



CAPTIVE

SCARLET BLACKWELL



Captive
by Scarlet Blackwell

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Chapter One

Gabriel Black cursed as the toaster coughed up two slices of blackened bread and the smoke alarm immediately kicked in with an ear-piercing shriek. He moved to the French windows, quickly unlocking and drawing them open, emitting a burst of freezing night air, before grabbing a dish towel and wafting it under the smoke alarm vigorously. As he did so, a flash of black registered at the periphery of his vision.

He turned around in surprise just as a figure sidled through the windows, leveling a gun at him.

His mouth dropped open, icy fingers creeping down his back, and not from the cold air. The man was a little shorter than him and not as muscular. He wore a thin shirt and jeans, despite the weather outside being at least ten below, if not more. He was covered with a light dusting of snow. It was on his boots and in the jet-black hair that fell untidily over his face. The face, which was milk-white and startlingly attractive, dominated by huge, jade green eyes and pouting lips, had a few days' worth of dark stubble lining the jaw. The nose and lips were blue with cold. The man trembled violently, his teeth chattering together.

"Knock that off," he snapped at Gabriel, gesturing to the annoying smoke alarm, his accent Southern Californian, like Gabriel's.

Gabriel, numb with shock, did as he was told, wafting the towel again until the alarm went off abruptly, leaving a

sudden silence broken only by the sound of the intruder slamming the windows shut and pocketing the key.

The two men faced each other across the kitchen. "What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Gabriel demanded, brave words considering that the nut job in his house held a gun.

The man moved quickly to him, his face stony. "You don't get to ask questions," he all but sneered. "Upstairs now. I want some dry clothes." He prodded Gabriel hard in the chest with the gun to make his point.

Gabriel turned around and moved woodenly through the living room to the spiral staircase. His mind whirled as he climbed. He was miles from civilization, stuck in the middle of the Alaskan woods. Who exactly was this man and was he going to kill him?

He entered his bedroom and turned around to look at the man, who gestured toward the wardrobe. "Open it," he demanded. "Get me out pants and the thickest sweater you got."

Gabriel did so, choosing jeans and a hooded fleece-lined sweater that he wore when he needed to chop logs for the fire.

"And underwear and socks," the man directed. "I'm wet through."

Gabriel moved to the chest of drawers and got out the items. He was damned if he was going to give away his best boxers, so he gave the intruder some old ones. The man didn't comment, just indicated with his eyes for him to place the lot on the bed.

"Turn around," he commanded. "Don't even think of trying anything because I swear I will shoot you in the head before you can move."

On legs of rubber, Gabriel did as he was told. There were the sounds of the man kicking off his boots, a zip sliding down, the rustle of denim. He waited for the man to dress.

"Back downstairs," he said behind him. "I need a hot drink."

Gabriel turned around. The stranger looked different in Gabriel's own clothes, softer and less intimidating, even though the expression on his face was hostile. "Move!" he demanded when Gabriel did not immediately comply, once more leveling the gun at him.

Gabriel reluctantly led the way back downstairs and moved to the work surface. "Coffee?" he asked coldly.

"Yeah," was the reply. Gabriel drew a mug off the stand and reached for the coffee pot. For a moment he looked at the freshly brewed liquid inside. Could he throw hot liquid over another human being? He wondered. *Yes, he thought, if that man was going to kill me.* But just how big a threat was this man who had invaded his house?

"Don't even fucking think about it," snarled the man suddenly, and Gabriel's dark eyes darted to him in surprise. "Get over here now, pretty boy."

Gabriel glared at him and did as he was told, approaching the man so they stood eye to eye, staring each other down. Gabriel heard the jangle of metal in the man's hand a split second before his wrist was grabbed and a handcuff was locked around it. He opened his mouth in shock as the gun

was pointed at his face and he was shoved backward hard into the radiator and down onto the floor. A moment later, the second cuff was locked around the pipe.

The man smirked mirthlessly, showing perfect white teeth, and moved off toward the coffee machine, filling his cup. The radiator was red-hot. Gabriel tried to sit as far away from it as he could. "You going to tell me what you want?" he demanded.

The man's eyes swung to his. "What I want," he said, "is a meal, a shower, and a warm bed. As for the rest, we'll see how it goes." Their eyes held for a long moment. Gabriel had no idea what he meant by this.

The man pulled some milk from the fridge and splashed it into his coffee. "What the fuck are you doing all the way out here alone anyway?" he demanded, glaring at the other. "Are you some sort of fucking hermit?"

Gabriel returned his steely glance. "I come here a few months a year," he said.

"What for?"

"To write."

"You're a writer?"

"That's generally what writers do," Gabriel could not help saying sarcastically.

"Fuck off," the man spat. "One more crack like that and you'll be picking your teeth up."

Gabriel shut up.

"What's your name?" the other demanded.

"Gabriel," the author replied sullenly.

"Well Gabriel, how much longer are you here for?" the man asked.

"Maybe two months. I've been here a couple of weeks."

"You alone?"

"Yeah."

"You got a cell?"

"No," Gabriel said.

"Liar! Where is it?" The man advanced on him suddenly.

Gabriel started to get to his feet as the man loomed over him, gun trained on him, right hand grabbing at his pockets, patting them down. Gabriel was on one knee, the man bent over him, fingers over the tight denim of one hip. He stared up at the intruder's face, unsettled by how attractive the man was with that pale skin and those luminescent eyes.

"What?" the man demanded when he finished with the front pockets and leaned further over Gabriel, curling an arm around him to pat at his ass, feeling the cell instantly in his back pocket.

"Nothing," Gabriel murmured, lowering his eyes, too aware of the heat of the man against him.

The intruder drew away with his prize in his hand, pocketing it and going back to drink his coffee. "How many people know you're here?" he demanded.

"A few," Gabriel said.

"How many? And who?"

"David, my agent. My friend Jordan and my ... partner."

The man's feline eyes narrowed, noting something amiss in Gabriel's hesitation. "Who's your partner?" he demanded.

"Jack," was Gabriel's reply.

The man stared, disgust curling his lip. "You're a goddamn fag?" he said in disbelief.

Gabriel colored from the neck upward. "You need to take what you want and get the fuck out of my house!" he hissed.

He saw sudden fury overtake the man. He stalked toward Gabriel, leaned down over him and grabbed him by his shoulder-length hair, yanking his head back. Gabriel gave a little hiss of pain. "And you need to shut the fuck up before I put a bullet in you," he spat.

Once more their faces were close together, the gun right against his neck, digging in hard enough to bruise. He saw how the man's green eyes, pupils dilated, perused the depths of his own as though trying hard to read Gabriel's mind.

He let go of him abruptly and moved back once more to drink his coffee. Gabriel remained sitting on the floor. "So how often do these three people contact you?" he asked.

"David will call sporadically," Gabriel said. "He usually waits for me to call him. He knows I don't like to be disturbed. Jordan will call maybe once a week and Jack calls every day."

"Has he called you today?" the man asked quick as a flash.

"Yeah," Gabriel said.

The man nodded as though he were pleased with this. "What do you have to eat?" he asked.

"Look for yourself." Gabriel gestured coldly to the fridge.

The man shot him a poisonous look and yanked open the door. He searched for a moment before pulling out a dish of leftovers from the day before. "What's this?" he demanded, pulling the lid off and sniffing.

"Casserole," Gabriel said. "With tofu."

The man nodded and shoved it into the microwave, twisting the dial around to three minutes. He turned to look at Gabriel, arms folded across his chest.

"Who are you?" Gabriel asked. His ass was beginning to ache from sitting on the kitchen floor. The heat from the radiator was making his skin prickle with sweat.

The man regarded him stonily for a moment, as though debating what to say to him. "Ethan," he said finally.

"What are you, some sort of escaped prisoner?" Gabriel asked.

Ethan's eyes narrowed. "Yeah," he replied, "something like that. You ask way too many questions."

"Are you leaving tomorrow?"

"What did I just say?" Ethan growled. "Enough with the questions. I'm the one with the gun. I'll stay as long as I goddamn want."

Gabriel regarded him with disgust. The man's face had lost that blue tinge, but he noticed the intruder still shivering as though unable to get warm. He felt a strange pang of pity and berated himself furiously. *This man has come armed into your home, stealing your clothes and food and no doubt your bed tonight and what? You want to give him a cuddle to warm him up?* Sometimes Gabriel was way too soft for his own good.

Ethan turned away to the microwave, stopping it, plunging a fork into the food, stirring it and lifting it to his mouth. Gabriel watched his pink tongue dart out and lick at the fork delicately. An odd sensation went through him. There was no denying he and Jack had been on the rocks when he had left

and it had been weeks since he had had sex, but he was starting to be way too attracted to this bully who had forced himself into his house. He cursed himself and his dick. *This man could shoot you dead at any minute, he thought, and you're looking at his tongue and thinking of what it would be like around your cock?*

Ethan took his plate to the table in the center of the room and pulled out a chair. He ate a couple of mouthfuls slowly, and then looked up at Gabriel. "You make this yourself?" he asked.

"Yeah," was Gabriel's reply.

"It's good," Ethan said. "I thought you would be a shit cook when I saw your attempt at the toast." He gestured to the charred bread still lodged in the toaster. "So are you a famous writer, Gabriel?"

Gabriel shrugged. "Not really. I sell enough to get by."

"What sort of stuff do you write?"

"It varies. Thrillers, horror, romance...."

"Gay romance?" Ethan asked slyly with a smirk.

"Not usually. I'm not gay. I like women too," Gabriel said defensively.

"I see," Ethan said scornfully. "Not bothered which hole you stick it in?"

Gabriel flushed angrily and lowered his eyes to the ground.

Ethan laughed. "How long have you been with your ... *partner?*" Again the word was derisive and Gabriel bristled with rage.

"Two years," he said.

"Two years," Ethan said in contemplation. "That must be one sore ass you have. You *do* take, right, Gabriel? I imagine that you do."

Gabriel stared at him in disgust. "You need to shut the fuck up right now," he snapped. "My private life is none of your business."

Ethan shrugged. "Just making conversation," he said with his mouth full. "I take that to mean that you *do* receive. I can so see you on all fours."

Their eyes met confrontationally. Gabriel was furious at himself for thinking for one moment that this man was attractive when his personality was so odious. He longed to overpower him and beat the crap out of him before throwing him out into the snow to die. Nothing would give him greater pleasure. He sat by the radiator with his eyes averted, mouth firmly shut, quietly seething until Ethan finished eating and stood up.

"I'm going to shower," he remarked, moving past Gabriel, gesturing at him with the gun. "Behave yourself."

As soon as he heard Ethan's footsteps ascending the stairs he tried impossibly to squeeze his wrist out of the cuff until the skin was chafed and raw. Then he yanked hard at the pipe, trying to wrench it from the floor to no avail. He sat back in impotent fury thinking of all the things he'd love to do to the pretty little bastard who'd come unannounced into his house.

* * * *

Ethan was upstairs for twenty minutes. When he returned, he wore some of Gabriel's pajama pants and a T-shirt with the fleece over it. His hair was wet, hanging over his face and into his eyes. He was clean-shaven, the removal of the stubble having taken years off him, so beneath it he was fresh-faced and young. He glared at Gabriel as the other's eyes lingered on him. "What?" he demanded.

Gabriel looked away. "Uncuff me," he said. "I have to pee."

Ethan's catlike eyes narrowed. He produced a key from his pocket, bending over Gabriel. Gabriel could smell his own aftershave on him. It smelled much more intoxicating than it ever had on himself. Ethan unlocked the cuff from the radiator leaving the other half dangling around Gabriel's wrist. He moved back, leveling the gun at him again.

Gabriel climbed up slowly, his backside numb, relieved to be away from the heat of the radiator. He walked through the lounge and started to climb the stairs, aware of Ethan's eyes on him as he did. He turned around as he reached the bathroom door. "Come on then," Ethan said impatiently, gesturing with the gun for him to go in.

"I can take it from here, thanks," Gabriel said sarcastically.

