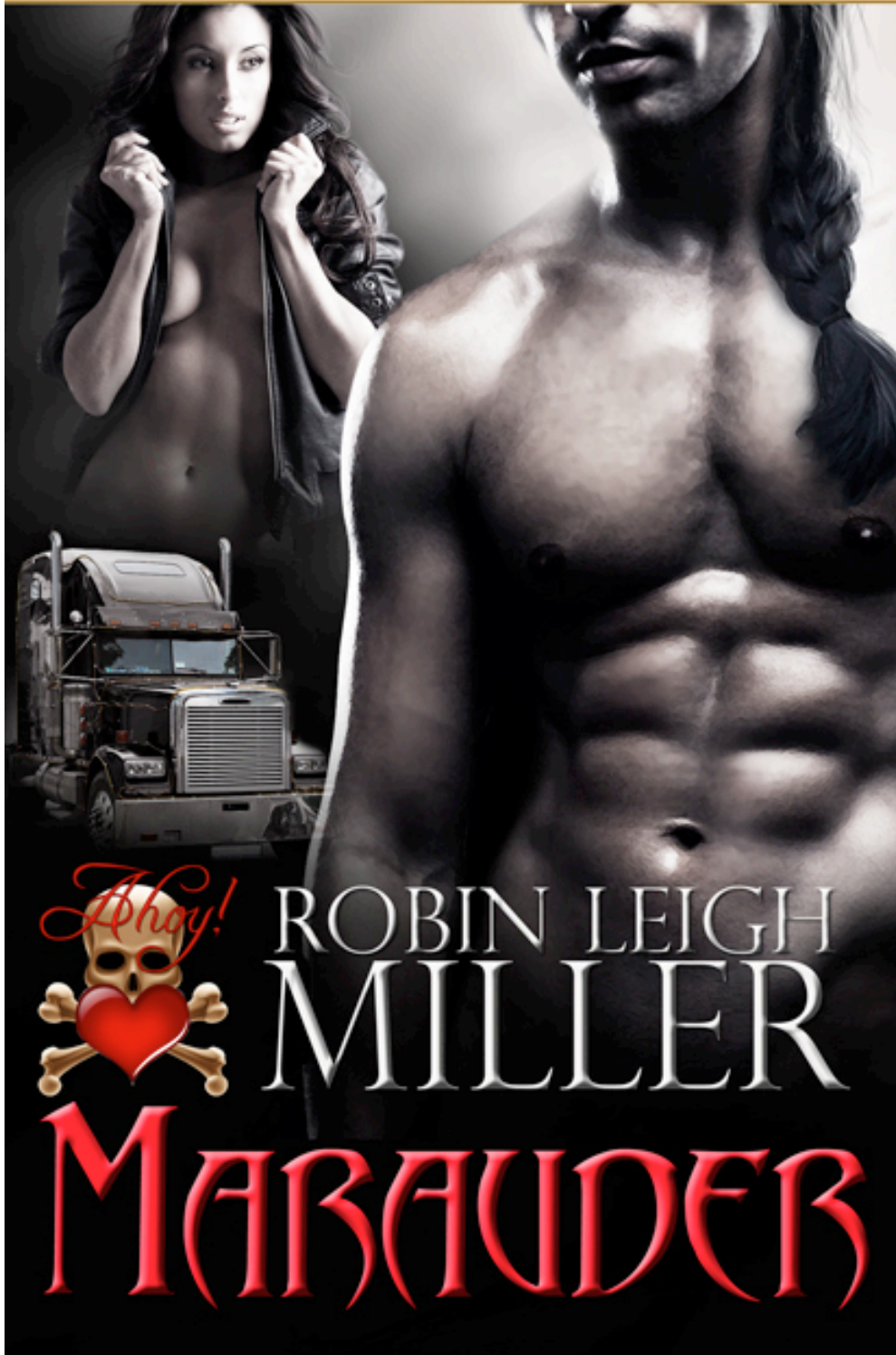


ELLORA'S CAVE **AEON**



**Marauder**  
*Robin Leigh Miller*

Nothing mattered in Evan Duvall's life as much as his sexy, timid Priscilla. Her touch could destroy and resurrect with one feathery stroke. Pleasure was all they could give each other—and Priscilla gave freely. Her presumed death annihilated Evan and brought to life Strafe, the notorious road pirate.

After years of loneliness, Strafe finds Priscilla alive—and changed. She's feisty, independent and sensual as hell. She may be wary of the new Strafe but her body responds with a hungry need he finds impossible to ignore. Waiting for her capitulation becomes torture, so he begins a series of inventive, erotic teasing sessions that keep her in a constant state of arousal.

But to properly care for Priscilla, as well as those who've come to depend on him, the pirate must strike again.

Ellora's Cave Publishing



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Marauder

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# ***MARAUDER***

**Robin Leigh Miller**

## *Acknowledgements*

This is my thanks to all those hard-working truck drivers who travel our roads, making sure our store shelves are stocked, so when we frantically run to the store desperate for that all-important item, it's there.

A special thanks goes to my family for their loving support.

## **Chapter One**

Priscilla stood in the tiny, dimly lit room, anxious and already prepared for her lover Evan Duvall to arrive. Every chance they got they came to this isolated two-room cabin in the woods to steal a little privacy. Traveling the weathered, beaten, barely there path could be dangerous and not because of animals. No, even the animals relocated deeper, farther up into the mountains to avoid the new level of savagery man had reached.

Even now, as she stood seemingly safe and secure so far away from civilization, Priscilla knew fierce unrest could reach out and smack her down. Not so many years ago—twelve perhaps, she couldn't be sure anymore—life was good. A living could be made, a family could exist, eat and purchase clothing, have a house of their own and even take trips abroad. The only limitations were your imagination and the amount of money you could make.

Moving to the dingy mattress sitting on the floor, Priscilla removed a soft blanket she carried in her shabby backpack and smoothed it out, covering the unsanitary piece of furniture so she and Evan could lay together. A memory flickered inside her head. She'd once had a bed, a nice, clean, soft bed with a frame and flowered sheets. A fluffy comforter spread out on top that she would snuggle under on cold nights.

Pushing the memory away, because it did no good to wallow in the past, Priscilla stood and tugged her faded green shirt up and over her head. Beneath she wore a black lacy bra she'd found scavenging through an abandoned house. Evan loved the flimsy material, always remarking how sexy it looked against her fair, creamy skin. Priscilla took extra care of the tiny treasure, only wearing it for Evan on these special nights. Who knew if she'd ever find another?

Wiggling her hips, she shucked her faded jeans down her legs and carefully folded them. Her panties were nothing to rave about. Simple, pink cotton bikinis she'd acquired from a local girl trading for some fruit.

At one time her mother had spoiled her with silly, frivolous gifts on her birthday, again a memory that shouldn't be thought about too much. Priscilla had learned early pining away for the past got you nothing but heartache. Strolling toward the cracked window, she leaned against the frame and stared out into the night, watching for her lover, praying he made it through the woods without being spotted.

Since the civil war had broken out, groups had formed to rebel against the government. Not exactly a bad idea since the government had gone the way of being ruled by only the most wealthy and powerful. Over-taxing, stealing land in the name of security and basically taking anything they could had become a way of life. The rich got richer and the poor existed only if they were willing to take the meager wages the wealthy handed out.

So groups formed to rise up against the dictatorship that masqueraded behind democracy. Only without real leaders, the groups began to fight each other instead of the real enemy and when their numbers dropped they began the so-called drafting stage. Priscilla closed her eyes and took a deep breath. She'd seen a few young men get drafted. They were stolen from their bed, dragged out into the night and beaten in front of their families until they swore their allegiance. Those who still refused watched in horror as another member of their family was beaten, tortured or—for the lucky ones—shot once in the head.

Now living outside city limits unprotected by the government was as dangerous as working for the fat, greedy rulers. She'd heard horror stories about what they did to their workers and it made her blood run cold. Girls disappearing, some forever, others returning maimed, scarred both mentally and physically. No, she'd take her chances out here, thank you very much.

It seemed time had turned backward somehow. The country divided into kingdoms with supreme rulers. Trading went on with other cities to gain the supplies they needed. Those supplies were trucked on the highways by only the most trusted and well-paid drivers. How much longer could this country exist like this before an outside force decided to claim her for their own?

"You look cold."

Evan's gentle, soothing voice drifted through the dim light and wrapped around her like a heavy, comforting blanket. Immediately her blood heated as it raced through her body. Turning, she gazed at her lover with a hunger so consuming her body quivered from it. Liquid lust pooled between her legs, her breasts swelled with an almost painful ache and her nipples pebbled against the sheer lace. Only Evan could instill such feelings inside her.

In the dim, flickering candlelight he looked almost like a dream. His shoulder-length, jet-black hair waving around his face, his deep blue eyes framed by thick, long lashes and his square jaw all gave him the appearance of a mystical man instead of her Evan, her lover, her soul.

"I love it when you look at me like that," he whispered softly.

His lean, muscled arms and chest bunched beneath his thin blue T-shirt. His jeans hugged his thighs and when her gaze drifted to the bulge pressing against the zipper, her heart fluttered, making her head spin. The scuffed boots he wore finished his rugged look and she loved every inch of him.

He too drank her in. She could almost feel the touch of his gaze grazing over her flesh, lingering on her nipples, stabbing through the lace. When his eyes shifted her pussy flooded with heated desire, dampening the soft cotton. Evan's nostrils flared as if he could smell her cream. His chest heaved and then he made that sound she so loved to hear deep in his throat. A hungry growl she'd learned indicated his readiness to take what was his.



Slowly, Priscilla moved toward the mattress. Breathing heavily, Evan closed the distance between them, his body hard, his erection straining against its confines.

“You are so beautiful.”

His thick, raspy voice rumbled over her flesh, causing her to quiver with anticipation. Evan always told her that. She knew better, knew she wasn’t anything other than plain, but when he looked at her she felt like a desirable beauty queen.

His calloused hands cupped her face as he leaned down and took her lips. Priscilla could tell he was trying to be gentle, easing his tongue into her mouth and stroking hers. She could feel his body trembling with need beneath her palms and still, he struggled for control.

Wanting to mix things up tonight, Priscilla carefully pulled away, smiled up at him with mischief in her eyes and then lowered down onto her knees.

“What are you doing?”

His voice sounded strained and surprised all at the same time. Good. She wanted to surprise him. Tonight would be all about surprises, some good, some she wasn’t sure about. “Tonight I take the lead,” she told him as she popped the snap on his jeans and lowered the zipper.

His erection sprang free, bobbing a mere breath away from her lips. Oh, she loved the sight of him wanting her, his arousal heavy and long, marbled with thick veins. His balls drew up tight and when she cupped them in the palm of her hand he hissed his approval.

Using sure but gentle movements, she tugged his jeans down and then unlaced his boots and helped him take them off. Naked from the waist down, Evan fisted his hands at his sides and fought to breathe.

“Feeling dangerous tonight?” he asked in a rumbling voice.

Priscilla knew she was pushing his limits. He’d be gentle, always gentle with her when she knew he wanted to hammer inside her. Evan treated her like a fragile, yet

cherished, glass object. Sometimes, though, a woman needed more and tonight was one of those times.

"Behave," she warned, flicking her tongue over the head of his impossibly hard cock. Evan sucked in a harsh breath and went stone still. "Or don't you want this?" Looking up his body, she gave a little pout with her lips and was rewarded with the sight of storms brewing in his eyes.

"I want it," he managed through a tight throat.

"Good. So do I." Knowing slow and easy wouldn't cut it, Priscilla eased him between her lips and took him all the way inside until he slid down her throat. Swallowing, she felt his body jerk and his hands dive into her hair.

"Aw, fuck!" he shouted, thrusting his hips forward and tossing his head back. "So good," he croaked as she pulled back.

His cock throbbed against her tongue, twitched and she quickly swallowed him again. Holding his heavy sac in one hand, she grasped the base of his cock with her other and impaled herself until he slid down her throat. Retreating, she sucked hard, hollowing her cheeks, flattening her tongue on the underside, feeling every vein pulse with blood.

"Sweet, Priscilla," he groaned, thrusting his hips back and forth.

Pre-cum dribbled on her tongue, filling her mouth with his spicy, musky taste and surging through her system like a drug. Priscilla worked him faster and harder, wanting more and when his balls drew tight against his body, Evan pulled away.

Disappointment made her frown until Evan gripped his shaft and began pumping his cock. She'd never seen him do this before and she found the sight turned her on. Thick cream wept from between her legs, saturating her panties.

"Take your bra off," Evan commanded, stroking his shaft.

Priscilla obeyed. With one quick snap her bra loosened and dropped down her arms. Almost instantly Evan shouted a curse as he ejaculated all over her breasts. His

warm, thick semen coated her flesh with quick spurts and when he finished he dropped to his knees, shoved her backward onto the mattress and gripped her panties in his fist.

“Don’t rip them,” she blurted out. “They’re my only good pair.”

Evan made a frustrated rumble in his chest but carefully pulled them down her legs and then tossed them away. Before she could adjust herself on the mattress, he lifted her legs, tossing them over his shoulders, and sealed his lips over her pussy.

“Evan,” she shouted as his tongue slipped effortlessly into her tunnel. He probed with fast, even strokes until she could feel her body tightening.

Evan eased his large palm up her tummy and then pinched one hard nipple between his fingers. Priscilla arched her back from the combination of slight pain and ecstasy racing through her body. She dug her heels into his back and lifted her hips, grinding her pussy against his mouth.

“More,” she panted, climbing closer to the climax he drove her to.

Evan pulled back slightly, thrust two fingers deep inside her sopping core and pumped her pussy as he sucked her throbbing clit between his lips.

“Oh God!” she shouted as lightning bolts exploded throughout her body. Her orgasm tightened around the base of her spine, strangling her muscles, but Evan held her there on the precipice, not allowing her to dive off that glorious cliff.

“Please, Evan,” she groaned, working her hips in rhythm with his hand.

“Fuck my hand, Cilla,” he demanded. “I wanna feel you tighten around my fingers.”

If she tightened any further she’d snap something. Digging her fingers into his hair, she gripped, grinding her pussy, thrusting her hips. Through it all, over the sound of their panting, she heard her body sucking his fingers in hard and deep.

“That’s it, babe. You are so wet. I can’t wait to lick you dry after you come.”

Priscilla thrashed her head back and forth on the mattress. Her blanket bunched beneath her ass and his cum slipped around on her breasts. He was going to kill her if he didn't let her come soon. "Please," she cried once more.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, damn it!"

Evan stopped pumping his fingers, leaned in and nipped her clit as he curled his fingers inside her tunnel and caressed that spot that she hadn't known existed until he initiated her in the ways of sex. Her lungs froze as her orgasm detonated throughout her. Brilliant little colored lights exploded behind her eyelids as her body arched. Pleasure so fierce it bordered on pain washed over her, flushing her skin and bringing every nerve ending alive with a snap and a sizzle.

Evan's tongue slipped between her swollen lips, caught her cream and quickly returned for more. He lapped away like a kitten starved for nourishment. Priscilla twitched as she came down from her release. Evan soothed her quivering muscles, caressing her thighs, her hips and her tummy as he continued to feed on her. When he'd done as promised, licked her dry, he moved up her body and did something she never thought she'd see.

Keeping his gaze locked with hers, he licked away his semen, gently circling her nipples, running his tongue through the valley of her breasts and then finally he sucked her nipple into his mouth and drew hard. Another light show burst to life in her eyes. Her clit pulsed as if attached to her nipple and yet another tiny orgasm rolled free.

After the waves of pleasure subsided, Priscilla opened her eyes and found Evan staring down at her, wonder in his eyes. "What?"

"I've never seen you come before," he whispered. "I mean, I've seen you come, but not paid attention to how your flesh grows pink." Evan lightly trailed his fingertips between her breast and down over her rib cage. "Or the way your eyes dilate or how your lips part slightly as you pant. Exquisite."

Priscilla blinked rapidly a few times. He meant what he said. Evan had a small tell in the way his eyes seemed to lighten when he spoke the truth. If he lied, he couldn't even look at her, but honesty made his eyes seem to shine.

"Only for you," she replied, not knowing what else to say.

"Damn straight only for me," he grumbled, tugging her close to his chest. "I'll kill anyone who touches you. You're mine."

A small smile tugged at her lips. His. She loved when he said that. Here, in the dark with him wrapped around her she could pretend she was safe. Civil war didn't exist outside his arms and everything was right in the world.

"I want you to move in my tent with me. Tonight."

Priscilla sighed heavily. They'd had this conversation more than once and it always ended the same way. Tonight, however, Evan had a finality in his voice, something she'd never heard before.

"I'm not arguing about it anymore, Priscilla. I want you with me all the time. I hate sneaking around. You're mine, damn it, and it's time everyone knows."

It would be nice to fall asleep in his arms every night and wake up there in the mornings. No more fending off advances from men who thought she'd be good for a one-night thrill-fest. Yeah, being taken care of would be a nice change. Not to mention the benefits of being able to hold a conversation with Evan that lasted more than a few moments or between bouts of sex.

"I'll think about it," she finally agreed.

Evan loosened his grip on her and smoothed his hand up and down her spine, occasionally cupping her bottom and giving it a gentle squeeze before continuing with the caress.

"I think about you all the time," he told her in a much softer tone. "I fall asleep thinking about you, dream about you and then wake up with an erection that could choke a horse because all night I've been tasting and touching you in my dreams. I

spend the day looking for you, wondering if you're safe, if you've eaten or how many fuckin' bastards have tried to touch you. I'm going out of my mind, Priscilla. I want everyone to know we're together."

Evan moved her away and tilted her head up to gaze into her eyes. His tell had his eyes shining as bright as the stars he wanted to look at. "Is that asking too much?"

The way the candlelight flickered across his face accented his young, soft features. How the hell could she refuse? In this messed-up, crazy world she'd found a slice of heaven. Giving up her freedom, however, settled in her stomach like foul meat.

"I said I'd think about it," she whispered, cupping his cheek with her hand.

"Let me help you think," Evan replied, rolling her over on her back. "God, Priscilla, you are the most beautiful woman I've ever laid eyes on." His gaze traveled down her naked body and back again.

She'd never get tired of his attention and when he leaned down and sucked a pert nipple between his lips she knew she'd never get tired of his lovemaking. Evan teased, licked and sucked her breasts until her blood ran white-hot through her veins. Without realizing, her hips bucked and squirmed, desperate for attention to be paid between her wet folds.

Even took her hand, placing it between her legs. "Let me watch, babe. Let me see you pleasure yourself."

Priscilla swallowed and then licked her lips. "Only if I can watch you." She'd never asked him to do anything for her before. She'd always been the one to do for him, eager to please. Her nerves settled when one dark eyebrow arched and he smiled.

"You liked watching me stroke myself?"

She couldn't lie. The sight of his large hand caressing his thick cock turned her on like nothing she'd ever witnessed. "Yes, very much."

"Anything for you," he told her and then positioned himself on his knees between her spread legs. "I won't touch you," he said, gazing down at her.

Priscilla nodded and eagerly waited for him to grip his already semi-erect shaft. To her disappointment, he moved off the mattress and grabbed his jeans. When she saw him remove the little square package from his pocket, she breathed a sigh of relief.

Evan moved back into place, tore open the package and removed the latex, setting it on the blanket. Finally prepared, he gripped his shaft and began a slow stroke up to the head and down again.

"I do this every morning," he admitted. "I close my eyes and picture you like this, laid out in front of me, your legs spread wide, you touching yourself, your pussy glistening with your need."

The mere thought of him jerking off every day, thinking about her, made her heart race. As she watched him stroke, her fingers slipped between her outer folds and began a lazy caress of her tender tissue.

"Yeah, that's good. Does it feel good, Priscilla?" He looked up long enough to see her nod.

She couldn't speak if she wanted to. The sight of him in front of her, his muscles hard and bunched, one hand cupping his balls while the other stroked his cock, took her breath away. Her fingers worked faster, rubbing her throbbing clit and then slipping inside her tight tunnel.

"Oh fuck," Evan groaned. "That's a pretty sight."

His encouraging words helped her feel freer, more relaxed. Yeah, she'd masturbated before—like Evan, almost every day. He consumed her mind, body and soul and in the dark as her mother lay sleeping, Priscilla relieved the ache, but she'd never done it while being watched. Yet being watched added to the erotic thrill.

Priscilla pulled at her clit, bucking as the jolt of pleasure raced through her body. Evan groaned again, increasing the speed of his stroke. Right before her eyes he grew, became thicker and harder. She wanted to touch him, feel him in her palm, but this was new, exciting and she didn't want it to stop.

"Such a pretty little clit," he panted.

"Such an enormous cock," she retorted, receiving a wicked grin in return. "I'd like to suck it again," she told him. "Feel it slide down my throat as it throbs."

Evan's body jerked. Her words affected him and she found this to be a new and exciting way to play. How far could she take him by simply talking?

"I want to lick it like a lollipop," she continued. "A big, fat treat that no one else will ever taste."

Evan's strokes became faster, tighter and Priscilla realized she too had increased the pressure on her clit. She tugged it again, knowing he liked that. Cream leaked out of her tunnel, trickling down between her ass cheeks. Feeling wicked and sensual, she scooped it up with her finger and watching him closely, licked it away.

A low rumble erupted from deep in Evan's chest. His eyes grew dark and hooded as his hips thrust with each stroke of his hand. A pearl of pre-cum swelled on the tip of his engorged head. Priscilla reached out and, being careful not to touch him any more than she had to, swiped it up with her fingertip, bringing it to her mouth and smearing the thick, warm juice across her lips.

"Oh fuck." Sweat beaded across his forehead and chest. He was digging for control, she could see it in the way veins popped out on his arms and his muscles quivered.

"I love your taste," she told him. "Next time, you come in my mouth."

Evan clenched his jaw, his nostrils flared and still he continued to stroke his shaft. Priscilla pressed two fingers deep inside her core and used her thumb to strum her clit. With her free hand she reached up and pinched her nipple, rolling it between her fingers. Apparently Evan reached his tipping point. In the blink of an eye, he grabbed her up, rolled until he was on his back and positioned her so she straddled him.

Handing her the condom, he growled, "Put it on."

He'd never let her do this before and she wasn't sure exactly how. He must have seen the worry in her face.



"We'll do it together," he told her and with his hands over hers, rested the thin latex over his head and helped her roll it down over his throbbing shaft.

She could actually feel him pulsing between her fingers. He was steel covered in soft silk and ready to explode with warmth.

"You're gonna make me come from those expressions," he told her with a strained voice.

"I guess I never took the time to..." To what? She didn't want to say feel because that wasn't right. No, *admire* was the word.

"I know and that's my fault. Come live with me and we'll be able to explore each other properly, slowly."

Oh, that sounded so good. She wanted to explore every inch of him.

"Ride me, Priscilla," he said, lifting her at the hips and positioning her over his cock. "Show me the little minx I know you hide."

Heat swamped her body, drawing more liquid lust forth. Evan's cock nudged her entrance and she slid slowly down, feeling her muscles stretch as he filled her. Inch by inch she took him in until he hit her cervix and then she stilled, thrilling in being filled by the one man she loved.

Giving a slight swirl of her hips made him rub each and every over-sensitized nerve ending until she clamped tighter around him. Evan's head snapped back into the mattress as he groaned long and loud.

"We should have done it this way a long time ago," he panted.

"Oh, you haven't seen anything yet." Her plan, take him to the brink and pull back. Torture him with pleasure until he begged for mercy. She wanted him to know he'd never get anything better from anyone else.

Placing her palms on his chest, Priscilla lifted, dragging out the pleasure as long as she could. Her internal muscles rippled around him, clenching and milking and before she pulled all the way off she slid back down. Over and over she rode, twisting and

rolling her hips so every nerve could be touched. Leaning forward, she braced herself with her hands on either side of his head.

Evan took advantage of her breasts bouncing in front of his face and sucked her nipples hard until the fire inside became an inferno blazing out of control. The harder he drew, the more her clit pulsed and her tunnel clenched. Priscilla sat up and began a quick, short bouncing pace, driving him deeper each time. Reaching around behind her, she cupped his tight balls, working them in her palm.

Evan flicked her clit with his thumb, strumming it until Priscilla thought they both floated in the air. She bounced up and down at a maddening pace, her breasts flopping. The slick sound of her body greedily taking him in filled the room along with the sound of slapping flesh.

Erotic. Sensual. Right. Those words sailed through her head as she cupped one breast and pinched her nipple. Electricity sizzled across her flesh as the base of her spine tightened and her clit hummed.

“Can’t. Wait.” Evan pinched her clit and the world exploded.

Her orgasm struck with the force of dynamite, shattering her body into tiny, confetti-like pieces. Her head spun as she felt Evan release at the same time. He throbbed, she tightened. Again and again the pattern went on. Pump, milk, pump, milk, their bodies working in perfect rhythm.

In the distance she heard Evan’s deep moans and groans as blood roared through her ears. She drifted on ecstasy, allowing her body to free-fall through a burst of colored lights and waves of breath-stealing pleasure. Slowly her scattered body began reassembling piece by piece and before she came completely back together, Evan rolled her onto her back and covered her mouth. The shock was only outdone by the fierce, angry look on Evan’s face.

“What is it?” she whispered behind his hand.

“Shh.”

Voices drifted through the darkness outside the window. Now her heart hammered out of fear.

"Get dressed quietly. Stay low," he whispered back and then rolled to his side, pinching the candle out with his fingers.

