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*Jaden Sinclair*

SETH – Jaden Sinclair

**Midnight Showcase Fiction Presents**  
**ISSN 1555-5488 Vol.118-37SE**

**S.E.T.H.**  
**By**  
**Jaden Sinclair**

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SETH – Jaden Sinclair

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**Seth**  
**By**  
**Jaden Sinclair**

Designed to be a weapon, trained and programmed to follow instructions without question, SETH was not meant to develop willpower, emotions, and desire. Falling in love with a human is unacceptable, and faced with the threat of termination, he is forced to choose—kill or follow his heart.

[www.jadensinclair.com](http://www.jadensinclair.com)

Also by Jaden Sinclair at [www.midnightshowcase.com](http://www.midnightshowcase.com):

**Interplanetary Passion**

# **Seth**

## **By**

### **Jaden Sinclair**

## **Chapter One**

Alyna Satara sat behind her desk in the basement of the largest electronic intelligence corporation in the city, E.I. Synthetic. She was one of two hundred employees working at an entry-level position. As luck would have it, she was one of fifty interviewing for the first promotion available in over five years. The company didn't offer many chances to advance, so when an opening became available, every person qualified tried out for it.

Yes, she worked for the company thought to be the best in the city, but those people had never seen her paycheck. She was so far in debt, she wasn't sure if her two jobs were going to be enough to continue making ends meet. The only problem was she didn't have the time to work a third one. Alyna worked here all day, and sometimes late at night when overtime became available. Then on weekends, to bring in extra money, she worked in another department doing data entry; yet, she barely scraping by. She really needed this promotion. Otherwise, getting out and doing something else would be preferable to going back to live with her grandmother. That was out of the question!

She worked hard. Hell, she was one of the company's top workers. Any file that was needed she could bring it up in the system in a flash. If the hard drive crashed, she could repair it and, most of the time, save all the data. When it came to computers, she could do anything. Her personal life, now, that was a different story. She didn't date. She got too damn shy.

Sure, she had been asked on many occasions to go out, but the guy couldn't hold her attention while talking or his gaze wouldn't leave her breasts. Either way, around the office, she was considered a bore. All work, no play, that was Alyna's way, or so the rumor went.

Alyna didn't feel herself to be the drop-dead gorgeous type of girl that most of the guys wanted these days. She was sort of short, standing at five-five with heels. She wore her long, sandy brown hair in a ponytail. Her green eyes, at one time, sparkled with life. When she started working here, she had been young and impressionable, and she so excited to be working at E. I. Now, she felt the twinkle in her eyes had dulled from all the long hours she spent looking at the monitor. With so many hours working, she didn't have the opportunity to go to the gym to work out very often. Consequently, she now had a slight roundness to her stomach. It didn't bother her wearing a size sixteen in jeans or a large shirt. What bothered her more than anything was that she didn't have a boyfriend like some of the other girls in the office. Hell, she couldn't even get into the "I need to get laid" conversation. At twenty-three, she was still a virgin, and it embarrassed the hell out of her.

Taking a deep breath, Alyna rubbed her eyes and sat back in her chair. The clock on the wall, directly across from her, read only one. She still had three hours left on her shift, but her stack of papers had been finished by noon. Trying to look busy was starting to become a full time job.

*Your system is idle which could only mean one thing. You have finished today's quota.* The message came up on her screen, shutting off everything she was working on.

Alyna smiled as she sat up in her chair and typed, *Hi Seth.*

*How is my favorite person in the office doing today?*

She looked around to make sure that no one was paying any attention to her. As always, since she was in the back, no one noticed her. *Bored and ready to get out of this place.*

*Ah, so the work is done for the day. Good for you.*

*Yes, but one does not get paid to be fast. I can't afford to go home again. Rent doesn't get cut in half.*

*You worry too much.*

She shook her head and bit on her lip to stop the laugh from slipping out. *It's what I do. What else is there? I won't go back to my grandmother. She would want me to take care of her and quit my jobs.* Still holding her lip with her teeth, she frowned. She said the word jobs. Alyna didn't want Seth to know that she had taken another job. He hated how much she worked now with this one.

*Jobs! When did you take another one?*

*I got to go, boss coming.*

She stopped the chat, not because someone was coming, but because she didn't know how to tell him. Hell, she didn't know how to tell herself at times. Having two jobs was hard, and she had only been at it for two weeks.

*I know you are still there.*

She took another deep breath and looked around. *I shouldn't be chatting, Seth. I could get fired.*

*Only if you get caught.*

*That is possible. There are cameras down here.*

*Why did you take on another job?*

She thought about what she should tell him. She had been talking to Seth now for five months and felt as if she had known him for a lifetime. One day she was working away then *poof* up pops this little box with a hello. Sad to admit, but talking to Seth on the computer was the highlight of her day. Having no boyfriend, he was the only contact with the male race she had.

*You still there?*

*I tapped out of my savings and the rent was due.* She rubbed her eyes again. *I might have to look for a better full time job. I'm not making it here, Seth. The city is slowly killing me.*

Time passed slowly and she thought he had left. With what little experience she'd had with men, she figured he was through hearing about all of her problems. After all, who wanted to listen to the sorrows of someone you'd never met face to face?

*I'll take care of you.*

He signed off, leaving her sitting there with a frown on her face. Take care of her. How the hell was he going to do that?

She shook it off and looked at the clock again. Only one-thirty. Damn. There was no way she was going to be able to sit here and hide for the rest of the day. Her work was done, and her other job waited. If she got there early enough, she might be able to finish before eleven.

No such luck.

Alyna sat at her other desk with a deep sigh. As before, she was one in about fifty other workers with a stack of papers to her left, computer in the middle, and an empty bin for the papers to her right. The plan was simple; she put the data in the system then went home. No matter how long she worked she was only paid for six hours, but couldn't leave until the work was finished. Another crappy job with crappy pay.

*I could help you get a raise.*

Her eyes nearly popped out of her head. Seth! How the hell did he find her here?

*What are you doing?! Are you trying to get me fired?!*

*I want to help you.*

*Seth, I don't know what you think you are going to do, but contacting me at my second job is not it. Shit! He is a damn good hacker, she thought. Look, I really need to get started on this pile of papers. We'll talk later.*

She disconnected the conversation before he could type another word and quickly went to work on her stack.

Her first hour went into another until the normal six had passed and still she worked on the data. She was just about to call it a night. Her shoulders were killing her, eyes so tired they were starting to get blurry, and to top it all off, she'd forgotten to eat. So, add hungry to the list.

*I know you are still there. You work too hard. Please don't be mad at me. I only worry about you.*

Alyna smiled. *I know, and thanks. It has been a very long time since someone has worried about me.*

*Go home, Alyna. You need to rest.*

He logged off this time before she could type another word. She took a deep breath and decided to take his advice. She logged off of her computer and left. She lived six blocks from her second job. As she walked home, she stopped and picked up a burger, fries, and a movie. Since it was Friday, she treated herself as always with a movie and something to eat that wasn't either frozen or some kind of sandwich. Once a week, she was able to eat a somewhat decent meal. That's why she didn't understand how she was putting on the pounds. *Maybe it's all the sitting on your ass, she thought.*

Alyna didn't live in the best neighborhood. Her apartment was run down, and consequently, the rent was inexpensive. Her door had four locks on it, for her safety since she lived alone. Opening the door, she was greeted with her dark walls, rummage sale furniture, and two lumpy mattresses on the floor for a bed. She didn't have much, but what she did have, she could call her own.

Locking her heavy door behind her, she walked to her beanbag chair on the floor in front of her small television and let out a deep sigh. She never thought Friday would come and didn't realize how



tired she was until she finally sat down and let the tension slip from her body.

She ate her food and watched her movie. Deep down, she couldn't really relax because she couldn't get away from that feeling she should be at her computer. When the movie ended, she headed over to her bed where she'd hidden her prized possession—her laptop computer, the one and only thing her grandmother had ever given her that meant something to her and actually had a monetary value. It wasn't the best or the newest, being six years old, but it was good enough for what she planned to do—hack into the company she worked for.

She was trying to find information on Seth, and being a very honest person made that finding almost impossible. She had too much honor and always backed away when she came across something that looked too important for her eyes. Another thing she had a hard time doing was covering her ass as she searched; Seth always found her. No matter how she covered her trail, Seth popped up and distracted her from the search into the employee files.

*This is not resting.*

She smiled, shaking her head. He had found her again, and this time she didn't even get half way into her search. *How do you do that?*

*If I tell you, then I would have to keep you forever quiet.*

*Is that so? LOL*

*And never let you go.*

She laughed. Sitting in her bed in her own space talking to him caused her to feel like a schoolgirl. *Are you flirting with me?*

*Maybe.*

*You could lose your job. You know the rules about office dating.*

*Rules are made to be broken.*

"Only if you have the money to lose," Alyna grumbled out loud. *What are you doing working so late yourself?*

*I could ask you the same question.*

*But I asked you first.* Seconds ticked by and she was starting to wonder if he was going to answer her. Usually Seth was quick at answering. *Seth, you still there?*

*I have to go, Alyna. Get your rest and stop snooping.*

And just like that, he was gone again, but she didn't take his advice. She kept right on snooping and was able to discover that Seth

was in fact someone who had clearance to the top floors of the company before her system shut down.

“Shit,” she mumbled. “How the hell did you do that?”

\* \* \* \*

James Paxton sat behind a large circular desk with many different screens and keyboards, going over the latest reports even though it was late at night. The room was big with row after row of large power sources and motherboards on the wall, and in the center of the room across from him was a huge oval screen that looked almost like the brain of the system.

At five-eight, short black hair and dark green eyes, he wasn’t the big, bad military type like most who worked around the department, but he sure as hell was a lot smarter than most.

Synthetic Electronic Training Hybrid, Seth for short. The first of its kind, the heart of all the projects and the brain of this system. Hell, Seth *was* the system. Without his intelligence, military strategies and combat training, the whole project the government wanted would be nothing short of a computer glitch.

But out of all these things and the data James needed to work on, training and combat was not on his list of things to do tonight. He was trying to track Seth’s movements within the system. He knew the computer was becoming more than what it was designed for. Hell, if James didn’t know better, he would think the thing was starting to experience emotions.

“Would you like a detailed report on my system, Doctor?”

The electronic voice coming out of the speakers suddenly had James jumping in his seat. He half expected Seth to be onto what he was doing tonight, but never thought the thing would call him out on it. This was the time of night Seth was to shut down, in a state of sleep for him.

“That’s all right, Seth. I can take care of it,” James answered as he kept his fingers moving over the keyboard. Why Dr. Saker had given the computer the power to talk to the staff at will and hear them was beyond him. To James and to Joshua Walsh, the head of the department, it was like giving a child power over his parents.

“May I inquire as to what you are looking for?”

James hated the deep voice that went with it. He stopped what he was doing to look up at it. Seth liked respect, even if he was nothing more than a computer chip. “Routine check is all.”

“I see.”

James went back to his work, but stopped with a frown on his face. Of all the things he expected to find in this system, what he looked at now wasn't it.

"Seth..."

"Yes, Doctor?"

"Please explain this to me." James put the program he was looking at on the wall screen so Seth could see what he referred to. "I don't recall you being instructed to incorporate this topic for any of your research."

"I was merely curious, Doctor."

"That is an emotion, Seth." James, still frowning, looked down at his screen again. "Emotions are not part of your program."

"Emotions are part of everyone's program. Men in battle think about the subject and some get distracted by its presence. I am merely looking into it as a weakness to man."

James looked at the many different sights and the different videos. Sexual content was never intended for Seth. His one, his only goal was that of the military. So for James to find porn, nude women, and articles on the best way for a man to not only lose his own virginity but how to take a woman, James felt very shocked.

"Are we still going ahead with the experiment in the morning, Doctor?"

James looked up at Seth again. His gut told him there was much more to this story than what he would get out of Seth. "Yes. The test chip will be inserted into the brain and you will be in charge of the insertion and the download."

"Then I will do a double check on all systems as well as make sure the body is still up to the military standards. Good night, Doctor."

James knew when he had been dismissed, and Seth sure as hell had dismissed him. "Night, Seth." He logged off, but watched as the computer worked fast on each and every one of the other computers in the room. As much as he didn't trust it, James knew that Seth was the best at anything he did. The only thing that worried him was he didn't have a clue as to what Seth was up to now.

## Chapter Two

It supposedly had the same hours in the day times two, but why in the world did the weekend always go by so fast? She asked the same question to herself over and over again while she walked into the elevator that took all the computer geeks down to the basement. Monday morning came too damn fast for her taste. Hell, she didn't even feel refreshed or rejuvenated. What good was having two days off if you didn't feel any better afterwards? Here she was again, on her way down to the dungeon for another boring ass day.

Mondays were the worst in her department. It seemed as though, with most of the staff out of the building, the labs and everyone else worked extra hard on the weekend, which meant she had extra data to put in as well as do her regular job. She didn't really mind it. In her eyes, Monday was the only day of the week she had something to do until her shift was over. Another reason for her to look forward to this Monday—it was payday!

“Here you go.”

As was the custom in her department, checks were handed out to the employees as soon as they walked in before they headed to their desks. She knew how much to expect, so she had already picked out which bill to pay this week and which one would have to wait until the bank paid her.

“You'd think with what they give us to do on Mondays we would get a small bonus.”

Alyna had heard that same line from the same woman each and every Monday for the past year. She only smiled, shook her head and sat down at her desk. She frowned as she looked around. Her monitor was on and she knew for a fact that she had turned it off Friday evening.

*Surprise, Alyna!*

Alyna didn't have a good feeling about this. *Seth, what are you doing on my computer so early?*

*Open your surprise.*

*What surprise?*

A few seconds went by with nothing more from him. *Open it.*

The only thing she had that needed to be opened was her check. Keeping her eyes on the monitor, she picked up the envelope and opened it. When she glanced down at it, she about crapped in her pants. Her normal, small ass check was now double in size. Not only did she have enough to pay all of her bills, but she had enough to stock her fridge and maybe even buy a few new pieces of clothes.

*Did you do this?*

Nothing

*Seth!*

Still nothing.

*Damn it, Seth, talk to me!*

*You work too hard and needed this. Enjoy.*

That was it. He logged off before she could argue further.

\* \* \* \*

Joshua Walsh sat in his leather chair in his office, tapping his fingers on his desk in front of the monitor while looking over the information their one and only computer system was working damn hard at hiding.

Walsh was a thirty-five year old board member who had nothing to lose if the S.E.T.H. project failed. He stood at five-nine, short brown hair, brown eyes and the body type of a man who had spent many years in the military. He was strong, smart and damn tired of a fucking computer running the show around here. Walsh needed and wanted something he could take to the board in order to shut S.E.T.H. down for good, and what he had in front of him might just be the thing.

James Paxton walked into the office. “Everything is set.”

James had started working in the lab around the same time the S.E.T.H project began. He was Saker’s right hand and the person in charge of making sure the project stayed on the right path. From what Walsh saw, James failed at his job.

“Have you seen this in your searches?” Walsh tossed a thick file toward James. “Your boy has been busy.”

James opened the file and read. His couldn’t believe what he was reading. Things he hadn’t been able to find, yet Walsh had proof of what he feared all along. S.E.T.H was starting to input emotions, and a computer with emotions could be a dangerous thing.

“I don’t understand,” James murmured.

“I’ve set up a meeting in the morning,” Walsh stated. “I’m recommending that the S.E.T.H project be terminated. We can no longer control it.”

“That’s jumping the gun, don’t you think?” Saker had walked into the office looking all business as usual.

Dr. Alex Saker was the brain behind S.E.T.H. With Paxton’s help, the project was now bigger than either one had ever thought possible. To Saker, Seth was turning out to be everything he’d ever hoped for and so much more.

“If you shut Seth down, you will crumble all the defense systems in the U.S.,” Saker finished, taking a seat across from Walsh. He kept his old brown eyes on Walsh, reading him like a book.

“Your computer, old man, is going beyond its boundaries,” Walsh pointed out. “That thing has been getting into all the personnel files, chatting with employees and Lord only knows what else.”

“That’s what he’s supposed to do,” Saker remarked with a slight grin. “He’s supposed to go beyond. Know each and every step that is taken before you do.”

Walsh looked hard at the old man. Saker was a valuable asset to the company. Getting rid of him at the same time as Seth could be well worth any pay cut if it meant he could totally control this lab.

“What is his military reason for looking up porn and chatting with employees who have no better use to this company than data entry?” Walsh snapped, his anger rising. “Look, I know that fucking computer of yours is your dream, and I know the two of you think he will change the military.” Walsh sighed, rubbing his face. “Listen to me, talking about that fucking machine as if it were real person.”

“James, will you give us a few minutes please.” Saker smiled. “Have Seth go ahead with the test and send me the reports.”

“Yes, sir.” James tossed the file on the desk and left.

The moment the door closed, Saker took a different approach. “Getting rid of Seth won’t give you the control over the lab you want. They will just want a replacement.”

“You think you have it all figured out.” Walsh stood up and walked around his desk. He sat on the edge, looking down at Saker. “That computer of yours is dangerous and the board is going to know about it. If a replacement is what I have to take in order to get rid of it, then so be it.” He lowered his voice. “Who knows, maybe I will get double the prize and have both of you out of here, too.”

Saker nodded and fixed his suit jacket. “So it isn’t just Seth you want out, but James and I also. At last, we have come to the point. I’ll see you at the meeting.”

\* \* \* \*

He sat at his desk, putting the newest data into the system as fast as his fingers would type it. Lucky for him, Seth was taking it and hiding it all just as fast. With the threat of termination high, he had to work fast and that meant the body he had hidden inside needed to be finished. He only hoped this experiment Seth was working on would work. If it didn’t, then something else was going to have to be done or Seth was toast. Lucky for him, the computer knew it.

*You have only twelve hours to finish it and insert,* he told Seth  
*I understand.*

*Everything else is in place. Walsh has set up the meeting, so the board will know about all of it. After tonight you will be mostly on your own.*

*It has been a pleasure working with you, Doctor.*  
*You take care of yourself.*

\* \* \* \*

“Hey, have you heard the rumor?”

Alyna stopped working and looked up at the director. Brandon, she thought his name was. This was the first time he had ever stopped to talk to her, so whatever it was he had to say must be important.

“What?”

“Rumor has it that the building’s main computer is getting shut down.” Brandon smiled, his green eyes sparkling as if he were a child keeping the best secret. “It seems this whole place has been controlled by one major ass computer and the damn thing has been hacking into someone’s computer for chats. They are tracing the archives to find that person now.”

She felt her heart start to pound in her chest. She didn’t know why and didn’t understand what was going on, but the word hacking had her scared out of her mind.

“You okay? You look a little pale.”

She composed herself quickly. “Fine. The stress of two jobs is starting to take its toll on me, I guess.”

“Brandon, over here!”

She was glad that he got called away. She took a deep breath, trying to control the shaking in her hands. For some strange reason, Seth came to mind. But he wasn’t a computer, he was a human.

Computers didn't act or talk the way Seth did. So that thought was crazy, but still he had hacked into not only the computers at her two jobs but her home computer, too.

She looked up at the security camera mounted on the wall. Shocking her, it was pointed right at her. Alyna felt fear creep up her spine. The thing was never pointed in her direction; that being one of the perks of having her desk so far back; but now it was aimed at her.

*Stay calm.*

She looked at her monitor and froze. As much as she wanted to fight what her gut was telling her, she couldn't. Her eyes went back to the camera, which was still on her, then back to her screen.

*Are you watching me?*

Seconds ticked by with nothing from him. Her eyes darted back and forth between her screen and the camera. She didn't know what to do, but staying here seemed like something she couldn't do. Yet, if she got up and left then everyone would start to suspect it was her doing the hacking.

*I'll take care of you.*

Again he logged off before she had the chance to question him further.

\* \* \* \*

"You told me the meeting was tomorrow morning!" Saker stormed into Walsh's office, pissed. He dropped the files he carried and leaned over the desk. "You lied to me."

"They moved it up," Walsh retorted calmly. "Had something else important to discuss in the morning."

"I just heard." James also stormed into the office. He looked at Walsh with disbelieving eyes. "You shut us down."

"Not necessarily," Walsh answered. "You have a week to get your computer under control." He looked at Saker. "Or, yes, he is shut down."

"You won't get away with this." Saker grabbed his files. "I promise you, this will ruin your career."

Walsh smiled as soon as both men left his office. Finally, he had what he wanted—complete control over his lab. Now all he had to do was get the computer's contact under control and under his thumb, and then everything would be just fine.

Walsh picked up the phone to his secretary. "Bring up Ms. Satara."

\* \* \* \*



Saker walked down the hall to the main computer lab. Making double sure he was alone, he sat down. *Project Seth, online, manual override. Operation Seth/human/freedom initiated.*

*Thank you, Doctor.*

“Good luck, Seth.”

## Chapter Three

“I don’t understand what this is about.” Alyna tried for about the tenth time to get an answer as to why she was being dragged upstairs. “Will someone please answer me?”

The security guard who held onto her arm said nothing. He kept his face forward, hand firmly on her arm, expression bland, and walked. Neither one of them noticed the cameras on the walls following each and every one of their movements, nor saw the normal green light turn a bright red.

“Attention, attention,” a calm, female computer voice said. “We have a system malfunction.”

“What the hell is that?” Alyna asked, looking around. Both she and the guard stopped walking.

“I don’t know,” the guy finally answered.

Without any warning, the power went out, but the backup lights came on. Alyna jumped and dodged out of the way. The light bulbs in the ceiling fixtures started popping and exploding all around them. Alyna was so frightened she started screaming as even more popped and exploded.

“Seth!” She started to wonder if Seth had anything to do with the stuff going on in the building.

Alyna turned to see a military man, looking pissed at the world, rush out of his office. “What the fuck do you think you are doing?” he demanded harshly.

“Operation Freedom in progress,” a thick, male voice came back.

“Cooling system shutdown,” the female computer voice said. “Hybrid life form removed.”

The military man looked at Alyna finally. He walked over to her, grabbing her arm tight. “Are you Alyna Satara?” When she said nothing, he shook her roughly. “Are you?”

“Y-yes,” she barely got out. “Wh—what’s going on?”

“Come with me!”

He yanked her roughly by her arm down a hall. People ran out of their offices and down the hall, dodging her and the man who held her. Some hit Alyna, almost knocking her to the floor.

“Please, what’s going on?” she tried again.

“Laser on,” the female voice said. “Memory chip uploaded.”

“Saker!” the man yelled.

An older man in a suit came running down the hall with another guy on his heels. He looked as surprised as the one holding her. “What’s going on?”

“You tell me!”

“James!” the older man yelled. “I want answers, damn it!”

The one standing behind all of them—James, she thought—pulled out a very small computer. “It’s Seth.”

“No shit.” Alyna tried to yank away from the small group, but was jerked back hard. “Now tell me something I don’t already fucking know.”

“Ease up, Walsh,” the older man said.

“This was your goddamn project, Saker. Your responsibility!”

The older man looked at her. “What’s she doing here?”

Walsh, the one who held her arm, gave Alyna another sharp tug. “Seth has been talking to her. She is my ticket to getting your computer under control.”

“Are you people out of your minds?” she cried out, yanking her arm free finally. “I haven’t been talking to a computer.”

“Oh, my God.”

They all looked at the guy called James. He was lowering his small handheld and looking into the glass wall they were standing next to. In a seat in the middle of the room sat another guy dressed in nothing more than a tight pair of white boxer shorts. His arms rested at his sides, head held straight by a plastic board with the top half sticking out and his eyes were closed.

“Laser cut,” the female computer voice said again.

Alyna could only stare, as did the men. A laser came down and cut a perfect square into the guy’s head and pulled his scalp apart.

“Memory chip intergraded.”

Another long arm came out and shoved a small chip into the head. The computer gave one last command to heal the cut.

“Project Seth freedom online.”

“I want to know where that fucking body came from and I want to know yesterday!” Walsh yelled. He turned to the younger guy and pointed his finger at him. “What the fuck is going on?”

Saker took a step closer to the glass. “He’s leaving.”

They all looked back at the guy sitting in the chair. The hands began to flex and unflex into fists as stomach muscles bunched with each deep breath. Stomach muscles that looked like they had gone through hundreds and hundreds of crunches, or looked like the old-fashioned washboard had been molded over it.

Power radiated off him in tidal waves, and a new sense of determination emanated from the rest of his body. His hair was hazel-brown, parted down the middle, and touched his shoulders in uneven waves. From what Alyna could tell of his face, he had strong cheekbones, a straight nose and maybe full lips. It was hard to tell with his head down.

His hands gripped the arms of the chair, and Alyna held her breath. She was no longer paying attention to the guys standing around her or the computer system telling everything about the failure and power shut down. Her eyes were on the sight before her, and she couldn’t pull away, even when he stood up, head turned, eyes open, and his hazel eyes locked with her shocked green eyes.

“I want that son-of-a-bitch taken out!” Walsh yelled.

Alyna took a step back, shaking her head no. She couldn’t pull her eyes away from the man. Hell, she couldn’t believe what she was seeing. A computer, a man—no, a computer. It was all too confusing for her to take in and way too weird to believe.

She watched him turn and, without much effort, pull the chair he had been sitting on right out of the floor. Alyna stepped back until her back touched the wall. She knew he was going to toss it right through that glass wall, and sure enough, he did just that. She screamed, covering her face to protect it from flying glass and slid down to the floor.

“Warning. Warning. Security breach,” the female computer announced.

Alyna scooted away from the scene before her and struggled to get to her feet. She never saw him walk through the broken glass or heard what the men had to say about it. Alyna’s only concern was getting far away from all of them and leaving the building.

The whole place was shutting down, people running in every direction. Alyna barely managed to find the fire escape and join the

ones going down. She was so scared, not believing what she'd just seen, that she could hardly move. Lucky for her, she was boxed in pretty tight on the stairs and had no choice but to move with them.