"I don't think so," Ethan replied. "There's razor blades in there. You might kill yourself or something."

"I'd hardly do that over you, babe," Gabriel retorted scornfully before he could stop himself.

Ethan stared at him a moment. Then he grabbed a handful of Gabriel's shirt and shoved him into the bathroom, against the mirror, pinning him there. "Me and you are going to fall out real soon if you keep this up," he growled.

"You and I," Gabriel corrected smartly, unable to stop his runaway mouth. It always got him in trouble. Ethan belted him across the face with the butt of the gun, so Gabriel's head smacked against the mirror and he saw stars.

For a moment he stood there unsteadily, hand groping for the radiator to hold him up, and merely burning his hand. His swimming head cleared slowly and his eyes focused with hatred on his attacker. He tasted blood in his mouth where his teeth had cut his lip.

"Now," Ethan said, "either you pee or I cuff you here and leave you all night."

Gabriel moved toward the toilet, pausing to spit blood into the sink. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw Ethan watching, the gun leveled. With a sigh, he turned his back and took himself free, willing up the stream of urine that wouldn't come. His cheek was throbbing.

"I can't do it when you're watching," he muttered angrily.

"I'm not watching," Ethan replied. "Your back is turned; I can't see you. Stop being such a pussy and piss."

Gabriel gritted his teeth and emptied his mind of all thoughts of what he was going to do to this prick when he wrestled the gun away from him. He managed to pee finally. Washing his hands, he turned back to Ethan, glaring.

"Back downstairs," the intruder directed.

Once they were back in the kitchen, Ethan cuffed him back to the radiator, much to his chagrin. He ran himself a glass of water and drank it thirstily. "I want to get a bag of frozen peas out," Gabriel said quietly, indicating the freezer with his eyes.

For a moment, Ethan looked like he might ask him why, before realization dawned over his face. Silently he moved across and opened the door, searching for the item and drawing it out. He then wrapped it in a towel and handed it to Gabriel.

"Thank you," he said, pressing it to his face.

Ethan sat down, averting his eyes.

There was a long silence. "I want to shower," Gabriel asked.

Ethan shook his head. "Tough," he said. "I'm tired." He moved over to Gabriel and uncuffed him, gripping his arm and pulling him up. "You don't smell too bad; you'll do until morning," he said sarcastically. "Bring your peas. We're going to bed."

For a moment, Gabriel's heart surged in his chest. Ethan must have caught the horrified look on his face because he laughed with scorn and pushed Gabriel into the lounge. "You should be so lucky," he remarked caustically.

Never knowing when to shut up, Gabriel spat back, "Oh, you would be the lucky one, I promise you that."

Ethan snorted in derision. "I'm so glad I have my gun to stop me getting ass-raped," he sneered.

Gabriel shook his head and muttered "Prick" under his breath.

When he reached the top of the stairs, Ethan shoved him into his bedroom. "You're not sleeping in here with me!" Gabriel exclaimed as Ethan followed him in and switched on the bedside lamp.

"Aren't I?" Ethan asked sardonically. "We'll see." And he reached for the empty cuff that dangled from Gabriel's left wrist and snapped it onto his own left hand.

Gabriel stared at him in horror. "What the fuck?" he demanded. "No way, dude!"

"This is hardly what I dream about at night either," Ethan said dryly. "Now shut the fuck up before I give you a matching bruise on the other side." He moved to the bed, virtually dragging Gabriel after him, and climbed into it, gun still pointed at Gabriel, moving to the other side, tugging on the chain so Gabriel had no choice but to follow him. The bed was a king-size, but even so, the chain on the cuffs was not very long. Ethan got under the covers and lay on his side facing Gabriel.

"I need to ... undress," Gabriel said hesitantly, placing the peas on the bedside table.

"Be my guest," Ethan said, green eyes unblinkingly on his. He tucked the gun under his own pillow now.

"Turn the light out," Gabriel demanded.

"My pleasure." Ethan reached over to the lamp and plunged the room into darkness.

As Gabriel lay on his back and undid his jeans, Ethan's left hand came with his own cuffed hand, so the intruder's fingers brushed against his thighs as he pulled the pants down and took them off with difficulty. Finally he lay back under the covers beside Ethan and tried to turn over on his side, before being stopped by the cuffs.

"You need to lie facing me," Ethan growled.

"I can't lie on that side," Gabriel said.

"Why not?" Ethan demanded.

"I've got a sore hip where I had an accident. It hurts too much."

"Fucking woman," Ethan muttered. "Turn over then." And he shuffled up close to Gabriel, his arm going with him as Gabriel turned over.

Suddenly they were curled together, Ethan's arm over his hip, their cuffed hands lying side by side on top of the covers, Ethan's head on Gabriel's pillow. Gabriel was way too aware of the heat of the body pressed against his, of the warm breath on the back of his neck.

He started to stiffen uncontrollably. Anyone would have given him this reaction, he told himself as he shifted slightly in horror. It had been so long since anyone had touched him. Jack and he used to sleep this way, but these days they had been resolutely back to back, a vast void between them.

"Stop fucking fidgeting and go to sleep," Ethan snapped.

Gabriel drew his legs up slightly, anything to hide his ever-growing erection. He was awake a long while, listening to Ethan's soft breathing behind him. He wondered where Ethan had come from and what crime he had committed. And then he became aware of the warmth of the man again, and all that faded into insignificance against the pull of his dick.

His cuffed hand brushed against Ethan's. Lightly he entwined his fingers with his. His hand was small for a man, the fingertips calloused. Ethan shifted in his sleep. He pressed closer to Gabriel. A moment later he felt a face burrow into his hair and went rigid in shock.

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Slowly and deliberately Gabriel reached up with his free hand and pulled his long hair back from his neck and across his other shoulder, exposing his skin. As he'd intended, Ethan's face fell right against his neck. Gabriel stifled a groan as Ethan slowly pursed his lips and delivered a soft kiss to the nape of his neck.

He didn't stop at one. He kept his mouth there, delivering kiss after kiss on the same patch of skin until it burned and Gabriel was virtually delirious. And then the kisses stopped as suddenly as they had started. Ethan stretched sensually against him, pressing his body into the hollows of Gabriel's, and went still. He had been asleep all the while.

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Chapter Two

Gabriel always woke up with a hard-on, that was nothing new, but this morning when he blinked in the morning light and felt the body still against his, he began to wonder if he had been hard all night. He was aching a little, his face sore where he had been hit. His hand was still entwined with Ethan's. The face of the intruder was still pressed against his neck, the skin on fire where his lips had caressed it. He lay still, savoring the feel of it.

It was a few minutes before he felt the man stir and lift his head slowly away. Immediately, Gabriel's skin felt cold and bereft. He wanted Ethan back, his mouth against his neck. He wanted to feel those unconscious kisses again.

"Why the fuck are you holding my hand?" Ethan demanded. But he didn't move his hand.

"I'm not; you're holding mine," Gabriel retorted smartly. "Good morning to you too."

"Fuck off," Ethan said, letting go of his hand abruptly. He was leaning suddenly over Gabriel, both hands on his, unfastening the cuffs, his chest pressed against Gabriel's shoulder. "Get up," he said shortly, moving away and climbing from the bed, gun in hand.

Gabriel rolled onto his back, embarrassment masked by the two thick quilts on the bed. "Not just yet."

"What?" Ethan demanded. "You really didn't learn your lesson with that smart mouth of yours last night, did you? I think I'm going to have to teach you another." There was a

silence as their eyes held. Gabriel would have very much liked to be taught a lesson by Ethan, but he doubted that Gabriel's sort of lesson was what the green-eyed criminal had in mind. "Now get up!" Ethan waved the gun at him.

"I can't," said Gabriel. "I'm not doing it to be difficult. Just give me a minute."

Ethan stared at him like he was crazy. "What?" he asked again.

Gabriel sighed. Ethan's nastiness was making his hard-on go down no problem, but this was balanced by the thought of him "teaching him a lesson," which merely made him stiffer.

"I always wake up with a hard-on," he mumbled, eyes averted, "so can you just give me a minute?"

"Jesus Christ," Ethan protested. "You fucking fag."

"Your presence in the bed made no difference, I assure you," Gabriel lied.

He actually flinched when Ethan climbed abruptly onto the bed, thinking for a moment that he would strike him again with the gun. But Ethan merely hovered over him, grasping the empty cuff, pulling Gabriel's arm up and cuffing it to the wrought-iron headboard. Looking satisfied, he left the room, slamming the bathroom door behind him.

Gabriel's dark eyes flickered up to the ceiling and he sighed again. His free hand slid beneath the covers. He only had a semi now; it would be gone soon enough if he just stopped thinking of those green eyes and that warmth up close and personal with him. That goddamn rosebud mouth on his neck. But he wanted so much to get rid of it himself rather than allow it to go naturally. His hand slid over the

bulge in his boxers, rubbing slowly. *Fuck*, he thought; there was no way he could get this done before Ethan came back.

He withdrew his hand just as the bathroom door opened. Ethan glared at him and climbed onto the bed, legs astride Gabriel's hips, gun in one hand, key in the other. "I'm doing this on the understanding you don't fucking poke me in the eye when I pull the covers back," he growled, gesturing to Gabriel's crotch as he unlocked the cuff.

Gabriel reddened in embarrassment. Just the feel of Ethan's ass on his legs was merely making him harder. Ethan got off the bed and gestured curtly for Gabriel to get up. Inwardly groaning, Gabriel pushed the covers back and moved to the edge of the bed. His humiliation at Ethan seeing him like this was making him wither just fine, but evidently not enough for Ethan.

"You're fucking unbelievable," he muttered, shoving Gabriel roughly toward the bathroom. "A strange dude breaks into your house, hits you, chains you to him all night, holds you prisoner, and you respond by getting a boner. Jesus, I should shoot you. You'd probably cream yourself."

Gabriel whirled around to face him. "Fuck you," he hissed. "You sick fucking shit. Why don't you just take what you want and get the fuck out of my house?"

Ethan stepped right up to him, in his personal space, gun hard in his stomach. "Listen to me, asshole!" he said in a furious voice. "I swear to God if you don't quit riling me, I won't be responsible for what I do to you." In the brightness of the bathroom his eyes were startlingly green, the pupils constricted to tiny black dots. He was so close his scent

overwhelmed Gabriel, the smell of deodorant and aftershave and toothpaste on his breath.

Gabriel's eyes moved down to his intruder's plump, pink lips, watching how the other's tongue came out suddenly to moisten them, leaving them glistening in a way that almost made him groan. When his gaze shifted back to Ethan's eyes, he was arrested by the way the intruder was staring at him in turn.

And Gabriel realized suddenly: *he finds me attractive. He's fighting it, but he can't help it.* And he smiled inwardly. All he had to do to get the gun away from Ethan was seduce him. Simple.

"Can I shower now?" he broke the silence.

Ethan nodded. He stepped back, leaning against the wall, gun raised, not speaking.

"Don't tell me," Gabriel groaned. "I have to do it in front of you."

"Correct," Ethan said.

Well that was just fine, Gabriel thought. What better way to seduce Ethan than to strip off in front of him, then get nice and lathered up in the shower? He smirked to himself. Ethan would probably be in there with him within five minutes.

Despite his bravado, he was nervous as he pulled his T-shirt off, leaving himself in the boxers with the visible bulge. He turned quickly away and reached into the shower cubicle, turning the dial. He knew Ethan was still watching him as he dropped his boxers. He also knew he had a superb body and wasn't afraid to show it.

He climbed beneath the spray and closed the door. Then he stood with his back to Ethan, face turned up to the water, eyes closed. He tried to forget his captor was on the other side of the glass, but he couldn't, and his back burned with Ethan's eyes on it. His hard-on merely grew. He glanced back over his shoulder to see Ethan still leaning against the wall, eyes fixed on him.

"What exactly are you staring at?" he demanded crossly. "Who's the fag here, Ethan? Can't you turn your fucking back for five minutes?"