Priscilla wasn't sure anyone would be able to see the very dim light from outside, but right now she didn't want to take any chances. She gathered her shirt, tugging it down quickly over her head and poking her arms through the sleeves. Next, she jammed her legs into her jeans and did her best to snap and zip them.

Evan was already dressed, listening at the door, a large knife gripped in his hand. Where the hell had he hidden that thing? She didn't remember seeing it when he came in, then again, she only saw what she wanted to see.

The voices grew louder, commands shouted, rustling sounds in the brush outside the tiny cabin. She knew what they were up against. A rogue rebellion group out recruiting and suddenly terror stabbed at her heart. What were they doing this far out? No one knew about this place.

"How did they know to come here?" she whispered so low she could barely hear herself.

"I don't know."

"We have to get out of here."

"There's nowhere to go."

The group had the small building surrounded. They couldn't get out without being seen. Her throat closed up, her chest grew tight and she clung to Evan like a lifeline. Sobs built in her lungs as she fought to stifle them.

"Listen to me," he said, cupping her face between his hands. "I'll get away and come for you. Do you hear me? Stay safe and stay at the village. I'll find a way out and come for you. Trust me, Priscilla, and everything will be fine."

This couldn't be happening. She gulped for air as the room spun and her limbs grew weak. If only she hadn't fought moving in with him. They wouldn't be here, her mother wouldn't have talked and they could have escaped in the confusion in the village. This was her fault.

"Priscilla, don't do this. Breathe," Evan snapped in a whisper. "I love you, do you hear me? I love you and I will find a way back to you."

No one came back from the rebellion groups. No one. Trembling uncontrollably, Priscilla continued to cling to Evan. Letting go meant losing him forever, she knew it all the way to the center of her bones, felt the terror gripping her throat and heart, squeezing the life out of her.

The door burst open and four men rushed in. One grabbed her by the arms, throwing her to the floor so hard her head bounced off the wood. Something warm and sticky trickled down the side of her face as she blinked, trying to clear her vision. Through the haze of her brain, she could see Evan fighting, throwing punch after punch, his knife nowhere to be seen.

Two men fell to the floor only to be replaced by two more. He could do this. He could win this fight. Evan was strong, powerful and determined. He could get away.

Grunts and curses mixed with the sound of flesh hitting flesh. Frantically, she searched the floor for his knife. If she could get it in his hands he'd have a chance at striking a killer blow. Before she could make a move, Evan dropped to the floor with a thud.

No, get up, she repeated in her head. He had to get up. Two men dragged him out the door as she sat there, fighting to breathe, trying to make her body move to help him. She sat outside her body, watching herself sit helplessly.

"Take him back with the others," one man ordered.

"What about the woman?" another asked.

"Leave her. She's no concern to us."

No. The word exploded inside her head. No! They would not take him away. Priscilla spotted the knife on the floor, scurried toward it and wrapped her fingers around the hilt. With a burst of energy she darted out the door, shouting Evan's name and running toward the first man she saw.

Time morphed into slow motion. Her hand raised high in the air as she ran, coming down slowly to drive the blade into the man's chest. In the background someone shouted her name and what felt like five minutes later a deafening blast shut down her hearing. The sensation of her flesh burning overwhelmed her and then she felt herself slam to the ground. A split second of clarity filled her brain. Pain seared through her shoulder and out the back. She'd been shot and her body was on fire. As her life drained out through the wound she heard muffled shouts somewhere far away. Evan, her beloved Evan. She should have listened to him, stayed put. Too late now. She should have trusted him more. Her desperate thoughts drifted away like lint on a breeze and then darkness swallowed her whole.

## **Chapter Two**

*Five years later*

Priscilla stared down the broken road, her fingers wrapped around the steering wheel in a death grip. She hated traveling at night. Her old box truck's headlights barely illuminated the road, but that wasn't the worst of her worries. Road pirates, rebels and city guards were lurking in the darkness. Road pirates would steal everything they owned and leave them helpless and unprotected. Rebels would not only steal belongings, but them as well. Kidnapping women had become a high priority for the nasty group. City guards, them she feared the most, their only mission to supply the cities with labor. Death would be a more welcome outcome than being shipped off to a city where no one cared if you lived or died.

"Want me to drive for a while?" her friend Glee asked, sitting next to her.

Priscilla shook her head. Glee and her twin sister Jinx, along with their grandmother Mary, had found her five years ago tonight, lying in the woods nearly dead from a gunshot wound. Mary had nursed her back to health, a slow, agonizing process. Over the years, they'd gathered together broken, frightened women who'd lost everything, witnessed atrocities that mentally scarred them for life and had no one to look out for their safety.

Through the collection of women, they'd grown into a clan numbering thirty. All of whom were currently stacked into the back of the box truck. She hated making them travel this way. It seemed inhuman, yet if they didn't keep moving they'd be certain targets for the scum lurking about.

"How far do you think we've traveled?" Priscilla asked Glee.

"Around fifty miles," her friend answered on a yawn. "We should be fairly safe from the rebels for a day or two."

"A day or two," Priscilla muttered to herself. "We'll need fuel soon, Glee, and food."

Their food supplies were running low. They'd taken to eating one small meal a day, not a good way to keep her clan members healthy.

"When we stop, I'll send Jinx and her girls out to see what they can find." Glee ran her fingers through her long gold locks as she stared out the window into the darkness.

Jinx and a few of the other girls in the clan were experts at procuring provisions. They were crafty, silent and deadly when need be. Sneaking into a camp and taking what the group needed without being killed took skill not everyone had. So far they'd been lucky. One day that luck would run out.

God, Priscilla was tired of this. Sometimes, she fantasized about the life she and Evan would have had. If she'd simply moved in with him and become part of his town, they wouldn't have been at that cabin. He wouldn't have been taken away. She'd wanted her freedom and she'd gotten it.

"Careful what you wish for," Priscilla whispered.

"You okay?" Glee reached over and rubbed her shoulder.

"I'm tired, Glee," she said honestly. "So damn tired of living like this."

"I know. What choice do we have though? I for one am not interested in becoming a rebel's town whore or a city's laborer. Either way, death would come slow and painful."

So true. Still, the constant running and scraping by, it took a toll. Every time she looked into the thin, empty eyes of her clan she wondered if it was worth it.

A small window between the cab and the box on the truck slid open. Jinx stuck her head through.

"We've got trouble," she announced. "Big rig coming up behind us fast."

"Road pirates," Priscilla growled. "Do we have any ammunition left?"

"A handful of rounds at best. What do we do, Priscilla?"

Yeah, what did they do? “Hand out what guns we have. We may not be able to fire them, but we can sure as hell make it look good.”

Jinx nodded, the reality of their situation clear in her eyes. Maybe this would be the night she got her rest. Maybe she’d be able to find some peace in death.

“We have a better chance against pirates than we do rebels,” Glee said as she pulled a small handgun from the glove box. She opened the chamber to find one round, lonely and useless.

“Yeah, they’ll just leave us alongside the road with no truck, no food or weapons and sitting targets for the guard or the rebels. Talk about prolonging the inevitable.”

“We could get lucky,” Glee said with a sad smile. “They could take pity on us and leave us the truck.”

Yeah, what would they want with a broken-down, rusted-out box truck? Either way, Priscilla saw her life shorten by one more day and almost felt relief.

Jinx poked her head back through the opening. “I give it another minute or two and they’ll be all over us.”

“If you see a chance,” Priscilla said, looking in the rearview mirror at Jinx. “Take as many as you can and run.” If even just a few got away it would be a victory—minor, but a victory of some sort.

“And leave you behind?” Jinx shook her head. “Not a chance.”

“Don’t worry about me,” she told the twins.

They shared a long, knowing look before Jinx disappeared back into the darkness of the box. Glee fisted her hands on her thighs and took a few steadying breaths. They’d discussed this once. If it came down to saving the clan, Priscilla would gladly forfeit her life. What did she have to live for anyway? Everything she’d loved had been snatched out from under her.

The rumble of a large rig vibrated through her ears. She didn’t need to look in the side mirror to know they’d pulled alongside her truck. Priscilla pressed the accelerator



to the floor, only gaining a pitiful amount of speed. Glancing toward the passenger side window, she calculated how far she'd make it if she turned the steering wheel and took them off-roading.

Not far, but if she could get near the woods, her clan could jump from the truck and scatter. "Tell them to get ready to jump," she warned Glee. "Once we hit the tree line they need to run like they've never run before."

Glee nodded, leaned through the opening and relayed the instructions. They wouldn't all escape, but she'd damn sure make these filthy pirates work for what they wanted. As soon as Glee sat back down and nodded, Priscilla jerked the wheel hard to the right.

The flimsy truck rocked and jerked over the uneven ground, tossing her violently in her seat. Gripping the wheel, Priscilla held on with only one purpose and that was to allow as many as she could to escape.

"Not smart," a voice bellowed through her window.

Priscilla looked over to find a very large man hanging off the door, his eyes glittering with anger through the window.

"Damn, where'd he come from?" she gasped.

Glee screeched as another face appeared in her window. Ignoring the intruders, Priscilla gunned the truck and aimed for the woods.

"They're all over the box," Jinx shouted through the opening.

"Let's see if we can shake 'em." Priscilla jerked the steering wheel to the left hard and then back again, rocking the truck to the point of nearly tipping over.

Screams of fear echoed from the dark box. Glee sank her fingers into the dash, trying to keep from flying out of her seat.

"Jinx," she shouted. "Be ready."

The tree line was just ahead. If she could keep them from getting inside the cab her clan might have a chance. Adrenaline pumped wild and hot through her system. She

hadn't felt this alive in years. Sweat trickled down the side of her face as she jammed on the brakes and then punched the accelerator again.

Both men hanging from the side of the truck shouted, swung and slammed into the doors. Unfortunately, it didn't dislodge them.

"Are you crazy?" the man dangling from her mirror shouted. "You're gonna kill somebody."

"That's the idea," she grumbled, jerking the wheel hard to the left again.

This time the truck hit a hole and tipped, teetering on two wheels for a breath before slamming down hard on its side. Priscilla's head bounced off the window. Sharp, blinding pain exploded inside her head for a brief second and then all she heard were screams.

"No," she groaned, reaching up and feeling hot, sticky blood covering her face.

"Priscilla?" Glee crawled toward her. "Priscilla, are you okay?"

"Go," she grumbled to her friend. "Get out of here while you can."

The passenger side door opened and through a haze of fog, she watched helplessly as hands reached in and dragged a flailing Glee out the door.

*Please, let some of them get away,* she whispered the prayer inside her aching head.

Male voices shouted over the female screams until the screams died away. Why? What could they possibly have that these fucking pirates needed so bad? Anger pinched her gut. Nothing. They had exactly nothing. So pointless, all of it. Living, breathing, none of it made sense anymore.

The truck jerked as muffled male voices shouted outside. Priscilla groaned as her head bounced on her shoulders. Again, the truck jerked, only this time it kept moving until Priscilla found herself gripping the steering wheel as it righted on four wheels. The door jerked open and she lolled her head to the side, she saw the same face she'd seen earlier staring through her window.

"You're still alive," she muttered aloud.

"Where'd you learn to drive?" the man growled before reaching in and dragging her from the cab. "You didn't have to destroy the truck," he continued as he lifted her over his shoulder.

Priscilla tried to lift her head. Where were her girls? She couldn't see them in the dark. Frantic, she fisted her hands and began beating her captor's back.

"Put me down, you bastard." Her body bounced against his broad shoulders as tall weeds slapped her in the face. The sting fueled her anger and fear. "I'll kill you," she shouted as her fists beat uselessly against his hard muscle.

"Yeah, yeah," he growled and kept walking.

By the time they reached the road again, her muscles were weary and she had little strength left to fight. The pirate set her down on the road gently, leaned her against a huge tire and then knelt.

"Let's have a look," he said, pushing her hair back from her face. "Yeah, that's gonna leave a mark."

Priscilla slapped his hands away. "Don't touch me."

"Feisty little one, aren't ya?"

The pirate's smile beamed wide as he used one hand to hold her back against the tire. She blinked away the fog in her eyes pushed away the urge to spit in his face. He'd more than likely retaliate and right now, she couldn't take any more hits.

"Where is my clan?"

"They're over there, all safe and sound no thanks to you. What the hell was that about anyway?"

"You expected me to simply pull over and hand you everything we had?" His arrogance stunned her. She looked around him to find her clan sitting on the ground, huddled together in fear as fifteen men surrounded them with weapons.

"They're no threat to you," she shouted in outrage. "Stop pointing those guns at them." The youngest of the girls were already traumatized. This would set back their progress by years.

"Settle down," the pirate said calmly. "No one's gonna get hurt."

Ignoring him, she kept a careful watch on her clan, counting. One body lay stretched out on the road as two men crouched down beside it. No. "What did you do?" she gasped, trying to get to her feet. "Who is it? Who did you kill?" Her fists clenched as grief and anger mixed into a deadly potion.

She struck out, catching the pirate in the jaw and knocking him back on his ass. Priscilla scrambled to her feet, the road in front of her wavering as she struggled to get to her friend. Firm hands grabbed her arms and halted her progress.

"Let me go," she growled deep in her throat as she punched, kicked and flailed, trying to get free. "She needs me. Damn you, she needs me."

"Let her go."

Priscilla had no idea where the deep, strong voice came from and she didn't give a damn. The strong hands released her and she ran toward the motionless body on the ground. With shaking hands, she knelt down and touched the very young pale face staring back at her.

"It hurts."

She was alive. Oh, thank god, she was alive. Relief fell like a heavy blanket, hunching her shoulders under its weight. "I'll take care of you," she told young Beth. "Where does it hurt?"

"I can't move my arm," Beth sobbed quietly.

Priscilla looked down and fought the gag clutching her throat. Through the blood, she could see a bone protruding from Beth's tender skin. Nausea rose, choking the air from her lungs.

"I'm sorry, Priscilla. I tried to hold on, but the truck tipped and I couldn't stop from flying through the air."

"We'll take care of it, sweetie. I promise." This wasn't good. Beth could get an infection and there were no drugs to be found outside the cities.

"We have someone who can help her," the pirate who dragged her from the truck said. "Go over there with the rest of your clan."

"No!" Priscilla shouted. "I'll stay with Beth. I won't let you hurt her again." Oh, she wanted to gouge his eyes out and stomp on them. This was their fault.

"We didn't hurt her," he growled deep in his chest. "You did."

Two men crouched down beside Beth as Priscilla glared at her captor. She wanted to scream at him, call him a liar, but the fact was he was right. "I'm staying with her," she croaked through her tight throat.

"Have it your way."

One of the men whispered to Beth as he stroked her hair and wiped away the tears. Priscilla watched carefully. Beth nodded and gave a brief smile. The other man beside the girl wrapped his long, thick fingers around her good arm and then gently pushed against her other shoulder.

"What are they doing?" she grumbled as she strained against her captor.

"They're gonna pop the bone back in place. It's gonna hurt like hell, but she'll heal."

Priscilla watched in horror as the man grabbed Beth's arm and jerked. An ear-splitting scream filled the night air as Beth went ghost white and passed out.

"Beth!" Priscilla screamed, lunging forward. Arms tightened around her body.

"She's fine. Better she pass out than suffer any more than she has to."

Bile rose fast and foul into her throat and filled her mouth. "Oh god." She barely got the words out before she leaned over in the pirate's arms and vomited.

"And that's why I suggested you go over there," he bitched. "Come on."

He dragged her back toward the truck, sat her down and handed her a cup of water. "Rinse your mouth out," he ordered.

"Is Beth really going to be all right?" She'd never forget that scream as long as she lived. So much pain.

"Yeah." He pushed the cup of water in her hand. "Go ahead, get that shit out of your mouth."

Priscilla took a hesitant sip, sloshed the water around and then spat it out.

"Can't have you talking to our illustrious leader with puke breath. My name's Nick, by the way, and you need to answer some questions for me."

Priscilla took another sip of water, this time allowing the cool liquid to trickle down her throat.

"What are you doing traveling at night? Hasn't anyone told you how dangerous it is?"

"As opposed to what?" she snapped. "Traveling during the day so the rebels can get us? The way I see it, we're walking targets no matter what time of day it is. Besides, our chances of running into pirates were slimmer than running across rebels or city guards."

Nick nodded his head. "I have to agree with that," he muttered. "Who are you people anyway?"

"No one," she growled, making her head spin.

"Easy." Nick pushed her hair back and looked at the cut on her head. "You took a good hit, probably have a concussion. Calm yourself down before you make more trouble for yourself."

"I'll calm down when you tell those filthy pirates to stop pointing guns at my girls. The one crying," she said, pointing at young Holly. "Was gang-raped at gunpoint. It took me a year to get her to speak to anyone and you're traumatizing her all over again."

Nick swallowed hard and glanced away from her. Good.

"Most of those girls have had nothing but bad experiences with men," she continued, hoping to appeal to something inside him. "The older ones are simply trying to live out their days until they stop breathing. None of them is a threat."

Nick glanced off to his left, away from her clan. Priscilla followed his gaze and saw a tall, huge figure standing in the shadows. She could make out broad shoulders, muscled arms and thick thighs. He only stood about seven yards away, but kept himself hidden. The figure gave a sharp, single nod.

Nick whistled, calling another pirate over. He whispered something and the man headed back toward the group of cowering women. Instantly the men backed off and hid their guns behind their backs.

"Thank you," she whispered to Nick as her anger welled. "What could we possibly have that you want?" she blurted out, her rage dripping from her words. "We survive day to day. You want the tents we sleep in? Our few scraps of clothes? That's all we have and that shitty truck. Is that what you wanted? That rust bucket?"

Nick sighed and hung his head. "Actually, we don't want anything from you. City trucks are the only ones traveling at night. That's who we were after. We assumed you were one. If you had pulled over we would have let you go."

"What?" Did she hear him right? They would have simply let them leave? Priscilla snorted. "Sure."

"Who are you people?"

Priscilla rubbed her throbbing temple. "We're just a group of women trying to survive," she told him, exhausted and wanting nothing more than to go to sleep. "All of us have suffered from the hands of rebels or guards. We just want to find a place we can live without being hunted." Dropping her hand, she rested her head against the tire. "Since that's a dream, we try to stay one step ahead of the danger. Didn't work out too well, did it?"

Nick muttered a curse. "What's your name?"

"Priscilla. Priscilla Kift." She heard a sharp intake of breath from the mysterious figure in the shadows. He took a step back, fisted his hands and then retreated farther into the darkness.

"What now?" she asked, trying to decide if she needed to cause a diversion or wait them out and see if they let them go.

"Not sure. Sit tight and I'll be back." Nick waved another pirate over. "Take her over with her clan."

The man gently helped her to her feet and walked her slowly toward the group. When she sat down, Glee immediately began checking her head wound.

"I'm fine," she whispered to her friend.

"What's going on?"

"They thought we were a city truck. Apparently, around here only city trucks travel at night."

"Great," Glee moaned. "There's no time of day safe for us."

"Is everyone accounted for?" She still had no idea if anyone got away.

"We're all here. With the exception of you and Beth, minor injuries all around." Glee let out a long breath and covered her face with her hands. "I can't believe they helped Beth like that."

Neither could she. The rebels would have shot her, after using her of course. A crippled body was no use to them. The guards would have done the same. So, why did the pirates help her? Priscilla closed her eyes. She couldn't think anymore. Her brain felt like soupy mush.

"Are they going to let us go?" Jinx scooted over on her other side.

"I don't know yet," Priscilla answered. "Be prepared to run. I'll get you an opportunity if they don't."

"They have guns, Priscilla. Lots of loaded guns," Jinx reminded her.



"Well, then I guess we're at the mercy of the pirates." They'd turn them loose, they had to. A bunch of women were of no use to men like this. Unless, god, the thought of what they could be used for made her stomach revolt and cold sweat break out on her forehead. No, rumors were road pirates didn't take prisoners. She had to believe that.

Glee chuckled. "Could be worse. They could be ugly pirates."

Jinx cursed under her breath. "Have you actually looked at these guys? Not a bad apple in the bunch and not one has tried to hurt us. If I'm gonna die I'd rather die looking at a sexy man than a disgusting rebel."

Priscilla couldn't stop the chuckle that seemed to erupt from her chest. Leave it to Glee to find the bright side to everything. "You've got a point," she said, nudging her friend.

"You two are twisted," Jinx laughed. "By the way, have either of you taken a good look at the rig? Remind you of anything?"

Priscilla gazed at the big black trailer and rig. Menacing, she thought. Sparkling chrome and shiny black. "The Marauder."

"That's what I'm thinking," Jinx replied. "Fits the stories we heard. Have you seen the driver? Rumor has it he's built like a god and ruthless as hell."

Priscilla remembered the figure in the shadows. She'd heard the rumors too. The leader of the Marauders took what he wanted when he wanted and damn the consequences. That probably should worry her, but right now she couldn't scrounge up enough give-a-damn to care.

"Oh," Glee gasped. "Who's that?"

Priscilla looked up as Nick approached. "His name's Nick, and I think he's second in charge of this little organization." She glanced at Glee and saw the sheer, raw lust sparkling in her friend's eyes. "God," Priscilla snorted. "Have you been without sex for so long that pirates look good?"

"Sorry," Glee muttered, averting her gaze.

"Priscilla," Nick said as he neared. Oddly, his gaze shot to Glee and lingered on her face for a few moments before traveling down her body.

Behind them gasps and cries caught Priscilla's attention. "What's going on?" she asked, watching her girls being taken away.

"You're coming with us," Nick answered in a stern voice.

"What the hell for? Since when do pirates take prisoners?" This didn't make any sense. Pirates only took material things, not people.

"Don't you know your history?" Nick replied, glaring. "Pirates always take prisoners. I'm sorry, Priscilla, Strafe wants your clan with us. What Strafe wants, he gets."

"Oh really?"

"Yeah, really and don't even think about trying to cause some damn diversion so your girls can run. They're safer with us than they are wandering around unprotected in the woods. If the animals don't get them the rebels will."

Two pirates gripped Jinx's and Glee's arms, tugging them toward the Marauders' trailer.

"You," Nick said on a sigh, "get a special seat in the rig."

"I don't want a special seat." She didn't want to be separated from her clan. Fear clawed her insides. "Please, let me stay with them."

"I promise," Nick said, motioning for her to follow. "They'll be fine. They're even gonna get something to eat."

Priscilla looked between Nick and the twins. Panic gripped her chest. She decided she didn't want to die today.

"Run, Priscilla," Jinx shouted.

Without thinking twice, Priscilla turned and ran toward the woods. She could hear Nick's heavy-booted feet stomping behind her along with some rather inventive curses.

Before she got fifty yards he pounced, taking her down with a hard thud that jarred every bone in her body and exploded a bright white light inside her head.

“Now why did ya have to go and run?”

Those were the last words she heard before the white light faded into total darkness.

## **Chapter Three**

Strafe pulled the Marauder into their previously scouted site. Nick, Buck and Hammer secured several escape routes and made sure there was plenty of fresh water and ample wildlife to hunt. A small clearing would serve as the center of camp while the surrounding woods would offer coverage for their tents. Of course, when they found the place they hadn't expected the extra thirty women currently stashed in the trailer.

All of them except one special woman passed out cold on the floor of the converted sleeper cab. Strafe shut the truck off and turned, gazing down at her. He still couldn't believe it. Seeing her, really seeing her for the first time, was like a punch to the gut, knocking the air out of his lungs. He almost fell to his fucking knees, something he couldn't let his men see.

"You gonna explain this to me anytime soon?"

Strafe lifted his gaze to Nick, let the man feel his cold, go-fuck-yourself stare for a few moments before shifting his attention back to Priscilla.

"Okay," Nick conceded. "Don't wanna talk about it. I get that. Can you at least tell me where the hell I'm supposed to put her?"

"Keep her here until I get my tent set up. She'll be staying with me."

Nick shook his head and rubbed his eyes. "And the rest of our guests?"

He really didn't give a damn about the rest of them. "Whatever you wanna do. Just keep them away from her."

Silence echoed in the rig. How had she survived? Fuck, the last time he'd seen her blood covered the ground and her eyes were empty.

"You know her, don't you?"

"Let it go, Nick." He really didn't wanna have a man-sharing moment now. Not when the only woman he'd loved and thought had died was lying here in his truck and his body demanded he reclaim her.

Shit, his cock was throbbing, engorged and ready to burst out of his jeans. He hadn't taken a woman in over a year so his libido was starved as it was. Sadly, he'd never been able to get real satisfaction from other women. Only Priscilla could give that to him.

"Sorry, buddy," Nick went on, breaking into Strafe's thoughts. "You don't get to play the hard-assed pirate this time. We've never taken prisoners, ever, and all of a sudden we're hauling around thirty women, one that you seem to have taken an unusual interest in. I deserve some sort of explanation."

Nick's reasonable demand grated on Strafe's nerves. It was his rule, after all, not to take prisoners. Strafe jerked his head to the side and opened the door. After jumping down from the rig, he met Nick in front of the truck.

"Yeah, I know her," he told his second-in-command.

"Got that much. From where?"

The bastard wasn't going to make this easy. "Before I was taken by the rebels, we, ah, we were lovers." That word didn't accurately describe what they were. Soul mates, two halves of the same whole, yeah, he couldn't say that to Nick.

Nick arched an eyebrow and crossed his arms over his chest. "I thought you said she died?"

"I thought she did," Strafe growled because the pain still sat raw in his chest. "Apparently, she didn't."

Nick rubbed his jaw. "That really sucks," he finally said. "I'll keep an eye on her while you set up your tent. In the meantime I think I'll have some of the guys throw together some sort of temporary lodging for the rest. I don't think they'll go anywhere as long as she stays."

