the fluffy fabric looked like some kind of complicated origami, with tucks and folds that didn’t make any sense to her.

She’d find out soon enough if it would cover him or make a swan.

“His name is Adam.”

Tears welled. She’d heard him come into the room, felt him towering behind her in the doorway to the small bathroom, but hearing his voice had been just a little too much. Eyelashes fluttering as she blinked to clear her vision, she let them fall unhindered. Quinn gave the baby a watery smile as he made a squealing giggle, legs and arms flailing to splash in the water.

“Quinn, your face—”

“It’s fine.” She kept her gaze on Adam as she soaped up his arm again. He wasn’t half as chubby and wrinkled as the babies on the boxes. The limb felt bird-like, fragile in a way that terrified Quinn. The scratches on her face still burned, and the ache behind her right eye promised a beautiful bruise. But if she didn’t concentrate on the child now, she was afraid she would

lose the tenuous grasp she had on herself. Seeing to the multitude of small wounds could wait until she had Adam bedded down for the night.

How did one do that?

"I didn't want you to see that," Kahler said as he came further into the room, crowding the small space with his bulk and presence, leaving too little room for Quinn to breathe. From the edge of her peripheral vision, she could make him out in the mirror. Looking over her shoulder, he watched Adam gurgle and coo as Quinn rinsed him off again.

"Of course not, but what was your plan?" Tears streamed down her cheeks, dripping into the water of the bright blue bath. Somehow her voice remained steady though her hold on the turbulence of emotions clawing at her insides began to slip. "Were you going to slip him into my nest one day and see if I noticed? Maybe some extensive lie where he was abandoned or how he lost his parents."

"I do not care for your attitude or tone, little bird," he said in a low growl as he pressed against her back. Hands set on the sink to either side of her, he pinned her against the porcelain. "You would have welcomed him into *our* nest when I put him in your arms and told you to."

Her hands slowed then paused, holding Adam as he made arcane baby noises.

"This is why you did this to me, isn't it?" A shaky inhale followed the question, clarity coming in a bitter, cold wave. "This is why you got me pregnant. Omegas live for children, right? And if I was pregnant, I'd already have all the maternal instincts for him. You knew I wouldn't be able to refuse him. But why did you claim me? Everyone would have sided with you. You have all the rights to any child between us. You didn't have to bond me to do all of this. It didn't even have to be me!"

"You are mine." Each word was bit out through a growl that raised the fine hairs on the back of her neck. Kahler stepped forward to push against her back, wedging her against the sink. Adam started to whimper, pale blue eyes going wide as tears began to flood over the dark fringe of his lashes.

Lower lip quivering, she scooped Adam up from the bath and fumbled for the towel she'd left on the bar. Breaths hitching on her silent tears, she tried to soothe the baby in her arms that did not appreciate her awkward efforts to get him warm and dry.

"You're scaring him," she said, blurting it out in a choked whine as she wrapped the squirming infant haphazardly in the towel.

"Put him to bed." His departure was so swift, Quinn almost stumbled. Standing just outside of the bathroom, he was a menacing presence in the otherwise cheery room.

Clutching the fussing boy to her, she hurried to the changing table. Setting her armload down, both hands keeping Adam in place on his back, she looked around with a vague sense of horror. She had no idea what she was doing. She stared at the diaper diagram to stall for more time, swallowing back the sobs that clawed at the back of her throat. What she thought it would accomplish was anyone's guess. When Adam began to cry again, she pet at his chest with nervous strokes to soothe him.

There was nothing for it.

"I don't know what I'm doing," Quinn said in a low hiss as she turned her head in Tobias' general direction. Refusing to meet his eyes, to see the anger she felt roiling through her chest and stomach mirrored there.

Without a word, he stalked to the nursery door and opened it wide to admit the mousy Beta from earlier. He'd already known Quinn would fail and had been prepared. The knowledge should have bolstered her own anger, but all it did was make her realize how useless she was. Quinn swallowed back yet more sobs and clung to anger as if her life depended on it.

"It's not like we come programmed knowing this shit," Quinn said, the vicious curl of her lips pretending to be a smile as she made an inviting gesture to the Beta to take over. Her pale gaze skipped over the woman as Adam was taken from Quinn's grasp. Dark green eyes held a warning when Quinn met them, but she went on, uncaring. "We're good to fuck and knock up, but we don't innately know what comes after."

The Beta gasped and moved as if she would shield Adam from Quinn. It was a single step, maybe two, that blocked the burbling child from Quinn's view.

Red rimmed blackness clouded Quinn's vision.

The overwhelming urge was there, just as she'd professed to Tobias only moments ago. With her own child growing inside of her, the need to protect Adam was just as strong as if he was her flesh and blood. An Omega who thought her child in peril was dangerous, unpredictable. Deadly.

When the haze cleared, the Beta was on the floor, brown eyes filled with tears and terror, a red bloom across her pallid cheek. Mousy brown hair lay

in a wild halo around her face. Adam rested in the crook of Quinn's arm, babbling in his own language what he thought of the proceedings.

"Until he decides to throw me out with the trash, don't you ever try to get between me and this baby."

"That's enough." Tobias was there at Quinn's side, large hand wrapped around the back of her neck and squeezing. Delicate vertebrae shifted and groaned under the strain.

The Beta held out trembling hands for Adam after gaining her feet. Her teary gaze was kept aside, submissive and more than a little frightened. A wet, sucking blanket of guilt smothered Quinn as she handed the baby over. None of this was the woman's fault.

Even though she knew what was coming, Quinn gave a pathetic squeak and stumbled when Tobias pushed her into motion. His grip tightened, hauling her along without waiting for her to gain her footing. Dangling from his fist, she felt like prey being hauled off to slaughter as he took her down the hall to his bedroom.

Tossed onto the bed, Quinn scrambled up against the headboard to face the furious male that stalked back and forth at the other end.

"I understand that you are upset," Kahler said, words a low snarl as he yanked his belt free of the loops.

The snap of leather made Quinn flinch, her back shoved against the headboard as if she would crawl through the wall.

"But if you think for a moment that I will put up with this sort of behavior, you are sorely mistaken."

He came at her. The lines of his features were razor sharp in his anger, the heat of it scorching her before he'd even reached Quinn's side.

"Please don't punish me, sir! I'll behave, please, I'll be good," Quinn shrieked, trying not to cringe away from the impending strike. Blindly reaching for the enraged Alpha, her fingers fumbled at the zipper of his pants. She was already on her knees, hand reaching into the gaping fabric for his cock before she realized what she had done.

Quinn gaped up at Tobias as he stood motionless over her. It had been the belt dangling from his hand, innocuous and vicious at the same time. The words had tumbled free without thought, a cultivated reflex from time spent under Alton's control. The actions were just as fixed in her mind as the appropriate response. It was then she saw the strip of leather lying harmless on the floor where he'd dropped it before coming to her. Shrinking away

from the darkness swelling in the depths of his gaze, she tried to shuffle back.

She didn't get far.

Hand wrapped around the back of her neck, thumb and fingers pinching her jaw so that her head tipped back, Kahler forced her to look at him.

"You think I'm going to beat you?" The icy intensity of his gaze seared through her, burning across her skin as he pulled Quinn back up to her knees before him. Head tilted, he regarded her for a moment that seemed to stretch out for decades. As some thought came to him, his expression smoothed and became blank.

"Who are you thinking of here in our nest," Kahler asked with a deadly calm that did not match the lines of fury that etched their way across his features, the green of his eyes incandescent as he forced her to stretch up. "That pathetic male you ran to? The one you meant so little to, he couldn't even try to fight for you?"

"Please, I... It just... I didn't..." Quinn's voice shriveled on her tongue, running back down her throat at the sheer breadth of his anger. Body trembling, the caustic bite of her fear mingled with the miasma of his anger between them.

"But you did, little bird."

Quinn flinched at the use of the pet name.

Kahler moved her around with a care she did not trust until he had her stretched out on the bed. She stared up at him with fear wide eyes from the flat of her back as he kneeled between her legs, towering above her with all that cold fury. Fingers twitched at her sides, wanting to reach out to him, to appease and soothe away the frozen mask he wore. Daring to meet his gaze for a trembling heartbeat, she knew it would be a mistake.

She'd have given almost anything to see the controlled heat he'd always come at her with before.

Though she tried to prepare for whatever might come next, Quinn couldn't help the breathless shriek that burst from between her lips when his weight came down on her. She caught the slow curl of his lip, the snarl he did not voice before he buried his face against her neck.

Kahler could have called to her, forced a response from her body, but it was him. She was used to his scent, his touch, the way her heart pounded out a rhythm not her own. As he pressed her into the mattress, hands almost too careful as they removed her dress, Quinn arched into his touch. The

nervous tension was sluiced away in a heady wave of heat that left her fingertips tingling.

By the time he had her stripped and shuffled his trousers down around his thighs, notching the crown of his thick cock against her opening, Quinn was dripping wet and moaning in anticipation. Swiping through her slick folds, he nudged her clit with his head until Quinn whimpered and tipped her hips up in offering, begging, pleading. He was slow as he slid into her, easing his way through the initial tightness, feeding her one fraction at a time until she took every last inch.

Holding her wide and vulnerable, he began.

He dragged his full length out only to push forward until Quinn made small, grunting sounds of pleasured pain. He made her feel every bit of his length, to take his thickness as if it was the first time. The temperate roll of his hips was at odds with the way he held his body stiff over her, but Quinn was lost in the Alpha who had broken her to this act. The angle of his thrust was perfect, hitting the spot he had learned so well to manipulate before he plumbbed deep to drive against her cervix. Thick, wet sounds filled the close space of the nest, tangled up in Quinn's low moans and Kahler's heavy breaths.

Small fingers dug into his back and hips, clinging to him as her breath came in rasping pants. Pleasure seeped through her limbs, urging her to pull her legs further back, spreading wider for the male. Each inward motion pulled him flush, mashing against her clit as he ground in deep. It was wonderful, incredible, and not what she needed.

"Please, Tobias," Quinn said on a high-pitched whine as he continued at the unbearable crawling pace.

A grunt was his only response. Angling to reach between them, his rough hand cupped her swollen breast, the aching peak caught between his fingers as he kneaded the soft flesh. It was a tease of the violence she craved from him, a smooth and tender action that had Quinn whining in complaint.

Feet on his thighs, she tried to buck up into his slow thrusts. His weight crushed her, driving her into the bed so that she couldn't even twitch. His chest rasped against her other breast, abrading her unattended nipple, his whole body sliding against hers as he kept her pinned.

It didn't matter. Pleasure built, threading through her limbs, drawing the muscles tight. She felt the beginnings of his knot, swelling the base of his cock. It added a stretch that made her gasp in delight as he worked in and

out of her slick heat. Her pussy clenched in a pulsing rhythm over his driving length. Quinn teetered on the edge of bliss and moaned against Kahler's shoulder. She dug her nails into his back as the first shiver of release began to work its way up her spine, urging him to bury deep so she could bring him with her.

"Do you like this, little bird?"

His voice was a subterranean growl, a sound that had Quinn's hazy focus centering on him in confusion. Her jerky nod in agreement was met with a slow, predatory smile that wriggled its way under the heady fog of pleasure to unnerve her.

"Good, good. Now let's make sure you remember who makes you feel this way, hm?"

It was all the warning Quinn had before his teeth punched through flesh. Overlapping the scars of the claiming mark, she felt his teeth grind through the thickened tissue into muscle. His hand dipped down, finding her clit with unerring accuracy. The throbbing bud was pinched, twisted.

Her screams were a mix of everything.

She was over the edge, pussy clenching in time with the swirling waves of the forced orgasm as he shoved the swollen knot home. Delicate flesh, already aching, tore. It only added to the maelstrom of exquisite agony. His cock kicked and jerked inside of her as her pussy clung to his knot, milking every thick surge from him as he filled her up. The pain of his bite crackled down her chest and arm, crushing nerves in its wake as virulent pulses of vivid red flashed in her vision.

Not until the last shuddering wrench of her orgasm faded did he release her shoulder. Shivering, freezing and burning in turns, Quinn looked up at him in horror. The even whiteness of his teeth, the tender flesh of his lips, even his chin was all coated with a fine sheen of red. She recoiled, unable to go anywhere at all.

"Maybe now you won't forget," Kahler said. The deadly snarl coiled around her spine, his gaze pinning her with the same effectiveness as his body.

His bitter smile followed her down into the darkness as Quinn gathered shock to her and let it take her away from the terrifying sight.

The room was filled to bursting with bright toys and plush furniture. Hushed quiet followed her as Quinn walked through the door.

Two cribs stood end to end along one wall, both tasteful and elegant in an understated way. Her fingers trailed over the dark wood of the first before her gaze was drawn to the contents.

Rosy pale and fast asleep, she lay in a sea of soft turquoise. Chubby limbs were enveloped in fuzzy, gray pajamas with cloud-like sheep cavorting across the fabric. One lined up just right on the center of her diapered butt, making Quinn grin. She was so sweet, curled up in the awkward, bow-legged way of all babies. A wild tuft of near white hair stuck up at all angles from the top of her head. Forget sucking on a thumb, her whole fist was in her mouth as she gnawed on it.

A gurgling jumble of sounds from the next crib drew Quinn forward.

“Adam,” Quinn whispered as she smoothed back the wavy blond hair from his forehead. It was thicker, covering his whole head and then some. He needed a haircut. Bright hazel eyes peered up at her, sparkling as he smiled. Little teeth showed bright against the deep pink of his gums.

“Mama!” Garbled by the clenched fist he pushed against the growing teeth, the loud call was clear enough. “Mama up!”

“Shh, you’re going to wake her.” It was easy to pick him up, her arms no longer stiff with the strange weight of wriggling child. It was as if he fit there, formed just for her. He was just as comfortable, settling in against her chest with his head tucked tight against her neck. He breathed her in, a happy sigh warming her skin. Rubbing her cheek against his soft crown, she stepped back to the first crib.

“Ees! Ees, Ees, Ees,” Adam squealed, delighted in his discovery.

“Shh, Adam,” Quinn whispered against his cheek. “Yes, Elise is sleeping, just like you should be, little man.”

As if she could feel their attention, the little gray and white bundle began to stir. Blinking awake, unfocused green eyes turned up towards Quinn before a sleepy smile spread across full lips shined with spit.

“Uh-oh,” Adam said in a cheery sing-song.

“Yes, very uh-oh,” Quinn said, though she laughed and scooped the now babbling Elise into her arms alongside Adam. It was as easy and instinctual as breathing.

It was the perfect tableau, a damned greeting card. All that was missing was the sappy phrase or quote. It felt right though, as if this moment was as

good as it would ever get. One of those rare moments that the stars align and Mercury isn't in retrograde and everything is just... perfect.

It didn't last long.

Darkness. It approached from behind her somewhere, cold and unfeeling. It crept towards them, sucking all the color and joy from the room.

Quinn clutched the babies close, huddled over their little bodies as she backed away from the encroaching shadows. Both children began to fuss, their sniffles and whines growing into full throated wails.

Turning away, giving her back to the danger despite the way her skin crawled at the idea, Quinn found the nursery gone. Night sky spangled with stars and moonlit trees for as far as she could see. A glimmer of warm golden light was far off in the distance.

It wasn't the darkness itself anymore. Something was *in* the darkness. A glance back showed her a darker shadow among many.

She ran.

A roar went out into the night. Sheer violence and rage, it rattled her bones and made her teeth ache. Both babies screamed in response.

Quinn ran faster.

Low-hanging branches became painful switches, lancing across her forehead and cheeks. It didn't matter as she ducked and pivoted through the line of trees, the delicate skin of the children protected from the stinging slaps by her body. She had to get back to the house. He would protect them.

Whatever followed them crashed through, unhindered by things like heavy trunks and thick underbrush.

She ran harder, faster, ignoring the searing pain in her side and the frenetic pounding of her heart. Quinn paid no attention to the ache in her arms, but clutched Adam and Elise even closer.

The house. She had to get back to the house. He would keep them safe.

The glow from windows grew larger, brighter. Quinn could make out an expanse of lawn. Veering towards it, she felt the first sweet hints of victory.

It fell to ash before she could even swallow.

It rose before her, dark and ominous, massive and unreal. Shadows stretched out all around it, blanketing the tree, the grass, everything. It felt icy and dead as it seeped over her.