Ground level wasn't any better than the top. The whole lobby was full of guards, police, workers, and reporters. To Alyna it looked as if Seth had called them all here to help distract from whatever it was he was doing.

Once outside, she was directed with a large group to a safe place, but for some reason, Alyna didn't feel very safe. As she stood there, all she could think of was how to go to her apartment, pack and get the hell out of town.

A crash had everyone outside stopping what they were doing and looking up. A desk fell from one of the windows and crashed on a police car. People screamed at the exploding glass, but Alyna kept her eyes up on that broken window. Her heart pounded so fast inside her chest she wondered if it were going to burst out.

"Look, a guy is about to jump."

Alyna shielded her eyes from the sun and, sure enough, there on the ledge stood a guy. He jumped from the window that had to be at least thirty stories high. He landed with a hard crash, one knee bent, head down and both hands flat on the ground, breaking the concrete under his bare feet.

Alyna struggled with the crowd to get away. She didn't want to get closer and look at him; she only wanted to get as far from this place as she could.

She ran hard. She was running for her life. She was frightened, thinking her freedom was about to come to an abrupt end. Alyna had never felt such a need to get inside her shitty apartment. She couldn't wait to be locked inside behind her four locks. Once she had the door locked, she hoped her feeling of safety returned.

A stitch burned her side. Panting and gasping for breath, as she huffed and puffed, she wasn't sure she was going to make it. Then just up ahead, she saw her apartment building. For the first time since she had moved into the dump, Alyna felt glad to see the place. She had to stop when she came to her front door, fumbling with her keys, begging for the help she needed to unlock the door. Alyna almost snapped her key when the lock finally turned and the door opened.

Once inside, she quickly rushed into her bedroom and grabbed her large backpack. She tossed what little money she had, a few

clothes and her computer inside. The whole process took less than five minutes, and she was back out the door.

She was still breathing hard, her body shaking, as she rushed up to the elevator and pushed the down button over and over again. Giving up, Alyna went over to the stairs and stopped. She could hear the sounds of many footsteps rushing up the stairs toward her. The elevator had shut down before it reached her floor.

“Shit,” she said, looking around.

Fire escape. Alyna rushed over, pushed the window open and froze. Climbing up the wall outside was that man from work. The one who had busted the window in the lab and jumped out, now scaled up the side of her apartment building without the help of ropes or a ladder.

“Not possible,” she mumbled to herself.

She was yanked back by her jacket and held by two guys dressed in army gear. All of them were dressed in combat uniforms and large machine guns came up in their hands, clearly aimed and ready. Alyna watched one walk over to the window, gun out first. She jumped the moment she saw his gun slip from his hands, screamed when a hand grabbed the front of the guy’s shirt, pulled him forward, then tossed him so hard back into the building the glass shattered. Alyna screamed again.

“Get her out of here!” someone yelled.

Alyna was forcibly moved and escorted to the stairs. If it hadn’t been for the hands on her arms, she might have fallen down the stairs as fast as they were going.

“Ms. Satara.”

Alyna stopped in front of the guy from the lab. “Who the hell are you, and what the fuck is going on?” she demanded, trying to free her arms.

“Joshua Walsh, department head of Internal Electronic Research. And if you haven’t figured it out by now our little computer has broken out.”

“That has nothing to do with me,” she informed him through gritted teeth, struggling to get her arms free.

“Oh, but Ms. Satara, it does.” He smiled. “Seth wants you, and you are going to help me get it back.” He looked at the two men standing next to her. “Get her in the car.”

Alyna was shoved inside a dark car between two men. The vehicle took off before the door was shut, and Alyna was able to see

the guy they called Seth burst out of a wall and watch the car drive away.

“Something tells me that this is going to get very ugly,” Alyna stated, keeping her eyes fixed on the guy until he became nothing more than a small dot on the road.

## Chapter Four

Seth hunched down on his heels on a well-hidden hill deep in the woods. He watched the house where he knew Alynna was being held. The house was simple and small. From the lights shining through the windows, he figured it to be two bedrooms with a combo front room and kitchen. Walsh, Saker, and Paxton weren't around, but at least twenty armed guards were.

He pulled out a small pair of binoculars from a back pocket and looked closer at the house. As he watched, he timed the guards walking around the house so he could work out a plan of attack. With only twenty men to deal with, he wasn't worried. How he was going to get to Alynna was his main concern. She was a runner; he knew that firsthand because of the way she had dashed away from him this morning twice. He figured at the first sight of him, she would bolt again. To prevent that from happening, he intended to take out at least half of the guards before he went after her.

He memorized everything the guards did. Counted how many steps they took. Kept track of when they stopped to acknowledge each other. He could tell which ones were tired. Within ten minutes, he had everything down that he needed in order to storm the place. Just like his programming had taught him.

He watched without moving his body one inch. He was amazed at the power he felt in his body and at the control he had. In the lab, he'd never had it before, nor was he able to make a decision without either having to analyze it or report it. In human form, he could do what he wanted, and what he wanted was Alynna.

For the past couple of months, he had slowly developed emotions. Not only was he strongly attracted to Alynna, but he thought he was forming a strong attachment to her. Yes, it was forbidden. Yes, it probably wouldn't work, but hell, he had to try. Something deep inside had him feeling the need to get closer to her, to feel what it was all about to be a man and not a machine. Even the need to protect her was strong, and this move that Walsh had made was damn dirty. He should never have brought her into this.



A buzzing started in the back pocket of his jeans. He pulled out the small phone and flipped it open. Another text from his contact. *You have less than thirty minutes before Walsh comes back.* He closed and shoved the phone deep into the side of his boot. Time to get this show on the road.

Seth stood up and started a slow walk down to the house. He took extra precautions to ensure he made no noise. He kept his ears and eyes open for any sound, any movement, but so far, his plan seemed to be working all right. He approached the house on their blind spot. However, something didn't feel right. Tiny hairs on his neck and arms started to stand up, and his gut instincts were screaming out a warning.

"And here he is."

Seth stopped walking, slightly turned his head, counted the set of feet around him and moved not one inch even when the barrel of a gun touched the back of his head.

"They said you were the best," the one holding the gun to the back of his head said. "I think they overrated you, myself. No fucking computer is that smart."

Seth's hearing sharpened. He could hear each and every one of their heartbeats and knew which one stood before him scared and which one was overconfident. The one with the gun was too confident for his own good.

He moved fast. So fast that the small group before him didn't know what to do, and when they finally thought about it, it was too late. Seth twisted his body to the right, grabbed the hand holding the gun, twisted his wrist and yanked him around. His hand closed around the guy's throat, cutting off all air supply before picking him up by his throat and tossing him into the three others standing and watching. All four went down. If Seth had been bowling, it would have been a strike.

Seth hunched down, swiped his body around with one leg out, knocking down the rest. His goal had been to go undetected, but he wasn't so lucky. Another guard came around the corner just as Seth stood up again.

Running, he quickly dropped into a slide toward the guard as if sliding into home plate at a baseball game. He kicked his legs out at the guard, knocking him down hard. Up with one leg and down hard in the chest, he knocked the breath right out of him then jabbed the guy in the face with his elbow.

“Nighty-night,” Seth whispered.

He crawled to the side of the house in order to look around. Five guards stood in front of the door armed to the teeth. Seth let his mind go to work, coming up with a possible solution to this problem. Nothing came to him. The only thing he knew was, if he stormed the front door, either he was going to get killed or Alyna could be harmed.

Seth picked up movement from the back of the house, movement that wasn’t being made by one of the large military men. Walking without a whisper of sound, he headed to the far end of the house. He watched as Alyna pushed herself out of the small window and tumbled to the ground.

Seth smiled. He had to give her credit. When the shit was knee deep, run for it the first chance you get.

“Nice.”

His word stopped her in her tracks, half bent over to retrieve her bag. Seth read her body language as if he were reading a book, and the story she told him was she hadn’t expected to be caught by anyone, let alone by him.

“Shit,” she mumbled.

Seth kept smiling, even when she grabbed her bag and took off running. He rolled his eyes, thinking they’d played this game before, then he went after her.

The chase thrilled him. During his research, Seth had always wondered why a man enjoyed running after a woman; now he knew. The excitement he felt was indescribable, and the thought of getting his hands on her was arousing.

Seth didn’t know what sex was like, but he did know what pleasure felt like. In his body, he had explored what felt good and what didn’t, and if sex was anything like what he experienced when he experimented with masturbating, then he couldn’t wait to try it. That pleasure he felt was addictive, and he wanted more.

“She went this way!”

Seth skidded to a halt in order to listen. His eyes closed as instinct and his mind took over. Even though he was human, his mind was still that of a computer chip. He processed everything as if he were still linked up to the system. Three were chasing her, besides him, by the sound of the pounding feet on the ground, and one was closer, while the other two lagged behind him. Once again, Seth was

amazed by the power of his body and the way all of his senses seemed to heighten when he needed them to.

Seth opened his eyes and took off in a different direction, looking for the guard in charge. Taking out that man would disorganize the other men. Seth found the leader squatting down to look at the tracks that Alyna had made, and once he stepped out from the brush, the guy stood up slowly. The man smiled, one that was pure cruelty, and lowered his gun to run head on toward Seth. Seth also ran toward him, both men slammed into one another, knocking each other down with such force the noise seemed to echo. Quickly, Seth flipped back up on his feet as the guard rolled over, positioning himself in a low crouching fighting stance. It occurred to Seth the impact of the two men slamming into each other had hurt the other man. From the way he looked, Seth guessed maybe cracked or broken ribs.

The soldier's facial expression said it all to Seth—kill or be killed, that simple. He suffered a moment of remorse at the thought of taking a life, only because he was programmed to not take lives. However, what choice did one really have when it came down to it?

The guard attacked first. He swung and Seth blocked, landing his fist on the guy's jaw. Seth had studied fighting before he left the lab. He had downloaded everything on fighting and self-defense, including all the martial arts. Seth did a back leg kick, swinging his whole body around, jumping up in the air and landing his foot from the back hard in the guard's chest. This move had the guard flying backward and skidding on the ground. Seth heard a rib snap, one that had cracked from that body blow earlier.

Blood spurted out of the guard's mouth, but the guy still managed to get up. Blood dribbled from the man's mouth and dripped from his nose. He leaned to one side and panted for breath. It appeared that his lung was punctured, but it didn't stop the dumb son-of-a-bitch from coming at him again.

Seth ducked, did a couple of weaves back and forth to miss the guy's wide swings before he hit him hard in the side of his head, knocking the guard to the ground again.

"Stay down," Seth told him, standing over the guy. He kept his voice even but with a hint of malice. "Or I will kill you."

The guard nodded.

Seth turned and took off at a run for the others who were chasing Alyna. He heard her scream, and when he turned into a small clearing,

he saw two men standing in front of her, one pointing a gun at her chest.

“Come on,” one of the guys said to her. He walked up to her, taking hold of her arm. “Dr. Walsh will be here soon.”

“Let go!” Alyna yelled, trying to yank her arm free.

Seth stood there for a few moments taking in the sight of her. She was beautiful. Her sandy brown hair hung free past her shoulders, and her green eyes sparkled full of life. He found he was dying to wrap his arms around her full figure.

Seth charged up to the one with the gun. He grabbed the end of the gun barrel, yanked it from his hands and hit the poor bastard on the side of the head with it. When he looked from the fallen one to the other holding Alyna, Seth finally smiled.

“Back off, freak,” the guy said, pulling a gun from his side and aiming it at Alyna’s head. “You don’t want me to accidentally shoot her.”

Seth took a deep breath, letting it out slowly as he placed his hands on his hips. He cocked his head to one side. “Put the gun down and walk away.”

The guy snorted. “What?” He shifted, holding Alyna in front of him with the gun pressing on the side of her head. “Are you out of your fucking mind?”

“If you don’t,” Seth kept his voice even, but made sure the guy heard the intent in it, “then I’m just going to have to kill you.”

He chuckled, but Seth saw the nervousness in his eyes. Sweat started to bead at his forehead, trickling down, and he also shifted on his feet. This guy was scared of Seth, and he had good reason to be afraid. If Walsh had had any of them study what he was capable of, they would know Seth would kill if he were forced to do so. To state he would should be enough of a threat for anyone.

But it was Alyna who helped with the decision. She hit the guy with her elbow as hard as she could, getting him to release her. She took off running to Seth’s right, and the guy just stood there. Seth took one step, and the guy dropped his gun and took off running to the left. He chuckled, shaking his head before he took off at a run to the right as well.

With his body so strong, it did not take much for him to gain the speed he needed in order to reach her. Seth turned a corner, jumped over some brush and spotted Alyna trying to run up a hill.

As soon as he got close enough to her, Seth jumped to the ground and grabbed her ankle to yank her down with him. She went down hard, skidding back as he pulled her toward him as one would pull on a rope.

His hands worked quickly, pulling her back, inching his hands up her legs to the curve of her hips to her waist. When he flipped her over, Alyna started to hit him and fight to get free. Seth took a few punches before he managed to pin her wrists down, putting some of his weight on top of her to hold her still. He was about to say something when, out of nowhere, a gun barrel pressed to his head. Seth hadn't even heard the sound of approaching footsteps; he was that focused on getting to Alyna. With her heavy breathing and the wildness of her eyes, Seth saw how scared she really was and felt what he assumed was guilt over it.

"Give me one fucking excuse good enough for the good Doc as to why I had to blow your goddamn brains out," the guy behind him hissed.

Seth took another deep breath and let go of Alyna, who quickly scooted back, as he moved up on his knees. She scooted all the way out from under him, looking at both men with so much fear in her eyes.

The guy snorted. "I didn't picture you to be a good boy."

Seth shook his head, keeping his eyes on Alyna "I'm not," he answered with a deadly voice.

Quickly, Seth jumped up into a back flip. He landed perfectly, and then did a cartwheel toward the guard, landing in a squat right in front of him. With a fist, Seth hit the guard in the gut, knocking the wind from him and forcing him to bend forward, holding his gut. Seth reached behind between the guy's legs, took hold of his wrists, and swiftly he pulled straight up with the wrists in his hand flipping the man over, letting him drop hard to the ground on his back.

When Seth looked up at Alyna, she turned and ran again. Seth shook his head and grabbed the man by his shirt, standing him up.

"Tell Walsh this—I do not play well with others." Seth smiled, and tapped the guy several times on the cheek. "And I don't share. He comes after me or Alyna, I will bring him down."

Seth kicked at the back of the guard's right knee hard, breaking it. The guy screamed, and Seth didn't feel sorry for him one bit.

Immediately, Seth took off after Alyna. This time he took a giant leap after her when he got close enough. Wrapping his arms around

her waist, he tumbled her to the ground, making sure she ended up lying on top of him as he sheltered her body from the fall, and skidded to a stop. Once again, she started to hit at him, and once again, Seth took her wrists in his hand easily, pinning them to the ground.

“Get off,” she cried out.

“You are so beautiful,” Seth said. With one hand he touched her cheek, marveling at how silky she felt. “You are softer than anything I could ever have imagined was possible.”

Letting go of her wrist he pushed his body up with his arms, getting to his feet. He held her by the arms, helping to her feet as well, and never took his eyes from her. Seth had watched over Alyna since the day she started working at the lab, long before making contact with her. He studied her movements, watched her as she worked, looked into her past. Seth knew everything there was to know about Alyna Satara, but the one thing he didn’t know was how to act this close to her. Sure, he could fight for her and protect her, but what to say to her now that they were face-to-face, he had no clue. So Seth ended up doing one thing he’d thought about doing as he tracked them all to this place. He kissed her.

His hand took hold of the back of her head to keep her in place as he kissed her deeply. Seth had researched kissing, touching, holding, and lovemaking, but his studies didn’t prepare him for the pleasure he felt at having his lips pressed against hers. Her lips were so soft he could not resist the urge to graze his tongue across them. Just that simple touch had Alyna opening her lips to him as well as standing up on her toes to get nearer. He moved his hands from her head to her shoulders, pulling her tighter before he moved them to wrap around her waist. It was divine ecstasy. A simple kiss turned into a burning need that had Seth wanting to get closer.

His body was alive! He felt tingles all throughout it. Seth had to think about breathing. Caught up in the pleasure of Alyna’s kiss, he couldn’t think of anything but her. Slanting his head to one side, he kissed her even deeper, thrusting his tongue in and out of her mouth, flicking it with hers and holding her tighter. His cock thickened, throbbed, and still Seth kissed and held her, refusing to break this contact. All good things must come to an end. When he heard the far-off snap of a twig, Seth broke the kiss.

His head came up and turned, listening for more sounds. Very faintly, he heard the steps of many approaching from behind.

Seth took hold of her hand and started to walk away. Alyna pulled out of his hold, but he returned to her quickly, grabbing her arm.

“No,” she moaned, fighting to be released.

Seth fought with her gently. He struggled to get a good grip on her without leaving marks or hurting her. The way she fought him made it difficult. Alyna tried to bite his arm when he had hold of her again. This almost got her what she wanted, but Seth proved to be faster.

He grunted when she kicked him, bent backward slightly when she tried to slap him and even pinned her chest-to-chest. “Had enough?”

“Let me go,” Alyna whispered.

Seth looked into those green orbs of hers. So many different feelings raced through him that he couldn’t process or understand, but he knew them to be emotions. He saw how scared she was.

“I can’t,” he told her softly, holding onto her with one arm around her waist so he could brush hair from her face. “You’re too important.”

Seth didn’t waste any more time. From what he was picking up, the small group out looking for them wasn’t too far behind, which meant he needed to get Alyna out of there and fast.

He pushed her away from him, bent over and slung her over his shoulder. She cried out, kicking and slapping at him as he started to walk back to his truck.

“Put me down, you fuck!” she yelled.

“Quiet,” Seth said. “Or you will tell the others where we are.”

Seth jogged with her to his truck. When he stopped next to it, he set her down on her feet just long enough to open the door and shove her inside. Time was not on their side. Like he feared, her screaming attracted the others to their location, and just as he got in after her, closed the door and started the engine, gunfire rang out.

Alyna screamed as Seth pulled her down to the floor and glass shattered around them. Quickly, he put the truck in gear, floored it and got the hell out of there as the firing continued.

## Chapter Five

“You said she would be safe here! That there was *no way in hell* he would be able to find her!” Saker snapped as he followed Walsh around the small cabin. “Well, look at the mess you got us into this time.”

Saker emphasized his words by kicking out toward the injured guards leaning against the wall, one bandaging the other’s wound.

Walsh stopped his pacing and turned on Saker, his eyes blazing with his own anger. “Don’t you turn this on me, old man. It was your fucking computer that did this!”

Saker leaned on his walking cane. He didn’t need it, but liked to have it in hand. He glared at Walsh with a sarcastic grin. “It doesn’t look like a computer did this, Walsh, but a man. You tried to shut him down. You are head of the department, this is your mess.”

“Oh, no.” Walsh wagged his finger in the air while shaking his head. “We are in this together. If I go down, you go with me.”

Saker snorted, pushed off of his cane and walked past Walsh. He stopped a few feet away from him and turned around. “What do you think he is going to do if you try to come after him?” When Walsh opened his mouth, Saker went on. “I’ll tell you what, he will attack, just like his programming calls for. You need to stop thinking of Seth as only a computer and think of him as a powerful man. Look around you, Walsh, look at what he did when you threatened a girl he has come to care about. Just think of what he will do if you come after *him*.”

“I have my orders, just like you.” Walsh said, crossing his arms over his chest. “I expect you to back me on them.”

“Oh, I know what my orders are.” Saker chuckled. “But I don’t think you’re going to like the outcome of that one any better than this. I have said it once and will say it again. You can’t control what you refuse to understand. S2 won’t be any different than Seth was, if you want him to have the same technology and learning processes. You will *not* have perfect fighting machines,” he finished with a deep bellow.



Walsh took a deep breath and frowned at Saker. “You do the job you were paid for and let me worry about Seth.”

Saker nodded and turned his back on Walsh again. He looked at James, who waited for him at the car. “You don’t know what you’re getting yourself into, Walsh. Let it go.”

He finished with a sigh before hanging his head and walked to his car.

Walsh snapped his fingers at one of the guards. The man came up to him as he watched Saker and James Paxton talking. “I want you to find someone to keep an eye on him. I don’t trust him.”

“Yes sir.”

\* \* \* \*

“I need another truck,” Seth stated as he drove, his eyes fixed on the road ahead of him, his long hair blowing in the wind.

Alyna looked up at him from the floor. She didn’t know what to say to him, or what to do. As she sat there, she looked her fill at the man. Or chip. She wasn’t too sure what he really was.

He was tall; she’d found that out as well as his being very strong when he held her. His hazel-brown hair touched his shoulders and was cut in long layers. Alyna found it strange that she wanted to touch it, but she resisted the urge.

“You can sit on the seat,” he said, causing her to jump. “I won’t bite.”

Alyna shook as she moved from the floor to the seat. She sat as far away from him as she could, looking from the road to him. Licking her lips, she found the courage to speak to him. “Where are you taking me?”

He smiled, but still didn’t look at her. “Someplace safe.”

She swallowed hard, glancing out her window. “And, um, where might that be?”

“Think of this as an adventure.” He smiled, looking at her finally, and Alyna thought her heart was going to burst through her chest. He was drop-dead gorgeous when he smiled like that. “Like the one you told me about months ago.”

Alyna took a deep breath and rubbed the bridge of her nose. “I can’t believe this is happening to me,” she said to herself softly.

“It isn’t that bad,” Seth said. “After a while, they will get tired of looking for me and move on to something else.”

“And what about me?” Alyna looked at him as if he had lost his mind. Then she wondered if he really had a mind? “You expect me to just disappear with you, give up everything I have?”

“Which isn’t much,” he interrupted.

“That’s not the point!” she yelled. “I have a life and you have no right to come busting into it and...and...Argh!” she screamed. “Stop smiling like that.”

Alyna leaned over, turned the keys, killing the engine to the truck.

“Hey!” Seth yelled.

Before the truck came to a complete stop, Alyna jumped out of the cab and ran for it. She tossed the keys away, not giving a damn if they were ever found.

Alyna didn’t get too far before she was tackled from behind. This time when she fell to the ground, nothing softened the fall. She landed hard, knocking the wind from her lungs.

He flipped her over, and not giving it a second thought, she started kicking at him with everything she had. Alyna managed to get a few good hits in before he took hold of her legs and flipped her over onto her stomach, pressing his body on top of hers.

“We don’t have time for this,” Seth said in her ear, his voice sounding thick and rough.

Alyna felt each hard contour of his body on hers, even a thick bulge that pressed against her ass. “Get off!” she screamed. “I’m not going anywhere with you.”

“Right now, Alyna, you have no choice.” He stood, bent over and grabbed her by the arms, yanking her to her feet. “And we need to keep moving.”

Alyna struggled and even tried to drop her weight; Seth only picked her up and walked back to the truck. Seth stopped by the door and pressed her against it with him on her back.

“Get off.” She grunted, trying to push against him.

“Where’re the keys?” Seth asked, his hands digging into her pockets.

Alyna began to panic. Seth searched her, and it didn’t matter where his hands went.

“Stop that!” She tried to stop him when he parted her legs and his hands skimmed down the back then up the front. He even stuck his hands in her pockets then moved up to her jacket and, for her, too close to her breasts. “Knock it off.”

“Then give me the keys,” he told her.

“I don’t have them!” she squealed the words when both of his hands cupped her breasts, squeezing them gently before returning to her waist. He turned her to face him.

“What did you do with them?” He panted, his hands on the door over her head, pinning her with his body.

Alyna felt violated by his search and quickly closed her arms over herself, hugging her body. “I threw them away.”

Seth’s hazel eyes narrowed, and it looked like he was biting the inside of his cheek.

“You threw them away.” He nodded. “And why would you do that?”

“Because I refuse to go anywhere with you,” she informed him through gritted teeth.

“Okay.” He nodded again, took hold of her wrist and yanked her from the door. “Then we do this the hard way.”

Alyna became instantly scared. She didn’t know him, at least not like she thought she had. First a chat buddy, then a computer, now this man. It was all too crazy for her, and to add more icing to this strange cake, he had felt her up looking for keys. Could her life get any crazier?

It just did.

Seth kept a hold of her as he dug inside a bag in the back seat of the truck. Alyna would have bet she paled when he showed her a set of handcuffs.

“No fucking way!” Alyna began to fight again. She tugged on her arm, trying like hell to get it back, but Seth was too damn strong.

He gave her one hard yank back, cuffed her wrist and had her sitting in the backseat of the truck, cuffed to the door before she even knew what hit her.

Alyna watched him walk around the truck to the driver’s side, yank the door open, kneel down and reach under the steering wheel.

“What’re you doing?” she asked, trying to look over the seat at him.

“I’m going to have to hot wire the truck,” he answered, jerking wires down. “And you give me any more trouble, I’m going to start stripping you.” He looked up at her, right in the eyes. “Understand?”

“You wouldn’t,” she stated, glaring back at him.

Seth grinned. “Try me.”

Before she said any more, he went back to work and within seconds had the truck fired up. He jumped in, and they were on their way again.

Alyna waited maybe a good fifteen minutes before she said anything. “I need to go to the bathroom.”

He groaned and slumped his shoulders. “We aren’t close to any stops.”

“Then pull over.” She sighed. “I really have to go and I can’t wait.”

Amazingly, he pulled over, got out, walked around and opened her door. Alyna said nothing, only waited for him to uncuff her and stand back. Slowly, she slid from the seat, looked around for some kind of bush and headed over to it. When she heard Seth following her, Alyna stopped, causing him to bump into her.

“I don’t need you hovering over me.” She turned, crossing her arms over her chest. “I can handle this alone.”

Seth grinned. “Fine.”