He saw Ethan redden. "I'll come and drag you out of there in a minute," he hissed.

Gabriel smiled. "Promises, promises," he said, and Ethan went so red Gabriel thought he would explode.

The intruder resolutely turned his face to the wall. With a sigh, Gabriel turned his own back again and moved his hand over his cock. Did he have the balls to beat one off while Ethan was standing a few feet away? He took his hand away. *No, he thought, save that hard-on because you're going to seduce Ethan as soon as you step out of here.* The thought made him tremble a little, but he knew he had to try. Ethan might be so mad, he could end up killing him, but at the same time, this could be Gabriel's only means of escape.

He hurriedly washed his hair, and then set about himself with shower gel. He did not turn around again but each touch he gave to his own body was carefully calculated in case Ethan was watching again, fingers lightly caressing, stroking his own muscles and curves.

"Come on," Ethan said suddenly, impatiently. "You fucking chick. What are you doing in there, shaving your legs?"

Gabriel swore and turned around, opening the door. He saw Ethan's back was still turned. Then he saw there were no towels on the rail by the shower. "Fuck it," he said. "Can you get me a towel?"

Ethan turned around slowly. His gaze slid unbidden down the naked, dripping body of Gabriel, lingering on his semi-erection. Gabriel was almost triumphant as Ethan moved over to the radiator by the sink and grasped a towel. *He wants me*, he thought. *He's not even subtle about that need.*

The other stalked back across to the shower, face angry, thrusting the towel into Gabriel's chest. As he made to step back, Gabriel gripped his forearm lightly. Ethan immediately brought the gun up and pointed it right in his face.

"What the fuck are you doing?" he demanded.

Gabriel had two choices, he knew. Carry on and possibly get shot in the head or stop and lose his chance to escape. His hand tightened on Ethan's arm and he stared silently into his eyes, making his desire plain.

Ethan flushed again and anger crossed his face. "You want to fuck with me, Gabriel?" he demanded. "You really want to?"

Slowly, Gabriel nodded. He stepped out of the shower onto the mat, holding the towel, making no effort to cover himself.

"You fucking fag," Ethan growled. "On your knees."

Gabriel looked at him for a moment in astonishment before Ethan put a rough hand on his shoulder and shoved him onto the tiled floor.

"Well?" Ethan demanded. "Wasn't this your intention? I'm sure this is an unusual position for you, so what are you waiting for?"

"You don't need to hold the gun over me," Gabriel said quietly, eyes still fixed on Ethan's.

"Wrong," Ethan said. "Now fucking do what you wanted to do. And let me show you that it will *still* end with me in control."

Gabriel's eyes narrowed to a glare. He reached up to the waistband of Ethan's pajama pants and pulled them down. A sizeable erection sprang free. As Gabriel started to smile at this physical evidence of Ethan's desire for him, the gun pressed hard into his temple, warning him not to comment on it.

He took the base of Ethan's shaft in his hand and heard the other's breath catch in his throat. Then he shuffled closer on his knees and put out his tongue, licking slowly over the head. Ethan cursed under his breath and his hand came up to the back of Gabriel's head, fingers tightening in his hair.

Gabriel opened his mouth and swallowed Ethan down as far as was comfortable. His cock was smooth and circumcised and perfect. He looked up at Ethan as he started to move back and forward. The man had his eyes closed, an expression of concentration on his face. Slowly, Gabriel placed a hand on his abdomen and slid it upward, lifting his T-shirt, revealing pale, lean flesh, searching for a firm nipple, which he stroked and rubbed and pinched. He felt a shudder travel through Ethan.

His hand moved around onto his back, stroking down the length of his spine, feeling the muscles flex sensually under his touch. His fingers came down onto Ethan's firm ass, caressing each smooth buttock, one after the other. He was surprised by how soft Ethan's skin was. He had never known a man with such soft skin before. He was also surprised by how receptive the man was to his every touch. Such a sensual creature.

He continued to watch his face as he sucked Ethan off. He knew he was getting close because the hand in his hair tightened ever more until it became uncomfortable, his thighs starting to tremble a little. Gabriel moved faster, anxious to draw Ethan to a close. When the hand on his head became too much, he lifted his mouth back a little. "Please, Ethan," he said quietly. "You're hurting me."

If he had expected this plea to be met by a threat, or Ethan merely trying to hurt him even more, he was wrong. Ethan's fingers immediately released themselves from his hair and slid to the back of his neck, stroking, easing him closer, making it known he wanted Gabriel to continue. But his touch was light. He didn't force Gabriel's mouth back around him; Gabriel put it back willingly.

Ethan also removed the gun from his temple. Still holding his shaft firmly, Gabriel sucked Ethan quickly now, while his hand jerked him off perfectly in time. He thought briefly of Jack while he did this. Jack who said Gabriel gave the best blow jobs in the world and yet hadn't seemed to want that many lately.

Ethan was starting to moan. Gabriel knew he tried to hold it back but he could not help himself. He panted and groaned and whimpered, all under his breath, and bit his lip until it bled to stifle the sounds. Gabriel didn't care. He *wanted* Ethan to make noise. The more noise his partner made, the more it turned Gabriel on, and there was no doubting Gabriel had the worst case of blue balls at the moment. He put his other hand down and stroked himself.

His own touch caused him to gasp around Ethan's cock. God he was desperate, he was so desperate. If Ethan could just hold on another couple of minutes, Gabriel knew he could get himself there at the same time. But Ethan was seconds away, he knew that. Gabriel continued to jerk himself off while looking up at Ethan's stunning face through his lashes. The stranger was so beautiful as he trembled on the verge of orgasm, his pale skin flushed, the black hair hanging over the eyes, the white teeth biting into the full lip. *Beautiful.*

"Fuck," he heard Ethan say, his fingers tightening a little on Gabriel's neck, but not enough to hurt. "Oh Jesus...."

He felt the man's body stiffen and begin to tremble but he did not attempt to draw back even though he didn't like to swallow. Seducing Ethan meant going all the way. Ethan gave a long, loud moan and the hand holding the gun clasped at his shoulder, nails digging in, the metal cold against his damp, feverish skin. Gabriel watched how the other's coal-black lashes fluttered against his cheeks and his lips parted in silent ecstasy a moment before his mouth was full.

He swallowed quickly and drew back slowly, his hand letting go of his own dick. Ethan remained still, eyes closed,

seeming virtually catatonic. Gabriel swept his tongue gently over the tip now, cleaning every drop from the head, causing Ethan to whimper a little. Finally, he drew back, pulling Ethan's pants back up, and stood up, fastening his towel around his own waist.

Ethan, swaying a little in place, opened his eyes and looked around almost in confusion. The lids were heavy, the massive pupils shrinking as the light hit them. Yes, Gabriel thought in satisfaction. *The look of a man well-sated. I did a good job.*

He moved past Ethan to the sink and started to clean his teeth. He followed this up with some mouthwash. Then he wet his face and started to lather it up for a shave. He glanced in the mirror. Ethan had moved to sit down on the toilet lid, his head lowered, teeth worrying at his lower lip. Gabriel's cock ached. He wished he could get something in return. Suggesting this to Ethan would probably snap him right out of this post-orgasmic daze he seemed to be in.

He examined the bruise on his cheek where Ethan had hit him last night. Then he finished his shave and leaned over Ethan to retrieve a towel. He rolled some deodorant under his arms and patted his face lightly with aftershave.

He moved out of the bathroom without asking Ethan's permission, but he heard the intruder follow him into the bedroom. Once in there, Gabriel got out some clothes and dropped his towel, keeping his back turned as he crammed his hard-on into some clean boxers. His jeans were way too tight on his aching flesh as he did them up. "Can I get some

more clothes?" he heard Ethan speak behind him for the first time.

"Yeah," he said, surprised Ethan was asking.

Ethan moved quickly to the wardrobe and selected jeans, T-shirt, and sweater. Gabriel threw him some boxers out of the drawer. Then he set about blow-drying his hair, face turned away while Ethan dressed.

His hard-on started to diminish slightly. His jaw still ached. There was no doubting he had ever enjoyed giving a blow job as much as he had that morning. He berated himself. The intention had been not to get Ethan's rocks off but to get the gun away from him. He had failed in that endeavour as Ethan had said he would. Even in the throes of Ethan's orgasm, when Gabriel didn't doubt he could have snatched the gun from him, he hadn't tried. Why was that?

"Come on," Ethan raised his voice impatiently over the hairdryer. Gabriel switched it off and combed his hair down a little before standing up. Ethan waved the gun at him, gesturing for him to leave. He seemed to have recovered his previous coldness. *I just gave away that blow job for nothing*, Gabriel thought angrily.

He moved down the stairs and into the kitchen. As soon as he entered, Ethan came up behind him and grabbed roughly at the cuff dangling from his wrist, dragging him to the radiator, forcing him down onto the floor and cuffing him there again. Gabriel stared at him as he moved over to the coffee machine and set it to brew, getting two cups off the stand. Of course he had not expected to end up chained to the radiator again after giving his captor a blow job, but then

this was probably Ethan's way of enforcing the idea that it had meant nothing to him.

The coffee percolated in silence. As Gabriel watched, Ethan filled the two cups, splashed milk into them, and brought one over to Gabriel, setting it on the floor next to him. Gabriel, seething with rage, grabbed the cup and threw it across the kitchen after Ethan as he walked away, only succeeding in splashing the back of his legs before the mug shattered into pieces against the far wall.

"I'm not eating my breakfast on the floor like a fucking dog, you asshole!" he yelled at Ethan.

He saw the fury on Ethan's face as he turned and strode quickly to him, omnipresent gun in hand. He gripped Gabriel by the hair and yanked his head back hard, banging it against the sharp edge of the radiator so Gabriel moaned. Then, crouching over him, gun jammed into the sensitive flesh of his neck, he hissed:

"You fucked with me, Gabriel, and you *lost*. Now I swear to God, I don't want to hear another peep out of you today or so help me I will blow your fucking head off." He let go of his hair abruptly and moved into the lounge, slamming the door behind him, leaving Gabriel on the kitchen floor.

He heard the TV come on, tuned into the rock music channel Gabriel always watched. The channel was changed. He heard the distinctive intro music of the local news program before the sound was abruptly switched down and he couldn't hear anything but a murmur. Ethan would probably be all over the news, Gabriel thought. He could bet the other was

sitting watching his own face on the TV now with the sound turned down.

Ethan was in there twenty minutes before he came back. He walked past Gabriel without a word and moved to the fridge. As Gabriel watched him, he got out some milk and put it on the table. Then he took two bowls, a box of cereal, and two spoons before moving back to Gabriel.

Gabriel looked up at him as he leaned over him, uncuffing him. "Come on," he said quietly. "Sit down." Gabriel followed him silently to the table.

"You right- or left-handed?" Ethan asked.

You know the answer to that already, Gabriel thought. *Didn't I hold your cock in my right hand?* "Right," he replied.

Ethan nodded, took the cuffs from Gabriel's right wrist, locked one around his left, and cuffed his hand to the table leg. Gabriel sighed. He reached for the cereal box as Ethan moved over to the sink and started searching beneath it for something. As he watched, to his surprise, Ethan drew out a brush and dustpan and started to sweep up the broken cup. He then found a cloth and sponged the coffee off the wall and the floor.

Gabriel did not speak, and averted his eyes when Ethan glanced his way. He had finished his cereal by the time Ethan joined him at the table, bringing some orange juice and two glasses with him. Silently Gabriel poured them both a drink.

"I saw the weather," Ethan spoke. "We're snowed in."

"Is that so?" Gabriel murmured, hardly surprised by this news.

Ethan nodded, mouth full of cereal. "As soon as it thaws a little, I'm out of here," he said.

"Okay," Gabriel replied.

"I'll want to take your car," Ethan said, as though Gabriel had a choice.

"Yeah," he said with a sigh. "Were you on the news?" He couldn't stop himself asking.

His captor's feline eyes narrowed. "You obviously think I'm some criminal mastermind, Gabriel, who warrants a place on the news."