Green eyes, chips of cold rock in shadows that resolved into the hard planes of something she should recognize. Horror had her denying it.

"Mine."

Quinn bolted upright, choking on her scream. Twisted and tangled, the blankets and sheets of her nest held her prisoner. Cold sweat coated her body, her skin prickling in a painful rush. The dream followed her into waking.

Crying. The unrestrained wail of a baby.

It wasn't fading.

Looking to the side, Quinn almost screamed again to find Adam tucked in the bed beside her. His little face was red and wet from his tears. His wails sounded as desperate as she was.

There was no hesitation as she plucked Adam from the deep folds that had held him. Cradling him against her chest, she crooned and made broken purrs over his little body as she soothed him. She'd be lying if she said it didn't ease the ache in her chest as well.

"Ma'am? Ma'am, is everything all right?"

Recognition was slow to come, but it must not have taken too long for Quinn to place the almost panicked voice with the Beta woman in Kahler's employ. No one barged in or began yelling.

Sniffing back her unshed tears, Quinn made a sour face and peered down at Adam with an uncomfortable cant to her brows.

"Really, man? First that nightmare hell, now this unholy reek?" Giving a quiet laugh, Quinn turned her attention to the still closed door. "Yeah, it's fine, but he needs a new diaper."

"May I come in?"

Sweet Gods, but the woman must be terrified of her. Quinn wriggled towards the edge of the bed with a gibbering Adam. "Yeah, sure, come on in."

The woman came through the bedroom door in cautious pieces. First her head, followed by shoulders and torso, before the rest of her appeared. Scurrying steps brought her to waver before the foot of the bed. She blinked once at Quinn's state before averting her gaze to the floor.

"Listen, uh..." Quinn crumpled a little, staring at the Beta with lips parted in surprise. She had no idea what the woman's name was.

"Meghan, Ma'am." The woman's slender frame bobbed in an honest to Gods curtsey.

"Where the hell does he find you people?" Quinn waved away Meghan's confusion with a shake of her head then lifted the still grumbling Adam a little higher in offering. Her shoulder was beginning to ache, the burn of

Kahler's bite clawing its way down her arm in violent red pulses. "Could you help me out here please, Meghan?"

When Quinn didn't attack her after the first slow step towards the bed, Meghan came to them and lifted Adam from Quinn's arms with a deft expertise that Quinn felt envious of. The ache in her shoulder was nothing compared to the ache she felt as Adam's weight was taken away.

As Meghan shuffled away, Quinn cleared her throat with a small frown. It was a strange sensation. She had gone through a phase where she had dreamed of being someone's mate, of having a multitude of children. But it had been all too brief, crushed away under the reality of poverty and occasional homelessness. By the time she'd been sixteen and under Alton's employ as a runner, the thought was all but forgotten. Even he had never made demands for offspring, careful to keep all of his women safe on birth control.

"Ma'am," Meghan questioned in a faint whisper, the stink of anxiety surging as she stared at Quinn with wide eyes.

"I'm sorry, what?" Blinking away the fog of discomfort and memories, Quinn began the process of unraveling her body from the twisted sheets.

"A-after I change him, he n-needs to eat." Meghan swallowed and the dry click of her throat was loud. "Mr. Kahler has said I'm to bring Adam back to you whenever I'm not tending to him."

"I have a better idea." Quinn dragged herself from the bed, pressing her knees tight against the side of the mattress when they tried to fold under her. "I want you to show me how to do it."

"Yes, ma'am." The words may have been deferential, but Meghan's tone was nothing but confusion and doubt as she watched Quinn head towards the door. The soft angles of the woman's face began to fold in, scrunching into a look of dismay that was comical.

"You coming or what," Quinn asked over her shoulder as she reached for the handle of the door. It was then she saw the bastard hadn't bothered to bandage her up while she slept. The bite was raw and livid, smears of red still staining her skin. No wonder Meghan had looked a little ill when she'd first come in.

"Ma'am, um... perhaps you would like to dress?"

"Why would I?" No, let everyone see what she was subjected to. Let Kahler get angry. He'd done this to her, why would he not want to see his

handiwork to remind Quinn so well of how close she had come to caring for him.

“Ma’am...?”

“Curtis has seen me in all kinds of states, and unless you or Adam has an issue...”

“Mr. Kahler won’t like it, ma’am.”

“Yeah, he won’t.” Quinn’s smile was a bitter slash.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 13

Opening the door wide, Quinn stepped out into the cool hallway with her head high. Nerves jangling in discomfort at the display, skin crawling at the idea of anyone seeing her, she half-turned to sweep an arm in an invitation for Meghan to lead the way.

Hurrying past, Meghan headed for the nursery. She kept close to the wall, no doubt hoping Quinn would do the same. The whole game would be moot if Quinn hid now. Quinn veered towards the rail, trying her damnedest not to look down. No male roars of outrage filtered up from the lower level, giving her a little more space to breathe.

Inside the nursery, there was a brief shuffle as Meghan and Quinn arranged themselves alongside the changing table. Quick, efficient motions saw the grumpy, babbling Adam stripped, cleaned, and diapered before Quinn could even think to ask a question. His toothless smile was brilliant and made her heart stutter just a little when he turned it on her.

Quinn's answering smile crept into uncertainty as Meghan scooped Adam back up and headed towards the door. Trailing behind her, Quinn took several deep breaths to gather some calm with a brittle smile plastered on her face.

A litany of silent curses and pleas to the Gods for Meghan to not head towards the stairs leading down fell on deaf ears. Meghan glanced back just once, the faded brown of her brows knitting before she began to descend.

"You're just a piece of meat," Quinn muttered under her breath as she took the stairs down, toes curling into the soft carpet lining them. Refusing the banister, knowing it would show a white knuckled grip, she descended with exaggerated care. Goosebumps covered the backs of her arms and legs, drawing the skin tight as she imagined scores of eyes on her.

They made the stairs and even the first long hall to the main areas of the house without seeing a soul. They were almost to the turnoff for Kahler's office and the sitting room when Meghan headed down another path, one Quinn had never been allowed to explore. So sure the bastard would be in his office now and could be altogether avoided, she dared to think she might get through this unscathed.

She should have known better than to let that first flicker of hope to blossom, should have tamped it down with her heel the second it popped

into existence.

Quinn's breath left her in a rush as Meghan shied away, cowering against the wall with Adam tucked close to her chest.

Kahler stood there.

Not just him, but two other males and a woman.

There was no recognition for the other three people. She'd never seen them before. The warmth blossoming in her chest, spreading up her neck and face, promised a vivid blush suffusing her skin. There was no backing down now. Quinn bounced her eyebrows once at the trio, daring them to look, to fucking see what she'd been subjected to. Three sets of eyes went to the claiming mark and the fresh bite before rushing to turn away. The smaller male went so far as to face the wall as if giving her his back would somehow change anything.

If Quinn had expected an immediate explosion of rage from Kahler, she'd been mistaken. After the way he had acted the previous day, the cold fury he'd exhibited when he'd ravaged her shoulder yet again, she should have known better.

“What exactly do you think you are doing?”

The dark calm of his voice lashed around her spine, tugging at it as something vicious and snarled twisted through her chest. Quinn pulled her shoulders back, body on full display as she posed despite the heat burning through her cheeks as she stared up into the bitter green ice of his gaze.

“Was that not the lesson? That I’m here for you to do with as you please, when you please? I thought not having to deal with silly things like clothing would make it easier. Oh, I am sorry. My little brain must not have understood. Maybe you should speak in smaller sentences. Maybe mutilate the other side while you’re at it.”

“My Omega—”

“Your bitch, your breeder, your fuck toy,” Quinn hissed, baring her teeth at the male. Stomach twisted in knots, nausea swelled under her ribs to burn the back of her throat with the bitter words. “Don’t act like I’m anything but a fucking incubator and tight cunt for you.”

“What, did your mother fill your head with tales of Alphas in shining armor? Did she tell you that one would sweep you off your feet and take you away to some castle? Did you expect true love’s first kiss? Oh, that is rich.”

"My mother was far too busy whoring herself out for that shit," Quinn said with a bitter laugh. Lips curling into a cruel smile, she held her arms out to present her bruised body to Kahler. "That's the breeding stock you've fucking chosen. My father was probably just some John who couldn't be bothered with a condom."

The onlookers had been forgotten for the moment until the female gasped. Gray gaze snapping to the woman, Quinn offered a vicious smirk.

"That's right, sweetheart. He claimed a hooker's mistake. A prostitute's bastard is his mate!"

Kahler's reaction was far less calm than he had seemed only moments before. Broad shoulders held stiff, his arms damn near trembling at his sides they were so tensed. The deep green of his gaze burned as it swept over her. A muscle in his jaw twitched in double time as his lips thinned to a hard line. It was a world away from the cold fury he'd been displaying so far, and Quinn found it comforting to see him burning so hot.

"Get. Out." Bit out through a growl, the words were mangled by the serrated rumble though the intent remained clear. When the trio did not move, Kahler roared. "Now!"

Quinn knew she should duck her head and submit to whatever he had planned for her next. Knew she was treading a fine line between uncontrollable rage and a simple fit of anger. Still, she canted her head and smiled with as much serenity as she could manage. "Gladly."

Feet turning her towards the nearest doorway leading away from this moment and everything in that place, she tried not to brace for what was coming. There was no reality where Kahler would let her walk out of that house, and she knew it.

The trick to surviving an Alpha's temper was to remain pliant. Bones tended not to break when one remained limp.

The expected reaction took longer than she thought it would. Quinn managed three whole steps before his hand was around her throat. A wave of vertigo struck her seconds before the sensation of flying through the air ended with her back slamming into the wall.

Soft, pliant, calm, she screamed at a body that wanted to curl up with every muscle locked rigid in pain. There was no stopping her arms from curling around her stomach though, the way she tucked in to keep at least that one part safe. A split lip, a black eye, even a broken leg she could

survive. Quinn couldn't bring herself to think about what would happen if...

"You want to act like a fucking animal," Kahler rasped, his breath a torrid wash over her skin that made it prickle. "Then I'll treat you like one."

Knees and elbows met the floor, jarring Quinn as her teeth clacked together from the force. Hands scrabbling over the hardwood, she tried to rise only for him to shove her back. Chest slapping to the floor, she choked and gagged as Kahler's weight came down on a palm between her shoulder blades.

There was no breath to curse him as he shoved her hips high, forcing her to present. Hands smacking against the backs of her thighs, Kahler freed his cock and gave it one rough stroke, shoving the head between the taut, dry lips of her pussy.

His call was loud, aggressive, perfunctory. As soon as reddened flesh grew slick enough not to be damaged, he was inside of her. There was no finesse to his assault. Kahler buried his cock to the hilt in one hard thrust, just as Quinn managed a strangled inhale only to let it loose in a ragged wail.

Hunched over Quinn's back, hips pistonning, Kahler roared his fury. Quinn imagined that she felt the whole house shake as she was forced back and forth across shining wood that grew tacky with sweat and tears alike. Face kept smashed against the floor, her shrieks and whines scattered off into the motes of sunlight that angled their way into the hall.

And then it all changed.

Kahler wrenched her back into his thrust, pushing her legs wider, bowing her back as his grip on her shoulder tightened. The sudden change of angle and depth were perfect. The thick crown of his cock dragged across sensitive flesh, grinding against that spot that made Quinn's mouth open on a low, thick groan.

Each lunge forward pounded against her cervix, the dull ache a bliss in and of itself. Unwanted pleasure snaked its way through her veins, lighting a fire in its wake to burn through trembling muscle. There was no need for his growls and snarls any longer, her pussy dripping to cover both their thighs in a wet sheen. The sounds only drove her excitement higher, had her pushing back into his violence to take even more.

Made her hate herself a little more.

“Why,” Kahler shouted at her, his potent sweat dripping onto her back and making her skin prickle with goosebumps. “Why can you not act with an ounce of respect? I am your Alpha!”

The sharp slap of his hand against her upturned ass added to the fray. An explosion of sensation that sparked across her flesh before it settled into a raw, red hum. It coiled low in her belly, tightening down to a molten core.

“I give you a good home, a nest in my own fucking bed,” he roared, punctuating his words with more strikes against her ass and thighs. “I feed you, clothe you, give you everything you could want or need. I have been fucking gentle with you! All I ask in return is that you act in the proper way.”

“Why can you not be like Grace!”

Quinn screamed as the last blow landed, but not in pain. Kahler’s hands locked on her hips in a vice-like grip, uncaring of the bruises that already marked her flesh from his use the night before. Fury ripped through her in a wildfire, igniting her wrecked senses into a maelstrom of confusion as her cunt fluttered around him. Anticipation and anger stacked higher in a teetering puzzle of emotions that Quinn couldn’t begin to name.

Craning her neck back to look at him over her shoulder, she snarled at the male. Teeth bared, she promised violence if he dared to get close enough. Her pussy clenched around him, her body not giving a damn about anything but the knot the Alpha’s actions promised, begging for it. Uncaring of the fresh wave of tears, of the way her words came out in a broken sob, she yelled at him. “I’m not a Beta! I’m not strung out on Gods’ knows what, and I didn’t abandon my fucking child to a monster.”

“She has class,” Kahler went on, ignoring her. “She has style and grace. She listened and did as she was told.”

“Past tense, you fuck. She’s nothing now,” Quinn shrieked as pleasure threaded through the long muscles of her legs, drawing them tight. Hands digging against the polished wood of the floor, she hung her head and shoved back, matching his violence as he impaled her. How? How could she be on the verge of an orgasm during *this*?

“You ruined her! You broke her just... just like you’re doing... to me.” The last was said in a shrill scream as Quinn tumbled over, falling into the writhing, dark pit of ecstasy. Her pussy clenched around his cock, begging, pleading, the wet muscles contracting around him.

Kahler's roar was a feral thing that should have brought the house down around them. Weight crashing into Quinn's back, he crushed her into the floor. Delirious, Quinn whined, arching as much as she could to take what the bulge pressing against the lips of her twitching pussy promised.

He didn't give it to her.

Fist wrapped around his knot, slapping wetly against her, he milked it as he continued to thrust into her slick heat. Driving his spurting cock into her, drenching her with the potent fluid, he denied her the one thing she craved.

Quinn struggled, screaming incoherent nonsense as the instinctual need for him was refused. Bucking against his weight, legs kicking out, she scratched at the floor trying to get to him. Kahler pushed her head flat with a palm to her cheek, pinning her there so she could not bite. His groan as the last thin spray coated her thighs was sandpaper against her nerves.

He was still leaking come down the front of his pants as he rose, never giving her the chance to launch an attack. Large hand clenched around her nape, Kahler pulled her up with him, her wrists clamped behind her back. Marched up the stairs, her stammering curses and cries fell on deaf ears. Thick and cold, his slimy leavings trickled down her legs, and she whined at the loss of it.

Confusion didn't set in until they had passed the nursery. Kahler's bedroom and her nest awaited on the other end of the hall. He had passed it by without hesitation.

Digging her heels into the runner, Quinn shook her head violently as realization dawned. The cheery door hiding evil loomed ahead. Kahler's hands tightened, shoving her back into motion as soon as she gained traction.

The door was flung wide, but it wasn't the same as she had left it. Gone was the barren, narrow mattress on the floor and the pathetic nest. In its place there was a sturdy, low bed tucked against the wall along with a bassinet. More furniture blurred in her terror as Kahler picked her up and dropped her onto the bed.

"You want to think you're nothing but a breeder, to act like a Gods' damned savage? Have it your way. You will remain in here. Your nest, your meals, when I decide to fuck you. It all happens within these four walls. You do not step one foot out of that door without my permission."

"Or what," Quinn hissed from flat on her back. Body trembling, she grasped with frantic desperation at the edges of her anger and horror.

Kahler looked at her, narrowed eyes almost black as his lips pulled back from his teeth. She flinched as he leaned down, his shadow deadly cold as it passed over her reminding her so much of the nightmare.

“Or maybe I realize you’re more trouble than you’re worth.”

The door slammed behind him as he left, the whole wall seeming to shudder. Quinn rolled to her side, arms wrapped around her middle as she gave in and just cried.

Quinn sat back in the rocker as Adam sucked at the bottle she held with loud, wet smacks. Little mouth working, he regarded her with wide eyes that judged. As if he was weighing her technique versus that of the Beta who hovered nearby.