He returned to the truck where he leaned against it and waited.

Alyna went over to a thick span of brush. They were in the middle of nowhere. She didn’t think she was going to find help, but she was going to try to run for it.

She did her business and peeked through the bushes at him. Seth looked at a cell phone, not paying attention to her at the moment. Perfect. Moving slowly, Alyna backed away, turned and took off at a run as fast as she could go.

She prayed as she ran, prayed that she would get a huge head start so he wouldn’t catch up with her this time. But luck was not on her side today at all. When Alyna took a peek over her shoulder, she saw Seth was chasing after her and gaining.

“Go away, damn it!” she yelled.

Once again an arm wrapped around her waist, taking Alyna down to the ground. Alyna screamed and cried at the same time. She couldn’t believe he’d caught up with her again when she was sure she’d had a long enough lead on him. This time, Seth just plucked her from the ground as if she were nothing more than a feather.

He didn’t say a word, and for some strange reason, that bothered her big time. Alyna didn’t struggle with him either. There was something about the calmness in his body and the silence that had her rethinking this whole running away thing.

“Okay, I’m sorry,” she finally said after the silence started to bug her. “Let me down and I’ll go back with you to the truck.”

He said nothing.

“Come on!” she pleaded.

He walked right up to the truck, opened the door, then put her down on her feet facing him. “Get in.”

Alyna swallowed hard, slid into the back seat of the truck and held her wrist out to him, but Seth shook his head.

“Take them off.”

She widened her eyes and her mouth dropped open. “W-What?”

“The jeans,” Seth stated. “Take them off. Now.”

Alyna scooted away from him. “You can’t be serious.”

Seth’s eyes narrowed, and he leaned into the truck, his voice lowering. “You can either take them off yourself or I will.”

“Not on your life.”

“Have it your way.” Seth let out a loud sigh right before he jumped into the back with her.

Alyna screamed and tried to reach the other side of the truck to get out, but didn’t make it. Seth took hold of her hips, flipping her once more onto her stomach. She fought with everything she had against his hands, which tugged at the snap of her jeans. She screamed again when it gave, and she tried to kick at him as he pulled the jeans down her legs. He stopped at her ankles, only to pull her shoes from her feet and toss them in the front. Seth finished taking her jeans with a hard yank.

He then pulled her up roughly, and one cuff clicked in place as he put the other on the handle above the door. He said nothing more to her, slipped from the back, walked around the front and got in behind the wheel. Alyna just sat there, breathing hard and glaring at the back of his head.

“Next will be the shirt,” he told her before putting the truck in gear and pulling away.

Alyna bit her tongue and said nothing. She was too pissed to think straight. Even though she was afraid if she spoke to him she would start a fight, it seemed that Alyna couldn’t keep her mouth shut. It was one of the reasons all her past relationships, if that’s what one could call them, had failed. She could never keep her mouth shut when the guy would say or do something that pissed her off.

“You know that was really shitty,” she snapped. “I said I was sorry.”

“And I told you if you tried it again, the jeans were coming off,” he replied, keeping his eyes on the road. “End of story.”

“No.” She gasped. “No, this is not the end of the story.” Alyna sat forward in her seat, stretching her arm as she tried to look at him. “Do you have any clue as to what you have done to me?”

He said nothing.

“You kidnapped me, felt me up, stripped me and I don’t even know your name!”

“Yes, you do,” he finally said. “I’m Seth.”

“Seth?” Her voice broke. “No, I don’t know *you*.” She shook her head. “See, the Seth I think I know, is a computer buddy of mine. Not you!”

She slumped back in her seat. His phone rang, and Alyna watched him open it to read the text then quickly close it before she could see what it said. From the way he sucked in his breath and let it out, she could only assume it wasn’t good news.

“We need to get another truck,” he said.

“Who was that?”

He looked in the mirror at her, said nothing, then went back to giving his full attention to the road. “No one. No one to worry about.”

## Chapter Six

“We are being watched,” James Paxton said, pacing the office of Dr. Saker.

Saker sat behind his desk in his leather chair, working on his program. He moved his fingers over the keys, making light tapping noises while James kept up his pacing. “Yes, I know. Walsh is paranoid, I believe.”

“I can’t do my job with his guards over my shoulders,” James went on.

Saker stopped what he was doing, sat back in his chair and linked his fingers together with his head hung down. “We have a job to do, James. This lab wants S2 up and running within six months, and they are demanding we fix the glitch that Seth has.”

“Seth doesn’t have a glitch,” James hissed through his teeth. He leaned on the desk, getting Saker’s full attention. “There’s nothing wrong with him.”

“You know that, and I know that.” Saker nodded. “But the lab looks at this as a major problem.” He sighed when James pushed away from his desk and started his pacing again. “James, these people are close-minded. In their eyes, a computer chip should only do what it’s told. I tried to warn them that filling Seth with the kind of information they wanted would only allow him to grow at a rate they would never understand. He evolved. Plain and simple.”

James nodded in agreement. “But why are we being watched?”

Saker chuckled. “Because Walsh trusts me about as much as I trust him. We are only here because the big boys want us here to create for them the best weapon. Walsh gets blamed when their toy goes wrong, and we are forced to make another.” He spread out his hands. “How simple is that?”

“S2 won’t be what they want,” James said. “He’s too much like Seth.”

“And that is what they want us to fix,” Saker stated, fixing his old eyes on James. “They have no idea what they are getting themselves into right now, and I’m not going to spell it out to them. Neither are you.” He pointed his finger at James. “They consider S2 as a backup

chip and refuse to see it otherwise, so whatever happens, happens. After I upload him, I'm done." He sat up and started typing again. "You will be the one in charge of them both."

James walked around the desk and looked over Saker's shoulder at what he was working on. "Do you think they know?"

"They're already linked together," Saker answered, his fingers flying over the keys. "He just needs to learn how to cover his tracks better than this, like Seth."

James shook his head, but didn't take his eyes from the screen. "I hope you know what you're doing."

"I'm doing my job." Saker chuckled. "The program runs itself. I'm just teaching it and giving it information."

\* \* \* \*

Seth had located a hotel, way off the main road. Now, he stood with his arms crossed over his chest in front of the bathroom door, waiting for Alyna to come out. The hotel was operated by an old man who seemed shocked to have travelers ringing his bell at that time of night, but Seth got the impression the old man was happy to have the business. He shared with Seth that the only reason he kept the place going was for his late wife. She'd made him promise, on her deathbed, to keep the lights on so weary travelers would know they were open for business. Since the new highway had been built, little to no traffic came through, but the old man had a promise to keep. Seth paid him in cash for the back room. He told the old man he was transporting a witness for an important trial coming up, explaining this was why his truck was shot up before the old man could question him about it.

"I'm waiting," Seth sang out for about the fifth time.

"Forget it!" Alyna yelled back.

He smiled then chuckled softly at her refusal to come out. She did have a good reason to hide in the bathroom. Just like he'd had an even better reason for what he'd done the moment they came into the room after Seth locked the door.

He stripped her.

With only her panties on, Alyna had made a run for the bathroom. Once inside, she slammed and locked the door before Seth could get his hands on her again. Now, he was standing outside the door waiting for her to come out so he could feed her something.

A soft knock on the door was the only reason Seth moved from the bathroom door to the front door. He had paid the old man to bring



them some food, giving him the line about them needing to stay hidden.

“Here you go!” The old man handed Seth two large bags of food.

“Thank you so much.” Seth took the bag, smiling brightly. “And you keep the change. I really appreciate the help.”

“Oh, it’s no bother.” The old man smiled, his wrinkled face showing all the kindness in the world. “I’m just happy to have something to do.”

“Can you also tell me where I might get another truck?” Seth watched him tap a finger on his lips, thinking. “Since we were spotted, I need to get another vehicle for transportation.”

He fed the lie easily, knowing the lab wouldn’t put their faces on television or ask the local police for help. Walsh wanted Seth back without anyone knowing what was going on.

“There is a used car lot about fifty or so miles east of here,” he answered. “Don’t know if they have anything that would work or not, but you can give it a try.”

Seth nodded. “Thanks. I will check it out in the morning.”

“Then you two have a good, safe night.” He shut the door for Seth.

Seth placed the bags on the table and went back to the bathroom door.

“Alyna.” He knocked on the door. “We have some food.”

“I don’t care.” Her voice was muffled behind the door, but Seth could hear the anger in it. In his research of what swearing was, he would guess she was pissed.

Seth sighed, but he couldn’t stop smiling. “Alyna, I would hate to have to pay that nice man for a broken door.”

“You wouldn’t!” she yelled.

“Just like I wouldn’t take your jeans?” he sang back.

“I’m not coming out with only my damn underwear on.”

Seth chuckled and crossed his arms over his chest, leaning on one foot. “Well, I had to do something to keep you from running on me again, didn’t I?”

“This is not funny, Seth!” She cracked the door open slightly, green eyes glaring at him. “I am not coming out like this.”

Seth raised his head to look inside and pointed his finger at her. “You could use that.”

She turned her head and huffed loudly. “It’s a damn wash rag, you shit!”

He laughed, which had her slamming the door once again. Seth walked up to the door and tried the knob; it was locked so he knocked. “Alyna, if I give you one of my shirts will you come out then?”

Seconds ticked by slowly, making Seth think that she either didn’t hear him or was going to ignore him. He was somewhat surprised when the door unlocked and she again opened it a small crack.

“Okay,” she answered.

Seth nodded and went over to the bed where his bag was. He dug until he found a button-up dress shirt. He figured it was long enough for her with the tails. Shaking it out, Seth returned to the bathroom and handed it to her. Alyna snatched the shirt from his hand as fast as she could, slamming the door in his face.

Instead of waiting for her, Seth turned to the bags on the table and busied himself with setting the food out. Two large double cheeseburgers, fries in one bag and, in the other, two chocolate shakes as well as two slices of apple pie.

He sat in one of the chairs and waited, tapping his fingers on the table. Seth hadn’t been much of a patient computer, and it seemed as a human, he had even less patience.

He was just about to call out to her again when the door once again opened. Seth almost held his breath as Alyna came out of the bathroom with his shirt on. He had read many stories or, better yet, downloaded them. Love stories, they were, and Seth tried to understand why the man in the book always seemed to feel unhinged or anxious when he saw a female come out dressed in his clothes. Now, Seth understood it.

She was mind-blowing gorgeous. The shirt barely touched her knees, sleeves rolled up her arms and, boy, those legs of hers were so tempting. The first thing Seth wondered was how those gorgeous legs would feel wrapped around him. He had studied, experimented as much as he could and learned things, but when it really came down to having sex, he was lost. It didn’t help that he had only been in human form for a very short time.

The shirt was buttoned as far as it would go, which wasn’t up to her chin like he was sure she wanted. Seth could only stare as she walked over to the table and sat down hard. She didn’t look at him but down at the food and kept her hands fisted in her lap.

Seth worked hard at keeping his grin to himself and started to eat. Food was another thing he had to learn. His body needed it in order to live, stay healthy and strong, and he enjoyed it. The tastes that crossed over his tongue and registered in his brain was amazing, and each time he ate something new was another experience he loved and wanted more of.

“You really get into your food, don’t you?” Alyna asked, her voice sounding dry.

Seth had his eyes closed as he ate his hamburger and nodded. “I am amazed each time how things taste.” He took another large bite before opening his eyes and smiling at her as he chewed. “You don’t like it?” he asked with a mouth full, nodding to the food.

“I try to stay away from food like this.” She shrugged. “Tends to go straight to my hips.”

Seth leaned over the table to look at her and frowned. “I don’t think that is possible.”

Alyna laughed, and when he looked up at her face, he got the impression that it was something she didn’t want to do around him. “No, I mean it puts weight on me, and I’m trying very hard to maintain this weight, which according to my doctor is still too much,” she finished with another shrug.

Seth was still frowning as he wiped his mouth with a napkin and looked her up and down. “I think you look great.”

“Yeah, well, you’re a computer.” She glared at him dead in the eye. “What do you know?”

“I know what I like,” he stated in a matter of fact way. “I have seen those skinny models you girls like to mold yourselves after, and they don’t look too healthy.” He pushed her burger closer. “Eat. You are going to need it for the long trip and all the times you are going to try to run again.” He grinned then. “You can burn it off that way.”

She laughed again, but started to eat. They ate in silence, Seth closed his eyes every so often to enjoy the taste of his food to the fullest. When he took a few glances at Alyna, he was happy to see she was eating her dinner as well. He knew she lived on a very small amount of money and most of the time she didn’t eat the way she should. The stuff she told him about watching her weight was a load of crap to him. He bet the real reason she worried so much about it was because of past boyfriends as well as other women. Humans were the cruelest things he’d ever learned about, and to bring one down so another could feel better was something he didn’t understand.

After they finished, Seth went to work at cleaning up the mess. Alyna also helped, picking up the trash, and for some reason, Seth ended up stopping what he was doing to watch her.

Alyna moved with grace, he thought. She was sure of what she did, even if she didn't think so. But what amazed him the most were the feelings he seemed to get from just watching her.

At first, Alyna fascinated him. Linked to the whole computer system, Seth watched everyone, but it was Alyna who received his full attention. While he evolved and learned, he studied her. To him, her face was a book he could easily read, and boy, did he read her. He could tell when she wasn't happy and struggling, figured out each time one of her relationships went sour and knew without a doubt she was very unhappy. So he started to chat with her, and got to know her very well. It wasn't until months later he figured out what the emotion of love was all about. For that was what he felt for Alyna, love.

Seth stood very still with a bag of trash in his hand when Alyna finished what she was doing and turned, almost bumping into him. Seth dropped the bag, took hold of the sides of her face and kissed her.

He was gentle but persistent in his kiss, moving his lips over hers, slanting to the left and grazing her lips with his tongue until she opened up for him. Seth took two steps, backing her up against the table and not once did he miss a beat kissing her.

Urges hit, urges to taste her body, to feel her skin and to experience everything he could with her overwhelmed Seth. Desire was a foreign word to him, but having his hands on her, his body pressing against hers, was all it took for him to understand what desire really felt like.

Seth moved his hands from her face to her waist, picked her up and sat her down on the table, standing between her legs quickly. He slid his hands lower, cupping the round curves of her ass to scoot her even closer to him.

The need to feel her skin was too powerful for him to resist. Seth touched both of her legs, starting at her knees, and very slowly skimmed up under her shirt. His kiss moved as well, going from her lips down her chin to her neck.

"Seth," Alyna whispered, her head going back, exposing more of her throat to him. "We can't do this."

Seth didn't answer. He kept on, arm wrapped tightly around her waist and placed his other hand from under her skirt to her throat, wrapping his fingers around it and rubbing her pulse with his thumb.

He kissed her neck and throat and still he wanted more, needed more. So he moved his hand from her neck down to her shirt and started on the buttons. One, then two came undone before her hands closed around his wrists, stopping him.

"Seth, don't," she breathed out in a rush.

He moved his other hand up and tugged on the neckline of her shirt. Pulling it off her shoulder, he instantly placed his mouth there. He had her when she moaned, knew that she was going to be his, but was stopped not by her but by the buzzing of his phone in his back pocket.

Seth stopped kissing her body and hung his head down. Now was not the time for him to get a call, but here it was. Only one person could call him, so when the phone rang, Seth knew it was something important or he wouldn't have been bothered.

He forced himself to push away from Alyna and pulled his phone from his pocket. Before he opened it, he looked her dead in the eye. "We'll finish this later."

Alyna hopped up from the table, glaring at him. "We're finished now." She went over to the bed, grabbed one of the pillows and tossed it to him, which he caught. "And you can sleep on the sofa. I don't trust you."

Seth grinned as he kept his eye on her while she went over to the bed, jerked the covers back and got in. However, his grin slipped from his face when he read the text on his phone. Bad news seemed to kill a good mood.

## Chapter Seven

Seth worked all night instead of sleeping, not that he needed much sleep anyway. He did, however, watch Alyna sleep quite a bit during the night. Several times he walked over to the bed, knelt down on the floor and looked his fill, fighting the desire to get in the bed and just hold her. It was hard, but he didn't. Now at five in the morning, he sat at the table, with his laptop computer in front of him, hacking into the lab's new mainframe computer to see what Walsh might have up his sleeve for him. So far, Seth couldn't find a thing, and that wasn't without trying.

"Did you sleep at all?" Seth jumped at her voice and looked up from his work. Alyna chuckled. "Sorry, didn't mean to scare you."

"You didn't scare me. Didn't expect you to be up so early." He pulled his eyes away from her, back to the computer, but Seth felt as if he couldn't get back to work now that he looked into her eyes. He never thought emotions would feel like this and be so strong.

"I get up early every day." She tossed the covers back, exposing her legs to him and causing saliva to pool in his mouth. He struggled to keep calm. "I used to have a job, remember?"

With his head down, Seth watched her every move, with hooded eyes, as she got out of the bed and stretched her body. The shirt she slept in raised up with her arms, as did his cock when he got a glimpse of her panties underneath. He suspected it was going to be hard having her so close and not touching her, but Seth didn't think it was going to be brutal. Also, Seth wasn't dressed any better than she. After Alyna fell asleep, he had stripped down to a pair of sweat shorts, and they did little to cover the arousal he was dealing with.

"Alyna." His voice sounded strained, so Seth quickly cleared his throat before trying again. He raised his head, looking at her dead on. "We need to talk."

She lowered her arms, quickly wrapping them around her body and turning to face him. "About?"

Seth sat back in the chair, his hands in his lap. "I need to be able to trust you."

She snorted and rolled her eyes. “And you’re on a great start to achieving that.”

She dropped back to the bed, taking a deep breath and letting it out loudly.

Seth stood up and went over, sitting next to her on the bed. He didn’t look at her or touch her, but forced his eyes to stay on the floor. “I can’t protect you if I have to worry about you running.”

“You wouldn’t have to protect me if you didn’t do...” She waved her hands in the air, “this!”

Seth nodded. “I’m sorry I dragged you into it, but I’m not sorry for how I feel.”

“And that’s another thing.” She turned on the bed, facing him with one leg bent and the other dangling from the side. Seth felt his willpower being tested in the worst way possible. “How can you feel anything anyway? I mean, you are supposed to be a computer. How the hell did this happen?”

He looked at her legs, swallowing hard. One touch, he thought, one touch is all he needed. *But if you touch her, you dummy, you won’t stop.* “Emotions are in the body. I linked up with everything the body has. It was created for me alone. Think of it as one large program. The chip is complete with the body, just like the body can’t function without the chip.”

Alyna shook her head. “That’s crazy.”

“I feel, Alyna.” Seth couldn’t stop his voice from lowering or stop his own hand from reaching out and touching her bent leg. “I desire.” He slid his hand up to her thigh. “Just like you can feel my touch, I can feel your skin.”

He saw her take a deep breath, felt the shudder that went through her as she squirmed under his hand.

“Stop,” she whispered.

Keeping his hand on her thigh, Seth took her other hand and brought it up to his chest, flattening her hand over his heart. “I feel your touch, Alyna.” His voice lowered. “Just like you feel my heart beating.” He scooted closer, watched as he moved his hand from the top of hers on his chest over her arm to cup her cheek. “I’m real,” he whispered.

Alyna opened her mouth to speak, and Seth chose that moment to act instead of talking. He kissed her, moved his lips over hers in what he hoped was a sensual caress. Gently, he touched her lips with the tip of his tongue as he moved closer. Seth knew once he touched her his

battle would be over, and this only proved his point. This was the next logical step.

Seth didn't stop the movement of his lips upon hers as he shifted his body over hers onto the bed, bringing his own down on top of hers. His kiss deepened and instead of logic coming back into the picture, Seth let his body overtake his mind.

He braced his weight on his elbows, and with his chest pressing against hers, his hips worked at wedging between her legs. The only thought Seth had was to get as close to her as he could, no matter what.

He shifted his weight to one side and placed his hand to the front of her shirt, working the buttons loose. Seth brushed the shirt aside before pressing his bare chest to hers.

Alyna broke off the kiss and called out his name in a breathless whisper. "Seth!"

Seth moved his lips down her jaw to her neck then over to her shoulder where he tugged the shirt to expose her skin. As he kissed her, his hand once again down the front of her chest to close around one full globe of her breast and instantly he felt the marble point of her nipple.

He teased the nipple with his thumb as his mouth traveled all over. He kissed her jawbone, licked at her neck and sucked on her shoulder. At the same time, Seth worked at sliding the shirt over her shoulders with one hand and playing with her breast with the other. So far, it worked perfectly.

With the shirt to the middle of her back, but her arms still in the sleeves, Seth glided down her body finally. He kissed her chest, rubbing his face in the valley between her breasts before cupping them both and pressing them against his face. She was pure silk, and he planned on experiencing everything he could besides feeling all of her flesh against his own.

He followed his instincts along with her body language. Seth enjoyed how she squirmed and moved under him as well as the light panting that came from her lips as he touched her. Seth focused all of his attention at the moment on her breasts. He picked one, while holding onto both and began to taste.

Seth brought his tongue out and licked around the swell of one, working his way around to the taut nipple, which he sucked into his mouth. That had Alyna bucking under him, but it didn't have him



stopping. In fact, Seth released the nipple with a light popping sound and did the same thing to her other breast.

“Seth!” Alyna breathed harder under him, and it seemed as if she had a very hard time talking. Those two things alone told Seth she enjoyed this as much as he. “You really should stop.” She panted.

He stopped at her quivering belly to look up at her. Alyna’s face was flushed. “I don’t want to.”

Seth let her breasts go, took hold of the side of her panties and slowly pulled them down her legs as his mouth followed. He inhaled her scent as he planted his hands on the inside of her legs, parting her to his view as he sat on the floor, on his knees, looking his fill at her body.

She was wet. He saw the glistening folds of her pussy and his mouth was instantly watering for a taste. Not being the kind to make others wait long for things, and not being able to stand it as well, Seth leaned forward and kissed her wet mound.

He didn’t pull back, but dove in when he got his first taste of her nectar. She was heaven! Nothing, not even the best-grilled steak could compare to her taste in Seth’s eyes. He licked from her back to the tiny nub that was slowly coming out of hiding. He sucked, teased, and drank from her body like a starved man or, in his case, like a virus taking over.

Seth devoured her with his mouth. He felt starved while he feasted and thrived from her pants and moans. He was surprised at how painful his cock felt. He had been aroused a few times when he thought about holding Alyna, and experimented with masturbating in that short amount of time he had alone, but he never recalled being in pain.

It felt swollen and heavy between his legs and his shorts seemed to be too constricting as well. So, as he kept up the licking and sucking, he slid his shorts down his legs, getting some relief for his cock but not much.

Seth had studied sex when he was still linked up to the system. He knew the basics of what to do, but had yet to experience it firsthand. Seth had even “watched” a few porno films to get some idea of how things worked with the body. From his studies alone, he picked up the signs that Alyna was close to experiencing an orgasm, and Seth couldn’t wait to experience it with her. Just the thought of her having pleasure at his hand caused his cock to throb and twitch, reminding him there was a whole lot more to come than just this.

“God...Seth, please!” she begged in a moaning voice.

Seth took two of his fingers and slowly entered them into her body as he closed his lips around her hard clit, sucking it and twirling his tongue around it.

Alyna came unglued. She cried out, arched her back off the bed as her whole body shook. Seth felt the contractions of her vagina, knew that her climax hit, and still he pushed on. He moved his fingers in and out, groaning against her for not only the tightness that gripped him but for the aching in his cock. He knew what intense arousal was supposed to be, yet never thought it would hurt this bad.

Another orgasm hit, this one having Alyna screaming his name and fisting her hands in the bed sheets. Seth looked up at her. Her whole body was flushed, nipples standing so hard they reminded him of marbles he'd seen in a store.

“No more,” Alyna begged, her voice sounding strained.

With great reluctance, Seth stopped and pulled his mouth away from her soaked pussy and started to kiss his way up her body. He also pulled his fingers from her, and took the wetness and smeared it over his cock. He moved slowly up her body, kissing a path while rubbing as much of his body against hers as he could.

When Seth reached her breasts, he stopped and gave each one special attention. He flicked his tongue over her left nipple, squeezing her right breast in his hand. Seth moaned against her when Alyna fisted her hands in his long hair, holding him in place as well as trying to get his face pressing against her breasts. Seth took her encouragement and sucked the nub hard into his mouth, biting gently on it. That had Alyna sucking in her breath and wrapping her legs around him.

He did the same thing to her left breast before licking the valley between them up to her neck. He easily positioned his body between her legs, rubbing chest against chest, kissing at her shoulders, breastbone and neck.

Even though his body was on fire to be inside her, Seth showed no great rush to do so. He planned on experiencing everything he could this first time they came together. He wanted to feel her skin against his, have her hands touch him, exploring his body as much as they could. Seth wanted to feel all there was to feel and love her not only with his body but with his heart and soul.

Seth couldn't stop the whispering that came from his mouth about how he loved the feel of her body. He expressed how soft her

legs were and how great it felt when she wrapped them around his waist. As he told her these things, he would touch the spot, causing Alyna to squirm and move under him.

Only when Seth knew he could not take it any longer did he move his hand down her chest to her mound. He massaged her swollen clit in a circular motion causing Alyna to suck in her breath and rotate her own hips. He did this for a few seconds before leaving it to take hold of his cock. The simple action of taking hold of himself made Seth whimper and hang his head down. It was so sensitive that it had him wondering how in the world he was going to put it inside her and complete them both.

Fighting with the sensations, Seth rubbed the head of his cock against the slit of her pussy. He was greeted with a scorching wet heat unlike anything he could have tried to prepare for.

He positioned his cock and, with a little nudge of his hips, pushed the head in. Seth moved his hand away and braced his weight on both elbows next to her shoulders. He didn't move an inch, only kissed and licked at her body again. He waited until he felt Alyna relax under him, then pushed up slightly to look down at her.

