

london lennox



omega  
STAINED

# Omega Stained

London Lennox



Heartstrings Press

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## Omega Stained

**Kendra has been burned and broken, but this omega is ready to rise from the ashes.**

In the harsh and unforgiving underworld of Solstice Bay, omegas are marked with tattoos, their bodies adorned with the sigils of their claimed alphas. For Kendra, the tattoos she bears are more than just ink; they represent a life of restricted choices, a fate bound to the whims of others.

But Kendra is no ordinary omega. Beneath her submissive veneer lies a fiery spirit yearning to break free from the chains of tradition. Fueled by an unwavering determination to forge her own destiny, Kendra's defiance catches the attention of not just one, but several powerful and enigmatic alphas.

Carson, the Enclave's revolutionary leader.

Zane, the tattooist who finds Kendra at her darkest moment.

And Maddox, the ACB agent hunting all three of them...and who can't resist falling under Kendra's spell.

In a daring exploration of love and self-discovery, Kendra must navigate the complexities of her desires while challenging the oppressive norms that dictate her world. With danger lurking at every turn and a society that seeks to keep them apart, the alphas and Kendra must confront not only external threats but also their own insecurities.

Will Kendra find the strength to embrace her true nature and shatter the conventions of their cruel society? Can these alphas set aside their differences and come together to protect the omega they all cherish?

Or will Kendra's entanglements lead to the downfall of the Enclave?

*OMEGA STAINED is a steamy whychoose Omegaverse romance that will conclude the first arc in London Lennox's Inkverse. Buckle in for the most suspenseful entry in the series so far, and an exploration of alliances, love, and of course... plenty of steam.*

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# Trigger Warnings

*Please note that the following pages contain:*

Slavery and Human Trafficking

Violence

Torture

Light Gore



## Prologue

**T**HE AUCTION HOUSES OF Solstice Bay were the worst nightmare of every omega.

At the central hub of the train tracks, the upper crust of Solstice Bay sold omegas to the highest bidder—omegas that had done something bad enough to get the ultimate sentence of being breeders for the rest of their lives. The ACB was cruel to ordinary people, and they were even crueler to omegas who broke the rules.

They've gotten even worse since their enemies, the Enclave, started gaining power.

The Enclave is committed to freeing Solstice Bay's omegas, to making sure everyone can mate with who they want, when they want. The Auction Houses had become a major target of Enclave attacks, but that didn't mean you wanted to be there when they carried one out.

They could be brutal.

Deadly even to those they were trying to save.

So when the Auction Houses went up in flames one fall day, everyone assumed that the people inside were killed or gone for good. It was tragic, but at least the damnable place had been destroyed.

And it did kill a lot of people, true.

But some lived to fight another day.



## Kendra

I 'M ON THE BRINK of ruin.

My wrists and ankles are chafed from the shackles that have been locked around my limbs, my body achy from days of being hunched over in a cell. It reeks inside the cell block, the stench of fear sweat and vomit on the air, someone crying a few cells away. This is hell. I'm in hell, and I'm never going to get out.

I committed the greatest sin an omega is capable of in Solstice Bay: I tried to escape.

And now, I'm paying the price.

Light suddenly streams in at the end of the hall, and I hear men's voices somewhere in the distance. My heart pounds as I realize what's happening, where I must be. The place I was supposed to go months ago is finally coming for me.

The omega auctions.

The railyards.

Stomping footsteps come closer, and I huddle into the corner as I pretend that I'll be able to hide. It's only a show for myself; a split second later, the cell door opens and a big man comes through and grabs me by the arm. I scream and beg, but he doesn't pay any attention to my pleas for mercy.

He drags me out of the cell, and I stumble behind him, barely able to keep up. My heart is racing, my breath coming in ragged gasps. The hallway is crowded with other omegas, all of whom are being dragged out of their cells just like me. Fear and desperation fill the air, and I can smell the sweet tang of blood.

I know what's going to happen to us. We are going to be sold like animals, to the highest bidder. Our bodies will be used and discarded, and there's no escape from it. The fate of an omega is sealed from birth, and nothing I do can change it.

The man pulls me outside, and I blink in the bright sunlight. As my eyes adjust, I see a large crowd of people gathered in the distance, all of them milling around a raised platform. It's the auction. A chill runs down my spine, and I try to pull away from the man holding me.

But it's no use.

I'm screwed.

"Get up there!" the big man shouts, shoving me toward a set of stairs. I climb them slowly, my entire body shaking, my legs trembling. I'm so scared that I can't breathe, but I have to keep moving; I *have* to keep going. If I don't walk on my own,

they'll drag me anyway, and I can't look weak in front of them.

The minute I'm weak, the alphas will strike.

If I look weak, someone will take me away from here who *wants* a weak omega.

I toss my hair back and squint into the sunlight, looking out at the crowds. There are alphas of all kinds here—men in suits who clearly belong to the upper class, those in casual clothes, a few in coveralls who've just come by to observe. The one thing I'm certain of is that there's no help in sight; no one is coming to save me. I tune out the sounds of the crowd and make my eyes vacant, just looking at the horizon.

The sea is somewhere out there.

One day, I'll escape Solstice Bay and I'll go far, far away from here.

I have to hold out hope that's still possible.

“Kendra Morrison!” a voice says.

People in the crowd boo.

“This girl killed her father and ran away...and she's finally here on our auction block, in sore need of *discipline*.”

I don't know where the announcer is or what he looks like. He's just a disembodied voice, telling dozens of alphas that I need to be *disciplined*.

One day I'll escape.

One day I *have to* escape.



My heart pounds in my chest as I step onto the platform. I'm a mess of emotions, fear, anger, and a desperate hope all swirling together. I want to scream and fight, to lash out at this cruel fate that has been forced upon me. But I know better than that. An omega can never win against an alpha - it's just the way of the world. So instead, I keep my eyes downcast, trying to make myself as small and unremarkable as possible.

But even that's not enough to save me from the glares and jeers of the alphas in the crowd. They're all sizing me up like a piece of meat, looking for any flaws they can use to beat down the price. It's insulting, dehumanizing, but it's also the only way I have any chance of survival.

"Let's give our girl a warm welcome," the announcer says, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

The alphas begin to jeer and whistle, and I feel a wave of pure hatred wash over me. They know nothing about me, nothing about the life I've had to lead just to survive. They see me only as a tool, a means to their own pleasure. I can feel their eyes on me, roving over every inch of my body, and I shiver with disgust. They're animals—vicious animals who rule this world with an iron fist.

"She'll be pricy, but worth it, starting at fifty thousand credits...let's go!"

They start the process of bidding on me, and I watch as the number on the screen behind me goes up, up, up... I'm on display, a crueler fate than this on the other side of the bidding process. I can't stand it.

And then I see him.

He's different from the other alphas in the crowd. He's not dressed in a suit or casual clothes, but rather in a black leather jacket and jeans, his hair a mess of dirty blond curls. He's holding a cigarette between his fingers, his eyes roving over me with an intensity that makes my skin crawl. But there's something else in those eyes too—something that sets him apart from the others. It's almost like...like he feels sorry for me.

I shake my head, trying to dispel the thought. No alpha could ever feel sorry for an omega, especially not at an auction like this one. But still, I can't help but feel drawn to him, like a moth to a flame.

The bidding continues, but I can't take my eyes off of the man in the leather jacket. He doesn't seem to care about the bidding war, instead just standing there and puffing at his cigarette. It's like he's waiting for something, or someone.

I find out what when everything goes to hell.

Suddenly, there's a commotion in the back of the crowd. People start shouting, and I hear the sound of glass shattering. The alphas on the platform begin to panic, looking around wildly for the source of the noise.

And then, all hell breaks loose.

A group of men in masks and hoods rush the platform, wielding weapons and screaming. The alphas scatter, trying to

get away, but the attackers are too quick, too ruthless. They're like a pack of wolves, and the alphas are their prey.

I get a rush of satisfaction at seeing them like this.

Seeing *alphas* experience that fear.

But I'm frozen in place, my heart pounding as I watch the chaos unfold. I'm terrified, but there's also a strange sense of relief—a feeling that maybe, just maybe, this is my chance to escape.

The man in the leather jacket is still standing there, watching the attackers with a detached expression. He doesn't seem scared or panicked like the others—in fact, he almost seems amused. He takes one more drag of his cigarette, then he drops it on the ground and stamps it out with his heel.

He takes a step toward me.

Before he can act, though, someone's dragging on my shackles, pulling me backwards off the stage. I land in the dust with a thud, and there's someone in an ACB uniform pulling me up by the arm—an alpha with big brown eyes and a gentle face. This is something else I've never seen...this kind of gentleness in an alpha.

“We need to get you out of here,” he says. “Come with me.”

“Who are you?” I ask.

He glances around. “That doesn't matter right now,” he says.

“Come on.”

“I can't,” I reply. “My ankles are chained up, I can't run—”

He has the key.

Thank God, he has the key, and he unlocks my chains.

But if he wanted to keep an eye on me, that was a mistake.

Because now I'm free, and I don't fucking dawdle.

I don't hesitate; I start to run. I dart between the panicked alphas, the hooded attackers, and the screaming onlookers. I'm not sure where I'm going, but I know that anything is better than staying here. I feel like I'm living a dream—one where I'm floating away, my feet barely touching the ground.

And that's how my story begins.

Barefoot and bleeding, sprinting as fast as I can, with escape the only thought in my mind.

Not the two packmates I just met.

Not my oncoming heat.

Only survival.



## Kendra

**T**HE CITY STREETS ARE dangerous for someone like me.

I'm filthy, barefoot, and still bleeding when I finally reach the fringes of the city, and I fall into the dirty side streets of Solstice Bay. I don't know where I'm going—maybe I'll be able to find the rebels of the Enclave, where I think my friends should be. But I don't know how to contact them, and I don't know how to find the Enclave in the first place.

I don't even know if Jade and Olivia are safe.

All I know is that I'm in horrible danger if I don't find refuge soon.

I've been off suppressants for too long, and I've felt my heat threatening to overtake me for days. The ACB gave me suppressants while I was in their custody, sure, but now I'm in withdrawal...which means I'll lose control soon. I wonder if it was a mistake not going with the ACB agent who unlocked my cuffs, but it's too late to go back now.

I'm an omega on the run, about to go into heat...

...things really couldn't get worse.

I stagger through the city for three days, hiding in corners whenever I see anyone who looks hostile—which is damn near everyone. I get lost in the endless maze of Solstice Bay's alleyways, scrounging up food where I can. I can't believe I went from living like a princess to eating out of dumpsters, but I wanted *so badly* to take down the ACB from the inside out. And when my father tried to sell me off to one of his political allies...

...I knew I couldn't go with him. Not that old man and his cronies, who would use me like breeding stock.

This, though? This might be worse.

My eyes are bleary by the time I see something that I think might save me: a neon sign of an apple with a bite out of it, a pin-up girl covering her mouth beside it like she's done something naughty. In other circumstances, it would be just another sign, but a memory comes back to me of my friend Olivia saying Enclave rebels use the code name 'Eve'.

The name under the logo gives me even more confidence:  
*Eve's Apple: Tattoos and Piercings.*

There's a back entrance to the tattoo parlor from the alley, and I scuttle toward it to find that the door is unlocked. It's getting late, but for some reason, I can get in here...and I take it as a sign.

If I stay out here much longer, I'll die anyway.

This is really my only hope.

I open the door and step inside, the soft clanging of a bell over the door announcing my arrival. The sound echoes through the empty parlor, and I can feel my heart pounding with a mixture of fear and relief. I glance around, taking in the dimly lit space and the various tattoo designs and piercing options displayed on the walls.

“Hello?” I call out, my voice barely audible above the hum of the air conditioning. “Is anyone here?”

There’s no response. I hesitantly take a few steps farther into the room, my eyes scanning the space for any signs of life. The silence is deafening, and for a moment, I’m convinced that I’ve made a terrible mistake.

I feel like Goldilocks, intruding on a house that isn’t mine.

“I need help,” I call out, my voice weak and scratchy. “Please? If anyone is here...I need help.”

My heart stands still when footsteps thud on the tile floor... then a huge man steps out of the shadows of the neon light. He’s got a thick beard and his brown hair is pulled into a messy bun, tattoos coating every visible inch of him.

An alpha—I can already scent him, and he smells delicious enough that I’m sure I’m going into heat.

“You’re trespassing,” he says gruffly.

I try to gulp down a breath, but my throat is dry. “I’m sorry,” I whisper. “I need help.”



The alpha's eyes narrow, scanning me up and down. His gaze lingers on my bare feet, on the dirt caked onto my skin, and on the blood that's crusted over on my arms and legs. I can feel the heat rising to my cheeks, knowing that I must look like a wild animal that's crawled out of the gutters.

"What kind of help?" he asks, his voice suspicious.

I swallow hard, feeling my throat constrict around the words that I need to say. "I'm...an omega," I tell him, the admission feeling like poison on my tongue. "And I'm going into heat. I need a place to hide until it passes."

The alpha's expression changes, his eyes widening in shock. He steps closer to me, his nostrils flaring as he takes in my scent. I can feel his body heat radiating off of him, warm and inviting. His scent is intoxicating, and I can feel my body responding against my will.

Soon, it won't matter what I want.

I'll be his.

"You came to the wrong parlor, sweetheart," he says. "This ain't an Enclave shop, if that's what you're looking for. ACB's been cracking down on those places, and there isn't one for miles around."

"It doesn't matter," I breathe. "Please, I don't have anywhere else to go."

"Tell me who you are and I'll consider it," he says.

"I'm nobody," I whisper. "I was at the train station when... when whatever happened, happened. I've been wandering the

city looking for help ever since.”

Compassion flickers across his face, his brow furrowing in concern. “Shit...that was three days ago.”

“I’m aware.”

The alpha takes another step closer, and I can feel his heat rolling off of him in waves. My body is already reacting, my omega instincts urging me to submit to him. I can feel the slick between my legs, the need to be touched and taken. It’s terrifying and exhilarating all at once.

“I’m going to need your name,” he says, his voice lower now. “And if you’re lying to me, I’ll know.”

I take a deep breath, knowing that I’m putting myself in a dangerous position. But if I don’t find a safe place to ride out my heat, I’ll be at the mercy of any alpha who comes across me. And that’s not a risk I’m willing to take.

“My name is Kendra,” I say, my voice shaking. “Kendra Morrison.”

The alpha’s eyes widen in recognition. “As in, Senator Morrison’s daughter?”

I nod, my heart pounding in my chest. “Yes, and I know that I...yes, I killed him, okay? But right now, I’m willing to give you anything if you’ll just give me a place to hide out until my heat is over. I have money, resources—”

It’s all a lie, but I don’t know what else to do. I’m at my wit’s end, already unbelievably turned on, and with nowhere to go, I could end up accidentally mated to *anyone*.

The devil you know is better than the devil you don't.

And right now, this tattooist is my best chance at salvation.

The alpha takes a step back, his eyes darkening with desire. He's holding back...but he's on the brink.

I get it. I am too.

"I see," he murmurs, his hands flexing at his sides. "Well, Kendra Morrison, you're in luck. I happen to have a spare room in the back. You can stay there until your heat passes."

Relief floods through me, and I feel myself sag against the wall. "Thank you," I whisper. "Thank you so much."

"Don't thank me yet," he says, his voice low and dangerous. "You're not gonna like this part."

I swallow hard. "What do you mean?"

But before I can get another word out, he grabs me and picks me up, flinging me over his shoulder. I stride through a curtain in the back, and I beat on his back with my fists as I hear him kick a door open. The next thing I know, he's flinging me into the room and slamming the door, then I hear a lock click into place.

I grab the door handle and try to open it, but it's locked shut—which is confusing, because there's a lock on *this side* too. I hear the alpha lean against the wall, his breath coming in harsh gasps as he wrenches out a command.

"Lock it from that side, too," he growls. "Before I come in there and spread your legs, little omega."

My eyes widen and I lock the door, then take a few steps back so I don't obey after all. I can still hear him on the other side of the door, I can *smell* how turned on he is.

I want him.

I want him really fucking bad, but this is for the best.

"We keep these doors locked except when I bring you food," he says. "When your heat's over...then we'll figure out what to do with you."

"I'm not your prisoner, right?" I shout.

He sighs.

"No," he says. "I just...fuck, I had to get you away from me. I don't have any suppressants for you, and I haven't had an omega in...well, in a long fucking time. Just relax and let's give ourselves some time to calm down."

I don't hear him move. I don't hear a thing, in fact, the tattoo parlor going silent again.

"Are you still there?" I ask, my voice soft.

He takes a second to respond. But then he says, his voice rough, "Yes."

"I just wanted to say thank you," I tell him. "What's your name?"

"Zane," he says. "And seriously...don't thank me yet. Let's get through your heat first...and we'll see if my honor holds."



## Zane

**I**T'S NOT EVERY DAY that an omega in heat stumbles into my shop begging for shelter.

Especially when that omega is an infamous fugitive.

I remember seeing the case a couple years ago, the pretty young blonde's face splashed all over the news. She'd killed her dad in a bid for escape, and she'd vanished along with two other ACB kids: Olivia Cruz and Jade Winslow. The three of them were thought to have fled Solstice Bay completely, joining up with the Enclave or running all the way to Pacific City.

But then Olivia Cruz re-emerged and killed *her* father...and Jade ended up breaking into her dad's house and stealing a fuckton of ACB secrets that the Enclave then splashed across everyone's news feed.

It was only a matter of time before Kendra Morrison showed up, but I didn't know she was going to the auction block—and

I *definitely* didn't know she was going to show up here, of all places.

I used to work with the Enclave a long time ago, before my best friend and his sister got grabbed by the ACB while we were on a mission. She'd been an omega too...and I saw the things that happened to her once she was taken into custody, and the way they slaughtered my friend.

It was at that point that I decided it was all too dangerous, and I gave up my revolutionary ways.

But what the hell am I supposed to do when the revolution falls in my lap?

When that revolution is fucking *gorgeous* and needs someone to fuck her through her heat?

I growl and rake my hands through my hair as I stand at the kitchen counter, wondering what she might want to eat. I typically just have a couple eggs and bacon—nothing fancy, but nice and comforting. On some level, I know I shouldn't be agonizing over what to feed this girl—she's lucky I'm willing to give her shelter at all—but she's gotta be starving.

I certainly am.

Just not for *food*.

I didn't sleep a wink last night, and there's not enough coffee in the world to get my head on straight. I tossed and turned all night, wondering if I should just give up and go to her room, kick down the door and bend her over. She would love it; I

know she would. I could hear her every so often, whining and crying out when she touched herself.

I've been hard on and off for hours.

Fuck fuck *fuck*.

I finally decide to just make her an extra plate of my usual breakfast, and I serve up two eggs and a few slices of bacon on a plate for her, along with a cup of coffee. I don't have any creamer—I take mine black, and she'll have to do the same. It might help calm down her heat, if only a little. I steel my resolve and go to the guest room, then I knock on the door.

“Hey,” I say. “Uh...you awake?”

Her voice is small when she responds. “Yes.”

“I brought you some breakfast,” I tell her. “I'm gonna leave it by the door and you can come get it, then I want you to lock yourself in again, okay?”

She doesn't say anything.

I gulp. “Uh...you okay?”

“Why are you being so nice to me?” she asks, her voice barely audible through the door.

“Because I had to take care of someone else like this once,” I say, trying to keep my voice as level as possible. “You should eat.”

Her scent gets closer to the door, honeysuckle and champagne. She smells like money...like *dirty* money, wealth and decadence and pussy.



Fuck, I've got to get away from here before she opens the door.

I put the plate down and unlock the deadbolt on my side before I hustle back to the kitchen, pouring myself a cup of coffee for the sake of doing something with my hands. I listen as I hear the plate scuff on the floor...then, to my relief, the door closes again and the lock clicks into place.

Thank God she fucking listened.

I close my eyes for a moment and try to pretend I can breathe again.

Not that I *can*—that would be unrealistic.

I don't intend on breathing peacefully until she's gone, and that damn scent isn't filling my lungs and making me crazy.

I hear the door open again a little while later, and then the plate clinks on the floor. She must have been hungry; I notice that the plate's been licked clean, and I have to clench my fists in order to resist the urge to go to her and make her lick something else clean.

I'm not a fucking psycho. I'm just frustrated.

I'm not a fucking animal.

I brew up another cup of coffee and drink it black, then I head to the shop's lobby and light some incense to try and make sure it covers up Kendra's scent. That helps a little—and I have clients today that I need to deal with.

A good distraction...and the incense helps.

My first client comes in as soon as I unlock the door, and I spend most of the morning working on a sleeve with an underwater motif. We chat about the guy's day, what he has planned for the weekend—the usual smalltalk. It's almost enough to make me forget about Kendra, about the Enclave, about...well, everything. It's always weird to remember there's basically a war on when I'm back to business as usual, tattooing clients like I don't have a care in the world.

The guy doesn't speak much after that—he just wants me to fix the line work on the arm I just finished, and so I do. I spend the afternoon just sketching up some new designs, trying to focus on the pieces I've got on the schedule for next week instead of thinking about what might happen after I close up for the day.

But I'm not thinking about her.

I light more incense—until the whole place reeks of it.

I keep working and working in the hope that I'll forget there's a beautiful woman begging to be fucked in my guest room, hoping she doesn't get creeped out by the fact that I basically have a cell in my house.

It's from my Enclave days...but I don't want her to know that.

I don't want her to know I used to be a revolutionary, that I helped other omegas.

I don't need those questions in my life.

I keep the door open for walk-ins at the end of the day, and I'm surprised when I see a clean-cut guy come in just before

business hours end. The neon sign flickers over the door, illuminating his black hair in a reddish glow that makes him look somewhat devilish...and it's made all the worse when I notice the badge on his lapel.

He's ACB.

*Shit.*

I reach under the counter purely for the safety of the gun I keep down there, playing it as cool as I can. He's a big guy—not as big as I am, but big *enough* that he could take me down. His jaw has a layer of stubble on it that suggests he usually shaves religiously, but he looks haggard right now, with dark circles under his eyes.

“Hey there,” I say. “Can I help you?”

He grunts. “Yeah; I'm looking for a girl.”

I snort, even though my heart is pounding. “Not sure if you noticed, but this is a *tattoo parlor*. The brothels are all in the red light district a few blocks away; not gonna have any luck here.”

He points up at the sign. “I figured with the sign...I don't know—Eve's Apple is pretty suggestive.”

“An old friend picked out the name,” I tell him. “And I was just about to close up, so I'm gonna have to ask you to leave —”

“The girl I'm looking for isn't a prostitute,” he says. “She's a fugitive—and an omega who is very likely in heat. Pretty blonde, hazel eyes. You haven't seen her?”

*Oh—the pretty blonde in my guest room, you mean? The one who looks like an angel and smells like sex?*

“Doesn’t ring a bell,” I say.

“She’s one of ours,” he says, “and we want her back.”

“And I’d love to help you, but I don’t know a damn thing about this girl,” I tell him. “I’m gonna have to ask you to leave, friend.”

“And if I refuse?”

“I’ll call the cops.”

He looks at me with a feral grin, leaning forward on the desk. I close my hand around the handle of my pistol. “I *am* the cops, buddy. I could call for backup right now.”

“Go for it,” I say. “I’ve got nothing to hide. But I’m going to have to ask you to leave. If you want to talk to me outside, feel free—there’s a phone over at the bar round the corner. I’d love to explain how some ACB agent came in and started harassing me in my place of business.”

I don’t want to hurt him, but I fucking will. I’ll shoot him in the head before I give up this omega.

But he backs up and reaches into his pocket.

I tense.

He just pulls out a wallet and passes me a business card.

“Fine,” he says. “Just uh...give me a call if you see her, okay? Name’s Maddox.”

I take the card and glance at it. Yep—*Jack Maddox*. “I shouldn’t call the Bureau?” I ask.

“No,” he says. “Call me directly.”

Then he shoves his hands in his pockets and leaves the way he came in, just as the incense burns out and Kendra’s scent seeps back in.



## Maddox

**S** HE'S IN THERE WITH that alpha and she's in heat.

I'm confident he has her locked away somewhere. I could smell her, even over all that damn incense, and her scent was like...bad decisions. Bad decisions like the one I made when I unlocked her cuffs, when I should have just thrown her in the back of my car and driven her away from there.

I've been trying to find her ever since the Enclave attacked the auction, but I didn't track down a damn sign of her until I caught her scent by that tattoo parlor. After that, I bided my time...waited to see if she was inside. But the guy went about business as usual.

I'm fairly confident it's an old Enclave hideout, but not anymore.

Zane Stone isn't on any lists.

So why is he helping Kendra Morrison?

I book a room at the motel across the street from the tattoo parlor and make my way inside, ensuring that the view from

my room looks down at Eve's Apple. I can still see Zane through the window, closing up shop and finally pulling down the curtains.

The lights stay on.

I feel myself going crazy with jealousy as I sit in the window and watch shadows flicker across the shades. I could go in there and demand he give her to me...put a gun to his head and claim that she's mine, that I'm taking her whether he likes it or not. But that would get the ACB involved, and even though I technically work for the ACB, I'm not actually supposed to be here.

I would lose my job if they knew what I did.

I would go to prison, maybe even get the death penalty.

Because I looked into her eyes and I let her go.

The attack on the auction was my first day working there, and I thought I could hack it...but I couldn't fucking stand it. Seeing them so afraid and in pain made my skin crawl. I would never claim I'm a good guy, but I'm not a monster.

I thought the Alpha Control Bureau was keeping the peace, not destroying lives.

Turns out I was wrong.

That's to deal with some other time though...because I realized one other very important fact on the day that I let her go. When I looked into Kendra Morrison's eyes, I realized that she was mine. I've met a few omegas and plenty of betas, but



I've never had that kind of instant connection with anyone, and I can't just let her go.

Why didn't she stay with me?

Why did she run to this loner asshole instead?

I could be helping her through her heat right now, fucking her until she screams, and she's tucked away in the worst neighborhood of Solstice Bay while I lose my mind across the street.

My phone rings, and I glance down to find that my partner is calling me. I've been working abduction cases for years, and the Kendra Morrison case was one of the most high profile ones we'd taken on. I've been ignoring his calls for days, and I think it's finally time that I at least let him know I'm okay.

I swipe up to answer and put the phone to my ear.

"Hey, Barnes," I mutter. "What's up?"

"What the hell, Maddox?" he says. "Where are you?"

He's an older guy, mid-fifties and career ACB. He's gruff, too—a decorated veteran from the Control War, a true believer in the cause.

He would never understand how I could just...turn tail and run like that.

And he's predictably very pissed.

I go over to desk in the corner and snatch up a pack of smokes, grabbing one and putting it to my lips to smoke through the open window. I've been trying to quit, but this has me so

fucking rattled that I can't help giving into the sweet release of my addiction.

"Still in Solstice Bay, Barnes," I say, trying to keep my tone neutral. "Just following up on something. You know how it is."

"No, I don't know how it is," he snaps back. "I know that you're supposed to be working on the Morrison case and you're not answering your damn phone. We need to talk about this, Maddox. There are procedures to follow."

"I know the procedures," I say through gritted teeth. "And I'm still working on the case. Just...in a different way."

"What are you talking about?" he demands.

"I can't say over the phone," I say evasively. "But I'm close, Barnes. Really close. I just need a little more time."

"Maddox, you can't go rogue like this," he warns. "You're putting yourself and the ACB in danger. This girl is a dangerous fugitive."

"Pretty sure she weighs about one-twenty," I chuckle. "I think I can take her."

"That's not the point," Barnes growls. "You can't just do whatever the hell you want, Maddox. There are rules for a reason."

"I know, I know," I say, rolling my eyes. "But you're not here, Barnes. You don't know what it's like. She's not just some fugitive. She's..."

I trail off.

I shouldn't be telling him this.

"Don't fucking tell me you've gone soft," he says. "You know these omegas...they've got their pheromones. They can play mind games with you."

"It's not like that," I say. "She's different. Special."

"That's not your call to make," Barnes says sternly. "You're a detective first, alpha second. Don't let your damn rut get in the way."

"I know that," I snap back. "But you don't get it. You weren't there. You didn't see her. The way she looked at me...like she knew me. Like she belonged with me."

There's a moment of silence on the other end of the line, and I can practically see Barnes rubbing his temples in frustration.

"You can't let your emotions cloud your judgment, Maddox," he says finally. "That's how good cops turn bad. If you keep talking like this, I'll have to call it in."

"What the hell does that mean?" I growl.