Strafe nodded, glancing back at the rig. He didn't give a damn about the others. "I'll be quick," he told Nick before strolling off.

Picking out a perfect spot, Strafe went to work setting up his large tent. Positioning the opening just right allowed the moon to shine in. He also set it up around a large tree where he could keep her bound, yet give her enough room to move around. Yeah, he didn't hold any delusions that she'd stay willingly.

With great care, he arranged a sleeping area for her, pulled out extra blankets to cushion her body and after giving one last glance, he headed back toward the Marauder. Nick waited, leaning against the truck. Strafe glanced off to the side and saw a group of his men erecting a large tent among the trees.

"She's still out," Nick said, straightening and then rubbing the back of his neck. "Might want Bruiser to check her out."

"The young one with the broken arm, how's she doing?" Not that it mattered, he told himself.

"Good. Bruiser gave her some antibiotics and a painkiller. He assures me the pain will ease over the next few days. You want me to carry her to your tent?"

"Fuck off," Strafe grumbled as Nick laughed.

"Ya know, you aren't the same man," Nick said, keeping his back to Strafe. "I get the feeling she isn't the same woman."

"I made her want me once, I can do it again."

"I have no doubt you can."

Strafe wished he believed that as much as Nick sounded like he believed it. The woman he'd watched defending her clan certainly wasn't the same woman he thought had died five years ago. The Priscilla he knew was meek, mild and timid. This woman, she had grit, tenacity and damn, she really thought she could give her clan the chance to escape by running that dump of a truck into the woods.

Opening the door, he crawled inside the cab, lifted her limp body in his arms and carefully carried her to his tent. A few of the men stopped and watched, knowing better than to say anything. They knew he didn't show any affection for women. The only time he approached a woman was to sate his need for sex. So he could see their confusion.

Strafe carried her into his tent, settled her down on her bedding and allowed himself a moment to drink her in. He couldn't believe it. She'd died. He could have sworn she'd died right there in front of him.

His gaze drifted over her shabby clothing. Her shirt hung from her torso, her arms like thin twigs draped in cloth. The jeans she wore bagged around her waist, a piece of rope keeping them from falling down. It twisted his gut that his Priscilla lived like this. She deserved better and he would give her better.

Reaching over her, he grabbed a bowl of water and a rag, moistened the rag and gently cleaned the blood from her head. The cut didn't seem bad, not deep enough to be stitched anyway. Once he cleaned her face he worked tirelessly at cleaning her hair.

She'd let it grow. Long waves of chestnut-brown hair cascaded down below her shoulders. He liked it. It made her sharp, angular features softer. She'd acquired a few scars that hadn't been there before. One from the corner of her left eye that ran to her hairline and one that slashed across her right upper lip.

He couldn't allow himself to think about how she got them. The scenarios he'd conjure in his mind would only drive him to the brink of madness. Forcing himself to push on, he surveyed her clothing and decided he couldn't stand to see her in these rags any longer. Slipping his finger beneath the collar of her T-shirt, he ripped and was shocked how easily the material shredded down her front.

Glancing at her creamy exposed skin he sucked in a sharp breath and stifled a curse. Pushing the material aside made his insides quiver with both anger and terror. There over her right breast was a puckered, thickly scarred bullet wound that flooded his mind with memories of that night. He quickly pushed them aside, refusing to allow

those memories to take hold. Instead, he allowed his gaze to travel away from the wound and down the rest of her body.

What he saw there didn't help his sour mood. She looked like a skeleton with flesh stretched tight against it. Dear god. How long had she been starving?

"No more," he mumbled, untying the rope holding her jeans up. "No more." With shaking hands, he tugged the thin, dirty denim down her hips and down her thighs, cursing the entire time as each inch of her pencil-thin thighs were exposed.

"Oh baby. What's happened to you?" After removing her boots he shucked the denim off her body and tossed it aside. Tomorrow he'd burn the filth. He never wanted to see it again.

Pale moonlight filtered through the tent flap and kissed her tender, fragile flesh, giving her an angelic glow that had him reaching out. As thin as she was, she still was the most beautiful woman he'd ever laid eyes on. Her full breasts were topped with cherry-pink tips that made his mouth water. He remembered sucking them, rolling them on his tongue and getting drunk on her taste.

Fisting his hand to keep from touching her, he let his gaze travel down her ribs, over her sunken belly and across her protruding hips. She'd been thin five years ago, but not painfully thin like this. At least then she'd had curves, lush, delicious curves he liked to stroke. She'd be that way again, he promised her and himself. He'd make sure she ate every day.

Comfortable in his resolve to put meat on her bones, he allowed his gaze to brush over the soft brown curls between her legs. His fingers twitched, eager to be sunk deep in her fine hair and stroke her outer lips. He couldn't though, not now. Reluctantly, he moved away and rummaged through his bag of clothing. Buried at the bottom he kept a tank top that he never wore. After shaking it out, he tugged it down over her head, careful not to touch her bruising cut.

It took some maneuvering, but he managed to get the shirt shuffled down her back and over her hips. The garment hung nearly to her knees. On him, it was tight and



short. Brushing the backs of his fingers across her cheek, he sighed. What hell had she lived through over the past five years? Regretfully, he reached for the rope looped around the tree trunk and bound her wrists.

Walking to his pile of blankets, Strafe stripped off his shirt, tossed it aside and then removed his jeans. He always slept naked, a habit he chose not to shake after his time at the rebel camp. The rebels liked to keep their new recruits vulnerable, unable to hide weapons. He found it comfortable.

Lying down on top of his blankets, he stretched out and stared at the roof of his tent. What would he dream about tonight? Usually he dreamed of Priscilla, the night she died and how agonizingly lonely he'd become. Glancing over at her, he wondered again, what would he dream about?

Would she accept this new man? The rebels had created a cold, merciless monster. A monster who'd crawled out of his cage and lashed out until every last one of his captors was dead. He didn't do it alone of course, those men out there, they followed, fought until their bloody, bruised and damn-near-dead bodies collapsed. In the end, they'd won their freedom and now they intended to live the best way they knew how. He'd have to make Priscilla understand that.

\* \* \* \* \*

Priscilla rolled onto her side, snuggling into the luscious softness beneath her. Slowly, she realized something didn't feel right. Her blankets weren't this soft, they were scratchy. She moved and felt the material slide against her bare legs. Her eyes flew open as her heart hammered a thundering tattoo inside her chest. Reaching down to touch her bare legs, she realized her wrists were bound, the rope tied securely around the trunk of a tree.

"Oh god, no." She'd been taken captive, but by whom? The sound of soft breaths drifted in the dark, fueling her fear.

Priscilla sat up gingerly and looked down at her body now covered in some sort of shirt that hung to her knees. Her clothes were gone. With shaky hands, she felt her forehead and discovered the blood had been washed away, out of her hair as well.

Scared to death, Priscilla tucked her knees up against her chest and began rocking back and forth. She didn't know where she was, who had her or where her clan had ended up. Thinking about her girls made tears burn behind her eyes. The youngest would be petrified, all the progress they made at building trust again shattered. The older women, they'd handle the captivity better, but would still be terrified.

Why wasn't she allowed to be with her clan? Looking across the tent, she saw the form of a man stretched out, sleeping with the silver moonlight illuminating his bare abdomen. Thick, long scars cut across his sculpted abs, some traveling down his pelvis and, oh lord. Priscilla gasped and then quickly pressed her fist against her mouth.

He was naked. Those scars disappeared down into the thick, dark hair of his groin. Swallowing hard, Priscilla hesitantly allowed her gaze to drift just an inch lower where his erect cock jutted up toward his abs. She tried to swallow again but her mouth had dried up like a desert.

Oh, he was big and thick. Instinctively, she pulled her legs tighter to her body. He groaned in his sleep, shifting and letting his muscular thighs fall open slightly, giving her a better view of his heavy sac. Pure male. The words whispered inside her head as heat washed over her body.

Jerking her head to the side, she silently cursed herself for admiring the naked body of the man who'd kidnapped her. Obviously, the legendary pirate had plans for her, plans that included keeping her naked and her legs spread for him.

Was the same thing happening to her girls? Were the young ones trussed up and stripped down to be used by the savage pirates? What about the older women? What had they done to them?

Priscilla bit down on her knuckle to keep any sound from escaping her mouth. She didn't want to wake her captor. She had to think. She had to figure out some way of

releasing her girls. What could she bargain with? Glancing back over at her naked captor, she realized what she had to do.

If he wanted her as a sex toy, she'd agree as long as he released her clan. Jinx and Glee could continue to protect them. They were more than capable. Of course that could mean she'd be expected to service the entire road pirate crew, but what the hell did she have to lose? The others were more important. She didn't really have anything to live for anyway.

He groaned again, drawing her attention back to him. His large hand reached down and gripped his thick cock. Priscilla's breath lodged in her lungs as she sat perfectly still. He was asleep, wasn't he?

The man began a slow stroke from the base to his engorged head and then back down again. Up and down he stroked, all the while breathing heavily and muttering incoherent words. As his hips thrust slightly off his blankets, Priscilla found herself panting, unable to look away.

This wasn't right. She shouldn't be panting like a puppy over a man who had her bound helplessly and more than likely would use that thick, pulsing cock on her. Liquid heat rushed between her legs. She was insane. The hit on her head had screwed up her brain. That had to be it. Why else would her clit be aching and swelling, throbbing with each pump of his hand?

Well, she thought, believing insanity had finally taken control, let's hope he knows how to use that thing because if she was to be his sex slave, it could be worse.

Suddenly, he stopped. His hand stilled mid-stroke and his body went taut. She almost groaned in protest. She wanted to watch him finish.

The man tilted his shadowed face toward her. "You like to watch."

His voice rumbled deep and husky from his chest, sending currents of electricity over her flesh. Her nipples peaked into tight, aching pebbles. Damn it, she'd been caught and wouldn't that make her bargaining harder.

Instead of speaking, she jutted out her chin, stiffened her spine and refused to tremble in fear. Trembling in desire she couldn't control, she damned her traitorous body. It couldn't get any worse, or so she thought until he stood and the moonlight washed over his broad, chiseled chest, traveled down his sculpted abs and highlighted his jutting cock.

She wanted to moan. He looked tempting, delicious and forbidden all at the same time, yet he looked familiar. Why?

"Answer me," he growled in a whisper.

How was she supposed to speak when her heart raced so fast from fear and lust she could barely breathe? "No." The word came out a hushed, whispered lie.

"Liar!" he barked.

Priscilla winced, not in fear but in shock. Angry that she'd allowed him to elicit such a response. She pulled herself to her feet, braced her legs and shot him a daring look.

"You like to watch men stroke themselves," he said, taking a step closer. "Don't you?" He reached down and gripped his shaft and began a slow stroke that she couldn't help but watch. "It turns you on, makes you hot and wet."

Even as she stood there defiantly before this hulking, naked man she didn't know, her body responded with flames licking across her flesh and liquid lava seeping thick between her legs. She could get through this. She could bluff her way out of this strange, erotic nightmare. All she had to do is stay calm.

"Watch me," he demanded in that gravelly, husky voice that sent shivers down her spine.

Priscilla deliberately turned her head away. She couldn't allow him to think he had control over her, not yet. If she wanted to win her clan's freedom then she had to control herself. He took another step forward and she took one back.

"Who are you?" she asked in a stern voice. She needed to change the subject, think about something other than his erotic temptations.

"Who do you think I am?" He took another step, she backed up a step.

"The leader of the Marauders," she replied in a rushed, shaky voice. "The pirate who takes what he wants no matter who gets hurt. My question is, why take me?"

That brought him to a standstill, even his stroking stopped momentarily. "Why not?"

She looked down at her too-thin body and gave a nervous chuckle. "I'm not exactly a prize of any worth. Surely you noticed that when you undressed me." She shrugged, knowing what she looked like beneath this huge shirt.

"What I noticed," he said, taking another step forward, "was a woman with full breasts tipped with bright pink nipples I'd like to suck until she comes."

Priscilla staggered backward until her back hit the trunk of the tree she'd been tethered to. Said nipples peaked into tight, aching nubs and stabbed through the material of the shirt. Damn it, she couldn't hide that response.

"A pretty little pussy that I'm willing to bet tastes erotic, wild and spills juice a man could get drunk on." He stepped close enough his warmth surrounded her, yet far enough away that his cock didn't touch her.

Priscilla closed her thighs tight, hoping none of that juice he spoke of trickled down her legs. Why the hell was she responding to this? It didn't make any sense.

"I wonder, when I suck your pink little clit between my lips, will you scream for more?"

"No!" she shouted more to herself than to him because she couldn't stop her clit from throbbing. "Stop it," she snapped.

"Stop what?" he asked, stroking himself. "Stop making you hot and horny?" he asked, leaning in and whispering in her ear.

For a split second she could almost see his face before his hot breath swept across her flesh, sending chills throughout her body. "I'm not," she growled even as her clit pulsed and her breasts ached to be touched.

"I bet your sweet little pussy is drenched," he whispered in her ear and then flicked her earlobe with his tongue.

Priscilla jumped as lightning bolts rippled through her body. "Go to hell," she gasped, fighting for breath.

"Why don't we see?" He lifted the hem of the shirt, slid it slowly up her legs until it bunched around her hips. Finally letting go of his cock, he held the material with one hand and cupped her mound with the other. "Fuck," he groaned as one finger slipped between her outer lips. "Oh baby, you are wet."

His long, thick finger stroked her soaked, tender flesh. Flesh that hadn't been touched so skillfully in years. Oh, she'd had sex over the last five years, but only when she had to acquire supplies for her clan. She'd hated it, felt dirty after, but she'd rather defile herself than have to send another of the girls to do it.

Two fingers spread her lips as the middle one brushed over her clit and then delved deep into her clenched core. The invasion took her breath as her knees buckled. He continued to stroke, drawing more hot liquid from her until his finger was coated. When he removed his hand she almost groaned but managed to stifle the sound.

From the corner of her eye she saw him suck his finger dry and damn near came right then and there. Why was this happening to her?

"I haven't tasted anything so sweet in a long time."

She noticed the tone of his voice had changed. Instead of harsh, she heard a touch of regret.

"Tell me about the bullet wound," he asked, reverting back to the mean pirate routine. "How'd you survive?" He took a step back, giving her room.

Priscilla took a steadying breath, grateful for the chance to change the subject. "I was found by Glee, Jinx and their grandmother. They managed to keep me alive and then nurse me back to health. They said I was barely breathing when they found me."

"Glee, Jinx, those are the twins?"

"Yes."

"Where's the grandmother?"

Sadness suddenly flooded her as tears burned behind her eyes. "We were attacked by rebels, she fought to allow us to escape. When we returned we found her dead." Now the anger resurfaced like it did every time she thought about the older woman.

His hand reached out but before he could touch her, he pulled it back.

"The rest of them, the young girls and older women, how did you come by them?"

"As we traveled we came across them. Some of the youngest witnessed atrocities a child should never see. Others we had no choice but to try to free from the rebels." Priscilla lifted her chin. "We're nothing but women trying to survive without being used and murdered."

Now was her time to make the deal. "I'll stay, do anything you want me to do without fighting if you let my clan free."

He turned his back then, began pacing as he continued to stroke himself. She couldn't stop herself, she had to look. His toned ass bunched with each move, making her hands itch to touch all that hard muscle.

"Let me get this straight," he said, keeping his back turned. "You'll do whatever I ask, turn yourself over freely to me as long as I let your clan go."

"Yes." Could this actually be working? She didn't dare to hope.

"The things I could ask you to do would horrify you," he growled. "We get lonely on the road."

Priscilla swallowed hard. "It doesn't matter. I only care about them. Use me, I don't care, but don't hurt those girls. They've been through enough." She choked on the last word and silently cursed herself for showing weakness. He'd use that against her.

"You'd whore yourself for their safety?"

He turned toward her. She still couldn't see his face in the shadows but she got the sense her offer pissed him off. Such a confusing man.

"If that's what it takes to keep them from being hurt, yes. I've got nothing left in me," she explained for some unknown reason. "Everything I lived for is gone. My only purpose now is to make sure those women and girls are kept safe."

"You do this often," he snapped. "Give yourself freely for them?"

The way he spat "them" like her clan was some sort of dirty word sent fury raging through her bloodstream. What right did he have to judge what she did for the people she loved?

"When it's necessary," she replied, allowing every bit of anger to spill into her tone. "When you love someone you put them above and beyond yourself to keep them fed, clothed and safe. But you wouldn't know anything about that, would you? You only care about yourself. I bet if one of your men died you'd spit on his corpse and walk away. I'm not like that. I do what's necessary to protect the ones I love."

Her body trembled with anger. Fear had taken a backseat because no one, not even a vile pirate, could make her guilty about what she'd done to keep those women safe.

His body had grown oddly still and tense. "Why the hell do you care anyway? Isn't that why you brought me here, so you can use me? Where do you get off pretending to be so self-righteous?"

His fists balled up tight at his sides, his shoulders hunched and as he stalked toward her she decided she'd just poked a sleeping bear with a barbed wire. Not a smart thing to do. Bracing herself, she prepared for the hit she knew for certain was coming.



Instead of a hit, he grabbed her by the arms and lifted until her toes barely touched the ground. She didn't have time to even yelp a protest before he crushed his mouth to hers. The brutal kiss stunned her briefly, but when his tongue speared between her lips and exploded into her mouth, she gasped. He angled his head to cover her mouth more thoroughly and then without warning the savage turned gentle.

He tasted wild, musky and she couldn't stop herself from responding. He seemed familiar, tasted familiar. She was so lost in the kiss she didn't realize he'd lifted her shirt until his large, calloused hand cupped her mound.

His erect cock pressed between them like an iron bar. She pressed harder against it as one thick finger dipped inside her clenched, wet tunnel.

"Fuck, you are so hot and wet," he panted. "I wanna feel you wrapped around me, Priscilla. I wanna feel your tight pussy milking me."

While he spoke his finger plunged in and out, caressing her walls and bringing her closer to release. Her hips bucked, meeting his rhythm, riding his hand shamelessly. When he yanked the shirt above her breasts and sucked one stiff nipple between his lips, she cried out, reaching between them and gripping his cock between her bound hands.

He jerked back, grabbed her bound wrists and lifted them high above her head, never missing a beat finger-fucking her. The shadows lifted slightly, revealing a portion of his face. His jaw clenched and his nostrils flared.

"Come for me," he growled, adding a second finger and stretching her walls.

It felt good, too damn good. She shouldn't be doing this. Even as she thought that she increased her thrusting, taking every inch of his fingers in.

"Please," she sobbed, desperate for the orgasm tightening throughout her body.

"Leave your hands there," he ordered, releasing his grip and grabbing his cock. "I'm coming with you."

Unable to help herself, she watched as he stroked himself almost brutally. The sight of his hard flesh being pulled was more than she could stand. Her orgasm coiled tight and as she looked up into the face of the man giving her this mind-blowing pleasure the moon shifted, illuminating his face.

Her orgasm hit like a tidal wave as she finally identified her captor. "Evan!" Lights exploded in her eyes, her body bucked and he came all over her bare belly. Warm semen splashed against her flesh, with a deep, rumbling howl filling the tent.

She blinked rapidly, desperate to get a clear look at his face. Could she have been hallucinating? Soft whimpers rolled from her throat as she continued to ride his hand through the waves of pleasure. His eyes were dark and hard. His face had changed slightly along with his body, but it was Evan.

"Evan," she whimpered, coming down from her release.

He carefully removed his hand and took several steps back. "Evan's dead," he snapped. "Don't look for him here."

"I don't understand." Her body trembled uncontrollably as she slid down, plopping on her ass. "How? Why didn't you tell me?" All these years she'd thought him dead. Pulling her knees to her chest, she shook as her brain tried to make sense of this unbelievable reality.

"I couldn't," he answered in a cold tone that made her shake more.

"You couldn't?" Unbelievable. "You couldn't?" Her voice shrieked in a high pitch that hurt even her ears.

"I didn't know it was you until you told Nick your name." He paced around the tent, his brawny body coiled tight.

With her body still humming from her orgasm, she pushed herself to her feet, tugged down the shirt and suddenly realized he'd tied her up like a prisoner. Looking down at the rope wrapped tightly around her wrists, she felt the anger begin in the pit of her stomach. Welcoming it, she allowed it to build as she stared at her hands. Her

limbs stopped trembling, her heart rate settled and for the first time since she opened her eyes in this miserable tent, she felt calm.

"You tied me up," she grumbled. "You knew it was me and you tied me up."

"You didn't know it was me yet," he grumbled back at her. "And then after that failed escape attempt, I figured you'd wake up and try again before I had the chance to talk to you."

"What, you expected me to simply get in that truck with you like a good little prisoner? And what the hell's up with that, by the way? Since when did you learn how to drive a truck and become some wild-assed pirate?" Oh, this anger felt good. It cleansed her in some way, left her feeling like she had some control back. "The Evan I knew would never do something like that."

He turned, stalked toward her as his flaccid cock bounced against his thigh. He reached out and gently gripped her arms again. "I told you Evan died," he snapped in her face. "He died the night I watched you die."

"I. Didn't. Die."

His hands jerked away like her flesh burned and took several steps back. Turning, he rubbed the back of his neck, bringing her attention to his long, braided hair. She hadn't noticed that. How long he wore his hair now. Evan hated his long hair, always threatening to cut it off but failing to do so because she loved it.

What did that mean? she wondered. "Take these ropes off."

"No."

His short, simple answer made her mouth drop open. "No? Are you kidding me?" What the hell was wrong with him? "You bring me here against my will, tie me up like I'm some kind of pet and almost rape me—"

"Rape you?" he shouted, spinning on his heel. "Not likely." His fists balled up as rage burned in his eyes. "You freely spread your legs from the sounds of it."

He might as well have slapped her, the words stung just as bad. "How dare you," she whispered, hurting all the way to the core. He didn't have a clue what she had to go through over the last five years.

"How dare I?" he grumbled, stepping up to her again. "You fucking admitted it, Priscilla. You stood right there and offered yourself up as a whore for the group and then said you've done it before."

Without thought she balled her fists up tight, pulled her arms back and drove them right into his jaw. Pain surged up her arms, exploding in her shoulder. Tears filled her eyes but she refused to let them fall.

"You're right," she said, watching him wipe blood from his lip. "Evan is dead. He would never purposely hurt me like that. I don't know who you are, but I know I don't like you very much." With that she sat down and huddled against the tree trunk.

## **Chapter Four**

Strafe eased out of the tent before the sun rose and stomped around in the woods until his temper cooled. He didn't want to chance running into any of his men, especially Nick. How the fuck did this all go so wrong? He'd hoped once Priscilla figured out who he was things would go easier. What he didn't plan on was her offering herself up to be used as the camp whore in order to save the rest of her clan.

That sent icy chills through his already frozen heart. And when she admitted to doing it in the past to gain supplies he almost lost it completely. At first his anger wasn't toward her, but the fact that she'd been forced to do so. Then, everything got twisted up and he hated the whole damn world.

Stepping out of the woods, he found the stream Buck had told him about. After stripping down and removing the leather band holding his braid, he walked into the cold water, knelt down and dunked his head. The cool water chilled his blood as Priscilla's words rang in his ears. Jealousy, rage and finally failure collided into a stew of emotions he didn't have a clue how to deal with so he lashed out.

*I don't like you very much.*

Strafe lifted his head, tossing his hair back and taking a huge gulp of air. "Too fucking bad," he grumbled. He wasn't letting her go. He'd mourned, privately cried and then hardened his heart because of her. Now she'd have to come to like this new man. Strafe stood and walked out of the stream, sat down and let the water drip from his body.

Who was he kidding? He'd blown it, accusing her of being a whore when he knew in his frozen heart she did what she had to do to survive. If he took a good, long, serious look at his life he had no room to point any fingers. He just had to find a way to win her back. It wouldn't be easy. She'd become a feisty, stubborn woman and it would

take time to chip away at her hard shell. Strafe smiled. He knew exactly how to go about it.

Tugging his jeans back on and braiding his hair, he set off for camp. The early morning sun burned bright and orange in the summer sky and as he stepped into camp he smelled fresh meat cooking. Someone obviously went hunting during the night.

"Mornin', Strafe," his head medic said, strutting by.

"Hey, Bruiser, how's that young girl with the broken arm doing?"

Bruiser stopped, rubbed his jaw and sighed. "Hurtin' but she'll be fine in a few days. Poor little thing acts like a frightened rabbit every time I get near her. How that ragtag group of women managed to survive is beyond me."

Strafe grunted his agreement. "Could you drop by my tent in about two hours? I want you to take a look at someone."

Bruiser nodded his head. "Sure, I'll bring my bag."

"Thanks. Where's Nick?"

Bruiser nodded toward the big tent he'd put the women in. "He's got a few giving him a hard time." A small smile tugged at the man's lips. "I think he likes it."

Strafe cocked an eyebrow. Since when did Nick like being given a hard time? "He'll handle it. Any food ready yet?"

"Yep, they've been cooking almost all night. I don't think those women have eaten any decent food in months. The young ones devoured the meager rations we gave them last night like it was gourmet food."

"Just the young ones?"

Bruiser grunted. "The older women ate, but cautiously."

Good. Strafe nodded. "I'll see you in two hours." With that he headed toward the mess tent.

He loaded a wooden tray with as much food as he could, filling it with fruits, vegetables and dried meats. On the way out he stopped and filled two wooden mugs

with fresh coffee they'd gotten on their last raid. As he passed by the tent of women, Nick came stomping out.