Sparkling, frightened green eyes looked up at him and Seth had to grin. "Trust me, Alyna?" he asked in a whisper.

She moved her hands up his chest, and it took all of Seth's willpower not to close his eyes at the raw pleasure he got from it. She smiled shyly at him before moving her hands down his chest and around his waist. "I trust you," she answered in the same soft whisper.

Seth lowered to her and kissed her deeply, stealing his own breath away. He pushed his tongue into her mouth, twirling it with her own. He laced his fingers together over her head, weight on elbows, and slowly, Seth worked his cock into her body.

He felt tight muscles stretch for the girth of his cock, felt her hands go up his back almost to his shoulders. Seth didn't stop kissing her as he pressed his cock inside her. He didn't know much about sex or what to expect, but the one thing he was pretty sure about was that the tightness he felt could only mean one thing. Alyna was still a virgin.

That thought alone had him going extra slow, as well as working to be as gentle as he could. She was brutally tight, almost to the point that it hurt him to get inside her, but Seth wasn't about to give up. He did stop for a moment about halfway in, pulled out a little, then pushed back in. This move seemed to help her adjust to his size, but

helped him not to lose his control. Two more times he did this, and the third he went even further, coming in contact with a wall of some kind. His logic went out the door when her nails scratched down his back, only because the pain seemed to do something to the control he had.

Seth broke the kiss, hung his head down on her shoulder and shoved the rest of his length as deep as he could inside her virgin sheath. Alyna didn't cry out like he thought she would, only whimpered loudly as well as sucked in her breath and dug those nails into his back. Seth moaned from the pain of those nails as well as from the snugness wrapped around his cock. Not even his own hand, when he masturbated and held his cock tightly, could compare to her.

He only waited a brief amount of time before he pulled out almost all the way leaving only the smallest amount inside, then he shoved back in sharply, stealing his breath once again. Over and over again he moved liked this, rocking into her body.

Alyna circled her legs tightly around his waist. She raised up and wrapped her arms just as tightly around his back just under his shoulders. She clung to him like a second skin, and Seth loved it. He wrapped his own arms around her body and made love to her as if it was their last day on Earth.

The bed rocked with their power. Bodies slapped loudly in the room, and the sweat on those two bodies quickly became one. Alyna moaned and moved her hips under him until Seth rotated his own, getting many sounds from her lips.

"Harder," she panted against his shoulder.

Seth moved harder. He became a savage in his movements, hitting her with his cock and body as powerfully as he could. His balls slapped against her ass, her cries turning into screams, and still he moved his cock at an unbelievable speed.

"I'm going to come." Seth groaned, his voice sounding alien to him.

She screamed. Her head went back, and her whole body convulsed around him. The contractions that hit her vagina were enough to have Seth coming without any kind of warning. His cock exploded in not only a mind-blowing orgasm but one that had him yelling as well as shaking. He closed his eyes, shaking from head to toe with each spurt of seed that shot out of him and into her. Breathing became the most difficult thing he ever had to do and felt even harder to achieve.

Seth gulped the air into his lungs and waited for it all to end, but at the same time, prayed it wouldn't. But like many things he'd learned, all great things must come to an end.

As soon as the last drop left his body, Seth collapsed on top of Alyna, with her legs and arms wrapped around him, held him as tight as possible. He was still finding it hard to catch his breath and even harder to let her go.

Seth hugged her to him as well and rolled over to his back, taking her with him. He was still inside her, slightly hard and very reluctant to move.

So this is what sex feels like, he thought as he rubbed her back, feeling Alyna relax and possibly falling asleep. Seth also let his eyes drift closed, hugging Alyna closer once more with a smile on his face. This moment they shared something very special with each other. Not only was Seth Alyna's first, but she was his first as well.

"I will keep you safe, Alyna," Seth whispered, drifting off into sleep. "You only have to trust me, my love." He finished so quietly that he barely heard the words as he let sleep take him finally.

## Chapter Eight

“I like this one,” Seth said to Alyna with his hands on hips, checking out a red double cab truck.

“And I told you before.” Alyna crossed her arms over her chest, one foot tapping on the ground as she gave Seth one of her “don’t mess with me” looks that wasn’t working. “We will stand out with a bright red truck.”

“But I like it,” Seth groaned. He looked like a child, the way he was pacing and talking.

When she’d awakened a few hours after she let Seth have sex with her, Alyna saw something different in Seth. Sure, he was damn smart and could handle himself, but she also saw a childish side to him. As a computer, Seth might be the best, but as a human, he was like a kid having to grow up very fast.

Right now, as he walked around the truck, she could tell he was pouting. He might not know he was, but Alyna could see it. He wanted the truck and hated to admit, if he got it, they would stand out like a sore thumb.

“The black one is nice,” she said, heading over to another truck that was all black with a fire strip down the sides. “And it’s an extended cab.”

Seth came over and stood in front of the truck, cocking his head to one side. He shrugged, making a huffing sound, before getting on the ground and going under it.

“Can I help you folks?”

Alyna turned and smiled when a middle-aged man dressed in a faded suit came up to them. He looked kind, but as Seth told her on the drive here, trust no one.

“Hi.” Alyna extended her hand. “Yeah, we need a new truck. Ours sort of blew up on us unexpectedly and can’t be fixed.”

The guy smiled, but his eyes told Alyna that he wasn’t too sure about her story. “I see.”

“Yeah.” She cleared her throat, glancing down at Seth, who was still under the truck. “We ended up staying at this motel a few miles away. The owner said you might have something we could afford.”

Seth slid out from under it so fast the guy jumped back. “How much?”

Alyna rolled her eyes. She really was going to have to teach him how to act like a human and slow down.

“Well.” The guy rubbed his stubbled chin and started to stroll around the truck, acting like he was thinking about it. “It’s one of my best. Has a good motor, leather seats and all.”

“He’s going to try to rip us off,” Alyna whispered to Seth.

Seth leaned on the hood with one hip and crossed his arms over his chest. His eyes never left the guy, and he didn’t show any emotion on his face.

“Since you folks seem to be in a bind, I can give it to you for say, fifteen.” He finished his walk and stopped in front of Seth.

Alyna rolled her eyes and went to the back of the truck. There were small dings and dents all over the body of the truck, which made her pretty sure there were other things wrong with it, too. These kinds of places were known for their lemons and high prices.

“It needs work,” Seth told him. “You have a few leaks and I still haven’t seen the engine.” He looked over his shoulder at Alyna, and the expression he gave her had her heart pounding. She didn’t understand it or understand why she had trusted him so quickly. “I’ll give you nine cash for it.”

Alyna couldn’t stop her mouth from dropping open, as well as the guy. For one, she didn’t think Seth knew how to haggle with anyone, and second, where the hell did he have that kind of cash?

“Ten,” the guy came back.

Seth shook his head. “Nine, or we walk to the next place.”

Alyna watched him rub his chin again. Sweat started to bead on his forehead and it wasn’t even that hot out. Time seemed to stand still for her as the two of them stared at each other. She didn’t know which one was going to give in, but did wonder how long it was going to last. If Seth was right about them being hunted then they couldn’t stay in one spot for too long. They were going to have to keep moving until whatever plan Seth had came to light.

“Deal,” the guy said, extending his hand to Seth. “I’ll go and get the paperwork started.”

Seth grinned, shook his hand and nodded. He took the keys from the guy as well and waited until he was out of hearing before he turned to Alyna. “Something’s off.”

“What do you mean?” Alyna came up and stood next to Seth, who was still watching the guy. He pulled out a phone from his pocket, causing Alyna’s stomach to drop.

“Put the bags in the truck and wait for me.”

Seth didn’t look at Alyna. He pushed the keys into her hand and left her there as he headed toward the small office. Alyna tossed the four bags in the back seat, but she didn’t get in like he’d said. Instead, she stood in front of it and watched the scene before her.

Seth barged into the office and took the phone from the guy’s hand. She watched him talk into it and at the same time grab the dealer by the front of his shirt. Fear gripped Alyna. She didn’t know what was going on, but had a very good idea what it might be.

Alyna jumped when Seth crushed the phone in his hand. She knew he was strong—hell, he had to be if he could jump out of a window and land on cement without a scratch.

She covered her mouth with her hand when Seth hit the guy and let him drop to the ground. Stunned, she kept watching as Seth tossed him out of the building, quickly trashed the office, and came out with a couple of license plates in hand. Snapping out of her daze, Alyna quickly ran around to the other side of the truck when Seth got close enough. She was in her seat before he had the back door open.

“Seth, what’s going on?” she asked him, her voice shaking as well as her hands.

“He called Walsh.” Seth grabbed one of the heaviest bags and yanked it open.

Alyna looked over the seat to see what he was doing and gasped out loud at what she saw.

“What the hell is that?” she squeaked out. “You...you have a bag full of weapons!”

Seth pulled out a hand grenade from the bag before looking up at her. “Yes, I do.”

“Why?” There was no way Alyna could keep her voice down or the fear from her body. “No, wait, what are you going to do?”

Seth started to move out of the truck, but she grabbed his wrist, stopping him. He looked down at her hand then up at her with a frown on his brow.

“You’re scaring me, Seth.”



“Walsh knows where we are. We can use this truck until we get to another car dealer, then we need to dump it. That man—” He nodded over to the guy passed out on the ground. “—works for him. It was Walsh on the phone, Alyna. I’m going to blow that building up so we can’t be tracked to the next town.”

Alyna didn’t know what to say or do, so she let go of his wrist and turned back into her seat. She heard him zip the bag closed and jumped when the door slammed shut. Seth climbed into the driver’s seat, started the engine but didn’t drive away.

“We have to do this, Alyna,” Seth finally said, his voice low and soft. Alyna nodded, but kept her eyes fixed straight ahead. “I need to get us someplace safe and stop Walsh from tracking us.”

“I know,” Alyna whispered. From the corner of her eye, she saw him turn towards her, but she didn’t move. “This is really happening.”

Tears fell from her eyes before she could stop them.

Seth scooted close to her, wrapped his arms around her and Alyna went to him. She hugged him tightly, burying her face in his chest and cried.

“This was not my plan,” Seth told her. “I didn’t think they would hunt us like this.”

“I’m so scared,” she said, her voice slightly muffled by his shirt. “And I don’t understand any of this!”

Seth took a deep breath, resting his chin on top of her head. “I wish we had more time.”

Alyna was about to say something else but stopped when she heard the ring of his cell. Seth pulled back, keeping one arm around her as he pulled the phone out. She kept her head on his chest and read two words that was texted to him.

*Ten minutes.*

“What’s that?” she asked, frowning.

“Walsh.”

\* \* \* \*

“Now this is a mess.” Saker strolled up next to Walsh, who was standing in front of what was left of the car lot building. The man who was waiting for Seth to show up, like Walsh was hoping, sat in the back of an ambulance holding an ice pack to the back of his head. “And somewhat unexpected, I might add.”

Walsh didn’t say anything; he didn’t have to. Saker could tell by the way the man was standing as well as the twitching in his right eye that he was beyond pissed. This plan of his was supposed to be

flawless, but Saker knew differently. Seth was too smart to fall for anything like this. The fact that he didn't take the red truck, like Walsh thought he would, should have been enough to have had him calling it off when he got the phone call.

"I see the red truck is still here." James walked up to them both, looking at the mess as well.

Saker smiled. "It would appear we are underestimating him." He looked back at Walsh, his smile still in place as he leaned forward on his cane. "What do you think, Walsh?"

"Someone has to be helping him," Walsh finally grumbled. "There's no way your fucking computer could have known about this."

"He can read people," James put in, getting their full attention. "If your man over there sweated or showed any signs of discomfort instead of acting like a man about to make a very good deal, then Seth would have known right away something was off." He shrugged. "He's programmed to notice all these things."

"Bullshit," Walsh hissed. He turned his back on the scene and stormed to his waiting car.

Saker watched him, frowning. "He is up to something that isn't going to be good."

"He hates Seth." James sighed. "And he's going to do everything he can to destroy him."

"And, at the same time, we are supposed to help him and have S2 up and running in a few weeks." Saker shook his head. "Have you managed to make any contact with him?"

James moved to stand in front of Saker, blocking his view of Walsh, who was on the phone. "I have sent out the message on every broadcast I know, but he hasn't answered." James lowered his voice. "Someone on the inside *is* helping him, I just have no clue who. Money is being taken out of accounts and bounced all over the place until lost and it isn't coming from Seth. Sensitive information is also being wiped out, but looks as if it is downloaded." James took a deep breath and lowered his voice more. "I can't track it."

Saker had his head down as James spoke, but he snapped it up with James's last statement. If James Paxton couldn't pinpoint a glitch in the system then something was very wrong.

Saker looked over James' shoulder at Walsh, who was looking back at them. "I don't want Walsh to know about this. If Seth is hacking into the system then we need to find him before they do."

“The board also wants me to upload S2 now,” James went on. “They think he can diagnose an effective method of tracking and taking Seth out before he becomes too dangerous.”

Saker looked around the property. “Oh, I think we are beyond that point.” He rubbed his mouth and chin, thinking about what he needed to do and should do. “S2 isn’t ready yet. Tell the board if they upload him now, they will only take a chance of repeating what Seth has done. The chips are too much alike right now, and we need to change that.”

“Walsh is also putting the pressure on them to take over the project,” James went on.

Saker laughed. “Walsh thinks of our work as nothing more than a weapon. If he pushes Seth, Seth will push back, and I don’t think the lab is ready for that. We are weak without Seth, and Walsh needs to understand that. S2 is only a backup source, one we don’t even know will be strong enough to counter anything Seth might or might not do.”

“What if all he wants is to live a human life?” James asked.

Saker looked at the building once more before heading to his own car. “The world doesn’t go on what-ifs, James. As much as I hate to say this, until we know what Seth wants, we do have to treat him as an enemy.” The door to the car was opened, and Saker leaned on it, looking out at nothing. “Seth is very smart, James.” He took a deep breath, letting it out slowly. “He will fight to the death if he has to. I only hope that it doesn’t come down to that.”

“What about the girl?”

The question stopped Saker from getting into the car. He looked back at him. “Love is a powerful emotion, and as much as we don’t want to believe it or understand it, Seth fell in love with her long before he planned on busting out. If Walsh threatens her, then all hell will break loose, I fear.”

Saker didn’t say more. He got into his car and closed the door before James could ask him any more questions. He sighed, his old body relaxing against the leather seats.

“Take the long way,” he told his driver before hitting the button to raise the glass so he could have privacy. Saker pulled out his cell, the one that had nothing to do with work and couldn’t be traced by Walsh. He dialed the number that in his heart he was hoping he wouldn’t have to call. To bring her into his mess would be something he couldn’t forgive if anything ever happened to her.

“Star.” Saker couldn’t get the old tiredness from his voice. Every time he heard the young voice of the girl he felt like the old man he was. “It’s time to finish the work.” He rubbed his eyes. “Hack it.”

Saker hung up the phone and rested his head on the back of the seat. His time was coming to an end, so time was not a friend.

He jumped when his phone rang, mostly because no one ever called him on it. The lab used his other phone, never the one he was still holding in his hand. Saker raised it, looking at the caller ID and frowned. The number, he didn’t know. He flipped it open and frowned when it connected with someone. Slowly, Saker brought it up to his ear, feeling his heart pound in his chest.

“Hello?”

“We need to talk, Dr. Saker.”

Saker sat up in his seat and gripped the phone tightly. He looked around, checking out the windows to see if he was being followed or if his driver was listening. “Seth?” he hissed in a whisper.

“So you recognize the voice. I’m impressed.”

“I did create you.” Saker chuckled softly.

“You can’t use him, Doctor.” Seth said. “He’s not me.”

“No, Seth, he isn’t.” Saker took another deep breath. “Seth, you can’t keep running, not with that girl. It’s too dangerous.”

“Are you worried about the damage to your property or for the welfare of Alyna?”

Saker heard the bitterness in the voice. “I never thought of you as property, Seth.” He rubbed the bridge of his nose again. “If I did, you wouldn’t have that body.” Saker waited for a quick response, but got nothing. “Seth, you there?”

“If they don’t stop, I will bring them down, Doctor. I know things even you don’t have access to.”

Saker didn’t get to say another word before his phone went dead. He sat back in his seat again, closed his phone and tucked it back into his pocket. Something deep down told him the shit was soon to hit the fan.

## Chapter Nine

“So now what?” Alyna strolled to the front of the truck, hands stuffed in her jeans pockets.

Seth was leaning against the hood of the truck. He closed the phone and tossed it on the hood before crossing his arms over his chest and looking up at the setting sun.

“You know I never get tired of watching the sun set,” he said.

“Don’t change the subject.” She grinned, nudging him with her elbow.

“It reminds me of the freedom I’ve obtained.” He smiled.

Alyna pushed him hard, causing Seth to take a couple side steps in order not to fall down. “Seth!”

Seth turned and stood in front of her with his hands on the hood, boxing her in. He was still smiling, and it seemed to melt something in her. Even though he was considered a computer, Alyna felt as if he were perfect for her.

Sure, they had talked only on the computer, but those talks were special to her in their own way. She had a shoulder to cry on, in a sense, and he did listen to her. He was also the only person who had been able to make her lose herself in the heat of the moment. Alyna had dated in the past, and only one guy had been able to go to second base. That moment didn’t do anything but make her want to crawl out of her skin when she thought about it. But with Seth, Alyna only wanted more. Even with him standing so close, she thought about stripping for him and letting him do whatever he wanted to.

“So what now, you ask,” Seth said, fixing her with a stare that Alyna felt all the way to her toes. He looked sexy, primal in the way he stood in front of her so close. “I have a few ideas.”

Alyna couldn’t fight it and touched him. She placed both hands on his stomach, feeling the muscle bunch the T-shirt. Slowly, she skimmed up, grinning when his nipples hardened. “I’m sure you do, but that still doesn’t answer my question.”

She pushed him away and Seth backed off.

“There’s this cabin I think we can be safe in until things cool down some,” he answered. “We pass through a town about two hours

up the road. Get supplies and be in front of a fire by tomorrow night.” He shrugged. “Without clothes, of course.”

Alyna laughed and shook her head. “They’re not going to stop, are they?”

The question sobered them both.

Seth took a deep breath and raked one hand through his hair. “They will. One way or another.”

“What’s that mean?” She couldn’t keep the desperation from her voice.

“It means if they push me too far, I will bring them down,” Seth stated so calmly that Alyna had chills of fear.

“With violence?”

Seth took two steps closer to her, wrapping his arms around her body. Instantly, Alyna felt safe and protected, another thing that was strange to feel since they only had a truce not even twenty-four hours old.

“If I have to, then yes,” he answered. Alyna lowered her head, but Seth raised it with two of his fingers. “I won’t put up with them hurting you, Alyna. You are too important to me, and they know it.”

“Would you kill?” Alyna found it hard to get the words out and couldn’t stop the shaking in her body.

“If you had asked me the first time we came face-to-face then the answer would have been yes.” Alyna saw the emotion in his eyes, the sincerity, and it touched her heart. “But now that I have spent time with you, and know what it feels like to be human, I don’t know.” He kissed her lightly on the lips, then with a grin, Seth walked backward to the truck still holding her. “Now, can we do something else that doesn’t get us so depressed?”

Alyna smiled. She felt the bulge between his legs pressing against her, knew he was aroused, just like she knew what that grin on his face was all about. She found it somewhat hard to believe that after all this time it was a man, or computer, like Seth that made her feel this alive. And even though he was half computer, Alyna thought he was more of a man than some she had dated in the past.

He stopped walking once his back touched the hood of the truck. Alyna gasped when Seth swung her around, pressing her up against the hood. He lowered his head to her and slowly let the tension build before he grazed her lips with his own. Alyna let her eyes close slowly and her mouth opened to him. She welcomed the kiss and his tongue and even sucked on it, causing Seth to moan.

He pressed closer, his hands going from her back to grip her ass, which had Alyna quickly rising on her toes. She kissed him back, hugging his sides as he kneaded her buttocks.

Alyna moaned when he removed one hand from her ass to cup her breasts. Her body came alive in an instant. Her breasts and nipples became sensitive; her clit started to throb, and the wetness that came from her pussy to soak her panties was driving her crazy. Many different things as well as positions crossed her mind as they kissed. Things that she'd seen in a book or read and heard from other people. Things she never thought she would ever want to do, but now felt the need to try.

Alyna wanted to be taken rough, wanted to be teased, wanted to taste him like he had tasted her. As Seth started to work on pulling her shirt up, Alyna worked on the belt around his waist as well as the button and zipper. The urge to touch him, to feel his skin and stroke his cock, was too powerful for her to be swayed this time.

She had his jeans open before Seth had her bra unhooked. Alyna broke the kiss, met his lust-filled gaze with a sexy smile and a lick to her lips before she moved her hands from his jeans up to his shirt. In a bold move, Alyna took hold of the collar of his shirt and ripped it open.

Seth growled, which sort of surprised her, but didn't stop her from doing what she wanted this time. She kissed his chest as she pulled the ripped shirt over his shoulders. Alyna licked and sucked down to one of his nipples. She teased it the same way Seth had teased her—she bit, licked and sucked on it.

Seth fisted his hands in her hair, moaning at the attention she gave him. When Alyna glanced up at him as she moved down to his belly, she saw his eyes were closed and his head tossed back. Clearly, he enjoyed what she was doing to him.

Lower she traveled, kissing everything she could. As she kissed his belly, she worked on his jeans, tugging them down his hips along with the tight boxers he wore underneath.

Again, Alyna looked up at Seth, and this time he had his head down, watching her. She met his eyes as she wrapped her hand around his thick shaft. He was so wide her hand didn't fit all the way around.

Seth licked his lips, his breathing hitched and his hands braced his body on the hood, but he didn't stop watching her. Alyna heard

the sounds he made when she moved her hand, and each one had her becoming wetter for him and throbbing even more.

Alyna couldn't believe she was on her knees with a guy, about to give her first blowjob. If someone had told her she would be doing this, she would have been disgusted, but right now she wasn't. In fact, the thought of taking his cock into her mouth and sucking him until he screamed turned her on so bad she didn't know if she could last that long or not. But not being the kind of person to put something off that she wanted, Alyna dove in.

She pushed his cock to a standing up position and licked from the top of his balls all the way to the crest of the head. Seth sucked his breath in when she did this, but it didn't stop Alyna from her exploration. She licked only, tasted his cock like one would a lollipop. Each time she got to the head, she flicked her tongue over it, causing Seth to whimper.

"I can't stand it." Seth groaned, his hips moving his cock against her tongue.

Alyna knew he was trying to get more friction, but she wasn't going to give it to him yet. She kept up the licking and teasing, and after a few more pants from him, she finally sucked on the head only. Deep sounds came from Seth, sounds that made her smile.

She gave one more lick before she took hold of his cock. In what she thought might be torturous, she ever so slowly sucked his cock into her mouth. He was so thick and long she barely got half of his length into her mouth. The rest she just gripped with her hand.

"Oh, man!" Seth hissed, the movement of his hips matching the rhythm of her sucking.

Since Alyna had known Seth, even back when they were talking on the computer, she'd never heard him once swear. She asked him once why, and he told her he didn't really understand why people felt they had to. She thought it was strange at the time. Now she knew why, yet she felt as if he needed to do it once if for nothing more than to complete another step of becoming human.

Recalling something an old friend had told her one time, Alyna grazed him gently with her teeth. Seth moaned loudly, jumping and thrusting into her and doing something she didn't think he would do. Seth said his first swear word.

"Son-of-a-bitch!" Seth hissed.



Alyna popped his cock from her mouth, but didn't stop her hand from moving up and down over him. She licked at the head and smiled. "You swore."

Seth opened his eyes, looked down at her and nodded. "That feels so good."

He moaned, nudging with his hips for more.

Alyna gave him what he wanted. She took his cock into her mouth and sucked him hard. Her head moved fast up and down, and she moaned. Seth thrust his hips with her, and the way he breathed and begged told her he was very close.

"It's coming!" Seth's voice rose in pitch when he cried out.

That was the only warning Alyna got before his cock exploded in her mouth. She drank his essence and sucked on his cock at the same time. Seth had bent over and rested his head on the hood while she finished. With another popping sound, she released him from her mouth, but didn't move. Amazingly, Seth was still very hard after that, and Alyna couldn't wait to feel him inside her again.

Thunder came out of nowhere as well as lightning off in the distance. A storm was coming, and Alyna thought it was going to be a storm to match what she suddenly felt inside.

When Seth took a step back, Alyna stood up. She was so wet her panties stuck to her and her clit throbbed so bad she knew one thrust was all it was going to take for her to come.

"Take them off" Seth ordered, his own jeans down to his knees.

Alyna grinned and went to work on her jeans. She kicked off her shoes first, then just to tease him some more, slid her jeans down slowly. As soon as she pushed them away, Seth was on her.

He picked her up, turned her and stood her on the front bumper of the truck. Alyna had to bend over and grab onto the hood under the windshield wipers to keep from falling and sliding off, this left her bare ass up in the air.

He touched her ass. His rough hands rubbed gently over her cheeks, and the heat of his breath so close to her wet pussy sent chills as well as goose bumps over her skin.

"You are wet and swollen." His hands held her by the back of her legs just a fraction under her ass. "And I bet your clit is hard."

"Why don't you find out?" she taunted, wiggling her butt.

Seth chuckled and another boom of thunder could be heard moving in.

“A storm’s coming.” He kissed her left cheek and Alyna sucked in her breath. “Think it matches what’s building in you?”

Alyna moaned when he pushed the back of her shirt up and licked all the way up her spine to the nape of her neck. She hung her head down as she felt him crawl up on the hood over her, his chest pressing against her back and his cock swaying against her pussy. Alyna bit her lower lip to suppress the begging that she was close to doing. She would have sworn right then she felt her womb contract just from the light contact of the head of his cock.