"You know what it means," he says. "You'll go on our wanted list. You'll be the one we're hunting. Don't make me do it."

I clench my jaw, trying to keep my emotions in check. Barnes has always been a hardass, but I didn't think he would go this far. He's threatening to ruin my career, my life, over some omega fugitive.

But Kendra isn't just any omega fugitive.

She's my mate.

And if I want to find her without interference, I have to keep Barnes off my ass.

I take a long drag on the cigarette, feeling the smoke fill my lungs and calm my nerves.

"I won't let my emotions get in the way, Barnes," I say, quieter now. "I'm just...invested in this case. That's all. I promise I'm still following procedures. I'll check in more often, if it makes you feel better."

"It does," he says gruffly. "But Maddox, I'm serious. If you cross the line, I won't hesitate to call it in. Don't make me regret giving you a chance on this case."

"I won't," I say firmly. "Thanks for checking in, Barnes. I'll call when I get a lead."

I don't wait for him to say goodbye; I hang up and toss my phone on the bed with a growl, so I can finish my cigarette in peace. But there's no peace to be found here...

...because all I can think about is the fact that *my woman* is with some other man, going through her heat alone.

Or even worse, *with him*.



## Kendra

I 'VE SPENT A LOT of time in cells over the past few months, and as far as prisons go, this one isn't so bad. There's a big bed, a lamp that glows with soft golden light, a plush mattress and comforter—and even a connected bathroom. It's extremely comfy, in fact, to the point where it raises question about who the hell this guy is.

Especially after I find the journal in the side table drawer... and start to read.

The handwriting is looping and cute, like it belongs to a girl who might have been even younger than me. It goes on about life after the Great Mutation, about what it's like to be an unmated omega in Solstice Bay's poverty-stricken slums. She talks about selling her first heat to some random alpha, what she had to do to make sure she didn't get pregnant...

...running from the ACB.

Falling in love with a man named Zane Stone.

At first, I use the journal to distract myself from the twisting pain in my stomach, the desire coursing through me. After the pain fades though—as my heat ebbs away—I get truly invested in her story. She talks about her brother, her brother’s best friend—Zane, the big guy that rescued me and kept me here—and how she had to be locked away to keep her safe from alphas during her heat. She wrote her whole story down in that time frame, living in this room just like I am.

Then the journal abruptly ends.

An unfinished story stashed in a drawer for who knows how long.

As I close the notebook, I realize that my heat has finally ended—that I need a change of clothes, that I’m starving, that I’m ready to see the light of day and figure out how to leave Solstice Bay.

I find a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt in the dresser drawers, and I get changed before I unlock the door and rest my head on it, listening for a sign of Zane.

“Hey,” I call out. “It’s over. I’m ready to come out.”

Footsteps sound a few minutes later, and I give the door some space as I hear the lock click on the other side. The door opens with a creak and I look out into the darkness of the shop to find Zane’s retreating back covered in a black t-shirt, his hair still up in a messy bun.

He looks over his shoulder at me.

“It’s just after dawn,” he says. “Breakfast is ready if you want it.”

Okay...so it’s been two days.

Not bad. Maybe the ACB is off my scent at this point.

I follow him out to the kitchen, getting a glimpse of his home for what’s really the first time. When I got here, I was too distracted by trying to escape my fate to notice how this place looks—but now, I realize it’s homey and lived-in. Art and photos decorate the walls, a thin layer of dust on the frames suggesting that he hasn’t updated the place in a while. All the furniture is old and rundown—but in a way that makes it seem well-loved rather than trashy.

The wooden table is covered in paint, ink, scuffed up wood. A name is carved into the surface in the spot where I sit down.

*Evelyn.*

I look up at Zane, searching his features for any sign of what he’s been through, of who Evelyn is, if the journal belonged to her.

I’m dying to know.

“Are you feeling better?” he asks. “Your scent has calmed down quite a bit...you can probably travel safely now.”

“Yeah,” I say. “It was good to stay in there. Thank you for helping me.”

“I’m sorry about the locks,” he says. “I’ve found that uh...”



He pauses as he pours a cup of coffee for me, then passes it over.

“Thanks,” I whisper.

“I’ve found that we aren’t always in our right minds when heat and ruts are involved,” he says. “Thus, the two-way lock. I’ve known omegas who will forget everything about what they actually want and fling themselves through that door to get onboard whatever alpha they can find.”

I laugh softly. “Yeah...I had my moments over the past couple days when that was definitely a possibility.”

He *blushes*. It’s weird to see a huge alpha look bashful, but that’s exactly what I’m getting from Zane.

He’s like a big teddy bear.

And I’ve embarrassed him.

“Thank you again,” I say. “I didn’t mean to make it awkward.”

“It’s not awkward,” he says, shaking his head. “I just want to make sure you’re safe.”

“I am,” I assure him.

He nods and goes back to making breakfast. I watch him move around the kitchen, his muscles flexing as he reaches for plates and utensils. I can’t help but wonder what it would be like to touch him, to feel his body against mine.

I’m not in heat anymore, right?

Or...am I?

Is this real attraction or just my omega impulses?

“So, what’s your plan?” Zane asks as he sets a plate of eggs and bacon in front of me.

“I’m not sure,” I say. “I need to get out of Solstice Bay, that’s for sure. Maybe head north, look for shelter and just... somewhere isolated to escape to.”

Zane shrugs, leaning against the counter. “You can leave if you want. I won’t stop you.”

“But?” I press, sensing there’s more to it than that.

“But I think you should stay,” he admits. “At least for a little while longer.”

“Why’s that?”

“Well, for one, it’s not exactly safe for an unmated omega out there on their own,” he says. “Especially not one who’s just gone through their heat.”

“I can take care of myself,” I protest, even though I know he’s right.

“I’m sure you can,” he says, his expression softening. “But it wouldn’t hurt to have a little backup, would it?”

I consider his words, weighing the pros and cons in my mind. If my heat had gone differently—if he’d taken advantage of me—I might be inclined to dip out and go out on my own again. But Zane seems like a safe bet, and I don’t want to lose the only ally I have in this city.

“And I have connections with the Enclave,” he says. “*Old* connections, sure...but enough that they could help you.”

I nod uncertainly. “It’ll be dangerous. The ACB wants my head on a platter to show what happens to omegas who disobey.”

“I know,” Zane says, his voice low. “But I’m not going to let anything happen to you. I’ll keep you safe, I promise.”

His words send a shiver down my spine, and I can’t help but feel drawn to him even more. Maybe it’s just my omega instincts, but I don’t think so.

I think I’m really starting to fall for Zane Stone.

“I’ll stay,” I say, my voice barely above a whisper.

Zane’s face breaks into a grin, and I can see the relief in his eyes.

“Good,” he says. “Now, eat up. We have work to do.”

Work?

“What kind of work?” I ask, already guessing the answer.

“The kind of work that will get us out of this city,” he says, determination in his voice. “I have some contacts who can get me ink for a synth mark—do you want one?”

I bite my lip, wondering if I do. It was my dream for so long—to get a synthetic mating mark and live mate-free my whole life—but I’ve heard that it’s harder to pack up if you’re already marked with synthetic pheromones. It’s a hard decision to make.

And I just went through my heat...

...and I somehow found an alpha who's willing to help me, who kept me safe.

"Let's give it a day," I say, "but I think...I think I would. A mark would be nice."

Zane nods. "Okay. In that case...let me show you around the place, make sure you have all the exits handy. You know how to use a gun?"

My eyes widen. "Do you think that'll be necessary?"

"It might," he shrugs. "Some ACB agent was skulking around here yesterday—I want to make sure you're defended just in case he shows up again."

I nod, feeling a little bit uneasy. The last thing I want is to get involved in a firefight, especially considering my current state. But I also know that Zane is right—I need to be prepared for anything if I want to survive in Solstice Bay.

"Okay," I say, pushing away my plate of food. "Let's do it."

Zane leads me through the house, pointing out all the exits and showing me where he keeps his weapons. The tattoo parlor is surprisingly big, and the photos and art don't fade away at all. I get the impression Zane is the artist here; the sketches on the walls match the ink on his arms.

"You paint?" I ask, gesturing at the decor.

"When the mood strikes me," he says. "I wouldn't consider myself a fine artist or anything, but I like to experiment with different tattoo ideas on paper before I put anything down

permanently on someone's skin. Plus it's a nice hobby for de-stressing, you know?"

"Not really," I shrug. "I've never been very artistically inclined."

He leads me into a back room and puts in a code on the wall, then a screen raises to reveal a row of guns. It's more high tech than I expected, and my eyes widen at the display. "Uh...what is this?" I ask.

"Insurance," he says. "The code is 0327; if you need anything in a pinch, it's yours."

"Why do you have all this?"

He glances over at me. "I uh...I used to be Enclave."

"You did?" I ask. "Why didn't you mention it?"

"I told you I had connections with them."

"I mean—you're a tattoo artist in Solstice Bay, of course you have connections," I say. "But you didn't mention you were *in the organization*. Why did you stop working with them?"

He swallows hard. "Somebody died. Somebody important to me. I'd like to leave it at that, if that's okay with you."

My face falls and I nod. "Of course."

I go up to the wall and look at the weapons—a standard collection, if a little excessive for a civilian. I've seen most of these before, courtesy of my father's fondness for going to the shooting range and being an only child.

"You know how to use them?" he asks.

I point at a pistol and look back at Zane. “Yeah,” I say. “I killed my father with one just like this.”

He searches my gaze like he’s trying to figure out just how fucked up I am. “Why?”

I snort. “Isn’t it obvious? I was an omega in a society that treats us like animals. He wanted to marry me off. It makes sense that I would want him dead.”

“But you don’t seem like a monster,” he says. “I don’t understand how you could...how you could do that. And you were *so young*.”

“Cornered animals do desperate deeds,” I shrug. “I’m no exception.”

Zane nods slowly, his eyes fixed on mine. His irises are a warm, chocolate brown; they make me feel comfortable, safe. I wonder if I can really trust him, or if his looks are giving me a false sense of complacency.

“I see,” he says. “You had to do what you had to do to survive. But that doesn’t make you a monster, you know.”

I stare at him, surprised by the compassionate tone in his voice. It’s been a while since anybody’s tried to understand me, let alone sympathize with me. “You don’t think I’m a monster?”

“I think you’re a person,” he replies simply. “A person who’s been dealt a shitty hand in life, but still manages to keep going. And that takes guts. More than most people have.”

I feel a lump in my throat, and I'm not sure if it's because of his words...or the sudden confirmation that I am, in fact, attracted to him *without* the influence of my heat. His strong features, kind eyes, mysterious past, and the way he treats me like an equal instead of a freak—it's all making me want him in a way that's both thrilling and terrifying.

Desire is dangerous for omegas.

That's the first thing we learn when we get old enough to go into heat, because alphas won't let you love them without demanding your submission.

I want to ask if the person who got hurt—and the person who left the journal in the guest room—was Evelyn. But I can tell Zane is ready to leave it be, so I glance back toward the door.

“Okay...” I start. “So I know where the guns are, where the exits are. I guess we should start working on getting that ink?”





## Zane

I WALK BACK TOWARD Eve's Apple with a bottle of synthetic claiming ink in my pocket, and everything about it feels wrong.

I thought that, when Kendra's heat ended, I would stop feeling these raging hormones...but if anything, I'm feeling less in control than I did when she was locked up in that room. It isn't like when I could smell her heat—my body isn't getting aroused, threatening to take control.

Fuck...I think I might just *like her*.

Which is, of course, totally fucked up.

Kendra is half my age, and she came to me looking for help. It brings back lots of shitty memories, too...memories of Evie begging me to fuck her, when I knew that she was just in heat and wanted someone safe and *available*.

I never entertained the thought that Evie might just care about me—I was too focused on making sure she actually *knew* what she wanted as an omega.

And somehow, without even trying, here I am again.

I really hope Kendra accepts the synth mark.

Not just for her...but for me. So I don't feel this near-unbearable compulsion to claim her myself.

I go through the back door of the shop, finding the place empty. For a second, I think she's left—and I hate how *angry* that makes me on a deep, primal level—but then she pops out around a corner as I make my way to the kitchen, clearly having been hidden just like I told her. She's a smart girl; no wonder she managed to hide from the ACB for a full two years before she was caught.

“Hey,” I say, pulling the vial out of my pocket. “I got it.”

She swallows hard and looks at the vial, her eyes darting up to mine. She opens her mouth like she's gonna ask me a question, but then she just nods.

“We should do it,” she says. “I made up my mind. Let's do it now, just to be safe.”

I nod and walk over to the kitchen table, pulling out a chair for her to sit in. She's wearing a t-shirt—one of Evie's that was still tucked away in the dresser in the guest room—and it brings up lots of weird feelings that I can still scent a long-dead girl on Kendra's clothes, and that it makes me want her even more. I feel myself getting hard, but in a way that feels entirely different than how I get hard when I smell her heat.

It's just a reminder of why I need to do this *now*. To neutralize her scent, if only a little.

“Where do you want it?” I ask.

“Where would a claiming mark usually go?” she shoots back.

*Jesus...everywhere? On her neck, her breasts, her inner thighs, her round ass...*

“It’s really your call,” I say, my voice gruff.

Her eyes narrow slightly like she can read my pervy thoughts. I don’t know how she’s going to respond, because she could just freeze me out at this point, totally shut the whole thing down...

...but she does the last thing I expect.

She takes her damn shirt off.

She’s wearing a bra underneath—not anything fancy, but that doesn’t matter when the girl wearing it is so gorgeous. She tosses her straight blonde hair back and stares me down, daring me to look, and I somehow manage to keep my eyes fixed on hers.

She looks...offended?

Hurt?

Am I reading more into this than is really there?

“I want it right here,” she says, pointing at her heart, just over the swell of her breast.

“Any particular shape?”

“It doesn’t have to be a bite mark?”

I shake my head. “The point is the pheromones in the ink, not a literal mark...so no, it can be whatever you want.”

She bites her lip, frowning as she considers my question.

“Okay,” she says. “Then...an apple. The Eve’s Apple logo, actually. Would you do that for me?”

Fuck me. She wants a synthetic claiming mark, but she’s asking me to *tattoo my brand* on her. And I don’t think she realizes exactly what she’s asking, because I designed that logo—and tattooed it, a long time ago—on a girl I lost.

“Yeah,” I say. “I can do that for you.”

“Great,” she replies. “Let’s do it.”

We walk into the shop and I make sure all the curtains are drawn before I guide her toward my chair. It’s plush and comfy—if a little worn from years of use—and I help her get comfortable. I set down the ink carefully, then I go through the motions of preparing my inks, my tattoo gun, latex gloves and sterilizing gear. Kendra watches, not looking even remotely nervous even though she’s half-dressed and just a slip of a thing.

“This might be a silly question, but you ever been tattooed before?” I ask, making small talk.

“No,” she says. “Never had the chance. My friends I was hiding with...we considered getting the supplies for a synth mark ourselves and getting it all done, but we were worried we would mess it up—and it’s dangerous for omegas to try to get

those things for ourselves. Obviously it didn't end up working out anyway."

"It's good you didn't," I say. "I've seen too many botched tattoos—the pheromones make it a little more dangerous, more likely to get infected. You can get sick if you overdo the claiming ink."

She frowns as I turn back toward her, sterilizing wipe in hand. I'm going to need to touch her—and I'm going to need to stay *in control*. I'm really only talking about all this stuff because I'm trying to distract myself from the inevitability of putting my hands on her bare skin.

"I guess I don't really know how all this works," she says.

I shrug. "I'm no chemist, so I can't walk you through the whole elaborate process...but I do know you have to get the dosage of the synth ink *just right* to mimic the amount of pheromones injected during a claiming bite. Cold touch."

"What?" she asks, surprised.

I hold up the alcohol wipe and she laughs softly.

"Oh," she says. "I don't know why I thought..."

She doesn't finish.

I don't ask.

I brace myself and sit beside her to wipe down the area, resisting the urge to indulge myself and take my time. She feels just as good as I expected though—lean, but soft and

supple. She gasps a little when I touch her, and I hope she doesn't see how it makes blood surge right to my cock.

Somehow, I manage to turn around again, throwing the wipe away and picking up my tattoo gun.

"What does it feel like?" she asks.

*Like heaven and hell and everything in between? Like I should be biting you instead of inking you?*

"Some people compare it to a cat scratch," I say. "It stings, for sure...but I can tell you're a tough cookie. My recommendation is just to breathe through it, and to anticipate pain...but not *bad* pain. This tattoo is small, it will only take a few minutes."

"And the pheromones...will I feel anything?"

"I've heard it can cause an instant aversion to alphas," I chuckle. "So I won't be offended if you want to shut yourself in your room for a few hours after."

"You won't lock me in?"

I look her in the eye, honestly a little hurt that she would assume that.

But...then again, I am the creepy old man with a door that locks from the *outside*.

"Never," I tell her. "I promise you're safe with me, Kendra."

She nods and gulps, obviously nervous, but brave. I hope to God she's ready for this. I turn on the gun and squeeze the

trigger. It hums to life, buzzing softly, and I pause a moment to make sure she's ready before I put it to her skin.

"You're not gonna trace it or anything?" she asks.

I laugh softly. "No. I've drawn this design so many times I could tattoo it in my sleep. Do you trust me?"

She nods.

"I'm ready," she says, her voice soft yet firm. "Do it."

I press the gun to her skin.

She winces, but she doesn't make a sound. Yeah...she's tough enough for this. Ink blooms under her skin, the black outline fine and precise, and I try to focus on the ink and not the way she inhales, the way her skin trembles slightly.

Fuck, she'd be perfect to sink my teeth into.

Among other things.

I've done this thousands of times before, but the thought of it now is so fucking hard. I hate to admit it, but I'm insanely turned on by the whole thing—Kendra's soft skin under my hands, her smell, the heat in the room, my desire to claim her. Even under normal circumstances, there's something intimate about tattooing—when it's just the client in the chair and you touching them, a painful and meaningful experience.

With her...it's so much more powerful.

Fucking intoxicating.

"How is it?" I ask as I get to the halfway mark. It's only been a few minutes, but it feels like hours—and I wonder if I'm

having a harder time than she is, because I can barely resist her as I try to focus on the tattoo.

“It stings, but it’s really not bad,” she says.

Her voice is low and husky, and I realize with a start that one of the reasons I’m getting so turned on is her scent. She shouldn’t be aroused...but she is. Are the pheromones doing this?

Or...is it something else?

*Mine*, my alpha growls somewhere deep in the recesses of my head.

*Down boy.*

“You okay?” I ask.

“I feel...weird,” she admits. “You didn’t tell me it would make me horny.”

I let out a short, awkward laugh—not because she’s making me uncomfortable, but because I’m trying desperately not to forget about the tattoo and get on my knees to lick her pussy.

“It’s not supposed to,” I grunt.

“Well, it is,” she says. “Zane...why don’t you want me?”

Fuck, fuck fuck...seriously? I focus on keeping my hand steady, outlining Eve’s face over Kendra’s heart. The tattoo is almost done, and then I can flee to my room and jerk off until my dick is raw. That’s what I’m going to have to do if she keeps this up.



“You could’ve done anything you wanted with me when I got here,” she says. “And I would’ve let you. I would’ve liked it. I still would.”

“Jesus, Kendra.”

“Why?” she asks, her voice reedy and desperate. “You told me I’m not a monster, but you treat me like you don’t even see me.”

I finally finish the line work, sealing the pheromones into place, and I turn around and put the tattoo gun down on my work table. She shouldn’t be like this...she should find me repulsive right now.

“I’m trying to treat you like a lady,” I growl.

“I’m not a lady,” she says. “I’m an omega. And I’m a killer. And you say I don’t know what I want...but I do.”

I can feel her behind me, and I know we’re hurtling toward something we can’t take back. Once I’m inside her, I won’t ever stop fucking her. I’m gonna have her naked with her legs spread for days.

We’ve gotta escape Solstice Bay, not fuck all week.

But she’s about to make that choice for me.

“Look at me, Zane,” she murmurs. “Tell me you don’t want this.”

Then her hands slide across my chest from behind...and I’m done for.



## Carson

I CAN'T BELIEVE I saw her and she slipped away.

I've been looking for Kendra Morrison for months—and everyone has been riding my ass about it. I've got Olivia Cruz breathing down my neck from out west, and now my partner in crime, Rafe, is fucking Kendra's best friend...so *he's* just as interested in getting her rescued. Everyone in the Enclave seems intent on getting this last Solstice Bay heiress to safety, and I almost had her.

I've been staking out the auction houses for weeks, planning to stage a rebellion there.

Just *waiting* for the right time.

Then I saw her, and she was gorgeous, and I totally lost my cool.

Now I have to track her down again.

I make my way through the city streets, my hands shoved in my jacket pockets, asking everyone who's anyone if they've caught sight of her. If I was a fugitive from the ACB, the

Enclave is the first organization I would turn to—but last time I saw Kendra, she was terrified. She’s probably been more interested in running for her life than finding the rebels who could help her.

She could be anywhere.

Unwillingly mated to any damn alpha who found her.

I really fucked up, even if I shut down the auction.

“Hey,” I say, walking up to a bum on the street corner. He’s a beta—I can tell from his scent, masked as it is by his stench.

“You seen this girl?”

He looks at the photo on my phone and laughs, his voice hoarse and shaky. “Only on wanted posters,” he says. “Cute little thing though, huh?”

I snatch my phone away and shut it down again. “Thanks,” I mutter, then leave him behind.

I finally catch a break when I hear a rumor that Kendra has been spotted in the Red Light District, and my heart sinks. That might be the second worst place for an omega to end up after the auction block—where they fall in with pimps who want to sell them to the highest bidder, getting plowed night after night. I make my way there in a hurry, half-hoping my lead is wrong.

Then I realize I have a tail.

He follows me through the alleys and toward the brothels, past a few tattoo parlors that look like they may have once been Enclave bases. He’s tall and lean, with dark hair that’s pushed

back from his forehead. I catch sight of him in mirrors and shop windows: five o'clock shadow, dark circles under his eyes, a scar over his eyebrow. I don't recognize him.

He's ACB.

Gotta be.

Which means I have to divert course so that *he* doesn't catch her instead.

My heart is pounding in my chest as I move quickly through the crowded streets of the Red Light District. I can feel the ACB agent's eyes on me, watching my every move. I can't afford to lead him to Kendra; I have to find a way to lose him.

As I glance over my shoulder, I see him gaining on me. His dark eyes are fixed on me, and I know that he won't give up until he captures Kendra.

I duck into an alleyway, hoping to shake him off my tail. I run down the narrow, dimly lit path, my breath coming in short gasps.

Suddenly, I hear a rustling noise behind me, and I know that the agent is getting closer. I turn around and face him, lifting my hands in the universal sign of surrender.

"Hey man," I say, trying to stay level. "I don't want any trouble."

"Neither do I," he says. "You Enclave?"

I gape at him, my brows rising. "Seriously?"

His eyes narrow. "Seriously."

He doesn't have a weapon—or at least, he hasn't drawn a weapon on me. That doesn't mean he won't draw a gun, though, and I keep my eyes glued to his hands.

“You're obviously ACB,” I say. “And I just want to reiterate—I *don't want any trouble.*”

“Trouble seems to find people like you, no matter what you want,” he chuckles. “And I think we might have similar priorities.”

“What's that?”

“You looking for Kendra Morrison?” he asks.

I stop dead.

“What's it to you?” I scowl.

“I know where she is.”

My heart races with hope and suspicion. “What's your angle?” I ask.

“I've been tasked with bringing her in,” he says, “but I don't agree with the ACB's methods. I want to help her escape—and help you take down the ACB while we're at it.”

I eye him warily, but something in his expression tells me he's telling the truth. “Why?” I ask.

“I have my reasons,” he says evasively. “But that's not important right now. The important thing is that we get Kendra out of the city.”

I nod slowly, my mind racing. This could be a trap, but it feels like my only option. I don't trust the ACB, but I also need to

find this girl.

And he's got me cornered.

So...what's the harm?

If he's legit, he could be a valuable asset.

"Okay," I say finally. "What's the plan?"

He grins, and it freaks me out a little. Dude's clearly feral for her; I don't know what the deal is, but it's got something to do with her heat and his status as an alpha. I can see the craze of rut in his eyes, and it makes me nervous that I'm not doing the right thing.

"Well, she's not here," he says. "She's hiding out at a tattoo parlor—Eve's Apple. The owner's an alpha—"

"Yeah," I say, remembering the name. "Zane..."

"So he did used to be Enclave, huh?" the ACB guy says.

I grimace. "You don't need to know that. The bottom line is that she's safe there...so why the hell do you want her out?"

"What if he hurts her?"

"He's a big softie, he won't harm a hair on her head," I mutter.

"You, on the other hand? I don't even know who the hell you are."

"Name's Jack Maddox," he says. "I'm a nobody who wants to help an omega. In that, our priorities align. And you are?"

There's no way in hell I'm giving an ACB agent my real name.

“You can call me Rebel,” I say, going with one of my nicknames around the Enclave.

He snorts. “I trust you with my name and you give me some stupid pseudonym?”

“That’s all you’re gonna get,” I mutter. “So what’s the plan, Jack?”

“We need to get her out of the city,” he says. “But with ACB patrols everywhere, it won’t be easy. We’ll need a distraction.”

I nod, understanding what he’s getting at. “And that’s where the Enclave comes in.”

“Exactly,” he says. “I assume you have ways of getting her out of Solstice Bay?”

“I do...or at least I did,” I say. “But ever since Jade Winslow set the city on fire—metaphorically speaking—they’ve tightened up security. Those girls are bringing havoc wherever they go in the city, and Kendra is public enemy number one right now.”

“Oh trust me, I know,” Jack snorts.

“And I had a plan, but I didn’t expect to have an ACB agent on my tail.”

He smirks. “I have my uses.”

I roll my eyes, but I can’t deny the thrill of excitement as we hatch our plan. Together, we might be able to pull this off.

But there’s one thing I can’t shake.

Jack’s obsession with Kendra.



It's not just his alpha nature, or the fact that she's an omega in heat. There's something more there, something borderline concerning.

I don't trust him.

"You need to lay off and give me a chance to talk to Zane," I tell him. "I know the guy—he'll trust me."

"Fine," he says. "Just don't run off without me, okay?"

Yeah...that's exactly what I intend on doing. I'm grateful for the lead, but Jack Maddox strikes me as a total wildcard. You don't just leave the ACB on a dime, and he seems to have done it for Kendra.

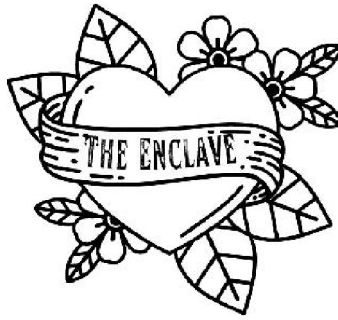
The question is why?

"Well...I'll head there now," I say, uneasy with the choice. "Give me a few hours and we'll meet back here."

He gives me a sly smile and runs his tongue over a sharp canine. He looks like a fucking psychopath.

"Alright, *Rebel*," he says, his tone taunting. "Just remember that I'll be watching."

Then he disappears into the night, leaving me to deal with Zane Stone alone.



## Kendra

I DIDN'T PLAN ANY of this.

I'm an omega. I know that this is how alphas control people like me—with pheromones, with sex, by dominating us and holding us captive to our desire. Since I was old enough to have a heat, I've felt like I was hurtling inevitably toward a future I never wanted.

And then I met Zane Stone.

And he was kind and kept me away from him while I was in heat because he wanted to make sure it was what *I wanted*.

There's something to be said for a man who gives you only what you want and doesn't care about his own desires...and I think his borderline rejection is what's convinced me this is all I care about.

Plus I don't think I'll be able to spend another second in the same room as him if he doesn't touch me.

His chest is just as broad and muscled as I hoped it would be, tensing under my touch as I slide my hands across his shirt.

My palms drift over his pebbled nipples, and my breath hitches when I realize they're pierced.

His hands shoot up and grab my wrists, stopping me there.

"Tell me this isn't your heat," he growls. "Tell me this isn't your heat, and I'll make you come all night."

"It isn't my heat," I gasp. "I just...I like you."

He turns around and stands in one fluid motion, towering over me and taking my face in his hands. I'm so *tiny* in comparison to this huge alpha—Zane has at least a foot on me, probably more—and he backs me against the tattooing bench until the backs of my thighs bump into it.

His thumbs glide over my cheekbones.