“Tip it up, ma’am, or he’ll swallow air,” Meghan said for what felt like the hundredth time.

Sighing, Quinn angled the bottle more. Okay, so both parties in the room were judging her. It was a constant thing now, this feeling. Forever blundering, she waded through the morass of desperate emotions that seemed to contradict each other.

Weeks had gone by since Kahler’s order that she remain in the room, and he’d made good on it. Everything arrived at the door for her, even disarrayed jumbles of bedding Kahler had freshly scented. Quinn had humiliated herself in front of Meghan and Curtis both the first time, screaming and throwing the linens around the room only to cling to the slick sheets and blankets as she’d sunk to the floor crying.

Adam was with her always now, only taken away late at night when Kahler came to her. Not that he remained for any length of time. There were no more tender caresses or touches for pleasure’s sake. He fucked her on all fours, not even touching her, knotting her as if the act was repulsive to him. He ignored the way she wept sometimes, the way she screamed and railed against him at others. He only did what he came to do, then left. It was so much worse than her time before in this room. At least then he had faced her, touched her, made his presence felt every second he was with her. Now...

It wouldn’t have gone well for Quinn if not for Adam.

She found herself purring over him when he was upset, humming as she nuzzled his soft cheeks, only to push him back into Meghan’s arms,

disconcerted with her reactions. She'd known the truth of it when she'd realized what Kahler had done, but she hadn't realized how abrupt and complete her feelings for the baby would be. Put in charge of feeding, clothing, and washing him, she was growing more comfortable with his presence by the second.

She'd come awake the moment Meghan had gone to pick him up the last time Kahler had invaded the room. Half-awake and snarling, it had taken her a long second to realize what was going on. Quinn hadn't even settled after he was gone, thoughts worrying over the now chubby boy as Kahler growled and shoved her into the familiar position.

Shaking her head at her thoughts, Quinn turned her attention back down to Adam as he worked the nipple free and smacked his lips. His radiant smile seemed to approve of her regard.

"Bet you'll be an Alpha, huh," Quinn murmured as she eased Adam up onto her shoulder to burp him. "You'll be all pig-headed and stupid, thinking with nothing but what's between your legs."

"Ma'am," Meghan said with a scandalized gasp. She held a hand to her chest, glancing towards the closed door as if an Alpha would barge in unannounced to punish them for Quinn's tactless remarks.

Quinn almost felt the urge to laugh before it was swallowed up in the dark, empty place that lurked inside of her. Instead she tucked her nose against Adam's neck, breathing in the scent of him and baby as she patted his back. There was comfort there, something she needed from him more and more every day, and that he seemed happy to give. As much as those bright blue eyes judged her at times, he snuggled against her with his hand tangled in her hair.

"I think we'll take a nap, Meghan," Quinn said as she stood from the rocker. While it was difficult to tell in the loose dresses that were all she had to wear now, Quinn didn't think her belly had grown much. If anything, she felt she was growing wan and thin. Yet her center of balance seemed off as if she was always ready to topple.

Meghan took Quinn's free elbow, helping her upright. "I'll wake you before supper."

Quinn managed a thin smile as she worked at the buttons of her dress. Meghan's presence was far more welcome in the room than Curtis' frigid demeanor.

The smile fell as she heard the loud footsteps in the hall. Curtis didn't walk like that and no one else was allowed on the second floor. The door was already opening as Quinn turned her back to it, Adam tucked against her chest as she curled around him.

He couldn't take Adam away now. She needed him.

Either sensing her agitation or upset by the sudden movement, Adam began to cry. Clinging to the fabric of her dress, he opened his mouth wide and wailed.

"Take him," Kahler said, sharp and distant as he continued into the room as if nothing was amiss with a screaming baby and a protective Omega.

"No!" Quinn scrambled away, pressing her back against the wall. Eyes wide, she clutched Adam just as he gripped her. "Y-you can't. Please. Please don't. Not right now."

"I'm not doing this in front of my son," Kahler said, lip curled in revulsion.

"I didn't mean..." Quinn stopped, crumpling in on herself as the fight withered under his disdain. He'd thought she meant for Adam to remain while he... Tears welled, burning the backs of her eyes before spilling down her cheeks. She'd accused Kahler of treating her like an animal, and he'd said he would. What more did she expect? She tried to manage a purr for Adam as she held him out on trembling arms to Meghan, but it was useless. They were both far too upset to be soothed.

As soon as the door closed, Quinn slumped down onto the mattress with knees spread and hands braced. There was no point in taking the dress off or in hiding her tear-streaked face. Still, she tried to quiet her low sobs as Kahler positioned himself behind her.

Skirt rucked up around her hips, he was there and ready. The first thrust was hard, rough. Too tight and dry, Quinn grit her teeth through the rush of pain and a fresh wave of tears. Giving up pretense, she lowered her shoulders to the bed to hide her face in the pillows where she could scream and cry as loud as she wanted.

It seemed to go on forever, whatever hell this was, but it was quick. Back tight, knees aching, Quinn clenched the sheets as her pussy contracted around his knot, drawing every surge of creamy fluid deep into her body. No matter how upset she was, no matter if she cried through the entire thing, always she came. He hated her, loathed her almost as much as she did herself. It gnawed away at her insides every time he was near. Yet still,

Quinn lost herself in those few precious seconds. Shuddering, body convulsing around the thickness of his cock and the almost too much bulge of the knot as she came groaning into the pillows.

As Quinn tried to collect the shattered pieces of her dignity and self in the aftermath, she felt his hands slide over her hip. An almost caress over her sides where they heaved with each ragged breath. Unable to stop the little jump or her muffled gasp, Quinn hunched her shoulders to her ears and tried to lower herself that much further. She'd never prayed to the Gods so hard for him not to become angry as she debased herself before him.

Instead of the angry snarl or grabbing hands, his fingers traced across her ribs where her breath stood frozen. Up to her spine, thumbs digging into the muscles that seemed to be always locked in knots. He worked away the dull ache of being in such a position one slow pass at a time. The rasping texture of the calluses on his fingers made her shiver, skin breaking out in goosebumps before he smoothed them away with the heat of his palms.

Lower lip trembling, Quinn tried to make sense of this new madness. Turning her head to the side, she peeked over her shoulder at him. Gone was the sneering distaste and rigid scowl, his features softened, almost warm as he touched her. Almost like that all too brief time when she thought he might not be all monster.

She'd been wrong to trust that look then and she would be wrong to trust it now.

She didn't trust it. But she was cracking under the weight of all his attention in that moment. Hating herself for the low hum that slipped past parted lips as he worked his magical touch over her hips. Despising the way she arched and groaned as he dug the heels of his palms into her shoulders. The way she moaned as the knot shifted, thrilling nerves that wanted more.

Quinn startled when his hand closed over her shoulder to pull her up to her knees. He met the distressed whine with a rich purr that ratcheted down her spine and sluiced the tension from her bones as he pulled her flush against his chest. The position was awkward, but he moved his hands down her chest, kneading tender breasts before sliding one hand down between obscenely parted thighs.

Kahler shushed her when she made a sound of protest, hands fluttering above his wrist. The purr deepened, became the perfect resonance for her spine to melt into him as he gathered wetness from her taut lips. Fingers plucked and played, teasing her response.

The knot was abating, the rush of fluid soaking his hand, her legs, the bedding beneath her. He never paused, hand working her swollen clit as he began to thrust into the still twitching depths of her pussy.

"That's it, little bird," Kahler whispered against her ear as her stuttering groan swept up into the pheromone laden air around them. "Take all of me."

He was careful of her that time, seeing to her, making her come twice before he knotted her again. Lying with her after, playing, teasing, until she was delirious with it, he was far less gentle then as he took her face to face. He remained with her all through the rest of the day and night, feeding her from his fingers even as he moved inside of her as he had before. The pain of those memories washed away as he kissed her, purring, rumbling a call to incite her one last time.

When Quinn next opened her eyes, groggy and sore, Kahler was gone. They had moved the bassinet beside the bed, Adam gnawing at his fist as he slept.

"Ma'am," Meghan called from the door, ever careful of intruding on Quinn's space when she wasn't aware. "It's almost time for his bottle."

"Where's..." The question died on Quinn's tongue before she could give it voice. She nodded, head feeling heavy on her neck as she shuffled the still tacky bedding from her body to rise with painful difficulty from the bed.

It didn't matter where Kahler was, she reminded herself as she pulled a new dress from the dresser. He'd done what he did and was gone. Nothing had changed. Nothing. It didn't escape her notice that she wasn't heading for the bathroom to shower away his scent, the feel of his come still leaking from her swollen pussy.

"Nothing has changed," she hissed at the reflection in the mirror above the dresser after she roughly pulled the dress over her head. Tears were already shimmering in her eyes, threatening to spill. Cheeks and nose flushed, prepared for an outright bawl. Sniffing hard, wiping at her nose with the back of her wrist, Quinn turned on her heel and strode with stiff legged determination towards the bassinet. Adam slept on though his lower lip began to pout, his little brows knitting.

"Curtis will be here with a tray soon," Meghan said as she slipped into the room, but something about her posture set Quinn on edge.

Moving to stand in front of the bassinet, Quinn canted her head, narrowed gray gaze fixed on Meghan as she scurried closer.

“He doesn’t want me to say anything. He says you’ll be... Well, that you’ll cause trouble, but I told him you have the right to know. And you have Adam now, and...” Voice just above a whisper, Meghan seemed desperate to tell Quinn whatever news she had, but the woman was terrified to disobey Curtis. The Beta male seemed to run the house outside of Kahler’s direction, so Quinn tried to remain calm and patted Meghan’s wringing hands.

“It’s all right, Meghan. Just tell me.”

“Mr. Kahler, he’s gone away. Business, they said. He’ll be gone for at least a month. That’s why—”

“Why he came here and fucked me like it meant something.” Quinn swallowed back the rising tide of bile burning the back of her throat as she turned to Adam with a calm she didn’t feel. Plucking him from the bassinet, she gave him a smile as he blinked awake.

“We don’t need him, do we, little man?”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 14

Two weeks.

Two weeks since Kahler had disrupted what had become known and, yet again, deserted her.

Huddled in the stale bedding that only held faint traces of him now, Quinn sniffled. She had tried to let Meghan put him in the nursery so her weeping wouldn't disturb him again, but she'd become frantic within minutes. So now she shoved her face into the pillow that smelled only of salt and her misery as another choked sob worked its way past clenched teeth.

Sleep only came in disjointed fits. Her eyes looked hollow, deep purple bruises staining the thin skin under a tormented gray gaze. Every sound real or imagined made her bolt upright, expecting to see him coming into the room. Even sneering at the state of her, mocking her.

She'd take it.

Food was forced down, her only reasons for trying growing larger by the day in her belly and in her arms. Adam was sitting up on his own, making gleeful messes with goop that Meghan claimed to be peaches and carrots and peas. She tried to be as enthusiastic as he was, but every bite was a chore that threatened to come back up.

She needed his touch. Needed him to purr. Needed him.

Gods, she hated him.

Blackness edged her vision, and she hoped that sleep would drag her under. She swayed, clinging to the pillow, before hazy consciousness drew her back up. She had to sleep soon. Had to.

It had only been two weeks and there were at least two more to bear.

Quinn cocked her head, the movement almost painful as she strained to hear something. Faint enough that she was sure she imagined it, but loud enough that she didn't care. It was a quiet roar of sound, bringing with it heavy, vivid memories of Kahler. She could almost smell him as he lay beside her. Those dark green eyes soft, almost languid, after they'd mated, his fingers tangling in her hair as if he liked to touch the fluffy curls...

Slipping sideways, she didn't realize she had toppled over until cheek met the bunched sheets. She didn't fight it, didn't struggle to right herself, but fell deeper into the vision clouding out the surrounding reality. They

were in his bed. Her nest. Their bodies still sheened in sweat from their mating, but even in this dream world his scent was faint, wrong somehow. Lips moving, he growled something at her, the temper at odds with the way he stroked her cheek. Somehow he was above her, smiling as he moved inside of her. Hands that were so strong and sure gripped her shoulders and shook her violently...

Shrieking as she came awake, Quinn clawed at the dark shadow looming over her holding her shoulders. Gripping, pulling, trying to wrench her free from the tangle of sheets.

Adam was screaming, Meghan's frantic cries joining his. Curtis' voice was a hoarse bellow at her ear as he continued to pull at Quinn. With a muted roar of frustration, he grabbed Quinn up, blankets and all, before he pushed Meghan ahead of him towards the landing.

Smoke filled the hall.

Dark, oily, billowing up on blistering drafts, it blotted out the scant light coming through the high windows as it choked the air. Wracked with a fit of coughing, lungs seizing, Quinn clung to Curtis as he herded Meghan down the stairs. Sweat beaded her brow, heat prickling along her exposed arms as they descended.

Adam's wails became more desperate.

Red rimmed light flickered against the walls as Curtis rushed through the main hall towards the back of the house. Adrenaline surged through Quinn at the first sight of flames licking their way up the plaster. Greedy, it devoured paintings and woodwork, flared and crackled as it consumed everything it touched. The initial implosion was soundless as a wall fell, only a rush of air and simmering heat before the ground shook, bits and pieces of the fine house tumbling down around them in a rain of glimmering reds.

In a rush of clarity, Quinn tumbled free of Curtis. Bare feet slapped against the wood floor as she caught her balance. Adam. She had to save Adam.

Meghan's screech of surprise was muffled in another blast of heat and sound. Quinn grabbed for the boy, ignoring the way tender flesh dimpled, likely to bruise, as she hauled him up into her arms. Bowed over him, protecting him from the sizzling wisps of smoldering house that scattered through the air, she ran for the promised safety of outside.

Lucidity faded almost as soon as it began as Quinn dashed through the darkness. Pools of nebulous clouds reached for her, caressing her skin, tightening like a noose around her neck. Gasping, choking, she stumbled on. She'd never known the house, but one room remained fixed in her mind. Angling her pounding feet towards the office, she dodged specters and flames.

Not until the woods appeared, rearing up before her did she stop. Cold lashed through her veins as the insidious black trunks and limbs swayed, reaching, grasping. With a strangled cry, Quinn fell back. Hoarfrost melted through the thin cotton of her dress to freeze her skin.

Not appreciating his jostling journey, Adam screamed his discontent. Even so far away from the fire working its way through the house, the wails and shrieks of an angry infant were swallowed up. People swarmed the raging bonfire, more than she had ever seen in the place. She saw no sign of Curtis or Meghan, nothing about any of the figures bathed in red and shadow familiar. Bleary gaze catching on their hurried movements, she watched them try to subdue the flames.

It was hopeless.

"Shh, shh, it's okay. Mama has you," Quinn mumbled as she tried to soothe Adam. It was freezing and there were only his pajamas and a thin blanket to keep him warm. Quinn wrapped him up tight, curling around him to keep as much heat against him as she could.

Sensations and thoughts came in jumbled arrays that she had no hope of untangling. Lashes stuttering in sluggish fits, darkness edged in around her from all sides. Quinn sat in a puddle of melted frost and murmured to Adam. Prayers and promises were made to the Gods, pleas for the Alpha who haunted her thoughts even now to appear and set things right.

Quinn gasped as her eyes opened wide. Adam's screams were not just irritated anymore. They were downright distressed. Numb lips trying to form the words that would comfort him, her lashes fluttered to clear the soupy fog from her thoughts.

The house was engulfed in fire. Almost liquid as it roiled and danced through the skeletal framework of the once fine building, Quinn watched the corner of Kahler's bedroom collapse. Time had passed, but how much she couldn't be certain. The figures that had once run around the building, trying to save it, now stood in grim silence as they watched it burn.

"I found her!"

“What the fuck is she doing all the way out here?”

Head flopping back, Quinn narrowed her eyes in the hopes of making sense of what she saw. Shadows swept across the lawn on a rolling tide, two indistinct shapes separating from the mass to rush towards her. One bulky, one smaller, they were almost on top of her.

One blink. That was all it was. Made as she tried to gather the last dregs of her resources to stand and meet this new thing head on. Only when she tried to tuck unfeeling legs under her did she realize she was drifting through the air.

The sky slipped by overhead, dark patches against even darker fingers of shadow, faint stars winking cruelly at her.

A hard jostle snapped her head in a whiplash of pain. The explosion of violet hues behind her eyelids cleared away the cold muck swamping her mind for a crystalline moment.