"Try that again and I'll tie ya to a damn anthill," he shouted before turning around and nearly slamming into Strafe.

"Problem?" Strafe asked, cocking an eyebrow.

"The one named Jinx, and what the hell kinda name is that anyway, just tried to slip my belt off while her sister sat there flirting with me."

"Your belt?"

"Ya, my fucking belt. Apparently she's a professional gypsy, pickpocket—hell, I don't know—she's got light fingers. You know what she could do with that belt?"

"Whip you?" He'd never seen Nick this flustered. Nothing shook the man.

"Oh, you're a real fucking cutup this morning aren't ya? She could strangle someone at the very least." Nick pointed his finger. "This is your fault," he growled. "I hope to hell it's worth my neck."

"Are you telling me you can't handle a few women?" Strafe almost laughed at the outraged look on Nick's face. Hell, he hadn't laughed in so long it startled him.

"I'd like to handle Glee, but her twin is a pain in the ass. Have you seen her? She's gorgeous."

"She looks just like Jinx."

Nick scowled. "Not to me. Big difference. Glee's sweet, has kind eyes and a sparkle about her. Jinx, she's just mean and it shows."

"If you say so." Strafe headed across the open field.

"Hey, how'd last night go? Does Priscilla know who you are?"

"Yep," he replied, refusing to stop and have a heart-to-heart about it. He had a plan to implement and the sooner he got started the better.

When Strafe stepped inside the tent, Priscilla was pacing, her pretty face all scrunched up in a cute frown. She'd worn a rut in the cleared ground.

"Where the hell have you been? I have to pee and unless you want me to foul your sleeping area I suggest you untie me."

Her temper sparked something inside him. The way her eyes glittered and her tiny fists clenched, it turned him on. Already his cock twitched to life behind his zipper. Setting the tray down, he went to the tree trunk, untied the rope and wound it around his arm.

"You're kidding me," she gasped. "Now you're gonna walk me like a dog?"

"Don't be ridiculous," he replied, gripping her arm and leading her outside.

She muttered, cursed and jerked away from him as he led her deeper into the woods. When he found a spot that would do, he released her arm.

"Do I get enough leash to squat or do I stand?"

He had a feeling if her hands were free she'd have them jammed on her tiny hips. Without saying a word, he unwound the rope and stepped back a few paces.

"You get off on watching women pee?" she asked, lifting the shirt and baring her ass.

He smiled as he turned his back. She was riled this morning, fuming, spitting mad and, damn, she was cute this way. The Priscilla he knew would go out of her way to play nice. This Priscilla went out of her way to play nasty. He liked nasty.

He heard her crunching toward him in the foliage and he wondered for a brief moment if he should watch his back.

"I want to see my clan and make sure none of them is being abused."

"Abused," he repeated, turning toward her.

"Yes. After what you did to me I want to make sure my girls haven't been defiled."

Strafe reached out and pulled her against his body. "If you'll recall you were wet for me, baby. You liked watching me jerk myself off, riding my hand and coming as soon as I came. You wanted it."

"Go to hell," she growled.



She didn't mean it. He could see it in her eyes as they clouded over and her flesh heated against him. "Should we test it?" He cupped her breast through the material and brushed his thumb over her already pebbled nipple. Oh yeah, he had her.

"Don't you remember how good we were together?" he asked, kissing her jawline and working his way down her slender, long neck. "I missed your taste, baby. Missed feeling your slick cream on my tongue. Would you like that? Would you like me to eat your sweet little pussy?"

Her chest rose and fell rapidly as she panted, tilting her head to the side, giving him better access. She'd arched her back, pushing her breast into his palm, and he took advantage, lightly pinching her nipple. Her breathy whimper made his cock hard, but this wasn't about him. This was about breaking through her anger and wearing her down.

Pushing his thigh between her legs, he gave her a hard surface to grind her pussy against. As soon as he opened her up she took advantage, grinding desperately. He continued tormenting her breast, dipping his head occasionally and licking her nipple through the fabric.

"Oh god," she whimpered.

Strafe stifled a groan as his cock throbbed and his balls tightened. He wanted to toss her on the ground and bury himself balls-deep in her tight little body, but she'd use it against him, he knew it. No, he'd stick to the plan.

"We should get back," he said, pulling his leg back and releasing her breast.

"What?" She blinked a few times, her mouth falling open.

Oh, what he wouldn't give to fill her pretty mouth. "I brought you some food. We need to get you fed." He tugged on her rope and she staggered forward. "After you eat I'll take you to the creek and bathe you."

She didn't say anything, simply followed, staring at the ground. He'd have to remember to put her boots on her feet before she tore her tender flesh in the woods. Glancing down at her, he smiled. He'd thrown her off and for the moment he had the

advantage. When they reached the tent he pulled back the flap and gently pushed her inside.

"Have a seat," he said patiently and waited for her to settle on her blankets. "Eat as much of the meat as you can," he told her, sitting with her.

"I'm not hungry."

"You're starving. Eat."

Priscilla glared at him. "I said I'm not hungry."

Her body objected, rumbling a loud growl that made him smile. "You were saying?"

After a few minutes of useless protest, he shoved a piece of dried meat into her mouth and then took a piece himself. They sat there quietly, him feeding her until he felt she couldn't handle any more. She eagerly drank all the coffee, including his.

"That wasn't so bad, was it?"

"You think I'm too thin," she said, rubbing her stuffed tummy.

"You are." No point in lying about it. "How many times have you skipped eating so the others could?"

She shrugged. "I do what I have to do. I have to see them." she said again.

"No."

"No," she repeated. "Why the hell not? What have you done to them?"

"I haven't done a thing. Nick, on the other hand, threatened to tie Jinx to an anthill." When she gasped in horror, he eased her concern. "Nick wouldn't hurt her. I've seen him go toe-to-toe with some big-assed bastards protecting women he didn't know."

Priscilla let out a long breath. "If you'd let me talk to her, I could get her to be more cooperative."

"In a day or two." He got to his feet and reached down to take her hand. "Time for a bath."

As he expected she bitched and moaned the entire walk. When they approached the stream she hesitated. He set down his satchel filled with a razors and soaps, smiling to himself.

Strafe carefully stripped the shirt from her body and tugged it off the length of rope. She stood there, gloriously naked before him, a faint flush across her cheeks and her gaze off in the distance. He'd expected more of fight from her and the fact that she let him undress her made him worry.

"You feeling all right?"

She nodded, refusing to look at him. Okay, she was silently protesting, knowing she couldn't do anything about it. He'd better watch his back, 'cause when the first chance at revenge opened he'd find a knife in his back. Tying the rope to a tree, he shed his shirt, untied his braid and then shucked off his jeans and boots.

Untying the rope, he led Priscilla into the cool water and then helped her sit. Crouching behind her, he scooped up water in his hands and let it trickle down over her shoulders. The cool liquid beaded on her creamy skin like little diamonds. Droplets formed on the tips of her breast, gleaming like fine jewels.

He wanted to sip at those pretty little buds, suck the water away and roll her pretty pebbles around on his tongue. In time, he reminded himself. Standing, he went to the bank and retrieved the razor and bottle of shampoo. When he got back he crouched down by her side. "Lie back for me."

"Why? What are you gonna do?"

"Relax, Priscilla. I just want to wash your hair." After a little coaxing, he got her to lay her head across his lap, which brought his cock to attention. Ignoring the raging, throbbing member, he soaked her hair and then lathered in the soap. As he massaged her scalp and ran her hair through his fingers, she began to relax.

Strafe took advantage and drank in the vision of her breasts protruding from the water. God, he'd missed her. He'd mourned her for so long it was almost impossible to believe she was here with him now. Before he realized who she was last night her fiery

temper and willingness to stand up to a horde of pirates had caught his attention. Most women played the weak card, hoping for pity. Priscilla didn't want pity, she wanted her freedom. Something he couldn't give her.

Dipping her head back into the water, he rinsed away the soap until her wavy locks squeaked between his fingers. He felt the tension coil through her body once again as he helped her sit up. Reaching down into the water, he retrieved the straight blade. Priscilla's eyes grew to the size of saucers and she tried to scramble away.

"What the hell are you going to do with that?"

She trembled in his grip so fiercely the water surrounding her rippled in tiny waves. The fear in her large eyes tore through him, wrapping around his heart and squeezing until he could barely breathe. Someone had hurt her. That knowledge brought on raw anger that lodged in his throat, tightening it to where he could barely speak.

"I won't hurt you, baby," he spoke with a choked voice. "I'll never hurt you."

Priscilla glanced at him and then back to the blade. She wanted to believe him, he could see it in her eyes, but the terror wouldn't allow it. God help him if he ever got his hands on the man who'd abused and tortured his woman. He'd gut the bastard and hang his entrails out as a warning.

"I remember how much you liked being shaved." Using slow movements, he picked up her leg, laid the blade against her flesh and cut away the hair from her knee to her ankle.

Priscilla's gaze darted back and forth between his face and her leg. Her jaw trembled, her pink lips paling and with every breath she fought the sobs tearing at her chest. Yeah, she'd been terrorized and he had a feeling he knew how she'd got those scars on her face.

"Is the man still alive who hurt you?" he asked, keeping his movements easy and slow.

"I don't know," she answered in a low whisper he barely heard as her eyes continued the frightened dance between his face and his hand.

Strafe let it go. He wouldn't push it. Later, when he'd gained her trust he'd get his answers. Once he finished the lower half of her leg, he gently lowered it into the water and lifted her other one. It didn't take long to finish. Her legs were so damn thin and tiny.

She still trembled, her bound wrists and arms pressed against her breasts. As he wrapped one hand around her wrists she whimpered and then glanced away with a hint of anger flashing in her eyes. Good. He'd rather have her anger than her fear.

Slowly, he lifted her arms above her head. She fought at first, her legs bouncing in the water and her breaths growing ragged. Still, he powered right through her tense arms and easily lifted them.

"Relax and don't jump," he told her, lifting the blade to her underarms. "I'd rather cut my own fingers off than leave a single nick on you."

With two easy swipes, he shaved away the fuzzy hair sprouting beneath her arms. When he finished, he dipped his hand into the water, cupped it and washed her flesh, letting his fingertips brush the side of her breast. Her small gasp wasn't one of fear, but shock at the pleasure that made her nipple harden.

In a matter of minutes he had her other underarm shaved. As before, he washed her flesh and let his fingertips trail along her breast. Her eyes closed on a tiny sigh and he had to turn away so she wouldn't see his pleased smile.

Now came the fun part. Keeping the rope at his side and tucked beneath his knee in the water, he opened her legs. Priscilla blinked several times and tried to close them. Strafe held her gaze with a touch of demand and heat.

"I want you clean and smooth." His words rumbled from his chest thick with need. "When I put my lips there I want nothing between us."

She sucked in a sharp breath, lifting her pretty breasts, and he took advantage of her diverted attention, opening her completely. Slipping one hand under her ass, he

lifted her until her tiny butt rested on his thighs. Blood rushed to his cock, leaving his head spinning. He had to take a moment, bring himself under some sort of control before he dared touch her with the blade.

To give himself some time and a touch of his own pleasure, he slipped his fingers through the soft curls, making sure he brushed her tender clit. He knew he'd hit his mark when she jolted and her thighs quivered. He wanted this to be hot for her. All those tormented memories would be pushed away by the time he had her shaved smooth.

With one hand he rested the blade against her flesh. With the other he slipped one finger between her tender, sweet folds. Hot lust slammed into his gut as her slick juice coated his finger. He didn't quell the moan of ecstasy. There really was no point. He wanted her and she needed to know it, understand it and deal with it.

Her hips bucked slightly. "Don't move," he warned, giving her a heated glare.

Pink lips parted slightly as her face flushed a beautiful red. All the while he caressed the tender flesh beneath her clit. Her head lolled back, cascading her long locks down until the tips touched the water. She swallowed hard, the muscles in her neck working and tensing as she fought to stifle her mewls of pleasure.

He shaved her, his cock growing and stiffening as every inch of flesh became exposed. The cool water of the stream did little to cool the hot release boiling in his tight balls. He never had any control when it came to her. One look, one touch and his cock took over from his brain. Not this time though. He had to hold it together this time or his plan would fail.

"You have the prettiest pussy," he whispered, allowing his caress to lower until his fingertip teased her clenched opening. "So pink and sweet."

Warm cream spilled from her tunnel and over his finger. Strafe clenched his jaw and resisted the carnal urge to lick it away. Her pink flesh had heated, engorged and he wanted desperately to taste her. Instead, he dipped the tip of his finger into her and moaned at the wet, hot muscles tugging on the digit, trying to draw him in deeper.

"I can't wait to slide my cock inside you," he growled, watching her chest heave.

Another rush of liquid doused his finger, showing she liked it when he talked this way. That pleased him because god knew he didn't have a sophisticated bone in his body anymore. He couldn't placate her with tender, loving words like he used to. That all withered away over the years as bitterness filled his soul.

Sweat rolled down the sides of his face as he tried to focus on removing the hair around her pussy. His engorged cock head bobbed around from the flow of the water. It throbbed and demanded to be driven inside her hot, silky tunnel. He wouldn't make it through this.

He had to remove his finger so he could hold her outer lips apart. Priscilla moaned and whispered something he couldn't make out. His finger glistened from her sweet juice and he couldn't help himself.

"Look at me," he demanded.

She lifted her head, her eyes smoldering as she locked gazes with him. Slowly he lifted his finger to his lips and licked away her essence. Her taste exploded on his tongue. Wild, sweet and spicy laced with sunshine. His hungry groan rumbled deep in his chest. He should just do it, toss the blade aside and bury his face in her wanton flesh. Lick her dry and make her come until she collapsed and he'd gotten his fill. Except, he'd never get his fill of her.

Shaking his head, he fought his demanding release. His muscles were too tight, his balls hurt and his cock throbbed, releasing little drops of pre-cum.

Priscilla's eyes grew stormy, hungry and her thighs quivered. She wanted it. Her scent filled his nostrils as he watched more hot lava seep from her folds. Fuck, this was going to be harder than he thought. He wouldn't take her. Not until she asked. No, not asked. Begged. He would not allow her to accuse him of taking like those bastards she'd been hurt by in the past.

That reminder only slightly took the edge off for the time being. Quickly, he finished shaving her pussy until not one single hair remained. "There," he muttered.

"Fucking beautiful." Her swollen little clit peeked out between her lips, begging to be pleased, licked and sucked.

The sight drove him mad. He couldn't wait anymore. If he didn't relieve his ache he'd do something he'd hate himself for. Standing, Strafe reached down and gripped his shaft.

"Watch me," he demanded and felt his cock twitch as her gaze settled on his jutting erection. "It turns me on when you watch me," he told her, stroking himself.

Priscilla's little tongue darted out and licked over her bottom lip as he stroked hard and fast. He wouldn't last long. Not while her lips were parted and her breasts were heaving. God, those pink nubs were so fucking hard and begging to be sucked.

His muscles tightened as his orgasm built and heated. Reaching between his legs, he gripped his balls, tugging the tight sac. Increasing the strength of his grip, he palmed his swollen head. His blood ran hot and thick through his veins as she mouthed the word "yes" and he lost it.

His orgasm exploded as he growled his pleasure until the sound echoed around them. His hot cum shot out, splashing on her breasts. She arched her back, thrusting her breasts forward, wanting more, and he obliged, stepping forward and stroking until every last drop escaped. When the waves of orgasm subsided his legs gave out, dropping him down into the water right in front of her.

Panting, he looked at his seed dripping from the tips of her breasts, glistening against her creamy flesh. Insanity overcame him. It's the only way he could describe it. He couldn't hold back. Gripping her ribs, he pulled her forward and dragged his tongue over one pebbled nipple and swiped away his cum.

Priscilla cried out as he licked away his seed, sucking her nipples deep into his hot mouth and rolling the buds on his tongue. She writhed against him, her desperate little pussy grinding against his knee. He couldn't let her come, not like this. The next time she came it would be with his cock buried deep inside her body.



Growling his frustration, he tore away from her breasts. His chest heaved as he jerked his knee away from her. Priscilla shouted a frustrated moan.

"Sorry, baby," he snarled. "Ain't happenin'."

Her cloudy, dazed eyes cleared. "Why?" she whispered.

"'Cause I said so." Yeah, he sounded like the biggest prick in the world, but it would be worth it. Fuck, it would be so worth it when she finally begged him to fuck her.

"Bastard," she snapped, jerking around and scooping up handfuls of water to clean her chest.

"Now you're getting the picture." He never claimed to be anything but. "You'll get used it."

"You say that like I'm sticking around."

He almost laughed out loud as she stood and marched her sexy little ass toward the bank. When the rope didn't allow her to move any farther, her shoulders stiffened but she didn't turn around and look.

"You are, Priscilla." Strafe wrapped the rope around his hand, reeling her in. "Get that in your head." He walked past her, stepped up onto the bank and turned. "I'm not letting you go. Ever."

Her outrage flamed from the top of her pretty head to the tips of her sexy toes. The flesh in between growing a hot shade of pissed-off red. Damn, his cock actually jerked to life again.

Like someone flicked a switch, the anger disappeared as her eyes softened to a pleading gaze. Her bottom lip quivered.

"Evan, please. Don't do this."

That name. That fucking name punched through his gut. Anger blazed quick and furious. Jerking the rope and tugging her the rest of the way out of the water, he pulled her hard to his chest and glared down into her eyes.

"Don't ever call me that again," he growled. "Evan couldn't protect what belonged to him. Strafe will do whatever is necessary to protect what belongs to him."

Her anger returned full force, burning in her eyes. Her body tensed against him. "And you think I belong to you."

Her gruff voice was like a caress against his raw nerves, fanning the flames of his desire. He was a sick motherfucker. "I don't think it. I know it." Releasing her, he shrugged. "You'll come to accept it in time."

Priscilla bristled, jutted out her chin and glared. "Fuck. You."

Hearing those foul words cross her lips made his cock hard. "You will, baby." Reaching down, he stroked his cock once. "In time."

## **Chapter Five**

"Arrogant bastard," she muttered as she stepped back into his tent. "What makes you any better than the rebels?"

"Everything," he said simply as he tied the end of the rope to the tree. "I don't hurt women for the sake of hurting them."

As if that made a difference. Curling up on her pile of blankets, she tugged her legs beneath her, angry that her body still hummed with need to be filled by him. That bump on her head must have done some real damage.

"You think you aren't hurting me?" she snapped, tugging on the rope. "Sure, you haven't physically harmed me, yet. But this doesn't exactly instill confidence."

Again he gave that shrug that just pissed her off to no end. "When you accept you're staying with me, I'll untie you."

Priscilla couldn't believe what she was hearing. When she accepted she was staying? Her heart clenched as hurt filled her chest. "It never occurred to you that I'd want to stay?"

He'd put his jeans and shirt back on, braided his hair and tied a blue rag around the crown of his head. Oh, he looked like the bad-ass pirate, all right. Big, brawny, heavily muscled and sexy as sin. Every once in a while she saw a little bit of Evan appear only to be jerked back by Strafe.

"Do you honestly think I forgot all about you?"

Strafe went still, the muscles in his back bunching. She'd hit a nerve and didn't feel the least bit guilty about it. Apparently, he'd never given her feelings a thought and that hurt more than being tied up like a criminal.

"Strafe?"

Priscilla jumped at the deep voice outside the tent. She must have made a startled sound because Strafe turned on his heel, took two long strides toward her and knelt, stroking her hair.

"It's okay," he whispered. "It's Bruiser. He's come to check your head and make sure you're okay. He won't hurt you."

Priscilla jerked her head away, averting his tender, caring eyes. She couldn't deal with it. He confused the hell out of her. One moment he treated her like a prisoner and the next he acted like he honestly cared.

"No one here will hurt you," he said like a promise as he stood. "Come on in, Bruiser."

Priscilla watched the man duck into the tent. He was big, bigger than Strafe in height. Not nearly as muscled but she didn't doubt for a second that he couldn't break bones with an easy twist of his wrist. Like Strafe, he had scars on him. His arms were covered with them and one single jagged scar slashed across his face from the side of his nose across his cheek and behind his ear.

He wasn't a handsome man, but not barbaric either. Rugged, like he'd lived a hard life, which he obviously did. When he glanced toward her his eyes were curious, yet sympathetic. Strafe was muttering something to him that she couldn't hear. Bruiser nodded once and then turned his attention back to her.

"Let's have a look at that bump on your head," he said, stepping toward her carefully and kneeling down.

She couldn't stop the wince when he reached out to push her hair back. The reaction had become habit, one she wished would go away. It represented weakness and that could get a person killed.

Bruiser pulled his hand back, sighed and looked down at the ground, shaking his head. "You all do that," he muttered.

All. "You've seen my girls?" Suddenly her fear and situation didn't matter anymore. "Are they okay? Are they hurt? What have you done to them?" She began to claw at the tree, trying to pull herself up.

"Priscilla." Strafe ran to her. "Calm down," he said gently. "No one's hurt your girls."

Her heart raced as her flesh quivered with fear. Those girls hadn't gone a day without her. "You're hurting them by keeping us apart," she snapped.

"They're okay," Bruiser offered in a friendly tone. "I promise you."

"Beth." Poor Beth. She must be in so much pain.

"Little Beth is doing well," Bruiser offered. "I've got her on some pain meds so she isn't feeling a lot of discomfort. I've given everyone a once-over and everyone seems to be in good shape. Too thin, but healthy."

"You touched them?" The words blurted out of her mouth in a high-pitched squeal. God no, they would be horrified, terrified. A fierce knot formed in her gut, doubling her over, almost feeling the fear her girls went through.

"Priscilla!" Strafe jerked her into his arms, pressed her head against his chest and smoothed her hair. "Calm down. No one hurt them, do you hear me? As long as they're with us they're safe. No one in this camp is going to hurt them and if anyone so much as makes a threatening move toward them I'll tear their heads off with my bare hands. You have my word on that."

As Strafe spoke his chest rumbled against her cheek. She bunched his shirt in her hands, fighting to bring herself back under control. Nothing could push her into insanity like a threat to her girls.

"I'm sorry," she muttered. "I'm sorry."

Strafe's hold tightened. "It's okay, baby. They mean everything to you. I understand that."

"They've been hurt in the most despicable ways," she said as her throat tightened. "I wouldn't survive it if anything happened to any of them."

Strafe's body tensed and his hand faltered slightly on her hair.

"Let Bruiser check you out and then we'll talk about taking you to see them."

His tone had turned a bit icy, but she didn't care. Pulling away, she looked up into his hard, cold eyes.

"You mean that?"

He nodded once and set her away from his body. "Bruiser," he said, taking a step back.

"Miss Priscilla, if you'd sit I'd 'preciate it."

He was going to let her see them. Priscilla quickly sat down, shoved her hair back with a shaking hand and watched Strafe as he backed away, crossing his arms over his chest.

"It looks good," Bruiser muttered. "Strafe did a good job cleaning it." He pulled a small light out of his pocket. "I just want to check your eyes and see if you have a concussion. Is that okay?"

Priscilla nodded her head. Anything to be able to see her clan. He flashed the light in both eyes a few times and then put it away.

"Were you a doctor?" Curiosity got the better of her.

"Almost," he answered. "I was in my last year of school when the rebellion started."

"Are my girls really okay?"

"Yes ma'am. Skittish, but then that's to be expected after what they've been through. And so you know, Glee helped me examine them. She gave me history on each girl so I knew what I could and couldn't do. They're eating well too." Bruiser looked into her eyes with a stern, serious gaze. "I made an oath a long time ago never to harm,

Miss Priscilla. At times it's necessary to survive, but I would never harm a female. Even if she held a gun on me."

Priscilla blinked rapidly a few times. He meant it. She could see it in his soul. "I'm sorry." He may be a big man, but that didn't make him a barbarian.

"It's okay," he said, using that same damn shrug Strafe used. "You ladies haven't been treated very well and I can understand your suspicion." Bruiser gathered his things and stood. "No concussion," he told Strafe. "She's good. Anything else of concern?"

"Not at the moment," Strafe answered. "Thanks, Bruiser."

Strafe followed him out of the tent. She could hear them talking but couldn't make out the words. It didn't matter. He was going to take her to her girls. He had to. Evan always kept his word. Except, he wasn't Evan anymore.

Priscilla chewed on her bottom lip, fretting over whether or not she could trust him. This would be the test, she decided. If he kept his word, she knew where she stood and what she had to do. If he didn't, well, she couldn't think about that right now.

Strafe stepped back inside, knelt down in front of her and just looked at her. His gaze searched her face. What was he looking for? Myriad emotions flickered in those eyes. Emotions she wasn't sure she understood except for one. Lost. Deep in the recesses, behind the cover of ice and hardness, he was lost.

No different from her really. Two people yanked from their lives and trying to make the best of it in very different ways. Strafe tried to put up a front that he didn't care, that nothing could touch him, but it could. He thought she'd died and that must have been sheer hell for him.

She reached out, unable to stop herself, and cupped his cheek as best she could with her hands bound together. Strafe leaned into her palm and closed his eyes. For a brief moment she saw Evan again. All those harsh lines in his face softened and there he was.

"What happened to you?" she asked in a hushed voice.

His eyes flew open, he jerked back and Evan disappeared.

"Come on."

"You're actually taking me to see them?" Her heart skipped a beat.

"I said I would. I'm a man of my word." He untied her rope, wrapped it around his hand then reached down and helped her to her feet.

"Thank you." She couldn't wait. She'd never gone so long without seeing them and it felt like a part of her was missing.