"Fuck, Kendra," he groans, his voice harsh. "I tried so hard to resist you...I really did."

"Then stop resisting me," I say. "You have my permission."

He doesn't wait another second; he kisses me hard, his tongue invading my mouth as I sigh against his lips. I've only been kissed once by a boy in high school—before we all discovered our designations, before I lost my independence—and this is nothing like that. Zane *knows* how to kiss, sucking on my tongue, nibbling my bottom lip with sharp teeth.

"You taste incredible," he growls. "Can I touch you?"

"Please," I whisper.

His rough hands are on my hips now, and he slides them up over my ribs to palm my breasts through my bra. I want him

touching me without them in the way, and I reach behind me to unclasp the bra. It comes off in his hands, and Zane tosses it away to roll my nipples between his fingertips.

“Tell me how you like to be touched, baby girl,” he rumbles. “Where...and if you like it rough or gentle.”

“Give it to me rough,” I say, instantly knowing what I want when he’s been *too gentle* so far.

He pinches my nipples hard and I arch my back, pushing my tits into his hands.

“Like that, yes, like that,” I moan.

“Good,” Zane growls. “You like me a little rough, baby?”

“I like you *a lot* rough,” I gasp. “I want you...I want you to fuck me hard.”

His hands slide down my ribs to my hips, and he spins me around to face the tattooing table. I lean over it and look back at him as he drags my pants down my thighs along with my underwear, leaving me completely naked and bent over for him. He’ll see my untouched pussy for the first time; I want to see his reaction.

It doesn’t disappoint; his eyes darken and he glances up at me. I think he’s going to start right away, but when he runs a finger between the lips of my bare sex instead of diving in, I whimper in desperation.

“Oh Kendra...” he rasps, playing with my clit. “You’ve got such a pretty pussy.”

“It’s yours,” I murmur, biting my lip. “Do whatever you want with it.”

“Are you a virgin, Kendra?”

“Yes.”

He chuckles low in his throat. “Then I wanna play with you for a while.”

He pushes his fingers through my slick folds, stroking my clit with a big, dexterous index finger. I gasp and push my hips back toward him, loving the way my whole body is on fire. This is nothing like when I’ve fingered myself; Zane Stone is a master at getting me off.

His thumb pushes into my pussy and he curls it toward the front as his finger continues to play with my clit, teasing me until I’m close to exploding. I bite my lips and let my head drop, trying to keep my voice down as I pant and whimper.

“I want you to come all over my hand, baby girl,” he rumbles.

His thumb touches somewhere that feels *amazing*.

And I do as he says.

I lift my head and howl as I come in pulses, shuddering and shaking with ecstasy until I can hardly see straight. I squeeze my eyes shut and bare my teeth as the waves of pleasure crash over me.

I’m not sure how long it lasts, but when I’m finally done coming, I fall forward and rest my head on the tattooing table. My thighs are trembling and I don’t know if I can handle

much more. When I think I'm done, Zane slides another finger into my wet pussy and starts fucking me with it until I'm tugging at the sides of the table and moaning, stretching me out to get me ready for him.

"Yes, baby," he rumbles, fucking me harder. "I want you slick and ready for me when I knot you. You want me to knot you, Kendra?"

"Yes," I cry. "Yes!"

I'm breathing heavily and my eyes are squeezed shut again, but I know he's looking at me. I can feel his gaze on my skin, making me feel like a goddess.

"Fuck!" I gasp, my body shaking as I grind back against his hand. The orgasm goes on and on, and I can't stop myself from moaning loudly. I know someone may have heard us, but in this moment, I don't care.

I'm being claimed by Zane Stone.

And the mark he put on me will keep me safe...just like he will.

"Let me know when you're ready for me," Zane says, leaning over me to whisper in my ear.

"Please," I whimper. "Don't make me wait...I want you inside me."

Zane pulls me up slightly then turns me over, making me wrap my arms around his neck as he stares into my eyes. He's so devastatingly hot that it makes my pussy throb, anxious to feel him.

“I want you to look at me when I fuck you,” he growls. “Eyes on me, baby girl.”

He tears his shirt off and pushes down his jeans and underwear in one motion, then takes my hip in one hand and his cock in the other. His cock is huge and thick, and I feel a moment of uncertainty as he lines up with me. He’s going to split me in half.

“I’m going to hurt you,” he says. “But just at first...and then I’m gonna make you feel good for hours, Kendra. I’m gonna make you feel so damn good.”

“I know,” I whisper. “Please...please fuck me.”

He takes me by the back of the neck and glances down at where his cock is lined up with me, his breath harsh. “Watch when it goes in, baby,” he says. “Look how I’m fucking stretching you out. *Look.*”

“Yes,” I whisper, biting my lip as he pushes the head of his cock between my swollen folds. It’s crazy to see how he impales me, his cock disappearing between my legs, the pressure so intense that I almost scream. I squeeze my eyes shut as I feel the fullness in my pussy, and then Zane is sliding into me all the way—all the way to his knot.

“Oh god...” I moan.

He’s so big and thick that my pussy hurts, stretching to take him. I feel like I’m being ripped in half, but it’s the most incredible pain I’ve ever felt. He’s filling me up and touching every inch of me.



“Am I hurting you?” Zane’s voice is strained, and I open my eyes to see him staring at me with his lips parted and his eyes hungry.

“I think I’m alright,” I whisper. “You feel amazing.”

And he does. I’ve never felt pleasure like this in my life.

“I want you to remember tonight...” he rasps. “I want you to remember it and touch yourself when you’re in heat. I want you to think back and think *fuck*, Zane fucked me good.”

I frown, confused why he’s acting like this is the only time we’ll do this. As far as I’m concerned, we’re gonna do it again and again until the day we die.

“Fuck...” he breathes. “I don’t want to hurt you, Kendra. Tell me if I’m hurting you.”

“You’re not hurting me,” I whisper.

“I want to do this right,” he says. “God, I want to do this right.”

“You are,” I say, and I can feel his cock swelling inside me. “I know...I know you would never hurt me, Zane.”

“Do you trust me enough to knot you?” he asks.

I meet his eyes, that rich chocolate brown making me feel safe and secure. I nod slowly, and he smiles and rests his head against mine.

“You’re fucking incredible, Kendra Morrison,” he says.

He closes his eyes and pushes deep inside me once again, and a moment later I feel the most amazing feeling in the world.

His cock swells as he knots me, the bulge at the base of his cock slotting into place, and I can feel my pussy stretching to accommodate him. I moan and bury my face in his shoulder, feeling so full of him that I don't even have words for it.

"You're mine," he growls, his voice so low and hoarse that it sends a thrill through me.

"Yours," I whisper. "All yours."

I can feel his cock throbbing inside me as he knots me, and my entire body feels like it's going to explode. Zane is holding me so tightly that there's only a little bit of air between us. It feels like he's carving out a place for himself in my heart, like he's touching my soul.

"This is all for you," he whispers. "I want you to remember how good your first time was. How you made me so fucking hard that I couldn't resist you any longer."

I whimper, and I can feel that constriction in my pussy. I know he's getting close to coming, and I want that, too. I want to feel him come inside me. I want it all.

"I'm gonna come, baby girl," Zane says, panting. "You want that? You want my cum?"

"Yes," I gasp. "Yes!"

And he does. He's so deep inside me that it feels like I can feel every pulse of his cock as he comes, shooting his sticky white seed inside me to mix with my own juices. He groans through clenched teeth and holds me close, his arms hooked under my

ass as he thrusts and comes. It's like he's holding onto me for dear life, like he's afraid to let go.

“Kendra...Kendra...”

He whispers my name in my ear, so intimate that I can barely stand it.

I think I meant what I said.

I'm *his*.

Zane picks me up effortlessly in his arms—still knotted inside me—and walks past the counter, into the back of the shop. I've never been in his room, but I don't have the energy to look around just yet as he lays me down in his bed, curling up around me while we wait for the arousal to fade. I don't know if it ever will—I don't know if I want it to—but what I *do* know is that I'm truly happy.

I don't want to leave him.

If I'm escaping Solstice Bay...I want Zane by my side.

And tomorrow, I'll ask him to mark me, tattoo be damned.



## Zane

I CAN'T BELIEVE I lost control like this, but I'm so glad I did.

I wake up early the next morning with Kendra in my arms, her blonde head tucked against my chest, her breath slow and steady and comforting. She snores a little, which is adorable, and I think I'd like to fall asleep to the sound of her snoring every night for the rest of my life.

Fuck...I'm such a hopeless romantic that I can't stop thinking about keeping her.

Even though I'm a sad old man who shouldn't have anything to do with her.

All I am is ex-Enclave, going nowhere. She's the most wanted woman in Solstice Bay, even if she looks like a goddamn angel.

She doesn't stir as I get out of bed and step into a pair of sweats to make my way out to the kitchen. I must have let my hair down at some point, because its down in waves around

my shoulders...and it smells like Kendra. Her scent is all over me; in my hair, my beard, *everywhere*.

I've just gotten the coffee brewing when I hear a chime that signals a customer is outside, and I frown as my head snaps toward the shop entrance. I have the doorbell set up if the door happens to be locked and a customer shows up, but no one should be here right now—I don't have any appointments today and it's the ass crack of dawn anyway. I think it might be a straggler until the doorbell rings again.

*Shit.*

I wonder if it's that sketchy ACB guy again—the one who's definitely working *off the clock*.

I grab the pistol I always keep in a kitchen drawer for emergencies and I shove it in the back of my pants to go out to the tattoo parlor, keeping a scowl on my face. I'm a big guy—even if my friends consider me more of a gentle giant—and I know I can scare the hell out of intruders if they fuck with me. But what I see at the door surprises me almost as much as seeing Kendra did.

Carson fucking Connelly is out there, just *waiting* with his hands in the pockets of his leather jacket like we have a goddamn appointment.

And you don't just turn away the head of the Enclave when you've got a fugitive who needs help stashed in your bedroom.

I go to the door and yank up the steel shutter over the door before I unlock the deadbolts to let Carson in. He looks me

over with green eyes, inhaling sharply and raising his eyebrows.

“Holy shit...you already fucked her,” he says.

“Get inside,” I bite out.

I usher him in and glance around for anyone following him before I lock the deadbolt and close the shutter once again. Carson keeps his hands in his pockets, staying calm and collected, looking like a fucking angel with that curly blond hair and blue eyes.

“Where is she?” he says.

“Straight to business,” I mutter. “No ‘Hey, Zane, it’s been a while,’ huh?”

“I figured if you wanted to talk to me, you knew how to get in touch with me.”

“She’s asleep,” I reply. “And before you start interrogating me, let me just say that she’s not going anywhere until I know you can get her safely out of the city. I promised her I’d keep her safe and that’s what I’m going to do.”

Carson nods and leans against the counter, his eyes never leaving mine. “I’m not here to cause trouble, Zane. I just need to know where she is. Her friends want to see her.”

“What friends?”

“Olivia Cruz and Jade Winslow,” he says. “They’re with us; in fact, Jade is mated to the *other* chief of the Enclave...you know, the asshole one?”

“Why do you think you’re not the asshole one?” I ask.

He snorts. “We both know that’s not true. Rafe is way worse than I am.”

I can’t help but chuckle at that. “Fair enough. But why do they want to see her?”

“I think they just want to make sure she’s okay,” he says. “They were worried when they lost her...they’ve been looking for her ever since.”

“Well, she’s safe here,” I say firmly. “And I’m not gonna let you take her until I know for sure that she’s not going to be in danger.”

Carson nods. “I understand. But you have to know that the longer she stays here, the more danger she’ll be in. The ACB is closing in on her, and we both know they won’t stop until they find her.”

I can feel the weight of his words like a heavy blanket, suffocating me. He’s right, of course. Kendra can’t stay here forever, and the longer she does, the more danger she’s in. But I can’t bring myself to let her go just yet.

Is that because I have her best interests at heart, though, or because I’m falling for her?

I push the thought away and focus on what needs to be done. “What’s your plan, then?”

“We have a safe house outside of the city,” Carson says. “We can take her there and keep her hidden until we can figure out what to do next.”



“And what about the ACB? Won’t they be monitoring the roads and checking vehicles?”

“They will,” he admits. “But we have ways of getting around that. We uh...we’ve got a man on the inside who has a vested interest in Kendra’s case.”

I nod slowly, frowning as it sparks a sense of paranoia. “Let me guess...Jack Maddox?”

Carson snorts. “You know him?”

“He came by the other day acting as sketchy as could be,” I mutter. “I don’t trust him.”

“Me either,” he says. “But he’s willing to help us and we don’t have much time, Zane. The longer we wait, the harder it’ll be to get her out of here.”

“I know,” I say, feeling a sense of desperation creeping in. I don’t want to lose her, not after what we shared last night.

Carson blows out a breath. “I know you haven’t wanted to work with the Enclave since what happened to Eve and Ricky,” he says. “But I swear we’ve cleaned up our act.”

I eye him skeptically. “Have you?”

Carson flinches, but he doesn’t back down. “Yes. I’ve made sure that every operation we’ve carried out has been clean. No more innocent people getting hurt.”

I snort. “Forgive me if I don’t take your word for it.”

Carson’s expression hardens. “I understand why you wouldn’t trust me, Zane. But think about it. Kendra needs our help right

now, and we're the only ones who can provide it."

I shake my head. "I'll think about it."

Carson nods. "Okay. But please, Zane. Time is running out. Let us help her."

I don't respond. Instead, I head back to my bedroom to check on Kendra. She's still asleep, her chest rising and falling in a slow, steady rhythm. I take a moment to just watch her, the way her hair fans out on the pillow, the way her lips are slightly parted as she breathes. She looks peaceful, and for a moment, I'm tempted to just stay here with her and forget everything else.

But I can't. Carson is right. She's not safe here, and the longer she stays, the more danger she's in.

I take a deep breath and head back to the front of the shop, where Carson is waiting for me. "Okay," I say. "You can take her with you. But I'm coming too."

Carson raises an eyebrow. "You sure about that? You don't exactly have a clean slate with the Enclave, Zane."

"I know," I say. "But I'm not going to let Kendra go with you on her own. I promised her I'd keep her safe."

Carson nods. "Okay. But you have to understand, Zane. This is going to be dangerous. We don't know what kind of resistance we're going to face, and we don't know who we can trust."

"I understand," I say firmly. "But I'm not going to just sit here and let you take her without me."

Carson nods in agreement. “Alright. We’ll leave tonight, under the cover of darkness. I’ll have someone come by to pick us up. Make sure Kendra is ready to go.”

I nod, feeling a sense of dread settling in my stomach. This is a bad idea. A really bad idea. But I have to do it. I have to keep Kendra safe.

As Carson heads out the door, I can’t help but wonder what kind of danger we’re about to face. But I push the thought away. We’ll deal with it when it comes. For now, I have to focus on getting Kendra out of here and to safety.



## Kendra

I WAKE UP TO the sound of voices in the tattoo parlor, Zane's side of the bed conspicuously empty. Two men are talking quietly somewhere else in the building, and I'm comforted by the fact that they sound calm and that Zane is one of them.

Still...I have no idea who this other guy is.

I get up and pad over to the dresser drawer, grabbing a big t-shirt and some boxers out of Zane's stuff. It's oversized, but it'll do—and I know Zane will keep me safe.

The voices get louder as I walk from Zane's apartment toward the entrance to the tattoo parlor, but I keep to the shadows to stop myself from being seen. I peer around a corner trying to see who's out there, and I'm shocked when I see someone I recognize.

Leather jacket guy—the one from the auction.

His eyes flicker up toward me, and Zane turns around from where he's sitting and spots me in the darkness.

“Kendra,” he says. “It’s safe. You can come on out.”

I don’t move a muscle. “Are you sure? This is the guy who caused the chaos at the auction...I don’t know—”

“I did that to get you out,” leather jacket guy says. “I didn’t know you were going to run.”

My eyes widen. “For me?”

Zane nods. “This is Carson Connolly. He’s with the Enclave. Or...more accurately, he *is* the Enclave.”

Leather jacket guy raises his hand with a weak smile. “Hi, Kendra. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

I step carefully out of the shadows and take up a position behind Zane, putting my hand on his bare shoulder. He covers my hand with his and grazes his thumb over the back of my hand, setting me instantly at ease.

“Carson and I were just talking about how to get you out of here,” Zane says.

“How did you even find me?” I ask.

“I got a tip from what I think is a rogue ACB agent,” Carson says. “But I don’t know how long we have if he already knows where you are—it’s only a matter of time before the ACB finds you.”

“What?” I ask. “I didn’t...I didn’t think I was followed.”

“I should’ve told you...but the guy came in asking about you a couple days ago,” Zane says. “I figured it was best to act like nothing was wrong and lay low. I told him I hadn’t seen you.”

I frown and think back to the day of the auction—the agent who unlocked my shackles and gave me the opportunity to run. “Wait a minute...” I say. “What did he look like?”

Zane hums. “Short dark hair, official-looking...but strung out like he hadn’t slept in a few days,” he says. “Why?”

“An ACB agent let me go during the riot,” I tell them both. “Do you think it may have been him?”

“Maybe,” Carson says. “He told me he wanted to help you, and I’m inclined to believe him if he hasn’t brought the ACB down on the shop yet.”

“Okay,” I say. “So...maybe he could help us?”

“I don’t trust it,” Zane says. “Look—I appreciate what he did to help you, but I don’t want to bring anyone else into this op if it’s not necessary.”

“What...op?” I ask. “What do you mean?”

“The operation to get you out of here,” Carson says. “Not out of the city—the ACB has everything on lockdown right now—but to an Enclave safehouse out at sea.”

“You wanna bring her to the Raft?” Zane asks.

“What’s the Raft?”

“It’s where your friends are,” Carson says. “Jade and Olivia.”

My heart pounds in my chest at their names, and my eyes widen. “What? They’re safe?”

“Yes—they’re with us,” Carson says. “We’ve been planning your escape and a push on the city for months now...and

we're all gathering out at sea.”

Zane grumbles. “I didn’t know you were planning on bringing her to war. We talked escape—safety.”

“There’s no safety in Solstice Bay,” Carson says. “You know that better than anyone, don’t you Kendra?”

He looks in my eye, and I find that his gaze is a clear, breathtaking blue. I bite my lip and look between Carson and Zane, understanding in that moment that there’s something going on here—that maybe Carson wasn’t entirely honest with Zane before I came out to join the conversation.

But Carson is absolutely right.

“I’m not the only omega in Solstice Bay who needs help,” I say quietly. “There are so many others...so many men and women who don’t have a chance. I’m grateful to the Enclave for rescuing me, but I met dozens of others who were being sold off like animals.”

“See, Zane?” Carson grins. “She gets it.”

Zane sighs, running a hand through his hair. “Fine. We’ll bring her to the Raft. But we need to be careful. There’s a lot of risks involved.”

“Of course,” Carson says. “We’ll have to move quickly and quietly. Kendra, can you handle that?”

I nod, suddenly feeling a wave of excitement and fear wash over me. The thought of being reunited with Jade and Olivia is almost too much to bear. But at the same time, I know that getting to the Raft won’t be easy. There are so many obstacles



in our way—the ACB patrols, the Enclave’s enemies, and the sheer unpredictability of Solstice Bay itself.

But I’m ready for this. I’m not going to let fear stop me.

“When do we leave?” I ask.

“Tonight,” Carson says. “We’ll have to start planning immediately. We can’t waste a single moment.”

Zane nods, his jaw set. “We’ll need to pack light and move fast. Kendra, do you have everything you need?”

I shake my head. “I don’t have anything other than the clothes on my back.”

Zane nods and stands up, walking over to a cabinet and grabbing a backpack. He hands it to me. “Take this. We’ll need to move quickly, so there’s no time for anything else.”

Carson stands up and pats Zane on the back. “Good work, man. We’re gonna get her out of here.”

Zane nods, but his expression is still grim. “We need to be careful. If anything goes wrong, it could be disastrous.”

“I know,” Carson says. “But we have to take these risks. The ACB has to be stopped.”

I bite my lip and look over at Zane, and he meets my eyes with that steady, comforting gaze.

“You keep saying ‘we,’ I say. “Does that mean you’re coming with me?”

He gazes up at me for a second, then he takes my hand in his and kisses my knuckles.

“I’ll go anywhere with you, Kendra,” he says.

I can feel Carson’s eyes on us, and it feels strange—like this is just the beginning of something, like he belongs and he’s not intruding on anything. But he clears his throat and steps away.

“I’ll leave you two to get ready while I make arrangements,” he says. “Just...be careful, okay? Lay low and don’t say a word about our plans.”

Zane doesn’t take his eyes off me.

“Understood,” he says.

I hear Carson leave through the front door, but I only have eyes for Zane. He pulls me around in front of him and I straddle him in the big armchair where he’s sitting, wrapping my arms around his neck.

“I don’t want to push you into anything,” he says. “I know this is happening fast, but...”

“...but it feels right,” I finish for him. “Zane...I think I ended up here for a reason. I’m not afraid of what’s happening, and I’m really, *really* glad you’re coming with me.”

Zane smiles and leans in, kissing me softly at first, then with more urgency. I wrap myself around him, feeling a sudden heat that makes me forget everything else. He pulls away and looks into my eyes.

“You’re amazing, Kendra,” he says. “I’ll do whatever it takes to keep you safe.”

I smile back at him, feeling my heart swell with emotion. “I trust you,” I say.

He stands up, pulling me up with him. “Come on,” he says. “No matter how much I want to keep you in bed all day...we have work to do. Gotta make sure we get packed and that I get you some Plan B...”

Something twists inside me at those words. I don’t say it...but I wouldn’t mind *not* worrying about that. I know Zane and I just met, but I trust him.

I want to be with him.

“Thank you for being responsible,” I blush. “But can we get back in bed for just a little while?”

Zane grins, and his smile is beautiful.

“Yeah,” he says. “Just for a little while.”



## Maddox

I THINK THEY'RE TRYING to leave without telling me.  
I won't fucking have that.

I'm willing to give up everything for this girl—I've already lied to the ACB, and I'll lose my job (and maybe my head) when they find out—and I'm being treated like the fucking enemy. It makes me want to scream that they're just going to leave me behind like this, when I'm ready to bail on the life I've lived for years to be with *her*.

Kendra is mine, even if she doesn't know it yet. Even if she fucked that tattoo artist, even if Carson fucking Connolly—and yeah, I know who he is—thinks he can swoop in and steal her out from under me.

She belongs to me.

I watch the shadows move in the tattoo parlor and the house behind Eve's Apple for most of the day, smoking cigarettes through the window and giving up completely on quitting. Carson told me he would keep me updated, but he's already

proved himself wrong. I saw him leave through the front door of Eve's Apple, off to cause *some* kind of trouble.

I don't like it.

My phone rings and I glance down to see that Barnes is calling me again. It's been a couple days, and I told him I'd ring...but obviously that was a lie.

We're all playing games with each other.

I pick up anyway, putting the phone between my shoulder and my ear as I light up another cig.

"What do you want, Barnes?" I mutter.

"Maddox...what the fuck?" he says. "You told me you'd get in touch."

"And I will—when I have an update," I say.

There's a long silence over the line and I can hear Barnes shifting uncomfortably on the other end. I know what he wants to ask me. He wants to know if I found any leads on Kendra yet—if I have an update on public enemy number one.

The thing is, I don't have any answers for Barnes. I've been staking out this damn place for days and I still haven't gotten my hands on Kendra. My frustration is starting to bubble over and I can feel myself shaking as I take another drag of my cigarette.

"Listen, Barnes," I say, the words coming out sharp. "I'll call you when I have something to report. Until then, quit calling me and just let me do my job."

There's another pause over the line and I can practically hear the tension mounting between us. I know that Barnes doesn't trust me, and honestly, I can't blame him. I've been keeping secrets from the ACB, and he would be right to be suspicious.

But if he has too many questions...it could mean Kendra's capture and my execution.

My head is quite literally on the chopping block, and I need to defuse this situation before it gets ugly.

"Maddox," he says, his voice low and threatening. "I like you. You're a good kid. But you're starting to sound like an alpha in rut, and these girls...they'll get in your head if you let them. You don't know where she is, do you?"

I clench my jaw and take a deep breath, trying to calm myself down. "Like I said, I'll call you when I have something. Until then, just trust me."

"I can't trust you if you're not telling me the truth," Barnes says. "Look, Maddox, I'm not trying to screw you over here. I just need to know what's going on. If you've got nothing, I'll call in some backup and we'll start turning over every rock in the city until we find her."

"No!" I say, my voice sharp and panicked. "You can't do that, Barnes. You'll tip them off, and then we'll never find her."

There's a long pause over the line, and I can hear Barnes considering his options. I know he's right to be suspicious of me, but I also know that I'm the only one who can find Kendra. I've got a connection to her that no one else does.

And when I find her, we're getting the hell out of Solstice Bay.

But first, I need to get Barnes off my back.

"I'll call you when I have something," I repeat, trying to sound more steady. "Just give me a little more time."

Barnes sighs heavily. "Fine. But don't make me regret this, Maddox. If you're not making progress soon, I'll have to bring in more resources."

"I know," I say, feeling the weight of his words. I know what that means; he's going to bring in backup if I don't get my shit together. "I won't let you down."

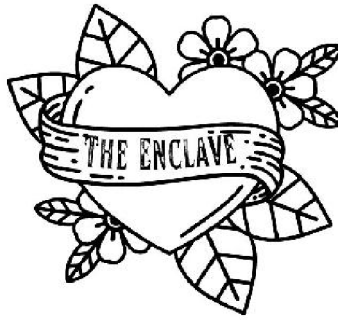
I hang up the phone and toss it onto the table, taking another drag of my cigarette and trying to calm my racing heart. I need to get Kendra out of here before it's too late. But how do I do that when she won't even talk to me?

I glance out the window, watching as the shadows grow longer and the night settles in. It's getting late, and I know that—if Carson does what I think he will—a van should be on the way soon. So I pack up my shit, turn off the safety on my pistol, and I head downstairs with my hands in my pockets.

When the Enclave arrives, I'll be ready.

And I'll take Kendra Morrison for myself.





## Carter

I HEAD BACK TO Eve's Apple that night with a van and backup.

We'll take the van out to the docks, then we'll load up in a boat from there—with more Enclave guys waiting to help. Among them are Jade and Olivia, the two friends who have made it clear for months that I had to go and get Kendra.

They're going to kill me if I don't bring her back safe.

And that's looking more and more unlikely as we catch sight of an increasing number of ACB patrols around the neighborhood on the drive.

I glance over at the two men who've agreed to come with me—Jade's beta mate, Fallon, and Olivia's toughest alpha, Mercer. I can tell Fallon is getting anxious as we drive down an alley, his hands tight on the steering wheel.

"Are you seeing this?" he says.

I frown. "Yeah...area's crawling with ACB agents."

Mercer leans forward. “They’re up to something, right?”

I nod, feeling the weight of the situation settling heavily on my shoulders. Kendra is waiting at Eve’s Apple, scared and vulnerable, and it’s up to us to bring her back safely.

And she should just be another girl—Zane has basically claimed her, and I’m not exactly on the market for a mate—but this is personal for me.

Because I don’t know what it means...but I really fucking like her.

She’s spunky.

“You sure we can trust your guy in the ACB?” Fallon asks.

I shake my head. “Not for a second—but I don’t think he would sell Kendra out. He wants her for himself, not for the ACB.”

“Why?”

Mercer scoffs. “Shit...he’s in rut. You could’ve mentioned that, Carson.”

I glance behind me, where Mercer’s leaning against the seat.

“What? No fucking way. They haven’t had sex.”

“They don’t have to,” Fallon chimes in. “I’ve seen it in Rafe with Jade...meeting that special omega just triggers something wild in them.”

“Liam went through it, too,” Mercer says. “Touching her would be enough to do it.”

“So...we need to keep an eye out for a psycho ACB agent who’s convinced our target *belongs* to him,” Fallon mutters. “Great.”

The Eve’s Apple neon sign appears in the distance, and I drive toward it. We’ll need to hurry; the ACB is agitated. I wonder if they’re starting to zero in on Kendra, and it makes my heart pound to think of her getting captured.

“You two ready?” I ask as I pull the car over. “I’m going to go in, then I’ll bring Kendra and Zane out with me. Fallon—I want you with me to watch my back, and Mercer, I want you stay here and keep an eye on everything if it goes south. Get behind the wheel so we can make a quick exit.”

“Roger,” Mercer says. “What does this guy look like, if you can describe him?”