Gabriel said nothing.

"Yeah, I was on the news," Ethan said. "But it'll blow over soon enough. I'm no big deal." His eyes were averted, his tone self-deprecating.

And Gabriel thought suddenly: *how wrong you are, because at the moment, with the taste of you still in my mouth, you feel like a real fucking big deal to me.*

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Chapter Three

After breakfast Gabriel asked to get some writing done and, after unplugging the Internet router downstairs, Ethan came up with him. Gabriel was intimidated by him prowling around his office looking at things while his computer booted up.

He stopped by the bookcase and scanned the books, looking over at Gabriel. "You got any of your own books here?" he asked.

"Yeah," Gabriel said. "Those on the top shelf."

Ethan pulled one out and looked quizzically at the name on the front. "Chase Delaney?" he questioned in disbelief.

"My pseudonym," Gabriel said haughtily.

Ethan sniggered. "Well, *Chase*, I'm going to take these books over into the corner here and decide which one to read while you write." He scooped out the six novels and carried them over to the sofa bed in the corner, lying down full-length, the books spread over his knee.

With a sigh, Gabriel turned back to the computer.

"Which one's your favorite?" Ethan asked. "I like the sound of this one."

Gabriel turned around to see him holding up the black-covered book titled *Broken*. He nodded. "That's my favorite," he said.

"Great minds think alike," Ethan remarked. "Get back to work."

Gabriel turned back and opened up the document holding his latest book. At the side of the keyboard was a book that held notes and a rough chapter plan. As he skipped to the end of the document, he glanced at the book, trying to remember where he had left his writing the previous day, before the intruder had turned his life upside down. He stared at the screen now, at the paragraph he had written last.

The words swam before his eyes. He could still feel Ethan under his hands and in his mouth. He could still hear the moans and curses Ethan emitted as he came and feel the hand on the back of his neck. His omnipresent hard-on started to rise again. He swore he was going to get some alone time, somehow, from Ethan in order to beat one off, or he was going to die. He would have to tell Ethan what he wanted, make it clear he needed to let him do it, for the sake of his sanity, for the sake of his balls. He could just ask for five minutes alone in the bathroom; that would be more than enough.

He squeezed his eyes shut and tried to get focused. Then his mind wandered treacherously back to his unsuccessful seduction attempt. But how unsuccessful had it been? Ethan had let him do it and he had loved it. He would no doubt be receptive to more of the same if Gabriel could engineer another similar situation. He almost laughed aloud at his own thoughts. Who was he trying to fool? He wanted to engineer another encounter to get his hands back on Ethan's lovely body, and not to get away. When he had had that cock in his mouth, he couldn't have given a fuck about getting away. Jesus, this was a mess. If Ethan wasn't so damn hot.... How

long was the bastard going to stay here, putting Gabriel off his writing when he had deadlines to meet?

"Struggling?" Ethan asked suddenly, sarcastically.

Gabriel's jaw clenched. "Any chance you could go sit in another room?" he suggested sweetly, words dripping with venom.

"Any chance you could fuck off?" Ethan retorted. "What's the matter? Am I distracting you? Still thinking about sucking me off?"

Gabriel's spine stiffened. "Yeah," he said. "Just like you are."

Ethan went quiet. Gabriel slowly swiveled his chair around to look at him.

Ethan was flushed, jade green eyes intent on his. "Aren't you?" Gabriel repeated in a low voice.

Ethan shook his head.

"Liar," Gabriel growled.

"Fuck you," hissed Ethan.

"You would, given half the chance," Gabriel retorted.

Ethan grew even angrier at this baiting. "Want to be chained to the radiator the rest of the day?" he demanded.

"I'm beginning to think you get turned on playing these S & M games," Gabriel remarked facetiously. "Am I right?"

Ethan leapt from his chair and stalked over to Gabriel. Gabriel tried to get quickly to his feet so as not to be at a disadvantage for whatever was coming, but Ethan jabbed him hard in the stomach with the gun before he could, gripping a handful of Gabriel's long hair, dragging his head back. "Listen to me, *Chase*," he hissed. "I've had about as much as I can

take from you. That ... thing in the bathroom never happened. If you mention it once more, I swear to God I'm going to shoot you."

"See, Ethan," Gabriel replied calmly. "I think you've no intention of shooting me. I think you like me way too much for that."

Using his free hand, Ethan hit him hard across the face. Gabriel's head snapped back, the chair spun and he hit the corner of the desk hard, instantly unconscious.

* * * *

Gabriel came slowly around to find himself lying on his bed, one arm stretched above him, chained to the headboard. Sitting on the bed beside him was Ethan, a bag of ice wrapped in a towel and pressed to Gabriel's head. Their eyes met and Gabriel instantly turned his face away. "Get the fuck off me," he muttered.

Ethan tossed the ice onto Gabriel's chest and stood up. He left the room without a backward glance. Gabriel stared after him angrily for a moment before picking up the ice and pressing it back to his head. He tried to relax but his skull ached mercilessly and he was thirsty. He wondered how long he had been unconscious. He glanced at the alarm clock. It was five-thirty.

"Ethan," he called finally. "I need some painkillers."

There was no reply from downstairs. Gabriel shuffled as far to the edge of the bed as he could and reached into the bedside drawer. There he found some aspirin. He hated

swallowing tablets dry but he had no choice; he didn't intend to suffer here for as long as Ethan decided to leave him.

One-handed, he fumbled two tablets from the bottle and put one in his mouth, trying to conjure up some saliva from somewhere. Immediately the tablet lodged in his throat and he started to cough. He slid quickly up into a seated position, trying to swallow.

The tablet remained stuck. He coughed more violently. Only water would shift it, he knew. He tried to call out to Ethan for help, pulling uselessly at the handcuff, but he made no noise other than deep, wheezing inspirations for breath. His face turned red and tears ran down his face. He tried in vain to swallow again, beginning to panic, the small tablet feeling like an apple in his throat.

His vision swam. He clutched at handfuls of the bedcovers, his airway virtually occluded, rattles for breath diminishing. He saw Ethan enter the room as he began to lose consciousness. He felt rough hands on him, flipping him over onto his face, dragging him up onto his knees. A moment later, he was embraced from behind, two hands thrusting up hard beneath his sternum. The tablet was ejected violently from Gabriel's mouth and he sucked in huge gasps of air, head hanging down, only Ethan's arms preventing him from sliding down onto the bed.

It was many minutes before he recovered, panting and gasping, strings of saliva dripping from his mouth, to be gathered by his trembling hand. And Ethan remained kneeling behind him, arms around him, holding him up.

Finally, Ethan let him go and climbed from the bed. Gabriel turned around, sitting down and lifting his eyes to look at his rescuer. But Ethan had gone. He closed his eyes a moment, wiping his wet lashes, hearing footsteps suddenly return. Ethan held out a glass of water.

Gabriel took it gratefully, drinking it down slowly. Ethan watched him in silence.

"You gonna uncuff me now?" he asked quietly, his voice raw and hoarse.

"You gonna behave now?" Ethan retorted.

Gabriel nodded.

"Let me look at your head," Ethan said. He knelt on the bed and took Gabriel's head in his hands, leaning it forward so it was almost pressed into his chest. There he parted the hair with almost delicate fingers, tracing the lump there so Gabriel winced in protest. He let go and sat back a little, still close to Gabriel.

"I didn't mean to..." he said quietly, eyes averted. "I'm sorry about that."

Gabriel was taken aback. He studied the intruder's attractive face. He knew he should have hated the man for the continuing abuse he was taking at his hands, but he still wanted him; he could not help his desire for him. He didn't speak as Ethan leaned over him now, uncuffing him and motioning with his head for Gabriel to follow him downstairs.

He became aware immediately that something was cooking, much to his surprise. Silently he sat at the table when Ethan indicated that he should do so, watching and waiting as Ethan pulled a dish from the oven and served it up

onto two plates. He stared down at his plate as Ethan put it in front of him.

"What's wrong?" Ethan asked defensively. "Does it look so bad?"

"God no," Gabriel said quickly. "It looks great." He was wondering why Ethan hadn't cuffed him to the table. He was thinking about the gun tucked into the back of his captor's pants and wondering if he could grab it next time Ethan turned his back.

"It's just the same as that casserole of yours I had last night but I'm a shit cook so...." Ethan shrugged now, looking embarrassed. He went to the fridge and looked inside. He pulled out a bottle of white wine. "Do you want this?"

"Sure," Gabriel said, more than eager for a drink although a little surprised that Ethan would choose to add alcohol to the volatile situation between them both.

Ethan brought two glasses now and uncorked the wine, pouring them both a measure. He then filled a jug with water and brought two extra glasses for this. "Where're your painkillers?" he asked.

"Top cupboard," Gabriel said, indicating the one next to the fridge. Ethan went over and came back with a box of Tylenol before sitting down opposite Gabriel. Gabriel immediately took two, guzzled these with half a glass of the wine and felt almost instantly better as the alcohol worked its way into his system. He tackled the food, finding it delicious, keeping his eyes averted from Ethan.

The meal was silent, the wine frequently topped off. Ethan finally spoke up. "He hasn't called yet."

A statement, not a question. "It's early," Gabriel mumbled, eyes averted although he was thinking the same thing. Why hadn't his partner called him yet today?

"He usually calls late, does he?"

"It varies. Maybe he's working late."

"What does he do?"

"He works for an Internet book company."

"I see. Travel a lot, does he?"

"Yeah." Gabriel stared suspiciously at Ethan.

"Hmm," said the interloper. "I bet he gets up to all sorts when you're up here working your ass off."

Gabriel's face heated in defensive anger. "I don't know what sort of twisted, cheating relationships you've had in the past, Ethan, but this is a monogamous loving one, something you obviously know nothing about. I feel sorry for you."

This had the desired effect on Ethan. He went pale and bit his lip hard, thick lashes lowered to his plate, fork stabbing hard into a piece of eggplant as though wishing it were Gabriel's head.

Gabriel leaned over and poured Ethan the remaining portion of wine. This could make him go one of two ways, he mused. Either even more violent than he already was or putty in Gabriel's hands, ripe for seduction.

Ethan lifted his head now from watching Gabriel pour the wine, feline eyes narrowed. "Want to see me drunk?" he questioned as though he knew every thought in his captive's head.

"It can't be any worse than seeing you sober," Gabriel retorted flippantly. Even now, after all the injuries this man

had inflicted on him, he still had no control over his big mouth.

Instead of making him livid, however, Ethan regarded him in sardonic amusement. "You know, Jack must have to gag you in bed just to stop you talking," he remarked.

"I'm sure you'd love to know what he does to me in bed," Gabriel retorted. "Shame I didn't bring any videos with me."

A heated flush rose over Ethan's face. "And what exactly are you expecting me to be like when drunk?" he questioned.

Gabriel regarded him a moment before replying thoughtfully. "Like a slut."

Now Ethan was angry finally. "There's only one slut here," he spat. "The man who sucks the cock of a strange guy who's been in his house less than a day."

Gabriel shrugged. "You can think whatever you like about me, Ethan," he replied. "It doesn't matter. It's not as though I'll ever see you again once you're gone." His gaze met that intense green one opposite, and the thought hurt him.

Ethan got up abruptly from the table and grabbed their two plates, moving toward the sink. Gabriel watched. His chest hurt where Ethan had thrust his fist into it. His head still ached where it had struck the desk but it also swam with the effects of half a bottle of wine. He longed for nothing more than to be buried under the covers of his bed with Ethan at that moment.

Ethan was rinsing plates and pans and stacking them in the dishwasher, clattering them unnecessarily in a way that jarred Gabriel's head. "You're always so angry with me," he said quietly.

Ethan stopped what he was doing and turned around.

"I don't want to fight with you anymore," Gabriel continued. "I just need to get my writing done. I'm behind schedule."

"It was you who stopped your writing getting done today by being a smartass," Ethan pointed out with a glare.

Gabriel said nothing.