Adam wasn’t in her arms. His screams were hoarse, terrified. The caustic scent of his fear drifted through the night to her.

Lips curled, the rattle of her growl was feral as Quinn lashed out at the male holding her. Large and dark, no other features were clear under the screen of shivering trees. Still, her fingers found their mark, clawing down the side of his face. A rush of wet heat spattered over her hand.

The male’s howl was muffled behind clenched teeth. His supporting arms fell away, the back of a meaty fist connecting with Quinn’s temple as the thick padding of old brush and twigs rushed towards her. Stars exploded, violet-red-black, the darkness sparkling with after images of green.

“Shut that fucking thing up,” the male ground out through a snarl as he jerked Quinn up by her arm, as if trying to tear the limb from the socket.

Held dangling on tiptoe, forced to meet his bloodshot gaze, recognition seeped through the fog. Her other arm came up, intending to take Gerry’s dark eyes, but it was caught in a crushing grip. Pain crackled down her spine, explosions of agony bursting through the heaviness that plagued every cell as the Alpha wrenched her arms back. Bowed over her wrists, weight suspended from that grip alone, Quinn whined through bared teeth.

“You’re going to behave yourself now, aren’t you, you little bitch? Wouldn’t want to damage this pretty face, now would we?” Crashing into Gerry’s chest, his rancid breath washed over Quinn in a sickening wave. Ripe with rot, he whispered against the corner of her lips, “Bet I could do a whole lot before I fuck you up enough he won’t pay out.”

Quinn fell boneless back to the ground. Twigs punched into bare thighs, other detritus bloodying her legs and arms. None of it mattered as dilated gray eyes fixed on Adam in the clutches of the ragged Beta.

“Shut that fucking thing up, Tina,” the Alpha hissed, a threatening step taken towards the Beta female as if that would silence the baby.

“I’m trying, Gerry,” Tina whined, jostling Adam in an awkward bounce that only made him scream all the louder. Under the growing resonance of the Alpha’s anger, Tina slapped her hand over Adam’s mouth to muffle him. The breadth of her palm covered his nose. Brilliant crimson hazed Quinn’s vision.

Thoughts racing faster than she could hope to follow them, Quinn lurched to her feet. Hands up, gaze trained on Adam, she tried to make herself appear cowed. “Give him to me. He’ll settle down.”

“Don’t think so, bitch.”

“You’re going to kill him! He can’t breathe.”

“Shut. Up.”

“Please, look at him! She’s suffocating him. He’ll quiet down if you just give him to me.”

“Fuck!”

In an almost violent move, Tina shoved Adam into Quinn’s arms. Before she could do anything more than support his neck, Gerry had his arm around Quinn’s throat. Squeezing, choking, he angled her head down over his bulging forearm to see the sinister black pistol nuzzled against Adam’s neck.

“Make one move, bitch. He’ll make more with you, this one won’t matter to him.”

Blackness ringing her vision, Quinn tucked Adam closer to her breast and strained to offer the comforting purr. It came out as a rattling wheeze, but it worked. He quieted, turning into Quinn’s chest and latching onto her nipple through the thin cotton of her dress.

A hiss of discomfort preceded a faint whine. She couldn’t provide what he wanted. Quinn stood frozen in place as the two intruders stared on. It wasn’t the first time he’d done such a thing, but she worried what would happen if she pulled him away.

“Quinn!”

The call was faint, but they heard it clearly.

Curtis. He was searching for her.

Daring to glance away from Adam's reddened cheeks, she saw that the fire, the entire house engulfed in flames, was little more than an evil glow through the trees. The male, Gerry, had brought her much further than Quinn had realized. Moments could have been hours. Would anyone hear her if she screamed?

She could drop Adam. Take him and the dark gun still pressed against him out of the equation for the moment. Even from her short height, it was a long way down for a baby. He'd break something for sure. A leg, an arm... his neck. It could save him from a bullet, giving her a chance to scream for Curtis and the other faint voices calling into the darkness.

And if it killed him?

If that happened, she wouldn't be long in this world, either. Wasn't sure if she'd want to be. Smoke-thin images of a smiling little girl with brilliant white hair skimmed through her mind before she banished them.

There was no time to think about that.

It was all also moot. Quinn was barely able to take a decent breath around the arm that continued to crush her throat. A scream loud enough to reach wherever the others were would be impossible.

Gerry jerked her back several paces. Wrenched from his comfort, Adam began to make sounds of protest, growing louder. Quinn pulled him back into place, but he refused to latch on. His noises were only muffled.

"Shut it up or I take care of it," Gerry hissed at her ear, spittle wetting her cheek.

"I can't. He's cold and hungry. He's scared."

"I don't have time for this shit. Tina, take it and shut it up."

"Just leave him, please!" Tightening her grip on Adam, Quinn tried to twist away from Tina as she advanced. Gerry pulled his arm up and back. Quinn's mouth dropped open, silent as black rings began to seep into her vision.

Tina scurried forward, prying Quinn's fingers away from Adam's back only to have her palm gouged by Quinn's nails when they tried to snap back into place. Hissing in pain, her restless gaze bounced between Quinn and Gerry.

"You're wasting time, Tina."

Dragging in a strangled gasp as Gerry loosened his hold, Quinn kicked out with watery legs at Tina to hold her at bay for just a moment longer.

“They’ll... pay more attention to him... Give you time. Know it was... you if... you take him.”

“Please, I’ll go quietly,” Quinn croaked, ignoring the male to beseech Tina with eyes that welled with horror and grief. It wasn’t supposed to be like this. She shouldn’t have had to worry about Adam, shouldn’t have had to offer herself like this, shouldn’t have even been there. If Kahler had never done this to her... The tears burned as they slipped down her frozen cheeks.

“She’s right, Gerry. It’d be weird if she disappeared with the kid, then we showed up right after he bought him back,” Tina said, the whine in her cracking voice showing the strain of speaking up against the Alpha.

“Quinn! Where are you? Answer me!”

Gerry didn’t say a word for a long moment, eyes trained on a break in the trees where Curtis’ voice came clearest. The crash of underbrush and bushes was coming ever closer, though not close enough yet. The rise and fall of his chest against Quinn’s back slowed, evened. There was time. Plenty of time if they left Adam behind. His indignant, terrified screams would cover a whole host of sounds.

“Put him out of the way. Don’t make it easy for them to find him.”

Unwilling to waste another second, Gerry clamped a hand over Quinn’s mouth as she handed Adam over to Tina. There was no fight, no protest. As soon as Adam was free of her, the Alpha swung Quinn up, arm crushing her middle as he moved stealthily through the trees. The boy’s screams followed, accusing and bereft.

Adam would be fine. She had another life to worry about.

Leaving Tina to catch up, Gerry made his way to a hard-packed dirt road that Quinn hadn’t even known existed. It must have been much further back into the woods than she had traveled that awful night. With no landmark to get her bearings from, there was no hope of trying to outrun him, even if she thought to try. Grief clogged the back of her throat.

Dark and sinister, a low black car waited in the shadows. Only the faint gleam of moonlight on glass gave any indication it was there at all until Gerry swung the back door open and flung her inside. Rough upholstery skinned her palms and knees as she tumbled to the floor. Before she could right herself, he was in beside her. A hand clamped to the back of her neck, pressing her face to the mildew scented cushion.

Minutes later, Tina scrambled into the front seat. The door closed with exaggerated care before she brought the car rumbling to life. The car swung wide, Quinn's knees scraping across the carpet as her weight shifted. The physical pain was nothing. Heart a shredded ruin in her chest, Quinn swore she could still hear Adam screaming for her.

Miles went by under Quinn's throbbing knees. Her stomach twisted and churned, breaths coming in pained gasps between clenched teeth. Every dip and bump in the dirt track bounced her body around the floor of the car. With her head pinned in place, her vision swam as bile burned her nose and throat.

"I'm gonna be sick."

Hauled up to kneel on the seat, Quinn got a glimpse of cars zipping along in the near distance. The highway. Tina was steering the car away from the lights of the city, deeper into the less populated outskirts. Racking her brain to figure out where they could be taking her, Quinn couldn't think of anything. A few campgrounds, a mobile home park, a nature preserve somewhere out there that connected to the ocean. It was a virtual desert between Alderbrook and Lancaster.

Coherent thoughts scattered as Gerry's hand came up, fingers clenching over her breast.

"Let's see what we've got here." The hand slipped down, fingers tucked between the buttons of her dress before wrenching the two sides free of each other. With little fanfare, the bodice was ripped open, the delicate buttons not even daring to make much more than a muffled thud against the seats.

"Gerry, maybe—"

"Fucking drive, bitch."

The sheer breadth of fury contained in those three words promised pain that Quinn couldn't imagine. Somehow, she managed to not flinch away from it, her flesh going cold and numb. Didn't feel the scrape of his nails as he tore his way through the rest of the buttons. Arms limp as the fabric was ripped from her shoulders. The rush of clarity and adrenaline was seeping away, leaving Quinn lifeless. There was only the hollow ache the exact shape and size of an infant boy. If she dared to examine the gnarled, pulsing pain behind that, she knew she would find a demon with green eyes waiting, watching, repulsed.

“You’re gonna be real good for me now. All the trouble you caused me tonight, you’re gonna make it worth my while.”

Only dimly aware of Gerry’s hands as they mauled her, Quinn watched the receding lines of traffic in a stupor through the back window. There was no resistance when he pulled her up to straddle his thighs. She didn’t even grimace when he rubbed his cock between her legs. The breach was swift, painful, and she didn’t feel a thing. The groans and grunts of the male were muffled, lost in the mire.

Time passed. The road wandered on. Quinn didn’t know how long Gerry rutted up into her, grasping and clawing at her softer parts before he slapped the back of his hand across her cheek. Slammed into the side of the car, she twisted so that her back took the brunt of the impact. Swearing she heard the metal give a plaintive groan, Quinn hissed in a pained breath.

“He mated her,” Gerry roared, fist closing in Quinn’s hair as he jerked her up to face him. “That lying cunt said he only bred her!”

“She said she wasn’t sure, Gerry,” Tina said in a trembling whisper from the front, eyes fixed on the road ahead. “He only let the nanny and that black guy near her.”

“Fuck!”

“What does it matter, baby? He’ll pay more—”

“He’ll kill anyone who touched her, you dumb bitch. He’s not going to pay a damn thing. That’s if the worthless bitch even survives this shit. Fuck!”

“What do you mean?”

“Omegas need their fucking mate when they’re knocked up. Fucking hell, Tina, how stupid are you?”

“I’m sorry, baby.”

“Just fucking drive.” Gerry yanked Quinn forward, his dull brown eyes narrowed as he stared at her. Making a disgusted sound in the back of his throat, he pushed her down. Mashing her face against his wilted cock, rubbing the wet flesh against her, he sneered. “Might as well get a little use out of you while I figure this shit out.”

Gerry was intent on getting his money’s worth from her. Despite the cramped conditions of the backseat, he fucked her the entire way to their destination. Only knotting her once, he’d groaned loud and long the entire time. Praising Omega pussy as he’d twisted and rolled Quinn’s hips in a crushing grip while she faced the front seat.

It was nearing dawn when Tina pulled the car into a motel parking lot. Made sometime during the era of long, single story breezeways, they had the room furthest from the office. It was easy to hide Quinn in the Alpha's coat, carrying her inside doubled over his arm. Even if there had been anyone awake to notice, they wouldn't have.

Crusted with Gerry's tacky come, Quinn only slumped to the floor when he freed her inside the dingy room. The gaudy burnt orange and dirty yellow curtains were pulled tight, the mismatched avocado green coverlet and dingy beige sheets in disarray. Brown carpet crunched under her hands as they splayed.

"Go get some food."

Moving to stand over Quinn, his dirty boots planted on either side of her rounded shoulders. Shivering from a cold that had nothing to do with the frigid temperature of the room, Quinn couldn't even bring her head up. Staring at the grungy carpet, at her filthy fingers pressing into the short pile, she clung to the edge of consciousness.

"Gerry, c'mon—" Tina's plea cut off with a smack of flesh. She stumbled into the wall with a hollow thud, rebounding to the floor beside Quinn. Lip split, Tina wiped at the blood. Smeared makeup showed mottled bruises, days old.

"What did I say?"

"O-Okay, baby. I'll go get some burgers." The words were mushy, but Tina said them with a smile as she clambered to her feet.

"Don't forget the ketchup this time."

Almost against her will, Quinn craned her neck back as Tina froze with her hand on the knob. Every muscle rigid, the stench of Tina's fear seemed disproportionate to the warning. As did Gerry's smooth, rumbling tone as he'd said it.

"I-I won't, baby."

With that, the Beta was gone.

Gerry didn't even wait for the sound of the car starting. He went to the door, sliding the bolts home before turning back to Quinn with a smile that punched her in the stomach with cold dread. Tina wouldn't be able to come back in until Gerry opened the door for her.

"Now let's me and you have some real fun."

If Quinn thought to struggle, it was obvious it would be useless. In a matter of shattered breaths, Gerry had her arms tied behind her back. A rag

stuffed between her lips was secured with a length of fabric, her stomach heaving. Panic wide eyes rolled, too much white showing as he picked her up with terrifying ease.

Thrown over the edge of the bed, he kicked her legs out until she lay sprawled and spread. Quinn could only whine low in her throat as the male began to strip behind her.

“You be good, do as I say, and you’ll be fine,” Gerry crooned as he moved between her legs. Nudging his swollen cock against dry folds, he chuckled.

Without warning his weight came down on her. Large hands splaying across her upper back, his hips connected with hers. The thick length of him shunted inside, tearing delicate flesh.

Quinn screamed behind the gag, legs kicking in useless jerks. Unable to even twist away, she was held still for the slow drag of his withdrawal before the next punishing thrust.

“Oh, fuck, yeah,” Gerry groaned as he lurched forward again. The slide of his cock was smoother, and it had nothing to do with slick. “I almost forgot how tight you bitches are.”

With her screams punctuating each rolling snap of his hips, Gerry fucked her into the mattress. The warm trickle oozing down her legs, spattering her thighs promised damage she couldn’t comprehend. Everything hurt, insides on fire, her pussy a thrumming agony that lit up the backs of her eyelids with dark stars with every slap of his groin against her ass. Body realizing the injury done, her pussy seeped slick to ease the destruction.

Shifting, he put his weight behind several rapid thrusts, shoving Quinn up the bed only to haul her back. “Fucking beautiful.”

It went on forever, too long, before Quinn collapsed to the filthy sheets and sobbed. Each choked breath was a struggle, the wet rag muffling what she couldn’t drag in through her clogged nose. The wet gurgles and gagging only spurred the male on.

“Oh, fuck, yes!”

There was no warning. His knot was shoved into her, complete and throbbing. Her scream was a ragged, broken thing. Insides shifting to accommodate too much flesh, Quinn keened and tried to remain motionless.

Gerry had other ideas.

“Take my knot, bitch,” he roared, landing an open-handed slap against her ass.

The burn was immediate, but it was nothing compared to the wrenching agony as she jumped. Trying to force overburdened muscles to clench, her tears became frantic as blow after blow rained down on her ass, back, and shoulders. Each one knocked her body, jostling the knot deep inside until it felt like her insides were about to be ripped out.

“Squeeze it!”

Hands closed around her throat, bending her back until Quinn stared up at the ceiling. Mouth working around the gag, tongue pushing at wet cloth, there was nowhere she could go and nothing she could do. Hands and arms long since numb, were helpless. Bent back at a painful angle, even her hips wouldn’t move.

Heat suffused her face before it began to tingle, the angry burn at the corners of her mouth fading as the dingy motel became a gray washed landscape. Black edged her vision, narrowing it into pinpoints. Her whole body convulsed once, twice.

Gerry bellowed, dropping her back to the bed. Rocking the knot inside the spasming clutches of her cunt, he came. Each surge burned, salt in her wounds as he ground in deep. Not until the last watery spray coated her insides did he collapse on top of her. Rubbing his chest against her back, scenting her with his sweat while shifting the knot to keep her milking him, Gerry’s satisfied laugh was an almost growl.

“See? You’re fine. No lasting harm,” he panted against her neck.

Numb, Quinn stared at the old-fashioned alarm clock on the bedside table bolted to the wall. The numbers flipped over, proving to her that the world had not ended, and she was still alive. The knot slipping free didn’t disturb her, visions of a white-blond girl with deep green eyes buoying her through the worst of the pain centered south of her waist.