“Maddox?” I ask. “Imagine a classic ACB shill if he hadn’t slept in a week, and that’s him. Tall guy, more lean than bulky, dark hair. He blends in pretty well, but he’s intense.”

“Got it,” Mercer says. “In that case...see you two on the other side. Good luck.”

We both hop out of the van, keeping our heads down as we walk around the block to Eve’s Apple. We’ll leave through the back entrance and take to the alleys, then we’ll climb back in and drive to the docks. Hopefully, everything will go smoothly...but the hair on the back of my neck is on end, convinced Maddox is going to come out of nowhere and fucking kill me for trying to take his omega.

Either that...or the ACB is going to strike.

As we approach the back entrance of Eve's Apple, Fallon whispers, "You think we're being followed?"

I tense up, my senses on high alert. I glance around, scanning the dark alleys for any sign of movement. "I don't know, but we need to hurry."

We pick up the pace and reach the door. I motion for Fallon to cover me as I unlock it and push it open. The door is unlocked, as we agreed to with Zane, and the smell of sex is everywhere. I catch sight of Zane in the shadows of the apartment, a backpack over his shoulder, his pistol ready in his hand.

"Who's with you?" he growls.

"Name's Fallon," he says, raising his hand in a wave. "Jade sent me."

"Jade?" That's Kendra's voice, quiet and careful. I see her a second later, coming out from behind Zane; in all likelihood, she was hiding there the whole time. My stomach somersaults at the sight of her—which isn't *good*, because I've got a little crush and Zane is a massive, hulking barricade between us.

"She's with you?"

"Just a drive away," Fallon grins. "She's excited to see you. You ready to hit the road?"

Zane looks around at the apartment, which I know he's called home for years. It's gotta be hard to leave, especially when the ACB will probably ransack this place once they realize it's conspicuously empty.

But he nods, putting a big hand on Kendra's shoulder. "It's time," he says. "Let's go."

We hurry out of the apartment and into the alley. Fallon and I take up positions at the front and back of the group, watching for any unwanted guests and keeping Zane and Kendra between us. Kendra looks terrified, and I understand why. This is the first time she's been outside in days, and she knows the danger that awaits us.

But it seems like it's safe. We're almost to the van, our guns at the ready just in case, our pace quick—

Until we turn a corner and come face to face with two ACB agents.

They draw their guns and point them at us, a floodlight blaring in our eyes.

"Stop right there!" one of them yells. "Hands up!"

Then everything goes to hell.

Zane doesn't hesitate—he charges forward, tackling the agent to the ground. Kendra screams as the other agent takes aim at us. I grab her and pull her behind a dumpster, shielding her with my body as bullets fly past us. Fallon returns fire, taking out the second agent.

"Come on!" I yell, pulling Kendra to her feet. "We have to move!"

We run down the alley, Fallon and Zane covering our tracks. I can hear return fire from farther away—Mercer, shooting at the ACB agents from the van. Kendra is quick on her feet in a

crisis, and I find myself grateful for how savvy she is when she could very easily melt down in a situation like this.

The van is ahead...we just have to get there, then we can lose them.

But there's one thing I forgot about.

*Maddox.*

A shadowy figure leaps out of the alley to our left and I hear Zane roar and Kendra scream.

I spin around, pulling out my gun, and see Maddox standing there, a crazed look in his eyes. His hand is clamped around Kendra's wrist and he's dragging her back, away from us.

"Let her go," I growl, my finger on the trigger.

Maddox has a wild look in his eye, desperate and animalistic. "She's mine," he says. "I won't let you take her from me."

Zane is up in seconds, snarling and baring his teeth. He charges at Maddox, but the ACB agent is quick—he pulls out a knife and slashes at Zane's arm, causing him to stumble back.

I take aim and fire, but Maddox is too quick—he dodges the bullet and drags Kendra back, toward the alley, *away*. Zane is staggering after them, but I think he's more injured than I previously suspected.

"Get out of here!" Kendra shouts. "I'll find you!"

And then...surprising us all...she goes *with Maddox*.

Zane tries to follow them, but me and Fallon both grab him and pull him back. “If we don’t get out of here, you’ll get killed,” Fallon mutters. “Live to fight another day, man.”

“No!” Zane says, his voice strangled. “I need to help her!”

“He won’t hurt her,” I say. “We have to go.”

Zane looks at us, his face contorted with pain and anguish. “I can’t just leave her,” he says.

“I know,” I say, putting a hand on his shoulder. “But we have to. We’ll come back for her, I promise.”

He nods reluctantly, and we all get into the van. Mercer is already in the driver’s seat, his face grim.

“I lost them,” he says. “They took off down the alley and I couldn’t follow.”

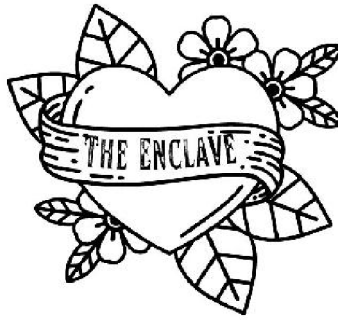
“It’s okay,” I say, my mind racing. “We’ll regroup and figure out our next move.”

Zane is silent in the back seat, his injured arm cradled against his chest. Kendra is gone, and I have a sinking feeling that we won’t find her again if Maddox has anything to do with it.

But I have to remember that Kendra is smarter than that. And she’s no damsel in distress...

...she’s a killer.





## Kendra

**W**HEN THE ACB AGENT whispered in my ear and told me he would help me escape—and that he would make sure I got back to my allies in the Enclave—I was forced to believe him. Not because I wanted to, but because he had already hurt Zane, and I didn't want to see it happen again.

Now, I'm starting to regret my choices.

I sit with my hood up in the passenger seat of his car, a sleek black ACB vehicle with tinted windows and no tags. He takes me onto the freeway without saying anything, headlights zipping past us and rain falling on the windshield.

“Where are we going?” I ask.

“Somewhere to lay low,” he says. “I got a tip that the ACB was planning a sting and I didn't want you walking into it.”

“You didn't do a very good job stopping me,” I tell him.

He barks out a bitter laugh. “I couldn't get to you when that brute was between us.”

“His name is *Zane* and I won’t listen to you talk about him like that,” I snap.

“And what are you going to do about it?”

I balk. I’m stuck in his car...but I have a gun at one hip and a knife at the other.

He didn’t search me.

Still, I need to keep those weapons hidden until I absolutely need them.

“Nothing,” I say. “Unless you don’t actually plan on reuniting me with my people.”

“Okay, Kendra,” he says, his dark eyes darting over to me. “Sure.”

I was *so close* to seeing Jade and Olivia again...so close to finally finding the Enclave and ending up somewhere safe.

And now it’s all slipping away.

“I need specifics,” I say. “So I ask again—*where are you taking me?*”

“Fine,” he says. “There’s a hotel downtown where they’ll never expect us—somewhere nice, out in the open. We’ll hunker down there until the ACB loses the scent, then we can contact Connolly and the other Enclave folks.”

I nod slowly, still unsure if I can trust him. But for now, I have no other choice.

“What’s your name?” I ask.

“Jack Maddox,” he says. “But everyone calls me Maddox.”

“What if I prefer Jack?”

He smirks. “You can call me whatever you want, sweetheart.”

“I don’t have the same mindset,” I mutter. “Don’t call me sweetheart.”

“Noted.”

I sigh.

“Why did you help me at the auction?” I ask. “You let me go...you pulled me out of the fray. You didn’t have to do that. Even now...your job is fucked, right?”

He shrugs, his expression sobering. “It just seemed right.”

I don’t believe him, but I lean back into my seat and close my eyes, trying to keep my mind blank. The sound of rain and the soft hum of the car’s engine lull me at least into a certain level of calm—not that I think I’ll sleep when it’s just me and him.

When I open my eyes again, the car is pulling up in front of a towering hotel. Jack takes me by the arm and hands me a room key-card and leads me to the elevator—which makes me feel at least a little at ease, since it seems like I’m not his prisoner. We’re both silent as the elevator doors close and we ascend to the 30th floor.

There are only a few rooms here, and we walk toward the one at the end of the hall. As I step into the room, my jaw drops. It’s a luxurious suite with a king-sized bed, flat-screen TV, and a stunning view of the city, lit up in the rain. I haven’t seen anything this decadent since I left my father’s house on a night a lot like this one, his body in a pool of blood on the floor.

I wonder if this night will end the same way.

With me burying a knife in my captor's gut.

"I figured if we're going to hide out, might as well do it in style," Jack says with a smirk. "You can take the bed; I promise I won't touch you."

"I didn't plan on sleeping," I tell him.

"Suit yourself," he shrugs. "But you *should* if you want to escape; I don't want you exhausted when we go on the run again."

"Which will be...?"

"Whenever I think the ACB has lost our scent," he says. "Like I said."

I nod, still skeptical, but there's nothing else I can do for now. I take off my hood and sit on the edge of the bed, ignoring my damp sleeves. I don't want to undress; it feels like he'll get a little too excited by that.

Jack sits in a plush armchair across from me and pulls out a cigarette.

"You mind?" he asks, holding up the pack.

I shake my head, watching as he lights the end and takes a long drag. He blows out a stream of smoke and leans back, studying me.

"You're not like most of the omegas I've dealt with," he says after a moment. "Most of them are just...scared. They would be worried, locked in a fancy bedroom alone with an alpha."

“I’ve been through worse,” I say flatly. “Have you hunted a lot of us?”

“Not a lot,” he says. “I typically work kidnapping cases—where omegas were taken from their packs against their will. This was the first time I ever found an omega who *willingly* left safety.”

“Seriously?” I ask. “I find that hard to believe.”

“Why?”

“Because the ACB has nothing but evil my whole life,” I say. “Why did you even join up if you were going to turn on them on a dime?”

He frowns. “That’s a complicated question, Kendra.”

“I have time,” I say, crossing my arms over my chest.

He takes another drag of his cigarette and exhales slowly. “I grew up in the ACB. My dad was a career cop, so was his dad. I didn’t know any better.”

“You didn’t know any better?” I scoff. “I hope you know that’s a horrible excuse. You’ve worked for an organization your whole life that oppresses people like me—”

“But then I started to see things,” he continues. “The way omegas were treated...it didn’t sit right with me. I thought maybe I could change things from the inside, but it’s not that simple. The ACB is corrupt to the core.”

“So why are you helping me now?” I ask.

“Because I don’t want to be a part of that corruption anymore,” he says. “And because...you’re different, Kendra. You’re not just some scared omega. You have fire in you.”

I glare at him. “So I get rescued because I’m special...but how many omegas have suffered because of you?”

He stubs out his cigarette. “Too many.”

I watch as he leans back in the chair and sighs, examining the way he moves, the way he breathes. I can’t deny that he’s gorgeous—with dark hair that’s a little too long, overgrown stubble, eyes so brown they’re closer to black.

But there’s something under the surface, too.

Something that scares me.

“I don’t believe you,” I say. “I don’t believe this is purely altruistic. You have another motive.”

He leans forward on his knees, looking closely at me. “Of course I do,” he says. “Can’t you feel it?”

I frown. “What do you mean?”

“The connection between us,” he says. “I’ve known it was there since the moment I saw you on the auction block. It made me want to help you...even if Carson Connolly hadn’t shown up with his goons, I would’ve helped you.”

“How?”

“I would’ve dropped all my savings to have you,” he says. “To make you my mate. And I promise...you would love it.”

“I doubt it,” I say, getting angry now. “See? This is the problem—you think I’m a thing to be *kept*, not a real person.”

“No, Kendra,” Jack says, shaking his head. “That’s not what I mean. I know it’s hard for you to understand, but there’s something different between us. It’s like we were meant to be together.”

“I don’t believe in soulmates,” I say. “I know there are people who claim the Great Mutation gave us the ability to sniff that out, but...”

I think about Zane.

How I was instantly drawn to him, how he was to me.

If soulmates are real, Zane is mine...and Jack took me from him.

“Neither do I,” Jack admits. “Or...I *didn’t*. But there’s just something about you. Something that draws me to you.”

“I don’t want to be drawn to you,” I say firmly. “I don’t want anything to do with you.”

The understanding on his face fades, replaced with anger. “You think that now, but you’ll see,” he says.

“I won’t,” I tell him. “And if you touch me, I’ll kill you.”

Jack’s expression hardens, and I can see the anger simmering beneath his skin. “It won’t come down to that,” he says, his voice low and dangerous. “You’ll see things my way, eventually.”

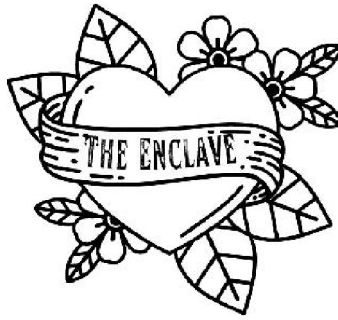


“I doubt that,” I say, standing up and advancing on him. “You have no idea what I’ve been through, Jack. You have no idea what it’s like to be an omega in this world, to be treated like a piece of meat. And you have no right to claim that I’m meant to be yours.”

“I have every right,” he says, standing up to meet me. “Because I know what’s best for you. And I’ll prove it to you, one way or another.”

The air between us crackles with tension as we stare each other down. I can feel his alpha pheromones working on me, trying to seduce me into submission. But I won’t give in. Not to him.

Not when Zane is still out there, waiting for me.



## Maddox

**S** HE FUCKING HATES ME.

I guess it makes sense; I had to take a slice out of her boyfriend so he didn't cause a scene when I was trying to get her away from the ACB. But she just...refuses to understand why I'm doing this.

For *her*.

Everything I've done since the moment I laid eyes on her, I've done for her.

As promised, she seems to stay up all night, sitting with her knees under her chin in a chair in the corner of the room—near the door. I drift off for a few hours in the middle of the night, but Kendra has the same look on her face when I wake up as she did when I fell asleep.

Yeah...she's real angry.

I blink my eyes open and look across the room at her, finding dark circles under her eyes. Her hair is a mess, her clothes exactly the same as when I dozed off.

“How was your night?” I ask.

She ignores the question. “When are you going to help me get to the Enclave?”

“I told you—when it’s safe.”

“And when will it be safe?”

I stand and roll my neck, then walk over to the coffee pot to make a cup. “You want some coffee?”

“Answer me, Jack.”

I glance back at her. “Let me check the ACB scanner and I’ll let you know.”

Kendra doesn’t respond, her eyes locked onto mine. I pour myself a cup of coffee, taking a sip as I walk over to the ACB scanner on the desk. The device lights up as I turn it on, the screen displaying a map of the area.

“They’ve surrounded the docks and they’re combing the sea for the Enclave base,” I say, turning back to Kendra. “We’ll need to stay put a little while longer.”

Kendra jumps up from her chair, anger flashing in her eyes. “Zane is going to be worried. We can’t stay here forever. I need to get to the Enclave.”

“I know,” I say, setting my coffee cup down. “And we will. But we have to be patient. The ACB is on high alert right now. We need to wait until they calm down before we make a move.”

Kendra crosses her arms, pacing back and forth across the room. “I need to call him right now,” she says. “He’s probably losing his mind—”

“You mean the same way I was losing my mind when he *kept you from me?*” I snarl.

Kendra’s hands drop to her sides, looking—to her credit—entirely bewildered. “Excuse me?”

“Just that...I tried to talk to you,” I say. “And he...”

Okay. This sounds bad.

“I didn’t mean it like that,” I finish.

“You tried to talk to me?” she says. “When?”

“I came into the shop,” I tell her.

“Why?”

“Because I wanted you.”

“Again, *why?*”

“Because you’re my my mate, Kendra,” I growl. “Even if you won’t admit it yet...you’re *mine.*”

Kendra’s eyes widen, shock etched on her face. “What are you talking about?”

I take a deep breath, trying to calm myself down. “I’m an alpha, Kendra. And you’re my mate. It’s not something I can control, it’s just the way it is.”

She looks at me, confusion and anger mixing in her expression. “That’s why you helped me? Because of some

kind of...urban legend?"

I nod. "Yes. And I've been trying to protect you since the day I met you."

Kendra scoffs. "Protect me? You kidnapped me, Jack. You *tore me away from a man I care about*. You didn't even give me a choice."

"I had to," I say. "You were in danger."

"And now you're telling me that I'm your mate? That's bullshit. I don't even know you."

"You will," I say, taking a step towards her.

She doesn't flinch; doesn't waver. "Try anything and you'll be sorry," she says.

I take another step forward, until I'm just inches away.

Then I stop short when I feel the barrel of a gun under my chin.

"*Fucking. Stay. There,*" she hisses.

I laugh low in my throat, grinning despite myself. "You wouldn't."

"Try me," Kendra says.

I laugh again as she steps forward, backing me away with the gun still at my jaw. "What are you going to do, shoot me? I know you wouldn't."

She takes another step backward, her eyes never leaving mine. "You think I won't? You've investigated me; you should know

a whole lot about the lengths I'm willing to go to if it means saving my own skin."

I laugh, shaking my head. "You know, I've thought about whether you have a gun on you like a dozen times since I've met you and you still caught me off guard. Nice job."

"I guess I can't fool an alpha, huh?"

"No," I say. "You can't."

Fuck, she's fucking beautiful. Standing there with a gun in her hand, totally unconcerned about it.

I have no doubt she'll kill me if she doesn't get her way.

I clear my throat, smiling at her. "What are you doing, anyway?"

She narrows her eyes at me. "Lie down, Jack."

I do as she asks, sitting down on the bed and then leaning until I'm flat against the still-made bed. Kendra straddles me, keeping the gun to my jaw, ready to blow my fucking brains out with her finger on the trigger...but she unzips my pants.

My cock twitches.

Holy fuck, holy fuck...she's gonna touch me.

"You know what they say about omegas, Jack?" she says, yanking my briefs down and freeing my cock. It bobs toward her, hard as fuck just from this interaction, my knot swollen and painful.

"What?" I ask, my voice rough.

“They say we have complete control over alphas,” she says. “That we use our wives to seduce you and make you into monsters ready to do our bidding. Do you know how?”

“How?”

“By *controlling* your sexuality. By owning your cock.”

She strokes me up and down and I groan, my hips jerking.

“Don’t move or I’ll shoot you in the fucking head, Jack,” she says, the gun shoving against my jawline. “If you’re my mate...you’ll do what I say. You’ll get me back to the Enclave. And then...when I’m back with Zane, *only then* will I let you claim me.”

“Holy fuck,” I growl, thrusting into her tight grip. I can scent her arousal in the air, filling the room—she’s just as turned on by all this as I am. “You’re insane.”

“Shut up,” she says.

She strokes my cock, up and down, up and down...She’s not looking at me anymore, her eyes flicking between my cock and my face.

“I’m going to make you suffer, Jack,” she says. “I’m going to make you wait...and wait...and wait. I’m going to make you beg.”

“Please,” I growl, my cock thickening with need. My knot is swollen and ready, and I need to fuck her—now.

“Please, what?” she asks, stroking me so lightly that I can barely feel it. “Please keep jerking you off?”



“Please, Kendra,” I groan. “Please let me claim you.”

“You’re mine already,” she purrs. “You just don’t know it yet.”

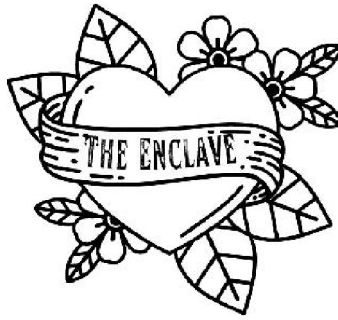
“I need to fuck you,” I growl. “I need you.”

“No,” she says. “When we’re on the Raft, *then* you can fuck me.”

She keeps jerking me off until I’m almost at the brink, my hands clawing at the blankets. I groan and thrust into her hand, and I feel myself about to come all over myself—

—then she leaps off of me, holding the gun on me from across the room.

“Now put your dick away and find us a way out of here,” she says. “I’ll be waiting.”



## Carter

**Z**ANE IS IN SHAMBLES by the time we get to the Raft, practically feral as he demands that we go back for Kendra. Her friends aren't much better, Olivia and Jade telling us that she's absolutely not safe with that ACB agent.

And I agree...but we could've all lost our lives if we'd fought him.

"We'll find her," I tell them as we take Rafe's boat back out to sea, away from where the ACB can catch us. "She's tough... she'll make it out of there."

As we navigate the choppy waters, Zane growls in frustration, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides. Olivia and Jade exchange worried glances before turning to me, Fallon at Jade's side with his hand on her shoulder.

"What do we do?" Olivia asks, her voice pitched low to avoid Zane overhearing us. She seems a little more methodical than the crazed alpha...even if I get it. He's scared; I am too.

I take a deep breath, my mind racing with possibilities. We can't just leave Kendra to the mercy of Jack Maddox. But we can't risk going back there either, not without a solid plan.

"We need to regroup," I say finally. "Figure out a way to get Kendra out of there without attracting too much attention."

Zane snorts, his eyes narrowing when he overhears us. "And how do we do that? We don't even know where they're keeping her."

I shoot him a stern look. "We'll find out. But first, we need to lay low for a bit. Stay off the ACB's radar."

Jade nods, her fingers tapping on her thigh. "What do we even know about this guy?"

"He's psychotic," Zane says. "I saw the look in his eye...what if he hurts her?"

"He won't," I tell him. "He legitimately cares about Kendra."

"He thinks she's his mate," Fallon cuts in. "That's not the same as not wanting to hurt her."

"Where the hell is he hiding out?" Olivia asks. "Do we have any leads?"

"None," I say. "We just...we have to wait for Kendra to make this happen. I'm sure he won't kill her, and she's tough."

"And she's armed," Zane adds. "I made sure of that."

Rafe is at the helm, and he calls out to us over his shoulder. "Did I hear you two talking about Kendra Morrison...?" he asks.

“Yeah!” I call back. “Why?”

“Because she’s on the radio,” he chuckles.

We exchange a look before we race over to the helm, Zane in the lead and Jade and Olivia hot on his heels. Zane snatches the radio away from Rafe and I raise my hand to stop Rafe from lashing out at him, shaking my head.

“Let him do it,” I say. “He’s with her.”

“Kendra?” Zane says. “Where are you?”

“I can’t say,” she says, her voice staticky on the other end. “I don’t know who’s listening. But I’m okay and I miss you, Zane.”

He raises his free hand and swipes at his eyes, shaking his head. “Fuck, I miss you too, Kendra,” he says. “How can I get to you?”

I can hear her talking to someone on the other end of the line—a man’s voice. *Jack*. He didn’t hurt her...

Good.

If he had, I think I might kill him.

“Meet me where you said goodbye to Eve,” she finally says.

“Do you know the place?”

I can see the confusion on Zane’s face—the hurt, the pain. Whatever she means, he didn’t expect to hear it, and it hits him somewhere deep.

But he nods. “Yeah,” he says. “I know the place. When?”

“I’ll be there at midnight,” she says.

Then the line dies.

“How the hell did she get a hold of us?” I ask, stepping closer to Rafe. “That was crazy.”

“She radio’d through an old resistance line,” he says. “No idea where she got it...but she’s resourceful, just like you told us, Jade.”

“I know,” Jade says with a proud smile. “She’s amazing. I can’t wait for you to meet her.”

“Where was she talking about, Zane?” I ask. “We’ll set a course.”

Zane grimaces, his brow furrowed. “There’s an old lighthouse north of Solstice Bay, where the old priory used to be. I...I lost a good friend there.”

I know what he’s talking about, even if it was before my time; Zane left the Enclave after a mission gone wrong, and he and his crew had fled to that lighthouse as a safehouse.

One of our omega operatives died there—or so the legend goes.

I guess it was true.

“Thanks for letting us know,” I say, clapping a hand on his shoulder. “We’ll head there and wait for her.”

“But what about Maddox?” Fallon asks. “He’ll be there too, won’t he?”

“We’ll deal with him when the time comes,” I say, my mind already racing with possibilities. “For now, we need to focus

on getting Kendra out of there.”

Zane nods, his eyes hardening with determination. “I’m ready,” he says, his hand tightening around the radio. “Let’s go.”

As we race towards the lighthouse, I can feel my heart pounding with excitement and fear. We’re getting closer to Kendra, but we’re also getting closer to Maddox. And I don’t know what he’s capable of.

But I have faith in our team, and in Kendra’s intelligence. She’s smarter than people think...and she’s already used that to her advantage.

She has Maddox wrapped around her finger.

And with any luck, he’s actually on our side.





## Zane

**A**S WE MAKE OUR way toward the lighthouse, I think about the past.

The last time I was here, the woman I loved died. We never acted on anything. We were young and stupid, but somehow we kept our composure, even when she was in heat and I was in rut. She was incredible, an omega who never took shit from anyone

It always felt like destiny that we would end up together.

Then it all ended too fast...because of the Enclave.

Now, I can't help but wonder if this will be the end of me and Kendra's relationship too—if Jack Maddox will try to stand between us, if this is all a setup, if the ACB will show up and destroy what we have.

I have to hope this time will be different.

Night falls as we get close to the lighthouse, the beacon unlit and looming over the sea. Kendra's friends stay at my side, Olivia glancing from me toward the lighthouse.

“Do you think she’ll make it out of this alive?”

I don’t know what to say. I want to believe that we will, that we’ll come out of it unscathed, but I can’t ignore the nagging feeling in the pit of my stomach. The ACB is always one step ahead of us, always waiting for us to slip up.

“I don’t know,” I say finally, my voice low. “But I’m not willing to give up on us. Not yet.”

Olivia smiles—a small, sad smile. “You really love her, don’t you?”

“I just met her,” I admit, “but...yeah, I really fucking do. I felt it from the moment she walked into my shop—that we were meant to be.”

“That’s how I felt about my pack,” Olivia says. “Liam and Phoenix and even Mercer—even though Mercer *really* didn’t like me at first.”

Her words nag at me. “And your point is...?”

She shrugs. “I don’t know. Maybe Maddox actually wants to help her.”

I glare at her, and I can feel her mate’s eyes on me. Mercer watches us from the edge of the boat, ready to strike if I step out of line. “Maddox is an asshole.”

“An ACB agent would be a pretty useful ally,” she says. “Just...be careful, but go into it with an open mind. Kendra knows how to bring people over to her side, maybe she’s done the same thing with Maddox.”

I nod but I can't shake off the feeling of unease. It's not just about Maddox. There are too many variables. Enemies are everywhere, and the ACB might not be the only one with an eye on us. The sea is eerily calm, and the lighthouse looms like a sentinel, the darkness around it impenetrable.

Carson puts his hand on my shoulder.

"We're almost there," he says. "You good?"

"I'm really fucking worried," I say. "This guy is bad news. I can't believe you trusted him."

"I didn't," Carson says, "but I didn't see him coming either... and I take responsibility for that. It's my fault Kendra got taken."

"I should kill you for what happened to her when you promised me she would be safe," I growl.

Carson holds up a hand, a grim expression on his face. "I know. And I get that. But right now, we need to focus on getting her back. And if Maddox can help us do that, even if it's just a little bit, then we need to take that chance."

I hate when he's right, but he has a point. We need all the help we can get if we're going to rescue Kendra and take down the ACB once and for all.

I take a deep breath and nod.

"Okay. But if he tries anything, I won't hesitate to take him out."

“That’s fair,” Carson says. “Just remember, we’re in this together.”

We reach the base of the lighthouse and, leaving everyone else on the boat and across the dock to cover us, Carson and I make our way up the winding staircase. The air is musty and filled with the smell of saltwater. My heart is pounding in my chest as we climb higher and higher, each step taking us further up, through cobwebs and around dark, rounded corners.

“Do you think they’re already here?” he asks.

I inhale deeply and smell Kendra, along with an alpha male I’ve only scented once before.

“She’s here,” I say. “And so is Maddox.”

Carson inhales, too, and I hear the vaguest hint of a purr in his chest. Yeah...fuck, he wants her.

He wants her, and there’s nothing I can do about it.

Not sure I even *want to*, because if she was under the protection of the leader of the Enclave, she would be safe.

“Before we go up there,” I mutter, “I want to clarify what your intentions are with her.”

Carson stops in his tracks. “What does that mean? I’m trying to help her.”

“Not that,” I say. I grab his arm and twist him to face me, and Carson—to his credit—doesn’t react badly. “I can tell you’re interested in her, and you’re an unmated alpha. Do you want to claim her?”

Carson's brow furrows. Yeah, he's an alpha too...but I'm bigger than him, stronger, older. He's smart to worry about this. "Wouldn't want to step on anyone's toes..."

"She's an omega," I tell him. "She needs a pack to protect her, and I know you would be an admirable ally."