"Do you want to go up to write now?" Ethan asked.

Gabriel shook his head. "My head hurts," he said. "Can I lie down in the living room?"

Ethan nodded. He closed the door of the dishwasher. "Come on," he said.

Gabriel got up and went through to the next room, lying full-length on the couch, face turned away from Ethan, who took the other couch. He closed his eyes and tried to drift away from all this.

After five minutes of silence, he was unable to stop his eyes opening and moving to Ethan, turning over on his side to face him. "You saved my life today," he said quietly.

Ethan looked embarrassed.

"Why did you bother?" Gabriel continued. "You could have had me out of the way."

"Who would I have enjoyed the verbal sparring with then?" Ethan questioned in an irritated growl. "Why don't you go to sleep and give me some peace?" He reached for the remote and flicked on the TV.

Gabriel sighed and turned onto his other side. His thoughts shifted to Jack. He couldn't help remembering the last time they had made love. There was a fight, an angry, ugly fight, a

Captive
by Scarlet Blackwell

lot of crockery getting broken in the kitchen when Jack had swept everything off the table and forced Gabriel down over it. When they had lain there after, among the remains of their dinner, Jack still buried within Gabriel, his hands clutching at his, soft panting breath heating his neck, Jack had said this was the only way to shut him up. And Gabriel cried silently to himself as though he knew it would be the last time.

Here on his solitary couch now in Alaska, he clutched a cushion to him and squeezed his eyes shut, willing the sudden uprising of emotion to go away. He had known as soon as he had boarded the plane to Anchorage that this was the end. He had known it deep down as Jack kissed him goodbye tenderly in the car, Jack who wouldn't show any kind of public emotion and so afterward had simply walked him to the boarding gate and brushed his fingers lightly over Gabriel's arm with a smile.

But Gabriel knew. He knew. And he wanted to leave right now. He wanted to run back home and salvage his relationship with Jack. He would have to get the gun from Ethan. He would have to.

He sat up. "I'm going to bed," he said quietly.

Ethan looked over at him in surprise. "Come on," he said, switching the TV off.

"It's early," Gabriel said. "You don't have to come with me."

Ethan shook his head. "I'm tired," he said. "You're hard work."

Gabriel glowered at him and moved past him to the stairs.

He thought hard all the way up to the bedroom. He knew Ethan's gun was still tucked down the back of his jeans. He waited until Ethan had entered the bedroom behind him, and then he turned around abruptly.

"Ethan," he said quietly, putting a hand on the stranger's arm, closing the distance between them, attempting to kiss him.

Ethan stumbled backward against the door, which merely slammed behind him, and Gabriel had him pinned there in an instant, one arm around his back, tantalizingly close to the gun, the other hand on the back of his neck, holding him in place.

"Fuck..." Ethan protested, turning his face away so Gabriel's lips collided with his cheek. Once more Gabriel's hormones got the better of him now he was sandwiched up close and personal with the object of his desire. He was aching stiff in an instant, sinking his lips into Ethan's neck and kissing feverishly.

Ethan groaned. "Stop. Fucking *stop*," he demanded, hands on Gabriel's shoulders, his attempts to push him away negligible much to Gabriel's delight.

It was only by accident that Gabriel even remembered the gun, his fingers sweeping over it as his hand moved down to grope Ethan's backside. Immediately the tide of lust retreated and his hand moved back up firmly, under Ethan's shirt quick as lightning, and grasped the butt of the gun.

Ethan was quicker than him. He shoved Gabriel backward hard and drew the gun all in one movement. Gabriel, frustrated and disappointed, regarded Ethan in dismay.

"You fucking asshole," Ethan spat with narrowed feline eyes. "You put your fag hands on me one more time, Gabriel, I swear...."

Gabriel gave a sigh. He moved to the opposite side of the bed and sat on its edge, undressing, keeping his erection hidden. Once he was in T-shirt and boxers, he slid beneath the covers, lying turned away. He let his left hand lie out behind him, submissively inviting Ethan to cuff him.

Ethan, however, left the room. Gabriel had drifted into sleep by the time he felt the bed shift behind him. Half-awake, he felt a body press against his and the metallic click of the cuffs. Fingers brushed his hand. For a moment Gabriel thought Jack was curled up beside him and he slid his hand into the palm of his captor's. A moment later he fell back into sleep.

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Chapter Four

Ethan was gone when Gabriel awoke from tormented dreams of being chained to a radiator and left to slowly starve. To his surprise he was not cuffed to the headboard. He got up quickly and went out onto the landing. The upstairs was silent. He could hear noise from downstairs in the kitchen. He was amazed Ethan had left him up here alone. Maybe he had finally realized Gabriel was so hot for him that he would not climb out of the skylight and risk plunging to his death from the roof in order to escape him, as much as he was desperate to run back to Jack.

He went into the bathroom, not locking the door in case it made Ethan mad and he kicked it down. He climbed into the shower and started to shampoo his hair. He turned his thoughts away from how he had pinned Ethan against the door the previous evening and back to Jack. Jack, who had not called in over twenty-four hours. Something was wrong, but then something had been wrong when he had left. Why was he even surprised?

His chest hurt when he thought of his partner and their impending demise. It also hurt when he touched the bruise Ethan had inflicted yesterday by saving his life. He cursed as his thoughts slid back to the green-eyed stranger. His hand moved down to stroke his morning wood. He couldn't jerk off here. Ethan could walk in at any moment. He ached as he touched himself. He wasn't sure who it was he was aching for, though. His fingers closed tighter around himself and his

breath hitched in his throat. He could do it, he thought. It would only be a matter of a few more strokes and at last he would have some sort of relief.

"What are you doing, Gabriel, as if I need ask?" a cold voice startled him.

He moved his hand away, bracing both on the wall, keeping his back turned. "Washing," he muttered.

"Sure, looks like you are," Ethan said sardonically. "Why don't you get out now? You look clean enough to me."

Fuck it, Gabriel cursed silently, making no effort to move.

"Now," Ethan said.

Gabriel turned abruptly around, glaring, pushing the shower door open hard. To his surprise, Ethan had his face turned to the wall. In relief, Gabriel grabbed a towel and dried himself vigorously before dragging on his T-shirt and boxers.

Then he moved out of the bathroom before Ethan could stop him and into the bedroom where he pulled out some fresh clothes. Keeping his back turned to his captor who had followed him, he stripped. He knew Ethan's eyes were on him but it hardly mattered, he thought. Ethan had already seen him naked before.

When he was dressed, his hard-on thankfully diminishing sullenly, he faced Ethan with a scowl.

"Let's go, big boy," Ethan said, gesturing with his gun.

Gabriel moved down the stairs ahead of him both a little puzzled and a little flattered by Ethan's statement. He went straight to the coffeemaker once in the kitchen and set it running, then he got two of everything out, setting the table

the way Ethan had the previous morning, while Ethan sat eyeing him suspiciously.

Finally he sat down and poured himself out some cereal, eating slowly, one eye on the coffee machine, waiting for it to finish. Ethan also ate some cereal, or at least he pretended to, spoon stirring it distractedly, eyes fixed in his bowl, not speaking.

Suddenly there was the blaring of a Guns 'n' Roses song and Gabriel recognized his own ringtone coming from Ethan's pocket. His heart leaped up into his mouth. Ethan glared hard at Gabriel as he pulled it out and glanced at the screen.

"Your boyfriend," he said. "*Finally*. You say your writing's going fine, you're snowed in but you've got plenty of food, you're having a great time. If you give him even the slightest hint that I'm here I'll shoot you dead." He stood up and came around to Gabriel's side of the table, dragging his chair with him.

Gabriel sullenly reached out for the phone with a clammy hand and Ethan ignored him, instead flipping it open and putting the cell by Gabriel's ear. Then he sat down and leaned over, pressing his own right by the other side of it, so the two were closer than Siamese twins and Gabriel was once more overwhelmed by his scent and warmth.

"Hi," he said in an unsteady voice.

"Hey," came Jack's deep voice.

Gabriel knew immediately there was something wrong. "What's up?" he asked, his two hands resting on the table in front of him and interlocking tightly. He could feel Ethan's

breath on his face. "You didn't call last night," he added lightly.

"I know and I'm sorry," Jack said. He gave a sigh. "Shit, Gabriel, I hate doing this when you're so far away. I wish I'd had the balls to do it to your face before you left."

At which point Gabriel realized the moment he had been mentally preparing himself for, for the longest while, was here, with Jack thousands of miles away and a stranger pressed up close and personal with him, listening to the breakdown of his relationship. "You don't have to do this now, Jack," he heard himself say, angry at the pleading tone in his voice. "Wait 'til I get home. We need to talk."

"No, Gabriel," Jack said. "I can't wait two months for you to get back. I'm sorry. We both know things aren't the way they used to be. We're at the end."

Gabriel lowered his head, eyes squeezed shut. Ethan was utterly still beside him.

"I'm sorry," Jack said helplessly.

"Is there someone else?" Gabriel asked abruptly.

"Shit, Gabriel..." Jack began.

"That's a yes then." Gabriel felt his sorrow turning to anger.

"Let's not do this now...."

"Oh, it's okay for you to dump me now, but not tell me who you've been screwing?" Gabriel asked sarcastically.

"Fuck it. It's Jordan," Jack said. "Happy? This isn't the way I wanted...."

When Ethan heard the moan of pain that came from deep inside Gabriel, he snatched the phone away from his ear and

slammed it shut, standing up and pocketing it. "You've had enough of that asshole for one day," he declared.

Gabriel whirled furiously around, rising from the table, hands curled into fists. "You fucking son of a bitch!" he screamed at Ethan, red-faced, eyes glittering. "Don't tell me when my conversations are at an end!"

"Oh fuck off," was Ethan's retort, who made to walk away before Gabriel got hold of him fiercely, dragging him back and launching a fist at him.

It caught Ethan square on the face, almost knocking him to the floor. Sensing the upper hand for the first time as Ethan reeled back against the sink, Gabriel gripped him by the shirt, fist raised again, just as Ethan reached behind him and pulled out the gun, leveling it at Gabriel's chest.

Gabriel halted in his tracks. "Move!" Ethan yelled furiously, shoving him backward, all the way across the room and back to his usual place of the radiator. Gabriel fell against it on his knees as Ethan cuffed both hands to the pipe and turned away, slamming the door behind him.

Gabriel's head hung down until he burned his forehead on the radiator. With a hiss he shifted position, cuffed arms out to one side, and then he let his misery overwhelm him. This was not happening to him. Dumped by his partner of two years, who had been screwing his best friend, thousands of miles away from home, held captive by some escaped freak. He heard his own pants for breath as a strangled moan came out of him and he silently started to weep in earnest, fists clenched in the cuffs, nails digging into his palms.

* * * *

His throat ached with the effort of keeping silent as he cried and cried for what seemed like hours. Even as he was still in full flow, he heard the door open again. He tried to turn his face back to the radiator, but Ethan was there beside him, a rough hand to the back of his head for a brief moment.

"Come on," he said. "Pull yourself together."

This made Gabriel cry harder. He bit his lip, stifling his sounds, head turned as far away from Ethan as he could. A moment later, a tissue was pushed into his hand. He brought it numbly to his face, blowing his nose and wiping the tears away. He put the tissue to the floor as another two were placed in his hand and he filled these up with snot also and discarded them.

When, to his shock, Ethan then leaned over him and uncuffed him from the radiator, he was still crying too much to even move. He remained on his knees, head hanging down, aware Ethan was standing watching him and hating him for it.

"Come on," he heard Ethan say again. "Why are you wasting your time on someone who'd sleep with your best friend? You deserve so much better."

Gabriel was suddenly riled by this. He lifted his tear-streaked face and shot back. "Like you, you mean?"

Ethan flushed. "No," he said slowly. "Not me. Why would I mean me? I'm not a fag."

"Sure," Gabriel said sardonically. "You don't mind whose mouth your cock's in."