The gag was removed, her arms freed but wrists still bound together in front of her. Quinn remained where she was. Fluids leaked from her, down her thighs to cool in sludgy rivulets on her calves and ankles. She didn’t want to know, didn’t want to see. Her head remained right where he left it when a knock sounded at the door.

“G-Gerry, baby? I got dinner.” Even muffled as it was through the door, Quinn could hear the chattering of Tina’s teeth. How long had it gone on? How long had the Beta stood outside in the freezing cold of the graying dawn?

Without responding, Gerry rose from where he'd been toying with Quinn's pussy to open the door. He showed no shame or concern over the state of his nude body. Turning her head into the dingy sheets, Quinn tried to forget the sight of lurid red on his fingers and his recovering dick. The sounds of the many locks disengaging came to her with crystal clarity, as did the knowledge there would be no escape.

"What'd you get?"

"Um..." Tina's voice was strained, a wheezing sound like a controlled gasp filling the dead air before she answered. "I got cheeseburgers, and those spicy fries you like."

"Good."

Crinkling paper bags, the scent of greasy meat and fried potatoes filled the dank confines of the room. It was better than the reek of sweat and sex tinged with copper. Quinn almost laughed, biting it back at the last moment before the hysterical sound could bubble up and escape. Hadn't she asked for a cheeseburger before all hell broke loose? Now the thought of eating made her stomach give a violent lurch, sending Quinn back into the gray mire where the tiny spark of hope lived in full color.

She was so involved in her thoughts she didn't pay the couple any attention until she heard the distinct sound of a body hitting the floor.

"Do it now."

"But, baby, we don't have any!"

"Sure, we do."

Quinn could just see Tina from the corner of her eye, kneeling up on the floor as Gerry pinched her cheeks together tight enough to purse her lips, skin blanched white under his fingers. A cruel smile preceded him spitting on her face. It dripped in thick strands from her eyebrow onto her cheekbone, smearing across her nose.

"Do it or take her place."

"I'm going, okay? I'm going."

Denim scuffed over carpet before feminine hands, cold and trembling, came to Quinn's legs. Parting her thighs, spreading her wide once more. Tina's hands moved up, spreading Quinn's cheeks wide. Swearing she wouldn't react, Quinn bit her lips hard.

Her head shot up with a stifled shriek, twisting around at the first touch of a delicate tongue on her asshole. Meeting Tina's cold glare, seeing no help there, her gaze swung to Gerry.

“Lie back down and let her do her job.” Stroking his engorged cock with one hand, smearing still wet fluids over the glistening length, he held a burger in the other hand. “If you don’t, I’m going to tie you back up and I’ll just fuck it as is. What did I say about being good?”

“Answer him,” Tina hissed, her nails digging deep into Quinn’s flesh.

“Do as you say, and I’ll be fine,” Quinn mumbled, eyes never leaving Gerry. His smile was beyond sadistic. If she’d ever thought Alton was unreasonable or cruel, he was a saint next to this man. Rolling back onto her stomach, she tried not to flinch and squirm as Tina applied her tongue. Feeling disgusting, beyond filthy, she clenched the blanket in her fists.

And he watched.

Rustling paper proved he continued to eat, only giving the occasional groan of appreciation when Quinn lost control and whined. The only other noises were the wet sounds of Tina’s mouth and Quinn’s ragged breaths. Tina stretched Quinn’s ass wide, straining the skin to open Quinn up to Gerry’s view.

Quinn’s only warning was when Tina was yanked away. A moment later, she felt the heat of him between her legs once more. It was stupid, useless, but Quinn still cried into the thin mattress at what lay ahead. Even Kahler hadn’t done this to her, only his fingers, and not even that since...

“Now me...” Gerry’s tone was almost gentle.

Tina gagged, the wet gurgling all too familiar. His sighs were loud, almost frustrated. Quinn flinched, muffling a shriek, when Tina slapped her, scratching at her thigh. “Can’t even take all of me and you wonder why I have to fuck other women. For fuck’s sake open your damn mouth!”

Tina went tumbling across the floor as Gerry shoved her away. Blood seeped from her lip, the split from earlier opened, a new one forming on the other side. Bruises peeked through her tear streaked makeup, showing a rainbow of pain.

“Get the gag on her.”

Tina didn’t care about her nails or the way they scraped across Quinn’s tongue, the insides of her cheeks, even her gums as the wet ball of cloth was shoved into Quinn’s mouth. Snarled curls were yanked, strands jerked out by the hundreds as the strip was tied around her head. As much as Quinn didn’t want to blame her, she did.

“Now put me inside her.”

The nudge of hot flesh against her ass was terrifying, Tina's hand brushing against her more so. Nothing prepared her for the way one of them spat on the exposed ring of muscle. Keening low in her throat, shaking her head, Quinn tipped her hips. Offering the painful ruin of her pussy.

"Be good," Gerry snapped, the back of his hand coming down on Quinn's ass before he gripped her hips and put her into the position he wanted her in. Tina's hand returned, centering him. Another glob of spit rained down on her clenched ring. "Relax, sweetheart. It'll hurt a lot less."

Unbelievable pressure followed by indescribable pain.

There was no easing inside of her, no letting her adapt to his intrusion. Gerry shoved in amid Quinn's screams. He laughed as she bucked and writhed, bound hands clawing at the bed to pull herself away from the agony exploding through her. Ignoring her kicking legs, he pushed forward until he had his entire length hilted.

Making a series of rapid thrusts, Gerry grunted and pulled out. Pinning Quinn's hips with a palm splayed over her back, Tina's squawk of surprise and revulsion cut off. The gagging was immediate this time, Gerry's grunts accompanied by Tina slapping at the bed, Quinn, him. Watery and vile, vomit splattered to the floor beside Quinn's face as Tina heaved over the side of the bed.

The briefest hesitation as he aligned once more, Gerry lurched forward. No longer amused with the way Quinn scrambled to be free, he paused only long enough to cover her back. Hunching against her, he ground his cock in deep, eager, excited. Foul breath washing over her shoulder, he licked and bit at her flesh as he groaned and praised her.

Assaulted nerves screamed as loudly as Quinn wailed. Reaching up, trying to gouge the eyes of the male on top of her, she found her wrists caught.

Bile and thick saliva dripping from mangled lips, Tina sneered and pulled Quinn's arms taut.

Chapter 15

“I’m telling you, man, she’s prime. She’s a little used, but you know that Omega pussy stays tight no matter what,” Gerry said into the cellphone, slapping his dick against Quinn’s cheek. He hadn’t dared to put it in her mouth. He kept her gagged unless he was shoving the barest of necessities at her, threatening to take it away. “And if that doesn’t work for them, her ass ain’t half bad, either.”

After a week with Gerry and Tina, Quinn wasn’t sure how much worse it could get, though he seemed to have lost the sharpest edge of his sadistic bent. At least with her. He’d made Tina get actual lubricant, smearing it over his prick when he fucked Quinn, and that was coming less and less often. Today, he’d only been toying with her, seeming content to slake his needs with Tina.

Now, Quinn felt hollow. She’d been drained, wrung out, starved, and beaten. It was only the spark of life that buoyed her, the one that had decided to make itself known while Quinn was on all fours, Gerry in her ass again.

A mother shouldn’t feel her baby’s first kick while having to endure that.

Now Gerry seemed to know what he would do with her, provided the price was right.

“I’m telling you, thirty is a steal for this one... Yeah, so what? Since when is a pregnant Omega a turn off? If nothing else, you don’t have to worry about getting her shit for a few months.” Gerry’s lined face broke out into a sunny smile that was more terrifying than anything he’d done to her so far. When he aimed it down at her, Quinn almost peed herself. “That’s what I like to hear, Alton! You tell me the time and place and I’ll have her there for you to test out.”

Everything went blank for a moment. She saw Gerry’s lips continuing to move, scratching out a time and address on Quinn’s chest in red ink, but she didn’t hear him, didn’t feel it. Alton... There could only be one of them that Gerry was trying to sell her to in Alderbrook. Alton had always prided himself on offering the best pussy money could buy.

Her expression showed nothing, she knew that, but she still closed her eyes. Hoping, praying, that neither Gerry nor the still hiccupping Tina would see the sudden flash of victory in her gaze.

Alton.

He'd make it up to her if she had to rip his limbs off and shove his cock down his throat.

"Get her cleaned up," Gerry said after he copied the information onto the back of a ketchup stained napkin. Giving a rough slap to Quinn's cheek in parting, he went outside.

"Get up." Full of spite and hatred, Tina's voice still wavered with the last of her tears.

The scrape of nails on her scalp was enough to get Quinn scrambling off the bed, ruining the trembling grip that sought to make Quinn pay in pain. Any pity she'd have felt for the Beta female was long since turned to ash. Tina exalted in her position of meager power, but often fell into meting out twisted revenge.

Shoulder slamming into the mildew crusted tiles of the shower as Tina pushed her, Quinn swallowed back the stream of curses she wanted to hurl at Tina. Unsure if it was because Gerry had turned his sadistic needs onto Tina or if it was because he had demanded Quinn spread for him while he did it, the result was the same. Quinn would suffer the small wounds Tina counted as victories.

Scrubbing away the crust of filth from her skin under the frigid spray, she ignored Tina's snarls and barks as much as she could. It was the first time they had allowed her to be clean, and she'd be damned if she would have Alton see her covered in white scum.

Bundled in a pathetic scrap of fabric that would have gotten her called off the floor at Wicked, and a coat stinking of Gerry, Quinn was hustled into the back of a gray clunker of a car that wasn't familiar. It looked stolen, but it didn't matter. Gerry wasn't stupid enough to get pulled over, and with Tina crowding Quinn in the backseat, escape wasn't even a glimmer of an idea. Even if she had thought to try to run, there was nowhere to go. They would run her down in moments. Quinn settled against the dank upholstery and stared out the window, indifferent as Gerry guided the car down one backroad after another.

Her time would come. And when it did, she would release a fury the likes of which none of these people had ever witnessed.

It was full dark by the time they reached a rundown monstrosity of crumbling brick that claimed it was a hotel. Quinn knew it very well. She had come there many a night with Alton, tucked against his side as he

claimed his due from the owner. Straining to keep her breaths calm and her heart from ripping free of its cage, Quinn bowed her head to hide any possible trace of her eagerness. Docile was an understatement for her demeanor as she waited for Gerry to collect her from the backseat, scurrying at his side as he marched her through the rickety doors that screamed an infernal wail of protest.

The reed-thin Beta behind the counter didn't even look up from the pages of his magazine, the glossy paper splashed with images of women bound, gagged, sporting vivid red lines on their flesh.

"We're meeting him," Gerry said, a sleazy smile on his lips as he shook Quinn at the man.

"Room four-oh-two." Narrow finger touched to his tongue, the page turned in a lazy arc to reveal more flesh.

No key was offered, but it appeared that was how it worked. Dragged towards the stairs, Quinn guessed it made sense. Customers wouldn't need the doors to be locked until they were inside, and there couldn't be anything worth stealing from this shithole.

By the third floor Quinn lost what little steam her anger had fueled. She hadn't eaten more than scraps, hadn't rested, and the demands on her body had been almost too much. More than once she had laid there trembling and wondering if this would be the time that her body would break, losing the little bundle of light and hope inside. Stumbling as her ankle turned, she crashed hard down to her knees on the rough concrete step. Palm scraping across the craggy texture, she struggled to remain upright. There wasn't even breath to make a sound of pain around the wheezing gasps. Only Gerry's hand kept her from tumbling back down to the bottom.

"Fuckin' hell, bitch."

Quinn didn't even bother to think of squirming when Gerry hauled her up. Sheened in a cold sweat, skin flushed pink, she thought she might be ill if she even tried.

The room was beyond filthy. Saturated in the leavings of so many, steeped in violence and fear, it made Quinn gag. The brown spotted sheets were stiff with something vile. Puke, piss, and come were a miasma that tried to send her into unconsciousness as her stomach turned and roiled.

Tina's piercing yelp pulled Quinn's attention away from the state of the disgusting room. Gerry's hand wove through ashy brown locks to bow Tina's spine over his arm. Teeth bared, voice an ominous growl, he said,

“Don’t make me have to teach you a lesson again. Don’t fuck this up for us.”

Nothing more than a strangled scream escaped Tina’s gaping lips as Gerry wrenched her back further. Bent unnaturally, hands clenched into useless fists, only the stark terror in her watery brown eyes could answer him.

“Don’t. Fucking. Touch. Her.” Each word was paired with the hard crack of flesh meeting, the back of Gerry’s hand knocking Tina’s head from side to side.

As soon as he had begun, it was over. Quinn stared in horrified fascination as the dull gleam of insanity oozed from his eyes. Gerry’s lips curled in his version of a smile as he turned to Quinn, letting Tina drop from his grip. Muddy brown searing her flesh, he jerked the coat from Quinn’s body leaving her only in a strip of fabric that did little to conceal. The shadow of her pussy was on full display, breasts held back with a thin strip of cloth, belly obscene as it jutted from her narrow hips. Looking down, Quinn grimaced to see the dusty rose of her areolas visible. Somehow it made everything worse to have the aching points of her nipples covered.

Then he was on her, rough hands gripping her ass, spreading, lifting. Dry and twisting, a finger was shoved inside. Quinn’s unprepared squeal of pain made him chuckle.

“You better be a good girl for them,” he said, voice a grating rasp against her cheek. The finger dug deeper still before he edged it out. A rhythm was set, torturous and slow, as he took in the way she bared her teeth and fought to remain still. “You can fight a little, but don’t you go making them think you’re not willing enough. This doesn’t pan out the way it should, well... I’m sure I could find some use for you. Cause you and I both know that nobody else is gonna want anything to do with you after what you’ve done.”

Flung back on the bed, Quinn managed to remain on the mattress even when the rusty springs squealed and tried to launch her off the side. Fingers scraping through something wet and cold, she almost wished she had tumbled off.

Tina ignored her after Gerry left them alone to wait down the hall for Alton. Quinn reminded herself that it was good, that Tina’s attention was

nothing but more pain. It also left Quinn alone with her thoughts and that was not a place she wanted to dwell.

If she let go, even for just one moment, the stranglehold she had on the present moment, she'd feel that awful ache in her chest. The writhing agony that howled and tore at her heart, ripping through her lungs until she wanted to scream. If she started, she would never stop. Arms wrapped around her swollen middle, she dashed away any thought of a smiling girl with bright blonde hair and deep green eyes. There could be no room for memories of callused hands and that perfect rumble that had caused all of this to happen. Gerry was right. No one would touch her with another male's marks scarring her shoulder, and not with a child in tow.

That wouldn't matter, though. That wouldn't be her life. She wouldn't, couldn't be a twisted version of Marina. Alton would help her, and she'd figure something out.

Caught unaware when the door slammed open, Quinn stumbled to her feet in reflex, prepared to fight, to run, to do whatever it took to get away.

The man who came through the doorway wasn't Alton, wasn't even familiar. A shock of vivid red hair streaked down the middle of a shaved skull, tattoos adorning the stubbled head. Tawny skin, bottomless dark eyes, he had a swagger that said he belonged. He looked like any number of Alton's lackeys, grungy jeans slung low on his hips, leather jacket, dirty shirt. Yet there wasn't a single memory of the gentle roundness of high cheekbones, the squareness of his jaw, as Quinn racked her brain for something, anything identifiable about him.

"He's busy. Either I take care of it now, or it doesn't happen," he said as he came further into the room, Gerry close on the heels of battered black boots. The brown-black of his eyes caught the sallow light as he looked Quinn over. The casual inspection finished, he turned on his heel towards Gerry a sneer on his thin lips. "She's further gone than you let on and you didn't say nothing about the marks."

"What does it matter how big it is? They can still fuck her."

"And the marks? You trying to shove your cast offs on us now, Gerry?"

"I didn't fuckin claim some cunt." Bristling, Gerry stalked towards the male. Chest puffed, arms bunching, Quinn imagined she could see his hackles raised.

"Then whose are they?" Delivered in a smooth tone, the man's face remained expressionless apart from a single raised brow.

“Some guy. Bailed on her when she came out of a heat knocked up.”

“And you got her how?”

“Found her in the trash.”