He laughs. "She would be pissed if she knew we were talking about her like this."

"I know," I smile back. "And that's why I can tell you would be right for her...for us."

Carson gives me a wry smile, and I can see the gears turning in his head. "I'm not gonna lie, I'm attracted to her. But I'm not trying to encroach on your territory. I know you have feelings for her, and I respect that. I just want to help her."

I nod, relieved. "Good. We need to work together on this."

We continue up the stairs in silence, the tension between us palpable. I try not to think about Carson's attraction to Kendra, or how it makes me feel. I'll deal with that later, after we get her back.

Finally, we reach the top of the lighthouse and push open the door.

The room is dimly lit, and at first, I can't see anything. Then, I hear a low growl, and my eyes adjust to the darkness. Kendra is standing in the center of the room, her gun at the ready. She raises it to point at us—

—then she lowers it, her eyes wide.

“Zane!” she cries.

She races toward me and flings her arms around me, and it’s only then that I see Maddox lurking in the corner. He comes forward with his hands in his pockets, glancing around then peering out the dirty window.

“No time for sentimental reunions,” he says roughly. “We need to go.”

I move Kendra behind me and step forward, glaring at Maddox. “*We* aren’t going anywhere.”

Maddox smirks. “You don’t have a choice. The ACB is on their way, and we need to get out of here. Now.”

I narrow my eyes, stepping closer to him. “And why should we trust you? You’re ACB.”

Maddox rolls his eyes. “I told you, I’m not with them anymore. I’m here to help. Take it or leave it.”

I snort, still not convinced. “Fine. But how do we know you aren’t leading us into a trap?”

Maddox sighs, clearly annoyed. “Look, I get it. We don’t have time for this. You can either come with me and have a chance to save Kendra, or you can stay here and let the ACB take her back.”

I glance at Kendra, who is looking at me with pleading eyes. I know we don’t have much time, and as much as I hate to admit it, we could use the help.

“Okay,” Carson says. “Let’s get the hell out of here.”

We race back down the stairs and we emerge just in time to hear a shout from the boat.

“ACB agents incoming!”

We sprint across the dock, Maddox leading the way with Kendra in tow. Gunfire erupts behind us, and I feel a sharp pain in my side. I grunt in pain, but I keep running, fueled by adrenaline and the need to protect Kendra. I can hear Carson firing backwards at the ACB, his footsteps heavy on the dock.

“Move, move!” he roars.

We reach the boat and jump aboard, the engine roaring to life as we speed away from the dock. I slump against the railing, my hand pressed against my side. Blood seeps through my fingers, but I try to ignore it. We’re not out of danger yet.

Rafe is at the wheel, his face set in a grim expression. “They’re gaining on us,” he says. “We need to lose them. I apologize in advance...”

He maneuvers the boat through the choppy waves, expertly weaving between obstacles and dodging gunfire. I can feel the tension in the air, the fear and desperation. We’re outnumbered, outgunned...but we have each other.

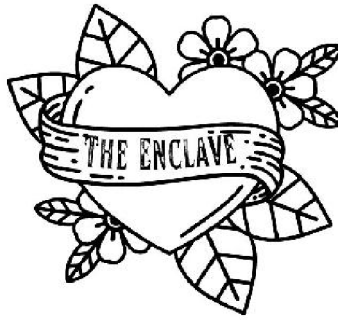
And Rafe is good at losing a tail.

Kendra is at my side, ignoring everyone and everything else. “Are you okay?” she asks.

I reach for my side. “Just grazed,” I say, and use my other hand to touch her face. “I’m so glad you’re okay.”

“Me too,” she says, taking my hand. “Me too.”





## Kendra

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE three of us are all together again. Me, Olivia, and Jade. Best friends since we were kids, the darlings of Solstice Bay high society...until we turned on our ACB fathers and made a run for it.

This whole thing started two years ago, when we made a deal that we would get out from under the ACB's chokehold before we turned eighteen and had our first heats. The three of us planned to stash as much money as we could and run.

I was the only one who got caught.

Which meant that *I was the only one* who had to kill my father on the way out.

I was his only child, the sole heir to the Morrison fortune. Even though I was a girl, he had treated me like he would a son, because he didn't have a son to train.

We went shooting together. I learned hand to hand combat.

He loved me, in his own way.

That all changed when I hit puberty, though...and he realized he would need to sell me off to a pack if he wanted to capitalize on what I was.

An omega.

Jade and Olivia were my only solace during that time, my port in a storm.

And they came to save me, just like we had always promised.

That we would save each other.

They come to sit with me and Zane after we lose our ACB tail in the dark seas of the Atlantic, the boat bobbing in the waves as Rafe—the pirate king of the Enclave—steers us to safety. It feels so good to be hugging my best friends again, reuniting with the family I *chose*.

“We were so worried this whole time,” Olivia says. “When we lost you...we thought you would be executed or worse.”

“Worse was planned,” I say, squeezing Zane’s hand. “But Carson caused enough chaos to get me out...and then I found Zane.”

Jade’s eyes dart over to him, her brow furrowing as she inhales. “But...his mark isn’t on you, right? You got the artificial one?”

“I did,” I say, looking at Zane. “But as soon as we get some privacy...”

His purr erupts in his chest, and I bite my lip as I gaze at him. I want him so bad—I’ve wanted him since the moment I met

him—and that hasn't changed even a little bit.

“You two are packed up, I understand?” I ask, looking from Olivia to Jade. I can see both their marks—*multiple* marks on both their necks, tattooed over in black ink. Olivia is covered in tats and piercings, while Jade only has a single rose over her heart.

“Yeah,” Olivia replies with a dreamy smile. “Phoenix, Liam, and Mercer...they're my family. And I guess yours too, now that you're home.”

“And Rafe claimed me,” Jade says with a blush. “Fallon and Hawk too, though Hawk stayed behind to run the ship while we were off saving you. And I'm so glad you're here for me to tell you the news...”

Olivia's eyes widen at Jade. “No way.”

“What?” I ask.

“I'm pregnant,” Jade whispers. “The only one who knows is Rafe—it's why he came with us, because he won't let me out of his sight.”

I lean forward and fling my arms around her neck, and Olivia joins us. I realize I'm crying a second later, when I feel Zane's big hand gently rubbing my back. Even though we're living through what feels like the apocalypse, there's hope here—a future.

I wonder if I'll have that with Zane one day...or if we might grow our pack.

I glance up at Carson and he averts his eyes...then I look back at Maddox, who doesn't bother pretending he wasn't looking. I feel a pull to all of these men—Zane most of all—but I don't know how Zane will feel about it.

I need to talk to him alone after I've caught up with Olivia and Jade.

As we all settle down in the cabin, I feel Zane's gaze on me. I turn to him, meeting his dark eyes with my own. He's so handsome, with those brown eyes that make me feel safer than I ever have. I can't help but feel a surge of desire every time I look at him.

"Are you okay?" he asks softly, his voice deep and soothing.

I nod, feeling a blush creeping up my cheeks. "Yeah, I'm okay. I'm just really glad to be here with you."

He smiles, his eyes crinkling at the corners. "I'm glad to have you here too, baby girl. I was so worried when you were with Maddox...I thought I'd never see you again."

"He wasn't going to hurt me," I say. "He just...he doesn't know how to behave. He wanted to be with me and he didn't..."

Zane glares over at Maddox, who returns the look with a lazy smirk.

I don't think these two are ever going to work together.

"You aren't angry with him," Zane says, and I know it's more of an angry admission than a question.

“Not really,” I say. “He brought me back to you, after all.”

Zane takes me by the chin and kisses me softly, and I lean into his touch, wanting to just forget about everything that’s happened—and the road ahead.

“I know it hasn’t been a long time,” he says, “but I love you, Kendra. And if you want my mark...I’ll give it to you gladly.”

“But the synthetic mark...”

“It can be covered over with enough bites,” he says. “And maybe...maybe more than one alpha.”

That surprises me—and it makes my core throb, my belly twisting with desire. “What are you saying?”

Zane’s eyes flick over to Carson, who’s on the other side of the deck and trying very hard not to look like he’s listening. His blond curls drift softly in the night air, making him look like Adonis.

“I talked to Carson,” he says. “I could tell he wanted you...and I caught your scent when you saw him in the shop. He would be a fine member of your pack, Kendra.”

“You would be okay with that?”

Zane brushes his thumb over my cheekbone as he looks into my eyes. “I want you protected, and Solstice Bay is a harsh world. I can’t always be there, and I’m not...I’m not all that young—”

“Don’t say that,” I cut him off. “I don’t want to even hear that from you. We have so many years ahead of us.”

“But that doesn’t change the fact that you need a pack, not just one man,” he says. “And I don’t mind sharing, Kendra. You’re...you’re a special kind of woman. Too much of a bombshell for one man.”

I feel my cheeks heat up at his words, and I can’t deny the thrill that runs through me at the thought of being with both Zane and Carson. It’s a heady feeling, and I can’t help but picture the three of us together, tangled up in the sheets, our bodies moving in perfect sync.

“I...I don’t know,” I say, my voice barely more than a whisper. “I’ve never thought about...being with more than one man. I didn’t even think I would take a mate before I met you.”

“That’s okay, baby girl,” Zane says, his fingers trailing over my skin. “We can take it slow, or we can jump right in. Whatever you want.”

I nod slowly, my mind whirling with the possibilities. I’ve never been with anyone besides Zane, and I can’t help but wonder what it would be like to be with someone else—especially someone like Carson. He’s a big deal in the Enclave, infamous around Solstice Bay.

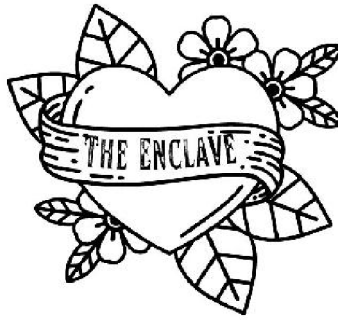
It would be dangerous...and that turns me on.

But what about Maddox?

I don’t mention Jack as we finish the journey though, preferring to spend my time wrapped in Zane’s arms and catching up with Olivia and Jade. Carson can wait; Jack can wait.

Right now, I just want to take a moment to breathe.





## Carson

I CAN'T STOP THINKING about Zane's proposition.

For years, I've avoided taking a mate—not just because I was worried about their safety, but because I never met the right person. Given my high profile, any mate of mine would have a target on their back.

But if we packed up...

I've watched Rafe form a pack, and I know he's happier for it. He and I had agreed years ago that it wasn't secure—but then he mate Jade. Rafe still leads the Enclave with Jade at his side, and Fallon and their third, Hawk, always make sure that she's safe.

I wonder if Kendra would accept that with me.

The sun rises as we make our way toward the Raft, which is currently set up far from Solstice Bay—off the coast of a lonely, uncharted island. We manage to keep the ACB off our trail by scrambling their signals out here, using the light of the

stars and our own technology to navigate the sea, but it won't last forever. I know our time on this old warship is limited.

But still...it's turned into home.

And it feels like I'm bringing Kendra home to meet the family.

She stays at Zane's side for the whole ride, Maddox lurking at the fringes of the group, Zane snarling every time Maddox gets too close. Zane got hurt—*again*—but I get the impression that he's so big he ends up being a bullet sponge a lot of the time, and it doesn't seem too bad. Alphas heal faster, and he's no exception.

He jerks his head at me to bring me closer as we make the final approach to the Raft, Kendra's hand in his. She looks up at me with a strange expression on her face, biting her lip... and my cock reminds me of its presence at that look, at the way her scent spikes.

I wasn't imagining all this.

She's interested...and Zane already gave me the go-ahead.

“So what's the plan from here?” Kendra asks. “We get to the Raft...and then what?”

“Well, now that we've rescued you from the ACB, we can finally make our move,” I say.

Zane frowns. “What move?”

“Haven't you noticed how active we've been in Solstice Bay?” I ask. “Zane...we're planning a final push on the ACB. We've taken out their head operative thanks to Olivia, we've obtained

all the secrets they've hidden from the city for so long...and now we have Kendra, they don't have any leverage over us. They're hanging on by a thread. It's time to act."

Kendra's eyes widen. "You're taking out the whole operation?"

I grin. "That's the plan."

"And then..." she pauses. "What happens after that?"

I inhale deeply. "It's going to be messy. They've ruled Solstice Bay with an iron fist ever since the Control War, and there will be a lot of angry people. We have people working in the background, though, people who are ready to take charge."

"People like you?" Zane asks, raising an eyebrow.

I laugh. "I'm much more the burn it down type than the build it back guy."

"I'm in," Kendra blurts out. "Just tell me where to shoot."

"Kendra," Zane says, wrapping a protective arm around her. "I don't want you going into a firefight..."

"But that's what packs do, right?" she says, looking at me.

"We fight together."

I glance between the two of them, frowning. "What are you saying...?"

It suddenly occurs to me that we are *very much alone* on this side of the boat—other than fucking Maddox, who's lurking around like a vampire and watching us like a hawk. Kendra

doesn't seem to mind, even going so far as to stare over at him as she reaches for me and takes my hand.

It makes my heart pound and my breath stop.

Touching her...just holding hands...it feels fucking incredible.

"You know what it means," she says, biting her lip and meeting my gaze with those gorgeous hazel eyes. "Me and Zane have talked about it and...if you want..."

I never saw it happening this way, but *fuck*, I want her. I would claim her right here on this boat in front of these two men if she asked me to.

"When?" I ask.

"Tonight," Zane says, his voice rough. At first, I think he's angry...but his hand is roaming over her back in slow, deliberate circles, and I quickly realize he's turned on by her scent.

Just as turned on as I am.

Not *nearly* as aroused as *she* is.

"I want her safe," Zane continues. "And if you're pack, you'll do more to protect her."

His words are a warning; he's saying that if I don't do my job to protect her, he'll kill me.

And I believe him.

"I need you safe, Kendra," Zane says. "But I also need you with me."

Kendra's scent hits me like a ton of bricks. All fire and lust, and I'm hard in an instant. Her eyes meet mine, and she stares at me, almost challenging me.

A challenge I don't intend to back down from.

"I'm in," I say. "And I know she was with you first...so your rules stand."

"Not mine," he says. "*Hers*. She's in charge here, and I think it's become very obvious I can't tell her to do a damn thing."

"So what do you want?" I ask.

"I want to help you take back Solstice Bay," she says. "And I want...I want to pack up. With you and Zane and..."

"And who?" Zane asks, his voice a low rumble.

Maddox. Obviously it's fucking Maddox, and I don't know what happened between them when they were alone, but her scent is all over him, and his all over her...

"No one," she says. "Let's figure this out tonight...and we can go from there."

I'll talk to him about this later—when Maddox is in a holding cell, because I don't trust him as far as I can throw him.

"We'll see you later," Zane says, his voice husky. "Tonight."

I nod. "Tonight."



## Kendra

**T**HERE'S A LOT TO talk about in regards to the revolution—the world we imagine, how we're going to defeat the ACB—but we're all exhausted by the time we get to the Raft.

And even more than that, I'm only interested in one thing.

Being along with Zane...and with Carson.

We dock on an island, and on the other side of that island is a massive old warship. The sun rises behind the warship, lighting up rigging and shiny steel, everything in pinks and purples and oranges. Zane keeps his arm around me as we climb a gangplank into the ship, Carson leading the way.

"I can't wait to show you around," Jade says. "You *and* Olivia. Everyone's gathering here now and Olivia's been out of town for a while...but this is my home. *My* ship."

"I think it's *my* ship," Rafe laughs, coming up behind her and pressing a kiss to her forehead. He's a big guy with dark hair and a beard, completely covered in tattoos. I never imagined



Jade with someone like that...but love comes in all kinds of funny ways.

Honestly, I would have thought Carson was more her type.

But I'm almost one hundred percent confident I'm about to get in bed with the golden boy of the Enclave.

"You always tell me I'm the one in charge of the pack," Jade giggles, and Fallon comes up behind the two of them.

"Yeah, dude...it's her ship," Fallon smirks.

The Raft is full of people running around and doing things—making sure the ship is secure, keeping codes scrambled, or just doing everyday work like cleaning and cooking. We walk past the kitchens, where a delicious smell is wafting off the stove, and then past what I'm pretty sure is a cantina.

"The tour might have to wait," Zane says. "We have something to take care of first."

I think he's talking about getting in bed...marking me. It leaves me excited, and I reach out to squeeze his hand.

Then I turn around when I hear Jack snarl.

"Get off of me!" he warns.

I look back to find Olivia's mate, Mercer, and Carson and Fallon, all gathering around him. He backs up and then looks at me, betrayal clear on his face.

"What's happening?" I ask.

"We need to take him into custody," Carson says, looking me in the eye. "Just for now. We don't know if we can trust him."

“Kendra, please,” Jack says. “You know I wouldn’t do anything to hurt you.”

I almost step in to defend him...but the memory of him hurting Zane flashes through my mind. Not only that, but it was terrifying to be stuck in that room with him, wondering if he was ever going to free me.

“It’s just temporary,” I say, my expression hardening. “Go with them and prove to me that you aren’t dangerous.”

He raises his hands almost instantly, though he still looks really angry.

“Fine,” he says. “For you...anything.”

I watch as Fallon and Mercer lead him away, a few other Enclave folks falling into step with them. Carson levels with me and Zane, and then the desire is back, surging through me.

The heat in Carson’s eyes, combined with Zane’s purr, is enough to leave me breathless.

“We should debrief,” Carson says. “But...”

“...but I could use some sleep,” I murmur, catching his hand in mine. “It’s been a few days—I didn’t sleep when I was with Jack—I mean, Maddox.”

Zane’s brow furrows at the way I refer to the other man, but Carson nods and draws closer. “Right...you could absolutely use some sleep. I’ve got space in my quarters if you...”

I glance up and find Jade and Olivia listening closely. Rafe chuckles as the two of them giggle, then Rafe ducks his head

against Jade's ear.

"I think we could use some sleep, too," Jade says, blushing.

"Then it's settled," Rafe says. "Rest up, grab some grub...then we debrief at sixteen-hundred?"

Carson nods and entwines his fingers with mine.

"Sounds good," he says.

Our group breaks for the moment and the three of us go with Carson into the barracks of the ship, Carson leading the way. I can tell he's nervous from his quick pace, and I know I should be nervous, too...but I'm not. This all feels right—like it was meant to happen from the moment Carson's group attacked the auction, since I stumbled into Zane's tattoo parlor. I want to set him at ease, so I reach forward and grab his shoulder.

"Carson," I murmur.

He stops in his tracks. Zane is right at my shoulder, the heat of his body maddening.

Carson looks over his shoulder, blue eyes bright and hooded.

"I just wanted to tell you that I'm..." I pause. "I don't know. I wanted to tell you not to worry..."

"You nervous, kid?" Zane asks, putting his hands on my hips. His voice is rough, his lips close to my throat. I suddenly realize we're completely alone here, and it makes it very clear that I'm trapped between two gorgeous alphas who want to claim me.

“I’m not nervous,” Carson says, coming closer. “I just...don’t want to hurt her.”

Zane chuckles, his chest rumbling against my back. “I know she looks like an angel, but she fucks like a demon. Ain’t that right, baby girl?”

His lips are on my throat, then, his teeth grazing over my pulse. I can’t wait for him to mark me...to truly make me his. But not here, not where anyone could just walk by.

That doesn’t seem to stop Carson.

His hands find my waist, just over where Zane’s hands rest on my hips.

“You like it rough, Kendra?” Carson asks.

I nod vigorously. “Yes. *Please* take me to bed. Claim me... both of you.”

Zane’s purr makes my pussy throb. “You heard her. She wants to be fucked.”

Carson growls. “Come here, Kendra.”

He wraps his arms fully around me and I somehow find my way into his embrace, wrapping my legs around his waist. Then he’s carrying me, his breath against my throat, his hands on my ass, squeezing, massaging...

He carries me the rest of the way, until I hear him say, “Here—the keycard is in my pocket.”

And I hear a door open.

The door to the rest of my life.

My mind is on sex, and sex alone, as we cross the threshold of the captain's quarters. I turn my head to the side and find Zane right next to me, his lips at my ear, his hands on my breasts.

"He can barely keep his hands off of you," he growls. "You like that, baby girl?"

"Yes," I whisper. "Yes...I want you both so bad. Make me yours."

Carson places me on my feet, but keeps my arms in his grip as he kisses me. I groan as I feel his tongue plunge inside my mouth, tasting him, feeling Zane behind me as his hands roam over me. He works on undressing me so Carson can keep kissing me, his hands under my shirt, pulling my tits out of my bra.

"You ready for us, baby girl?" Zane asks, rolling my nipples between his fingers.

I moan and nod. I've never been so ready.

"Take her shirt off," Carson commands, playing the part of the Enclave's leader. "I want to see her gorgeous tits."

Zane does as he's told, hooking his fingers in the hem of my shirt and tossing it somewhere else in the room. His hands go down to my pants next, unbuttoning my jeans, unzipping them, then diving in...

I gasp when I feel Zane's fingers on my clit, Carson's hands and mouth on my breasts. I lean back against Zane's broad chest and push my tits out toward Carson.

“Fuck, I could suck on these gorgeous nipples for hours, Kendra,” Carson growls. “But your scent is gonna drive me crazy...”

“She’s so fucking wet,” Zane purrs. “Begging for our knots and covered in slick. Ready to be bitten and bred.”

He moves his fingers faster, plunging two of them inside of me, then three. I bite my lip to keep from crying out, and feel Carson’s lips on my neck as his teeth graze my pulse. Zane’s hand goes to my pussy next, his fingers swirling around me and then slowly pushing inside me, his thumb on my clit.

I know I’m on the pill—Zane got me some birth control before Jack took me, before everything happened—but the idea of getting pregnant like Jade makes me so horny. The idea of my mates knocking me up, taking care of me, building me a nest...

“Oh, fuck,” Carson whispers. “I’m gonna pump you full of cum, Kendra. Knot you, breed you, make you mine...”

“I want it,” I gasp. “I want you both so bad.”

Zane’s teeth graze my shoulder and I cry out again, every nerve in my body on fire.

“She’s gonna be a wild one, Carson,” Zane drawls. “She’s a goddamn animal.”

“I know,” Carson murmurs. “I can tell.”

“But I get to go first,” Zane says.

His fingers increase in speed as he fucks me with his hand, and the next thing I know, his kiss turns sharp, his fangs grazing over my skin.

“I can’t wait to feel you come, baby girl,” Zane purrs. “And then...I can’t wait to watch Carson make you come. Nothing sweeter than your mate’s pleasure.”

“Oh, fuck,” I whisper. “I’m almost there...”

Zane’s fingers move faster, his groans rumbling in my ear. His teeth sink into my shoulder, his hand on my nipple, pinching and tugging, sending me over the edge. Carson kisses me as Zane bites me and marks me for the first time, and I feel a surge of desire for them both.

I cry out as my orgasm rips through my body, my pussy tightening around Zane’s fingers and my juices spilling down my thighs.

“Mine,” Zane growls in my ear as he laps at the bite mark.  
“*Mine.*”

Carson breaks away so he can trail kisses down the other side of my neck, his own teeth sharp. My skin is so hot that I feel like I can’t breathe—my pussy aching to be filled, every hole feeling so, *so* empty.

“Tell me why you’re so wet, baby girl,” Carson murmurs in my ear, his hand on my neck. “I want to hear you say it.”

I shiver. “Because I need you to fuck me,” I whisper. “I need you both so bad...”

“Get your fingers out of her so I can fuck her, Zane,” Carson mutters. “Please. I need her right fucking now.”

“I think we agreed that you’d be her mate,” Zane says. “You should knot her.”

I can barely speak. All I can do is mumble *yes* as Zane yanks my pants off, as Carson pulls me toward the bed. Carson starts shedding his clothes as he pulls me backward, Zane’s big body still behind me, shoving me forward, boxing me in.

Then Carson sits on the edge of a big bed with a porthole looking out to sea, and he’s pulling me down toward him...

His cock is so big. I can feel it prodding between my legs.

“I’m gonna bite you,” he growls. “I’m gonna knot you. I’m gonna fill you up with my cum and I’m gonna make sure my scent is all over you, then I’m gonna protect you for the rest of our lives, Kendra Morrison...”

“Romantic,” I manage to laugh, straddling him. “Now... fucking bite me, rebel.”

“Fuck, you’re a spitfire,” he chuckles.

His wild eyes meet mine and I shiver as he leans in, his teeth at my neck, and he bites me. Hard.

I cry out as pain floods my body, my pussy clenching around nothing, my nipples like bullet bullets against his chest. His cock is between my legs, rubbing along my clit. I can feel his teeth, his fangs, his cock.



“Oh, fuck,” I whisper, and suddenly he’s shoving inside me, his massive cock invading my pussy as his teeth sink deeper into my neck. He pulls back and I see that he’s leaving little love marks all over my neck...marking me as his and Zane’s.

“This is gonna hurt, spitfire,” he murmurs. “I’m sorry.”

“Do it,” I growl. “I need it.”

“She likes the pain,” Zane adds. “Like she said...she likes it rough. So give it to her.”

And he does. He fucks me, claiming me, his teeth on my neck, my scent filling the air. Claiming me as his.

I didn’t realize how much I needed this—to be taken by these two men, claimed like this—until it’s happening. I meet Carson’s eyes as my pussy tightens around him, as he thrusts inside me, as the pain begins to turn to pleasure, then to sheer bliss. It hurts when his knot slips inside me, sheathing me fully on his huge cock, but the pain vanishes when I glance over to see Zane at my side, his cock jutting toward my face.

“Come on, baby girl,” Zane growls. “Suck on it...give yourself a distraction.”

I moan and take Zane’s cock in my hand, then I wrap my lips around his head and take him deep into my throat as Carson continues to fuck me. He growls and pulls my hair, squishing my tits against his chest. He thrusts into me harder and faster, the pain turning to pleasure, making my toes curl.

“Feel that, spitfire?” Carson asks. “Your body knows it. You’re built to be fucked by two men like this. You’re built to be a

mate for two alphas...”

I moan, my pussy tightening around Carson’s cock, my mouth around Zane.

“Fuck, Kendra,” Carson growls, his voice rumbling through me. “I’m gonna fucking come...you’re clenching around my knot so fucking good...”

I get louder as I suck on Zane, my moans filling the room as Carson pushes in and out of me, his teeth still on my neck, his hand tangled in my hair. He’s squeezing my tits, then my ass, then my pussy, and I feel his cock swell inside me.

“Here it comes, spitfire,” he murmurs. “You feel it? My cock swelling? My cum shooting into you?”

I nod, my mouth full of Zane. I know he’ll take me next—because I need to be fucked after I’m bitten, because I *missed Zane* and I want his cock in my pussy, no matter how exhausted I am...

“Come for me, spitfire,” he growls. “I want to feel you come on my cock as I shoot my cum deep inside your pussy...”

I do as he says, coming on his cock as he comes in me, my pussy gripping his knot. I scream into the ceiling, letting go of Zane, not caring who hears, and Carson’s face falls to my tits as he licks the sweat from my skin.

We stay like that for a long time—I’m not sure how long.

It takes an alpha’s knot a while to go down after he’s fucked his mate.

But I don't get a second to breathe—because as soon as Carson's pulled out, Zane is grabbing me and tossing me roughly to the bed, yanking me up to my hands and knees. I feel Zane's muscular thighs press against mine for a split second, and then he's buried in my sore pussy, fully knotted, and his teeth are at my throat again.

“Fuck, Kendra,” he growls. “This is just the beginning. I've been thinking about where I would bite you from the second you walked into my shop.”

His teeth sink into my neck and my whole body erupts, a thousand tiny sensations exploding out from my pussy, from my clit, from my throat.

“Zane!” I scream.

My mouth falls open, and his hand slaps my cheek.

“I want you to remember that,” he growls. “That you're mine...that you're covered in my bite marks, in my *claiming* mark.”

I scream into the bed, clawing at the sheets, my pussy clenching around Zane.

“Play with her tits, Carson,” Zane says. “I want her senseless.”

Carson's hand is on my chest, pushing my breasts together. He tugs my nipples as Zane fucks me, slow and deep, his cock throbbing inside my pussy.

“You like that, spitfire?” Carson asks, kissing my shoulder. “You like me claiming you? You like me playing with these perfect breasts?”

“Yes, Carson,” I moan. “I love it.”

“What do you love, Kendra?” Carson asks.

“I love you playing with my tits,” I whimper. “I love you touching me.”

“You love me inside you?” Carson asks.