"Don't thank me, Priscilla. You're coming back here, not staying with them." He put his hand on her lower back and gently pushed her toward the tent opening.

He didn't want her around them for long. Why? "You think keeping us separated will keep them in line?" Anger edged into her voice. Again, his arrogance stymied her.

"That actually never entered my mind."

"Then why?" Damn it, she was tired of this.

"Let it go. You're getting what you want, be happy with that."

"There was a time when you'd give me everything I wanted, without strings attached." Not that she'd asked for anything. He simply gave her gifts, or provided her with things she needed without her having to ask.

"There aren't any strings attached to this," he replied with a snap.

"Isn't there?"

Strafe came to an abrupt halt, turned her toward him and frowned. "Did I ask for anything? Did I demand anything?"

No. He hadn't. Guilt washed through her like a sour wave. "Fair enough," she whispered and continued on by his side. Damn, he kept winning these arguments.

The camp was simple. In the middle of the clearing they had a huge fire with a cooking pot over it. Tents were scattered around in the surrounding woods. Priscilla spotted what she assumed was the tent they were keeping her clan in. It was about ten times bigger than the others.



Strafe led her right to it. Other men milled around, keeping a close eye on things, and she felt herself bristle every time they looked at her.

"Easy," Strafe whispered. "Remember what I told you. No one here will hurt you. They're just curious."

"I feel like a freak on display." She didn't really have much on. A shirt that hung to her knees and that's it.

"It's not you they're curious about," Strafe muttered as they neared the front of the tent.

Priscilla looked up at him, confused. He shrugged it off and opened the flap. There, sitting around on plush blankets and in better clothing, her clan sat staring at her.

"Priscilla." Glee got up and ran toward her.

Priscilla tried to run, eager to hug Glee but came up short because of the rope. Looking around, she noticed none of the others were tied. Whoops, except for Jinx.

"Why is she tied?" Priscilla demanded.

"Cause I'm a bad girl," Jinx replied with a gleam in her eye.

"Are you okay?" Glee asked, hugging her.

"I'm fine. What about the rest?" Strafe released the rope, allowing her to walk freely around to check on her girls. Well, as free as she could get with her wrists bound.

She went to each girl, hugging them, talking with them and getting the lowdown on how they were being treated. Bottom line, they all had been properly fed. The men had brought in a large metal tub filled with warm water so they could clean up and then given them clean clothes. All the men they'd had contact with were kind, gentle and somehow had begun to win them over in a short period of time.

Priscilla sat down next to Jinx with Glee.

"So what did you do to deserve this?" Priscilla asked.

Jinx smiled, that devious gleam glittering in her eyes.

"She keeps trying to lift things off them to use as a weapon," Glee informed her.

"Oh Jinx. Don't get yourself hurt."

"Hurt?" Jinx snorted. "I'm beginning to think these guys are afraid of women. They don't even raise a hand like they're gonna hit me. I don't get it."

"Why are you tied up?" Glee asked.

Priscilla shrugged and then winced. Now she was doing it. "He's afraid I'm going to run."

Jinx snorted again. "Really? What in the world would give him that idea?"

Priscilla picked up a stick and twirled it in her hand. "There's something you two should know." They knew about Evan. She'd never hidden it from them. They'd held her while she sobbed during the night and done their best to console her broken heart. "He's Evan," she admitted. "Only he doesn't go by Evan anymore."

"What?" Glee's eyes popped wide open and her chin dropped.

"Are you serious?" Jinx added.

"Yeah." She didn't know what else to say.

"And this is the way he treats you?" Jinx asked, jerking the rope and glaring at Strafe who stood at the tent flap, watching her carefully.

"He says he's never letting me go and until I accept that," she raised her bound wrists, "this is the way it's going to be."

"Do you want to leave?" Glee asked quietly.

Staring down at the ground, she thought about that. "I don't know. He's not the same man. I don't know this man."

"He watches you like you're a piece of meat and he hasn't eaten in years," Jinx whispered. "Are you afraid of him?"

Tilting her head to the side, she watched him watching her. "No." She wasn't. He made her mad with his arrogance. Made her body melt with desire and turned her brain inside out with whatever game he played.

Nick stepped up beside Strafe. Both men watched them as they spoke in hushed whispers. While Strafe's gaze settled on her, Nick's settled on Glee.

"So, you getting along with Nick?" she asked Glee.

Jinx barked a laugh. "She wants to jump his bones."

"Shut up, Jinx. I do not."

Glee didn't sound very convincing.

"He's been nothing but nice," Glee added. "Sue me. I'm horny, stuck in a camp full of buff men. So what."

"Yeah," Jinx said on a sigh. "You aren't the only one. One difference though, I'd fuck 'em and leave without a thought. You're looking for happily ever after and that isn't going to happen. Not with these guys."

"So, ladies," Priscilla asked, sure her time with her clan would be coming to an end soon, "what do we do?"

"In light of your news, we'll wait for your decision. Pirate man wants to keep you, but that doesn't mean he wants us."

She'd thought of that. He knew how much these woman meant to her. Would he really expect her to leave them?

"It's all of us or none of us," Priscilla said as Strafe headed toward her. If he couldn't understand that, then they really didn't know each other anymore.

"Are you ready?" he asked, looking down at the three of them.

"No." His hard gaze never flinched. "Strafe, these are my dearest friends, sisters actually. Jinx and Glee. They saved my life."

Something flashed in his eyes for a brief moment. He knelt down and looked at both of them.

"For that alone I owe you." He glanced down at the rope around Jinx's wrists. "If you promise to behave and not give Nick any more trouble, I'll have him untie you. I've never heard him threaten to tie anyone to an anthill before."

Jinx smiled that mischievous smile and then glanced at Priscilla. "Untie her and I'll be as cooperative as an angel. No more trouble from me."

Priscilla's heart sank when he shook his head. "No."

Jinx sat up, getting right in his face. "You think holding her against her will is the way to win her heart, Evan?"

Strafe didn't so much as flinch. He held Jinx's gaze, his nostrils flaring with each heavy breath. Priscilla didn't know what to expect. Her heart paused mid-beat. The air stalled in her lungs and Glee tensed beside her. It seemed everyone in the tent held their breath waiting.

A wicked smile tugged at Strafe's lips. "I like you." He reached behind him, snagged a long dagger and reached out toward Jinx.

The earth stood still. Glee whimpered and Jinx's eyes flared with dare. Strafe grabbed the rope and in one clean swipe sliced it. The pieces dropped into her lap and a collective breath was taken by everyone.

"What?" Jinx asked, more confused than anyone.

"You have grit. Not many people get in my face. You did for Priscilla. I like that. You're a worthy friend." He turned and motioned for Nick.

Priscilla didn't understand. Jinx challenged him and he rewarded her. God, he was full of surprises.

"Nick, let's start training some of these woman how to defend themselves properly. Start with Jinx."

"Are you out of your fucking mind?" Nick snapped. "You want me to teach her how to kill me?"

Strafe and Jinx held gazes for a long, quiet moment. There seemed to be a silent conversation between them no one else had privilege to.

Finally, Jinx gave a genuine smile, not the one that meant she had trouble brewing. "It's all good. Until I hear otherwise from Priscilla, I'm as obedient as a puppy."

Glee gasped and Priscilla felt the earth tilt because a black hole or something opened up and swallowed them into an alternate universe.

"I don't want any puppies around here," Strafe said, frowning. "I'm not asking for obedience. I'm asking for cooperation."

"You've got it." Jinx looked up at Nick. "Truce?"

Nick growled, ran his fingers through his short hair and then glanced down at Glee. Priscilla swore she felt the heat pour from his gaze.

"Truce," Nick replied. "Glee can help."

"Let's go," Strafe said, holding his hand out for her to take.

She didn't want to leave. She missed being with her clan.

"I'll bring you back tomorrow. My word."

Priscilla gave him her hands so he could help her to her feet.

"Strafe," Glee said as they turned. "She's everything to us. Take care of her."

"I'll be okay," she told Glee with a faint smile. "Keep Jinx out of trouble." She wasn't sure what her friend was up to, but whatever it was these pirates wouldn't know what hit them.

The walk back to Strafe's tent turned out to be quiet and leisurely. He didn't use his long strides, opting to let her set the pace. He'd scored points today and since when did she start keeping a scorecard? Priscilla shook her head. She had to keep her guard up.

He led her past his tent, deeper into the woods and stopped beneath a large oak tree that looked as though someone had cleared it out beneath. Strafe spun on his heel, pulled her against his chest and took her lips in a hungry, desperate kiss. He startled her, making her gasp. He took advantage and slipped his tongue between her lips.

She tried to fight. Tried to push him away but after a few seconds gave up. She didn't want to fight, not while his tongue caressed hers. Not while his musky, wild taste filled her senses and obliterated all the bad memories. Right here, right now in this

moment she couldn't ask for anything more than that the man she'd once loved and thought dead kissed her senseless.

Strafe pulled away, rested his forehead against hers and stared into her eyes. "I'm not the same man anymore," he said in a gruff, hungry voice.

"I know." His hands were bunching the shirt up over her thighs.

"You need to understand that." The shirt eased up over her ass, leaving it bare.

"I do." The shirt kept moving up, exposing her belly.

"The way I fucked you in the past," he growled, continuing to pull the shirt up over her breasts. "I was always so careful, afraid I'd hurt you."

A shiver raced down her spine as his fingers brushed over the sides of her breasts.

"I can't be careful anymore," he continued, tugging the shirt up to her shoulders and then lowered it down her arms until it caught on her bound wrists. "My needs are fierce, Cilla."

He grabbed the end of the rope and tossed it up and over a tree limb, raising her arms high. She should be shivering in fear, stretched out naked and strung from a tree instead of shivering with need. Strafe's gaze caressed her naked body and she swore she felt it all the way to her core, her weeping core.

He walked around her, tied the end of the rope to the trunk and then let his hand smooth down over her ass. Fire spread through her body, igniting a firestorm between her legs. Hot lava churned, trickling down the inside of her thighs. God, he was standing there, not touching her, simply looking at her and she was on fire, melting inside and quivering for his touch.

"Strafe," she gasped, shivering as his gaze settled on her clean, smooth pussy.

"You make me so hungry," he growled. "I'll fuck you one day like this." His words were a promise, not a threat.

Every organ inside her body quivered with excitement she hadn't felt in years. Her nipples tightened into painful, aching peaks that pointed straight at him.

"I could give you so much pleasure with my mouth, my hands and my cock. Make you come so hard and so many times you'll scream my name like a prayer."

So why the hell wasn't he doing it? Why was he just talking about it? He kept teasing her, taking her to the brink and then walking away. She couldn't stand it anymore.

When he lowered his hand and cupped the bulge in his jeans, she thought her agony would be relieved. The memories of him driving into her swamped her brain and she wanted to feel it again.

"You make me so fucking hard, Priscilla. I wasn't even this hard our last night together."

Her heart thrummed in her throat as he lowered his zipper and unsnapped his jeans. Oh yes. Sweet relief wouldn't be long now.

"I won't lie," he said as his rigid cock sprang from its confines. "I've taken a few women over the years. My needs build until jacking off doesn't cut it anymore."

His large palm wrapped around his shaft, stroked to the head and then back to the base. Hot juice trickled down her thighs as her body readied for him.

"None of them did this to me, baby. None of them could make me hard like this, need like this."

She couldn't stand it anymore. Her body burned with liquid heat, tightened so impossibly tight her bones groaned. Why wasn't he touching her? Why wasn't he fucking her?

Her gaze settled on his hand as he stroked himself. God, that always made her wild. There wasn't anything sexier than watching him masturbate. Her hips bucked unexpectedly, her clit throbbing so hard it hurt.

"I want to fuck your mouth, Priscilla. I want to feel your hot mouth swallow me as I come down your throat."

"Oh god," she groaned, teetering on the edge of release from his words and watching him jack off.

Her orgasm spiraled around her spine like a snake, squeezing until she couldn't breathe. Just a little more. A few more words from him and she'd shatter.

Strafe's body went taut. He threw his head back and opened his mouth for a silent howl of gratification as he came, shooting his hot seed onto the ground.

"No," she cried, trembling from her need. "Stop doing that," she shouted in frustration. "Damn you, Strafe." Why did he keep doing this to her? "Damn you."

Tears welled in her eyes. She'd lost control of her life. Not like she had that much to begin with, but damn it to hell she'd had some. Now she couldn't even get herself off because he wouldn't let her touch herself. Mad, desperate and burning with need, she stomped her foot and cursed Strafe a thousand times when he laughed.



## **Chapter Six**

A week passed. Seven whole days of her wrists bound, him feeding her, bathing her and taking her to spend a few hours a day with her clan. Every time he led her away he stripped her bare, ate her alive with his eyes and then jacked off, leaving her frustrated and horny.

That still didn't make any sense to her. No matter how many times she rolled the situation around in her head, she couldn't come up with one single good reason he wouldn't toss her on the ground and fuck her brains out. God, she couldn't take it anymore.

Priscilla sat on the ground, her legs crossed and watched several of her girls going through self-defense exercises with Strafe's men. There was laughter, smiles and what appeared to be genuine trust building between them. The young girls were treated firmly, but also with a care that made her heart melt. As she gazed around the camp she saw some of the older women helping with the cooking, again, laughing.

Others helped carry firewood and seemed more than happy to be doing it. They'd settled right in and Strafe's pirates didn't appear to be put out by it. In fact, they seemed to welcome it.

A rich, deep laugh drifted across the open field, bringing Priscilla's attention to Strafe. His head was tossed back, his braid swinging as Jinx threw punch after punch at him. For a brief moment her heart seized. What the hell were they doing?

"Excellent!" Strafe shouted, patting her on the back. "You've learned a lot. Hey, Buck!" he shouted, motioning at a large man helping one of the youngest. "She's ready for the next step."

Buck pointed a finger at the two of them. "Give me a minute."

Strafe went from girl to girl, testing their abilities. Some did well, others not so much. He praised and encouraged each one. And when he approached Julie, the most traumatized of her girls, he crossed his arms over his chest and peered down at her with a menacing glare. Priscilla nearly came to her feet, ready to run to Julie's aid. He shouldn't be doing that. He'd terrify her.

Then, before she could move, Julie lifted her gaze, shooting Strafe an icy-cold look before her fists bunched and her arms started moving. She proceeded with a dance of kicks, jabs and damn, she nailed him good, right in the ribs. Priscilla felt the blood drain from her head. Her body trembled in fear for the girl. Would he retaliate?

Strafe hunched over, holding his side, looked up and smiled. "Well done, Julie."

The smile that spread across her face was electrifying. Her eyes beamed. Priscilla had never seen the girl smile. Not once. In a matter of days Strafe had her smiling, fighting and — could it be? — beginning to trust.

Tears welled in her eyes when Strafe draped his heavy arm over Julie's shoulder and the girl didn't flinch. Instead, she looked up at him, her innocent eyes filled with gratitude and respect. He'd pulled her out of her shell, given her hope.

"Miss Priscilla." Bruiser stepped up beside her and crouched down.

He always did that, called her Miss. "Hi."

"They're doing well," Bruiser commented. "Even little Beth is doing better."

Priscilla smiled at the man. When she first came here his huge size and scarred face scared her. Now he seemed like nothing more than an overstuffed teddy bear. "She told me you've been incredibly nice to her. Thank you for that."

Bruiser shrugged. "Hard not to be nice to her, to all of them for that matter. I don't know the story between you two," he said, nodding toward Strafe. "None of my business, but I've never seen him like this. Hell," Bruiser chuckled. "This whole damn crew is different since you and your clan arrived."

Priscilla frowned. "How so?"

Again, Bruiser gave one of the Strafe shrugs. "Having you women around, it's nice. There's more smiles, more laughter, a hell of a lot better-looking faces. Seeing the same old ugly mugs every day gets to ya."

Priscilla laughed.

"Anyway, Strafe's got life in him. He doesn't just exist anymore, the last week he's been living. I wanted to thank you for that." Bruiser stood, gave a nod and headed out into the field where he quickly took up sparring with Julie.

Priscilla looked down at the rope wrapped somewhat loosely around her wrists. He'd stopped tying her so tightly. If she worked at it, she could get away, but did she want to? If she was honest with herself, truly honest, she liked being here. Liked seeing Strafe every day.

Strafe. She couldn't bring herself to call him Evan anymore. He was right. Evan didn't exist much in this man. Sure, there were occasional signs. When he let the gruff exterior drop she could see the soft features of Evan, but really, that was about all. Where Evan had been gentle, careful and willing to bend to make things easier, Strafe was brash, rough and didn't bend for much of anything. His way or no way.

Smiling, she decided she liked that much better. But did she want to stay with him? Let her clan leave and remain behind? She didn't think she could do it. It would be like leaving her children behind.

Him or them? She knew what Strafe's strategy was. Train the girls to defend themselves and then send them on their way. That tore at her heart. Why did she even have to make such a choice? Why couldn't they all stay together?

They could. A plan formed in the back of Priscilla's mind. All she had to do was work her sexual charms and he'd promise her anything. Or would he? It used to work. Maybe it still would. This time, when Strafe stripped her down she wouldn't stand there and watch, she'd play along. If he could bring her to the brink with words, she could do it too. This time he wouldn't leave her panting and wanting. She'd have him buried deep inside her body and promising her the sun.

"You ready to get something to eat?"

Strafe's deep voice jerked her out her thoughts. Looking up, she met his gaze and felt the heat pouring from eyes. Yep, this would work.

"You really want to fatten me up, don't you?"

He reached down and helped her to her feet. "You're too thin."

"Comes with living on the run. In case you haven't noticed all my girls are too thin." Playing on his affection for the clan would help her plan.

"I've noticed," he grumbled. He led her toward the cook tent instead of back to his tent.

"We aren't going to your place?" she asked.

"Not tonight," he answered and left it at that.

"Why not?" He always took her back to his tent or into the woods after a round of exercises with the girls.

Instead of answering, he led her into the tent and she breathed in the delicious aroma of cooking meat. Her stomach growled in response and suddenly she felt like she hadn't eaten all day.

Strafe looked down at several loaves of bread. "Fresh bread?"

Vinny, the one who seemed to be in charge of all the cooking, smiled a wide, cocky smile. "Fresh bread, thanks to Maria," he said, nodding to one of the older women in her clan. "She can whip up anything with anything," Vinny stated proudly. "She walked in here and started throwing together flour, yeast and something I'm not sure what the hell it was and voila. We have bread."

Maria watched Strafe cautiously as he cut a slice, took a bite and groaned his appreciation. "My compliments to the chef," he said, smiling and winking at Maria. "You could learn from her, Vinny."

As Strafe cut a few slices and put it on a tray, Priscilla caught Maria's gaze and gave her a smile. The woman absolutely beamed with gratitude.

"I'm glad I can be useful," she said in a choked voice.

And that was it. Priscilla got why her clan seemed to be accepting the pirates. They felt useful. They'd found purpose in getting up every morning. When it was just them, she, Jinx, Glee and one or two more took care of everything. The others simply followed.

As they left the cook tent, Priscilla touched Strafe's arm. "You knew she could cook?"

"No. I told them there were things that needed to be done." He shrugged. "They found their own way. Eagerly too, I might add."

"I'm so stupid," she muttered more to herself.

"Not stupid, babe," he consoled, wrapping his arm around her hips. "You wanted to protect them. It's understandable. We aren't so different," he went on, popping a piece of bread into her mouth as they walked. "You gathered together your clan from broken, wounded and desperate women. Took them in and sheltered them the best you could."

He took another bite of bread and chewed for a moment, his eyes rolling around in rapture. She couldn't blame him, it was fantastic.

"I put together my crew with lost, nearly destroyed men who'd had their masculinity stripped. I gave them a chance to build it back up."

"By giving them purpose." Really, it made sense. So why the hell hadn't she thought of it?

"Yep." Strafe sat her down on the edge of the field and put the tray between them. "I have something to tell you."

"We aren't going back to the tent?" She really, really wanted to begin her seduction.

"Not tonight. In about an hour, we're heading out."

Like ice-cold water had been tossed on her, Priscilla gasped, jerked and felt the panic rising inside. He was leaving. She didn't expect that.

"Hey, you okay?"

No, she wasn't okay. He just told her they were heading out. "Yeah."

"I'll leave a few of my men behind to keep the women safe. The rest of us need to hit the road before dark."

What? He was leaving a few men behind as well? She didn't understand. Her brain scrambled to put pieces together that didn't fit.

"Strafe, what the hell are you talking about?"

"There's a city truck due about fifty miles down the road. We need to intercept it. If we leave before sunset we'll have time to scope the road out for any traps. I'll leave Vinny and Bruiser behind to keep watch while we're gone."

Priscilla blinked a few times. "You're doing your pirate thing?" He nodded, popping a piece of cooked meat into his mouth. "You're coming back?"

He stilled, looked at her a few moments and nodded. "You don't want me to." It wasn't a question, but a statement.

"No. Yes, I mean. Of course I want you to come back. I thought you were saying you were leaving and leaving us behind."

Strafe caught her chin in his fingers, lifting her head until she met his gaze. "I told you I'd never let you go, Priscilla. My word. I'll be back."

The sound of a rumbling engine filled the silent trees. Priscilla went on alert, stiffening her back and glancing around for the direction it came from. Then, through the trees, she spotted her old box truck.

"Is that what I think it is?"

"Come on." He helped her to her feet and they walked through the woods toward her old, beat-up truck.

A young man about twenty jumped from the cab. He was filthy, greasy and his shaved head bore some nasty scars that made Priscilla wince. He nodded at Strafe, but kept his gaze averted from her. She didn't remember seeing him around the camp. As

she eyed him from head to toe, she noticed a few of his fingers were missing and she could only imagine the horrors this boy had been through.

"Priscilla, this is Casey. Our head wrench."

"Hi, Casey," she said softly.

"Ma'am." Still, he didn't look at her.

"How is it, Casey?" Strafe walked the side of the truck.

"Beat to hell, falling apart, but she moves," he said. "A little work and I think I can make her look a little better."

"Looks like ya got your work cut for ya. It couldn't have been in much better shape before hell-on-wheels here turned it over."

Priscilla frowned at the impromptu nickname.

"No sir." Casey couldn't stand still. As if being in such close proximity to her was driving him insane. He needed to move, leave and the more Strafe talked the more the kid oozed nerves.

"Okay, Casey. I'll let you go. You're staying behind tonight so you can get this heap fixed up. Understand?"

"Yes sir."

She followed Strafe back through the woods and when they were far enough away, she touched his arms. "What happened to him?"

Strafe turned his head to the side, thinking he could hide his emotions, but she still saw the slash of pain cross his face and fill his eyes. "Horrible things," he said in a tight voice. "Thank god, Bruiser was with me when I found him or the kid would be dead."

"Rebels?"

Strafe grunted in response. "We were driving through a remote area and saw smoke billowing from the trees. We stopped, trudged through the woods and found a camp burned to the ground, dead bodies everywhere. Casey was hunched over his mother's

body, blood pouring from his head and hand. He'd been severely beaten, slashed and left for dead."

Tears welled in her eyes. The poor boy had suffered so needlessly. "I don't remember seeing him around the camp."

"You wouldn't. He keeps to himself usually. With you women here he set up his own camp out of sight. He doesn't like being around people."

God, how sad. She turned her head and caught a glimpse of Casey watching them through the trees. "Why?"

"He thinks he should have been able to save his mother," Strafe snorted. "One lone kid against twenty rebels and he thought he should be able to save them all. To him, that proved he wasn't a man. He can't shake the humiliation."

A tear rolled down her cheek. So many innocent lives shattered and for what? Greed. Fucking greed. Strafe tugged on her rope, pulling her against him and wrapping his arms around her. She nuzzled her cheek into his chest and let a few tears fall for all the innocents who suffered.

They stood that way for what seemed like twenty minutes. Strafe stroked her hair and back, kissed the top of her head but never spoke a word. Sometimes words didn't help because, really, how could such madness be explained?

"I have to go, babe."

His chest rumbled against her cheek as his hand continued to stroke her hair. She didn't want him to leave. She wanted him to stay here, take her back to his tent and continue to hold her for a while longer. Because she wanted that so much, she backed away, brushed the tears from her eyes and nodded.

Strafe led her to the tent housing her clan, tied the rope rather loosely to a tree and then smoothed his fingertips down her cheek. Worry filled his eyes. His jaw clenched so hard she felt sure he'd break a tooth. She didn't know much about what he did on the road, but it had to be dangerous.



Glee and Jinx stepped up behind her, their heads down as he continued to hold her gaze.

"Strafe," Nick spoke quietly. "It's time."

Glee let a little gasp free and she saw Nick glance back at her. He smiled, nodded and then left.

"Bruiser, Vinny and Casey will be here in case there's trouble," Strafe's voice rumbled thick and gravelly.

The Marauder roared to life and Strafe took a deep breath. He turned then, and left. Priscilla reached out and then pulled her arms back quickly. Her pleas for him to stay wouldn't work. All she could do was wait.

Hours passed. Jinx and Glee kept a close eye on her. The other girls kept busy doing small chores. The mood around the camp felt somber, like everyone held their breath, waiting for the Marauders to return safely.

After hours of sitting in the dark, brooding, worrying herself sick, Priscilla decided she'd had enough. At least in his tent she'd be surrounded by him, his things and his scent. Priscilla untied the rope from the tree and then tugged her hands from the rope, gathered it all and headed out into the night.

"Priscilla?" Bruiser ran up beside her, looking at the rope piled in her hands.

"Don't worry, Bruiser. I'm going to his tent to lie down. I'll put them back on before he comes back. We'll tell him you took me to his tent."