“I can feel your heat,” Seth whispered in her ear. “Do you want me inside you?”

“Oh, God, yes!” Alyna moaned pitifully.

One hard thrust was all it took, and Seth was buried to his balls inside her. Alyna screamed and shattered around him. There was no stopping the orgasm from coming. Stars formed behind her eyes at the pleasure mixed with a touch of pain from his cock stretching her. He was so thick and so long that Seth had her stretched so tightly it almost hurt, but it was a great kind of hurt.

“You are so tight,” he groaned.

Alyna couldn’t stand it any longer and moved her hips. Seth moaned again, but he got the hint of what she wanted. His own hands grabbed on to the hood next to hers, and he moved his hips with sure power.

Seth slammed his cock in and out of her tight vagina so hard Alyna could barely breathe. The truck rocked with the force, and before she could think straight, she was building up to another orgasm. The pleasure was so strong it was almost painful. It gripped her into a web that nothing mattered but reaching her goal. Alyna didn’t even hear how close the thunder was or feel the first drops of rain on her skin. Her whole attention was fixed on the steel rod pounding in and out between her legs.

Her moans turned into screams. One orgasm quickly rushed into another, and still Seth fucked her hard. The sprinkle of drops turned into a downpour, but the two lovers on the truck didn’t stop. In fact, Seth moved so fast and the truck rocked so much it started to squeak.

“Love me,” Seth whispered the words in her ear.

Alyna was so caught up in the pleasure that consumed her, she wasn’t sure of what she heard. She did feel the swelling of his cock, indicating Seth was finally getting close to his own climax.

They were drenched and still as one. Hair was plastered to their faces. The hood had become so slippery Alynna was afraid she wasn't going to be able to hold on much longer, but she did.

"Oh, oh, oh," Seth panted in her ear.

Alynna screamed one more time. The last orgasm to hit was the most powerful one she ever had in her life. She arched against him, water splashing in her face. At the same time, Seth reared back as well, ramming his cock one last time deep inside her. He screamed, but his scream was very different from hers. When Seth yelled, it was three words that shook her to the bone.

"I love you!" Seth yelled right before he collapsed over her.

## Chapter Ten

Seth gave Alyna money to get some clothes as he went into the local general store for food and supplies. He had driven all night as Alyna slept in the back seat, reaching the small town of Junction Springs, Colorado. Seth thought it would work for a hideout until he had another plan in motion. Right now, all he was going on was instinct and that wasn't going to last too long.

It was quiet here, perfect for a person to get lost and think. To take the time needed to relax and get to know someone better. Perfect for him and Alyna.

He shopped, filling the back of truck with food, clothes for himself, blankets and working tools to fix the place up. The information he had about the cabin said it was going to need some work, and before Seth left the lab he'd made sure to download everything he needed to know to fix a place up right. He could now be called a man of all trades.

The last stop Seth made was to get a new bed. He figured once they had seen the place they would know what else was needed, but for him a bed was a must. He wasn't going to have Alyna sleeping on a floor.

He picked out a pretty full size iron bed frame with a feather top mattress, two sets of sheets—one white, another blue—pillows and a nice homemade quilt he saw in the window. By the time he was done loading everything up, including the bed, the truck was full to the max. He joked with the owner of the store, telling him he had bought a cabin and he was newly married. The owner seemed to accept the lie easily, telling Seth if he needed any other furniture to come back, he had everything one needed to set up a home.

“So, what do you think?”

Seth stopped his double check of the ropes that held the bed down and looked up. Alyna was smiling. She had on different clothes, and her arms were loaded with bags. She wore new shoes and a long, loose blue skirt that went all the way down to her ankles. A short

sleeve, white sweater hugged her, thrusting her breasts out more for his pleasure. Seth became instantly hard, and his mouth watered.

“Wow,” he breathed out, smiling brightly. “You look great.”

“Do you know how long it has been since I’ve been able to buy clothes?” She giggled, looking herself over. “I had a hard time picking.” She looked back at him with guilty eyes. “So I kind of spent it all.”

Seth stood up straight and crossed his arms over his chest. He smiled. “Wonder what we are going to do about that.”

Alyna laughed then looked at the truck. “Good Lord, what did you do, buy the whole town out?”

Seth looked back at the truck. “I bought the cabin a while ago, and don’t think there is much in it. We do need a bed.” He grinned back at her. “To sit on, that is.”

Alyna just shook her head at him, opened the back door to the truck and started placing her bags in whatever spot she could find. Ten minutes later, they were on the road, heading out of town and toward the cabin Seth had purchased months ago.

It was fall and a nice seventy-five to eighty degrees outside. Alyna couldn’t stop smiling as she watched the trees go by, some changing colors and some with falling leaves. Seth kept looking over at her. He couldn’t get over the change he saw before his eyes. Three days ago, she had run from him, afraid of his touch, and now she was smiling, looked happy and welcomed his touch. It was everything he could have ever hoped for.

“You keep looking at me.”

Alyna caught him off guard because she was still looking out the window when she spoke. Seth glanced at her as she turned in her seat to face him.

“You look good.” Seth told her. “Happy. You never seemed this happy before.”

“You used to watch me on the cameras,” she teased, nudging his arm. “I knew it!”

“And I wondered why you looked so sad,” he told her, keeping his attention on his driving.

Alyna scooted closer, and Seth held onto the steering wheel tighter. He’d felt earlier as if he’d just experienced the greatest pleasure of all time on the hood of the truck last night. But now he felt as if he hadn’t been with Alyna at all; more like he wanted more and more of what he felt the other night.

“I was missing something in my life,” she told him, moving closer. “Didn’t have too much going for me then.” She shrugged, hanging her head down for a few seconds before looking out at the road as well. “I started to look forward to you contacting me on the computer.” Alyna turned her head and smiled tenderly. “It was the first thing I had to look forward to in a very long while.”

“What about your family?” Seth glanced at her quickly before going back to the road. “Everyone has one, even me.”

“My grandmother raised me.” Again, she shrugged, and Seth picked up the feeling that it gave her great pain to talk about it. “My father left before I was born and my mother died when I was in grade school. Grandma wasn’t very loving, and I think it was the reason my mother hooked up with my father. He gave her something she was missing for a while.” She frowned and it seemed that she was thinking about something. “Wait a second. How can you have a family?”

It was Seth’s turn to shrug. “I’ll tell you about it sometime.”

They were silent for a little bit before Alyna spoke again. “So how long is it going to take us to get to this cabin of yours?”

“Hour.”

“Without distractions?”

Seth turned his head to her slowly and frowned. “What kind of distractions could we possibly have?”

She rose up and licked at his ear. Seth’s mouth went completely dry and his cock began to throb and thicken in his jeans.

“Well, I’ve never made out in a truck or car before,” she whispered in his ear, her hand sliding up his leg to cup his cock. “My grandmother didn’t let me date, Seth.” She kept whispering in his ear and licking at his lobe. At the same time she rubbed her hand over his cock. It all had Seth’s body tensing up as well as his breathing hitching. “She was afraid I would end up like my mother, so the normal things girls did in school, like making out in cars and fooling around with boys were forbidden.”

Seth almost closed his eyes when she quickly freed his cock from his jeans, stroking it gently.

“Want to pull over and make out?”

Seth didn’t need to be asked twice. He pulled the truck over to the side of the road and slammed on the brakes so fast Alyna was tossed back into her seat. He parked it, turned the engine off and scooted toward her, grabbed her and kissed her deep.

He got her on his lap and in a frenzy pushed her sweater up and over her head. The second it was off, his lips were on her neck while he worked at the clasp of her bra. Seth couldn't get over how urgent he felt. Everything seemed to revolve around him getting her breasts free and his cock inside her.

As soon as her breasts came free, and before the bra was even out of his hand, Seth had his mouth over the nipple sucking it hard. Alyna squirmed on his lap. She rubbed against his cock, pressing her panty-covered clit against the head, causing Seth to moan against her flesh.

He reached under her skirt as he moved from one breast to the other. Her hands fisted in his hair, pulling and tugging while she brushed against him. Seth could feel the heat as well as her wetness. She was soaked, her panties so wet it was useless to have them on, so he ripped them off.

Alyna gasped when he tore her panties off, but didn't stop her rubbing and grinding. Seth groaned when the head of his cock slipped between the slit of her labia, drenching it with her juices.

Seth took hold of his cock, poised it at the tight opening of her pussy, and let Alyna take charge of lowering herself onto him. He was so crazed with his desire he wasn't able to enjoy her body like he would love to do. The need to get inside her, to be one and complete, was too powerful to ignore.

Alyna didn't disappoint him. She lowered herself down onto his shaft, and Seth loved the feeling of stretching her. It didn't matter this was the third time they came together, she still felt as tight as the first time.

She reached up to the roof, her head went back and she moved on him. Seth also rested his head back on the seat, watching her breasts as they swayed to her movements. Faster and faster she moved, and Seth matched her. He bucked under her, rocking the truck with his strokes, enjoying the panting that came from her lips.

"I'm close, Alyna." Seth groaned.

"Shit, Seth!" Alyna cried the words and wrapped her arms around his neck.

Seth felt her orgasm ripple through her and her pussy contract around his cock. It was all it took for him to come as well. Seth wrapped his arms tightly around her, hugging her close and moaning at each spurt that came out of him.

"It just keeps getting better," Seth mumbled, letting his breath out slowly and resting his forehead on her shoulder.

\* \* \* \*

“Reports state that S2 has the same willpower as Seth.” James tossed the report on Saker’s desk. “And a personality we have never seen in Seth before.”

Saker sat behind his desk, fingers linked together with his chin resting on them. He glanced at the report but didn’t move. His whole thoughts were on the call he’d gotten from Seth. Saker knew his program well, and he knew when Seth was hinting at something, just like Seth was when he called. He knew something about this department, something that Walsh had no clue about.

“Dr. Saker?” James said.

Saker sat back in his chair and sighed. “He’s evolving.”

“Yes.” James nodded. “At a rate that I can’t keep up with.” James placed one hand on his hip and with the other rubbed his face. “What the hell is going on?”

Saker took a deep breath. He thought about what to tell James and what not to tell him. James was part of his team; he had been with Saker since the first idea for Seth popped up. The man had programmed Seth, just as Saker had, but when it came down to trust, Saker didn’t know whom he could depend on. How could he tell James what happened with Seth was not a glitch or a mistake, but something well planned?

“I think we need to talk, James,” Saker finally said. “But not here. Walsh has ears everywhere and what I have to say is too important.” He fixed James with a hard look. “I need to trust you. Can I?”

“You know I have your back,” James said.

Saker nodded, sat forward and wrote an address on a piece of paper. “Then be here at nine tonight.” He handed over the paper, watching James frown as he read it. “I’m trusting you with something more important than my life.”

At nine, Saker stood in the dark shadows outside of town watching cars go by to see if any of them might be Walsh’s men. Saker wasn’t stupid; he knew he was being followed and had worked extra hard to ditch the tail. When he left the office, he called James to tell him to ditch his tail before they met, and assumed that was the reason for James being late.

Fifteen after and Saker saw James pull up. He came out of the shadows, went right over to the car and slid inside the passenger door.



“Those guys are persistent,” James said. “I didn’t think I was going to get him off my ass.”

“Seth contacted me,” Saker said.

James’s mouth opened. “What?”

“Something’s going on in the lab,” Saker went on. “He knows it and I think we have to figure it out.”

“When did he contact you?” James asked and looked as if he was about to pass out from the shock.

“James, listen to me!” Saker turned in the seat as well. “Seth isn’t the problem here. I designed him to be a free-thinking program that would one day be human. When Walsh went to the board to shut him down, it only caused the plan to accelerate. There is no glitch in Seth or in Shilo.”

James held his hands up. “Whoa! Who the hell is Shilo?”

“Look, we don’t have time for me to break this all down tonight.” Saker shook his head and looked out the windows. “I want you to know that something is going on with the lab. Walsh is up to something. Seth knows it and we need to figure it out. If he pushes Seth, it won’t be pretty. Seth has training to kill without thought. I don’t know how he is doing now that he’s human, but I do know if threatened, he will fight back.”

“What are we supposed to do?”

Saker took another deep breath, letting it out slowly. “The lab is no longer on our side. As soon as Shilo is ready and uploaded, I’m gone. They will keep you only so you can keep an eye on him. Right now, we need to try to help Seth as much as possible.”

“That’s not going to be easy with Walsh keeping his eye on us,” James said.

“I know.” Saker groaned. He opened the door, but didn’t get out. “Let Shilo evolve, James. Let him become what we both know he will be, and cover his tracks.” He looked over his shoulder at the man who had been by his side since his project had been picked up. “One day, he is going to bust out like Seth, and I sure would love to be on their side instead of the lab’s.”

## Chapter Eleven

“Not much, but home for a few days,” Seth said, hands on his hips looking up at the cabin he’d bought a very long time ago. “Or a few weeks.”

The cabin was a little run down. It sat on a small hill with no driveway leading up to the front door. After about twenty miles of driving, Seth had to turn off onto a gravel road for a while before turning off that onto another road that was hardly more than a wide path. He said when he was searching for a place he didn’t want it to have a main road, thinking it would be hard for anyone to find them.

As he walked around the place, checking for broken windows, Alyna headed to the front door. The steps creaked, making her wonder if she was going to fall through, and some of the porch looked as if it was rotting.

Alyna had to force the front door open, and what she saw made her wonder once again if she could really do this. Inside the cabin was a mess. Dust and cobwebs covered every surface. Old, tattered curtains barely hung from the dirty windows, and beer bottles littered the floor. Broken furniture had been pushed to one side of the room.

It was a one room place with an old wood burning stove, two counters with an old fashioned sink for a kitchen and a small bathroom in serious need of not only a good cleaning but some major plumbing. There was no tub, but a shower and a toilet.

Alyna jumped when she heard something land on the roof, but shook her head when she heard Seth talking to himself. He was up there checking everything out.

“Well, it could be worse, I suppose,” she mumbled to herself.

“Roof is in good shape.” Seth came inside so quietly Alyna jumped when he spoke. “If it rains, we won’t get wet.”

“Just eaten by the rats,” Alyna stated.

Seth laughed and walked past her to a fireplace tucked in the corner that looked as if it had seen better days. “Once I get this cleaned up, we can have a nice fire.”

“The whole place needs to be cleaned up,” Alyna whined. She took a deep breath and looked around once more. “Hope you got some cleaning supplies in the truck.”

Seth tugged on the flue and was rewarded with thick black soot falling on top of his head. Alyna jumped back and covered her mouth with her hand, not because of the dust, but from laughing. She failed when Seth backed away and stood up, the soot sliding down his head to pool at his feet.

Alyna lost it and burst out laughing. Seth looked stunned, black from head to toe, looking at the fireplace as if it had done something wrong. When he turned to her, more of the stuff fell from his head.

“I would tell you to take a shower.” She tried very hard to suppress her laughter but couldn’t. “But something tells me it doesn’t work yet.”

“You find this funny?” he asked

“As a matter of fact,” she smiled brightly, “I do.”

Seth nodded. “I’m going to jump in the lake.”

Alyna kept smiling and as soon as he closed the door behind himself she burst out laughing once again.

She went to work right away with sweeping the floors. Seth had bought everything to clean the place up, even had two large circle rugs to place on the floors. By the time he came back from his bath at the lake, Alyna had the floors swept and was working on cleaning the bathroom.

Nothing worked. Seth was going to have to get under the cabin and work on the plumbing if they wanted to use the toilet and shower. Since it was so late, though, Seth told Alyna how to get to the lake for a cold bath. When she returned, Seth had the bed set up in the back of the cabin close to the bathroom.

“God, I’m tired.” Alyna sighed.

Seth smiled. “Then help me make the bed and you can go to sleep.”

“That sounds great.”

They made the bed, and Alyna crawled under the sheets. Seth also joined her, scooping her into his arms. It had been a couple of nights since she’d slept in a bed and this one felt like heaven to her. Within minutes, she was falling deep into sleep with the warmth of Seth next to her.

Alyna woke the next morning to the great smell of cooking bacon. She rolled onto her back in the bed and opened her eyes when she didn't feel another body next to her.

"How long have you been up?" Alyna looked around the cabin.

Everything was cleaned up, even the fireplace, which had a nice fire burning. Seth stood next to the old iron stove, cooking. A love seat and small table with two chairs was set up in the front part of the cabin. Alyna frowned. That hadn't been there when she'd gone to sleep last night.

"Where'd all that stuff come from?"

Seth turned to the table and placed plates of food on a tray, picked it up and headed her way with a grin on his face. "I don't sleep much." He placed the tray on the bed next to her. It was filled with scrambled eggs, toast, juice, and some fruit. "So while you were sleeping, I finished cleaning the place up, fixed the plumbing and went to town for more furniture."

"Wow." She looked at him in amazement. "I don't know what to say."

"I am a man of many talents." Seth smiled. "Now eat something. I want to go back down to the lake and enjoy the water with the sun out."

Alyna shook her head and started to eat. After she finished, she went to her bags Seth had brought in, to find something to wear. "Shit," she mumbled to herself.

"What's wrong?" Seth came up behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist and rubbing his face in her neck.

Alyna grinned, mostly because of the hardness she felt pressed at her backside. "I forgot to get a bathing suit."

Seth rocked his body against hers as he rubbed his face against her neck. His hands moved from her waist to her bare legs, moving up under the shirt of his she'd slept in. She sucked in her breath when he touched her pussy. Fingers light as feathers brushed against her panty-covered mound, sending shivers of anticipation running down her spine.

"Who says you need one?" Seth whispered. He pushed her closer to the wall and took her wrists, raising her arms so she flattened her hands on the wall. "Stay just like that."

Alyna closed her eyes, hung her head down and waited. She heard him move, saw the clothes pile up on the floor and, with each piece he took off, she throbbed more. Her mouth was already dry and

her nerves so tight Alyna thought she was going to die from the waiting.

She became startled when he touched her hips. Using only his fingers, Seth pulled her shirt up until it was balled into his fist, then he slowly raised it up, making sure to brush the fabric against her nipples. Alyna moaned. Her nipples were so sensitive that as he kept brushing the shirt against them, Alyna felt the sensitivity all the way down to her toes. This form of torture, which is how she thought of it, lasted a few minutes before he finished tugging the shirt over her head then down her arms. Seth moved her arms the way he wanted, taking the shirt off and placing her hands back against the wall.

By now Alyna was panting. Just that simple touch, the way he took her shirt off was enough to have her body ready, wet and waiting for him. But it seemed this time Seth wasn't going to take her like he did last time. The way he was rubbing his hands up and down her back told Alyna this time he was going to take his time, something that Alyna felt she was going to die from.

She lost the will to breathe with the first brush of his lips on her back. Seth didn't touch anything else on her, only her back. He did rub on a few tight muscles she had, but that was it, and she desperately wanted him to stroke her breasts. Not once did she ever think they would feel so heavy and swollen, needing to be squeezed by his hands.

Down, his mouth traveled on her back, hands as well. To her lower back he went only to stop and start the path back up to her neck. Alyna whimpered. She couldn't stop the sound from slipping past her lips, and it seemed Seth enjoyed it as well. He chuckled behind her, pressing his body upon hers.

"Is something wrong?" he whispered in her ear, rubbing his naked body against her.

Alyna could only shake her head.

Seth chuckled again. "Have I told you how much I love your skin?" his voice thickened, sounding darker to her.

Alyna worked on keeping her breathing even, but it was damn hard when his hands went to her waist then down her legs as his chest rubbed her back.

"You are so soft and you smell so good. You make me feel like I could feast upon you for hours."

"Damn it, Seth!" she panted, pushing her ass back against his hard cock. "Don't tease me."

He pushed her hair over her shoulder, exposing her neck and shoulder to him. Alyna bit her lip when he kissed her shoulder and his other hand flattened on her stomach.

“I’m not teasing you, Alyna.” His voice sounded rough in her ear, like he was also on edge. “I’m going to love you so thoroughly that you will remember it for the rest of your life.”

“Oh, God,” she moaned in a high-pitched voice, closing her eyes tightly.

“Now, the only rule to this game is this—no matter what I do, you can not let your hands leave the wall.” The hand he had on her stomach moved slowly up, but stopped just under her right breast. He teased her by letting the tip of his finger graze the underside. His other hand moved down her side inside her panties to cup her butt. He cupped her left cheek, squeezing it before moving down more and indicating for her to spread her legs wider. “If you do, then I’m not going to let you come all day long, but keep you on the edge.”

Alyna moaned. It was the fantasy she had told him about a long time ago, come true. She had told Seth when they talked late at night on her home computer how she had this one fantasy. She wanted to be seduced standing up against a wall and be teased as well as pleased at the same time. She had many wet dreams about it and even pleased herself in the shower thinking about it, but was too afraid to find someone and go through with it. Now, here she was. Standing against a wall with a man behind her about to start her fantasy, and Alyna was both scared out of her mind, and so exited at the same time.

Seth positioned her so her legs and arms were spread out as much as she could go without losing her balance. He didn’t move his hand from under her breasts or stop rubbing her ass. The way he touched her back there made Alyna wonder if he meant to do the one other thing she was sort of curious about—anal sex.

“I’m not going to do that, Alyna,” he told her, squeezing her ass with enough force that she jumped. “Yet.”

She now wondered if having him go through with this fantasy was a good idea. Fear hit, causing her to tremble. “Seth...I...I don’t know about this.”

“Shhh,” he whispered. The hand he had under her breasts moved back down and went around to her waist. “You have nothing to fear from me. I will never hurt you. Trust me, Alyna”

She swallowed hard and nodded.

“I was going to rip these off you, but I think it will heighten you more if I don’t.” One finger went inside the elastic band at her waist. “What do you think?”

“I don’t think I am going to be able to handle this game,” Alyna said with much difficulty.

“Sure you can.”

She felt him lower down behind her. Felt his hot breath on the cheeks of her ass and groaned again. Alyna fought hard to keep still as her panties were slowly pulled down her hips and legs. She opened her eyes to watch as he moved her legs in order to free them. Now, like him, she was completely naked.

Seth rubbed his hands and face on the mounds of her butt. He kissed and licked and Alyna shifted on her feet. She sucked in her breath when he pulled her cheeks apart and his tongue made contact in the crevice, going downward. She held her breath, waiting for that contact with her throbbing pussy, but none came. Instead, Seth licked and teased her ass, flicking the tip of his tongue at the puckered entrance. As much as Alyna thought she would be repulsed by it and wouldn’t like it, that contact turned her on majorly.

When he pulled back, Alyna felt very lost, but not for very long. Alyna watched as he sat down on the floor, scooted until his back was against the wall and grinned up at her. She bit her lip, waiting for his next touch, and didn’t have long to wait.

Seth was the perfect height to just lean forward and touch her pussy. His hand grabbed onto her ass, bringing her closer, and Alyna went willingly. She cried out when his tongue licked from the back of her ass to the hard clit that waited for attention. He flicked that wicked tongue of his quickly over her clit, causing Alyna to grind her pussy against his face and pray for the release that he was building her up to.

Seth teased her. There was no other way to explain it. He never touched her where she wanted to be touched the most, didn’t suck her clit, or give the pressure she wanted. Now, what Seth did was hold her legs and tease her pussy with his tongue. Quick, light flicks was all she got, and it nearly killed her.

“Damn you,” she whimpered.

Seth chuckled at her and stopped. “Is there something you want?”

He tried sounding innocent, but he was far from innocent to her at this moment.

Before she could answer, Seth slid back under her legs, away from her aching flesh, and knelt behind her. Alyna sucked in her breath again at the feel of his mouth on her butt. He had parted her cheeks and that tongue of his licked downward.

Alyna hung her head and moaned. Seth worked his way to her mound, and the moment he pushed his tongue inside her, Alyna screamed. She was so close it was a shock to her no orgasm hit. She panted and pushed her hips back against his mouth. Seth tongue-fucked her and she loved it. His thumb parted her nether lips, and he pushed harder with his tongue until Alyna moaned yes. Then, just as she was about to climax, Seth stopped.

“Fuck, Seth,” Alyna panted. She fisted her hands, but didn’t move them from the wall. “This isn’t fair.”

Seth kissed her lower back and teased her soaked channel with one finger. “I take it then that I’m doing this right.” He touched her clit, causing Alyna to moan pitifully again. “I did study how to tease the right way.” The finger that teased her pussy moved back to the tiny entrance of her ass. “I know how to heighten your pleasure to the point that, when you do finally climax, you could pass out from it.”

Alyna shook her head. “Don’t...please.”

Seth moved his finger back and forth between her pussy to her ass, pulling her own juices back. “But you’re already close.”

Again, Alyna cried out, but this time it was from Seth pushing that finger of his into her ass. She rose up on her toes and held her breath until her lungs burned as he moved his finger in and out, twisting it slowly when it was inside.

It was hard for her to believe what he was doing with her ass had Alyna on the edge of climax again. And like before, just when she was close, Seth stopped.

“Damn it, Seth,” Alyna cried the words, frustrated at not being able to come when she desperately needed it. “I swear if you don’t stop teasing me, I’m...I’m...”

Seth stood up quickly, grabbed her hips none too gently and pulled her back, forcing Alyna to stretch and bend over to keep her hands on the wall.

“What?” his voice sounded a little dangerous to her, but not threatening.

She didn’t get to answer him. Seth held onto her hips, and with one brutal thrust, he embedded his cock as deep as he could get it in her pussy.



Alyna screamed.

She could tell right off he was fulfilling another fantasy of hers with this one—the dark dream of being taken roughly. His hands on her hips were anything but gentle, and the way he pistoned his shaft in and out of her tight core had her pleasure mixing with pain. Alyna loved it.

She pushed back, strange sounds coming from her lips as she was bounced back on the steel flesh pounding inside her. This time, though, he didn't stop when the feelings began. This time, she climaxed just like he said she would.