“Yes,” I whimper. “I love it when you fuck me. I love it when you play with me.”

“What about Zane?” he asks, his voice low. “You love him too?”

“Yes!” I cry.

Carson rolls my nipples between his fingers, and I glance down to see he’s already getting hard again. I realize with a sense of molten pleasure that I’m not leaving this bed for hours—that these alphas are going to take me and claim me as many ways as they can think of, that they’re going to cover me in bite marks and fill every hole.

That Zane and Carson will be inside me when they sleep, that I’ll feel their cum drip down my thighs when I get up, that when I see their handsome faces I’ll remember what we did, and my pussy will clench and a thrill will run through my body...

I’ve never been happier in my life.

Then Zane is coming as Carson fondles my breasts, and I’m stuck in an endless orgasm as I writhe on Zane’s knot. Carson leans in and places another bite on me—right over the

synthetic claiming mark—and I feel the vestiges of those fake pheromones leaving my body as they're replaced by those of Zane and Carson.

My true mates.

Claiming me completely.

Zane pulls out and his teeth leave my neck, and as he falls to the bed, he kisses me—kissing my lips, my cheeks, the corners of my eyes. Carson's hand is on my neck, touching the bite marks, and he sinks to the bed next to me.

I'm sandwiched between two gorgeous alphas, and I love it.

"Where do you want us to bite you next?" Carson growls in my ear.

"My ass," I whimper. "My thighs, my tits, my stomach...God, anywhere you want."

"You've never been fucked in the ass, baby girl," Zane murmurs, his lips on my neck. "How about that?"

"Yes," I moan, arching my back. "Do it."

Carson drags a finger down the curve of my back. "Not yet... but soon, we're going to fuck you here," Carson says, whispering in my ear. "You're going to feel Zane's cock in your ass, and then me in your pussy, and you're going to be fully and completely claimed, spitfire. You're going to feel owned by us."

"Please," I whimper.

“We’ll be here all night,” Carson murmurs. “We’ll take you however we want you. In any way you want. We’ll make love to you until you can’t stand.”

I look into Zane’s deep brown eyes, then Carson’s. I run my fingers over their faces, their bodies.

“I can’t wait,” I whisper, my pussy clenching.

And I really can’t.



## Carson

I CAN ONLY BASK in the afterglow of mating for so long...because there's still a revolution about to begin, and I'm leading the charge.

*And* because there's an enemy in the brig—an enemy who wants to fuck my mate.

I slip out of bed late in the afternoon, leaving Kendra and Zane to sleep. They're curled up in each other, Kendra snoring softly, but Zane cracks an eye open as I leave. I gesture toward the door and silently mouth *Maddox*.

Zane gives a barely perceptible nod, making sure not to wake Kendra, then I leave them behind, knowing that she's well-protected. I'm glad I have Zane in the pack; he'll be right at her side as long as he can, when I have work to do with the Enclave.

I head down to the brig and find Rafe inside, leaning against the wall with his arms crossed. His knuckles are bruised and bloody, and he scowls at me as I look into the cell.



“He won’t tell us a damn thing,” he says. “The asshole insists on talking to Kendra first...she’s the only one who’ll get anything out of him.”

“You tried the usual tactics?” I ask, glancing down at his knuckles.

Rafe huffs out a laugh. “Of course I did—and Fallon tried good cop. But we didn’t get anything.”

“How bloody did it get?” I ask.

Rafe shrugs. “Eh...a little. Not as much as I wanted, but Jade came down here and told me to lay off.”

“Good thing she did,” I mutter. “We don’t want a dead ACB agent on our hands.”

He gives me a sharp-toothed grin. “I don’t know, man...seems to me the more dead ACB agents, the better.”

I shake my head and leave Rafe behind to walk into the cell, where Maddox is sitting tied to a chair with his hands behind his back. He’s real fucking bloody—more than I would have liked, especially since Kendra seems to have formed an attachment to him. His lip is busted, and his hair hangs in blood-soaked strands across his forehead.

Still, he manages to sneer at me when I walk in.

Yeah...I get it. He’s got a really punch-able face.

“You fucked her,” Maddox says, inhaling deeply. I’m shocked he can scent her over the coppery smell in here. It’s awful.

“I’m jealous.”

“What do you want, Maddox?” I ask. “Why are you here?”

“I told you back in the city what I wanted,” he says. “Kendra. Just Kendra. I gave up everything for her and came willingly to your fucking base...I don’t know what else you want from me.”

I pull up a chair and sit across from him, leaning forward with my elbows on my knees. Maddox doesn’t balk, his dark eyes trained on mine even as he spits some blood out on the floor.

“I didn’t want them to rough you up like this,” I mutter. “I apologize.”

“Don’t come in here and play good cop,” he snorts. “You took me into custody. And let’s be real...I would have done the same to you.”

“That doesn’t make me want to trust you,” I tell him.

“I don’t need you to trust me,” he replies. “What I need you to understand is that, from the second I set Kendra loose at the auction house, I made a choice...and that choice was *her*. Not the ACB, not the Enclave. Just her.”

“Why?”

“Because she smells fucking delicious,” Maddox says. “I don’t know, man...I don’t have any other explanation.”

“You want to keep her safe; that should make you an asset, I guess,” I breathe out. “I mean...I’m glad you came here, I’m glad you kept her out of ACB clutches, glad you got a hold of us...but now I don’t know what to do with you.”

I glance down at the floor, and Maddox says, “She’s fucking amazing, man. Yes, she’s fucking with my head, but that’s nothing compared to what she’s doing to my dick.”

“She’s mated to me and Zane,” I mutter.

“But she wants me too,” he says. “And you’re gonna let her have me, aren’t you? Because you’re just as beholden to her desires as I am.”

“Rafe is more inclined to throw you overboard and let you drown...or worse,” I say. “You’re lucky to be alive out here.”

“I’ll be with Kendra or I’ll die,” he shrugs. “I made that decision when I turned on the ACB.”

I lean back and blow out a breath, shaking my head as I wonder what the hell I’m going to do with him. “Do you have information?”

“Yeah, but I’ll only give it to her.”

“What kind?”

He hums. “Pass codes, ACB stronghold locations, safehouses...I know all kinds of things,” he says. “Not that the information is evergreen—they’ll know pretty soon that I’ve turned on them, and then they’ll change the codes, move things around. The ACB is established enough to be agile.”

“So you need to talk to her today,” I say.

Even as I say the words, I know this isn’t gonna be easy. Zane won’t want her getting close to him; Rafe is ready to murder the guy. But we need that information...

...and I know Kendra trusts him.

I don't know *why*, but I know she's smart, and I can't doubt her when it comes to all our survival.

"I'll talk to her—and to everyone else," I tell him. "I'll see what I can do. Then...if you give her the information, we might be able to work something out."

"That's all I'm asking for," Maddox says, watching me stand up. "You know where to find me."

I laugh. "Yeah...and I'll tell Rafe not to beat the shit out of you again."

"Wow, thanks," Maddox mutters. "See you around, Connolly."

I step out of the cell and find Rafe standing in the same place he was before, his eyebrow raised. "That sounded downright cordial," he says. "You sure about this?"

I shake my head. "Of course not...but time is of the essence. And of course I'm worried about Kendra, but she's tough. We have to trust her judgement."

"If you say so," Rafe says. "But I'll be ready to throw him overboard just in case."



## Kendra

**T**HE SEX WAS NICE, but I can't stop thinking about Maddox.

Okay...the sex was more than nice. The sex was *incredible*. I'm covered in bite marks when I wake up, and I wear them like medals, proud of my two incredible mates.

Zane, my steadfast protector.

Carson, the revolutionary.

But it seems like something is still missing...a puzzle piece out of place.

*Jack Maddox.*

Where Carson is the angel on my shoulder, Jack is the devil, and I know I have to talk to him...and that in some twisted way, we belong together.

All four of us.

No matter how much Zane hates it.

I've got plenty of energy after I wake up in Carson's room, well-rested and wrapped in Zane's arms. He's watching me with those soft brown eyes, making me feel safe. It's a nice reprieve from the stress of the past few days, when I was stuck with Jack and worried I would never see Zane again.

"Hi," I whisper.

"Hi," Zane replies, stroking my hair.

"Where's Carson?"

Zane sighs, shutting his eyes. "He went to go talk to that ACB fucker," he mutters.

"Jack?" I ask.

Zane's eyes open, dark with anger. "I didn't realize you were on a first-name basis."

I bite my lip. "Zane...I know he hurt you and took me away from you. But he was right to do it—they could have caught us if we hadn't split up."

"I was so fucking worried, Kendra," he murmurs. "Damn near crazy with worry. I was so scared that I'd lost you."

"And I hate that he did that," I say. "But me and Maddox...we have a connection that I can't deny."

Zane swallows hard, shaking his head like he's trying to shrug off the bad feelings. "I'll never like him."

"You don't have to," I reply. "You're my first—my first mate, the one I *chose* before anyone else. You were the one who rescued me and kept me safe through my heat. The one who

made it clear I had to want you before you would so much as touch me. That doesn't just go away."

"So what now?" he asks.

"I want to talk to him," I say. "As soon as possible. He might know something we can use."

"Do you want me there?"

I nod, touching his face. "Always."

I hear the latch turn in the door, and I roll over to find Carson stepping through. Zane sits up, the blankets falling around his waist, and I glance back just to admire his tattooed torso—his piercings, his muscles, the ink swirling over his skin. Meanwhile, Carson seems to be admiring me, kneeling and crawling across the bed to take me in his arms.

He kisses me deeply, his fingers tangled in my hair as Zane's hand brushes up and down my spine.

"Fuck," Carson curses. "I came down here to talk business... but now I just want to get back into bed."

I laugh against his lips. "Pretty sure we've got a revolution to plan and a prisoner to deal with."

"That's what I came down here for," Carson sighs. "Maddox is down in the brig and says he has intel...but he'll only give it to you."

"What kind of intel?" Zane asks.

"Safehouse locations, defense plans, and passcodes," Carson says. "Stuff that could speed up our plans to take down the



ACB for good.”

I nod, knowing what I have to do.

“Take me to him,” I say. “But both of you...I want privacy.”

“No fucking way,” Zane mutters right away.

“Trust me,” I say. “Please. I’ll bring my knife in there so I’m armed, and I know you’ll be right outside the door. Oh...and I need a notebook and something to write with.”

Carson’s brows shoot up.

“You think you can get that much out of him?” he asks.

I smirk. “Yeah...I think I can get everything.”

We all get dressed and head down to the brig, where I can smell the scent of blood as soon as we walk through the main door. All the cells are empty but one—where Jack’s scent wafts through over the reek of copper. He smells like tobacco and musk, and it draws me in even though I know he’s injured.

“Notebook?” I ask, holding my hand out to Carson.

He hands me the notebook and pen, and I tuck them into my back pocket—right next to where I have the knife holstered.

“We’ll be right outside,” Zane says, taking me by the shoulders. “Just shout if you need help.”

“You know I will,” I murmur, then stand on my tip-toes to press a kiss to his lips. “I love you, Zane.”

It’s the first time I’ve said the words, and Zane’s eyes widen when he hears them. He responds instantly, though, sweeping me in for a deeper kiss, his big hands on my waist.

“I love you too, Kendra,” he murmurs.

I look over my shoulder at Carson, but he doesn't look like he expects the same...even if I can feel that he wants it. He just jerks his head over his shoulder, gesturing at the cell door.

“He's ready for you,” he says.

I walk past my two alphas, across the threshold to the cell. Jack's eyes meet mine, one swollen almost completely shut.

It makes my heart hurt to see him like this—even if I know he's a psycho, that he basically kidnapped me.

“I hate that they did this to you,” I whisper.

He smirks and shakes his head, wincing slightly as I step closer. “I'm fine,” he says. “I'm just glad to see you're alright...if a little bitten up.”

I blush and come closer, sitting down in the chair opposite him and dragging it close enough that our knees touch. He takes in the sight of me—my dirty hair pulled into a bun, showing off all the places I was bitten by Carson and Zane.

“Shit,” he mutters. “Did they leave any room for me?”

I shake my head. “What makes you think you'll get to mark me too?”

He laughs. “I don't think it. I *know* it.”

“Why?”

“Because we're mates,” he says. “Like I've told you a thousand times. We're meant to be...and soon enough, you'll be begging for my claiming mark.”

I raise a single brow, my eyes skating over where he's tied to the chair by his wrists and ankles. "Seems to me like you're the one who should be begging right now."

"You want me to beg?" he says. "I'll give you anything."

I shift to pull out the tiny notebook and pen, then I click the pen open. "Information," I say. "You have it; I want it."

"Okay," he says. "But I want something first."

"I'm listening," I murmur.

He leans forward as much as he can, giving me a sly grin. "A kiss."

I roll my eyes. "I'm not going to kiss you, Jack."

"You will," he growls. "And you'll like it too."

"Okay," I murmur. "Information first, and then a kiss. What will you give me for it?"

"The passcode and coordinates for a safehouse downtown," he says. "How to disable the door alarms, how to gain access to the weapons cache."

"Is that all?"

"More...if you come over here and sit in my lap," he says.

I roll my eyes. "Okay—but for that, I want information on how to get into the ACB's HQ."

"I'll even add on how to get out," he says. "Trust me—I know how to do it."

I gulp as the words sink in. This would be the thing that could change everything—that might finally free the omegas in this city, that could be the key to making or breaking our revolution.

I could give all of Solstice Bay's omegas a chance at a real life, give them a chance to choose their own destiny.

“Okay,” I say. “The safehouse...then you'll get your kiss.”

He immediately dives into a rambling explanation of how to get to the safehouse—including exact coordinates and the passcodes for everything. He details what's in the weapons cache, where we can find it, how to get inside. I take notes the whole time, filling a few pages.

Then he looks at me expectantly.

“Well?” he says. “How about it?”

I lick my lips, hating how much this turns me on. My pussy throbs at his proximity, at his scent, at the way he stares at me like I'm the only thing he's ever wanted.

“We made a deal,” I murmur. “It's only fair that I hold up my side of it.”

I lean forward, pressing my lips to his.

It's a mistake.

He tastes too good and too dangerous—like tobacco and like flowers that grow in the deepest, darkest forests, and my body warms as he opens his mouth for me, inviting me in. I can feel his tongue flicking against mine, and this is so wrong. This

psycho kidnapped me, took me away from the man I loved...  
and here I am, kissing him like we're meant to be.

I pull back, gasping for breath.

"I don't want to do this," I whisper.

"Yes, you do," Jack growls. "And we both know it."

I look into his eyes and see the truth in his words. I want this, even if it is wrong. Even if he's spent his entire life working for an organization that oppresses people just like me.

I sit back down opposite him, ignoring the way my heart pounds, the way my nipples harden and ache to be touched.

"Now the ACB's headquarters," I tell him. "I want everything."

"Of course you want everything," he says, his voice dark with lust. He smirks at how suggestive it sounds, and it should piss me off, but it's dark and cocky and sexy as hell. "I'll even draw you a map, sweetheart."

"What are you going to do if I untie your hands?" I ask.

He shrugs. "Pick up that pen and paper and I'll give you a blueprint," he says. "I'll only touch you if you ask."

"I won't," I reply.

"We'll see."

"Whatever," I huff. "Information first...then I'll see if I still need a map."

We go through another round of that: Jack giving me everything he knows, and me writing it down. It could all be a

lie, but I have to assume that Carson has some way of verifying all this with his people. I fill out another few pages, then I glance up nervously at Jack.

“Well?” he says, tilting his head and beckoning me toward him. “I thought we’d agreed you would sit in my lap.”

I can’t help but lick my lips, and he gives me a satisfied smirk when he sees my tongue dart out. Fuck, I want him so bad it hurts...but I don’t want to betray Zane and Carson. Even so, I know we’re alone here.

I get up again, bringing the paper with me. I put it on the table beside Jack’s chair as I straddle him...and I find him hard as a rock, his cock jutting between my legs. I can’t help the little moan that comes out of my throat at how he feels, and I don’t pull away when he leans his head in to graze his teeth over my pulse.

“You smell so fucking good when you’re turned on, sweetheart,” he growls. “Now...are you gonna untie me or what?”

I nod. “But you have to do as I say.”

“I’m yours to command,” he says.

I take out my knife and wrap my arms around him, reaching for the ropes at his wrists, then I cut through them with a few hard slashes. Jack groans and flexes his arms, rolling his shoulders before letting his arms hang limp at his sides.

I pull the knife to his throat, remembering how good it felt to have his cock in my hand, controlling his every move with a

gun to his head.

“I’m starting to get the feeling you like threatening me,” he says, his eyes meeting mine. His hips roll slightly and I cut off my own sigh, biting my lip so hard I taste blood.

“Pen and paper,” I say. “Draw. Now.”

He picks them up, and I lean back slightly to give him space—but that just gives him an opportunity to put the notebook down on my chest. His left hand holds the pen and he starts to write, his wrist flicking against my nipple through my shirt, making my whole body throb.

“Right...” he says. “You’re lucky I have a photographic memory. It’s just like...this.”

He pauses in his writing briefly to give me a smile.

“Don’t stop on my account,” I say.

“Damn,” he says. “You’re a hard woman to please.”

“Just get it done,” I say.

“Okay, okay.”

He turns his attention back to the paper and keeps writing as he starts to talk.

“The stronghold’s on the other side of the city,” he says. “It’s an old, abandoned warehouse that they’ve turned into a series of interconnected tunnels. The big boss, Ramsey, has a private suite underground, where he can hide from the Enclave if shit ever goes south.”

“Ramsey?” I ask. “I thought Eduardo Cruz was in charge of the ACB.”

“He was...until your little friend killed him,” Jack says. “Anyway...there’s a guard posted at the door twenty-four hours a day, and a few others positioned nearby. There’s a kitchen, a bathroom, a living room...”

A whine escapes my throat when I shift slightly, his hard cock putting just the right amount of pressure on my clit.

He pauses, his eyes on me, knowing what he’s doing to me.

“I was just getting to the good part,” he says.

“Really?” I say. “I’d heard you were mostly fibbing.”

“I was just holding off until you were in a better mood,” he says.

“Well, I’m in a good mood now,” I reply.

I lean in to kiss his neck, and I can hear his heart pounding as I drag my lips over his skin. His pulse is racing, and I can feel the heat of his cock against me.

“Get back to work,” I whisper, making myself sit back up.

He nods, licking his lips as he turns back to the paper.

“Ramsey has a lot of omegas in his service,” he says, “but he’s worried about them turning against him. So he keeps a few tied up in his private suite...and he’ll hold them against you for leverage. Be prepared for hostages when you go in.”

“We will be,” I tell him, starting to feel breathless. I need to get out of here before we both lose control. “Anything else?”



“Nope,” he says.

But then he yanks the notebook away and holds it over his head, out of my reach.

“But if you want the map, you’re gonna have to take my cock out and ride it until you come.”

I gape at him, my heart pounding as I glance toward the door. No...I couldn't. Zane and Carson are just outside, worrying about me, angry at this man who's doing everything he can to control me.

But...

...if I give him this, he'll be connected to me. He's already obsessed with me, and I know that he would never hurt me. This man is insane, but the one logic I can count on with him is that he will protect me at all costs.

So I meet his eyes and keep the knife to his throat.

“Fine,” I mutter. “But no biting.”

In one swift movement, I stand up and step out of my pants, leaving them in a pile on the floor. Jack gives me a feral grin as he pulls out his cock and strokes it once, twice—then I'm climbing on top of him, sinking down, taking him all before I can second guess myself.

I gasp in pleasure.

He gives a long moan as I ride him, my body shivering as he digs his fingers into my hips, his cock driving deep inside of me. I keep the knife steady on his throat, just in case.

“That’s it,” he murmurs, the notebook somewhere on the floor, the pen discarded. “That’s it...take all my cock...ride it just like that...”

“Shut up,” I mutter, digging the knife in. “I don’t want them to worry.”

He laughs low in his throat, his cock swelling as his knot threatens to dip inside. I stay just out of reach—just so that he can’t knot me, force me to stay here.

“You’re such a bad girl, Kendra,” he murmurs. “You’re so fucking wet for someone who hates me.”

“I don’t hate you,” I gasp. “I just don’t like you very much.”

He chuckles and his hips rock beneath me, his cock sinking in deep.

“Tell me what you want,” he whispers. “Talk dirty to me.”

“I want to ride your cock,” I whisper back. “I want you to fuck me until I come all over your cock.”

“Fuck,” he groans. “Those dirty words are gonna make me come.”

“Not the words; *me*,” I say. “*I’m* going to make you come. I’m going to make you come so fucking hard you’ll never disobey me again.”

“I’ll take you up on that,” he says. “But you have to do one more thing.”

“What?”

“Let me mark you, sweetheart,” he says, his voice a low growl in his throat. “It’s fate. It’s gonna happen eventually. Let me put my fucking bite on you.”

I can’t, no matter how much I want to. I’m with Zane and Carson...and we make those decisions together.

“I’ll think about it,” I whisper, not wanting to hurt him.

“Shut up and fuck me,” he says. “You don’t know what you’re missing.”

I lean forward, keeping the knife there until he puts his hands behind his back. I can see the wildness in his eyes, feel his cock swelling inside of me. I want to give it to him. I want him to be my mate.

But not like this.

Not after everything he’s done.

“I’m close,” I gasp. “I’m so close...make me come, Jack... make me come on your cock...”

It’s like a switch flips inside of him. I can see it, and I can feel it. He’s completely given himself over to me, eager to do whatever I say.

“Do it,” I whisper. “Make me come.”

And that’s when everything gets completely out of control.

He leans forward faster than I can react, and his teeth are bared as he bites into me. That’s when I shout, the knife clattering to the floor—not because I’m scared, not because I don’t want it, but because it feels so good. He bites through my shirt and into

the flesh of my breast, latching on, lapping at me with his long tongue.

I hear the door open—hear Zane roar.

And even as I continue to come, I'm pulled off of Jack—and Zane leaps on top of him to tear his throat out.



## Zane

I 'M GOING TO FUCKING kill him.

I tried to stay out of Kendra's business, I tried to leave her to it...but I could scent her arousal when she was in there with him, and it made me so fucking angry. Carson tried to keep me out, but now I've seen Maddox fucking her, now I've heard her cry out, I've *seen his bite on her*—

And my hands are on him.

I knock over his chair as I leap across the room, taking him by the collar and slamming his head into the ground. Maddox is fucking *laughing*, his dark hair drenched in blood, the coppery scent invading my senses. I'm thirsty for that blood; I want to bathe in it, to knock his head against the floor until his head is empty of whatever dirty thoughts he has for my mate.

“Zane, please stop! Don't hurt him!”

I feel her hands on my shoulders, but I can't fucking stop. He needs to die...

The only thing that gives me pause?

Her knife at my throat.

I stop dead, raising my hands feeling the blade slice into my skin just slightly—just enough to make it clear she means business. All four of us are in the room now, Carson watching with wide eyes from the door, Maddox still laughing maniacally on the floor.

“Don’t stop me, Kendra,” I growl. “He fucking hurt you.”

“No,” she says. “He marked me...because he’s one of us.”

The words hit me like a punch to the gut. I don’t want to believe it. I don’t want to believe that the woman I love, this *strong, badass* rebel, is ready to take an ACB agent into our pack...and into her heart.

But I’m hearing her right.

That’s exactly what she’s doing.

“He gave me everything,” she says. “Passcodes, weapons caches, even the way into the ACB’s HQ. Carson—take this.”

I glance over to find that she’s using her free hand to pass over a wad of papers. Carson looks down at them, then back at the two of us before staring at Maddox.

“Is this legit?” he asks. “No...no fucking way.”

“Yes way,” Maddox cackles. “She’s mine, too, Stone...”

I go to grab him again, but Kendra yanks me back and strides past me. I think she’s going to get between us—and she does—but to my shock, she draws her arm back and plunges the knife right into Maddox’s thigh.

He howls in pain and Kendra stands up to look down at him.

“You’ll heal,” she says. “And hopefully you’ll learn to get along.”

“Fuckin’ hell, you’re sexy,” Maddox growls through clenched teeth. He seems to be declawed for the moment, though...and it gives me enough of a break to stand up straight, rolling my shoulders.

I look down at Kendra and find that she’s barely bitten by him—but she’s bleeding anyway. I reach out to touch her and instinctively pull her to me to press my lips to the wound and soothe her, and she leans into me.

And if Maddox really didn’t belong with us—if he was as bad as I want him to be—I would be able to taste how *wrong* his mark is on her...but she cares about him.

I can’t deny there’s real, literal chemistry between all four of us.

“Damn it,” I mutter, pressing my forehead to hers. “You scared the hell out of me.”

She looks into my eyes. “I’m sorry, Zane...but I’m not going to stop scaring you until this war is won. Do you understand?”

I shake my head and kiss her again, needing to feel the reassurance that she’s alive and well in my arms. When I pull away, I feel like the world is right again.

“You’re not going to do it alone,” I say. “I’m going to be there every step of the way...no matter who you choose to be with you.”



She looks like she might cry.

“I know,” she whispers. “You’re the bravest person I’ve ever met.”

I’m not brave.

I’m just a fool in love with the woman who has to beat the odds for us.

She steps away from me and looks over at Carson, who’s down on the floor with Maddox. “Get him up and take him to med bay?” she asks. “I don’t think I hit any major arteries... but I don’t want him to bleed out, and he’s already wounded.”

“Good to know you care,” Maddox croaks.

Others are coming in now, too—Rafe is with them, and he doesn’t seem nearly as willing as Kendra is to treat Maddox like a person. “He’s ACB,” Rafe says. “We should—”

“What she says goes,” Carson interrupts.

The two men stand off for a second—the two leaders of the Enclave. They’ve always had different leadership styles, and I know that Rafe would sooner throw Maddox overboard than let him live...but then Carson shows him the papers.

Rafe’s eyes widen.

“Well, shit,” he says. “You got all this out of him?”

“No,” Carson says, jerking his head back at Kendra. “She did. Which is why we’re bringing her into the op.”

“We’re going ahead with it?” Rafe asks.

“Too right we are,” Carson replies. “We’re gonna hit the ACB next week. They’re hosting a meeting with all the other agencies in town, so it’ll be the best chance we ever have to hit them. We’ll go in as one pack and take them down with force.”

Kendra nods. “And I’m coming, too. Which is the insurance you need, because Maddox wouldn’t put me in danger—would you, Jack?”

“Fuck no,” Maddox says. “I don’t like it...but the information is legit. I wouldn’t hurt Kendra.”

Rafe studies her for a second, and then he nods. “All right,” he says. “But if anything goes wrong, Jade will kill me.”

“We’re all going to make it out of this,” Kendra says. “There’s a better world on the other side...for Jade.”

Rafe pales slightly, and I know he’s thinking about the secret that only a few of us know: that Jade, his mate, is pregnant. He has more riding on this operation than any of us, because his pack is more vulnerable.

Kendra is going to protect Jade...and I’m going to protect Kendra.

No matter what happens, I’ll be by her side til the end.



## Maddox

**T**HEY BEAT THE EVERLOVING hell out of me, but I'm still here...and Kendra's mine.

I've never experienced anything quite like what it felt like to have her riding me, her sweet cunt squeezing the life out of me. It's the one thing that gets me through the next few hours of stitches, scalpels, and syringes...and of course, seeing her gorgeous face on the other side of it.

She's not smiling—not yet—but one day, I'll be able to make her smile.

When this is all over and I've found absolution for my days with the ACB.

I'm feeling a little less like a punching bag by the time I'm released from the med bay, and Kendra, Zane, and Carson are waiting for me. Kendra lets me put my arm around her for support and I resist the urge to wink and smirk at Zane, who seems just as pissed off as he did when he was beating the shit out of me.

Not that it's easy to wink when my eye is still swollen as hell.

"So where are we off to?" I ask. "I assume you're not letting me go or throwing me in the ocean."

"You need a shower," Kendra mutters. "You stink."

"And you'll stay with at least one of us at all times while you're on the Rig," Carson adds. "If you don't want Rafe to kill you on the spot...you'll behave."

"Hey...okay," I nod. "Are you saying you're gonna shower with me, pretty boy?"

Zane growls under his breath. "Don't push it."

"Look, Maddox," Carson says. "I'm letting you into my living space—to shower, to rest. I'm letting you free in *my territory*. I'm not killing you even though you took liberties with my mate. So you need to keep a lid on it."

"But Kendra likes it when I'm feisty, don't you sweetheart?" I ask.