Bruiser stopped her. "I don't get it. If you could get out of them, why not do it before now?"

She shrugged and gave a sad smile. "It's a game. See who blinks first kinda thing, I guess."

"You're sticking around because you want to, not because he's making you. He's giving you the opportunity to run and waiting to see if you take it."

"Yeah." It sounded so juvenile. Maybe it was time to start acting like adults. "How long do these things usually take?"

"Depends," Bruiser grunted. "If they don't run into any trouble from the driver, not long at all. Sometimes they put extra guards on the truck. That's when things get tricky."

Ice formed in her blood, but she ignored it. "Have you ever lost anyone?"

Bruiser looked away and rubbed his jaw.

"How many?"

"Three. Strafe took it bad. He's not as hard as he likes everyone to think he is."

"No, he's not." She'd seen it in the way he dealt with her clan. He had a soft spot for them.

"Goodnight, Bruiser."

"Night, Priscilla. Let me know if you need anything."

She nodded and headed to Strafe's tent. As soon as she stepped in, she went to his blankets and curled up on them. His scent surrounded her, bringing her comfort, soothing her rattled nerves.

As the hours passed she laid there, listening to the sounds of the night. How many times had she lain in the darkness alone, missing him, aching for him? Years. Every night for years. Now she ached for another reason. She wanted him, needed him so damn bad she could barely breathe from it.

He'd given her one orgasm since she'd been here. One. Since then, he'd teased, tormented and taken care of her. She didn't need him to take care of her. She needed him to fuck her.

She'd kept herself alive for five years without him. She no longer needed a caretaker. Just like Evan didn't exist any longer, the old Priscilla didn't exist any longer. Being the cowering little female didn't fit her anymore. He needed to see that. She needed to show him that.

If she wanted him to respect her strength and independent spirit, she needed to push the issue. Maybe that's what he'd been waiting for? Hell, she didn't know. All she knew was he was alive and she was still waiting for him.

Frustration and nerves rushed through her as the hours passed and the night grew closer to dawn. Several times she ventured from the tent and went looking to see if the Marauder had returned with her driver and crew. Nothing. Bruiser and Vinny seemed to be impatient as well. She watched from the shadows as they paced, poked at the fire and muttered to each other.

Returning to the tent, she gathered her ropes, put them back on her wrists and tied the other end to the tree and then lay down on her blankets and settled in. If he wasn't here when she woke, well, she'd have to wait and see what happened in the morning. Her eyes drifted closed and she slipped into a restless sleep.

Soft grunts and moans stirred her from strange dreams. Priscilla opened her eyes and through the early morning light she could see Strafe stretched out on his blankets, naked, hard and stroking himself. The sight instantly swamped her with heat, need and a hunger so fierce she refused to ignore it this time.

Slipping her hands free from her ropes, she gripped the hem of the shirt she wore and tugged it up over her head, tossing it aside. Strafe continued to stroke, his head thrashing back and forth, obviously dreaming. Well, she'd bring his dreams to life.

Crawling toward him, she felt herself creaming, readying. Her nipples peaked into painful points and her breasts ached as they swayed back and forth. Quietly crouching next to him, she allowed herself the pleasure of watching him. His large hand tugged and jerked at his thick cock, the veins protruding through his tight flesh.

She wanted to run her tongue over those raised veins. She wanted to suck him into her mouth and taste his wild, musky flavor. Leaning forward, she flicked her tongue over the tip of his cock and was rewarded with a loud groan and his hips bucking. As he continued to stroke, she licked, raked her teeth over the head and tongued the crest.

Strafe's chest heaved, his hand released his cock and tangled in her hair, holding her, keeping her from going any farther. Not this time.

"I want to suck you," she said with a husky voice. "I need to taste you." He continued holding her back, his eyes sparkling in the dim light rising outside the tent. "Please."

As if she'd said the magic word, he pulled her head down and groaned as she sucked his head between her lips. His girth stretched her cheeks, his taste exploded through her mouth and drove her to the brink of madness. He was like a drug, sinking into her bloodstream, wrapping around every fiber in her body and she knew she'd never be sated, always needing more.

"Oh fuck, Cilla. Suck me hard, babe."

She did, thrilling in the fact that she had him begging. Working her mouth up and down, sucking hard and swallowing, had flames bursting hot and wild in her body. Her clit throbbed, thick juice trickled between her thighs. Her nipples brushed his thighs, making her moan around his shaft.

"So sweet," he groaned, thrusting his hips. "Your mouth is hot, babe."

Reaching between his thighs, she cupped his tight balls and rolled them gently in her palm. Their weight felt good in her hand, his taut skin writhed against her flesh.

"Oh fuck," he snarled, tugging her hair and moving her away from him. "I'll come in your pretty mouth if you don't stop."

"Is that so bad?" She wanted that. She wanted to taste all of him.

"Is that what you really want right now?" His hand reached up and cupped one breast, feathering his thumb over her nipple.

Electricity jolted through her body, drawing more slick heat from her core. "No." She wanted him inside her, pumping hard and fast. Lifting her leg, she straddled his hips. "I want to fuck you like you've never been fucked before."

His body went tense beneath her and for a second she thought he might toss her to the side. Strafe reached beneath his pillow and pulled out a square foil packet. She hadn't seen a condom in years.

He handed it to her. "Do you remember how?"

Priscilla took the package, tore it open with her teeth and removed the thin latex. Keeping her gaze locked with his, she opened her mouth in the form of an O, placed the rolled rubber between her lips and leaned forward. Strafe rose, bracing himself on his elbows as she touched the latex to his head. Pushing him between her lips, she rolled the covering over him. Inch by inch she rolled and by the time he lodged deep in her throat, she'd run out of latex.

Pulling back, she smiled, pleased that it worked.

"Where the fuck did you learn that?"

Strafe's shocked, awed expression thrilled her. "If you think that was something," she said, lifting up and hovering over his cock. "Hold on tight, pirate. You're about to be plundered."

Gripping his shaft, she held him steady and tucked the head of his penis against her eager, hot, wet opening. Easing down, she pushed him in, gasping as he stretched her.

"Christ," Strafe hissed, reaching to grip her hips.

She smacked his hands away. "No. You've tortured me for a week. My turn."

Her gruff, angry tone surprised even her. Strafe cocked one dark eyebrow and lay back, fisting his hands at his side.

"Good boy." She continued lowering herself, taking him in slow. "I forgot how big you are," she moaned, wiggling her hips to help wedge him in.

"You like my fat cock?" he growled.

"Oh yes, Strafe. I like your big, fat cock." Watching him, she slammed down, driving him all the way to her cervix.

Strafe's back arched, his head snapped back and he shouted a low, growling, "Fuck!"

Licking her lips, Priscilla raised her arms and ran her fingers through her hair. She liked this, having this power over him. He throbbed inside her, making her muscles clench.

"Sweet mercy," he moaned, thrusting his hips high, driving himself in deeper.

"What's the matter, pirate? Too much for ya?" She didn't wait for his reply, opting to begin his torture, the same torture he'd put her through all week.

Resting her hands on his thick, muscular chest, she began lifting, drawing him out of her body until his head nearly popped out and then plunged again. God, he touched nerves that hadn't been touched in so long, sending hot licks of fire to her womb. Her body clenched around him, soaked him in her hot, needy juice until it gathered at the base of his cock.

She couldn't take it. She needed more. Lifting up and down, she rode him hard, fast and greedily. Her body sucked him in, tightened and slurped as she retreated. It still wasn't enough. Her breasts bobbed up and down as she bounced. She cupped them, tugged at her nipples and tossed her head back as pleasure raced to her clit.

"Let me suck them," Strafe moaned.

Sweat beaded over his face, his shoulders and chest. His jaw clenched and his eyes were brewing with firestorms. Cupping one breast and holding it out, she leaned forward and aimed her erect nipple toward his lips. Strafe flicked it with his tongue before sucking it hard into his hot mouth.

Hot, almost painful pleasure tugged at her clit, made it throb, swell and ache. The rapture overtook her. Tossing her head back, she cried out as he continued lavishing her nipple with hard tugs, nips with his teeth and slow licks with his tongue. He was going to kill her.

*What a glorious way to go,* she thought as she continued bouncing on his cock and driving him all the way in. Strafe released her nipple, tossed his head back and forth

and groaned deep in his chest. She echoed those groans and ground her hips against his groin so his rough hairs scraped across her clit.

“Fuck me, Strafe. Make me come.” Her orgasm tightened throughout her body, constricting muscles and forcing her blood to rush hot and thick.

Strafe reached between them, separated her glistening folds and pressed his thumb against her clit. Priscilla looked down, her vision blurring with ecstasy and watched her body take him. That alone nearly pushed her over the edge.

“Fuck, Cilla, you feel so good I don’t ever want it to end.”

His strained voice vibrated over her flesh as she clenched tighter, pushed him through her slick tunnel and caressed oversensitive nerve endings. So close, she teetered on the edge, her brain swimming and her legs trembling. Her lungs burned with each ragged breath and when Strafe licked the pad of his thumb and strummed her clit, she exploded.

Her orgasm burst from her womb, traveled down her vaginal walls and sang in her clit. The lights went out when her eyes rolled back in her head and she screamed at the top of her lungs only briefly before Strafe pressed his hand over her mouth. Her scream died as wave after wave of indescribable pleasure consumed her soul. Still, she wanted more.

Swirling her hips, she ground his rigid cock, making sure he touched every part of her, making her climax more intense. That move sent Strafe over the edge. He jerked, tensed and clamped his hands onto her hips, digging his fingers into her flesh as he thrust his hips high, driving himself so deep she thought he touched her stomach.

When his cock pulsed hard, it sparked another orgasm that took her by surprise. For a moment she orbited the cosmos, her body drifting on an endless wave of pleasure that stole her breath and froze her lungs.

She milked him with every pulse of his release. And as she floated back down to earth, her body spent, weak and almost sated, Strafe wrapped his arms around her and pulled her down onto his chest.

"Christ," he groaned in a breathy voice. "I thought you were going to kill me."

Priscilla smiled, flicking her tongue across his hard nipple. "I did die for a moment and it was wonderful."



## **Chapter Seven**

Strafe rolled to his side and pulled Priscilla up against him. He couldn't stop the smile or the joy leaping in his—what he'd thought was a dead—heart. She'd come to him on her own. Come to him, hell, ambushed him more like it. And as she rode him like a wild, wanton woman, taking what she wanted without shame, he thought his heart would give out. He almost died when she speared him into her hard and fast. The lights actually went out temporarily. He'd never seen anything more beautiful, erotic and damn near pornographic as Priscilla taking him. He almost felt sorry for all the other men in the world.

Priscilla wiggled against him, stretched like a cat and wrapped her leg around his. She had her arm slung across his chest and her plush breasts pressed to his side. He almost reached down and pinched himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. He'd thought on the long drive back to camp that he'd lay there alone again, dreaming of fucking her like he had every night for the last five years.

Now he had everything he could possibly want cuddled up against him and sleeping soundly. Strafe reached down and tugged the condom off his limp, raw cock. Who would have thought he'd ever be so completely spent he couldn't even get a slight rise out of the thing? Tomorrow, before he left for the next raid, he take her out in the woods, tie her to that big oak tree and fuck her like she'd never been fucked.

Tomorrow. He frowned, thinking about the raid. Something didn't feel right about it. The driver had given up the information too easily. It all sounded too good to be true. The truck was supposed to be loaded with a variety of items they'd need now that their group had grown. Food, medicines, clothing and other items they could trade along the way for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Maybe he was making too much out of it. Either way, they needed to clear out of this area after this last raid. City guards were getting wise, almost capable of predicting his next move. Maybe that's why he felt apprehensive about tomorrow.

"What are you thinking about?"

Strafe smiled. He'd thought she was asleep. "I'm still trying to understand what just happened."

She snorted, a sexy little noise that made him chuckle. "You've been poking at the tiger all week. The tiger had enough and decided to devour the tormentor."

Devour was a good word for it. She consumed him whole and he had a feeling at this very moment she was licking her paws in satisfaction.

"How did everything go?"

Her question surprised him. He wanted to keep that part of his life away from her. She wouldn't be able to handle the reality he lived with. Or would she? If tonight was any indication, she could deal with more than he imagined.

"Not bad. Hardly any trouble at all."

"What did you get?"

Looking into her shadowed eyes, he could make out her curiosity. "Not a lot. It wasn't a very big truck. We got some material and a few boxes of toiletries." Things they could use, but not the usual load he'd come to expect from a city truck traveling a long distance to another city. Yeah, something didn't seem right.

"Material? What kind?" She rose up, her soft breasts pressing against his flesh and her hair tickling his chest.

"I'm not sure. I haven't looked at it close enough yet. Why?" God, if he wasn't so wasted he'd roll her over and suck those pert nipples until she screamed.

"Some of the girls are pretty good seamstresses. We could make clothes." She crawled farther onto him, her wet pussy brushing against his hip and her nipples lightly dragging over his.

Fuck, she could arouse a dead man. He could barely keep his eyes open and now his cock wanted to play again. "I thought maybe we could trade it for other supplies," he said as his eyes grew heavy.

"Well, maybe some of it. Let me look at it, Strafe. My girls need clothes and I'm sure the men could use some as well."

He could hear the excitement in her voice and knew exactly what she was up to. She wanted to prove they'd be useful so he wouldn't send them away. Maybe that was his first intention, but since he'd gotten to know them things changed.

"We'll talk about it later, babe," he said and then yawned. "You wore me the hell out."

"Really?"

He felt her wet pussy slide against his thigh as she positioned herself over his hips.

"It doesn't appear that way."

He damn near jumped off the ground when she wrapped her tiny hand around him and stroked. Every ounce of blood in his body rushed to his erect cock. He opened his eyes in time to see her shake her hair back over her slim shoulders and reach between her legs, lightly rubbing her clit.

Aw, hell. How could he resist that? "I can barely lift my arms," he groaned even as his hips thrust, driving his erection into her fist.

"It's okay," she laughed sweetly. "All you have to do is lie there. I'll take care of the rest." She leaned forward, her breasts dangling in his face as she reached beneath his pillow and retrieved another condom.

He captured a nipple between his lips and sucked hard, smiling at the throaty, husky moan that tore from her. He'd never get tired of hearing her pleasure. Before, she barely made a sound, always lying there letting him see her pleasure instead of hear it. He really, really liked hearing it.

She made quick work of covering him. Nothing wild and elaborate this time. No, she slipped that thin piece of rubber over him in record time and he braced himself for the mind-blowing pleasure about to come.

Priscilla hovered over his hips, gripped his shaft and plunged hard and fast onto him. The lights went out again, his mind shattering into a thousand pieces as he felt her soft, wet muscles working and rippling around him.

"Fucking hell," he growled, arching his back. "You're gonna blow my head off doing that." No lie. All that magnificent sensation was more than any man could stand at one time.

"Big," she crooned, swirling her hips and drenching him in juice, "bad," her tiny fingers reached up and pinched his erect nipple, "pirate," leaning forward, she dragged her nipples across his chest. "Can't handle the skinny woman."

A surge of new life filled him. He could feel his entire body all at once and it was starving and demanding this one woman. Gripping her hips, he quickly rolled, forcing her onto her back. Her gasp of surprise sent chills over his heated flesh.

"Let's see who can handle what," he growled, tossing her legs over his shoulders and grinding his hips.

She arched her back, thrust her breasts out and let a desperate cry free. "Fuck me," she demanded, lifting her hips to take more of him in. "Hard."

He had no intention of doing otherwise. Sinking his fingers into her bony hips, he withdrew until he almost fell out and then slammed home. Her soft muscles parted, pulsed and trembled around his aching cock. He wouldn't last long. She felt too damn good.

"Rub your clit," he demanded, giving her parted folds a little slap. She bucked and moaned. "Like that?" He tapped her again, right where her swollen little nub peeked through.

"Yes," she cried, fisting her hands into her hair.

Strafe reached up and jerked one hand down, placing it over the bundle of nerves. "Rub it, Cilla."

She complied, her thin fingers working the sensitive flesh fast and furiously. She tightened harder around him, a hot, silky glove embracing his hard rod. He bored into her, driving himself so hard the sound of their flesh slapping together filled the tent. With his gaze locked between them he watched her juice gather at the base of his cock as she drove herself higher.

Nothing existed but them, their bodies locked together and their pleasure. God help anyone who dared disturb them because he wouldn't be able to stop and then he'd be forced to kill them for looking at his precious Priscilla in the throes of orgasm. She was his and his alone. His light, his soul and his world.

With her free hand, Priscilla rolled her nipple between her fingers, tugged the little peak and worked it as hard as she worked her clit. She was too much. His orgasm boiled and burned in his balls. He couldn't wait any longer.

"Come, baby," he panted, driving himself deeper with each thrust. "Come for me."

Strafe licked his thumb and forefinger, pushed her hand away and stroked her clit a few times before giving it a little pinch. Her muscles rippled down his length once and then tightened unmercifully before proceeding to milk him with desperation. Her body stiffened, arched and her mouth opened on a soundless scream as her arms slapped to the ground.

Like a volcano sleeping for centuries and ready to release its built-up rage, Strafe exploded. Tossing his head back and clamping his mouth shut, he growled low, deep and for what seemed like minutes as he came inside her. Her greedy little body milked hard, taking more than his seed, but his soul as well.

He poured everything he had into her and silently prayed it would be enough to hold her to him forever. As his release eased like a tide ebbing away, he fought the fear lingering in the back of his mind that she'd grow tired of his gruff, unromantic ways and he'd wake up one morning alone.

That thought plowed into his chest hard, hunching him over and collapsing him down on her body. Sinking his face into her lovely neck, he nuzzled, inhaled and kissed her until she too stopped trembling from her release. When her dainty hands sank into his long hair and stroked, he moaned from the simple pleasure.

"I'll never get tired of that," she panted, dragging her fingers from his hair and feathering them down his spine.

"Are you sure?" Damn his uncertainty when it came to her. It left him reeling and lost like a small child.

"As sure as I'm breathing." She gripped his rear, digging her fingers into the muscle and squeezing. "You have the finest ass I've ever seen," she giggled.

The soft, yet firm grip of her hands sent fire racing along his flesh. Rolling, he fell to his back and draped her across his chest. Her long hair fanned out over his body like a blanket and when she sighed, her warm breath breezed across his shoulder. He couldn't remember ever being so content.

With his body sated and exhausted, a smile on his lips and the woman of his desires pressed close to him, Strafe quickly discarded the condom and fell into a peaceful, restful sleep for the first time in a long time.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sunlight speared through the tent opening and slashed across his face, dragging him from a deep sleep. Strafe groaned, rolled and reached for Priscilla. His hand hit empty ground and like a bullet being blasted from the barrel of a gun, he sat up, his gaze scanning the tent. Where the fuck was she? The rope he'd used to tether her to him lay piled in a heap over by her blankets.

Sheer terror gripped his chest. She'd left. His heart raced, thundering behind his rib cage so hard he couldn't catch his breath. Jumping to his feet, he tugged on his jeans, shirt and crammed his feet into his boots. In a matter of seconds he was stomping

through the woods, almost running toward the camp. His muscles tensed, his fists bunched and he swore when he got a hold of her again he'd never take the ropes off.

What if he didn't find her again? What if he'd lost her for a second time? No, he couldn't think like that. He'd tear the countryside apart until he found her. Panic choked him as he stepped out of the woods and onto the edge of the clearing.

His men were scattered around the campfire. Nick tossed his arms in the air with a frantic look on his face. A few others stood there scratching their heads and looking confused. Strafe shifted his gaze and found the source of their bewilderment. The women were sitting on the ground, going through boxes, pulling items out and scattering them all over the ground as they laughed and chattered.

Okay, the women were still here. Priscilla wouldn't leave them behind. That he knew for a fact, so where the fuck was she? Looking through the crowd, he searched each face as he stomped toward the group. She wasn't there. The panic grew. Maybe she did leave.

"Strafe!"

Priscilla stepped out from behind a group of girls digging through the boxes, waved and then ran toward him. Just like that his feet rooted to the ground. Unable to move, he watched as her breasts bounced freely beneath her shirt and her hair sailed in the breeze behind her. His blood converged in his groin, filling his cock. Sweet mercy, she made a vision of hot, sweaty dreams running like that with a bright, wide smile fixed on her lush lips.

Four feet away she jumped, wrapped her arms around his neck and legs around his waist as his body lurched. Instinctively, he circled her with his arms and held tight as he buried his face in her neck and breathed a sigh of relief. She hadn't left him. She'd stayed. God, his knees almost gave out.

"You finally woke up," she laughed, pulling back to look at him. "Guess I really did wear you out."

He couldn't speak. His emotions were too thick and raw and sitting right there in his tight throat. She didn't leave.

"Come on, I want to show you something." Priscilla jumped down, grabbed his hand and tugged him toward the group.

"I tried to stop them," Nick grumbled, spreading his arms wide. "They wouldn't listen."

Strafe couldn't take his eyes off Priscilla. He didn't care what Nick's complaint was, he just wanted to make sure he wasn't dreaming.

"Oh, stop acting like a constipated old woman," Priscilla said, waving Nick off.

Strafe cocked an eyebrow at her fearless barb. Could it be possible, could he actually love her more?

"You didn't tell me you got leather," she said, holding a fragment of material to her nose and breathing in deep. "I love the smell of leather, and it's good quality."

Strafe's erection jerked beneath the zipper of his jeans when she rubbed the soft leather against her cheek. Yeah, suddenly he liked the stuff too.

"There's tons of it. Do you know what we can do with all this?"

Her eyes were sparkling with joy as she spread her arms out and turned, tossing her long waves over her shoulder. How the hell had he gotten so lucky?

"Yeah, we can trade it," Nick groused, frowning at the bolts spread out over the ground.

"We can make clothes, even shoes," she said, picking up large squares of thick leather. "Imagine how much you could get for a pair of shoes instead of just this. Twice as much."

Nick scratched his head. "You have a point."

"Of course I do. And look," Priscilla squealed, picking up a coiled length of thin leather. "We can make ties for you guys with long hair. It'll hold up better and longer than cotton material."



Strafe watched all the men as they muttered their approval. His little minx was winning them over.

"Wouldn't you like a pair of leather pants that didn't wear out as fast?" she asked, holding up the material in front of Buck. "Or vests. If you're gonna be pirates you might as well look the part."

"Leather pants, huh?" Buck took the bolt and ran his calloused hands over it. "That would be nice."

"The ladies will fall at your feet," she laughed.

Strafe grew harder by the second as he watched his woman get her way with very little effort. She was good. As she continued to convince the crew to keep the leather, he grabbed the coil of leather strap, measured out a piece the length of his arm and cut it. After sticking it in his pocket, he stepped up to her, wrapped his arm around her tummy and lifted her off her feet and headed for the woods.

"Wait, Strafe," Nick shouted. "What do you want to do?"

Turning slowly, he smiled. He wanted to take his woman into the woods and fuck her, but he knew what Nick needed to know. "We keep it. Let the girls work their magic."

A round of shouts and giggles filled the air as the women clapped and jumped for joy. Priscilla wiggled in his hold, filled with excitement.

"As for you," he growled, walking away. "You have a punishment coming."

"Punishment?" she squeaked, going still in his arms.

She didn't speak and he didn't want to. His mind raced with all the things he'd do to her once he got her alone. After stopping at the tent and grabbing the rope, he ventured farther into the woods until they came to the large oak tree.

"Strafe? What's going on?" she asked as he stripped her shirt from her body and tied her wrists.

"I woke up and you weren't there," he snapped, tossing the other end over the tree limb and tugging her arms high. "Don't ever do that again." Fuck, remnants of that fear still lingered and he needed to get rid of them once and for all.

"You thought I left," she whispered.

He couldn't respond because his emotions would show in his voice. Instead, he tugged off his shirt, heeled off his boots and shucked his jeans down his legs, kicking them aside. They were both naked and he was as hard as that fucking tree limb he had her strung from.

"You were sleeping so soundly," she said with a small smile. "I didn't want to wake you."

He still couldn't believe he didn't feel her pulling away from his body, or sense her leaving. Circling her and reveling in her slightly apprehensive gaze, Strafe stepped behind her, pulled her hair to the side and leaned in.

"You never leave my tent without me knowing it," he whispered and then sucked her tender earlobe between his lips, giving it a tender nip.

She gasped, jerked and then moaned. "You can't control my every move," she said in a defiant tone.

"Can't I?" Eyeing the tender flesh at the junction of her neck and shoulder, he leaned down, licked and then bit hard enough to leave a red mark.

Priscilla jerked again, groaned and slammed her thighs shut. He knew what that meant. She was hot. She didn't think he could control her. Well, he might not, but right now he could. Walking to the tree, he untied the rope, lowered it and then pushed her to her knees.

Stepping in front of her, he gripped his thick cock. "Suck me, baby."

Her eyes went hazy. Her tiny tongue darted out and licked her lips and before he could prepare, she swiped the tip with her tongue and devoured him in one fell swoop.

Unbelievable, hot, wet pleasure surrounded him, shattered his brain and tore a thick, husky groan from his chest. The woman didn't believe in taking it slow.

Good, because he needed her wild. He needed to push away the last of the fear that almost broke him only minutes ago. Fisting his hands in her hair, he guided her mouth, set the pace and when he hit the back of her throat he held there for a moment and then pulled back. Her tongue ran the length of his shaft, brushing a sensitive spot below the crest.

"Oh fuck yes, Cilla, your mouth is so hot." Thrusting his hips, he drove in and out, her cheeks hollowing as she sucked hard. "I love fucking your mouth, almost as much as I love fucking your pussy."