Ethan went redder, eyes narrowed. He moved closer, glaring down at Gabriel. "I did that to teach you a lesson—" he began.

"You didn't teach me any kind of lesson," Gabriel retorted. "I *wanted* to do that to you. I fucking *wanted* it!"

"You wanted to do it in order to get the gun away from me," Ethan argued as though Gabriel had not even made his last statement. "And it didn't work."

Gabriel didn't really care anymore what Ethan thought. He was too upset, the tears still hot in his eyes. "When I had you in my mouth I didn't give a fuck about that gun," he said in a rush. "I've been hard for you since the moment you walked in the fucking door. I just wish you'd give me five minutes alone in the bathroom to sort it out, you mean son of a bitch." He hung his head again, teeth gritted, aware he had revealed far too much.

Ethan was deadly silent. Then he slid abruptly down onto his knees in front of Gabriel. "You want me to let you go to the bathroom right now?" he questioned quietly.

Holding his lip hard between his teeth, Gabriel shook his head. "I want *you* to do it," he said in a low voice. He wasn't sure where the words came from. He actually braced himself to be hit by the gun and chained back to the radiator at any moment.

Instead, after a long, long while, he felt a hand on his inner thigh, moving up to rub at his ever-present boner, and he gasped in shock and gratitude, hardly daring to hope his dreams of being touched intimately by Ethan were about to come true.

The hand moved up, the thumb sliding the button of his jeans free, the zip pulled down relieving the pressure on Gabriel's cock. He did not dare look up at Ethan as he felt small fingers curl around his shaft and pull him free from his boxers carefully, slowly sliding him through them.

He stifled a moan of utter delight. One hand came up to grip Ethan's shoulder to steady himself. Ethan seemed in no hurry. Gabriel imagined this might have been three or four rough jerks to get him off as quick as he could (and that really would have been all it would have taken), but Ethan was going about it leisurely, his grip firm but his strokes slow and steady.

Already the orgasm was building in his thighs and stomach. Gabriel felt like screaming at the aching deliciousness of the way Ethan was getting him there. He wanted to put his hand over Ethan's and force him to go faster and yet, at the same time, he loved it. Because it meant he got longer contact with Ethan.

"Oh, Ethan," he groaned, unable to help himself. He inched closer on his knees to his pleasurer and the hand on his shoulder slid around his back so he could rest his head on Ethan's shoulder, face turned into his neck, nostrils twitching at the scent of his own aftershave.

He was trembling now, pushing into Ethan's hand, the long-awaited release moments away. His other hand clutched at Ethan's waist. He was pressed close to him now, Ethan's hand sliding his T-shirt up and down with every movement he made, his erection jammed between their bodies, so Gabriel

would probably catch one of them in the eye if they had the misfortune to be looking down when he came.

"Oh God," Gabriel moaned. "Fuck, please Ethan ... *please*." He held onto Ethan tightly now, eyes squeezed shut as the first waves of orgasm flowed over him and he came in long spurts over the front of Ethan's T-shirt. He shuddered and trembled and gasped for the longest time as he rode the orgasm out, one of the most intense he could ever remember having, and then his face dropped against Ethan's neck and he clung to him, his heart pounding.

Ethan did not hold him in return. He was too busy pulling tissues from the box and cleaning off his hand. Reality was intruding for Gabriel. He was kneeling on the kitchen floor with a stranger, having just been dumped by his long-term boyfriend. He stifled a whimper of misery. His lips sought the soft skin of Ethan's neck and he delivered a lingering kiss.

Ethan abruptly jerked back. "Don't do that," he admonished Gabriel. He put his hands up to his neck and removed Gabriel's arms from around him. Then he stood up quickly and moved to the sink, where he started to scrub his hands with soap as though he had a lethal substance on them.

Gabriel quickly fastened his pants. If he had expected him and Ethan to cuddle and kiss in the afterglow of this, he was sadly mistaken. Ethan turned around, drying his hands. Then he came back over to Gabriel and gripped the empty cuff. "No, Ethan," Gabriel sighed as he was attached back to the radiator.

"Changing my shirt," Ethan said, indicating the semen stains on the front of his T-shirt, before leaving the kitchen. Gabriel sat down and brought his knees up, burying his face against them.

* * * *

Ethan took the longest time coming back. It gave Gabriel plenty of opportunity to stew in the mess Jack had left behind. Jordan? *Jordan?* How long had the two of them been deceiving him? If only he could speak to the son of a bitch now. Give him a piece of his mind. It could be days until Ethan left and gave Gabriel the chance to call Jordan and tell the bastard what he thought of him. He sighed. By which time he would have calmed down, which would be all for the good. He wondered if Jack had already moved his things out of his house or if he and Jordan had been screwing in his bed.

He clenched his fist in impotent fury. *Well, you know what, Jack,* he told his ex silently, *I've been getting a much hotter piece of ass than Jordan and I aim to get even more.*

The door opened and once more the green-eyed stranger took his breath away.

"Let me call Jordan," Gabriel blurted out. "I won't say anything about you, you know I won't. I just want to tell him what a fucking asshole he is."

"No, Gabriel," Ethan said quietly. "Be dignified about it. Silence is always the best way."

"I don't *feel* dignified!" exclaimed Gabriel. "I feel lost and betrayed and really fucking hurt!" He was aware he was close to tears again.

"I know," Ethan murmured. "Come on." He moved to uncuff Gabriel and then gestured for him to go into the lounge. He didn't have the gun on display this time. Gabriel guessed it was shoved down the back of his jeans.

Gabriel curled up in the corner of the comfortable couch, face hidden.

"Do you want to write today?" Ethan asked in a low voice, sitting at the opposite end.

"No, I don't want to write!" Gabriel exclaimed.

"I only asked," Ethan growled in return. "It's not my fault you have lousy taste in men."

"Does that include you?" Gabriel shot back immediately.

Ethan stared at him, before averting his eyes. "I'm lousier than Jack and Jordan put together," he muttered. "And as I've already said, I don't believe you're remotely interested in me; you're just pretending to get the gun away from me."

"Ethan," Gabriel said in exasperation. "Have you not just had the evidence before your eyes? You took about two minutes to get me off. No one's ever done that before in my fucking *life*, not even myself! If I could just prove it to you, I would."

Their eyes held for a long moment.

"What do you mean?" Ethan asked.

"What do you think I mean?" Gabriel asked boldly.

Ethan reddened, eyes averted uncomfortably.

Enough is enough, Gabriel thought suddenly. *I have reined in my control for too long where he is concerned. I've never been more hot for anyone before in my life and I know of no better way to get Jack out of my system than a rebound fuck.*

Captive
by Scarlet Blackwell

He moved so fast across the couch that Ethan didn't have time to react. Before he knew it, Gabriel was astride his lap, hands pushing his shoulders roughly back into the couch, mouth over his demandingly.

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Chapter Five

Ethan reacted predictably. He shoved Gabriel from him so hard that he tumbled backward onto the floor, hitting it hard, for a moment lying on his back stunned. In a second, Ethan was over him, pinning his wrists above his head, one thigh between his, body pressing him hard into the floor. Gabriel heard the familiar snap of the cuffs as his wrists were shackled together.

Ethan stared down at him, his jade green eyes livid, face suffused with heat. As Gabriel looked up into his face, he became slowly aware of the erection growing against his hip.

"Is this what you want?" Ethan asked abruptly, nudging it into him.

"Yes!" Gabriel moaned. "You know it. Do it. *Please*." He lifted his pelvis deliberately into Ethan's, the delicious friction driving him almost out of his mind.

He heard Ethan catch his breath. A moment later he moved himself right between Gabriel's legs, spreading them wider so they were groin to groin. Gabriel thought he would explode at the sensation, even with layers of clothes separating them.

"Fuck," he breathed. "Come on, Ethan. Put me out of my misery."

The fact that he lay with wrists cuffed together above his head, spread out in submission to Ethan, instead of frightening him, merely turned him on to no end.

Captive
by Scarlet Blackwell

Ethan leaned down to him now, those bright green eyes blinding Gabriel with their intensity. Gabriel took the chance immediately, craning his neck up and capturing those plump lips with his own.

This time Ethan reacted in an astonishing way. He did not push Gabriel from him; he did not reach for the gun and threaten to blow his brains out. He gave a low moan of complete bliss and pressed Gabriel's wrists harder against the floor, his body crushed to his, as close as they could get, opening his mouth and diving headlong into the sweetest, most intoxicating kiss it had ever been Gabriel's fortune to share. Gabriel saw stars behind his closed eyes, his fingers clutching at Ethan's, groaning in delight at the warmth and softness of the mouth that returned his kiss with equal passion. Their tongues tangled as he tasted every delightful inch of his would-be lover's mouth.

Ethan drew back abruptly after some minutes, leaving Gabriel gasping for more. Letting go of his captive's wrists now, he sat back and roughly shoved Gabriel's sweater and T-shirt up to his neck before dipping his head and attacking his exposed torso with his tongue and lips.

Delirious with astonishment, Gabriel arched up into the touch, bringing his cuffed hands down now, resting them on Ethan's head, finding his hair like silk to the touch. Ethan worked efficiently on one nipple after the other while Gabriel moaned beneath him, wondering if he would wake up from this wet dream soon, before sliding down farther and swiftly unfastening Gabriel's jeans. Without preamble, he stripped

these off, followed by his boxers, and immediately went down on him.

Gabriel cursed in shock and stared at the pink, glistening mouth around him. How was it that Ethan sucked cock like a pro, or was it an innate skill men had no matter how straight they were? His eyes fell shut, his neck arched back, and he died and went to heaven right there on the floor of his living room.

It was only when he felt his orgasm rising swiftly that Ethan stopped. "Do you have a condom?" he asked quietly.

"Yes," Gabriel said wide-eyed. "In my wallet, in the bedside drawer."

Ethan nodded. His face was blank, as though this act was something deadly serious to him. He got to his feet, and Gabriel's eyes could not help but linger on the bulge in his jeans. "I hope you won't move while I'm gone, Gabriel," he said quietly. Gabriel couldn't tell if this was a threat or merely a lover's endearment. He preferred to think it was the latter.

As Ethan moved to the stairs, Gabriel watched him with eyes drowning in lust. He could have run out into the snow now, half-naked and handcuffed, to get away from his captor. But he laughed at the thought, because he had only one priority now and that was to get fucked to within an inch of his life by the hottest man he had ever met. He put his cuffed hands back above his head and lay there waiting. He cursed himself for not telling Ethan to bring the lubricant too. A straight man wouldn't think of such a thing. But Gabriel was more than willing to make do with saliva.

It was only a moment before he heard Ethan's footsteps on the stairs again. He focused on him as he stood before Gabriel now and started to strip off. Gabriel's mouth went dry as he cast his eyes over the milk-white skin revealed.

Ethan's face remained almost stony. He didn't smile, and he didn't preen before Gabriel's admiring gaze. He didn't seem bashful to be naked in front of him, either. His eyes were cold and distant and angry. Gabriel's heart sank a little at what he was getting here. Chances were Ethan was going to hurt him and get off on that fact.

For a moment he thought about changing his mind. Then he remembered that when he left Alaska, he was going home to an empty bed. He remembered what Jack had done to him and how, consequently, he needed this.

He lay still, communicating this need to Ethan with his eyes until the other slowly sank down onto him, nudging his legs apart, moving between them, a condom and thankfully, the tube of lubricant, falling from his hand as he leaned down, luscious pink mouth seeking Gabriel's.

Gabriel moaned in satisfaction at the kiss, his hands immediately moving to Ethan's jeans, unfastening them quickly, yanking them down along with his boxers. One of his two cuffed hands curled around the warm, silken length he had already been up close and personal with and slid it slowly through his palms. He felt Ethan's body tense deliciously against his, heard his breath hitch against his mouth, and he deepened the kiss, sucking at his tongue.

Finally he heard a low moan from the back of Ethan's throat. Their mouths split apart and Ethan lifted himself a

little on his arms. Gabriel stared up at him as he jerked him off. The stranger had his eyes closed, head bowed, raven hair falling over his face. His kiss-swollen lips were slightly parted, emitting small pants of breath.