She rolls her eyes. "Keep it up and you're getting a knife in your other leg."

"That won't be necessary," Zane cuts in. "If he leaves you alone, I'll let him live. But shit needs to stop, and if he steps outta line, I'll make sure he never wants to step outta line again."

Kendra sighs. "Could you two just—"

"Because I don't want to kill you, Maddox," Zane cuts in. "But I will. Step outta line, and you're dead. Do I make myself

clear?”

I glower at him for a moment, but I know he’s not kidding. So I nod, admitting that he’s right. I’ve had my fun. And whether he likes it or not, Kendra is mine for good.

That bite mark won’t just go away...and she doesn’t want it to.

“So I guess we’re all pack now, huh?” I ask. “You two think you can learn to tolerate me?”

Carson huffs out a laugh. “You haven’t exactly given us a reason to.”

He strides ahead to push a door open in front of us, and Kendra and Zane both help me through the door. The room is nice for a ship bunk—clearly a former space for crew quarters, now cleared out for a single person. There’s a huge bed in the corner, posters of a few punk bands on the wall and a record player in the opposite corner, a big Enclave flag with the tattoo symbol on it. Carson takes over from there, grabbing my arm and helping me limp toward the bathroom.

“I’ll be right out here,” he says. “And before you try anything...there’s no way out of there except through this door. Shower, then come out—I’ll get you a change of clothes.”

“Gee, thanks,” I tell him. “That almost makes up for the torture.”

“You had it coming,” Zane grumbles from behind me.

I snort and shut myself in the bathroom, then turn the shower on as I hobble in. The water heats up right away, steam filling

the room. I don't bother looking for a weapon; I don't want one.

I'm seriously not trying to escape, even if they don't believe me.

I take off my bloodied, tattered clothes and get under the water, letting it course over my skin even though it hurts. The water runs pink for a while as the blood is rinsed off, my stitches burning. It feels good...

...and then I hear a sound.

*A moan.*

Over the thick steam, over the scent of soap...I smell sex. I would know Kendra's pleasure anywhere, and it sends a rush of blood straight to my cock.

They're fucking her out there right now.

With me in here.

No fair.

I make sure I'm thoroughly cleaned up, then I grab a towel and dry off my hair. I'm already feeling better with the meds and treatment, even if I still have a limp and a black eye—and I wrap the towel around my waist, suddenly fucking bashful about getting naked in front of other alphas. I only have eyes for Kendra...but these guys are all about sharing.

I have to share her if I want her.

And because they claimed her first, I'll have to pay my dues to be with her.

I can hear the sounds of their lovemaking through the door, Kendra not remotely shy about making sure everyone can hear her. I put my hand on the door handle and turn it, opening the door slowly...

...and I nearly come right there when I see the scene in front of me.

Zane is sitting on the bed, Kendra completely naked and straddling him backwards. His hands are on her breasts, tweaking her nipples, his cock inside her, his knot at the threshold. He's shirtless, his musculature *real* intimidating with the added tattoos, but his pants are still on, unzipped to pleasure Kendra. Carson kneels in front of her and licks her pussy as she cries out, her eyes meeting mine.

Carson is fully dressed, Zane mostly there, but Kendra...the sight of her is fucking pornographic.

Better than porn.

*Fuck.*

Carson hears the door open and turns to face me, getting up and swiping the back of his arm across his mouth. He leans down and kisses Kendra hard, and she moans at the flavor of her own pussy on Carson's lips.

My cock is hard as a goddamn rock.

What the hell are they doing?

Zane slows his pace, Kendra arching her back as he plays with her tits. He kisses her throat and looks up at me, meeting my eyes with a warning glare.



“She wants you,” he growls. “You marked her...and she needs satisfaction.”

She sighs like it’s on cue, her head rolling back. “Zane...” she whines.

“Sh...baby girl,” he says. “I won’t let you go without a good fuck.”

“Can’t just leave your mate high and dry like that, Maddox,” Carson adds.

“I didn’t want to,” I hiss, my voice harsher than I planned. “You’re the one who pulled her off me—”

“Because we do this on *our terms*,” Zane says. “You play by *our rules*.”

“This should’ve been the way we did it from the get-go,” Carson says—conversationally, like we’re not looking at the hottest thing we’ve ever seen. “You only fuck her when we’re around. Because it’s our job to keep her safe.”

I snicker. “If you like to watch, just say so.”

Zane gives me a warning growl and I raise my hands.

“Fine, fine,” I say. “So...what’ll it be, sweetheart? Where do you want me?”

Her eyes drift down to where Carson was before, kneeling in front of Zane, and Carson smirks.

“Well, Maddox?” Carson murmurs. “Get on your knees.”

I don’t bother keeping the towel, tossing it aside and falling to my knees. It hurts like a motherfucker, but I don’t care, eager

to taste her.

She reaches forward and knots her fingers in my hair as I suck on her clit, feeling how Zane fills her up. I've never been this close to a man—and to be quite honest, I'm not interested at all in him—but I like how it makes *her* feel, and I don't really care how close I have to be to Zane to make her come. My hands find her thighs and I squeeze hard, pulling back to graze my teeth between two other bites there.

“May I?” I ask.

Zane growls, but Kendra nods.

“Please,” she whines.

I bite down, marking her, *claiming her as my mate*. Then I lap at the wound, ensuring that it doesn't hurt, that it heals fast, that she feels incredible. In that moment, I'm promising to protect her forever, to make her happy, to do everything she says.

“Can I fuck her?” I ask, looking up at Zane.

He ducks his head against her neck and grazes his teeth over his own bite, his lips at her ear. “Can he, baby girl?”

She nods vigorously. “Yes, please, yes!”

“Lay down, asshole,” Zane growls.

I do as I'm told, stretching out on the bed beside them, my cock sticking straight up. I can't fucking wait to knot her...to bind her to me forever. I hear the wet sound of Zane pulling

Kendra off of him, and then she crawls over me, straddling my hips.

I can't wait.

I put my hands on her waist...and she slaps them away.

“Not there,” she says. “Play with my nipples. *Now.*”

I laugh and take hold of her tits, and then she's sliding down my shaft, taking me all the way. She's so fucking tight that she must have been a virgin not long ago—but she's already been well-fucked, and she knows how to ride me like a pro. She grinds her hips against me, making sure she gets some friction from my knot against her clit, and it makes me feel like I'm gonna lose my damn mind.

Zane leans toward her and takes her lips in a bruising kiss, and she groans into his mouth as I fuck my cock deep into her pussy. She's so wet that she's leaking all over my thighs, sliding almost onto my knot very time. And shit...I can't believe how much it turns me on when Zane lets her go only for Carson to come in on the other side, putting his cock in her mouth.

“Now I know...” I gasp, “...why you two didn't want...to share...”

Zane's chest rumbles in a soothing purr that seems to relax Kendra right away. “She's fucking phenomenal, isn't she?”

“Fuck yeah she is,” I murmur. “Fucking...fucking hell, I want to knot her.”

Carson groans. “Maybe you should ask her.”

“Can’t exactly do that when your cock is in her mouth,” I mutter.

But I guess I don’t have to—because Kendra’s pace changes, and she starts to thrust her hips downward, taking my knot a little bit at a time. She gasps—it has to hurt—and I feel how tight she is around me, her entrance too constricting, not quite there...

...then I slide home.

Inside.

So fucking deep inside her that I’m sure I’m up against her cervix, and the idea of knocking up my mate nearly makes me come on the spot.

She gives another sharp gasp and I fall back against the bed as Carson and Zane both grab her, keeping her lodged on top of me. Zane’s fingers go to her clit, his lips to her throat, while Carson keeps fucking his cock into her mouth.

“I can’t believe I’m knotting you,” I hiss. “I’m fucking knotting you, sweetheart, and you feel incredible.”

She whimpers around Carson’s cock, tears of pleasure streaming down her cheeks.

“You gonna come for us, baby girl?” Carson rumbles.

She nods, gagging on his cock.

Zane keeps fingering her clit, working her up to a powerful orgasm, and I feel her shiver as she grinds against his hand, as her pussy clenches around my knot, her body tensing.

“Come for us, Kendra,” Carson says.

And she does.

Holy fuck, does she do it.

She comes on my cock, her pussy tightening so hard around me I feel like I’m gonna lose my fucking mind. She rides out the orgasm, but I’m not quite there yet...and she’s a wild thing, jerking her hips on me, her whole body convulsing.

“That’s right, Kendra,” I growl. “Ride me, sweetheart...use me like a fucking toy. Fuck me...”

I’m on the bring, my knot aching for release. I’m gonna be stuck inside her for hours, and even though my whole body hurts from my time in the brig, I want her to use me. I want her to play with me. I want her to hurt me.

She pulls her lips from Carson with a wet pop, her mouth shining with spit, and she looks down at me.

“Fuck, Jack...make me come, Jack,” she gasps. “Claim me, Jack!”

My name is what does it for me, and I shudder as I spill my cum deep inside her. In that split second, I imagine what she would look like all big with my baby—how I’ll protect her with these other men, the nest we’ll build for her. When this is all over, I’m gonna make sure she’s so happy.

I’m gonna make sure she never wants for anything, that she’s safe in a world *without* the ACB.

My knot stays inside her as I take her into my arms and roll us to the side, my lips at the mark on her breast that I left there in the brig. Maybe that was a mistake...but now I'm here, and it's like all the things I've done suddenly make sense.

"You're mine, Kendra," I whisper.

"I'm yours, Jack," she whispers back. "But remember...you have to share..."

She laughs as Zane props her head up on his knee, as Carson comes in to curl up behind her. I don't want to share—I want to keep her to myself forever—but I can't deny that I like the idea of these strong alphas protecting her alongside me.

That's the point of a pack, I guess.

To make sure the woman we love is never in danger.

She's the future of Solstice Bay—and if I have to protect her with Zane Stone and Carson Connolly, that's what I'll do.



## Kendra

I CAN'T BELIEVE I get to be in the room where it happens—the room where we make our final plans on the ACB.

The stage is set for a revolution; we have the blueprints to ACB HQ, the location of their weapons caches, a man on the inside. There are Enclave agents waiting all over the city to strike...to bring about the end of the ACB's authoritarian rule.

We gather together around a central table as the sun sets over the Raft—my pack, Jade's, and Olivia's, and the rest of the Enclave's leadership. Somehow, we ended up with a group of the most important people in the Enclave...and that includes us. The *three of us*, who escaped our father's shadows and came out stronger on the other side.

I come to stand with Olivia and Jade and squeeze their hands as Carson calls everyone to order, standing tall at the head of the table and looking at the map. Zane is at one of my shoulders, Maddox at the other—Maddox still looking worse for wear, but better than he did before.



“Hey...” Olivia says with a sly smile. “You’re looking a bit more packed up than you were last time I saw you.”

I give her a sheepish grin and a shrug. “Yeah; I guess that happens when you join the Enclave.”

Carson clears his throat, drawing our attention back to the table. “Alright, everyone. Let’s get started. We have a lot to cover tonight.” He looks around the room, his gaze landing on each of us in turn. “As you all know, tomorrow is the day we take down the ACB once and for all.”

There’s a moment of silence as the weight of his words sinks in. This is it. The moment we’ve been working towards for months. The moment that will determine the course of history.

Carson continues, his voice steady. “We’ve got the element of surprise on our side. We know the layout of their headquarters, and we know where they keep their weapons. But make no mistake—this won’t be easy. The ACB is a well-oiled machine, and they will fight back with everything they have.”

He pauses, looking around the room again. “But we have something they don’t. We have each other. Families, loved ones. They treat their omegas like objects...but that makes *our* omegas our greatest weapon.”

He points to the map, indicating the areas where the ACB’s weapons caches are located. “We know that they have weapons stored here, here, and here. Our plan is to hit all three locations simultaneously.”

Everyone nods in agreement, and I can feel the anticipation building in the room. Zane leans in closer to me, his voice low. “Are you ready for this?”

I look up at him, feeling a mix of excitement and fear. “As ready as I’ll ever be.”

Jade chimes in, her hand squeezing mine. “We’ve come too far to back down now.”

Carson claps his hands, drawing our attention back to the table. “Alright, let’s go over the details. We’ll split into teams and coordinate our attacks. We’ll have to move quickly and efficiently to make sure we hit all three locations before the ACB can mobilize their forces.”

As he speaks, my mind races with the possibilities and the risks. We could lose people. We could fail.

I look between Zane, Carson, and Jack, not wanting to lose them when I just found them. Jack’s lips curl at me looking at him, and he reaches out to squeeze my shoulder. He spent his whole life in the ACB, but he’s given up everything to be with us.

That cements it for me.

We have to try.

We have to fight for the future we want.

The Enclave is like a family now, and we are united in a common cause.

Carson goes through the details of the plan with the expertise of a man who's been planning for this his whole life, his voice laced with determination and a sense of purpose. We listen intently, taking in every word and committing it to memory. The plan is complex, but we've trained for months, rehearsed every scenario, and we're ready.

Finally, Carson concludes, "And that's it. We move out at dawn. We leave nothing behind. We take them all down, and we do it together. The ACB will fall...and then we get to go to work replacing it with something better."

The room erupts in cheers and applause, and I can't help but smile at the sight of it. We're a family, a community of people who have come together for a common cause. It's a beautiful thing.

As the meeting breaks up and people start to file out of the room, Zane pulls me aside and looks at me with intensity. "I need to talk to you, in private."

My heart races as he leads me to a secluded corner of the room, away from even the rest of our pack. His eyes are dark with desire, and I feel a shiver run down my spine as he pulls me close.

"I just wanted to let you know how proud I am of you," he whispers, his breath hot against my ear. "You've come so far, and you're such a strong woman. Before you...fuck, Kendra, I had completely pulled away from the Enclave. I didn't think a better world was possible. But you made me want a better

world...and now you've made me believe we can make it happen.”

I feel my heart swell with emotion, and I wrap my arms around his neck, pulling him in for a deep kiss. Our lips meet, and his hands move down to my hips, pulling me in closer. I can feel the heat radiating off of him, and I respond with equal passion.

As we break apart, he looks at me with a fierce intensity. “No matter what happens tomorrow, I want you to know that I love you.”

I feel tears prick at the corners of my eyes, and I lean in to kiss him again. “I love you too,” I whisper.

We stand there for a few moments, locked in a tight embrace, feeling the weight of the impending battle bearing down on us. A moment later, I sense the rest of our pack coming closer... and Carson comes in at my side, Jack behind me. They take me in a bear hug, and I feel so *safe* that I'm certain everything is going to be okay.

Eventually, we pull away from each other and join the rest of the Enclave, ready to take on whatever the next day brings. I feel the weight of responsibility and the fear of the unknown. But I also feel the power of unity and the strength of love.

We will fight for what's right. We will fight for a better future. And we will do it together.



## Zane

**A**LL I WANT IS to go back to our room and fuck Kendra until we're all spent, my pack pleasuring my mate.

But it doesn't work that way in the Enclave.

Kendra hasn't seen her best friends in months, and they insist on all four of us joining everyone in the cantina for drinks. I don't know if it's the best idea to get rowdy before a big op like this, but Kendra gives me those eyes as she asks me to come...and I can't resist the look on her face, and the promise of what comes after.

The cantina is full of people partying or shaking off their nerves—or both—before we all head into the city for tomorrow's events. We make our way through a crowd of people, alphas, betas, and omegas alike, and we end up at the bar with Jade's pack and Olivia's pack. Jade is quietly sipping on some water, glancing around to make sure nobody notices as Rafe stands at her shoulder.

Maddox stays just as close to Kendra as I do...which makes me feel a sort of kinship with him. I may not like the guy, but we both have the same priority to protect our mate.

“So you’re going in with us tomorrow?” Olivia asks Kendra. “I just assumed...I remember you being really tough when we took fencing classes in high school.”

Carson laughs. “You took fencing lessons?”

Kendra shrugs. “I wasn’t always a fugitive. Shit was fancy at Solstice Bay Prep...and the head honchos of the ACB always demanded the best for their kids—even omegas.”

“I don’t mean to be rude, but...why?” Carson asks. “Those guys just let their daughters end up trapped with some rich pack who treats them like trash. It isn’t right to give you an education then rip it all away.”

Kendra hums. “There are all kinds of people in Solstice Bay... and not all the packs are horrible. Just the ones we were promised to.”

“That doesn’t mean they don’t deserve to be taken down,” Olivia says, a note of rage in her voice.

“Definitely not,” Jade says. “*But* we’re going to make sure we don’t kill indiscriminately tomorrow—*right, Rafe?*”

“I mean, I would be if I was going...but I’m not,” Rafe says, wrapping his arms around Jade. “Not gonna leave you here unprotected.”

Jade giggles. “I would have Fallon and Hawk with me.”

“Yeah,” Fallon adds. “What are we, chopped liver?”

“Eh, fuck off,” Rafe growls. “Let me coddle my pregnant mate, okay?”

“Shit, dude—what?” Olivia’s mate Liam says. “Y’all are having a kid?”

“Yup,” Rafe says. “Remember that when you’re out there fighting for us tomorrow—there’s a wholeass future riding on this rebellion.”

“Pressure’s on, I guess,” Maddox says, and I can somehow sense that he *means it*.

Maybe he’s not all bad.

“I’m gonna go down to a less heavily populated stretch of the bar and grab some beers,” I say roughly. “Anyone want one?”

A few people raise their hands, and I kiss Kendra on the forehead before I part ways with them. I don’t want to loom over her time with her friends; she deserves time to herself, and I just feel like a third wheel.

Plus...this is painful.

I worked with the Enclave when the Raft got started, and the last time I was here I was with Eve. She and her brother Diego were old school friends of mine from before the contagion, before the war...and it had been a rough transition.

I remember the first time Eve went through a heat, and we had to lock a door between each other to keep ourselves safe. I’d



always been able to control myself around her, but her heat had made it too dangerous.

Kendra reminds me so much of her.

I'm standing at the bar waiting for my beers when I hear a familiar voice beside me, a voice I haven't heard in years and didn't think I ever would again. The last time I heard that voice, we were being separated and he was being taken in to ACB custody over his sister's still-warm corpse.

I turn and look at him.

He meets my eye.

"Zane?" he says, his jaw dropping.

I frown and shake my head, barely able to comprehend what I'm seeing. "Diego?"

He forgets about the beer in front of him, and I forget I was supposed to be placing an order, and I'm wrapping him in a big bear hug before I even realize what I'm doing. I legitimately thought he was a goner—that he was just as dead as Eve. But here he is, living and breathing in front of me.

Kendra has brought so much back to me that I thought I'd lost for good.

"Shit man," Diego says, shaking my hand as we pull away from the hug. "I thought you were dead."

"Likewise," I tell him. "Last time I saw you, you were getting trundled off in an ACB van. What the hell happened?"

“Well...I got out for good behavior after feeding them some fake intel,” he says. “And of course, I came right back here.”

I nod. “After Eve...”

“After Eve, I was always going to come back here.” His eyes harden. “So the question is, why didn’t you?”

Shame hits me like a fucking baseball bat, the realization of what an asshole I’ve been hitting home. There’s so much I could have done in the interim.

I gulp.

“I was fucking scared,” I admit. “Eve was gone...I thought *you* were gone—”

“So you gave up the good fight?” he asks. “Shit...you’re a big guy, strong and tough. Imagine what you could have accomplished.”

I didn’t come over expecting to be reamed by a ghost, but here we are. I struggle for the right words, but they completely fail me.

And then a small voice pipes up from beside me.

“If he hadn’t been in exactly the right place at exactly the right time, he wouldn’t have been there to help me,” Kendra says.

She extends her hand with a pointed stare.

“Kendra Morrison,” she says. “Zane is my mate. And he saved my life.”

Diego looks from me to Kendra as he takes her hand, shaking it in surprise. “I uh...sorry, did you say Morrison?”

“Yeah,” she says. “You may have heard of me? I killed my dad and I’ve been on the run ever since...?”

“Of course I’ve heard of you,” he says. “And Zane—you saved her life?”

“This is going to sound bad, but not on purpose,” I say, my voice softening as I look over at my beautiful mate. “She showed up at my tattoo parlor and I had to help her. The mating thing...it was an accident.”

“I read your sister’s journal,” Kendra says, looking at Diego. “She really loved you.”

Diego’s face falls, and his eyes sparkle. He’s a big guy, so it’s jarring to see him like this...and I didn’t even realize the journal was still there, hidden somewhere in Eve’s old room.

“Do you still have it?” I ask.

Kendra nods, her eyes sparkling as she looks up at me. “I put it in our backpacks before we came here. If you still have mine...then yeah. Eve’s journal is in there.”

“Why didn’t you tell me about it?” I ask.

Kendra bites her lip. “It seemed personal. I read it to occupy myself while I was in that room, and well...I don’t know. It seemed like it would hurt too much to talk about.”

Diego nods. “It’s an old wound, but it still hurts like a motherfucker.”

“So...anyway,” Kendra says. “What I’m trying to say is that Zane is a good guy. He saved my life...and I love him. And I

think Eve would be proud, given that her name has become somewhat of a code word among omegas.”

My brows go up. “It has?”

Kendra nods. “Yeah—when we go into certain tattoo parlors for claiming marks, we tell them that we have an appointment with Eve. She’s like...an icon, honestly. I just never knew who she really was until now.”

Diego’s mouth twists into a sad smile. “I still miss her so much, dude...but she would be happy for you.”

“And tomorrow, we’re all gonna make her proud,” Kendra says. “Right?”

I nod.

“Absolutely right.”



## Carson

I CAN'T BELIEVE JACK fucking Maddox was the key to unlocking this whole plan.

For months, we've been placing units of Enclave troops around Solstice Bay, waiting for our moment to strike. We have people in every tattoo parlor in the city, in every piercing shop, every bar and back alley and brothel. People are eager to get out from under ACB rule, and we just needed the intel to get us into ACB HQ to destroy them from the inside.

But if Maddox is being legit—if he's really given us Ramsey?—then we're golden.

We're going to take them down.

Which means that everything is riding on him *actually* wanting to protect Kendra.

We take boats out from the Raft toward Solstice Bay, coasting around ACB patrols and making sure we aren't seen.

As we approach the city, the salty sea air fills my lungs, and my heart races with anticipation.

This is it.

The moment we've been waiting for.

I glance over to Maddox, who's standing at the helm of the boat, his jaw set in a determined line. He's a wild card, that's for sure, but we need him. Without him, we wouldn't have been able to get this far.

And I have to trust that Kendra really is the insurance we need to make this happen—that Maddox is more interested in protecting her than anything else.

As we near the shore, I see the familiar neon lights of Solstice Bay's downtown district. The place is a cesspool of crime and debauchery, but it's also where we'll find ACB HQ.

I turn to my team, the Enclave soldiers who have become my family over the years. They're all equipped with the latest weapons and gear, ready to take down any ACB agents that cross our path. Kendra is here with us, decked out in tactical gear and carrying a weapon, Zane at her shoulder.

"Alright, people," I say, addressing my team. "This is it. We're going to hit their HQ hard and fast, and we're going to go in and capture Ramsey. The goal is to put pressure on him to call an election *right away*—and to install one of our allies as the new head of government. By the time the day is over... Solstice Bay will be on its way to democracy for the first time in decades."

The others nod. There's not much to say; I'm sure they're all getting sick of my inspiration speeches. But that's what I'm

good at, and I just want to ensure our success...

...and hide the fact that I'm fucking terrified.

We dock the boats at a hidden inlet and make our way through the dark, foggy streets. Our intel tells us that the ACB's headquarters is in a supposedly abandoned building, that they've hidden themselves away from us because they *know* how close we are to success. Their new boss—*new* because we killed the old one months ago—is holed up there, and he'll have hostages.

We'll have to be careful.

We don't want any omegas to die in this process.

As we approach, I can feel the tension building between my shoulder blades. This is it; there's no turning back now.

Maddox leads the way, his eyes scanning the area for any ACB agents. I stay close to him with Zane and Kendra, our pack sticking together. We're going to be the tip of the spear here, and I'm so scared our little family is already going to be broken apart.

"Are we close?" I whisper to Maddox.

"Yeah," he says. "Unless they've moved...which I hope to fucking God they haven't."

"And what if they have?" Zane asks.

"Then we go back to the drawing board," I say.

"We won't have to," Kendra adds. "I know we're getting this done today."



Somewhere else in the city, an explosion goes off...then another. That will be our satellite times, working hard to provide a distraction while we take on Ramsey.

“It’s here,” Maddox says, gesturing at a door. “Let’s do this.” We move in silence, our steps as light as possible as we get into position to burst in. The building is a tall, abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of the city. The windows are boarded up, and the door is rusted shut.

But Maddox seems confident...and I’m starting to really trust Maddox.

Not just because of Kendra, but because I’m certain our priorities are aligned.

Maddox pulls out a keycard and scans it at the door, but it doesn’t budge. I glance over to Kendra and Zane, who are watching our backs. They’re both nervous, but determined. They know what’s at stake.

“Shit,” Maddox curses. “They’ve locked me out...and there’s a good chance they flagged my pass.”

“Why?” Kendra asks.

“My partner suspected I was about to switch sides,” he growls.

“I guess they confirmed it when you and I escaped to the Raft.”

“Your partner?”

As if on cue, a voice flickers over the intercom by the door.

“Well, hi there, Maddox,” a man’s voice says. “Fancy meeting you here.”

Maddox grimaces, but stays in character, the rest of us concealed in the shadows. “What the hell, Barnes?” he says. “You gonna let me in or what? I have valuable information about the Enclave.”

There’s a pause, and then the voice crackles back over the intercom. “Valuable information, huh? Well, I’ll be the judge of that. Come on up, Maddox.”

Maddox looks over at us, his expression grim. “Stay sharp,” he whispers. “We don’t know what we’re walking into.”

“I feel like this is a trap,” I mutter from the corner.

Maddox shrugs. “But we’re in...aren’t we?”

He scans his keycard again, and this time the door unlocks with a click. We have a choice here—to stay safe and go back to the Raft, or to go inside and see if we can actually defeat the ACB.

And we can’t wait any longer, as evidenced by the fact that Kendra walks in right behind Maddox.

Here goes nothing.

We follow him up a set of stairs and into a dimly-lit hallway. The walls are covered in old, peeling paint, and the air smells like mold and old cigarette smoke. This feels more like the ACB I heard about when I was young—before I joined the Enclave, when they were just a paramilitary group taking omegas captive during the Control War. It reminds me that all

they are is a group of alpha supremacists, dangerously committed to keeping everyone else under their thumb.

As we make our way down the hallway, Maddox leading the way, I can't help but feel like we're walking into a trap. The thought of being captured and held by the ACB is terrifying... not for me, but because I know it would be torture for Kendra. I look over to my mate, who seems to be just as nervous as I am. Zane, on the other hand, is gripping his weapon tightly and scanning the area. He's ready for whatever comes our way.

Suddenly, we hear footsteps coming from the end of the hallway, and Maddox gestures for us to hide in a nearby room. We quickly squeeze inside, closing the door behind us just as a group of ACB agents walk by. They're heavily armed based on what I can hear from the clink of their gear, and I can feel my heart pounding in my chest. I glance over at Kendra, who looks like she's about to panic.

"Stay calm," Maddox whispers, his hands on her shoulders. "We can do this. We just have to get to Ramsey...and this place is never that well-protected."

"But they know we're inside," Kendra whispers. "What about the omegas? What if he kills them?"

Zane grits his teeth. "We won't let him."

We wait for the sound of the ACB agents' footsteps to fade away before Maddox cautiously peeks out of the room. He signals for us to follow him, and we proceed down the hallway

once again. The tension in the air is palpable, and every nerve in my body is on edge.

We turn a corner and come face to face with a group of heavily armed ACB agents. They immediately raise their weapons, and we do the same. For a moment, we just stare each other down, neither side wanting to make the first move.

But then, all hell breaks loose.

Bullets whizz past our heads, and we return fire. The sound of gunfire echoes through the hallway, and I can hear Maddox shouting orders to Kendra and Zane. We maneuver ourselves into a defensive position, providing cover for each other as we continue to exchange fire with the agents.

My heart is pounding in my chest as I take out an ACB agent who was about to get the drop on Maddox. He turns and gives me a feral grin. “Well, thanks,” he mutters.

“Does *that* make up for the torture?” I ask.

He laughs. “Not quite yet, bud.”

I can feel the adrenaline coursing through me, and I’m grateful for the training the Enclave has given me. We dodge and weave around the enemy, and I feel a pang of admiration as I watch Kendra fight like the best of us. There are only a small group of us—our squads have split up, some to go to operations, some to the weapons cache—but we manage just fine.