She groaned, the sound vibrating up his shaft and resonating in his balls. He wouldn't stop this time. Couldn't stop. The need to come in her mouth was too strong.

"That's it, baby. Harder, suck harder. I'm going to give it to you."

She looked up at him, her eyes sparkling beneath her thick lashes and the hot lust and want he saw pushed him over the edge. His orgasm erupted out of nowhere. His hot cum splashed into the back of her throat and she eagerly swallowed. With shallow thrusts he worked her mouth. The sight of her lips wrapped tightly around him burned into his brain and when she'd taken the very last drop, he pulled out.

Standing there panting, he worried he'd pushed too hard, too fast. But his precious Priscilla met his gaze and licked her lips, moaning deep in the back of her throat.

"What else ya got?" she spoke, daring him.

Strafe pulled the rope, jerking her up and to her feet. Once again he tied it off, marveling at her glorious naked body stretched out for him. Stepping up behind her, he reached around, cupped her breasts and plucked at her nipples until she writhed and moaned.

"Suck them," she panted.

He wanted to, but not now. He had other things in mind. Releasing her and smiling at her groan of objection, he brought his palm back and smacked her tiny ass. Priscilla yelped, jumped and again slammed her thighs together.

He slapped her again and again until her flesh grew a nice shade of pink and then he slipped his hand between her legs. She was hot, wet and swollen with desire. How hot and wet could he get her?

Turning his attention to the other cheek, he spanked her until both globes of flesh matched in color. Testing her, he reached between her legs and pressed one finger deep into her core.

"You like being spanked," he muttered in her ear as she drenched his finger. She was panting, her hips moving, riding his finger.

Removing his hand, he walked to his jeans, pulled out the leather strap and doubled it up. "Let's see just how much you like leather," he growled, watching her eyes go hazy.

Kneeling down in front of her, he lifted one leg and tossed it over his shoulder, opening her up to him. Taking the strap, he tapped at her engorged clit and was rewarded with moans and a rush of heaven's nectar. Using the strap, he tapped her harder a few more times until her cream trickled down her thigh.

"Look at all that sweet, intoxicating cream," he groaned, touching the quivering flesh of her thigh and licking it away.

Her breathing turned to ragged, short, shallow hiccups. Her flesh prickled into tiny bumps that indicated the height of her arousal. Strafe slapped her clit a few more times with the strap and marveled at the sweet liquid running down her leg. Standing, he captured a nipple between his lips, sucked hard, nipped, scraped his teeth across the hard flesh and then quickly backed away.

"Look at you," he whispered, cupping his already semi-erect cock. "So hot and ready to be fucked."

"Do it already," she moaned.

"And miss out on all the foreplay? Not on your life." Opening up the strap, he let it dangle to the ground. "You left my tent without me knowing it," he said, shaking his head. "Not acceptable. It won't happen again."

Walking around behind her, he fished the strap between her legs, held both ends and lifted until the leather cradled her pussy, pressing on her clit. Priscilla groaned, leaning into it. Very gently, he sawed the strap back and forth.

"Oh yes," she panted, moving her hips in rhythm with him. "Yes."

Looking over her shoulder, he saw her juice glistening on the leather and his mouth watered. He'd have to eat her. It couldn't be helped. He was a starving man and only she could provide him with the sustenance he needed. Knowing she grew close to climax, he pulled the strap away and dropped it to the ground.

"Damn you," she snarled, glaring at him as he stepped around in front of her.

"Yeah, I probably am damned." Kneeling, he lifted her leg again, dropped it over his shoulder and spread her outer lips. "Oh baby. You're so pink and swollen."

She didn't say anything, just looked down at him, unsure what he'd do. Good. With one long, slow swipe of his tongue, Strafe licked her folds, gathering as much sweet nectar as he could.

Desperate little mewls and gasps filled the air as she tried to press her pussy to his mouth. Holding her hips still, Strafe licked again, circling her clit, careful not to touch it. The more he licked, the more she gave. With one finger he swiped up some cream and trailed it toward her puckered little anus.

"Let's see if you like a little ass play." Strafe smeared her juice over her opening and then gently pressed his middle finger into her ass.

Priscilla stiffened at the shocking invasion.

"Relax. I won't hurt you. Feel it, baby. Feel me touching you in places no one else ever has or will." He crooked his finger and stroked as he returned to licking her pussy.

In a matter of moments she was moving her hips, groaning and working her ass, trying to take more of his finger in. Good, she liked it. He couldn't wait until he got his cock buried there. Not now though. That would take time.

"Strafe," she pleaded, rolling her head around on her shoulders. "I can't take any more."

Neither could he. His cock bobbed with hunger. Standing, he went back to his jeans, pulled out a condom and covered himself while she watched. Picking up the leather strap, he wrapped it around the base of his cock tightly. The shocked look on her face almost made him laugh.

"It'll keep me hard longer," he told her. "I wanna feel you come on me at least twice before I lose my control."

Untying the rope, he lowered it and then pushed her forward until her body was bent over and her sexy little ass was offered up. Securing the rope once more, he stepped up behind her, laid his cock in the crevice of her ass and stroked.

"This is a good look for you," he said, reaching around and fondling her breasts with his other hand. "Hang on, baby, I'm about to pillage your kingdom."

Standing straight, he tucked the head of his cock against her opening and pressed forward, nice and slow. Her body quaked, she gulped air, shook her head and tried to force him in faster. He wouldn't have it. He wanted to feel every inch of her surrounding, soaking and gripping.

By the time he'd sunk balls-deep in her body, he had to stop. She felt like heaven, hot, slick and tight. His vision blurred, sweat ran like streams down his face and body. Unable to wait any longer, he pulled out and slammed home. Priscilla shattered around him. Her muscles rippled down his length, squeezed and then began a rhythmic pulse that milked at him unmercifully.

"Aw, fuck!" he shouted, drowning in the sensation. She felt like a hot waterfall cascading over his hard flesh. Her juice oozed out, running down his uncovered skin. God, he wanted to take her without a condom.

Strangled cries fell from her lips as she tried unsuccessfully to move against him. Gritting his teeth, he held on tight and lost himself in her waves of release. When the last spasm pulsed weakly, he leaned forward, rested his forehead on her back and let out a long breath.

"That was unfuckingbelievable."

She panted, hung her head and chuckled.

"Let's see if you can do it again."

"I can't," she whimpered.

"Sure you can." He thrust with slow, steady, long strokes, dying from the feel of her muscles gripping him. "You feel so fucking good."

"Ahhhh, Strafe," she cried. "You'll kill me."

He laughed. More like she'd kill him. Looking down to where they joined, he scooped up her moisture and rubbed it around her anus. Using one finger he pushed inside and stroked her tender flesh.

"Oh god."

"I'm going to fuck you here someday soon, Cilla. You'll like it, I promise." Her hips swirled and swiveled and when he thought she could take it, he pushed another finger deep into her forbidden recesses.

She shouted a ragged, breathy cry and he could feel her body tightening for her next release. He didn't think he could hold out this time. Her orgasms were devastating. Leaning over slightly, he used his free hand to locate her clit and massaged her into a dizzying frenzy. Her hips bucked, jerked and her ass tightened on his fingers.

Taking a chance, he pushed a third in and groaned at how much tighter it made her around his cock. His long thrusts had turned to short, quick ones. His balls drew up tight, burning with the need to release. Pinching her clit, he sent her over the edge. On that first death grip from her muscles, he lost it.

The world melted away around them and beneath them. He swore they floated as carnal pleasure filled his body to overflowing. Fireworks exploded behind his eyes and inside his head. Somewhere in the distance he heard shouts, but didn't care as long as he was inside Priscilla and her body milked him with tender, sweet muscles.

She sagged beneath him, her legs buckling. With a foggy brain and mushy arms, Strafe untied her wrists and they both fell to the ground in a heap. He gathered her close to him, wrapped her tight in his arms and fought to drag air into his burning lungs.

Long moments passed before Strafe could gather his wits. "I was so scared," he whispered, knowing he owed her an explanation. "I thought you'd left me again."

Priscilla turned in his arms and cupped his cheek. "I didn't leave you the first time." Tears glittered in her eyes. "Neither one of us had control over that."

He shook his head, he knew that. "Please, don't leave without telling me again."

She gave him a watery smile. "If this is my punishment, I'll be sneaking out more often."

He couldn't believe it. He had to be the luckiest man on earth. The city people could keep their money and material possessions. He had the most valuable gift on earth.

"Let's get cleaned up and see if anyone remembered to cook through all the excitement."



## Chapter Eight

When they returned to the camp, they were met with shy glances and timid smiles. So everyone knew what they were doing off in the woods. Great. Priscilla found Glee and Jinx, sat down next to them and sighed.

"That must have been one hell of a romp," Jinx snickered.

"What?"

"We could hear noises," Glee said with a smile.

"Oh. My. God." Could she be more horrified? "Please tell me you're joking?"

"No," they both said in unison.

"Don't worry about it," Glee said, waving her hand. "We tried to be loud so it drowned it out. Anyway," she said, eager to change the subject. "Nick made us a needle to poke through the leather and we used Buck's knife to cut out a pattern."

Priscilla sat there half listening as she watched Strafe talk with Nick, Buck and a few others. After Strafe had bathed them, they'd returned to his tent where he'd braided his hair and put on his skullcap. God, he was something.

The men opened up what looked like a map and hunkered over it. Their faces were serious, too serious. She'd like to know what they were talking about.

"What do you think? Priscilla?"

"What?" She turned to find Glee frowning at her. "Sorry."

"What do you think of your new clothes?" Glee held up a vest and Jinx held up a pair of pants.

"For me?" She took the garments and looked them over. "How'd you get this done so fast?" They were incredible.

"You were our first dry run," Glee snickered. "If they don't fit, I'm sure we can find someone who can wear them. We also made you a tie so you can pull your hair back."

Tears welled in her eyes. Her first set of new clothes that no one else had worn.

"You can't keep wearing that shirt," Jinx whispered. "You needed proper clothes."

"Come on, let's try them on." Glee grabbed her by the hand and the three of them disappeared into the big tent. The vest fit perfectly, although if Strafe kept feeding her every few hours she'd need a bigger one, same with the pants. Right now the leather hugged and molded her body like a second skin. Running her hands over her thighs, she smiled.

"Perfect. Let's go show Strafe."

"Wait." Glee picked up a pair of boots. "These should fit you nicely. Nick found them."

"Yeah," Jinx said on a sigh. "He's not so bad after all."

Priscilla slipped them on, tied them up, spun around. "How do I look?"

"God," Jinx chuckled. "He'll drag you back out there and fuck your brains out again."

"She's right," Glee said. "You look hot."

"Well, let's get the verdict." The three of them stepped out of the tent and sauntered back toward the fire.

Nick was the first to spot her, then Buck and then it was like dominos. Each man turned his head and stared, everyone except Strafe. Nick poked him in the arm and nodded in her direction. The girls, who were sitting around the fire, cutting patterns and sewing, snickered.

"What do you think? They thought that baggy shirt didn't do much for me." Strafe's gaze grew hot, stormy and hungry as he looked her up and down. She spared a glance at his groin and had to bite her lip. It was obvious he liked it.

"You can outfit everyone like that?" he asked in a husky voice.

"Sure can," Jinx answered.

"Good, you two are next."

Priscilla noticed Nick's and Buck's expressions went from shocked to "oh, hell yes".  
"I think that's a very good idea. Girls, you have your next two customers right here."

While Jinx and Glee were being measured, Priscilla sat down and braided her hair, keeping a close eye on Strafe. Something had him worried. She could tell by the way his shoulders hunched up and the strain on his face. Maybe, if she got close enough, she could hear their conversation.

Getting up, she made her way closer, pretending to check on the progress of the girls and their sewing.

"There should be fuel about hundred miles up the road," Buck said, pointing at the map.

"We have enough for tonight's run and then our departure," Nick added.

Departure? Where they pulling out? Would Strafe take them all?

"I don't like it, Strafe," Nick said, rubbing his jaw. "It smells like a setup."

The men all mumbled their agreement, making Priscilla's gut cramp.

"If it's not, we'll need what that truck is carrying," Strafe replied sternly. "What other choice do we have?"

Nick shook his head. "You're right."

They were going on another road raid tonight. Why hadn't he told her? Oh, she was going to give him the riot act as soon as she could.

"Get things ready. I wanna pull out about an hour before sunset. Casey and Bruiser will stay behind. Vinny, you come with us tonight."

"Should we start packing up camp?" Buck rolled up the map and tucked it in his back pocket.

"No," Strafe replied. "We'll do it in the morning. We'll let them have one more worry-free day."

What did that mean? Panic began to set in her chest. He wouldn't leave them behind, would he? He wouldn't force her to walk away and leave her family stranded?

"Strafe," she heard herself saying. "I need to talk to you." The words had slipped out of her mouth before she could think.

"Yeah, give me a minute." He wrapped up his meeting and then strolled over to her. "What's up, babe?"

Priscilla grabbed his hand and led him off out of earshot. "What's going on?" she asked, jamming her fists on her hips.

"What's going on is that outfit is making me insane." He reached down and cupped his package. "Damn, babe."

"Stop it. I mean, what's this about a setup?"

Strafe frowned. "You're nosy."

"So take me into the woods and punish me, but tell me what the hell is going on." The stubborn set of his jaw and distant look in his eyes told her he didn't plan on telling her anything. "Strafe, do you just want me around to fuck me, or do you want all of me?"

"What the hell kinda question is that?"

At least he had enough sense to show anger over it. "A legitimate one. Answer it."

"Fuck, how could you even ask that?" He crossed his arms over his chest and glared down at her.

"If you want this to work you need to treat me like an equal, not a child. Don't force me to walk away, Strafe. It would kill me." Tears burned behind her eyes, but she wouldn't let them fall. She had to know where he was headed with their relationship.

When he didn't answer, she swore the world fell out from beneath her, tumbling her through a weightless hell. "I see. You can fuck me, but you can't trust me." Well, she'd gotten her answer. On stiff legs she turned.

"Damn it, Cilla," he snapped, grabbing her by the arms. "It's not that I don't trust you. I didn't want you to worry."

Her head jerked around. "Well, guess what," she growled. "It comes with the territory. I sat here last night and worried, for all of you and I'm not the only one. Damn you, Strafe. Damn you for forcing yourself back in my life and then being such a complete and utter ass."

"Yeah," he said, pulling her hard against his chest. "I'm an ass. I'll be the first to admit it. What I do isn't pretty, Priscilla. It's ugly and dangerous. I didn't want it touching you, okay. It's a necessary evil for us to survive and now that our group has grown by thirty, we can't afford to pass up any trucks, no matter how dangerous. What that truck is supposed to be carrying could clothe and feed us all for months."

Her mouth dropped open and her heart began to race out of control. He wasn't planning on abandoning her clan. She plummeted back to earth with a hard plop and swayed from the shock of his words. She wanted to jump him right here. Instead, she steadied her breath, reached up and cupped his cheek, tried to soothe his angry face.

"Okay, I get it," she said quietly, smiling when he looked surprised. "I do. Here's the thing though. Anything that touches you touches me. Including what you do on the road. Please, don't keep me in the dark. I begin to think the worst and all that does is piss me off."

Strafe closed his eyes and leaned his face into her hand. "I don't like it."

"I know. I don't like you putting yourself in danger, but I'm not going to ask you to stop. That wouldn't be fair."

"I don't deserve you," he ground out through his tight throat.

"Sure ya do. Every nightmarish moment I give you along with every bit of pleasure I give you."

He shook his head and then kissed her. A very soft, gentle kiss warmed her from her head to her curled toes. When he pulled away, she wobbled.

"Okay, you nasty pirate. Spill."

Taking her by the hand, he walked. "Last night was too easy. The driver gave up without a fight and started talking like someone put a coin in him. He said another truck was due through tonight, filled with cases of medicines, canned food, and other staples we could use."

"And you think he was sent out to give you that information?" She couldn't stop the chill that ran through her blood. She didn't like the sound of it either.

"You got it. We could pull that truck over and be ambushed. If I let it go and it's not a setup, I've let the crew down."

"And if it is a setup?" She didn't want to think about it. They'd either kill him, or take him back to the city and make an example out of him publicly.

"We both know the consequences."

Taking a shaky breath, she stopped, turned toward him and said, "So what do we do? How do we prepare for an ambush?"

"I'm not sure. I'll have to think about it."

She nodded, wishing she had an idea for him. "You went back for our truck so you had room to transport everyone, didn't you?"

He gave his famous shrug. "More people means more stuff. We needed the room." Strafe frowned down at her. "You thought I was gonna leave them behind, didn't ya?"

"Honestly," she said, afraid to meet his gaze, "yes."

"Well," he chuckled. "I intended to at first. Then I got to know them. They sorta grow on ya."

They both laughed. Priscilla felt her heart swelling with happiness even though a dark cloud hung over them. They'd get through this. They'd figure something out. They had to.

"After you leave, I'll tell the girls what's happening and we can start packing things up."

"Heard that too, did ya?"

His smile warmed her. "Yep. Bruiser can supervise so we do it the way you want. That way, in the morning, all that's left is the tents."

Strafe nodded. "This may just work out," he said, smiling.

Priscilla spent the rest of the day with the girls while Strafe and his men tried to come up with a plan. Two outfits were put together quickly and the excitement grew as Glee and Jinx modeled them. It thrilled Priscilla to see the new life taking hold in her clan. Even Julie participated where she would have sat off to the side and watched before. Being with this hard-assed bunch of pirates was turning out to be a good thing.

As the afternoon grew late, the men broke from their meeting. Strafe, Nick and Buck came sauntering through the field. Priscilla stood and watched their movements, trying to decide if they'd come up with a worthy plan. Glee and Jinx stood beside her, their tension adding to hers. They'd been together so long the two knew when something serious bothered her.

"Huh, I guess they like what they see," Jinx said.

Nick had his hot gaze locked on Glee while Buck had his full attention on Jinx. No wonder Strafe insisted they get dolled up next. It didn't matter where they were or what trouble lay on the horizon, men always took the time to appreciate a woman's form.

The three men sauntered up, their swagger a little more noticeable, their bodies puffed up. Priscilla had to smile. They looked like proud peacocks trying to impress prospective mates and from the looks on her friends' faces, succeeding. If she weren't so worried about the danger Strafe faced later tonight, she might do a little teasing, but her heart wasn't in it.

Reaching out with her hand, she took Strafe's and led him away, eager to hear the plan they'd come up with. They walked, and when they left the clearing Priscilla took a shaky breath.

“Well, do you have a plan?” Her hand tightened around his. She couldn’t shake the niggling, foreboding, chest-clenching fear that after today she might never see him again.

She had complete faith in Strafe, believed he knew what he was doing. He hadn’t made it this far alive, becoming the thing of legends, without being careful. He was always smart and she hoped still careful when it came to his chosen profession. Still, the what-ifs ran through her head until she grew dizzy.

“It took some arguing over logistics, but yeah, we have a plan and a pretty fucking good one at that.”

She could tell it was difficult for him, but he explained it all. Most of the crew would be dropped off to hide where they could watch, armed and ready. If the truck turned out to be clear, they’d converge and help switch the cargo. If it turned out to be an ambush they’d be available to intervene, and she didn’t want to think about what that meant.

“I’ve been thinking, maybe we’ll just take the truck too,” he said, rubbing the stubble on his jaw. “Sort of a parting shot before we clear out of the area and move on. Hell, we could always use it.”

“We have the box truck,” she said, unsure it would be a good idea to take on another rig to be maintained and driven.

“I get the feeling we’ll be gathering more people through our travels,” he said with a smile. “I can’t see you finding someone who needs help and leaving them behind.”

He knew her so well and she appreciated the fact that he seemed to be okay with it. Still, it made her nervous. She leaned against him and sighed when he wrapped his thick arm around her tiny waist. It felt good to be held by him again. She’d missed it.

“I wish I could go along.” Sitting here and waiting would tear her to pieces. The wondering, the nightmares running through her head. God, could she do it?



Strafe came to a sudden halt, turned her in his arms and gazed down into her face. "I can't do that," he said, frowning. "I'm trying really hard to let go of old ways for you, babe, but that I can't allow."

Not yet anyway. Maybe over time she could convince him to take her along. Tonight, though, she'd be a distraction and he couldn't afford that.

"I know. Promise me if you get the sense of an ambush you'll turn around and come back. My girls are used to making do with what they have and we've survived that way. A truckload of food, or even gold, isn't worth your life."

He swallowed hard, the muscles in his neck flexing as he clenched his teeth. Storms brewed in his eyes, a mixture of relief she understood, hunger for her and maybe even a little emotion called love. He hadn't told her that yet and she didn't want to push it. She understood the barriers he'd put up to keep from being hurt again. She'd had them too.

Hers however were being slowly dismantled and then came crashing down the day she realized he'd managed to bring Julie out of her shell and given her hope again. What woman wouldn't love a man who took such care and at the same time gave strength to a damaged young woman and all for nothing in return? Even thinking about it now made her heart swell and engulf her chest.

No, she'd wait until he found his way and could tell her how he really felt. Until then, she'd stand by his side and be there when he needed her.

"You make me a weak man," he said in a thick, husky voice.

"Nah, I make you stronger." She had to swallow the tears that threatened to spill. "You just can't see it yet." For her he'd fight harder to survive instead of putting himself in unnecessary danger. For her he'd think things through before going off half cocked and for her, he'd open his heart, that alone taking more strength than anything.

A smile tugged at the corners of his mouth and after fighting it for a few seconds he allowed it to bloom into a brilliant, breathtaking thing of beauty. "You might be right. I don't know how I lived these last five years without you," he said, leaning down and nuzzling her neck.

"Bruiser said you didn't live, you existed," she commented, tilting her head to the side and giving him better access to the tender flesh.

"Did he now?" Strafe lightly licked at her neck, placed hot, fiery little kisses down the column until he reached the junction at her shoulder.

He nipped with his teeth and sent her brain spiraling as electric currents arced in her bloodstream. Instantly her body responded. Slick need pooled between her legs and her nipples pebbled, pushing against the stiff leather of her vest. He popped the homemade metal latch of her pants and tucked his hand down inside, cupping her.

"Mmmm," he groaned, sliding a finger deep into her core. "He may be right."

The thrilling invasion tore a gasp from her lungs as she bucked her hips, trying to push him in farther. His palm pressed against her clit and like a button being turned on she came. "Strafe," she whimpered as gentle waves of erotic pleasure surged through her.

He continued tormenting her neck, his hot breath, soft lips and gentle nips drawing out her orgasm and setting her already sensitive flesh on fire. Inside her body he stroked her rippling walls relentlessly until she felt another release build before the first one died away. How did he do this to her?

"I need you," he moaned between kisses.

The desperation in his voice had her fumbling with the snap and zipper on his jeans as she floated on a wave of ecstasy. She could barely think, much less make her fingers work while her body melted from the inside out. The only thought that would form in her hazy brain was that this could be their last time together.

That fear drove her desperation higher and when she released the hard length of his cock, she stroked him from tip to base. While toeing off her boots she continued to stroke him with one hand and push her pants down with the other. Strafe had locked himself to her neck, sucking, licking and nipping, setting off little bombs in her brain.

If she didn't get him inside her soon she'd stop breathing. Somehow, through strange contortions, she managed to shed her pants even as he continued to stroke her sensitive tunnel.

"Have I told you how fucking horny that outfit makes me?" he growled against her flesh. His hot, rumbling breath made her cry out as she doused him with hot juice. Still, her hands worked feverishly as she tried to tug his jeans down over his hips.

Who knew her neck was such an erogenous zone? Part of her wanted to pull away the sensations were so intense while the other part demanded more. Giving up on his jeans, she wrapped her arms around his shoulders and began to climb his body. She needed to feel him inside her now.

Wrapping her legs around his waist, she lifted to impale herself onto him only to have him grip her hips and stop her. "Damn it, Strafe," she snarled. "I need you in me. Now."

"And I need to be in you," he told her as he walked the best he could with his pants down around his knees. "I need to cover up first." He leaned her back against a tree trunk, pressed his hips forward to hold her there and contorted until he could reach his jeans.

In a matter of second he had himself covered and she thought sweet relief was on its way. Strafe had other ideas. Carefully he unhooked the first two fasteners of her vest, reached inside and popped her breasts out.

"Aw, baby," he moaned. "That's a pretty sight."

She looked down to find her full breasts pushed up and cupped by the leather like an offering to him. He leaned forward, his tongue poking out and as she watched him near her nipple the anticipation raced through her bloodstream. He flicked one peak and she jerked as the sensation arced straight to her clit and womb.

"I wonder if I can make you come like this," he panted between licks.

She bounced on his hips, trying to force his cock inside her dripping-wet, desperate pussy. "Strafe, please," she panted, digging her fingers into his muscled shoulders.

"Tell me when you're ready to come," he demanded. "I wanna slide into you and feel it."

God, he was so wicked and devious. Her head thrashed against the tree trunk as she watched his tongue flick, his teeth nip and his lips suck on her painfully hard nipples. She ground her clit against his groin, trying to reach for that final push that would throw her over the edge.

Finally, Strafe sucked one tip into his mouth and drew hard. Her eyes filled with nothing but white, her body jerked hard and her orgasm detonated as her clit throbbed.

"Now," she shouted on a scream and arched her back as he drove his cock deep inside her.

"Fuck," he growled in a long, drawn-out hoarse word.