Gabriel longed to keep his hand going now. To lie there and pleasure Ethan, to watch his face as he came. But he couldn't do that. Not when he wanted Ethan inside him. He took his hand away. Ethan's thick lashes lifted, showing green eyes dark with desire.

Gabriel took hold of the tube of lubricant. Ethan's eyes flickered to it and he seemed to hesitate when Gabriel held it out to him. There was a silence as their eyes met. *So I'm not going to get the foreplay of my dreams here,* Gabriel thought, *but then why should I? This man is a supposedly straight guy I've corrupted. What does he know about fingering my prostate? He hardly looks like he would want to learn what drives me insane so I may as well advance to the business in hand.*

He reached for the condom now and ripped open the packet. Ethan remained still as Gabriel rolled it onto him, and then smeared some lubricant over it. Then he reached between his own legs and rubbed some lubricant around his entrance.

"All yours," he said flippantly and lifted his knees up to his chest.

Ethan looked down at him for a moment as though wondering where he was supposed to put his cock, before his face set determinedly. "Turn over," he demanded.

Gabriel only hesitated a moment, disappointed that he wouldn't see his partner's beautiful face as he came, before rolling over onto his hands and his knees. He felt a strong hand on the back of his neck, pushing his head low, before a pair of hands gripped his hips and dragged his backside up.

He hissed involuntarily in pain and felt Ethan immediately let go in surprise. A moment later, a soft finger brushed over the black-and-blue bruised area on his left hip. "What's this?" he asked quietly.

"I fell off my bike," Gabriel admitted, embarrassed.

He heard Ethan laugh softly. "I would have liked to have seen that," he remarked a little coldly. "Did Jack kiss it all better?"

Gabriel squeezed his eyes shut at the memories. Of being laid in Jack's arms in the bath as he tenderly sponged the raw, bruised areas of Gabriel's body after their Sunday bike ride had ended in calamity. Of the way Jack had held him in bed later, not attempting to instigate love-making, only murmuring endearments about how he wished it was he and not Gabriel who had undergone the trauma. *Jack wasn't such a bad guy underneath the cold front*, Gabriel thought, forcing sudden tears back. How was he ever going to find someone to replace him?

He saw Ethan grab a cushion now from the couch and he shoved it under Gabriel's abdomen, propping it up, leaving his ass sticking in the air. There was a tense silence as Gabriel virtually trembled under the hot eyes he knew were perusing him. He felt a cold wetness on him now, Ethan rubbing his lubricated self along the crack of his buttocks, insinuating

himself between them, clutching him with his other hand, spreading his cheeks a little in order to locate his target. Finally he felt Ethan pressing against him and he shivered a little in both anticipation and fear of being hurt, willing himself to relax.

Ethan thrust into him now, gliding straight inside without preamble, not stopping until he was buried deep, despite the cry Gabriel smothered with his hand over his mouth. And Ethan surely couldn't have known that propping Gabriel up this way would make the angle so perfect, but it did, and as Ethan drew back and thrust in again, he hit the jackpot.

The agony dissolved in a white-hot flash of sensation and Gabriel almost yelled, not believing his luck. "Jesus, Ethan!" he blurted out.

"Like that?" Ethan replied with one hand stroking the bruised hip way too softly for it to have been the same man who had beaten and abused him for the past two days. He sounded amused.

"Fuck yes!" Gabriel said.

"You feel good, Gabriel," Ethan said in a low voice now, as though he were confessing a secret.

"Oh God, you do too," Gabriel said in a moan, pushing himself backward, impaling himself again and virtually shrieking.

Ethan started to move swiftly but gently now. His hands roamed Gabriel's back, caressing, one of them moving around to grip his dick, at which point Gabriel thought he would come.

He cursed again loudly and groaned in delight as Ethan started to jerk him off. "Are you fucking sure you've never done this before?" he gritted out through his teeth as wave after wave of pleasure assaulted him.

"Never," Ethan said. He was panting now, giving out a little moan every time he struck the spot that caused Gabriel to squirm and yell.

"You're fucking amazing," Gabriel said. He typically wasn't vocal during sex. He usually moaned a bit but never showered these clichéd compliments around like this. He felt embarrassed at his loose tongue, but wanted to give credit where it was due. Ethan was about to give him death by orgasm, he was in no doubt about that.

"Thank you," Ethan said as though Gabriel had just told him he was wearing a nice shirt. He held Gabriel now with his left hand around his rib cage, his other hand working faster on him, his thrusts jerky, hitting that spot rapidly.

Gabriel felt the orgasm beginning in his legs and his abdomen, rushing through his body, making him tremble uncontrollably, and he whimpered with need as he let go, Ethan's name spilling from his lips in a rush the way the semen spilled from him into his lover's hand.

Behind him he heard a hiss of deep satisfaction as Ethan thrust one more time and held himself, shuddering there inside Gabriel as he came. Gabriel moaned a little in continuing pleasure at this evidence of Ethan's climax, wishing again he could have seen the man's face. Ethan slowly sank onto him and the two stretched out in a motionless heap on the carpet.

* * * *

It was a while before Ethan lifted himself off him, but Gabriel had no desire to complain about the weight crushing him. He stretched his sore body slowly as Ethan moved away, leaving him cold with the sweat drying along his bare back. He turned his head but Ethan was behind him out of view, pulling on his clothes. As he did, something black caught his eye, lying half under the couch.

The gun.

His heart, which was starting to slow, picked up pace again to a gallop. He tried to turn half on his side as casually as he could in order to see if Ethan was watching him. He wasn't. He could see his lover from the corner of his eye with his back turned, pulling his boxers up over a pale, pert backside.

Swiftly Gabriel turned his attention back to the couch, his arms sliding along the carpet, fingers scrabbling beneath the couch, closing over cold steel.

A bare foot stood hard on his cuffed hands, weight behind it.

He sucked in his breath in pain and tried to draw back, looking up into cold, seawater eyes. "I didn't think you'd have the energy to even *move* after the way I just fucked you, Gabriel," Ethan remarked sardonically.

Gabriel glared at him. Ethan lifted his foot a little for Gabriel to remove his hands. He sat up, feeling uncomfortable in his nakedness now, and reached out to pluck his boxers from the floor. As he pulled them on and stood up, he saw Ethan retrieve the gun.

He regretted his actions now. He had ruined the aftermath of perfect sex by going for the gun. He was a big one for cuddling and kissing after sex and although Ethan had started to get dressed, maybe he could have coaxed him back to the floor for a while if he'd fluttered his eyelashes a little. There was no doubting Ethan had enjoyed it as much as *he* had, but Gabriel going for the gun said only one thing to Ethan.

The two were standing facing each other now over the area of carpet they had just tussled on. "You scheming little prick," Ethan said in a voice spiky with venom. "You actually let me fuck you in order to escape."

"No," Gabriel said wearily. Even he was not sure why he had done it now, when he didn't want the gun, when he only wanted Ethan. When maybe Ethan could fill the void Jack had suddenly left in his life.

"Yes!" Ethan exclaimed. His eyes glittered with rage. He gripped Gabriel suddenly by the bicep with bruising strength and with the other hand placed the barrel of the gun against his temple. Like this, he dragged Gabriel semi-reluctantly into the kitchen.

Gabriel protested with a wordless moan as Ethan shoved him to the floor and cuffed him to his usual spot. At least it was warm here, he thought, because he still wore only his boxer shorts. He sank down and tried to arrange himself as comfortably as he could once Ethan disappeared back into the living room.

* * * *

Despite the warmth of the radiator, he still shivered as Ethan was gone maybe fifteen minutes. He lifted his head as he heard footsteps and as his eyes fell on Ethan, his mouth fell open.

Ethan was dressed in Gabriel's hooded parka, zipped right up to the neck, a black wool hat pulled low right to his eyes and Gabriel's heavy winter boots. Over his shoulder he carried a rucksack.

Gabriel felt a little bit more of his already fractured heart splinter away. "No," he breathed quietly as though this would change Ethan's mind.

"Yes," Ethan said firmly, voice devoid of all emotion, eyes glassy with disinterest.

"But..." Gabriel stammered. "What just happened, doesn't that mean anything to you?"

"No," Ethan said. "You used me, Gabriel. And I have to say you weren't even any good."

Gabriel just stared in horror. "But...." He tried to protest again. *I don't want you to go*, an inner voice shouted plaintively. *I don't even know you and all I know is that it will kill me to be parted from you.* "Please," was the word that came out.

Ethan's lip curled in scorn. "Thanks for the memories, Gabriel," he said tonelessly, before moving toward the French windows, bulky and shapeless in his snow gear like an Arctic explorer.

"Wait!" Gabriel cried, absolute terror now taking over his desolation. "What are you doing? You're going to uncuff me, right?"

Captive
by Scarlet Blackwell

Ethan turned back to look at him. He shook his head slowly, his eyes still flat and emotionless. "No," he said quietly. "Goodbye." He turned away, unlocking the windows with the key he had held for the duration of his stay at the cabin.

As he stepped out into the snow and slammed them shut behind him, the double-glazed glass locked out the sound of the scream.

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Chapter Six

Gabriel awoke with a start at the computer, head down on the desk, pages of his notebook sticking to his face. For a moment he stared around him in confusion, and then started to smile sheepishly in discomfort as he recalled the dream.

"Hey," a voice said behind him, a moment before a hand trailed lightly over the back of his neck, making him shiver. "The deal was you write, not sleep on your desk when you could be lying next to me doing the same."

Gabriel turned his chair around to see Ethan standing behind him, clad only in a pair of boxer shorts, his skin luminous in the outer reaches of the desk lamp's glow. He reached out for him quickly, drawing him down onto his knee, wrapping his arms around him and burying his face into his shoulder, inhaling his lover's familiar smell deeply.

"What's the matter?" Ethan asked softly, stroking his hair.

"I had a nightmare," Gabriel said, voice muffled.

Ethan drew back to look at him, fingers tracing the high curve of his cheekbones, green eyes dancing with adoration. "Want to tell me about it?" he asked.

"It was a little weird," Gabriel said, embarrassed. "I was here alone and you were some sort of criminal who broke in and held me captive and I was...." He averted his eyes. "I was really hot for you."

The laughter bubbled up in Ethan's throat and he bent his head and stole a kiss. "That sounds like a wet dream to me, not a nightmare," he remarked with a smirk.

"Well, yeah," Gabriel said, "maybe it was. Apart from the part where you cuffed me to the radiator and left me to die." He did not need to mention that he and Jack had still been together in the dream, because the reality was Gabriel had walked out on Jack six months ago, the day he met Ethan, a fellow writer, at a writers' conference and ended up being bent over a bathroom sink ten minutes later.

Ethan stared a little in surprise, made a soft noise of sympathy and drew Gabriel's head against his shoulder again. "I'm here now," he said in a whisper.

There was silence, the two men relishing the contact, the lingering traces of the nightmare soothed from Gabriel's mind by Ethan's hands.

"I'm sorry I insisted on coming here with you," Ethan said now, his face serious again, fingertips caressing Gabriel's cheek once more. "I can see I've been a distraction. You were right. I should have stayed at home. I'm a selfish bastard."

Gabriel shook his head, lifting Ethan's hand and sweeping his lips over the knuckles. "I *need* you here," he said plaintively. "You have no idea."

As the two stared into each other's eyes, Ethan's moistened visibly at these words.

"You handcuffed me quite a lot in the dream," Gabriel said abruptly to lighten the mood.

Ethan arched a perfect brow. "I did?"

"Yeah. I think you got off on it," Gabriel replied. "I know *I* did."

Ethan was smiling now. "I think you'd better come to bed now," he said, "because I've got something for you."

Gabriel's lips spread into a smirk. Ethan climbed off his knee and put out his hand, which Gabriel took. Their lips met in a lingering kiss as Ethan led the way across the landing and into the bedroom.