And then, as suddenly as it started, it stops.

The ACB agents are either dead or have retreated, and we're left standing in the middle of the hallway, guns at the ready. Maddox gestures for us to follow him, and we make our way to a door at the end of the hallway.

"This is it," he says, his voice low. "Ramsey should be behind this door."

Kendra nods, her jaw set in determination. "Let's do this."

We breach the door, guns drawn and ready for anything. But what we find inside is...unexpected. Ramsey is sitting behind a large desk, a smug grin on his face as he twirls a pen in his hand.

And behind him?

Five omegas against a wall...each with a gun to their head in the hands of five ACB agents.

I can practically feel the way that Kendra's shoulders drop, the way her heart pounds. She won't hurt those women...and neither will I. Ramsey knows exactly how to push our buttons.

I step forward, trying to remain calm despite the situation. "Ramsey, what is this? Let them go. We're not here to hurt anyone; we just want reform."

Ramsey just chuckles. "Oh, I know exactly why you're here, Carson Connolly. I've heard a lot about you...and Agent Maddox brought you right to me."

I don't bother looking back at him. It's a lie; it *has to be*. This was always about Kendra, not me...

“Don’t play games, Ramsey,” Maddox mutters. “They know who I am and what I stand for.”

“And what’s that?” Ramsey says.

Maddox grins. “A fucking psychopath,” he says.

Then he leaps forward.

It’s enough to distract the agents with their guns on the hostages, and Kendra is the next one to act. She sprints toward the agents and jumps on one of them, stabbing him in the neck with the kind of brutality that shocked me—and reminds me she had to kill her own father to escape the ACB in the first place.

I open fire on the other agents, taking out two of them before they even have a chance to react. Zane is right behind me, his movements fluid and precise as he takes out the remaining agent. Maddox is grappling with Ramsey, and I can see the sweat on his forehead as he tries to gain the upper hand.

I run over to the omegas, quickly checking to make sure they’re okay along with Kendra. They’re all shaking, but unharmed. I let out a sigh of relief and then turn back to see Maddox pinning Ramsey to the ground, his gun trained on him.

“Give it up, Ramsey,” Maddox growls. “It’s over.”

Ramsey doesn’t answer, just glares up at Maddox with a look of pure hatred. I can see it in his eyes—he’s not going down without a fight. But then, suddenly, an alarm sounds from the computer in front of him...then more.

Gunshots ring out elsewhere in the base, too.

I look to the wall to my left and see a map of Solstice Bay, green lights turning to red everywhere there's an ACB base. Those are our Enclave forces, taking the city over one base at a time.

"What the hell?" Ramsey says. "How...how did you do this?"

Maddox digs his gun into Ramsey's jaw. "How do you think? Keep people down long enough, and they fight back."

Kendra comes to stand over him, looking over Maddox's shoulder. "That's right," she says. "You pushed us too hard."

His eyes widen in recognition. I don't think he's met Kendra before...but he's seen her face. Everyone in the ACB has.

"You fucking omegas, thinking you can run the world," he snarls. "You'll doom us all."

"No," Kendra says, her eyes darting over to the former ACB agent. "You're the only one here that's doomed. Jack, kill him."

And before I can do anything to stop them, Maddox pulls the trigger.





## Kendra

**T**HE MINUTES AFTER I order Jack to kill the leader of the ACB are chaotic.

The silence lasts for a few seconds...then one of the girls screams and starts to sob—not because she’s sad, I think, but because she’s panicking. The view isn’t pretty, Ramsey’s eyes open as he bleeds out on the floor.

Jack stands up from where he had squatted over Ramsey, looking over at me. “It’s done,” he says.

*I know.*

It gives me the same sensation as I got when I killed my father...this feeling that the world is better off.

“Kendra, what the fuck?” Carson asks as he strides forward.

“He was our leverage...shit, *shit*—”

“I’m sorry,” I gasp out as he comes and takes my shoulder. “I didn’t think, it just...it just happened. I couldn’t take him talking like that.”

“You really think the ACB gives a shit about one man?” Jack scoffs. “Cut off one head, they just grow another. I thought that was the whole point of attacking every base at once.”

“This could mean all-out war in the city,” Carson mutters. “Shit...”

I take a step back and look at the console where Ramsey was sitting when we came in, where his desk chair is on its side with the wheels still rolling. There are controls here for the emergency broadcast system—a way to send a message to each and every person in the city, on their cell phones, on the loudspeakers all over Solstice Bay. I’m sure Carson intends on using it for some motivational speech, but I have a better idea.

I grab the chair and sit down, then I pull up the emergency broadcast commands. Carson is so distracted with Ramsey’s corpse—and arguing with Jack—that Zane is the only one who sees me. I meet his eyes, and he seems to realize what he’s doing just before he nods.

I pick up the microphone and speak into it, dictating a message to send as text as well as broadcasting all over the city.

“Omegas of Solstice Bay,” I announce. “This is Eve.”

Carson turns around slowly and stares at me, eyes wide. Jack gives me a surprised smirk, huffing out a silent laugh.

And Zane...his eyes are shining with pride.

“Wherever you are,” I continue. “Whatever you’re doing... you’ve probably noticed the chaos breaking out all over the

city. The Enclave is finally acting to overthrow the ACB, and we need your help.”

“Kendra—” Carson starts, taking a step forward—but Jack puts his hand on the revolutionary’s chest.

“Let her do it,” Jack mutters.

“Open your doors and find weapons if you can,” I continue. “Or hide if you need to. You’ve been told your whole life that you’re too weak to fight, but...I believe in you. You are *strong*. And wherever you are, Enclave fighters are en route to help you.”

I pause for a moment, taking a deep breath before continuing. “We will not let the ACB take this city. We will not let them take our freedom. This is our home, and we will fight for it. So join us, Omegas of Solstice Bay. We need you now more than ever.”

I cut the transmission, feeling a surge of adrenaline coursing through my veins. Carson and Jack are both staring at me, but for once, I don’t care. I know what I’ve done, and I know that it’s the right thing to do.

“We need to move,” I say, standing up from the chair. “The ACB will be coming for us soon.”

“Right,” Carson nods, his expression still stunned. “Let’s go, everyone.”

I feel a hand on my shoulder, and I whip around to find that it’s one of the omegas Ramsey had captive. She holds a gun in her hands, her grip steady as she nods at me.

“I’m with you,” she says.

I swallow hard. “What’s your name?”

“Naomi,” she replies. “And you’re Eve?”

“No,” I say, giving her a sad smile. “I’m just Kendra. We’re *all* Eve.”

We quickly make our way out of the base, but as we step into the bright sunlight, I can feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. The fate of the city now rests on us, and I can’t help but wonder if I’m truly ready for it. But then I look at the faces of the people around me, the ones who have been oppressed and silenced for so long, and I know that I will do everything in my power to fight for them.

As we move through the streets, I can see the fear and uncertainty in people’s eyes, but I can also see a glimmer of hope. They’re starting to believe that they can make a difference, that they can stand up against the ACB and fight for their freedom.

And that’s all we need to start a revolution.



## Zane

**W**E WATCH THE ACB'S strongholds fall like dominoes from the safety of an Enclave safehouse.

After we took their HQ—and killed Ramsey—we left to regroup with the others, taking out as many ACB agents as we could along the way. Their hold has been loosening on the city for months, ever since Kendra's friends started working with the Enclave, but this was the extra push we needed.

They never expected the ACB to be taken down by three little omegas...but here we are.

It's quiet in the safehouse, everyone watching the screens with bated breath. We're on the edge of a complete overhaul of our society...and it feels unreal. What makes it even stranger is that *my mate* is responsible; she did this.

Kendra.

*Calling herself Eve.*

My old friend would be so proud.

I find Kendra sitting on the rooftop as the sun sets, smoke billowing out over the city, the sound of gunfire less regular now that the Enclave has mostly taken control of Solstice Bay. It's like looking out on another world—a world that's more damaged but less hostile, a world that will one day be safer for omegas like her. I sit next to her and wrap my arm around her, and she leans into my chest.

“It's kind of beautiful, isn't it?” she asks. “The way the fires paint the sky?”

I laugh softly. “Anyone ever tell you that you got a bit of a psycho streak?”

She laughs with me. “Only every single news station that covered my escape when I was on the run.”

“Right...how could I forget?” I chuckle, kissing the top of her head. “Kendra—I wanted to thank you.”

“For what?”

“For keeping Eve's spirit alive,” I tell her. “I know I've said it before, but she would have been so proud. All she ever wanted was to be able to live like we all did before the Great Mutation.”

Kendra sighs. “What was it like?”

“Before?” I pause. “Well...it still had its problems. The way we treat omegas...it's kind of a continuation of what we were already doing, but to an extreme. It wasn't perfect.”

“Is it weird that almost makes me feel better?” she asks. “I don't want to strive for perfection. But if we can improve

things for people like me...that's all I really want."

I nod. "I get that. And remember...it's not your job. You just get to live now."

As we sit there, gazing out over the city, I can't help but feel a sense of pride for Kendra. She's an omega, but she's proven that she's just as strong and capable as any alpha. And now, she's helped bring about a revolution that will change the course of history. It's a powerful feeling, knowing that we've made a difference.

But even as I feel that pride, I can't shake the sense of fear in my gut. The ACB may be on the run, but they're not going to give up without a fight. And as the Enclave takes control, there will be those who resist. It's going to be a long and difficult road ahead.

I turn to Kendra and take her hand. "Are you scared?" I ask her.

She looks up at me, her eyes bright with determination. "No," she says firmly. "I'm not scared. I know we're doing the right thing...and I've spent way too much of my life running."

I nod in understanding. Kendra's whole life has been about survival, about surviving her father, then hiding and running from the oppressive forces that sought to control her. But now, she's done with that life. She's ready to take a stand, to fight for what's right, even if it means putting herself in danger.

And hopefully we'll be able to settle down one day.

Somewhere quiet with our strange little family.



“That’s good,” I say. “Because this fight isn’t over yet. We still have a lot of work to do.”

Kendra smiles at me, her eyes sparkling. “I know,” she says. “But I’m ready for it.”

I lean in and kiss her, feeling the warmth of her lips against mine. In this moment, I don’t care about the chaos raging around us, the danger lurking on every corner. All that matters is Kendra, and the love I feel for her. She’s my mate, my partner in this fight. And together, we’ll face whatever challenges come our way.

As we break apart, I hear a noise behind us, and we both turn to find Jack and Carson walking out the rooftop door toward us. Carson takes a seat on the other side of Kendra, while Jack stands behind her and leans down to kiss her forehead.

“We were looking for you,” Carson says. “Everyone is starting to relax...and even to celebrate. Olivia just showed up and she wants to talk to you about what’s to come.”

Kendra looks over at Carson, squeezing his hand.

“In a little bit,” she says. “Right now I just...I just want to enjoy this moment for the four of us.”

“Me too,” Carson smiles. “And Kendra...I’m sorry I questioned you. I should have known you were going to make the right call.”

“I’m sorry for stealing your thunder,” Kendra says with an awkward grin. “I’m sure you had something planned.”

“After Ramsey, I really didn’t,” he says. “I never would have called on the city’s omegas like that—and from what I’ve heard, they’ve been a big part of our victory.”

Kendra nods, beaming with pride. “They’re amazing,” she says. “And they deserve just as much credit as anyone else.”

Jack leans down and kisses her cheek. “We’re all proud of you, Kendra,” he says. “You’ve done something incredible.”

Kendra’s smile falters for a moment, and I can see a hint of sadness in her eyes. “I just wish Eve could have been here to see it,” she says softly.

I take her hand and squeeze it. “I know,” I say. “But she’s here in spirit, Kendra. And you’ve done her proud.”

Kendra nods, taking a deep breath. “I know,” she says. “I just...I wish she was here to see it with her own eyes.”

There’s a moment of silence as we all sit there, lost in our own thoughts. The city is still in chaos, but for this brief moment, we can forget about what’s to come.

What matters is that the biggest fight of our lives is over.

And it’s time for the Enclave to reshape the world.



## Epilogue

**W**E WATCH AS THE city changes over the next few days...as we take our first steps into what used to be New York City Hall. This is where we're going to establish the new government.

Not that we have any say in that. There are others who will take the reins now—activists working with the Enclave. Like Carson said, our crew is more the burn it down type than build it back.

And now...now we decide where we'll make our home in Solstice Bay.

That's how we find ourselves going back to Eve's Apple.

Only a few weeks have passed, but it feels like ages since I first stepped foot in Zane's shop, barefoot and bleeding and begging for his help. Everything in the shop has changed; the ACB ransacked it looking for us when we escaped, and it's a complete mess. I squeeze Zane's hand as he stares at the life he built, smashed up and ruined.

I know we can rebuild...just this tiny little space for us.

The four of us set to work right away, cleaning up the debris left behind by the ACB. It's hard work, but it feels good to be doing something productive. Zane is methodical, sorting through the wreckage and deciding what can be salvaged and what needs to be thrown away. I catch sight of Carson and Jack bonding, too...and that makes me happy, because I want my pack to get along. I know that Zane and Carson will come around to Jack; he can be a real pain in the ass, but he's got some really great qualities too.

As we work, we talk about our plans for the future. Carson wants to turn Eve's Apple into a headquarters for our crew, a place where we can gather and plan our next moves. I suggest making it a haven for omegas who want to get a synthetic claiming mark—because packing up should be a *choice*, not a requirement. There are going to be lots of people out there—women, and the rare male omega—who will still seek refuge.

We can be that place for them.

But first things first...we need a bigger bed.

A nest.

After a night out with Olivia and Jade, celebrating the end—for now—of the ACB, I come home to find the house immaculate, the smell of food wafting from the apartment behind the shop. Jack meets me at the door, where he's smoking a cigarette that he stamps out as I approach.

“Hey, sweetheart,” he says, taking my hand with a sly smile.  
“We missed you.”

I raise my eyebrows and glance down at the cigarette butt. “I thought you were going to quit,” I tell him.

He shrugs. “Starting now...I’ll try. Just need something else to do with my lips and hands.”

I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him, his fingers splaying out across my lower back. “I think we can figure that out,” I whisper.

“Come inside,” he says, his voice low and full of promise.  
“We have a surprise for you.”

I laugh as he pulls me through the door, where I find candles lit in every corner, the lights low and voices coming from the kitchen. “You three weren’t fighting, were you?” I chide.

Jack laughs and shakes his head. “Not at all—actually, we’re all pretty excited.”

“Is that so?”

“Yep,” he nods. “Zane’s cooking a nice meal for the pack, and then...”

I step through the door and my jaw drops as I look around, Jack letting go of my hand. It feels like a *date*—like the kind of courtship I never really got when I went on the run. I heard there were packs that did stuff like this, but I didn’t know it was real...

...until now.

Carson's eyes light up when he sees us come through the door, and he comes over to put his hands on my hips and kiss me. I can already feel my body stirring in response to the three of them; I've been off suppressants for a few days, because I want to experience my heat with my pack. And it *seems* like the suppressants are wearing off...because this is just dinner, but I'm already feeling practically feral.

"Hey, spitfire," Carson hums against my lips. "You ready for dinner?"

I'm ready for *something*—maybe dinner, or maybe... something else. But I nod.

"Starved," I say.

Zane comes over and places a kiss on my forehead, then we all sit down for our meal.

As we eat, the conversation flows easy between us. Even though we're all exhausted from the work we've done since the rebellion, it feels good to be surrounded by my pack. I catch myself stealing glances at each of them, wondering how I got so lucky to have all three of these amazing men in my life.

"Jack said you had a surprise for me," I say, cocking my head as I put my fork down after eating a delicious plate of spaghetti. "Was it the dinner, or...?"

"Not the dinner," Zane says, with the same heated promise I heard in Carson's voice.

“Yeah...we finally found a way to remodel the bedroom,” Carson says, glancing at Jack. He stands up and helps me to my feet, and I feel Jack join us with his hands on my hips, his cock already hard and pressing into my lower back. “You wanna see it?”

I nod eagerly, licking my lips as the three of them surround me and we move to the bedroom. Zane’s space was beautiful before, filled with his artwork...but this?

It’s amazing.

There are candles all over the place, even more of Zane’s artwork hanging on the wall and little vines and flowers painted along with them. And at the center of the room is the biggest bed I’ve ever seen, covered in blankets and surrounded by velvety pillows in various jewel tones, a new frame built around it that makes it look so cozy I just want to sink into it.

I bite my lip as I see a flash of the four of us there together, and I gasp slightly when I think about acting out those wicked fantasies.

Zane puts his hands in his pockets, his whole body tensed like he’s hanging on by a thread. “I thought...bold colors for you, because that’s who you are to me. Various textures...”

“It’s amazing,” I whisper.

“You like it?” Jack asks from behind me, his teeth grazing my pulse.

“I love it,” I reply.



Carson comes around in front of me as Zane circles toward the bed, shrugging off his shirt and looking back at me with the most come hither eyes I've ever seen on him.

"I think it's about time we break it in," Carson says.

All three of them are purring, their chests rumbling as I stumble forward with a soft shove from Jack. My pussy throbs at the way they look at me—predatory, like all three of these huge alphas are about to leap on me and devour me.

This...this is my heat.

And my men are about to claim me.

There's an ache in my core that's screaming for their touch. I don't even care about the pain—I just want them to mark me, claim me, fuck me.

"Fuck, I can't wait to get inside you," Jack says, growing more and more impatient with each second that goes by. He tugs at his clothes, his belt falling to the floor with a clatter. "Watching you take that alpha cock is going to be everything."

My eyes widen at the thought of all three of them at once, but instead of feeling overwhelmed, I feel my body hum. I haven't had a chance to really be with them altogether since we took Solstice Bay—it's all been political conversations and rebuilding and organizing our forces, when all I want to do is give myself to these men.

Any worries slip away as Carson undresses in front of me, unsnapping his jeans and shrugging them down over his muscular thighs. I gasp at the sight of his cock—it's so hard

it's practically pulsing, veins bulging along the sides, his knot swollen with desire. My mouth waters as I watch a bead of his precum emerge from the thick head of his cock, and my head spins as I imagine how one day, one of these men will get me pregnant.

Jack spins me around and backs me toward the bed, Carson catching me and Zane taking my elbow and pulling me closer. Jack growls as he yanks my shirt off and tosses it to the floor, then moves to my pants, unzipping them and dragging them down over my ass. I glance back to find Zane already naked, lying in the pillows, waiting for me to sit on his hard, huge cock.

They've already talked about it, I'm sure. The way these three are together, they've *negotiated* who will fuck me first, which way, and how hard. They know just how they're gonna use me and who gets their turn first.

And because Zane had me first...because he was the one I fell in love with—he's already waiting.

Carson takes me by one elbow and Jack by the other, and they lower me down onto Zane's cock in reverse cowgirl, Zane groaning as I take his full length all the way down to the knot. I don't take him inside just yet—I want everyone to get their turn before I'm stuck with one of them inside me, even though I know it would feel better for both of us if I had a thick knot in my pussy. Zane's hands clench my hips as I lick Carson's cock, my eyes meeting his, and Jack undresses in a hurry.

I take Carson's cock into my mouth, groaning as I suck it down, my body on fire with desire for all three of them. Carson threads his fingers through my hair, and I lift my head up to catch his eyes, looking up at him with wet lips. He guides me back down onto Zane's cock, moving my hips in a gentle rhythm that drives Zane absolutely fucking wild. I can feel his desire growing with each thrust.

"I love watching you take his cock," Jack growls into my ear, on my other side now, his fingers on my clit. "Every inch of him in that sweet little hole."

I moan as I rock back against Zane, his hands clenching my hips to hold me still as my body aches to be fucked. The thought of fucking each of them drives me wild—it's like there's a full pack inside me, and that drives me wilder. I whimper softly as Zane starts to talk, his rough voice almost making me come.

"That's right, baby girl," he growls. "Take my cock. Ride it... use me."

"Fuck," Carson gasps. "She's sucking my cock so fucking good."

"That's because she's a good fucking girl, our little omega mate," Jack rasps in my ear, playing frantically with my clit. "Isn't that right, sweetheart?"

Zane's fingers dig into my skin as he tenses up, and his eyes meet mine in warning. "Kendra, I'm gonna fill that tight little pussy of yours with my cum. I'm going to make you take every drop."

I moan again, rocking my hips, and Zane's hands hold my waist tight as he starts to come. I feel his cock throb between my legs, and the dragging sensation of his cock rubbing against my walls feels like nothing I've ever felt before. He grunts and growls and I keep riding him, pushing myself back until his cock is deep inside me, his hot cum flooding inside me.

I don't get a break as Carson pulls me off him and tosses me to my back, boxing me in, his cock sliding in right away. I'm still coming when he starts to fuck me hard—the golden boy of the revolution fucking railing me until I see stars, Zane's cum easing the way, every thrust making me gasp.

I moan and cry out, clawing at the sheets, and Carson growls as he works me over, my slick pussy clenching around his cock as I come again. "Fuck yeah, spitfire," Carson growls. "You like it when I fuck you like this? When we all put our cocks in you?"

"Yes," I groan. "Yes, please...I want more."

"Oh, we're gonna give it to you all night," Jack's voice comes from above, full of dark promise. My bleary eyes catch sight of him jerking himself off, getting himself ready for me, and on the other side of me, I see Zane doing the same.

I want them all inside me.

I want to be covered in their cum.

I don't even know how many orgasms I've had by the time Carson lets out a low, guttural moan and starts to come inside

me. I arch my back as he yanks my hips into his lap, not knotting me, but burying himself up to the knot.

Soon...soon they'll all be inside me, filling me.

I can feel it.

Zane pulls me into his arms and rolls me onto my side, and I feel Jack at my back, his hard cock pressing against my ass, his lips on my neck as he groans, kissing me.

“You ready to take me, Kendra?” he growls into my ear. “Thought you might want to be fucked in the ass...would you like that? You're so slick I'll slide right in...”

I gaze into Zane's eyes as my nipples graze against his muscled, hairy chest, and he gives me a downright wicked smile.

“I wanna see your face when he fucks your tight hole,” Zane says, his dirty words making me gasp as Jack plays with my ass. “The way you fucking scream...and then maybe we'll fuck you at the same time.”

“Fuck yeah,” Jack rasps. “You ready, sweetheart?”

“Oh yes,” I moan, my mind spinning with how full I'm gonna be, all three of them at once.

“Then get ready to come again,” Carson growls from where he's kneeling near my feet, stroking himself.

Jack strokes his cock against my ass, and I moan as I feel how wet I am, the slickness coating my cheeks and thighs, and I

hear Jack groan from behind me as I feel the heat of his cock, his precum warming my skin.

I don't even have time to think about it before I feel the blunt head of Jack's cock pushing against my tight asshole, and I gasp as he paces himself, pushing inside. I arch my back as the head of his cock fills my ass, the pressure intense as he pushes inch after inch inside me, and I cry out as I feel my hole stretching to accommodate his size.

"God, that's tight," Jack groans into my ear. "So fucking tight, sweetheart. Come on and ride me."

I move slightly, but I'm still getting used to the pressure. Jack pushes in deeper, shifting for the perfect fit. Zane takes my face in his hands and meets my eyes.

"You're doing so good, baby girl," he growls. "Now...you need to ride Jack's cock if you want me in your pussy. And then...we'll sit you up so you can suck Carson's cock. Would you like that?"

"Yes," I sob in pleasure as Jack starts to thrust in and out, my slick making it easy to fuck me from behind. "Yes, yes..."

"Maddox, get her up," Zane orders hoarsely. "All fours... we're gonna fuck her and knot her all at once."

*Oh my God, oh my fucking God...*

Jack grabs me, and I cry out as he picks me up and I feel the surreal feeling of being supported by him as I'm tossed up into the air. He holds me up, and I'm impaled from behind and in front—Zane's cock in my pussy and Jack's cock in my ass,

and it's so fucking good. I let out a long, primal scream as they both fuck me, my body taken, my body owned by them, and I feel my body give way as another orgasm rips through me.

And Carson is there, looming over me in the candlelight, his blond hair lit like a halo, his cock at my lips.

I take it in just as Zane's knot slips inside and he anchors himself into me.

*Fuck, fuck...*

Jack fucks my ass harder, and he reaches a hand around to rub my clit as Zane fucks my pussy, and it all feels like a drug, like a high, like I've never felt before. I'm loud, I'm panting, I'm crying out as they fuck me, and Jack holds me up.

"That's it, angel," Jack growls. "You're so fucking full of cock right now, and you're fucking beautiful. Sweet, bold girl, you're taking all three of us like a fucking pro..."

I'm coming again, my body wracked with pleasure, and as I'm crying out and gasping for breath, as my vision blurs and my whole body feels like it's on fire, I feel Jack shudder behind me and let out a roar as he comes inside my ass, his knot finally sliding home.

He stays there. Stays there, coming and coming, and the pressure is so deliciously intense that I can't stop licking Carson's gorgeous cock.

I hear Zane's deep, primal growl as my pussy clenches hard around his knot, and my ass is gripping Jack's cock like a vice, and it feels so fucking good I want to die.

I'm so full, and they're all inside me, and I'm overwhelmed with the feeling of being with them, and I let out a long moan as I tip over the edge, my orgasm shattering everything in its path as I feel Zane finally give into it, and he lets out a low, desperate growl as he comes, filling me up with cum. The sight of it must push Carson over the edge, too, because he's suddenly coming in my throat, his cum sliding past my lips.

I feel so dirty...like their queen and their whore.

Zane eases me to my side, still knotted inside me, Jack at my back. Carson lays his head down on my thigh, stroking my skin to try and ease the pressure just a little...but I love it.

And I'm not even satisfied yet.

Carson will get another turn...they'll all get another turn. We'll break in this bed for my first heat, and I'm going to love every second of it.

*This* is the future.

Not running, hiding, fighting for my life.

Just wrapped in the arms of my alphas, living happily ever after with my pack.

The rogue ACB agent.

The golden revolutionary.

The steadfast tattoo artist.

The loves of my life.





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## Author's Note

I have to admit that I never expected this series to reach as many people as it did, so I wanted to thank everyone who's read *The Enclave* so far. There are so many amazing omegaverse novels out there, and it's enormously flattering that you chose to read mine!

I have so much more planned in the Inkverse, so keep your eyes open for a few standalones, and a brand new slow-build whychoose omegaverse series in Spring of 2024.

And most of all, thank you so much for sticking with me, learning with me, and falling in love with this world and these characters!

Love,





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**CLARISSA BRIGHT**

**Genre:** Dark Romance

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** Dark, WhyChoose

**My Books in One Sentence:** Smart heroines with complex plots and heroes who like kissing each other.



**L.E. ELDRIDGE**

**Genre:** Paranormal Romance

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** Fated Mates, Forced Proximity

**My Books in One Sentence:** Fated mate romances with high heat and a dash of forced proximity.



**DAHLIA KAYNE**

**Genre:** Contemporary Romance

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** grumpy/sunshine and billionaire romance

**My Books in One Sentence:** High heat contemporary romance with possessive men and a dash of breeding kink



**LONDON LENNOX**

**Genre:** Omegaverse

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** Tatted Heroes, Accidental Heat, Instalove

**My Books in One Sentence:** No plot, just vibes...and lots of heat.



**HAZEL MONROE**

**Genre:** Romantic Comedy

**Heat Level:** Low

**Favorite Tropes:** Workplace Romance, Haters to Lovers,  
FMCs who want to have it all.

**My Books in One Sentence:** That hot co-worker who you're  
pretty sure hates you actually has a thing for you.

·♥·♥·♥·♥·♥·

**CHLOE PARKER**

**Genre:** Sci-Fi Romance

**Heat Level:** Medium

**Favorite Tropes:** Kickass FMCs, Virgin Alien Heroes,  
Enemies to Lovers

**My Books in One Sentence:** I played Mass Effect and I've  
been thirsty for aliens ever since.

·♥·♥·♥·♥·♥·

**WILLOW RAYNE**

**Genre:** Rockstar Romance

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** M/M in the Polycule, Guys Who Are Good  
With Their Hands

**My Books in One Sentence:** The show you go to where the  
guys are all super hot...but you get to get with the band.

·♥·♥·♥·♥·♥·

**AVERY SNOW**

**Genre:** Smalltown Romance

**Heat Level:** High

**Favorite Tropes:** Pregnancy, Found Family, Blue Collar  
MMCs

**My Books in One Sentence:** A big helping of Hallmark with  
a dash of breeding kink.



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