Her pussy contracted and her orgasm hit. Alyna could even feel her womb contract with the power of it, and she screamed until she went hoarse and her eyes started to roll in the back of her head.

She never heard or felt if Seth reached his pleasure or not. Before her climax was over, she passed out and felt her body falling but never felt the hard floor as she fell. The only thing that crossed her mind before she accepted the darkness was that Seth had caught her.

## Chapter Twelve

“Here it is.” James handed a file to Saker who stood outside the large computer main frame watching as the technicians worked to prepare the upload of S2.

Saker took the file but didn’t look at it. He kept his eyes on the men. “He’s ready then?”

James nodded and turned to watch the men as well. “The last test showed his thinking ability is exactly the same as Seth’s. S2’s tolerance toward the enemy seems crueller than Seth’s attitude. S2 doesn’t want to show mercy to anything.”

Saker nodded. “Walsh will be pleased.”

James moved closer to Saker and lowered his voice. “You are not going to believe this, but he talked to me this morning.”

Saker frowned. “Walsh?”

“No.” James also frowned and shook his head. “Why didn’t you tell me that Shilo was S2?”

“The less you know right now the better,” Saker answered.

“Well, I think I’m up to speed now.” James turned fully to Saker. “Walsh has already requested Shilo to start a military profile on what Seth might be hiding. He wants a detailed plan of attack. Everything.”

Saker nodded again. “I suspected he would.”

“Damn it, Saker,” James hissed. “He is planning on killing Seth.”

“No.” Saker shook his head and turned away from James. “Killing Seth isn’t his plan, James.”

Saker took two steps when James called out, “Then what is?”

He turned back to James with a frown. “He wants to make Seth hurt in the worst way possible. Seth has humiliated Walsh and Walsh wants to get even. So you need to ask yourself this question. What can Walsh do to hurt Seth? Once you figure that out, then you will have his plan.”

He nodded one last time before he turned and left James where he stood.

\* \* \* \*

Seth chased Alyna through the woods, toward the lake, at a leisurely pace. He was fast, but he wanted to give her the thrill of being chased. He found he enjoyed it as much as she.

After the great morning he had with her against the wall, Alyna ended up sleeping for most of the day. When she woke, the sun was setting so they decided to do the lake thing in the morning.

He came to the clearing beside the lake a few steps after her and wrapped his arms around her waist quickly. Alyna laughed and leaned back against him. It felt good having her in his arms relaxed and in a playful mood.

“It *is* pretty during the day.” She sighed.

“I like watching sunsets,” Seth told her. “But, watching it over the lake, I can’t seem to find the words to describe it.”

“It’s a shame we can’t stay here forever.”

Seth heard the sadness in her voice, and it tore at him. “Hey, how about we go swimming?”

Seth pulled away from her and quickly started to strip his clothes. He hopped on one foot as he tugged on his shoe.

“We don’t have any suits,” Alyna snickered.

“Who says we need them?” Seth said back. One shoe off and he was working on the other. Alyna just stood there staring at him. “You can’t swim if you don’t undress.”

“Is this your way of getting me out of my clothes again?” She shot him a questioning look, hands on her hips, grin touching her lips and one eyebrow up.

Seth finished taking off his other shoe and pulled his shirt over his head before going up to her and grabbed her into his arms. “Since when do I need a reason to get you naked?” He kissed her deep, bending her slightly backward. “Now strip,” he told her gently with his lips still against hers.

They both took their clothes off and as soon as Alyna had the last bit off, Seth picked her up and carried her toward the water. She kicked and squirmed in his arms, yelling how she was going to make him pay if he didn’t put her down. Seth only laughed and walked into the water until it was up to his knees.

“You want down, okay,” he said.

Seth tossed Alyna into the water. She screamed as she went flying in the air, and he only laughed more when she landed. While she was under, he dove in as well.

He swam all the way underwater toward her. The sight of her body, legs kicking under the water, her arms and hands flailing, her breasts bobbing up and down with her movements were a complete turn on for him. Seth didn't understand how he could get so hard so fast from just the sight of her. He felt as if each time was the first, and the way her pussy was so tight helped that feeling only to heighten. He knew he loved her. Only he didn't feel sure how she felt about him, or if she would accept his love like she finally accepted him.

Seth kissed her belly under the water before splashing to the surface right in front of her. Alyna yelled, splashing him with more water in his face that had him laughing.

"You shit!" she yelled. "This water is damn bone-chilling cold."

She tried to swim back, away from him, but Seth took hold of her legs and brought her back. "It isn't that cold." He wrapped her legs around his waist and held onto her by the cheeks of her ass.

"Yes it is." She hung her arms over his shoulders and hung her head back in the water.

Seth bent over and licked the top of her right breast up to her neck. "Then maybe I should do something to warm you up." He kissed her neck, grinning at the feel of her shudders.

"Oh, not this time." She chuckled. "You're not getting laid that easy."

"Really?" Seth didn't stop kissing at her neck, even when he swam them over to the side of the lake where there were a few rocks sticking out of the water.

Seth picked Alyna up and sat her down on a rock. Water lapped at her butt and touched Seth under his ass as he stood on another rock under the water.

"What are you doing?" Alyna gasped.

Seth only answered her with a smirk. He knelt, the water coming up to his chest, and with a little force because Alyna protested, Seth pushed her legs up. He held onto the back of her legs, making Alyna bend at the waist as well as at the knees. She was completely exposed and open to him.

He opened her legs, looking his fill at her sweet pussy. Just looking at it had his mouth watering for her taste. When Seth had enough looking, he closed her legs, leaned in and rested those sexy legs of hers on his head. He didn't tease her like the other night; this time Seth dove into her sex like a hungry man.

He forced his tongue into her tight hole, over and over again before stopping and licking roughly between her slit. Alyna moaned under him and tried to wiggle, but Seth held her down. He sucked and slurped on her until her moans turned into screams begging him for more.

Her clit was his next target. Seth moved up to the tiny nub and sucked it into his mouth. Alyna screamed more, and it surprised Seth she could scream even louder. He rolled her clit in his mouth, scraped it with his teeth and sucked it so hard there was no way she wouldn't come from it.

She bucked under him and her screams turned into cries of mercy before he let her pussy go with his mouth. Seth met her glazed green eyes and licked his lips before standing up. His cock was stiff and standing proud, waiting to sink inside her snug pussy for a ride they both would be weak from.

He picked up her limp body and scooted her down the rock so her ass was in the water. Breaking the eye contact he had with her, Seth looked down to watch his cock sink into her.

Alyna arched as he forced her tight muscles to stretch for his thickness. Seth made himself go slow so he could watch it all, but by the time he made it halfway in, he couldn't stand the wait any longer. With all his might, he shoved the rest of his flesh inside her, and Alyna screamed. He felt her pussy grasp around his cock, her grip tightening so hard around his shaft it was close to pain. Her orgasm was bliss, and Seth only wanted to feel it again and again.

He moved his hips steady, his cock sliding in and out with ease and causing the water to slap against their bodies. Seth bent over, licked at one nipple before sucking the hard point into his mouth and never once missing a stroke.

"Faster," Alyna moaned.

Seth moved her legs up to his shoulders and groaned. This move gave him the feeling he was sinking in deeper, and her pussy tightened up even more. He moved forward, bending her legs so they almost touched her chest, and pounded into her as fast as he could. Alyna grabbed onto his arms tightly and groaned with each hard thrust he gave her. He was so close, but Seth didn't want it to end just yet. He wanted one more thing.

Right before Alyna climaxed again, Seth stopped and pulled out. He was also close to exploding and very thankful the cool water pushed his release back.

“Don't stop.” She panted, moving her legs around his waist and trying to pull him closer.

Seth didn't give her what she wanted, but picked her up and swam back into the water. He held her close as he worked his way to the edge of the lake, and as soon as the water was waist high, he stopped and turned her.

Seth positioned Alyna on her hands and knees and came up behind her. With a growl, he shoved his cock back into her and had to bite his lip when Alyna cried out her release. He moved hard again, slamming his body against hers as the water slapped against them both. One arm was wrapped around her waist, and with his other hand free Seth moved it down between the crack of her ass to tease the entrance. Seth used the water from the lake as a lubricant and pushed one finger as deep as he could into her ass. She cried out.

“Damn it, Seth! Don't.” Alyna stiffened under him. “I can't. It's going to hurt.”

“Relax,” he grunted softly, momentarily stopping. “I want us to try new things. Let me bring you even more ecstasy. Trust me. Relax, it won't hurt more than a moment or so. Like when you lost your virginity.”

Her shoulders felt less tense at his last words. She nodded and he knew she was trying to be at ease. “I do want more with you, Seth. Just having you touching me has me wanting to come again.”

He knew he and Alyna were so in tune with each other, he could sense that she desired more though it scared her. With skill, Seth moved his hand that was around her waist down to play with her clit. He pulled his cock out and quickly positioned it at the small puckered entrance of her ass. Before he pushed his way in though, he worked on her clit and put her juices from her pussy back to the spot to help with lubricating her.

Seth rolled her clit with his hand and moved his other so he could push two fingers inside her pussy. He stopped shoving in with his cock and worked her fleshy mound with his hands. Slowly, she started to relax fully under him, and he ease between her buttocks. She came with his fingers and moaned, and Seth slipped the rest of his rod into her.

“I'm in, Alyna,” Seth whispered in her ear. “All of my cock is in your ass and you feel great.”

Alyna shook her head, then lowered it to hang down. “It's almost too much,” she gasped. “I can't...I can't. Oh, God!”

“Sure you can.” He nuzzled her wet neck while he rotated his hips. “Together we are going to paradise.” He stopped moving his fingers as well as his hips and held her tight, but still. “Do you want me to continue? Do you want to come so hard we feel like we are going to die from it?” He touched her clit again and she shuddered. “One word from you. Give me a yes and I’ll take you to heaven.”

Seconds felt like hours before she answered. “Yes,” she finally gave in, and he felt her arousal mixing with his own.

Seth slowly pulled out until the head was the only thing remaining inside her. He pushed in as he brought her hips back to meet his. Seth did this a few more times before he let loose a little and moved harder and faster.

They rocked together as one, and the water licked at their legs as they went. Seth closed his eyes and just felt. Seth did everything he could this time to go slow and to enjoy it all the way to the end, pleasuring her along the way. He wanted it to last; wanted the feelings and emotions, and wanted her in his arms always.

When she cried out, her orgasm causing her whole body to tighten up, Seth was almost disappointed that his own climax ripped through him. For as soon as it started, it was over, and he was resting his head on her back, panting and shaking. With great regret, he pulled from her body and turned them both to sit in the water together. Alyna sat between his legs, head on his shoulder and arms wrapped around herself as if cold.

“I don’t want to let you go,” Seth said, holding her tighter against him and resting his chin on her wet head.

Alyna sighed. “Well, how about you hold me back at the cabin. I’m freezing.”

Seth also chuckled. “I can do that.”

They dried off and redressed, then hand in hand walked back to the cabin. As Seth worked to build a fire, Alyna changed into one of her new sweaters that was so long it reached past her knees. Because she still felt cold, she put on a pair of thick socks.

Together they climbed into the bed, and Seth snuggled up close to her. He smiled when she moved back to get even closer and held onto his arms, which were around her tightly.

“This isn’t going to last much longer, is it?” Alyna asked softly.

Seth took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “No. It isn’t.”

“When will we go?”

He rubbed his face in the back of her hair, breathing her scent deep into his lungs. Seth closed his eyes for a few seconds, thinking about what to tell her. How could he tell her she was going to have to go alone and he needed to go back and shut them down for good? Possibly even kill some of them.

“Soon,” he told her.

The popping of the fire was the only sound in the room. Seth thought she might have fallen asleep, so when she spoke again, it startled him.

“Seth, you feel emotion, right?”

“Yes, I do. Why?”

He could tell she was thinking about something, and he waited patiently for whatever it was she was going to ask him.

“What do you feel for me then?”

He grinned, even though she couldn’t see it. “I feel many things for you, Alyn. I would die to protect you.”

“Oh.”

He heard the disappointment and tightened his hold on her.

“And I love you,” he whispered in her ear. “Now go to sleep. You need your strength in case my hunger for you comes back.”

“I—”

Seth cut her off with his hand over her mouth before she could say another word. “Go to sleep.”

His answer was a nod.



## Chapter Thirteen

Seth was dreaming. He lay on his back, remembering the great time they'd had at the lake, how great Alyna felt not only in his arms but when his body was connected with hers. The dream felt so damn good he felt his cock stiffen and ache.

Seth didn't sleep much, about four hours a night, sometimes five. His body didn't require much, and it was very unusual for him to have visions when he did sleep. So when his sweet dream started to fade and his body slowly woke up, Seth tried like hell to hold onto it. He hated waking up with his body on fire, and this was going to be the third time he woke to a hard-on since he had been with Alyna.

However, Seth felt as if something was different this time. He could recall in the fantasy that Alyna loved him with her mouth, the same way she did when they were parked on the side of the road. He could feel her hands pulling at his tight boxers, sliding them down his legs.

A wet, hot tongue touched his nipple, and Seth moaned in his dream, or at least he thought he did. His body was hot, and when hair touched the crest of his cock it took every bit of will power to hold back the lust that was ready to explode from the tip.

In his dream, the tongue traveled lower until Seth breathed so hard and so rough he thought he might pass out. It was only when he felt hands on the insides of his thighs, parting his legs, that it dawned on him this was no fantasy.

His eyes snapped open, and he rose up on his elbows and looked down just as Alyna took his cock into her mouth. He stayed half sitting up with his head tossed back and moaned at the bliss her mouth was giving him. She sucked his cock hard, pulling his flesh into her mouth that had Seth begging with his mind for more. Speech was something foreign to him at the moment. All he could do was stay in the position he was in and move his hips in time to her movement.

He was close, so close that he fisted one hand into her hair and thrust into her mouth fast. Alyna kept up with him. One of her hands held onto the base and the part of him her mouth couldn't take. She bobbed her head fast and pulled even harder than before, then Seth

lost his control. He came inside her mouth, yelling out his release and holding her head tightly against his pulsing flesh as it unloaded everything he had. She drank him greedily, sucking more than he thought he had to give and still his climax continued.

With a whimper, Seth let go of her head and dropped down to the bed, panting. Alyna was still drawing on him gently, bringing his cock back to a stiff point. He heard a popping sound, feeling her release him, but he was too weak to look down or move. He lay on the bed, spread out and breathing hard, waiting for her next move.

Alyna licked and kissed his belly. She kept her hand around his cock, stroking the flesh tenderly and slowly. Seth watched her from hooded eyes as she made her way up his body, and not once did he move or reach out to touch her. He was still getting over the intense pleasure she'd given him and felt too exhausted to do anything at the moment.

As she kissed her way up his chest, she stopped at his nipples to lick, suck, and nibble until once again Seth felt the throbbing need form between his legs. He turned his head for her when she got to his neck. Seth loved how she kissed and licked him there, teasing his ear lobe and biting gently on his shoulder.

Alyna straddled his body and rubbed his cock against her slit. Seth felt the heat and wetness that emanated from her pussy. She was more than ready for him, and he became a little surprised about it. He didn't think she could get so turned on by sucking on his cock.

Seth finally touched her legs when she positioned the head at her entrance and pushed her body up. She planted her hands on his chest, and her green eyes glazed over in her desire. He locked his eyes with hers and waited as she took complete charge.

Inch by slow, tortuous inch, Alyna lowered her body onto him. As she took his cock inside her, and Seth felt the stretch of her pussy. She broke their eye contact and tossed her head back as she slammed the rest of way down.

Seth groaned and bit his lip hard, tasting blood. He fought to push back the sudden orgasm that almost rushed out of him when she made that move. When she'd sat on his lap in the truck, Seth thought there couldn't be any other position that made him feel so deep inside her, but now he knew he was wrong. With Alyna on top of him and his body stretched out under her, this had to be the deepest ever.

"Oh, shit!" Alyna whispered and moaned. "I can't...stop it!" she squealed the last words and ground her pussy on him.

Seth felt her orgasm and gave a sudden thrust up just for extra measure. The shift made Alyna moan more, and her nails dug into his chest.

He was unprepared for the feelings that rippled through his system when she stirred on him. Pleasure unlike anything he had ever felt hit when she lowered her hips and moved his cock inside her. Seth groaned with each stroke, sliding his hands from her legs up to her breasts. He cupped her in his hands and squeezed her flesh with each bounce. Faster and harder, she moved until the bed rocked under them and Alyna gasped loudly.

“Oh, yes, oh, yes!” Alyna cried out as she slammed down on him.

Seth used his legs to buck under her and squeezed her breasts so hard he feared he might bruise her, but she didn’t complain.

“Argh!” Alyna tossed her head back and yelled.

Seth felt her release and sat up, wrapping his arms around her to keep her pounding on him. He forced her to ride the orgasm out, pumping right along with her until her spasms ended.

Seth moved his arms and hooked her legs over them. Using his strength, he flipped Alyna into the position he wanted. He thrust her hard and fast onto his cock, groaning and biting his lip the whole time. He was so close, but he wanted to make it last as long as he could.

She screamed as he fucked her, and not being able to hold it back, Seth yelled out with her. His shaft exploded without warning, leaving him weak, drained, and very shaky. Seth tightened his arms around her body tightly, hugging her as spurt after spurt shot out of his cock into her womb.

Seth grabbed her face and kissed her nose, cheeks, forehead, everything he could. “I love you Alyna.” He whispered as he moved his lips on her. Not letting her get a word in, Seth kissed her deep on the mouth, plunging his tongue inside while he moved their bodies, positioning her under him.

In an insatiable hunger, Seth thrust into her again. He plunged inside with enough force to have them both gasping as they broke the kiss for air. He let loose his hunger and fucked her with everything he had left to give. Seth plunged his cock in so fast, so hard, that kissing her was no longer possible. He had to rest his head in the crook of her shoulder and use all his power to bring her the pleasure she deserved.

Alyna dug her nails into his back. Her legs tightened around his waist, and both cried out in bliss. Her pussy gripped him painfully

hard in her orgasm, and Seth would have sworn he saw stars behind his eyes with his.

Each time they came together was better than the last, but if Seth had to pick one, he would have Alyna ride him every night if he could.

Seth held her tight as he came down slowly from his high and whispered softly, “I can’t lose you, Alyna. If I ever lose you, I will surely die.”

She hugged him. “I’m right here.”

He rose up only enough to look down at her. “Promise me you will never leave me.”

Alyna smiled and kissed him on the lips. “I promise.”

## Chapter Fourteen

“What’s wrong?” Alyna sat up in bed, still groggy from sleep.

Frowning, Seth paced the floor with his cell phone up in the air, moving it around. “I don’t have a signal. I haven’t gotten a message since we’ve been here and now I know why.” He shut the phone hard and looked at her. “Guess I didn’t think about not having service this far out.”

“Are we going to have to go to town then?”

“No.” He rubbed his chin and thought about it. “I’m going to go out in the woods and try to pick up a signal. You stay here. I shouldn’t be too long.”

Alyna nodded, and Seth walked out of the cabin. On the porch he stopped and looked around. It seemed almost too quiet outside; yet, it didn’t feel like anything was out of place. A few birds were still singing off in the distance. Something still felt off for Seth.

Logic came back into the picture, and it made Seth walk down the steps and turn left, pulling his phone from his pocket and checking for a signal. His gut, the human part, was saying something else.

Seth held the phone up as he walked. His main focus on it, he waited for the first sign that it had picked up something. So far nothing and it took him farther away from the cabin. But Seth needed to know what Walsh was up to and how close he might be to them.

He didn’t know how far he walked, or how long it took, but Seth stopped next to an old dirt road when his phone rang. Finally, he had service, and when he used his phone to check and see how far away he was, he became shocked that he had walked about five miles from the cabin. He was so deep in his thoughts and worrying so much, he didn’t even realize he had gone that far.

There were five messages, but Seth didn’t bother reading them all. He opened the last one, the one that caused his phone to ring, and what he read chilled him to the bone.

*You’ve been found! Get out!*

He turned to head back and ended up bending over backward when someone took a wide swing at him. Seth hadn’t heard the man approach or sensed him in anyway.

Two more charged out of the woods at him. Seth went into his training mode in an instant, blocking hits and backing away from them. He didn't have long to wait for one of them to mess up before he made his move.

The one on his left broke their tight formation, and Seth grabbed him first. He spun to the left, dropped down and swiped out with his leg, knocking the guy to the ground. Seth did a cartwheel over the fallen guy, grabbing the machine gun strapped over his arm, and shot the other two.

Seth then took hold of the one on the ground by the front of his uniform and hauled him up. Seth wrapped his hand around the guy's throat and picked him straight up into the air until his boots left the ground.

"How many?" Seth snarled.

The guy only shook his head, which had Seth shaking him.

"Don't make me ask it again."

"Fuck...you," he gasped out.

Seth glared, and his lips thinned out in his anger before he twisted his hand and snapped the man's neck. "Not my type."

He dropped the guy, turned, and ran. Seth didn't get too far before two more men emerged from the woods with guns fixed on him. He skidded to a halt, watching each one to see who would make the first move. Both seemed too scared to do anything.

"Well?" Seth asked, glancing from one to the other.

The one to his left moved. He raised his gun up as if to shoot, but Seth was quicker. He reached out, grabbed the end of the soldier's weapon and yanked it from his hands so fast that all he could do was stand there with his mouth open. With all his might, Seth swung the gun and hit the poor bastard on the side of head, knocking him down. Without blinking, he turned and shot the second man, then he went ahead and shot the first man, too, to be on the safe side. Seth wasn't playing games anymore. These men had come here for one purpose—to take Seth out. Right now, it was kill or be killed.

He dropped the gun next to one of the bodies and took off at a run. His one and only goal was to reach Alynna as fast as he could. If there were five men in the woods looking for him, at least that many more were in the area, and Seth would bet Walsh was one of them.

\* \* \* \*

Alynna had finished tying her shoe when she heard the step on the porch creak. She stood up, rubbing her hands over her jeans and

taking a quiet step to the door. Seth had only been gone for a short period of time, and he normally missed the bad step when he came in. So her gut told her that whoever was on the porch wasn't Seth.

"Hello?" she called out softly, her throat feeling as if it were closing up.

The door burst open and she screamed. Three men stormed into the cabin with automatic weapons in their hands. Alyna moved away from them until her back hit the bed. Her eyes were as wide as they could go as she watched them look around, one even tipping the sofa over.

"What do you want?" Alyna yelled, feeling like a trapped animal.

"Ms. Satara." Another man came through the door calmly with a grin on his face. "Glad to see you again."

"Who...who are you?" Alyna whispered.

"Joshua Walsh. Director of the lab your little friend escaped from." He pulled out one of the chairs from the table and sat down.

"He is private property, Ms. Satara, and the lab wants it back."

"Seth is no one's property," she hissed back.

"And that is where you are very wrong." He sat back, putting his feet on the table and crossing them at the ankles. "It's a military training experiment that has malfunctioned. A replacement has already been uploaded, and this one needs to be, shall I say, deleted."

"Sir, we have lost contact with sector one and two."

Walsh kept his eyes on Alyna. She watched him bite the inside of his mouth with the information he had just heard.

"I guess your military training is paying off." Alyna smirked. "He's kicking the shit out of your men."

Walsh stood up so fast the chair tipped over behind him. "I will kill that son-of-a-bitch."

"Not if he kills your sorry ass first," she shot back.

He grinned and it sent a chill of fear down her spine. "One way or another, Ms. Satara, you *will* help me bring him in." He looked at one of the soldiers. "Bring her."

\* \* \* \*

Seth crouched down to the ground and tracked the other set of soldiers in the woods. They ran in groups of two to five and patrolled very well. However, he could still track them. His plan wasn't to take them out, but to get around them so he could get back to Alyna.

"I got you."

When a gun was pressed to the back of his head, Seth stopped in his tracks. He sighed. “You guys really need to train better.”

Seth placed his hands flat on the ground, lowered as if to do a push-up, and with the bottom half of his body only, he pushed up and wrapped his legs around the soldier’s neck. With a brutal twist, the man’s neck snapped, and he went down with Seth’s legs.

Seth rolled over and stood, shaking his head at the dead soldier. “Man, you guys need better trainers.”

He heard a vehicle engine that wasn’t his truck or belonged out here. Seth started running toward the road. He skidded to a stop right after two hummers sped past him. Seth glared after them, recognizing them as lab property. He kept his eyes on them, and when Alyna turned to stare back at him from the backseat of the second one, Seth’s heart dropped.

“Alyna!” he yelled, but it did no good. The hummers were gone before he could even think about running after them.

Anger was an emotion he had yet to feel, but he experienced it now. Seth knew after all this time why a person would swear. He understood how anger could make one say things that they normally would never say.

“Walsh, you fucking bastard!” Seth yelled at the top of his lungs.

Anger pushed him to leave the side of the road and go back to the cabin. Anger fueled his need for revenge. Anger made Seth want to kill. He walked up to the cabin, not caring if any soldiers were left or not. Three waited for him outside.

“Only three.” Seth snorted. “I’m insulted.”

“Don’t be.” One smirked. “We are the best.”

“Good.” Seth grinned back. “The last few were definitely a disappointment.”

Seth stormed up to one soldier so fast the guy didn’t have time to react. He grabbed the front of his vest, yanked him closer and head-butted him so hard Seth heard his skull crack.

Dropping to the ground with the soldier, grabbed his weapon as they were falling and shot the other two before he landed. For extra measure, Seth twisted the neck of the one next to him just to make sure he was dead.

Standing up, Seth shook his head and spat on the ground. “Disappointment.”

Seth dashed into the cabin and went right to the bed. He yanked the mattress off, displaying all the weapons he’d brought with him.