The room was dimly lit by the lamp on Ethan's side of the bed. The two stripped off their clothes, shivering a little, and climbed beneath the thick covers, immediately seeking the warm familiarity of each other's bodies. They kissed and caressed until both were breathing a little faster with the sweet anticipation of what was to come.

"I really have got something for you," Ethan said now. "I know you thought I just meant my dick, but ... hang on...." He shuffled over to the bedside drawer and withdrew something from it, pressing it into Gabriel's hand.

It was a pair of black fur handcuffs.

Gabriel laughed in amazement.

"I guess great minds think alike," Ethan said with a smile. "While you were dreaming of these, I was plotting how to use them on you."

"Ethan," groaned Gabriel, planting feverish kisses on his cheek and jaw. "You have no idea how happy you've made me."

Ethan laughed giddily. "Come here then," he said. He maneuvered Gabriel onto his back and cuffed his hands above his head to the headboard, just like he had done in a similar way in the dream, before he had shown Gabriel the time of his life on the living room floor.

Gabriel stared up at him as Ethan deliberately pressed his pelvis against his, making him wild with desire.

"Do you remember?" Ethan asked in a whisper.

Nodding, Gabriel reached up to sweep a lock of black hair back from his eyes. "Always," he said.

* * * *

The conference room was full, the chatter between speakers rising to a dull crescendo of noise that threatened to undo Gabriel. Reclusive by nature, he had been persuaded by his agent to attend this writers' symposium for the purpose of networking, David believing that Gabriel could be negotiating his way to a much better book deal with the way his latest novel had sold. He wanted Gabriel with him to meet all the top executives who would be on hand from the major publishing houses. Gabriel would have rather been in bed with Jack.

He guzzled champagne like it was going out of fashion, relieved that it was free, as he had barely enough money in his wallet to cover more than a few drinks. He looked up at David now, almost scowling when he saw he had brought someone back to their table with him, when that look abruptly turned to a stare.

David smiled slyly as though he read every thought in Gabriel's head. "Have you met Ethan Baker?" He asked way too casually. "He wrote *Save Me*."

And Gabriel was staring for two reasons. First, because that book was by his bed and he had cried buckets over every chapter, reading it deep into the night while Jack breathed softly beside him, turning to embrace his lover once he had turned out the lights.

Second, because Ethan Baker was the most exquisite specimen of humanity Gabriel had ever had the pleasure to behold. He wrote about love at first sight often enough, although he wasn't sure he believed in it up until that moment.

Now he did. He believed in it with every cell of his body, which was gloriously singing; singing, dancing, and laughing gleefully. He had the bizarre urge to get on the table and start yelling to the room: "He's the one! I've found him!" He didn't give Jack a second thought as he held out a damp palm and murmured a "Hello" in the softest, shyest voice he had ever heard come from his own mouth.

And Ethan Baker was staring too, as he took Gabriel's hand in an equally damp one. Pale and black-haired, his eyes were like two bright green jewels, quick and intelligent and full of the life Gabriel so desperately craved.

This is the man who wrote such an amazing book, he thought. The man who told of love lost and found again. The man who had taught him that true love never dies.

"Do you ... want some champagne?" he stammered, turning red now under Ethan's intense scrutiny and David's amused watching.

Ethan nodded as though he too couldn't find any words, and as Gabriel sat down, the other writer pulled up the chair next to him abruptly so their knees knocked and they were way too close. Gabriel felt breathless with desire, his hand trembling on the champagne bottle and slopping the liquor over the sides of the glass. He was growing steadily harder,

his thoughts startlingly pornographic, involving being pinned beneath Ethan and pleased beyond his wildest dreams.

He looked into Ethan's eyes as he lifted his own glass and watched the other writer do the same. The two flutes clinked together and both men drank wordlessly, not taking their eyes from each other. Gabriel heard David clear his throat. He slid his eyes sideways to him. "Don't you have networking to do, David?" he asked, oblivious to how obvious this sounded. Because he knew Ethan wanted to be alone with him, too.

David smirked a little. "Sure," he said. "I'll catch you later." He rose from the table with his glass and weaved away, more than a little drunk.

Gabriel's eyes turned back to Ethan's. Suddenly he was terrifyingly nervous. "I met Stephen King earlier," he babbled.

"Is that so?" Ethan asked coolly with a vampiric little smile, which showed his pointed canines.

Christ, Gabriel thought. Drink me dry. Please.

"Yes," Gabriel said. "He's amazing. As are you." He stared at Ethan's full, pink mouth, thinking that it was made for sucking cock.

Again Ethan smiled. He lowered his head now, placing his glass on the table and twisting the stem in his hand, biting at his bottom lip.

Gabriel was so hard he ached. Seconds ticked by in silence. Finally, Ethan spoke. "Why don't you go wait for me in the bathroom?"

Gabriel's gaze moved from his mouth up to those jade green eyes. He opened and closed his mouth in shock. "I ... I'm with someone," he stammered finally.

"That's too bad," Ethan said, seemingly unruffled by this news. *And with good reason*, Gabriel thought. He was sure Ethan could see his desire for him written all over his face. The presence of a partner in this was irrelevant to Ethan. He was clearly going to get what he wanted.

"I'll leave you to think about it then," Ethan spoke again. "I'll wait five minutes for you." He got up from the table.

Gabriel tried to think of something to say as he walked away, but was struck mute. He watched Ethan move across the room and disappear into a door near the bar. He glanced around and caught David watching him with a smirk while talking to a man shorter than himself with a severe haircut.

He stared down at the table, clutching his champagne glass. Damn it, damn it to hell. His pants were so tight it felt like his dick was being slowly asphyxiated. He had to have Ethan, fuck the consequences of infidelity. He just had to.

He stood up quickly, pulling his jacket closed and buttoning it, before moving as casually as he could to the bathroom. Inside the pleasant, cream-painted room were a bank of urinals and three cubicles. The one at the end was a disabled one, big enough for a wheelchair, containing its own sink and hand-dryer. It was inside this one that Ethan loitered with a smile on his face, the door open.

As Gabriel moved urgently toward him, Ethan gripped his tie and dragged him inside, slamming and locking the door, pushing Gabriel up against it, crushing his mouth against his.

Gabriel saw stars behind his eyes, groaning, giving Ethan his tongue as the other author plundered his mouth with his

own, wrapping his arms around Gabriel's neck and pressing himself into the other man.

Ethan's hands moved beneath his jacket, underneath his shirt, sliding up his spine, creating flames everywhere they touched so Gabriel started to pant. When he withdrew one hand and thrust it roughly into Gabriel's groin, Gabriel thought he would explode. He whimpered with need and Ethan responded by gripping him again, turning him around, pushing him across the room to the sink and forcing him down over it, back turned.

Gabriel, trembling, braced his hands on the mirror over it as Ethan started to undo his pants and drag them down.

"Do you take?" he said in a hot whisper in Gabriel's ear as he closed a hand around Gabriel's length and started to jerk him off.

"Yes," Gabriel moaned.

"Good," Ethan replied in satisfaction and took his hand away. In the mirror, Gabriel watched him fumble something from his jacket pocket then unfasten his pants, dropping them and his boxers. There was a rustle now and a condom wrapper floated into the sink. A moment later, a tube of lubricant and its cap was rested on the edge. Gabriel stared at the clear liquid seeping from its nozzle as two fingers were thrust unceremoniously into him and he squirmed in delight.

"Do you always carry lube?" he gasped out as Ethan twisted and turned those fingers, brushing his prostate and almost making him whine.

"Always," came Ethan's reply, his mouth against Gabriel's ear. "You never know when you might meet the man of your dreams."

And Gabriel's heart beat gloriously and adoringly faster despite being bent over a public restroom sink by a man he had just met. Because he knew.

"Please," he gasped. "Please Ethan."

"Please what?" Ethan asked teasingly, but he removed the fingers anyway, gripped one of Gabriel's hips hard, and entered him swiftly.

Gabriel's eyes nearly rolled back in his head as Ethan bent him forward, withdrew, and hit him dead-on with his first thrust.

"Oh fuck!" he cursed.

He heard Ethan laugh softly. He curled his hand back around Gabriel and started to jerk him off. Gabriel steadied himself on the sink, now with white knuckles, and bit his lip to stifle the screams he wanted to emit.

"I love your books," Ethan purred into his ear as he fucked him more deliciously than Gabriel had ever been fucked before in his life. And he knew from that moment on that he and Jack were finished and he was Ethan's for the taking.

He came minutes later into the hand pumping him, moaning Ethan's name with every ounce of feeling he had, thinking to himself that now he would not have to wait until this man's books were published until he had them by his bed. Now he could stand over Ethan's shoulder watching as this amazing creature poured those words out onto paper or computer. He would be the first to read those agonized,

anguished words and he would be soothed better by the creator of those words as he became the first reader to cry over them. He knew this without doubt as Ethan came inside him with a groan and a soft murmur of Gabriel's name, hands clutching at his, dropping forward to nuzzle the back of his neck with tender lips.

"Gabriel," he said in a whisper as his warm breath cascaded over the other's heated skin. "Are you working on your new book?"

Gabriel, trying to recover his scattered senses, was almost confused at this conversation. "Yes," he said.

In the mirror his glance met Ethan's. "Will you let me read some?" he asked.

Gabriel smiled. "If I can read some of yours," was his reply.

Ethan smirked. "My laptop's in the car. There's five chapters of *Perfection* on there, my new one. Let's go."

He moved back and started to dress.

Gabriel wet some paper towels and started to clean himself as best he could. When he was done, he turned around to look at Ethan.

"Promise me you won't make me cry like you did with your last one," he said.

Ethan looked surprised and touched. He moved fingertips softly over Gabriel's cheek. "I can't promise you that," he said, "but I can promise you that I will never make you cry about anything else."

He leaned forward and kissed him before turning around to unlock the door. Gabriel, following him out of the bathroom in

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by Scarlet Blackwell

a daze, thought to himself, *He feels the same as me. Every single thought in his mind is identical to mine.*

* * * *

Back in Alaska and Ethan was kneeling up, Gabriel's legs over his shoulders, gripping his hips as he moved slowly into him, hitting his spot effortlessly every time, while Gabriel moaned and whined for Ethan to touch him, pulling uselessly at the cuffs that bound him to the headboard.

They both knew that Ethan could get Gabriel off this way without touching him anyway, so these demands were rather superfluous, but Gabriel liked to be jerked off while being fucked. But truth be told, he was enjoying this total submission to Ethan, and enjoying it even more that Ethan ignored him when he begged to be touched. He enjoyed looking up into Ethan's bright eyes and seeing the thrill he was getting from fucking Gabriel this way.

He smiled to himself, thinking the person on the bottom is often the one in control, a thought he would never voice to Ethan, lest it offend him. Ethan liked to dominate, but then he was generous with allowing Gabriel his way when he wanted it, too.

"Fuck me," he breathed now, lifting his hips, "Please...."

Ethan lay down on him, seeking Gabriel's mouth with his. The dream lingered at the back of Gabriel's mind. He couldn't forget the sadistic nature of the Ethan in his dream. The way he had beaten Gabriel, the way he had cuffed him to the radiator and left him to die. But nor could he forget the way

Ethan had made love to him on the floor. The way he had touched him and kissed him.

He smiled now with his mouth against Ethan's, opening his eyes when Ethan lifted his head to look down questioningly at him. He thrust one more time and Gabriel arched off the bed, spurting onto his own stomach, crying out incoherently, while his thoughts were startlingly clear as he felt Ethan come to his own climax.

He knew where to go from here. With Ethan by his side, he knew without doubt that the world was his oyster, that those book deals David said he could achieve were about to become a reality.

In the morning, Gabriel would be starting a new novel, committing the nightmare to paper. His lover had always inspired him, but this would be the first time Ethan would actually appear in one of his books.

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by Scarlet Blackwell

Scarlet Blackwell has loved books all her life. She would love to own a second-hand book shop and sit behind the counter reading her wares and writing her own all day.

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