

## Read Novel Alpha Male Chapter 1

### Alpha Male Chapter 1-Rafe

Willow Bonnier's black dress flowed in all the right places, stopping at a demure length above her knees. The curve of her ass, *the gentle swell of her breasts*, both visible through the laptop monitor I used to watch the recording. She swayed, stepped forward, and caught herself. Her face turned to one side. I caught a glimpse of her profile—all arched brows, a hint of cherry red lips against a pale face, and brown hair drawn back into a bun at the nape of her neck beneath the black lace veil that disguised her eyes.

Perfect attire for a celebrity funeral.

Except that funeral observed the life of someone who hadn't been famous, and who never should have come to my attention.

Neither should she.

Three tiny forms clung to raised calves that were tucked into five-inch heels as the coffin lowered into the ground.

I gripped either side of the screen, my guilt at the woman's situation assuaged by a wave of desire so strong I wanted to reach through the screen and pluck her out into my office. Lay her on my desk, peel her black clothing away from pale skin layer by layer, and worship her until her tears turned to ones of pleasure. Hearing my name on her lips as I thrust into her and made her mine would be a bonus of a different sort, but a woman like that shouldn't have to cry the way she did.

And I shouldn't have thoughts like that about someone I would never meet.

It's not nice to lust after a grieving woman.

"Not your style?" Killian Du Pont, manager of Fray and my best friend, planted his elbows on my desk and leaned forward.

"Said that aloud, did I?" I shot him a sideways glance, though the details at the bottom of the screen were burned into my mind.

Willow Bonnier, mother of five, husband killed by a Vespa in Melbourne's city center.

A fvcking Vespa.

“How does that even happen?” I squinted at the screen, tried to turn the concept over in my head, and came up blank.

Killian shrugged and sat back in my leather desk chair. “Prey, mate. Fvcking prey.”

“Damn.” I couldn’t keep my eyes off her.

The children detached from her slim legs, moving forward where a priest or some such person crouched to speak to them. She clutched her umbrella in a white-knuckled grip obvious through the grainy feed, but didn’t step forward. Even in the face of what I assumed to be all-encompassing grief, she stood strong and tall in those killer heels.

I could admire that. It fueled my desire for a woman I’d never met.

Stay untouchable. Unattainable.

My MO for the past few years since opening Fray. It made for fun playmates, excellent bedmates, and no tears come morning.

No happy ever after there, either.

A poor boy’s dream, though I hadn’t been that kid since I worked my a\*s to the bone and built my own club from the ground up. Still, something about her grabbed me right in the feels.

Not the wandering-hand-beneath-a-desk type feels, but the sort that grabbed on hard and refused to let go.

“Don’t you go getting obsessed over someone you’re not meant for.” Killian’s voice held a note of warning I couldn’t ignore, or not rise to. From the bastard’s grin, he fvcking well knew it too.

It hit a touch too close to home.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Remember that pretty little wallaby you had a thing for? Lila, right? The one who thought you were so handsome until you shifted, and we came close to resuscitating her on the sp0t.”

“Yeah.” A muscle flickered in my cheek. I clenched my teeth hard to suppress it. “She was a real sweetheart. I wanted to collar her too.”

“Wasn’t meant to be, brother.” Killian rose and clapped my shoulder hard enough to sting.

I didn’t give my friend the pleasure of a grunt. He might get something else later from me for comeuppance, but it wouldn’t be that, and I promised myself he wouldn’t like it, either. “Yeah. Shit happens.”

“It does.”

My office fell into a brooding silence while the video played in my periphery. I tapped the top of my laptop screen with a manicured fingernail. Ink wrapped my wrist from my exposed forearms where I’d rolled my sleeves back. A long snake curled around the tanned skin there, spreading into an open jaw both above and below my hand. If I grabbed something—or someone—then the snake did too, its fangs piercing down.

An illusion, like so much else in my life. The endless party at club level, all pleasure and good times. The united front we presented when in reality, everything pulled a little more apart at the seams day by day.

That bitter seed was a hard one to swallow, but swallow I did.

“This is recent, yeah?” Tap, tap, tap.

“A few weeks ago.”

“And you’re telling me now?” The local shifter community contained fewer numbers than I would have liked.

A touch over five million people in the city, fewer in the center. The shifter population made up an insignificant percentage, most opting to live in rural communities where they could live their lifestyle to their own preference without risk of judgment or ousting themselves to the rest of humanity.

Fray provided city-dwellers a few hours of freedom each week in a judgment-free zone. At least, that was how I’d designed the club.

I pressed my lips together in a tight line. Killian was right. My world had no place for a woman like her, no matter how much I might like to bring her into it. Too sweet. Too gentle.

I swallowed back my arousal and resolved to wear it out on one of the rope bunnies downstairs. The shifter club opened hours ago, and I needed to make an appearance.

Prey.

I was in the mood for something trussed up and tempting.

Forcing my gaze above the level of the screen to avoid catching another glimpse of her, I shut my laptop and sent Killian a feral grin. I needed a distraction. And to stay the hell away from grieving widows.

“Let’s go play.”