“Just to be clear. No asshole is looking for his little Omega that could make trouble.”

“Not at all,” Gerry said, lying with so little effort that even Quinn could almost believe him.

“Well, all right then,” the man said, all smiles now as he turned to Quinn. He clapped his hands and rubbed his palms together as he eyed her with newfound interest. “Give me an hour, put her through the paces.”

Quinn backed away, gray gaze wide as it sunk in that her entire plan was crumbling to dust before her eyes. Dark thoughts crept under her skin with a freezing, aching slowness. Alton wasn’t here. There would be no rescue.

“Hell, make it two,” the man said, voice pitched low, a husky growl resonating through his chest.

“Take your time, Josh.” With that, Gerry snagged Tina by the scruff, dragging her from the room. With a parting warning glare at Quinn, the door shut tight.

“Where’s Alton?” It took three attempts to get the words out past the swell of fear and rage in her throat, through the chattering of her teeth as she watched the man stalking her.

“Ah, darlin’, don’t you know not to talk about another man when one’s getting ready to fuck you? That’s okay. I’ll teach you. Now come here. Be a good girl.”

Quinn flinched, wedging the length of her trembling spine into the corner. The reminder of that moment, Kahler’s voice as she stammered through excuses... Wrenching her thoughts back into the moment as the wail built up in the back of her throat, she hissed, “Alton knows me.”

“Sure, fine,” Josh murmured as he caught her in the corner. Large hands splayed to either side, he moved in close. Crowding her, the scent of Alpha and cheap cologne mired what little air rattled into her lungs. The hard ridge deforming the front of his pants nudged at her belly.

Quinn recoiled, trying to shove through damp plaster. “Y-You don’t understand! Alton—I mean Rip, he knows me. I’m his baby girl, okay? All of this is—”

The back of Josh’s hand met her cheek. A line of searing blue pain slashed across her cheek, something warm and thick dribbling down to

spatter her chest. The ring on his middle finger, fashioned into a lurid skull with women's legs as crossbones, was smeared with brilliant red.

"You be quiet now, darlin'."

Hearing the dry click of her throat, Quinn dared to look up. His dark eyes held nothing. Even with the erection he freed to rub bare against her hip as he kneaded her tender breasts, none of it reached those dark eyes. As she went quiet and still under his passionless gaze, Josh gave a little nod then sent his attention to what his hands were doing.

He didn't speak, didn't groan and growl at her. When he lifted her with ease, pinning her against the wall with his hips as he hilted his swollen prick inside her, there was nothing more than a low grunt at the friction from a pussy too dry to take him. A glob of saliva, spat at the base of his cock and smeared with his thumb, allowed him to continue.

Never had Quinn felt so small, weak, and useless. As her body was maneuvered at will, the male almost silent as he fucked her, she wanted to scream and cry. Bent over the bed, hands braced as the Alpha shunted back into her, the burn in her eyes trickled down her cheeks. The cut stung and ached, but it was something else to focus on. Something to draw her away from that moment as she allowed yet another male to take her. Half the size of Josh, she wouldn't win a fight. Battling Gerry would see her dead.

Even as the thought formed, of ending the pain and degradation, her body rebelled. Growing slick and hot, swallowing the Alpha's cock with obscene squelching. It dripped down her thighs, smeared the Alpha's balls as they slapped against her mound.

Sensing the change, feeling the difference in the smooth glide of his thrusts, Josh redoubled his efforts. He shoved her leg up onto the bed, canting her hips just so as he pounded against her, battering against her cervix so she grunted with each violent thrust.

Delicate muscle began to flutter around the male's girth, teasing out the response her body sensed was close. The swell of his knot began to brush against strained lips, slapping against tender folds. Nature had its last laugh as Quinn took his entire length, pussy a rippling, twisting wave of contractions as she urged the knot to lock in. To fill her.

Built to withstand the violence and abuse of an Alpha, to protect the life growing inside of her no matter what, Quinn sobbed as she came. She needed an Alpha to stay alive, to keep her child safe.

Any Alpha would do.

Curled up on her side on the stinking mattress, Quinn drifted in a black fog, distancing herself as much as she could. The dull ache between her thighs, the sharp sting vibrating from her ass, even the twinge in her jaw was buried under an expanse of murky shadows.

Gerry had entered for a moment, thinking to have his fun one last time before Josh disabused him of the notion. She was property now. Perhaps Quinn should be thankful for that at least. After collecting his money—a mere twenty grand since she was not only further along in her pregnancy but scarred and bruised in addition—Gerry and Tina slithered back into whatever hole they had crawled from.

Now she listened to the low rise and fall of Josh's voice as he spoke with someone on his cellphone. He didn't play with her, didn't even look at her much. Just sat in the lone rickety chair nearby. The scent of an Alpha not soured by insanity and sadistic glee covered her in a fine sheen. Stomach filled, holes clenching tight to hold in the last sticky clumps of his load, Quinn sunk deeper into the haze and didn't think too hard about the overwhelming relief these things brought.

A pattern tapped at the door tried to wrench her back into the moment, Quinn digging her heels in, refusing to acknowledge anything but the fragile peace centered beneath her lungs. Josh called something out and then he was there, looming over her, his breath scattering over her shoulder and cheek as he leaned close.

"You're going to be a good girl for our friends. They're going to give you what you need, and you're going to make sure they leave out of here with a smile on their faces. Got it?"

A soft slap to her cheek brought hazy gray back, a rush of something electric sizzling through her synapses bringing everything into hyper focus. Quinn only nodded, not even certain what she was agreeing to anymore.

"Good girl," Josh said, and if there was the smallest rumble in his tone, Quinn clung to it like a life raft.

Then he was gone, four men in his place looking down at her with undisguised greed. Alphas, all of them.

"I get her pussy first," the muscle-bound male in a suit far too good for such a place as this said through a growl. It was so violent, so eager, it was almost a challenge in and of itself.

Quinn closed her eyes as hands reached for her, rolling her onto her hands and knees.

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter 16

Lashes glued shut under layers of unspeakable things, stiff from only a moment of sleep, Quinn whimpered as something hard banged on the door. Sunlight streamed through the threadbare curtains, piercing her retinas through a haze of white. Curling into a tiny ball, Quinn sought refuge under the blistering heat that had pinned her down not so long ago.

Josh shoved her away, climbing out of the bed amid a string of snarls and grumbles. Jerking his pants on, he shuffled to the door. It flung wide open as soon as the lock turned.

“Care to tell me why you’re fucking my pussy?”

Eyelids flying open, ignoring the little burst of pain, Quinn tried to make herself even smaller. Tucking her legs tight to her belly, arms wedging knees close, she protected the most vulnerable part of her.

“Ah, c’mon, it was late and—”

“Don’t give a shit.” The lesser Alpha stumbled back from the casual shove to his shoulder, slammed into the cracked plaster with a flurry of white dust. Well-muscled chest expanding, filling the entire space with aggression, he stepped closer to Josh, letting loose a subterranean growl of dominance.

Quinn clenched her teeth against the scream clawing at the back of her throat. Fingers gripping the edge of the bed, she began to pull herself towards the side furthest from the pair. Head ducked low, reeking of fearful submission, she tried to slink away.

“I’m sorry—”

“Oh, you’re gonna be. And if I ever catch you with one of my girls, you are gonna wish I killed you outright.”

“I’ll pay, Rip. I’ll pay for my time with her, I swear.” Head canted, he bared the side of his throat to the dominant male, offering the choice vulnerability. Seeking to appease, Josh stammered out, “I got that creep Gerry down to twenty, and I charged those guys extra. All told, she made you back the price you paid for her.”

Alton scoffed, an ugly sneer disfiguring his lips. Quinn sensed his attention turning towards her. Knees on the stiff carpet, she abased herself and slipped off the mattress. He couldn’t see her like this. Covered in the slime of so many, still dripping from her abused cunt in thick rivulets. A

sob was caught, battering at the back of her teeth as she shriveled before the sound of stomping boots.

“Get the fuck up.” The order was snapped out, a command not to be ignored.

Quinn managed to scrape an extra inch away, pressing down into the moldy carpet as she huddled in on herself. Face hidden, she prayed to whatever deity would listen that he’d turn away, leave, just forget about his new acquisition.

“I said get—” The assault stopped before it even started, his hand closed around her upper arm. An experimental sniff followed by a deep inhale. He dragged her up, holding her suspended as Quinn tried to fall back to the floor. Disbelief was thick in his voice, confusion tight on its heels as he whispered, “Quinn?”

Meaty palm pushing back the stiff, crusty folds of her hair, he forced desperate gray eyes to meet his. His howl was deafening, shuddering through her bones and ripping something inside of her free. He flung her away, her body crashing into the sticky wall with a splintering crack. Covered in plaster dust, chunks of it clinging to her hair, terrified, she met his gaze for only a bare heartbeat before she eased her body back down to her position of horrible submission.

Alpha anger was dangerous. Make yourself small, make the smallest target you could, while they raged around you. Give no reason for them to turn that strength on you.

The other Alpha in the room wasn’t so lucky.

Not daring to raise her eyes from the thin stretch of putrid yellow nap in front of her, Quinn could only listen to the sounds of Alton’s fury being unleashed. The scant furniture crashed, splintering and flying in every direction. The bed itself, bolted to the wall, slid across the carpet until it wedged Quinn between it and the wall. Mattress ripped apart, the sodden, dingy fluff and springs scattered through the space. Josh fell under Alton’s fists, the sickening crunch of bone stabbing at her senses. Long after the weaker Alpha’s shouts and screams tapered into grunts and whimpers, she could hear Alton’s broken ramblings under the animalistic sounds.

“You touched her. You touched her.”

All that was left was squishy, wet sounds and a pool of blood that crept over the carpet with frightening quickness towards her.

Then there was quiet.

Alton's ragged breaths, the creak of his leather jacket, the scuff of his boots. Her lungs refused to work, taking only the fractional sips of air to keep her heart going. Pisss and fear hung in the air thick around her, wetting her legs and soaking the small space under her.

"And you." Voice broken, cracking on what could have been her name, his fingers threading into her hair. Snapping her head back, ignoring her shriek of pain, he touched his nose to her cheek. "I give you up to the king of this shithole city and you spread for these bastards."

He didn't hear her whines and pleas. Shoving her down by her hair, smashing her face against the sodden carpet, he pried her legs apart with ease. It didn't matter that she wasn't wet. The copious fluids from so many others eased his way. Stretching the too tight passage, forcing her to open to him.

It wasn't need or lust or even just a good fuck. Alton sought to punish her for crimes she had no hand in. Babbling, terrified and in agony, she begged. She promised him anything, everything, if he would just stop. He fucked her harder.

Crushing her beneath his weight, she began to fight. Where she had laid passive and docile under others, now she sought to hurt, to maim, to kill if she had to. Her fear went beyond herself, bruising pressure across her middle seeing her legs kick, arms flailing to claw at the male on top of her. Her teeth caught and held in his arm, ripping a chunk of tawny flesh free.

With a booming roar, he struck.

Slapping, punching, tearing. He hit whatever was near as he continued to piston his swollen cock into her. Bruises bloomed on pale flesh, cuts and gashes garish smiles from where nails scraped and sliced. Not even when Quinn held the scream, tucked around her belly, did he stop. Even as he shoved his knot home, cock kicking and filling her, he laid one heavy handed blow after the other.

Quaking, foaming saliva and blood staining her mangled lips, she was forced to stillness. Covering her back, the panting male growled every time a shudder racked through her body.

Time passed, unknowing and uncaring. The sunlight seeping through the curtains grew searing, sweat beading on her skin. Then it began to fade, stretching long and languorous, fingers trilling over her arm and neck in a warm caress.

Rousing, Alton hissed. With a painful jerk, he pulled free, the knot only just starting to diminish as he flung himself away from her.

“Fuck. Oh, fuck, Quinn. Fuck.”

Cautious, she peeked around the edge of her arm to see him. Back against the wall, knees up with his head in his hands. He dared to swipe at his cheek with a rough palm.

As if he deserved to feel such things as guilt.

Seeing him like this just now, she felt something in her chest crumbling to bitter pieces. This was the man she would have mated herself to in order to escape Kahler. An animal who professed undying love on one hand, while the other sought to bruise and break. A male who had given her up without even raising his voice.

They remained that way until dusk fell in earnest, the dingy room filled with dingy light until Alton was little more than a dark shadow. Jostling in place, Alton seemed to remember himself. He stood, straightening out his clothes, wiping at gore, blood, and come.

“Get up,” he said, and though there was the snap of a command there, his hand on her arm eased her up from the awkward position. Holding on until she got her feet and was steady. Alton propelled her forward, towards the grimy bathroom. Reaching past, ignoring the way her lip curled, he turned the water on. “Get cleaned up. I’ve gotta make a few calls and then we’ll get you out of here.”

Quinn eyed the shower with obvious disgust, wondering if she would ever feel clean again as she stepped under the bitter fall of murky water. It needled torn flesh, stabbing at the dozens of small wounds. Turning, she caught Alton staring at her.

The molten gold of his eyes was fixed upon her. Not her eyes or the hurts he’d caused, no. They travelled up the length of her legs, took in the swell of a hip, the curve of her breast. Beneath the fragile, brittle guilt and horror lay an eager Alpha who wanted to fuck the violence from his veins.

He stared for a span of minutes. Quinn held still, not sure if she dared to turn her back on him or pretend he wasn’t licking his lips with growing excitement. Another time, another place, she would have sneered and confronted, uncaring that the Alpha was intimidating and dangerous. She thought she had known him, that he would never hurt her.

She knew different now.

No different than any one of his whores, she practiced the same careful skills she used with any strange male. The same painstaking effort she had seen a thousand times from a thousand different women. And during those long minutes, when it seemed Alton had not yet finished with her, her thoughts veered and took a hard left to another male.

The absolute perfection of his purr, the way his hands had given pleasure even as they bruised and pinned. Had Kahler ever truly hurt her? She couldn't remember anything beyond a smattering of bruises and the vicious scars at her shoulder. Those were claiming marks, though. A man determined to show his mate his dominance, for all to see his hold on the woman deserving far more than a delicate little nip. Even after she had pranced around naked, showed her body to unknown others, he had kept a level of control she couldn't comprehend.

Tears slipped down her face, tracking through the sticky slime coating her cheeks before the frigid water scoured them away. Empty and black, it roared to life somewhere under her lungs, clawing its way up, up, up, until it slashed at her heart with sadistic glee. A child ripping paper, flinging it in all directions, pieces of her fell to swirl down the drain.

Gray edged her vision, muting the already dim light, turning everything fuzzy.

Jagged edged pain wrapped around her middle. It sawed at tender flesh, stabbing deep into layers of muscle. Quinn's spine bunched and knotted, snapping straight as the first strangled scream split the tangled quiet. Another serrated pulse hunched her over.

“Fuck!” Alton was there, grabbing her up. Large hands encased the rippling swell of her belly, cradling the life inside of it. Wrapped tight around her, he let loose an uncomfortable purr. It broke under Quinn's next shrill scream, shattered under her sobbing cries. Drawn tighter still until he touched every inch possible, he tried again.

It wasn't Kahler.

It would never be the utter perfection of his deep resonance.

She didn't understand how she could want someone so much. Someone that had never wanted her.

Alton purred all through the shower. His clothes were soaked, a wet heap at their feet after he managed to strip denim and leather from his bulky frame. Kept swaddled tight in his limbs, she could only sob as Alton removed every trace of the other males from her body. Fingers plunged in

as careful glides as he dared, deep into her pussy, her ass, scouring her clean inside and out of others' scents. Pale hair plastered to her cheeks and shoulders, too long and unruly, he worked out the snarls and tangles, teasing out the matted curls.

It would have been nice to be attended so if she hadn't been hysterical and screaming for her mate the entire time.

The agony abated in slow waves under Alton's ministrations, the blackness chewed her up and swallowed her down as he cradled her to his chest. Purring loud enough to be heard through the whole floor of the hotel, he waited until she passed out. Exhausted, malnourished, there was nothing left to spend.

The sun was cresting the horizon, turning the broken pavement of the highway into liquid gold and ruddy amber when Quinn managed to come out of her stupor. There were brief snippets of information flitting through her memories, of Alton carrying her from the hotel, being bundled into a truck. The road, the hum of wheels on pavement. Food pushed against her lips that she puked up.