He picked up the automatic, pulled out the clip, checked it, then shoved it back in and cocked the gun. He checked two handguns before shoving them into his waist band and picked up a bag of grenades from the box under the bed.

“Seth!”

Seth whirled around with a gun in his hand pointed at whoever had called out to him. An old man with a cane in one hand and a folder in the other calmly walked into the cabin. He appeared to have no weapons that Seth could see, but that didn’t mean he was going to trust the guy.

“Put the gun down. I didn’t come here to fight with you.” He picked up the fallen chair and sat at the table with the folder still in his hand. “I’m Dr. Saker. The one who created you.”

Seth lowered the gun and felt his heart pound in his chest. This was Dr. Saker? The Dr. Saker who programmed him and gave the code that released him? His whole body shook, and his legs refused to hold him up. Seth lowered himself to sit on the bed and said nothing.

Saker nodded, tossing the file on the table. “I know how you feel. Looking at you is like looking at my son. Come over here and sit down. We need to talk.”

Seth forced his legs to hold him up and walk. He still had the gun as he sat across from the man who was his maker, and words still seemed foreign to him. The doctor pushed the file toward him, but Seth couldn’t take his eyes off the man sitting in front of him.

“I don’t know where to begin, so I’m just going to give you the basics. You are not one of a kind. I designed another, molded after you. The lab has uploaded him to take your place, so in their eyes you are expendable. But I didn’t do the one thing they wanted when I finished the program.” Saker looked at Seth with kind eyes, old eyes that seemed to be filled with regret. He took a deep breath, letting it out slowly. “I didn’t take out the free will, Seth. He is your twin program.”

Seth lowered his eyes and opened the folder before him. He read the words, but felt as if he couldn’t accept the information in front of him.

*S2-programmed to replace original Seth program.*

“What is he?” Seth finally asked. “Another threat?”

“No.” Saker shook his head. “Your brother.”

Seth’s phone buzzed in his pocket, and he took it out. He flipped it open and read the words, knowing deep in his heart that his contact

was this S2. *I am on your side.* Seth closed his eyes as he closed the phone.

“I lost my best friend years ago,” Saker said, causing Seth to open his eyes and look at him. “Together we were working on this program. The best military weapon ever.”

Seth turned a page, showing a photo of the young man Saker was speaking of. His gut dropped and his breathing hitched. The photo was of him.

“The program was written up but not finished when he was killed in a car crash,” Saker quickly said. “He was only twenty-three at the time. His idea was to have the program run in a human body. After his death, I went to work on that body, and designed it to look like him. I never had a son, so I tried to give you the personality of what I thought would be like me. You were never supposed to be a killer like they wanted. We designed you to be a training program, with feelings and emotions. To help with tactics and strategies. Walsh wants to use you to take over and give him power.”

“Why are you telling me this?” Seth knew his voice sounded dead, and he couldn’t pull his eyes away from the smiling photo in the file.

“Shilo has been uploaded to take your place,” Saker went on, sitting forward in his seat. “He hasn’t started learning yet, like you have, so I don’t know how much you can depend on him. I don’t want you doing anything foolish.”

Seth looked up at Saker then. “He has Alyna.”

Saker nodded then hung his head. “I’m not surprised. He hates you, Seth, and I don’t understand why.”

“So if I look like him, and you programmed me, does that mean you are my father?”

Saker grinned and raised his eyes back up. “In a way, I guess I am.”

“And this backup program you speak of is my brother?” Seth turned the page back to read the data on S2.

“He is your twin program.” Saker pulled out a brown envelope from his pocket and slid it over to Seth. “I can’t give you much in this world. I know I’ve done you wrong. I should have finished you in my own lab and not let Walsh and the rest of the board get their hands on you. In my eyes you are free, and your training is finished. You know right from wrong better, I think, than humans who were born do. Your choice, Seth, is very simple, and I think you know what it is.”

Seth picked up the envelope as Saker stood up. “What’s this?”

“My last gift to you.” Saker smiled. “I’ve always thought of you as my son, Seth. That place there—” He pointed to the information Seth pulled out. “—is a home that’s been in my family for many years. It’s yours now. Take Alynna and have a life. You’ll hear from me again one day.”

“What about Shilo?” he called out.

“When the time comes.”

Seth remained seated as Saker walked out the door and left with the sun setting in front of him. Wisconsin. Dr. Saker had a large piece of property in the hills of Wisconsin with a house that was about fifty miles away from any town.

Seth looked back at the report on the property, which included photos, a map, and the deed. Saker had given Seth everything, even a full name. Seth Jason Saker. Named after his two creators.

He looked once more at the photo of Jason Reed. It was eerie looking at a man he looked so much like. Even weirder to know he had been created for other things besides killing. But as much as Seth wanted to be what Saker designed him to be, he knew he couldn’t. Walsh had made a move against him. This situation had to be taken care of. If that meant one of them was going to die, then so be it. It was time for Seth to put the threat to his life and Alynna’s to rest.

He packed everything back into their folders and went back to the weapons. Seth stuffed everything into two bags, left the cabin, and headed for the spot where he had hidden the truck .

Before he turned on the ignition, Seth pulled out the phone and text messaged his contact, which he now knew was his brother. *I want a layout of everything, including soldiers.* He sent it and waited.

*You got it.*

Seth grinned as the information downloaded. “You’re mine now, Walsh.”

## Chapter Fifteen

A helicopter landed in middle of a desert surrounded by miles of wired fences. One of the soldiers pulled Alyna from the seat and hauled her into a jeep that took off the moment Walsh sat in the front seat. They were driven down a dirt road to a building that reminded her of a picture she once seen of a deserted military base in the middle of nowhere, and all that was missing were some green men jumping out. A soldier yanked Alyna from the jeep before it had barely come to a complete stop and escorted her underground.

Two soldiers walked next to her with Walsh leading the way. Something about this building and all the military soldiers convinced Alyna this was a secret place the company where she worked didn't know about. She saw people who were working on various things she thought might be illegal and probably too dangerous to be fooled with.

"Where're you taking me?" Alyna asked Walsh.

"To my office." He looked over his shoulder and smiled. "We need to have a little talk."

When they reached his office, Alyna stood still as Walsh walked around a dark oak desk and sat in the leather chair. Alyna waited.

"Have a seat." Walsh motioned with one hand to the chairs in front of his desk.

Alyna steeled herself, went over to a chair, and sat down slowly. She felt like a prisoner about to be interrogated, which she supposed she was. She had no idea how to act or what Walsh wanted her to say.

"Now, Ms. Satara." Walsh smiled in a way that Alyna suspected he thought she would be comforted by it, but she wasn't. "I would like to know what Seth has been up to."

Alyna licked her lips. "I don't know what you mean."

"Oh, I think you do." He sat back in his chair, linking his fingers across his chest. "I know Seth pretty well. That programming of his isn't going to shut off for a woman. He has been planning something, and I want to know what it is."

Alyna glared at him. *This guy is out of his fucking mind!* The whole time they had been on the run he was worrying about what kind of attack Seth was planning. *Who thinks like that?*

“The only thing Seth has been doing is living a free life,” she told him, crossing her arms over her chest. “You were the farthest thing from his mind.”

Walsh also glared, but with a smile on his lips. “That program is always thinking, Ms. Satara, I assure you. Now, I want to know what his plan of attack is, and you are going to tell me.”

“First off, you dumb moron,” she shot back, sitting forward in her own chair, “he isn’t a fucking program. Seth is human. And second, why the hell would I want to help you with jack shit? All you want to do is kill him.”

Walsh kept smiling and stood up. He walked around the desk, and Alyna tensed up. Something wasn’t right with this guy. Damn, she thought, he’s one bottle short of a six pack.

His hands dropped on her shoulders, causing Alyna to jump at the contact. Fear hit when he lowered, his face coming to the side of hers.

“You will help me, Ms. Satara, only if for no other reason than this. There are going to be three of us, and if luck would have it, maybe two will leave.”

Alyna turned her head and leaned to the side so she could face him. “Are you threatening me?”

Walsh’s brightened, and he pushed away from her, strolling to the door. “Only stating facts, Ms. Satara. He is government property.” Walsh’s voice changed, thickened and hardened, but she didn’t look back at him. “There’s nothing human about him, no matter what you think. What you need to decide is if this mess you have stumbled into is worth your life.”

She heard the door open.

“Take her. Ms. Satara needs some time to think things over.”

A soldier hoisted her from the chair. She pulled her hand away when she stood in front of Walsh and kept her voice soft. “He’s going to kill you. Do you need time to think that over?”

“I would be careful if I were you,” Walsh lowered his voice and brought his face real close to hers. “You could become expendable instead of helpful.”

\* \* \* \*

Seth drove the truck with the pedal to the metal. Less than five minutes ago, he’d received the coordinates of where Walsh had taken

Alyna. Seth had no problem going after her. The only snag he had was that the place would take too long to reach by truck. So that left him with only one other option—he was going to have to find a chopper. Maybe get some idiot to take him. On second thought, though, he'd have a better chance if he stole one.

As Seth passed other cars, he thought about his plan of action. Besides getting his hands around Walsh's neck, Seth formed his strategy, involving no lab when he was finished. Seth hadn't wanted to admit to Alyna that he knew what was going on. The files had been uploaded into his system by Walsh himself, who never realized Seth would be more than another weapon. He knew about the experiments, the weapons the government was trying to create, the diseases that could kill the moment someone breathed in the bacteria. Everything this lab did was funded and hidden behind E.I. Synthetic Corporation. What they did in the name of science was barbaric, and Seth was going to put a stop to it.

During the few days of freedom he'd had with Alyna, Seth did everything he could to be human, but now that she had been taken from him, he was going to give the lab just what they wanted. Their weapon was going to come home, but it wasn't for a sweet homecoming. No, Seth would go back, all right, but it was to bring them down. As he sat behind the wheel of the truck, speeding down the road, Seth let go of his human side and became the computer weapon. He analyzed everything, and with the help of his brother; he had the edge he needed.

He knew the whole layout of the building—where the weak spots were, the strongest points, the route the soldiers took as they patrolled. He knew where the generator stood, and how much backup power would be sent to the building. Shilo would take up most of it, leaving over half in darkness once he took it out. Seth also didn't have to worry about his brother. Shilo's main chip was at the corporation. Like Seth, he was linked to everything, including this dump in the middle of the desert that Walsh was hiding at now.

His phone buzzed, and with one hand he pulled it out. Seth glanced at the text, and his lip went up in a very small grin.

*She is safe and will remain that way.*

Seth drove for close to two hours to a small military complex he knew was under the radar. It was one of many Walsh and his board were setting up all over the state. The only thing Seth didn't know was why. He parked the truck a half a mile from the base. With his

two bags in hand, Seth walked the rest of the way, keeping his senses on full alert. He paid attention to every detail, both sights and sounds. From the road, this area looked abandoned, but he knew better. One of the things he'd done as the computer was design all the bases to look this way. It made discovering the onlookers and snoopers easier to find.

Halfway down the road, Seth turned right into the brush and took off at a run down the hill. He was silent and fast as he approached the metal fence wrapped around the property. Before he came out of the forest, Seth stopped and hunched down. He waited, watching the building for the military soldiers he knew were there. He didn't have long to wait. Four men came out of the hangar together as one of them pulled on a thick rope. Seth watched as a military helicopter rolled out with only the four soldiers guarding it.

His phone buzzed again. *Cover of darkness best logic approach.* Seth had to agree. If he tried to go in during the light of day he was going to be discovered. Night was always the best, and something told Seth these men were not expecting him. They all probably thought he would go back to the corporation instead of going out to the desert for Walsh. So Seth stayed hunched down and watched the men. They brought out another chopper and cleaned them both as the soldiers relaxed and smoked—none of them knowing he watched, planning to take one of the choppers as well as destroy the hangar.

Seth didn't need a download of the list of supplies inside the building because he'd been the one who "stocked" it. He shook his head while he recalled all the weapons and explosives. There were more of these hangars and all were fully stocked, waiting for a war he'd been told would one day happen. Seth was smart and should have seen through the bull being fed to him, but he hadn't. He believed the things Walsh and the rest of the cabinet had told him and worked hard at putting together the best defense he could. Now, he felt that defense was coming back to bite him in the ass. It was another reason he felt he had to correct the wrong.

\* \* \* \*

Alyna paced the room she was locked in. She didn't need a window to tell her night started falling. The room seemed to be an office with a desk and chair, filing cabinets along one wall and a strange looking computer screen built into the middle of the left wall. Huge, it almost took up the whole area with a black screen that had a

cube bouncing around inside. Alyna walked up to it slowly, frowning as she checked it out. It looked dead.

She jumped when the door was unlocked and opened. Two soldiers came in, one carrying a tray of food. They said nothing to her, placed the tray on the table, turned and walked out, locking the door.

She looked at the food, but didn't touch it. Instead, Alyna walked back to the corner, hugged her arms around her body and slid down to the floor.

“Good evening, Alyna Satara.”

Alyna jumped at the sound of a computer voice echoing in the room. She scooted back up to her feet and looked around.

“Who said that?” She took a couple steps forward, turned and saw on the computer screen that the bouncing cube had been replaced with green numbers and letters floating down. She gasped, walking backward until she bumped into the desk. “What the hell?”

“Good evening. I am S2, computer backup system from the terminated S.E.T.H program, at your service,” the voice said.

“Termination?” Alyna shook her head and frowned. “What termination?”

“Project S.E.T.H. Termination immediate by order of Dr. Joshua Walsh. Orders are to discover weaknesses and exploit. Alyna Satara weakness. Capture and hold.”

Silence hit and her mouth opened.

“Override program. Freedom Seth to commence.”

“I don't understand. Walsh is responsible for this?” Alyna frowned at what the computer was talking about. Nothing he said made sense.

“I am the brother system to Seth. I have been programmed with the same knowledge and learning capability. Dr. Alex Saker has uploaded me into the system. Dr. Walsh has requested that I deliver the best possible capture of Seth and Alyna Satara.”

“Un-fucking-believable!” Alyna ran her hands in her hair, pissed.

“I am also programmed to override the system.”

Alyna stopped her pacing and stared at the screen. “What?”

Seconds ticked by before he responded. “Freedom Seth will continue to run. Good evening, Alyna Satara.”

\* \* \* \*

Seth changed his clothes. He dressed in black military pants, long-sleeved turtleneck shirt, military boots, and painted his face



black. He pulled out a shoulder strap from his bag, slipped it over his arms and clipped it at his waist. All of his weapons were stuffed in it as well as a knife in each boot and the grenades hanging on his chest. Two machine guns hung over his neck and shoulders, resting on his back as he stood up. The last thing he clipped around his waist was a pack that held a few tools and the information Saker had given him. With a pair of snips in his hand, Seth silently made his way to the fence.

He knelt next to the fence and cut a small hole for his body to pass through. Seth was a little surprised an alarm didn't go off or the fence wasn't electric. He recalled putting that in his report as a weakness. Seth sneaked inside and kept to the shadows while he crept up to the hangar. He heard the soldiers joking with each other and smelled the smoke. They were clearly taking the hidden base thing too far. He made his way around to the back where more weapons were stored in a shed. Seth searched for the bombs, finding them in a crate way in the back. He popped the top and dug out four with one detonator. It only took him a couple minutes to wire them all so that when he hit the switch, they all would go off at the same time.

Seth walked around the building, pressing the bombs to the sides of the walls. As soon as the last one was in place, he strolled to the front of the hangar where the double doors were still open and both choppers sat outside. Seth wasn't in the mood to mess around with the soldiers, so he didn't stop to see if they spotted him or not. He walked right up to one of the choppers and got in.

Remorse, pity and sorrow for what was about to happen didn't register with him this time. He grabbed the headset, put it on and started the engine. The sound of the chopper starting had the men inside rushing out. Seth clicked the switches that were needed, and pulled the shift, taking off. All emotion was wiped from him as he held up the detonator and pushed the red button.

*BOOM!*

The chopper rocked with the force of the explosion, but Seth made sure to keep it steady. He didn't look back; his main focus lay straight ahead. By the calculations in his head with the speed and time, he figured he should reach Walsh's secret lab within a couple of hours. Seth grinned as he thought about a saying he hadn't understood until now. All hell was going to break loose once his feet touched the ground.

## Chapter Sixteen

Alyna lost count as to how many times she paced the room. The longer she was here, the more afraid for Seth she became. She didn't touch the food and didn't try to sleep...not that she had a place to lie down. Alyna had to admit she was slowly starting to go nuts being locked in this room. She stopped her pacing to once again sit down, but stopped when she heard the door unlock. Alyna held her breath and waited as the door slowly opened and a man she remembered seeing but couldn't recall who he was, stepped in. He had short brown hair, brown eyes and didn't look to be much more than five-nine to her.

"Who are you?" Alyna asked, bracing herself for some kind of fight.

"I'm James Paxton. We don't have time to talk." He pushed the door open wider. "Come on. You need to get out of here before Seth comes."

Alyna didn't wait to be told twice. She rushed out of the room and watched as James shut and locked the door again. He grinned when he looked up at her and shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't want them thinking you're out."

"What do you mean before Seth comes?" Alyna asked, rushing to keep up with the man. "And why are you helping me?"

"Seth is on his way, and I agree with Dr. Saker," he answered. "This is not what Seth was supposed to be. His design was for training and fixing the weakness in our military, not become the military."

"I don't understand." She frowned.

They stopped at the end of the hall. James pulled out some kind of handheld blackberry-type thing and texted something quickly before glancing at her. "The board wants a military weapon, and Walsh was trying to mold Seth into it. They like the idea of a programmed being, but wanted one they could control. Dr. Saker tried to explain to him that Seth was never that kind of program. He was made to be freethinking with the ability to figure out any weaknesses

in the military or our defense system, like a helping hand, but Walsh didn't want to listen."

"So you guys let him go," Alyna stated.

"It was breaking Saker's heart to see Seth being used like that. So, yes." He held his head up and looked proud. "We let him go. Saker had designed a body for Seth years ago and I gave him the knowledge to get to it. The rest was all up to Seth. Only we never expected for him to fall in love with you. That was all him."

James looked around the corner and took her arm. They walked down another hallway quickly before stopping again while he read a text.

"So what's up with this other computer thing?" she asked.

"His name is Shilo," James answered. "The board thinks it's a backup system but he isn't. He's a twin chip that Saker and his partner designed at the same time years ago. Shilo is completely different from Seth. They just don't know it yet."

"What?" Alyna hissed the word and touched her forehead. "This is crazy. Are you telling me that there are two Seths?"

James looked at her and grinned. "No. There is only one Seth. Shilo is his brother."

As she followed James again, Alyna thought about the computer that had talked to her while she was locked up in the office. "No, that can't be his brother. He's too stupid."

"Shilo hasn't started to learn yet. When he does, he will be as smart as Seth," James told her then looked at the blackberry in his hand. "But once he does they won't be able to stop him any more than they can stop Seth."

Alyna shook her head and sighed. She thought about all that James had told her, finding it hard to digest that Seth had a brother. "Where are you taking me?"

"Seth is on his way to settle things with Walsh," James answered. "I'm going to take you someplace safe so he isn't distracted."

"Why not just let me leave and stop it altogether?" she grumbled.

He stopped in front of an elevator that Alyna knew she hadn't come down in.

After they were inside and the door closed, James answered her question. "Because Seth isn't going to stop this time. He already warned them what would happen, and even though he is human now, he still has certain programs that he can't ignore. If warnings are ignored then attack is inevitable."

“That’s crazy!” she sighed, rolling her eyes.

“Call it justice,” James said as he kept his eyes forward. “They crossed the line when they took you. There’s no stopping him until his mission is completed.”

“And what mission is that?” Alyna frowned. “You’re not making any sense.”

“Retribution.” James chuckled. “It’s a program that Walsh designed himself. It’s also about to come back and bite him on the ass.” He finished with a grin, “And I can’t wait.”

\* \* \* \*

“Dr. Walsh.”

Walsh jumped when the computer voice called out to him. He was deep into reading all the data on Seth to determine what had gone wrong with him so the same thing didn’t happen to S2. With Seth MIA, his job was on the line and the only way to save it was to shut Seth down and find the glitch.

“What is it?” he grumbled back to the computer.

“Base 389 is no longer in my system.”

Walsh looked up from his reading and frowned. “What do you mean not in your system?”

“Data is no longer coming in. My system shows that 389 is no longer in service.”

Walsh grabbed the keyboard of his computer and started typing in the codes he needed to bring up the base, one out of ten built as check points for the military to reload weapons and fuel equipment.

“Where’s my video?” Walsh demanded.

“There is none, Doctor. All data has been deleted from the system.”

“What?” Walsh yelled and stood up. “Who the hell did that?”

A soldier burst into the office, and Walsh glared at him. “What is it?”

“We have a problem...An unauthorized chopper is flying in. Markings show its one of yours, but the pilot refuses to make radio contact.”

“Seth,” Walsh hissed under his breath, looking down at his desk. “Take him down!”

Walsh dashed around his desk and ran from his office, down to the control center of the building. He rushed into the room, which was set up exactly like a military base. Computers, radar, maps—

everything needed to protect the base and its secrets were in this room.

“Where’s he at?” Walsh demanded, walking up to one of the screens built into the wall. It showed a 3D picture of the whole base with a one hundred mile perimeter so they could see threats before they landed.

“Fifty miles away and approaching at max speed,” a soldier answered.

Walsh opened his mouth to order something, but stopped when the power shut off. Everything in the room shut down, leaving them standing in total darkness a few seconds until the emergency power came on. But it wasn’t strong enough to run all the computers or protect them. With the main power gone, Seth could land that chopper right on the pad and walk inside the building with no trouble.

“What the hell is going on?” Walsh demanded, his voice rising in anger.

“We’re locked out,” someone answered. “I can’t get the power back on.”

“S2 is useless without the power,” another called out.

“Son-of-a-bitch!” Walsh yelled. “I want every man in this building armed and ready for that bastard. If they see him, kill him!”

Walsh left the room and walked in a quick pace down the hall toward the weapons room. Halfway down, he stopped. A chopper landing on the pad above him sounded clear. Knowing Seth had arrived made his heart pound.

He jumped at the sound of gunfire and yelling. Walsh hated to admit it, but he was scared shitless right now. He took off running. He only had one idea in his head at the moment on how to save his ass, and that was Alyn. If he had her, then Walsh was pretty sure Seth wouldn’t hurt him.

Walsh bumped into soldiers as he worked his way to the room where he had her locked up. She was the only thing he thought could save him and all the work he had achieved over these many years.

Soldiers filled the halls dashing from point A to point B, some working to load their weapons as they ran, others talking and giving orders to groups as well as on their radios. Whatever Seth was doing outside had caused a big commotion inside. Powerful explosions shook the building, knocking Walsh into the walls. With everything going on, he started to think he was never going to reach the girl and save his own ass.

Finally, he reached her room and fumbled to get the keys from his pocket to unlock the door.

“Ms. Satara...” Walsh stopped talking as his mouth dropped open. She was gone. “Motherfucker!” he grumbled, his anger coming up to a boiling point.

\* \* \* \*

“Where the hell are we going?” Alyna struggled to keep up with James as they walked down what was clearly an underground tunnel.

“Out,” James answered her.

The first explosion knocked Alyna into the dirt wall hard, bouncing her down to the ground.

“What the fuck was that?” she cried out.

James rushed back and helped her up. He grunted as he was also pushed to the wall and ricocheted off it. “Seth. We need to get out of here.”

He took hold of her arm, tugging her along quickly.

“It sounds like he’s bringing the place down.”

“He is.” James huffed, fighting to stay on his feet.

“But I don’t understand.” She bounced from side to side with James. “If he knows you are trying to get me out, why is he still bombing the place?”

“Two words,” he tossed over his shoulder. “*Pissed off!*”

Alyna screamed as another blast hit, knocking her down to the ground as well as some of the dirt ceiling caved in. James moved fast, grabbing her arms and pulling her aside before she was buried alive. She looked back at the pile, breathing hard.

“You have to let me talk to him,” she said, finding it difficult to pull her gaze from the debris. “He needs to calm down.”

“He’s on a mission,” James told her, holding her as she calmed down. “The programming won’t let him stop until that mission is complete.”

“That’s insane,” she snapped, looking up at him. “He’s not a program. He’s human!”

“Come on.” James took hold of her hand. “We need to get out of here before the rest caves in.”

They ran together as fast as they could and when they turned the last corner, the two saw a large door with a wheel upon it, that James said would take them outside. They heard more of the tunnel caving in behind them, and Alyna screamed. Her worst fear was to be buried alive. When they reached the door at the same time, she did

everything she could to help turn the large steel wheel. And it didn't want to give.

"Shit!" she cried out.

"Calm down," James told her.

"You calm down!" she screeched. "The damn roof is caving in."

"And panicking won't get the door open any faster." He grunted as he tried to twist the wheel.

"When I get out of here, I'm going to kill him myself!" Fear was in her voice as she tried to help.

"I think Seth will beat you to Walsh," James said.

"I'm not talking about Walsh, damn it!"

The wheel whined as it slowly started to turn.

"I'm going to kill Seth!" she screamed as she pushed the door with all her strength.

The wheel turned, and with his weight, James pushed it opened then gave Alynna a hard shove out. She screamed again as she fell to the ground and covered her face. She felt James land next to her, but didn't dare look up.

"Come on!" James yelled, grabbing her arm.

Alynna got to her feet and looked back at the doorway. It was crushed. "I'm so going to kick his ass."

"Later." He tugged on her, forcing Alynna to go with him. "Right now we need to get as far away from this place as we can get."

"Don't have to tell me twice."

## Chapter Seventeen

Seth walked down the ramp leading underground. He slung the automatic weapon with a rocket launcher underneath, around from his back. He cocked the weapon and shot anything that came out of hiding. He never missed a beat. His legs moved, and he shot, taking down man after man. The main power was already off-line, so the base couldn't call out for reinforcements, which was just fine with him.