Her clenching muscles stretched, pulsed and milked as her body trembled and odd little sounds fell from her lips. He wouldn't let her move, pinning her against the tree and that made her more desperate. Stars floated by, pretty little lights that winked as her limbs twitched from the force of her orgasm.

Every ounce of her energy was focused between her legs, drawing him farther and when he pulled back, dragging his throbbing cock over tingling walls, she felt herself tighten again. He wasn't gentle, pounding into her like a man possessed.

She couldn't breathe, couldn't hold on. All she could do was feel. He filled her to overflowing, hitting her cervix over and over. The combination of pleasure and pain melted her bones and brain. Strafe leaned forward again, drew her nipple into his mouth and sucked so hard she thought the top of her head blew off. Like a line connecting the two, her clit sparked and shattered her again out of nowhere.

This time she scattered into a thousand tiny little pieces of Priscilla confetti, disconnected yet very much aware of Strafe still sucking her nipple unmercifully. With a hard thrust and a growling groan, she felt his cock pulse as his orgasm overcame him. She couldn't do it. Too many sensations, too much pleasure.

His cock throbbing inside her still-clenching walls, his mouth sucking her nipple until her clit ached, too much, yet not enough. As if knowing what she needed, Strafe pushed two fingers into her open anus and stroked the tender tissue. Suddenly the connections were complete. All her fluttering pieces assembled together, her brain gelled and the splintered feelings merged together to form one glorious orgasmic bliss.

She still couldn't breathe, her chest locked tight, but she could enjoy the feeling of Strafe filling her, making her whole. When the last weak flutter of her orgasm winked away, she gasped in a harsh, burning breath. Her body rocked forward limply, falling against him.

"Priscilla," he whimpered into her neck.

"You damn well better come back to me," she said on a sob. Tears rushed from her eyes, dripping onto his shoulder. She didn't know what made her cry. The power of his love he'd just poured into her, or the fear of never feeling it again. It didn't matter right now.

Strafe lowered them to the ground and with their bodies still locked together, pulled her tight against his chest. She couldn't see anything but fuzzy shapes surrounding them. Talk about being fucked blind.

"I can't see," she muttered, fisting her hand in his shirt.

"Give it a few moments," he said, stroking her back and kissing the top of her head.

Sure enough, after her blood pressure lowered to a respectable level, her vision cleared. Every other part of her body hummed and sizzled in a warm afterglow.

"I mean it," she told him, looking up and seeing a few sparkling tears in his eyes. "You come back to me, Strafe."

"Not even the devil himself could keep me from you."

They lay there together on the floor of the woods, holding each other tight. When their bodies regained strength, Strafe gently dressed her and then put himself back

together. He took her frizzed, messed braid out and with skilled hands tied her locks into three thin braids, knotting them together at the end.

By the time they returned to the camp it was time for the Marauders to roll. Her entire clan followed the men to the rig and watched in silence as they boarded. Priscilla fought back the tears and prayed they'd all be safe. Jinx and Glee weren't hiding their emotions any better. She didn't know if Buck and Nick had explained to them the dangers they faced tonight, but her friends seemed to understand something didn't feel right.

Before they pulled out, Strafe jumped down from the rig, stalked toward her and then jerked her body tight against his before dropping his head and taking her lips in a heated kiss that made her heart do a slow flip.

"I love you," he whispered against her mouth before setting her away and returning to the truck.

As the truck rumbled away, Priscilla let the tears rush down her cheeks, her heart aching and leaping for joy all at the same time. He had to come back. He couldn't tell her that and disappear from her life forever.

"Come on, Priscilla," Glee said, hugging her gently. "Let's get back and keep busy."

"You know?" she asked, meeting Jinx's watery gaze.

"We know." Jinx brushed away a tear. "I told Buck if he gets himself killed I'd dig up his bones and kick the shit out of them."

Priscilla hiccupped a laugh. So like Jinx to use anger to cover her feelings. The three of them returned to the camp arm in arm. The rest of the girls surrounded them like a force field.

Priscilla tried to keep her mind occupied, helping the girls pack their material and sewing paraphernalia, but she'd find herself staring off into space. Eventually, she excused herself and headed to Strafe's tent where she could be surrounded by his scent.

Nearly there, she heard movement in the trees.

"Priscilla."

The hairs on the back of her neck stood up, all her senses going on alert.

"Priscilla." Someone stepped out from behind a tree.

"Casey," she shrieked, her heart lodging in her throat.

The young man fidgeted, wringing his hands and a deeply concerned look on his face.

"What's wrong, Casey?" He opened his mouth a few times to speak but nothing came out. She wanted to shake the words out of him. Something had him scared and worried.

"Strafe, he's being followed," Casey finally said. "I took the box truck out behind them for a test run and I saw lots of them in smaller vehicles."

The world tilted, throwing her into a silent panic. "Ambush." God no, this couldn't be happening. She needed think. She, Bruiser, Casey and her clan were the only help Strafe had. Panicking wouldn't help. If she wanted Strafe to return alive, she needed to keep it together. "Get the box truck running and ready. I'm going to get Bruiser and the girls."

"What can we do?"

A horribly pained expression fell over Casey's face and she remembered what Strafe told her about the boy. "I'm not sure, yet," she said firmly, "I can tell you one thing though. I won't sit back and let them all be taken without a fight. Go, Casey, get the truck ready."

## **Chapter Nine**

Casey took off for the truck. Priscilla moved fast, jumping fallen trees, dodging saplings and feeling the sting of thin branches across her face. As soon as she hit the edge of the open field she started shouting.

"Bruiser! We got trouble. Bruiser!" Her lungs ached, her muscles burned and still she pumped her legs as fast as she could. "Bruiser!"

The big man stepped out of the cook tent and when he saw her face, he reached inside and pulled out a gun. In fewer than a dozen strides he had her in his arms and pushed her toward the tent as he scanned the area.

"Strafe's in trouble," she panted, fighting his hold. "We need to help him." Bruiser wasn't listening. "Damn it, man," she shouted, smacking him on the arm. "Listen to me."

Finally, he turned and looked down at her. "Casey said Strafe is being followed by a bunch of smaller vehicles. He's in trouble and we need to help him."

"Ambush," Bruiser rumbled.

"Yeah, only not the way they expected. My guess, that truck is probably empty or filled, who knows, but the ambush is coming from outside the truck, not in it."

"How many weapons do we have?" Jinx asked.

Priscilla jolted at her voice. Her entire clan had surrounded them, listening to her explain.

"About a dozen," Bruiser replied. The man's body seemed to expand in front of her, tensing into one giant ball of muscle.

"It'll have to do. I've got about nine girls who can shoot." Priscilla nodded toward her clan. "A few more are quick studies. Casey's bringing the truck around."



"Jinx," Bruiser said, glaring down at her. "How many of them are as good at sneaking around without being caught as you?"

"Five," she answered with a wicked grin.

Bruiser stepped inside the cook tent and returned with a huge satchel. "I've been working on these," he said, pulling out some very thin, very pointy darts. "They're soaked in a powerful anesthetic. It won't kill, but it sure as fuck will slow 'em down before knocking them out."

"What do we shoot them with?" Jinx took one dart and studied it.

"This." Bruiser pulled out a few hollow tubes not much bigger than the darts. "Blow in this end with every ounce of breath you have and the dart sails to its target."

"Cool," Jinx said, smiling up at him. "I'm guessing you know where Strafe was headed?"

Bruiser nodded.

"Then what are we waitin' for?"

Casey pulled the truck up and all but a few of them piled in. Beth and a few of the youngest girls remained behind. As Casey sped down the road to where Strafe intended to take the city truck, Priscilla and Jinx put together a plan. Most of the older women knew how to shoot, taught by their husbands when the rebellion was in its early stages. They gave crash courses to those with the calmest demeanors since Jinx and a few others would be sneaking around with the blow darts.

As she sat there looking at the determined faces of her clan, she realized for the first time they all had something to fight for. Not just food, but a family. Strafe and his men had become important to them and they weren't about to let anything happen to their family.

This newfound unity and spirit could either get them all killed or bring home their men. God, she hoped she knew what the hell she was doing. Strafe was a good hour ahead of them. They could be walking up on a damn gruesome, bloody scene.

"Tell me this is going to work," she muttered to Bruiser.

"It'll work," he said with certainty. "It has to."

"I feel like we're walking right into the lion's mouth." Now that she'd had time to think, she really didn't know if they could go up against trained men with weapons. Yet, the fear of losing Strafe for good pushed her forward.

Bruiser reached into his medical bag and pulled out a canister. "Flash bang," he said, showing it to her. He dropped it and picked up a round metal ball. "Grenade. It'll give us a diversion if needed."

They'd been riding for half an hour when she poked her head through the small window. "Casey, any sign yet?"

"No," he said grimly. "I managed to pull more power out of this old girl, but I'm not sure we have enough to catch them."

"Keep your foot to the floor," she told him. "This old bucket got us out of more than one run-in with rebels. She'll get us to them."

Sitting back down, she lowered her head and said a prayer for the hundredth time. The thought of going on without Strafe terrified her, chilled her blood into ice and made her gut cramp. They'd just found each other, it wouldn't be fair to rip them apart again. Surely fate couldn't be that cruel.

She felt the truck slow and bounce slightly before it came to a complete stop. Bruiser poked his head through the window, muttered something and then stood. Holding a finger to his lips, he motioned for her and Jinx to follow him.

"They're up ahead," he whispered, jumping down from the truck.

Priscilla looked up the road and could see the big, black rig and trailer illuminated by the headlights of smaller city cars. "How many do you think?"

Bruiser shrugged. "Not sure. I make about seven cars, figure four per vehicle. Jinx, grab your crew and get into position. Remember, aim for the neck. It'll bring 'em down faster. If you can't get a hit there, anywhere will do."

"Copy that, big guy." Jinx retrieved her crew and they disappeared into the darkness.

Bruiser led the rest of them, keeping to the shadows as they inched their way closer to the scene.

"There's the city truck," she said in a hushed whisper.

"Bet it's empty," he grumbled.

"Doesn't matter. We're taking it with us." This night wasn't going down as a total waste. Not if she could help it. It may be empty, but it would belong to them. "Let's do this, Bruiser."

They crept closer, the scene unfolding in front of them. Strafe had his hands tied behind his back and was slumped against the grille of the Marauder. Blood trickled from his mouth and covered his shirt. Seething, raw anger flared to life in Priscilla's stomach, quickly spreading throughout her body like a drug. One guard, the leader maybe, jammed the butt of his gun into Strafe's stomach and she nearly lost her sanity.

"Easy," Bruiser breathed next to her ear. "He's taken worse, trust me."

Priscilla clenched the handgun Bruiser gave her tight, ready to unload it on the bastards beating him. She shifted her gaze and found Buck and Nick being held, forced to watch their leader being beaten. Both of them had blood smeared on their faces as well. The rest of the Marauder crew was lined up against the side of the trailer, heavily guarded.

Suddenly, one of the guards smacked the side of his neck, pulled out the dart and looked at it for about three seconds before his knees buckled and he dropped to the ground. Instantly two more men jerked, raised their guns but before they could react, slipped into unconsciousness. Pop, pop, pop. Three more down for the count. Now all the guards watching the crew were out cold.

Bruiser chuckled. "Works pretty good," he said, smiling.

"Good job, Bruiser. Damn good job." Priscilla was ready to move and when Strafe took another hit, Bruiser had to hold her back.

"Not yet. Too many guns still ready to shoot." He reached into his satchel and pulled out the flash bang. "Don't look at it, and cover your ears," he told them. "When the smoke clears, be ready to fire."

This was it. Now or never. Once Bruiser tossed that canister all hell would break loose. Priscilla welcomed it. If Strafe died tonight, she'd go down killing the men responsible. She'd come to peace with that.

With her heart hammering in her throat, she watched Bruiser's meaty fingers pull the pin and his arm heave the canister. Closing her eyes, she ducked behind him as the loud bang filled the night air.

"Let's go," Bruiser shouted.

Smoke swirled around, masking their enemy. Those crew members of the Marauder who were lined up against the trailer moved into the smoke. One city guard stumbled out, holding his ears and a loud pop went off. The man dropped to the ground, blood oozing from his chest.

Priscilla turned to find Julie, her arm raised and her finger on the trigger, glaring at the man. So much for being too afraid to fight. Bruiser ran straight into the thinning smoke, his fists flying and elbows jamming. Casey flew past her like a flash and waded into the confusion. It seemed almost the entire Marauder crew was going hand-to-hand with guards.

"Should we join them?" Glee asked at her side.

"I'm going to see if Strafe's free. Keep your eyes open. If you get a clean shot, take it." Desperate to find Strafe, Priscilla ran toward the truck, dodging swinging fists. One guard stood off to the side, taking aim at Bruiser. "Like hell," she growled, lifting her gun as she walked.

Her finger squeezed the trigger in slow motion. Pop. The man jerked, looked over at her and aimed the barrel straight at her. Pop. She fired again and knew as soon as she

saw the dark red bloom of blood in the center of his chest she'd hit her mark. Not even waiting to see him hit the ground, she turned and found Buck struggling to fight with his hands bound.

Behind him, another guard took aim, ready to kill the pirate. Priscilla raised her arm, zeroed in and as soon as Buck ducked a punch, she fired. The guard wobbled. Buck stood up and looked at him and then at her.

"Owe ya one," he shouted, kicking out and knocking the already dead man to the ground.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" Nick snarled at her as he tried to force her out of the way.

"Saving your ass," she said sweetly, lifting her arm and shooting another guard behind him. "Where's Strafe?"

A guard fell back into them, his eyes rolling around in his head. Nick gripped him by the shirt and plowed his fist into the man's face. Dropping the guy, he shrugged.

"Not sure. He's around here somewhere. Is Glee with you?"

"We're all here," she grumbled and then weaved her way through the throng of fighting men.

So focused on finding Strafe, she didn't realize someone had her in his sights. A hand gripped her arm, spun her around and before she process anything, she took a punch to the face. The blow exploded in her jaw, rattled her brain and had stars circling her head.

"You'll make a nice play-toy back in the city," the man spat, pulling his arm back for another punch.

Priscilla blinked, trying to clear the haze, lifted her gun gut level and fired. Another hand gripped her arm, spinning her around so fast she nearly vomited. She only had a moment to see another guard before a hand came out of nowhere and clocked the bastard, dropping him cold.

"You okay?"

Casey stood before her, his face smeared with blood, his knuckles bleeding and a smile on his face. "I'm good." If everything would stop spinning she'd be great.

"Strafe's gonna be mad when he sees you all bloody. Good luck with that."

The kid took off, delving in deep, knocking heads together and busting shins. He seemed to be happy. Go figure. Staggering, Priscilla proceeded on, looking for one man. Damn it, where could he be?

A loud, ferocious growl rumbled through the air. Turning, she saw Strafe, his hands still bound behind his back, head-butting, kicking and doing his best to fight his attacker. Priscilla raised her gun, aimed at the guard and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. Damn it, she couldn't be out of ammo.

Stomping toward the dueling pair, she tapped the guy on the shoulder. When he turned around, she pistol-whipped him upside the head. "Hi," she said to Strafe as the guard crumpled to the ground.

His eyes grew big as he looked at what had to be a huge-ass bruise forming on her swollen cheek. Oh boy, she was in trouble. When she saw his eyes dart behind her, she quickly turned, flattened her hand and jammed her palm right into another guard's nose. Another one down.

"Can we get out of here, soon?" she asked Strafe. "I don't feel so good." In fact, things were beginning to get hazy and she had the strongest urge to fall asleep standing here.

"Priscilla," he snapped. "Stay with me, babe. Don't close your eyes."

Gunshots sounded around her, but they seemed so far away. Man, she hoped it was her girls doing the shooting and not being shot. "I have to go check on my girls," she said, staggering away.

"Priscilla," he roared, running up and blocking her way. "You aren't going anywhere."

"My girls," she heard herself whining.

"We're all okay," Jinx said, grabbing her. "It looks like we got them all."

"Oh hell, you too?" Strafe grumbled. "You girls have as many bruises on your face as I do."

"Nice of you to notice," Jinx said. "But we should get the hell out of here before the live ones start waking up."

"Have the girls gather the guns and ammo," Priscilla said, rubbing her forehead. "And don't forget to take the truck."

The clan gathered around her. "Hey, there you guys are," she said, wobbling against Jinx.

"Bruiser, what the fuck is wrong with her?"

The big doctor stepped up and looked into her eyes, checked her jaw and smiled. "Punch drunk. Her brain got sloshed. She'll be okay after some rest."

"Someone get these fucking ropes off me," Strafe shouted.

"Isn't much fun being tied up, is it?" Priscilla looked at his scowling face and laughed as he swam in her vision. "Strafe," she said, getting serious.

"What is it, babe?"

"I'll see you when I wake up." Everything narrowed down to a pinpoint of light before blackness dragged her under.

\* \* \* \* \*

Someone was in her head, using a pickaxe. They had to be because she didn't ever remember having this bad a headache. Even her face hurt. Should she open her eyes? Oh god. She didn't want to. What happened?

"Priscilla? Babe, open your eyes for me."

Ugh, why? Who would want to torture her like that? Giving a protesting groan, she kept her eyes closed.

"Come on now, you've been sleeping for ten hours."

Ten hours? Was it possible to sleep that long? "Strafe?"

"I'm here. Open your eyes."

Memories flooded her mushy brain. Strafe had been pissed at her for getting hurt. "Are you mad?" she asked, not up to fighting with him.

"No, baby. I'm not mad. I'm proud of you."

She pried open her eyelids and peered at his bruised face. "Proud?"

"You had our backs. Casey and Bruiser told us all about it."

Good, she wasn't up to telling the story just yet. "Do you think we could talk about this later? I'm really tired." She didn't want to wake up until her head stopped hurting.

Strafe leaned down and gave her a tender kiss. "I'll be waiting."

\* \* \* \* \*

The last couple of days were a blur. Between checks from Bruiser and occasional attempts at eating she mostly slept as they traveled. Strafe and Nick took turns driving while Glee tended to her. She didn't like all the fuss, at least not from anyone but Strafe.

Today, though, she felt better. Not normal, but better. Her head didn't feel like it wanted to explode, the pickaxes were gone and she was hungry.

They'd stopped at an old fueling station that looked to be abandoned, but she doubted very much it was. Strafe and Nick had gone to roust out the current occupant and see if they could do some trading for fuel. Traveling with three trucks now made things a bit more difficult.

During the night, she'd heard Strafe and Nick talking about finding a remote, out-of-the-way place to hunker down in. Something permanent maybe. They'd still go out and do their thing, but they'd have someplace to come back to. It sounded good to her. She was tired of traveling.



Standing there, in the hot noon sun, she lifted her face and let the warmth flow over her as Glee paced back and forth. The girl had it bad for the handsome Nick and she didn't like him being out of her sight.

"What if the guy has a gun and shoots them?" she muttered.

"Have some faith in your man, Glee. He hasn't made it this far on his looks alone."

"I wish I was more like Jinx. She doesn't ever worry about Buck."

"The hell she doesn't," Priscilla laughed. "You two are from the same pea pod. She just deals with it differently. Relax, honey. You're gonna give yourself a stroke in this heat."

"Oh, here they come." Jinx played like she didn't care, knowing the desperate act was pathetic.

Priscilla shook her head and met Strafe halfway. "Everything okay?"

"He's got enough for all three trucks," Strafe told her. "Nice guy. He has a family, couple of small kids and pretty wife. They're eager to trade."

"Good."

"Hey, you don't care I'm back?" Nick shouted at Glee.

She and Strafe watched as Glee ran toward Nick and jumped on him, nearly knocking them both to the ground.

"Come here, I wanna show you something."

Strafe took her hand and led her around the back of the building, through a door and into a dim room that looked like it had been an office at one time. He walked to the wall where a huge map hung and pointed.

"I think this might be our new home," he said, tapping the map.

"Really?" Eager to see, she went to the wall and leaned in, trying to get a good look. "Where?"

"Right there. It's about fifty miles up into the mountains. Plenty of fishing, wildlife and if my hunch is right, maybe some cabins that could be fixed up."

"Cabins?"

"If not, we can build them. Rebels won't travel that far, they don't really have the stamina to."

"You mean the guts," she corrected.

"Yeah. This guy says city trucks travel through about once a month. We're halfway between New York City and Roanoke. Traveling that far, they should have some good stuff. Plus, we can hit them in a variety of different places," he said, drawing a circle on the map with his finger. "No way to pin us down like last time."

Yeah, last time. She didn't like thinking about last time. "It sounds pretty good."

"Sounds damn good," Strafe said, pulling her to him. "How are you feeling, really?"

"I feel great." His erection pressed into her belly and she knew he wouldn't act on it if she wasn't up for it. But she was up for it. "I do have this one ache."

Worry crossed his face. "Where?"

"Right here," she answered, cupping her breasts. "And here." This time she ground herself against him. "I think those parts have been neglected far too long."

Oh, the way his eyes darkened made her heart flutter.

"I want to undress you, lay you out and feast on you." His words rumbled from his chest like a starving, desperate man.

They both looked around. Not the time or the place for that.

"Maybe a quick taste this time?" she suggested, knowing he wouldn't argue.

Without saying a word, he unhooked the first two latches of her vest, framed her breasts in the leather and dipped his head. As soon as his lips captured her nipple, she arched her back and stifled a cry of pleasure. It had only been a few days, but it felt like years since he'd touched her.

Blossoming from her hard tip were thousands of currents of pleasure traveling through her chest into her stomach and crashing in her clit. Unwilling to wait, she

unhooked her pants and wiggled them down her legs as Strafe continued to pleasure her breasts. Toeing off her boots, she kicked her legs until the too-confining leather slid free.

"Eager?" Strafe asked, licking at her nipple.

"God. Yes. Don't keep me waiting." It wouldn't be long before someone happened along and found them and she wanted him inside her before that happened.

Strafe released her to cover himself. She took the time to crawl up on a desk and position her butt at the edge. Opening her legs, she stroked her sensitive flesh and watched as Strafe devoured the sight.

"We're building a cabin far away from everyone," he told her, moving forward with his cock jutting out of his jeans. "I want to do things that make you scream. Loud."

"Make me scream now." Spreading her fingers, she separated her lips and invited him in.

Gripping her hips, he tilted her, nudged against her eager pussy and slid in with one slow thrust. She felt every inch of muscle stretch, felt each nerve ending spark and when he bumped her cervix, she sighed, feeling full and complete.

"I wish I could stay inside you forever." Strafe leaned forward and rested his forehead against hers. "I love you."

On those words he pulled back and began a steady thrust that quickly built friction between them. Their gazes locked and held as he pumped into her. Along with the incredible sensations filling and spreading throughout her body, his gaze sparked fire in her chest. So much emotion. She could see it, feel it and knew his love for her went deeper than sating his body.

His thrusts grew harsher, more forceful as he neared his limit. The head of his cock rubbed that special spot inside her walls, blasting her with pleasure that stole her breath.

"Together," he growled, digging his fingers into her hips.

"Always together," she panted, reaching for that last touch of sensation to toss her into heaven.

Strafe gave it to her. He pinched her swollen clit and together they exploded in a rush of sensual pleasure. She swore her soul left her body, floated and looked down on the erotic sight of them locked together in passion. It made up for all the lost years.

When she merged with her body again, her orgasm ebbed away and she fell onto his chest. Strafe wrapped her tightly in his arms and kissed the top of her head.

"I love you, Strafe. I haven't told you that yet, but I love you with all my heart." A single tear streamed down her cheek, soaking into his shirt right over his heart.

Strafe pushed her back, wiped away the moisture and then kissed her. A light brush of the lips, so soft it turned it her upside down and inside out. He then picked up her pants and helped her dress before disposing of the condom and tucking himself away. He walked to the wall and removed the map, rolled it up and tucked it in the back of his jeans.

With his arm draped over her shoulder they made their way back outside.

"What are we gonna do when you run out of condoms?" she asked, suddenly concerned.

Strafe barked a laugh. "Babe, we got four cases on that truck plus the three I already had. They'll lose their shelf life before we use them all."

Priscilla turned and caught sight of Glee and Nick coming around the corner of the building. Glee's hair was mussed and Nick's shirt wasn't tucked in. The flush on their faces looked familiar.

"We aren't the only ones using them," Priscilla said, nodding toward them.

"No, we aren't. Check this out."

Looking where Strafe pointed, she saw Buck tucking his shirt into his jeans as Jinx finished fastening her vest. They apparently chose a less private place to be intimate. Whatever did it for them.

The three couples met up, arms tangled around each other and faces glowing.

"Now that we've all had a nice, blood-surgingly break, should we get that fuel and be on our way?" Strafe hugged her tight against him.

"Fuel's almost all loaded," Nick informed him. "I had the poor bachelor bastards do it."

Buck snickered. "I'll go check on it."

Nick, Glee, Buck and Jinx walked off. Strafe looked up the mountain and then down at her. "Did you ever think you'd be shacking up with a pirate?"

"What makes you think you're my first?"

"Take that back," he growled. "Take that back or I'll spank your ass."

"Gotta catch me first," she teased and took off running. Strafe was only two steps behind her. In the blink of an eye, he snatched her around her tummy, tossed her over his shoulder and landed one hard smack to her ass. Yelping, she screamed, "You wicked pirate."

"That's me. Let's go make a home, pirate woman."

Bouncing against his back, she looked toward the mountain. "Yeah, let's go make a home."

## About the Author

Robin Leigh Miller lives in central Pennsylvania with her wonderful husband, three children and two German Shepherds. A retired dirt-track driver, Robin now gets her adrenaline fix by putting her characters through their paces.

The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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