Squinting against the light intent on searing the back of her eyeballs, Quinn managed to catch a glimpse of the bright green sign as they barreled past. Rockfell: 10 miles; Highriver: 40 miles. The little squares denoting food and a rest stop were little more than multi-colored blurs.

Rockfell was well outside her limited knowledge of the surrounding towns and cities. She knew almost nothing about Highriver other than it was a booming metropolis, untainted by the industrial districts that plagued Alderbrook.

"Where are you taking me?" Quinn winced at the sound of her voice. A ragged, broken thing that crept out between chapped lips to crumble in the still, too hot air.

"You'll be fine."

"Why aren't you taking me back?"

Alton didn't deign to answer her that time. Ignored her as she struggled up from her prone position where she'd been wrapped around his leg. Licking dry lips, she gagged. She could still taste him, salty, mixed with the warm sage and musk that was his alone.

Gray gaze bouncing around the cab, she ignored his flaccid length still wet with her spit against his denim clad thigh and spotted a bottle of water.

Cracked the seal, not caring it was hot from the vents that belched dry air, she upended the bottle and washed that taste from her tongue.

That, too, was ignored.

Quinn squeezed into the corner of the door, staring out of the window at the passing scenery. The thick woods had faded at some point, rocky outcroppings and brush studded hills of stone replacing them. She couldn't help the derisive snort. Rockfell had rocks, imagine that.

Miles passed in brittle silence. They came up on the rest stop and zoomed past, the squat brown buildings blurring as Alton sped up.

"There are sandwiches in the cooler," he said as he maneuvered away from a big rig. The truck was tall enough that the driver could have glanced down, seen a helpless Omega screaming for help, slapping on the windows.

Not that Quinn had moved an inch.

Alton had always been cautious.

"You know," Quinn began as she picked at the fraying threads of a shirt she didn't remember being dressed in. "I thought I had made it when you first took me in. Fifteen and on my own, I thought I was hot shit to be your runner. The biggest, baddest Alpha I had ever seen gave me a place to belong in his world."

Glancing sidelong, she saw Alton's shoulders tense, his grip on the wheel tightening by fractions until the knuckles blanched a pale beige.

"When you took me to your bed? Fuck, I thought I was on top of the world. Did you realize I was still underage that first time? I thought you had figured it out when you didn't fuck me again, but then you kept me in your bed. I was so confused, thought I hadn't done it right or that somehow this dangerous Alpha felt guilty. Then after that ridiculous birthday party for my eighteenth, you fucked me for days. That was the first time you pumped me full of hormones."

"Don't act like you didn't know the deal before you crawled onto my cock begging for it, little girl." There was a low snarl in his tone, the flash of teeth between full lips she'd once adored.

"Oh, I knew the deal all right. Just wish I had known beforehand."

"The fuck you mean? Known what?"

"That you were a spineless coward."

Quinn canted her chin, staring at the side of his face. Only a flick of mellow gold met icy gray, the briefest of moments, before he concentrated on the road ahead. The steering wheel creaked and groaned under the

pressure of his fists, the leather and plastic threatening to snap from the force of his ire.

“You’ll be fine,” he said again, resolute as he turned away from Quinn and refused to engage further.

Darkness was beginning to fall when Alton veered off the highway. Heavy hand clamping over her neck, he shoved her down and pinned her torso against his lap. There would be no tumbling from the truck at a light, no screaming for rescue at the window.

As the final nail in the coffin her life had become, Alton began to speak with an earnestness and gravity she’d never expected.

“He won’t take you back, Quinn. You fucked them, let them scent you. No amount of soap is gonna wash that clean. He knows it deep down in his gut. He’ll put you up somewhere, keep you locked up until the kid is born. Then he’ll take it away. He will take your baby away and you will never see it again, Quinn. If you’re very fucking lucky, and I don’t think you are with him, he’ll let you live out your days in a cage. Maybe he’ll come and fuck you once in a while for appearance’s sake, but he won’t care for you, Quinn. You’ll be no different than one of my girls.”

“You don’t know that.” It was desperate, the tremulous quality making the lie obvious.

“He knows each time a cock went into you. Each time you came. How many times you sucked down some other male’s cum. You’ve got bites on you. Maybe they won’t scar, but they’re there. And he fucking knows. He’ll *always* know.”

Almost tender, he dropped his free hand to her head, dragging his fingers through her hair to scrub at her scalp while stopped at a light. “This isn’t what I wanted for you, baby girl. If it could be any other way, don’t you think I’d have worked that shit out? You’ll be taken care of. You’ll be fine.”

The light changed.

As Alton eased the truck forward into traffic, Quinn began to cry. He didn’t bother to soothe her, just let her get it out. Held her down with that hand on the back of her neck just in case she got a little too desperate as his words sunk in. Things she’d already known but had been unwilling to accept.

Not long after, he pulled the truck into a driveway that was smooth as silk under the wheels of the old truck. The hum was different, the pitch

changing to something that spoke of perfection. When Alton let her sit up, she had her first look at what he intended for her.

Quinn's mouth tried to fall open.

Lips slack, she leaned forward to stare up at the massive house beside them in the circular drive. It wasn't a fucking house. It was a Gods damned mansion. Glittering crystal shone with clean, white light through the expansive windows lining the front. The long, wide porch boasted matching rocking chairs, a table, even a swing. Bright white siding gleamed in the moonlight and it took her a long minute to realize half of the illumination was tasteful outdoor lighting hidden in the landscaping.

"Alton, where... what is this place?"

"You'll be fine."

Nothing about this was fine, would *ever* be fine, no matter how many times he tried to convince her otherwise. Dragging her with him as he exited the truck, he held Quinn tight to his side as he climbed the steps and crossed the porch. His knock against the door was almost respectful.

"And who the fuck might you be?" The man who answered the door was huge, massive, bigger even than Alton. The thick rasp of his voice skated along jangling nerves. Quinn tried to hide, to run, only to be caught at the scruff by Alton's hand. Her quick movement caught his attention. Bitter blue eyes pinned their prey.

"I'm here to see Andrés," Alton said, his golden gaze fixed somewhere south of the other man's eyes. It was a tempered submission, an acknowledgment of who was the more dominant.

Quinn squirmed, grit her teeth against a squeal as Alton tightened his hold and she felt the small vertebra shift and grind. If Alton wouldn't look this man in the eye, she didn't want to be here. Didn't need to be here.

"And your business?"

The male leaned forward, sniffing at the air in front of Quinn. She froze. Her lungs locked up tight, heart stuttering to a halt as he released a low sound of contemplation.

"He knows my business."

The man grunted, taking a small step back to reveal a foyer in shades of sparkling white and threaded grays. A casual flick of his fingers signaled them inside. Alton lifted her, taking her by force into the space when she tried to dig her heels in. Chilled marble sucked the heat from her bare feet. Everything sparkled and shined to within an inch of its life. Quinn huddled

further against Alton's side, feeling grubby and awkward in a way she wasn't used to.

"You will wait here."

"Just tell that asshole that Alton is here, all right? He's expecting me—"

"I am not your message boy," the large Alpha rumbled with a sneer of contempt, hand slapping down onto Alton's shoulder hard enough to make him spread his feet to keep from swaying. "If Andrés expects you, he will come."

Others were appearing now, drawn towards the sounds of conversation. It was like she'd been transported through a rift in time back to Alton's warehouse, only these were not neighborhood thugs. These men were menacing in a way no street side hustler could ever accomplish. The too large male in front of them, his voice rasped and grated from the thick scar running across his neck that disappeared into silvered black hair. Another had ribbons of tight, pale flesh down his face, ruining the boyish charm with a cloudy, dead eye that still seemed to track the movement in the room. A man darker than Alton, his deep umber skin holding a sheen of blue as he stalked closer, bright pink circles adorning his cheek and neck. Others still were just an impression of evil and danger. Alphas all of them.

"I'll go get him."

Quinn swallowed her scream as someone spoke behind her, the sound escaping as a pathetic mewl. Freckled and fair, a young redhead ambled his way around Quinn with a wink that didn't belong on so young a face.

"*I am* the message boy, after all."

The redhead disappeared up a graceful sweep of stairs, sneakers slapping out a hurried rhythm as he took the steps two at a time. Quinn tried to remain still and small in the presence of all that aggression, but it was a difficult thing to do. How the hell could Alton think this was better for her? They would rip her apart the first chance they got.

It couldn't have been more than a handful of moments before the kid returned, a wicked grin on his lips as he peered over the banister of the second level and dangled his forearms over the polished wood. "He says come on up."

"Thank you," Alton said, stiff and tense under the first male's hand. He tried to pick Quinn up again, to take her with him, only to be stopped by that same hand clenching down into a creaking fist.

“He says you, not the girl.”

“I’m not leaving her here.”

“Well, then I guess you do not need to see Andrés, *da?*”

Quinn could see the thoughts racing through Alton’s mind as if he was speaking them out loud to her. The way his brows pinched together, the small tick at the corners of his mouth reminiscent of a grimace. She saw the moment he came to a decision, jaw clenched, refusing to look down at her.

“All right.”

“Don’t you fucking dare,” Quinn hissed, spittle flying from her lips as she clawed at Alton’s coat. Clinging, climbing his body, she snarled when he disentangled their limbs and sat her aside.

“You’ll be fine.”

“*Da*, you will be fine.” Releasing Alton’s shoulder, the man stepped aside in a move that blocked Quinn from following unless she wanted to try and run through a wall of muscled flesh.

Quinn stared at Alton’s back as he left her standing there alone. She didn’t try to hold back her snarl, or the low growl. Betrayal cut deep, ripping apart the scabs that had given her some small measure of peace. She wasn’t safe with these men. The evidence of which was clear before Alton even cleared the landing. She glared up at him when he glanced back. Small and alone in a closing circle of Alphas, she scoffed at his frown of concern.

“Run along and offer your ass up for the next male like a good little bitch,” Quinn called out, crossing her arms over her middle as she smirked at him. Somehow, she held the smile even when the Alphas chuckled at her game, drawing ever closer. Alton disappeared just when they blocked her view of anything beyond wide shoulders and barrel chests.

Chapter 17

“And what do you know about being a good little bitch?” It was rich and smoky, the voice that drifted over her shoulder in a wash of humid breath. Pale fingers, knuckles scarred almost beyond recognition, traced a sinuous pattern down her arm.

Quinn fixed her gaze on a point in the air, ignoring the males around her, their posturing and closeness. She concentrated instead on keeping her breaths slow and even. Tried not to curl her lip at the stench of violence that clung to each of them like cheap cologne.

“Darryl asked you a question.” Heavy fingers worked through her hair, curling against her scalp to make a fist. Head craned back, Quinn kept her eyes on the ceiling beyond.

“I do not think she wishes to speak to us, do you *kroshka*?” Met with Quinn’s silence, the Russian continued. “Perhaps we don’t need her mouth to say anything at all, though.”

A subdued murmur of male voices in agreement preceded the total lack of space. The air tainted by so many, her nerves scraped raw and twisted, she knew what was about to happen. Refusing to dissolve into pathetic weeping, to give them the teary pleas they likely wanted, she stood as proud as she could. Worse still would be to lose the tenuous control on her stark terror. Running incited violence.

No Alpha denied the lure of a chase.

She didn’t startle when one of them plucked the lapels of the borrowed jacket wide. Stood quiet as it slid over her shoulders and a warm mouth came to lick the skin behind her ear. Didn’t fight when hands bunched the hem of her shirt and worked it up her body.

Inhaled...

Exhaled...

“Ah, what have we here,” the Russian said, crouched before her as the shirt came free. Even so low, his eyes were level with her chest. Quinn’s skin prickled with awareness, nipples drawing tight in a rush of confusion and instinct. Massive paws slid over her hips, tucked into the waistband of the loose sweats and drew them down.

Expecting to be laid bare, to have her pussy on full display to them, Quinn made the mistake of looking down when he stopped as soon as her

stomach was revealed.

Someone pressed against her back, rubbing against her as they weighed her breasts in their palms. Still she watched the man before her, tense, cautious. Stared even harder when he cupped the swell of her belly, spread his hands wide and swallowed the whole thing.

“How long,” he asked on an appreciative rumble, his gaze fixed on her stomach as he smoothed the taut skin.

“Not long enough for her to have milk in these little beauties, Ilya.” It was the man with half his face ruined, and it was his hands on her. Tweaking her nipples, squeezing the tender points to prove his point. His mouth was at her ear, tongue tracing the edge as he whispered, “He likes to suck on them while he fucks the pregnant ones. Such a freak.”

The man with the circular scars, skin the shade of a midnight sky, muscled his way in to press against Quinn’s front. Slow rolls of his hips ground the bulge in his pants against her hip. Making sure he had her eyes, gripping her chin between pinching fingers, he said, “I get her pussy first.”

“The hell you do!”

Quinn couldn’t even see who this new voice belonged to. Aggression swirled and whipped around her. The edge of violence drew nearer, its claws rending the too thick air, so her lungs strained all the harder. More voices joined the fray. They called out what part of her they wanted, and who would lay claim first.

The redhead kid, younger even than she was, whined as he ground against her side. Pupils wide, the scent of him thick on the back of her throat, he shoved his nose against her neck. “You want to give me your mouth right, baby?”

Through it all, she was quiet. Pliant as they circled and rubbed against her. Scenting her. Marking her for what was to come. Not until the first hand made a grab for her, wrenching her back so Quinn stumbled into a wall of flesh, did she begin to lose the stranglehold on her fear. Another snatched her back, Quinn’s legs sliding out from under her in a messy sprawl, only to be caught up in another’s arms before she could hit the floor. A growl issued from someone’s chest, a challenge demanding to be answered. Clutched too tight, limbs dragged in too many directions, she lost the fight.

All it took was a single whimper.

The growls became snarls and snapping teeth. Bellows and roars reverberated off the cool tile and pristine walls. Challenges were made and answered in a rage. Fists pummeled, blood sprayed. It spattered hot and wet over her chest and the kid smeared it into her flesh while trying to drop his pants in desperate jerks.

A roar and he went flying.

Quinn was turned and tossed around. Bouncing from one body to the next. Terrified to drop to the floor, she was frightened what would happen if one took her down with them. The loose sweats were ripped away, leaving her in nothing but panic prickled skin. Hands that had sought to pull her in now grasped and scratched. Desperate for their taste, they began to maul.

Tears coursing down her cheeks tracked through crimson smears. She dropped to all fours amidst the chaos. Tucked her ass tight against her heels, praying to whatever deity would listen. Scrawny arms wrapped around her head, she tried to block it all out even as something hot and hard prodded between her ass cheeks. Nails dug in to the soft flesh at her hips.

More hands grabbed her up. Unfolding her to position her as they wanted. Too many to count. Too many to be believed. Frenzy following close at their heels, it swallowed Quinn whole. Too heavy bodies jostled and vied for their place, knocking her around like a crumpled piece of paper. They thrust and ground against her while battling one another.

A misplaced fist slammed into her thigh.

Quinn screamed.

A bellow that would not be ignored thundered through the turbulent air. It crackled and boomed, shuddering through her bones and making them weak.

The males around her fell away at once.

Quinn sprawled on the floor in hopeless submission, insides gone loose and watery in the face of such dominance. It promised so much more than simple pain for disobedience. Body quivering, afraid to even let out the sob congealing in the back of her throat.

It took her a long while to realize the thunderous resonance were words and that someone could speak with such command.

Whatever was said was lost in the pounding in her ears that faltered. It slammed to a stop, picking up in trembling bursts to repeat it all over again.

And then there was something else altogether different.

Rich and deep, the throaty purr slipped over her senses as Quinn was gathered up from the cooling smears she lay in. Quinn flinched, huddled into a tiny, quivering ball. Arms tucked her tight against the chest emanating such a sound, hands firm and sure as they cradled her.

“Easy now, sweetheart.” Confident rumble never ceasing, he tried to soothe the tension from her limbs, to unlock her joints so she would melt into him.

Quinn whined low in her throat, teeth bared in a grimace as she waited for him to drop the pretense. No one who commanded a pack of rapid Alphas wouldn’t expect his due.

“You did nothing wrong, little one,” the voice promised as a large hand skated down her bunched spine. “What’s your name, hmm?”

In the long stretch of quiet, only Quinn’s small sounds of pain and defeat could be heard.