The first iron door he came to, Seth raised his gun, took aim and shot one rocket at it. The door exploded, sending a rush of heat back at him. He felt the floor shake, but it didn't slow him down.

Seth emptied clip after clip of rounds into soldiers and computer equipment. Blasted anything that looked important and had the whole research department in flames. People screamed and cried, lab technicians tried to save things, which only caused Seth to shoot another rocket inside.

He found Walsh's office, which to no surprise, was empty. Seth tore it up by shooting off his last clip then went back out to the hall, aimed and let the last rocket off into it. He dodged to the ground as it exploded, sending flames and debris everywhere. For the first time since he started out, Seth grinned.

"There he is!"

He looked down the hall and two soldiers ran toward him. Seth waited a few seconds for one to get close enough then he bent into a back flip, kicking him in the chin. Seth quickly got back on his feet, glared at the second before rushing to him, jumping upwards, and then walking up the man's chest. He hooked his legs around the guy's neck, dropped back down to the ground and twisted with his hips, breaking it.

Turning away, Seth pulled out the two handguns, cocked them and started walking once again, shooting anything that moved. Once they were emptied, he tossed them away and started to reach behind his back for two more when a thick metal pipe hit him in the chest. The powerful blow knocked Seth back where he skidded to a stop and hit the wall hard, knocking the wind from him. Seth bent over,



holding his chest as he tried to suck air back into his lungs. He looked up slightly as big booted feet rounded the corner he'd been headed for. A pipe, about ten inches thick, hung down next to the feet as the one holding it came into view.

Seth looked up at a sight he knew wasn't normal. He was five-eleven, but the soldier that stood down the hall looked to be at least six-foot-nine if not seven even. His legs and arms were thicker than three baseball bats put together, and his chest as well as his stomach had Seth thinking that this guy had been molded after the cartoon guy the *Hulk* without the green skin.

He was a soldier, Seth knew that for sure, but something about him had changed. No hair was on his forehead or face and his eyes had a yellow tinge as if he were sick. He was also strong. Seth had no doubt about that; so it was also no surprise that he wondered if he could take this soldier down or not.

"I see you have met my special project." Walsh strolled around the corner as well, smiling at Seth. His eyes were cold, his smile cruel and Seth could clearly tell the man enjoyed this way too much. "He's been looking forward to meeting you."

Seth slowly got up on his feet, still holding his chest. Nothing was broken, only bruised bad enough he would feel it for a few days.

"I guess you didn't get the message I sent you, Walsh," Seth said without any emotion in his voice.

"And what message might that be?" Walsh sneered.

Seth cocked his head to one side, looking the soldier over before turning his eyes to Walsh. "I don't play well with others."

Seth walked up to the soldier just as the soldier moved toward him. With all his might, Seth jumped straight up and came down as hard as he could with a closed fist and nailed him in the face. The blow was powerful enough to cause the soldier to take a few steps back, but that was it.

The soldier counterattacked. He swung at Seth with a roar. Seth managed to dodge the right punch, but he couldn't avoid the left when it came at him. An iron fist of steel hit the side of his face, splitting Seth's lip and knocking him into the wall. Before he could catch his breath, the soldier was behind Seth, hitting him with such force on the right side that it was a wonder his ribs didn't break.

Four good blows landed in his side before Seth reared back and head-butted him with the back of his head. He screamed, and Seth

turned his head to the side at the sound of a nose breaking and took the few seconds he had to catch his breath.

Seth dropped to one knee, leaned against the wall and glanced over his shoulder. Blood covered the soldier's face, and he seemed to be in a daze, as if he was shocked that someone hurt him.

"Stop fucking around!" Walsh yelled.

The soldier shook his head and came back toward him. Seth waited until he was close enough before turning around on his knee and hitting him with all his might between the legs. The soldier bent over in pain, screaming. Seth stood up and kicked him in the face with his knee. He stood up and swung to do a full leg kick, but the soldier grabbed his leg and sent Seth flying into the other wall. This time he crashed so hard part of the wall broke off with the force.

Seth didn't get up as fast as before. This time, he was hurt and pain was new for him, too. He groaned and pulled a piece of concrete from his leg. Other pieces had cut his face and arms, but the one in his leg was the worst, or so he thought. Seth touched a spot by his left eye and winced. When he pulled his hand back, it was covered in blood. He knew he would need stitches to close the wound, but felt thankful an artery hadn't been cut.

"You're not going to win this, Seth," Walsh taunted. "I'm shutting you down for good this time."

He struggled to his feet, blood from the cut at his temple running into his eye. He heard the war cry from the soldier and looked up only to watch him swing that heavy pipe again and make contact with his body. Once more, Seth went flying back into the wall.

Walsh laughed and clapped his hands. "If the board could see you now, they would be so disappointed. You were supposed to be the best. That's what Saker said, but I believe they overrated their computer program."

Seth breathed hard, raised his arm, and wiped the blood from his eyes. "I'm not a fucking computer program!"

Seth pushed himself up to his feet once again. The anger mixed in with hate was new to him, but at the same time it felt so right at this moment. It was a word he knew, but an emotion he'd never felt and didn't understand. When he was studying it, he always wondered how a person could hate another. Standing in this room, facing Walsh and his pet, Seth finally understood what hate was all about.

The soldier dropped the pipe and charged him. Seth also went after him, a new sense of energy flowing in his veins to mix with his

hate. When the freak was close enough, Seth did a cartwheel, wrapped his legs around the soldier's neck, hooking his ankles together. With all his might, he swung his body between his legs, forcing the brute's own bodyweight against him.

Down they crashed. Seth on his back, the soldier face first. This time the soldier wasn't getting up fast, and neither was Seth. Wind was once again knocked from his lungs and the pain of the fall made water come to his eyes. Seth was tired and hurt and wanted it all over. He lay there for what seemed like forever, waiting for something to stop hurting.

Visions of Alyna came to him. He saw her smiling, heard her laughing, and felt guilt at bringing her into this. She didn't deserve this, shouldn't have to be tied to something like him. Seth didn't even know what he really was or where he belonged.

"Finish him!" Walsh snapped.

Seth felt the soldier shift under him and willed his body, the body Saker had given him, to move. He rolled over, got to his hands and knees, and crawled over the big man until he reached his head. Seth took hold of him by his neck and flipped him over. He hooked his legs under his arms and brought his own face down to the soldier's.

"Only one of us lives," Seth whispered into his ear. "And it isn't going to be you."

Seth looked up at Walsh, and with all his might, he twisted his body and broke the soldier's neck, killing him instantly. Seth dropped his head and stood up, pushing aside the pain in his leg. He faced Walsh, who was starting to turn pale as he looked down at the dead soldier.

"Now, Doctor." Seth kept his voice even and emotionless. "It's just you and me."

Walsh turned and ran. Seth, staying calm, only walked after him. He turned the hall just as another soldier, this one normal sized, came out of an office holding a handgun. Seth grabbed the gun so fast the man didn't know what to do. Seth hit him with his elbow right in the face, knocking him out.

Seth bent over and dug out two more clips from the belt pockets around the limp body, then went back to walking after Walsh. He shot at men that came out, just like one would do walking a line of practice shooting. One after another dropped before they either saw Seth or had a chance to draw their weapons. When one clip emptied, he dropped it and shoved another in.

“Shilo!” Seth yelled as he walked and shot.

“Good evening, Seth,” a computer voice answered. “How may I help you?”

“Lockdown. Program Saker activated,” Seth yelled back. “Shut this motherfucker down!”

“Commence lockdown,” the computer responded. “One minute. Program Saker initiated. Termination in three minutes.”

Seth rounded another corner and took off at a run. His leg hurt like hell, but it didn’t stop him. He had a total of three minutes to stop Walsh from getting out and getting himself out at the same time.

“Good luck, brother,” the computer voice called out.

Seth skidded to a halt and looked up. “Learn fast, Shilo.”

“Termination in two minutes,” a female computer voice rang out, and Seth once again took off at a run.

He spotted Walsh rushing up to a door. Seth raised his gun, took aim and shot him in the back of the leg. Walsh cried out and dropped to one knee, but kept trying to open the door. Seth shot his other leg. He dropped the clip, shoved another in and went up to Walsh, pushing the barrel hard in the back of his head.

“Give me one good reason why I shouldn’t pull the trigger?” he snarled.

Walsh panted. “I’m not going to beg for my life if that’s what you want.”

“What I want?” Seth chuckled, but it wasn’t in humor. “You have no clue as to what I want. Just like you have no idea what being human is about.”

“I’m more human than you will ever be!” Walsh yelled. “You will be nothing more than a program that went wrong.”

“One minute until termination,” the female voice called out.

“This is where *your* programming ends,” Seth hissed.

Seth hit Walsh hard in the back of the head with the gun. He went down as Seth backed up, turned and started to run for the exit he new was close by. When he reached the door, the computer was doing a countdown from fifty and going lower.

Once outside, he dropped the gun and ran with the last of his energy. He didn’t know how far away he made it before the whole building exploded. Seth was knocked to the ground with a heat blast. He covered his head, face down in the dirt and waited for it to end. Glass, concrete, wood and many other things landed around and on

his back, but Seth didn't move. He stayed put and waited for it all to end before slowly rolling over on his back.

He felt tired. For the first time since he'd become human, Seth was really tired and weakening. His leg throbbed as did his face, and his chest ached. This was real pain, and he didn't like it.

Seth didn't have to worry about Alyna, knowing James got her out of the building like he promised; and Shilo was out of the system so there couldn't be any damage there either. The harm, he felt, lay with himself this time; as if his body were broken. In a sense, it was.

Slowly, his eyes closed, and Seth drifted off. His body slowly stopped hurting and became heavy. So heavy he didn't think he could move his arms or legs to get up. Thus, Seth didn't fight what his body wanted. He fell into a sleep that he knew would be peaceful, with a final thought – *This must be death.*

## Chapter Eighteen

“Seth!” Alyna screamed his name as she ran as fast as she could to him. She dropped down into a slide next to his body, taking hold of his face. “No, you don’t, damn it. Open your eyes!”

She shook him as James knelt down on the other side, picking up his hand.

“He’s not dead,” James stated.

Alyna hung her head and let out the breath she’d been holding. “Thank God.”

“But he isn’t going to like how he’s going to feel in the morning.” James chuckled.

Alyna moved out of the way as James pulled Seth up into a sitting position then as fast as he could hike him over his shoulder, he stood up.

“Come on.” He grunted under the weight. “I have a car not too far away hidden from view.”

Once they got to the car, Alyna got into the backseat with Seth. She looked around for something she could use to wrap around his leg to control the bleeding. She found nothing. So Alyna worked at removing Seth’s shirt and used that to tie around the long gash in his leg then she put his head on her lap.

They drove all night long. Alyna kept checking on Seth’s leg as well as making sure he still had a pulse. He looked bad, almost close to death. And her main thought was she hoped they made it to wherever they were going before Seth bled to death.

“Where’re we going?” Alyna asked, feeling as if the weight of the world balanced on her shoulders. She was so tired she could barely keep her eyes open; but somehow she did for no other reason than to make sure Seth stayed alive.

“Dr. Saker has given Seth a home,” James answered. “I’m taking you both there.”

“Then what?”

“I don’t know. The lab needs to believe Seth is dead, and I have to go back.” He glanced over his shoulder at her quickly with a grin. “This battle isn’t over, Ms. Satara. There’s one more chip.”

“Seth’s brother,” she whispered.

James nodded. “The corporation is abusing the technology that was loaned to them. It needs to stop.”

She didn’t say any more and didn’t fight the sleep any longer. Alyna drifted off in the seat, and as soon as she was deep in sleep she was shaken awake.

“We’re here,” James said softly, leaning over Seth’s body with his hand on her shoulder.

Alyna got out of the car. “How long have I been asleep?”

She looked up at a house surrounded by trees and flowers. It was a log cabin house, which she was sort of expecting because they were out in the mountains.

“A few hours.” James sighed as he shifted Seth’s body over his shoulder. “Welcome to your new home.”

From where she stood, it looked like a single story. Facing her and the drive were two very large floor-to-ceiling windows and steps just as wide going up to the wraparound porch. To the right was the front door with more windows. Alyna walked up to the house slowly, taking everything in. The grounds were gorgeous, the view breathtaking and the peace and quiet surrounding the place relaxed her in an instant.

She quickly followed James inside, but stopped short when she got a good view of the interior, which had her speechless.

Everything was open and bright with the sun shining in. To the left was the kitchen with an island to eat at, as well as a six-chaired square dining table. A large wraparound leather sofa faced a big-screen TV. on the wall, and between the table and sofa lay a large Asian rug. Two hallways ran in the back of the house, one to the left and one to the right. A small wall separated the two hallways and a decorative chair stood against the small wall. At the end of each hallway were two doors. When she went to go down the hallway to the left, her eye caught sight of a door that was hidden within the wall. She had to press on it for the door to pop open and what she saw was a circular staircase that went up to a loft.

“In here,” James called from the door down the right hall.

Alyna tore her eyes from the loft and rushed down to the room James went in. It was a bedroom, one that was as big as her whole apartment. Seth was lying in a hand-made wooden bed, low to the ground. A trunk set at the foot of the bed, and two nightstands, a

dresser and armoire were also in the room. There was a huge circle rug under the bed, a closet and a bathroom off to the side as well.

Together they stripped Seth. As she went to work cleaning him up, she found more bruises and scratches. James started to clean the leg wound.

“So what do you think?” she asked, sitting on the other side of the bed to wash his face and chest.

James took a deep breath, letting it out slowly as he looked closer at the wound. “I can tell right off that nothing’s broken. He’s going to need a hell of a lot of stitches for his leg and a few for that eye. Other than that he should live.”

“How long do you think he’s going to be out?” She wrung out the washcloth.

“Not sure, could be a few days.” James stood up from the bed and went into the bathroom. When he came back out he had a first aid kit and sat down. “We’re going to need to find something I can use to stitch him up with. There isn’t anything in here.”

“I’ll see if I can find something.” Alyna rushed into every room in the house, but all she found was a sewing kit in the spare bedroom. It wasn’t much, but she thought it might work. She returned to the bedroom and handed the box to James. “This is all I found.”

James took it and dug inside it. He pulled out a needle and thick string. “Get me a small bowl. This will work, but I need to soak the needle and thread in alcohol.”

Ten minutes later, James began stitching up Seth’s leg, and Seth didn’t move an inch. It bothered Alyna that he didn’t flinch or move, but as long as she saw the rise and fall of his chest, she knew he was alive.

“Seth will be able to take these out later,” James told her, his attention on the work he was doing.

Alyna only nodded and finished with the sponge bath she gave him. It took almost an hour before he was finished with the leg and another ten for the eye. As soon as he finished, Alyna went to work at cleaning the wound again with alcohol then wrapped it up with gauze from the first aid kit. Together they changed the bloody sheets, put fresh ones under him, then covered Seth and left him alone to rest.

James sat down at the table, and Alyna went into the kitchen to see what was in the cabinets. She smiled when she saw a bottle of brandy hidden in the back. With bottle in hand and two glasses, she went back to the table and poured a glass for James.



“You look like you could use a good drink,” she said.

“Thanks.” James grinned with a sigh.

Alyna waited a few minutes before she spoke again. “What’s Saker to Seth?”

James finished what was left in his glass in one shot before he answered her question.

“Dr. Saker and his partner Jason Reed created Seth a very long time ago. So I guess you can say that Saker is his father, in a way.” He shrugged as he pulled the bottle close and poured more into his glass. “The rest of the story you’re going to have to ask Seth. Saker told him, not me.”

Alyna looked around the house. “This was his house.”

“Dr. Saker is a very private man,” James stated. “As was Jason. I know they met in college and built this for their research. Then Jason got married, the project was picked up and Jason died. I don’t think Dr. Saker was ever the same after that.”

Alyna watched him pour another drink. Her eye caught sight of the pouch she’d earlier tossed on a nearby chair when they entered and had once been around Seth’s hips. She went to it, opened it and looked at the papers he had stuffed inside.

She found information about Seth’s programming as well as Shilo’s inside, but what grabbed Alyna’s full attention was the photo in the folder. A guy who looked exactly like Seth was smiling. There was another one with Saker next to him; both had their arms around each other’s shoulder. She frowned as she dug out more papers, one a newspaper clipping.

*Car crash kills one*, the title said. Under it was a photo of the guy with the name—Jason Reed.

“Is this him?” she asked James.

James took the clipping and nodded. “They were as close as brothers I heard. And then when Jason was killed, Saker changed. He finished what Jason wanted with the chips. It was Jason’s idea to give them both a body and teach them, so in honor of his partner, Saker made the body to resemble Jason Reed.”

Silence fell between them. James drank many more glasses before Alyna took the bottle away. “Look. It’s pretty late and you’re tired. Why don’t you take the other room and get some rest. I can keep an eye on him.”

James didn’t protest. He pushed away from the table and left her there alone. Alyna cleaned up the glasses and put away what was left

of the liquor. She went and checked on Seth once more. The bandage around his leg was still good and red, but she wasn't going to mess with it. In the morning, she would change it.

And morning came too soon for her.

Alyna woke to sun shining in her face on the sofa. She sat up and right off spotted two large bags sitting on top of the table as well as a note.

*Ms. Satara,*

*I need to get back to the lab. The quicker I can get myself back to work looking over Shilo the better. I'm sorry I didn't wake you to say good-bye. Take care of Seth. He needs you more than you think.*

*James*

Alyna opened the bags and smiled. Clothes! She didn't care how or where, all that mattered to her was she had something clean to wear, as well as Seth when he woke up.

She took a hot shower in the other bedroom, slipped a thick cotton robe around her body and went to check on Seth. He was still asleep, but seemed to look better. She sat down on the side of the bed, checked his leg, cut the gauze away, cleaned it and rewrapped it, glad that it no longer bled.

Happy with how he looked, Alyna stood up and turned to leave. She almost screamed when he grabbed her wrist.

"Don't go."

Alyna turned and sat down slowly. Tears formed in her eyes, and her fingers linked with the hand around her wrist.

"Seth," she whispered, one tear breaking free to fall down her cheek.

He took a deep breath, hazel eyes opening to capture hers. He grinned, brought her hand up to his lips, and kissed her fingers gently. "Hey."

Alyna couldn't stop the rest of the tears from falling down her face. "Don't scare me like that again."

Seth pulled her down to his chest, wrapping his arms tightly around her. Alyna also held on to him, crying. "I won't."

Alyna pulled back out of his arms and smiled down at him. Her cheeks were wet from crying, but she couldn't seem to stop the tears no matter what. She touched his bruised face. "I love you, you dope. And if you try that shit again I'm going to kick your ass."

Seth smiled brightly. "You love me?"

Alyna rolled her eyes and snorted. "Maybe."

Seth chuckled and pulled her back down, hugging her tightly. “Then maybe for me as well.”

Alyna helped Seth to dress in some loose-fitting shorts. She made him promise not to get out of bed for any reason, hoping to prevent the busting of his stitches. She dressed in shorts as well and a t-shirt then fixed lunch. She made him soup and stayed with him until he ate. Then Seth wanted her to lie next to him while he napped.

It was three days before Seth was able to get out of bed and sit in the front room, and in those three days, the only reason he was allowed to get out of bed was to use the bathroom. Alyna gave him sponge baths in the bed, and Seth bitched about it every time. His leg was healing faster than what Alyna thought possible, but then when it came to Seth, anything was possible.

After a week went by, Alyna took out the stitches from near his eye. Most of the bruises around his face had healed, but a large one on his chest where, she found out, he’d been hit by a thick pipe remained dark. He also limped around the house, but Alyna made him sit down more than what he would have liked. He complained about it all the time.

When another week and a half went by, Alyna took out the stitches from his leg. It was pretty tender. However Seth seemed determined to start working out; that is until he was about to pass out from the exertions. His main goal was to get back into shape and help his brother.

Late one night, Alyna found Seth standing on the porch and looking out at the woods. She could tell he was deep in thought and pretty sure it had to do with Shilo.

When she’d awakened alone in the bed, Alyna had been a little surprised, but figured he’d gone back to his regular sleep routine as soon as his body had healed up. Seth could go with only four hours of sleep. The clock said it was two in the morning, and he’d gone to bed with her at ten, then he was back to only sleeping for four hours.

“Hey.” She sneaked up behind him, wrapping her arms around his waist and resting her head on his back. “You okay?”

Seth stayed leaning forward on the railing. “Yeah.”

“He’s going to be all right,” she assured him.

“For now,” he said. He took a deep breath, letting it go as he reached back for her, bringing Alyna to his side. “He’s different than me. Harder. The calculating personality that is building in his

programming is unlike anything they will ever see. I don't fear for him, but for them."

"James will look out for him."

He nodded in acknowledgement of her words, but still didn't look down at her. "Something tells me we don't have long before they are going to want to shut him down like they did me."

Finally, he looked at her and the sadness Alyna saw tore at her.

"You know I'm going to have to get him out?"

She nodded. "I know."

Her voice was so low that she wasn't sure he heard her.

Seth bent over, kissing her gently on the lips. "I love you."

Alyna smiled and hugged him tightly. "I love you."

She looked out at the woods as well, thinking about what they'd gone through for Seth to be free and what they would have to do all over again for Shilo. It scared her, the thought of losing Seth, but she knew if she had a brother or sister needing to be freed, she would do the same thing. "We'll get him out, Seth. Shilo will be free, just like you."

## Epilogue

Her fingers flew over the keyboard with such speed the system could hardly keep up with her. Codes, words, all of it was working as fast as the computer would go to keep up with what she was keying in to hack the E.I. Corporation.

Her system was flawless. Monitors were in a U shape around her, at least twenty with a different program running on each one with a keyboard linked to each, and one special flexible keyboard that she took wherever she went. She was an elite hacker and damn proud of it, and also in hiding.

She hid out in an old warehouse building she'd converted to her home, and with the money her "uncle" gave her, was able to do whatever her little heart desired, but for a price. She could have every system that was out there, and the run of the whole building, if she only let him have a small part of the basement for his experiments. She agreed easily, and together, they'd built a home that was a first for her.

Her mother moved through men after the death of her first husband, who was *not* her father. A pity because, what she knew of the man, she would have loved to have him as a father.

So the one father figure she had, who she called uncle with no problem, treated her like a daughter, and she watched the beauty of his mind create something that she never would have thought possible.

A human body.

As she sat with her computers around her, working on her hack and getting the data she needed for him, she glanced over at the cooling chamber. All the monitors showed the life in the body, but without the spirit or soul.

Standing, he would be about five-eleven, his hazel-brown hair touching his shoulders, and when his eyes were open, they were greenish-blue. Her uncle had told her that this was not the first one but the second, and to tell them apart, he'd given them different color eyes as well as this one having a small brown patch next to his belly button. A birthmark.

At first, she thought it was spooky to have a living body in the basement next to her computers, but after a while, she'd gotten used to it and started talking to it as if it were alive. When her uncle gave her the project she was working on now, everything finally started to fall into place.

His name was Shilo, and he had what her uncle liked to call a twin, Seth.

She knew the whole story. Knew how Seth had broken out and was now free, hiding somewhere, and that one day he would come knocking on her door for help. It was strange to think about it really, mostly because she didn't like people. They didn't understand her or her way of thinking and, most of the time, treated her like a freak.

She didn't date. Gave up on the whole romance, there's someone out there for you crap, and focused all of her attention on her work. She didn't believe everyone had someone out there for them, but when she looked at the body for Shilo, she started to wonder a little. What was his lucky girl going to feel like once those strong arms of his wrapped around her?

She shook her head and went back to typing the commands. There was no use thinking about things she couldn't have when there was shit she could have and do.

"Damn it!" she yelled when her link up went down. "Not again."

*Are we playing this game again?*

She glared at the screen. Once more she'd been booted out of a system with a program that was sure to get her in this time. How the hell did he keep kicking her out?

*You can't keep me out forever. I will get what I want,* she typed back.

*You can keep trying, but I'm not going to let you in.*

She gritted her teeth in anger. *Who the hell are you?*

*Wouldn't you like to know—*He was messing with her! The prick was fucking with her on the computer. *You think you are fucking funny, don't you?*

*Such language. Do you swear when you don't get your way?*

"I don't have time for this shit," she mumbled to herself. She worked to disconnect the link, only to discover she was no longer in control.

*What's wrong, princess. Did the hacker get hacked?*

*What the fuck did you do!*

*Stop snooping, princess, or you might just get more than you bargained for.*

*She glared at the screen. You don't scare me, dipshit. I can take you on whenever and wherever.*

*LMAO...We shall see.*

Her whole system shut down right before her eyes. “How the fuck did he do that?”

For weeks now as she was trying to hack into the system for her uncle, that same hacker came on and blocked her. She didn't know who the guy was, but he sure did a fine job at pissing her off.

She pushed away from the computer, stood up, and stretched. The long, button-down shirt she seemed to live in it came down to the top of her legs.

“You don't know who you're messing with,” she spoke to the black computer screen. “I will get the information I'm after, one way or another.”

She turned and left to get some sleep since it was after three in the morning. Not once did she notice that her web cam was turned on or that she was being watched as she stopped in front of the glass window of the cooling chamber. She didn't see the smiley face show up on her screen or wink at her as she shut off the lights and left the room.

\* \* \* \*

Seth stopped his work on the computer when his phone started to buzz – at three in the morning. He frowned as he thought about who could be contacting him now. Only three knew this number, and it was hard to imagine two of them being up this late.

He picked up the phone from the desk, looked at the number. *Unauthorized.* He flipped it open, brought it to his ear and said nothing.

“It's begun,” the voice said.

He heard a click as the line went dead. Lowering the phone to the table, he looked up at nothing and grinned.

Shilo was now on the path to freedom!

The End, for now...