

Chapter Fifteen

Victory

We arrive home and find William is still gone, but traces of him being there remain in the form of dirty laundry thrown on the bathroom floor and dishes in the sink. The sound of wood crashing against wood causes me to jump. The sound came from out back and Liam quickly goes to investigate.

Following him, I see the door to his work shed is blowing in the wind, unhinged in the upper left corner, the plywood hangs at an odd angle banging against the structure.

“I thought that was locked?” I ask.

Liam’s jaw flexes as he stares at the broken door. “It was.”

He enters the shed, but I wait outside. I know this is his private sanctuary, and even though he produces beautiful woodwork behind the closed door, I’m afraid of what else he might do in there.

He exits moments later, with a battered tool box that has seen better days.

“Are you going to fix the door to the shed?” I ask.

He angrily tosses the metal toolbox to the ground, pieces of tin exploding in all directions. “He’s taken my computer.”

“You’re computer?” I’m flabbergasted by what he’s just admitted to me. “That’s contraband. Only top ranking government officials have access to personal computers.”

He looks at me as he puts his hands in his pockets. His steady eyes hold mine. Cold truth floating in them.

This is how he knows.

How he found out about me.

He’s been lying to me from the start.

I feel the tremble set into my bones as the truth of it hits me. The fear wrapping around my heart like a fist.

I take a step back as my hands begin to visibly tremble. “You work for the Brotherhood.”

Deny it. Please say that there is another reason. There must be. It simply can’t be the truth.

He reaches for me, but I jerk back.

“Victory, wait.”

I shake my head, tears brimming. “How can you? How can you be one of them?”

“You need to . . . ”

I shake my head. “Leave me alone.”

I turn on a heel and head into the house. Defeated upon learning the truth behind my one husband I thought I could trust, I head for my room. I don’t know why I am mad. I hardly know the man. Yet here I am, running up the stairs with tears on my face.

I shut myself into my sanctuary and sink into the chair, grabbing a tissue for my eyes. I suppose I wanted him to be something else. The way he looked at me made me feel things I never felt before. The desire he stirs up in me with one glance, one smile, one kiss.

In my imagination he was . . . not this.

Not one of their lackeys.

He was better.

Now I don’t know what he is.

And I don’t like the sound of my door opening with my name on his rough voice. I don’t like him. Because I can no longer trust him.

He is one of them.

It’s always been us—the community—following *their* rules. Watching our loved ones carried away by them. Us against the brotherhood. A silent, invisible barrier always between us.

He told me he would protect me, but the truth is, I need protection against him.

Now he stands in my dressing room, arms crossed, and he is them.

So what does that make me?