The man tsked, bundling her even closer. Chafing frozen skin to bring back a hint of warmth, he tucked the edge of his jacket around her and stood.

“Explain.”

Before Quinn could be sick all over the silky smoothness of the Alpha’s chest at the idea of speaking, someone else answered.

“This is my fault, sir. This man is Alton Rippin, and I owed him a favor. He’s come to collect on it, and I didn’t stop to ask what it was.” If there was a hint of annoyance in the man’s tone, it was buried deep under heavy layers of contrite acceptance.

Quinn was not quite startled enough at the idea of an Alpha admitting to a wrong to peek out from behind the dim shadows cloaking her face.

“What is this debt, Andrés? How many times have I said my men’s debts are mine?”

“It was from long before I came here, sir. I thought he’d need something inconsequential. Like money.” And then the irritation made itself known. “I never expected him to try and dump a hood rat on my hands.”

The man holding her made a sound of displeasure. There was nothing obvious about the way he reacted that suggested anything, but the man Andrés conceded.

“Of course, no matter her background, an Omega is precious, but as I’ve told Alton,” Andrés paused, and Quinn could only guess he was glaring at

Alton during the brief silence. “I’m in no position to take on an Omega. Especially not a pregnant one.”

“It’s not like I’m asking you to mate her, for fuck’s sake,” Alton ground out.

Something about the quality of his voice had Quinn angling her head towards the sound. One bloodshot eye cleared the edge of the pinstriped charcoal and took in the state of him. Mouth a battered, mangled smear of red on a jaw already swelling, gouges lined his cheeks. Two black eyes and a smattering of more purple-toned bruises scattered across what she could see of his chest through ripped clothing.

The bastard had likely joined the melee to get his cock wet.

“Shut up.” Hissed under a rough breath, she assumed it was Andrés. No one else would care if Alton pissed off the boss.

It was then she realized that was who cuddled her. His purr had softened as he listened to his man, just loud enough for her to hear, but strong enough to feel it vibrating through his chest. Meant for comfort, to keep her somewhat calm as he sorted this out.

“I do not allow unattended Omegas in this house,” he was saying, the smallest shift in his hands baring the mottled agony of her thigh. “And for good reason.”

“Fine, I’ll take her somewhere else.”

Andrés snorted, and the derisive sound was joined by some of the others.

“Oh, I think not. You’ve proven you cannot protect her as she should be. If not for my interference, think of what could have happened here,” the male holding her said.

As if the part had been written just for her, the cue given at the perfect moment, the sob that had clung thick and hard in her throat burst forth. It was desperation and anguish, the sound of something skimming the last dregs of life from a well gone dry.

The sound of something broken.

“You can’t just—”

“I can and I have. I’m done here.” With that the male was turning, his long strides bringing them to the stairs and climbing up to the top before Alton could get much more than a snarled curse in.

The ruckus of Alton being shoved towards the door, the hurried sounds of fists making contact, an outright brawl beginning, all faded to a low murmur as the man carrying Quinn renewed the glorious sound of a

dominant Alpha in his prime. It drowned out everything but the tempered rhythm of Quinn's heartbeat as it calmed, and the rich rumble that vibrated through her bones pulled her eyes half-mast.

She was so very tired.

Sleep wasn't to be had though. Deposited in a too large bed, surrounded by too strange scents, she was swaddled tight in sinfully plush cotton and lofty wool. Tucked in up to her nose, wary gray eyes narrowed at the Beta male approaching.

"I'm Doctor James Hadler," the Beta said as he began unpacking a small duffel onto a table that had been brought beside the bed. An array of bandages, salves, and syringes were lined up with meticulous precision beside the food that had long gone cold.

She hadn't tasted the food. Hadn't drunk the water, tea, or coffee Lee, her Alpha rescuer, had served her with his own hands. Even with her insides clawing itself to shredded gore amid howls of agony, head a discordant mess of shrieks and wails, Quinn realized the stupidity of refusing. She also understood the danger of accepting. She didn't dare open her mouth even a fraction, afraid it all would come pouring out.

"Come on, pet, crawl out of there so he can take a look." Lee. Such a simple name for a man who wielded power like it was a child's game. A deceptive mild manner, crowned with thick russet waves that were brushed back from his face, a hint of silver at his temples and sprinkled in the short reddish beard along his jaw. Eyes a deep chestnut were warm and inviting and full of calming lies.

The Russian, Ilya, who had terrified her so, had bowed his head to Lee when he came to report that Alton wouldn't be returning. Quinn hadn't bothered to examine the surge of vindictive glee the phrase had given her, the finality of it twisting something deep in her guts.

"What do you want?" Quinn wasn't stupid, knew better than to argue when there were no cards hidden up her sleeve. There was no escaping this house that was grander and larger than even Kahler's fine home. It didn't mean she had to go belly up just because this *Lee* told her to though. She'd know exactly what was in store and what was expected of her.

"I want you to let the good doctor examine you and your little one. Given your... situation, it's important he knows of any issues that may arise. With what's transpired this evening alone, I want to make sure you and the child are well."

Delivered in a smooth, reassuring baritone, Quinn didn't trust it for a second. Leery gaze narrowing further, she pulled the blankets below her chin to give the Alpha her full regard.

"What do you want in return?"

Lee canted his head as he came forward and sat on the bed. Digging under the great drifts of blankets, palms curling under her arms, he hauled her out from the burrow he had piled her in. The studied gentleness of his fingers as they cradled her chin spoke of a patience nearing extinction. The rich brown of his gaze skimmed over her features before they met her suspicion without qualm.

"In return I want you to accept my most gracious hospitality. You will accept the generosity I'm offering with the respect and gratitude it deserves."

Eyes wide, Quinn felt a searing chill slip through her veins as she was forced to hold his gaze. The tone was almost light, but the steely core of it battered through her senses, promising a wealth of unwanted things should she refuse outright.

She could do nothing but bob her head in a frantic nod.

Lee smiled, warm and endearing, as if to say all was forgiven. Standing, he made way for the doctor but went no further than the foot of the bed. The first tickle of fear threaded through her veins, drawing muscles tight as the instinct to run flared to life. The sour stench of it flooded the space.

"I'm not the male who brought you here, pet. I'll not leave a weakened Omega alone with anyone," Lee said, putting a purr into his words as if they both didn't know why she was afraid. "Even the good doctor is a man, is he not? Best not to drown him in temptation. I'll remain, but I promise to give you some measure of privacy."

Unable to argue the point, Quinn succumbed to the doctor's gentle prodding. Bruises were inspected, the worst of the cuts and gashes stitched closed, the others cleaned and bandaged. And as Hadler eased her legs apart, gloved hands inspecting her, the privacy afforded was laughable.

Standing dead center, his view clear as she spread, Lee watched her face. Deep brown eyes caught hers, fixing her with a look that hinted at nothing of what he might be feeling. There might have been heat there, but it wasn't anything close to what she was used to. He didn't pant and suck in deep breaths of her scent, didn't lick his lips and stare at what lay exposed. Lee stood there, calm as he watched on.

His expression only changed when Hadler lugged a heavy ultrasound out of a bag from the floor and began setting it up. Even then, it wasn't until Quinn's nerves ratcheted up to levels that had her clawing at the bed, nails digging into the fluffy mattress that had him acting.

Moving to stand beside the bed, he began to purr. Soft and warm, it swelled around Quinn until she blinked up at Lee in the beginnings of a daze. When he saw her watching, he nodded his head at the expanse of sheet beside her. Asking permission.

Frowning, Quinn felt herself nod before she'd even realized the question.

Within seconds he was wrapped around her, pushing the resonance into her back as Hadler smeared cold goop over her belly.

"I might not be able to pick up much with the portable, and the images aren't great. When you're feeling better, we'll be able to get you clear pictures and tell you more."

Though Hadler included her, Quinn didn't miss that he spoke to the Alpha behind her. She couldn't be bothered to care. Could only stare in confusion at her hands wrapped tight around Lee's wrists. Fingers unable to touch, her knuckles blanched ghostly pale as she gripped the man.

At least until the first grainy image fluttered into existence on the miniature screen.

Hadler moved the probe around, circling her stomach several times before he settled into a low arc. Blobs and shadows coalesced into something alien.

"She's sucking her thumb," Lee murmured against her temple, Hadler drawing a line across the screen to point out what Lee saw.

"She looks healthy, though you're both too thin," Hadler said. "You'll want to put on a good bit of weight, but so far it looks very good. I'll take some samples and make sure there's nothing else happening we can't see here."

"When was the last time you heard her heartbeat?" Lee's voice was a gentle thunder against her ear, drowning her in things she hadn't even thought of since before Kahler had locked her away in a room to waste away in his absence. There had only been the promise of hope, the idea of light hidden away in a space meant to be kept safe.

Pale blonde hair and laughing green eyes danced across her mind's eye, imprinting on the grainy image.

“Please.” Breathless, heart swelling and pushing against the cage of her ribs, Quinn trembled for a different reason.

As the first strange little whooshing sounds washed through the room, Quinn shattered into a thousand little pieces she could never hope to put back together. Dissolving into ugly tears, she clutched at the Alpha holding her. Months of torment, of uncertainty and despair, tumbled free of the rickety cage she had built around it. She let him bundle her back up in the blankets as she sobbed hard enough to wheeze and choke, dead weight as he arranged her back on the bed.

Didn’t even think of saying something when he tucked himself in alongside her.

Hours later, with only the dim light of a graceful lamp in the corner to illuminate the room, Quinn calmed some. The shaking had stopped, the tears had run dry, and the broken sounds had tapered off into stuffy sniffles and swollen eyes.

Lee lounged at her back, complacent as he worked his fingers against her scalp and neck, easing away the last of her exhaustive outburst. He hadn’t tried anything, despite the fact she lay naked as a jay bird. Didn’t even rub the impressive erection she felt against her ass.

Twisting in the confines of his arms, she wriggled around to face him. Bloodshot gray and calm brown met for silent moments.

“Tell me.” Quinn swallowed hard, throat raw and aching, words ash on her tongue.

Lee looked as if he might continue the game for a while longer, but then he smiled and acknowledged her with a small nod.

“This will be your room to do with as you wish. The best of everything will be offered at your whim. Regular visits with the doctor.”

“And?”

“And you will graciously accept my generosity, showing me in all ways how very grateful you are.”

“Is that it?” The words were difficult to get out, had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the air. She was making a deal with an evil she had no idea how to handle. And she saw no way out of it.

“I will not claim you.” Cold, firm, it was a statement that would withstand eternity and more. Gentling, he brushed a limp curl from her face. “I will not take your child from you, either. I will see to her upbringing, her education, anything she needs. But she will be yours.”

Strange though the deal seemed, there were no other options. Still, she couldn't help but split the rich silence. "And if I refuse?"

"You *will* graciously accept my generosity." He smiled, a turn of lips that were neither thin nor full, shaded a dusty rose and brimming with deadly malevolence. Leaning in, slow enough that Quinn had all the time in the world to shy away, he brushed those corrupted lips against hers in a kiss that mocked tenderness. Turning her around with ease and shuffling the blankets up around her shoulders, he tucked Quinn against his front and began to purr. Loud and deep, he lulled her into a fabricated calm. "But tonight, you will rest. Tomorrow brings a new day and new beginnings."

OceanofPDF.com

Excerpt

From Damaged – Omega's Destruction Book

Two

The warmth sliding up her thigh shocked her out of the daze, eyes flying open. She had only just closed them, but darkness shrouded her burrow. The plaintive keen slipped past her raw lips. Knees pulling up, Quinn tucked Elise against her body, curling around the sleeping infant.

Whether it was Lee returned for more or Ilya to finish what he had started, she couldn't do it. Not now that she knew what they planned for her. Unable to plaster the smile across her face, to soften under the male's touch, she wept and held her daughter close.

"Shh, little bird." His voice flowed over her senses, a comforting rumble that infected her mind, her limbs. It calmed the agony clawing under her ribs into a dull ache before erasing it altogether. Heat enveloped her back, sat snug along her spine and tucked in against her thighs. Rich and spicy, his scent suffused her as the weight of an arm curled over her side.

It was impossible. It was insane.

She soaked it in like a flower reaching for the sun.

It didn't matter that it was Kahler. Quinn didn't care that she hated him. The only thing of consequence was that for just that briefest moment, she felt safe. She couldn't explain why she would feel that way. Why he, of all people, could engender that reaction. Warmth flowing through her, surrounding her, she let out a faltering sigh as her tears trickled to a stop.

"I have you, I'm here." Pressure along her neck, nudging aside the tangled length of her hair to kiss along the heavily scarred breadth of her shoulder. The weight of his hand settled over her hip, the firm grip gentle and comforting. An anchor in the tempest of misery she found herself in.

"No, you don't." Voice little more than a hoarse croak, she curled into the pocket of absurd heat anyhow. Drowned herself in that decadent scent as she wrapped herself and Elise in the comforting embrace. "You're not real."

"I am, sweetness." As if to prove it, the smooth timbre tripped down Quinn's spine, resonated through her bones. Rich and full, loud enough to block everything else out, he purred for them. Even Elise murmured in her sleep, pouty lips stretching into a soft smile as she snuggled closer.

“You’re not,” Quinn whispered into the humid darkness. No matter that the bond was humming, gentle and sweet, where it always twisted in pain. She knew he wasn’t there, that this was just one more step into the madness that infected her. The reason why Ilya wanted to claim her. “You’re not here and they’re going to hurt her.”

“I won’t let them, sweetness.” So confident, almost arrogant in his surety. The purr held the rough edge of a growl, a promise of violence against those who would harm what was his.

It didn’t matter if she was just a thing to him. He’d keep Elise safe, his own flesh and blood. He wasn’t a good man, had never been a good mate to her, but he wasn’t Lee. He had never flaunted the death and chaos that Lee held so dear. “If what he said is true... If this is the bond and you can... Please come and save her. Don’t let them raise her.”

“You can’t give up now, Quinn. Be strong for me, little bird.”

“I’ll die before I let them take her from me. Get here before she forgets who I was.” Resigned, bereft, but certain of her decisions for once in her life, Quinn brushed a kiss against Elise’s soft curls and closed her eyes once more.

Tobias shot up from the chair with a vicious roar. Chest heaving, his eyes darted around the dim room in search of the source of the delectable sweetness that still clung to him. Lavender and spun sugar, he could taste Quinn on his lips even now. Not finding her as the hotel’s strange furnishings came into focus, he bellowed his rage. The heavy chair he’d fallen into, exhausted and drained after days of endless searching, came under his hands to fly across the room.

The crack of shattering wood and the hiss of ripping cloth did nothing to appease his fury.

Her words that had been so clear in the dream were fading, the names and places she had whispered drifting into a murky fog that became more incoherent the harder he tried to recall them. She had been terrified, but that hadn’t been new. No, the resolve and despair had been different. She was prepared for something terrible. Something she felt would end with a finality.

“Tobias!” Curtis rushed into the room then shoved his back against the wall. Hands raised and chin aside, he bared his throat to the threat of the

angered Alpha who stalked towards him. Far quieter, bordering on hesitant, he continued. “They can’t find him, but we have new footage from the toll road and information about what direction he went. There’s possible sightings, but... they’re months old, but it could be her.”

Tobias struggled to control his breathing, to make the low growl abate as he stared at his second. It took a long moment for the words to sink in.

They had information on that bastard Rippin and where he had taken Quinn.

“Where?”

OceanofPDF.com

Thanks for reading Broken!

If you liked what you read, why not leave a review? Even a short one is a huge help for indie authors. It doesn't have to be eloquent and drawn out. Simple is good!

Want more? Sign up for my [Newsletter](#) to be notified of upcoming releases! This includes books 2 and 3 in the *Omega's Destruction* trilogy as well as loads of other books I have planned for your consumption. I also share exclusive excerpts, deals and promos, and other fantastic goodies. I will never spam you, and your address is never shared.

About Eva

Eva Dresden writes dark romance that lives up to its name with every turn of the page. Her heroines are tragic and strong, her heroes are anything but, and tearing characters apart to see what makes them really tick is a favored past time. Her cat is her staunchest supporter, provided there are treats involved.

Connect with Eva Dresden Online

Website: <http://www.evadresden.com>

Goodreads:

[https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/19033075.Eva Dresden](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/19033075.Eva_Dresden)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/evawritesdark/>

Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/eva_dresden

OceanofPDF.com