

Read Novel Alpha Male

Alpha Male Chapter 7-Rafe

Willow Bonnier changed my life in a matter of hours. To be fair, I'd stalked the woman for over a month, but having her in my arms, her berries and lilies scent filling my office ... hell, that sort of woman broke even me. I'd shown her my deepest secrets, and she hadn't balked at them. At the demonic soul I possessed when I wanted hers, as well.

Hell yes, I was a greedy man. When it came to her, I refused to be anything else. She left me sitting on the floor and leaning against my desk, giggling as she pressed yet more kisses to my lips and gathered her clothes for her trip home to her children, citing babysitter requirements.

At some point, I would meet her kids. Though our relationship hadn't surpassed fledgling status, I knew she was it for me. My One. The woman I needed in my life.

I remembered a fine detail as she dashed for the door. "Willow. Did you get the money I sent through?"

Silence reigned on the other side of my desk.

She cleared her throat. "Yes."

"All in order?" If I'd been smart, I would have noted her stunted words, the soft quality in her voice that hadn't been there before.

"Of course."

"Good."

The door shut behind her. I reveled in the silence of my office, her phantom touch grazing my skin in memory of our frantic fucking, and let myself drift while my ass went numb on the cold, hard floor.

My office. Friday. Wear something cute.

I sent the message to her Monday morning the week after I first fucked her on my desk, unable to hold off any longer. She'd met me for a few chaste dates,

and a little playtime in one of the upstairs playrooms. I didn't take her downstairs again and requested she never play there again, with me, or anyone else. Not after what could have happened to her the last time she played there.

Still, we'd missed the exclusive talk, and I hadn't confirmed where she stood on the matter. For the first time, I cared whether another man touched my playdate, as she'd fast become something much more. Maybe that chat hadn't occurred because I didn't feel the need for it on my side of the equation. Willow's sassy attitude and that sweet-as-cherry lips soothed every ache and scar I'd covered over the years with work and building my businesses.

That she might be open to a relationship lit a spark of hope in my chest. Another word I couldn't say—yet—but that last caveat ruined me for anyone else.

I couldn't bear the thought of her with anyone else, their hands on her sweet body, breathing in her scent, or stealing her moans. Lansdown gave me the perfect excuse to keep her away from the darker areas. As her current lover, I claimed the prerogative of teaching her the literal ropes of pain and pleasure. And where the line lay for her.

Willow occupied my thoughts from dawn until close when we evicted the few loiterers from Fray's doors. The bar cut off an hour earlier, leaving time for the regulars to finish their drinks and move on for the night with their chosen partner.

Killian and I took to populating a pair of lounges by the downstairs bar. Lux served us alcohol post the last-drinks call, knowing it would wreak havoc with the remaining clientele. A guy had to get his giggles somewhere. I smiled into my drink. The emu shifter flirted with a couple of local guys who would never end up taking her home tonight or any night.

My phone buzzed as she perched her round ass on the side of Killian's lounge chair and leaned forward to laugh at something her paramours said that wasn't remotely amusing. Killian looked away in the opposite direction, disdain written across his face. It did nothing to conceal the raging hard-on he had at her proximity.

I dug into my pocket for my phone, placed my top-end scotch on the small table at my side, and read Willow's reply.

Can't wait. And I have the perfect thing.

Of course she did. No matter what I said or did, Willow came back to me with a smile and acceptance. If any of my demands on her time or body made her uncomfortable, either she'd become the perfect actress or it didn't bother her. She took everything in stride. As far as I could tell, our hours together were perfect.

Being with her was easy.

"Still in that honeymoon phase, huh?" Killian stared at the stage where dancers packed up the props as the club wound down for the night. He grimaced and adjusted himself not-so-discreetly as Lux moved her leather-clad tush off his chair. "It'll wear off."

"You're in a foul mood." I eyed him, then shut up. There was no point poking the proverbial bear when he was like this.

"They won't accept her. You know that."

"Accept who?" Lux leaned over my chair, topping up my whiskey. She wiggled the bottle in Killian's direction, making sure he got an eyeful of her tits, and wiggled her shoulders to seal the deal. "Your new girl?" A small frown marred her smooth, pixie-like features.

"He's in love with her. A tiny little marsupial shifter. Prey." Killian spat the last word before I could intervene.

I leaned back and closed my eyes. My fingers ached, my talons pressing against the invisible barrier between man and beast. A long breath calmed me and pushed my predator back. When I opened my eyes, Lux stood before me, concern written across her face.

"Why would you—" She stopped and seemed to reconsider, forming each word with care. "Are you able to prevent another incident?"

"Are you able to shut up, look pretty, and do your fvcking job?" I snapped back.

Lux recoiled, horrified at my words. Behind her, James, her co-bartender, fixed me with a hard stare and crossed his arms over his chest as her eyes filled with tears.

I bit back the urge to call myself everything under the sun. I'd promised to protect the people in my employ, promised to give them a safe haven to play out their fantasies when the reality of hiding our dual natures became too much. A few moments of a bad mood and I'd broken that for someone precious. Lux had been with me since the day Fray opened. She deserved better.

Breathing hard through my nose, I pushed up to apologize but never got there. A large hand pressed to my chest and shoved me back. Hard.

"You don't get to speak to her like that." Killian loomed over me. He cut an imposing figure in his choice of all black from waistcoat to suit pants, but I knew him too well to be afraid of him. Accepting of the broken nose I'd rock if he chose to punch me, sure. "Apologize."

"I was trying to." You asshole. I didn't know if I wanted to curse him or myself. Or both of us.

"Well?" He stepped aside, a hand held out in Lux's direction.

I ignored my best friend and stepped up to Lux, giving her a little distance. Killian wasn't the only one who could be intimidating between us, and that wasn't my desire. "I'm sorry, Lux. You don't deserve to wear the fear gathering in me. I want Willow to be accepted for who she is. She—" I swiped a hand through my hair too hard, scratching my scalp. "She wants that too. I think."

"She wants you. I don't think she's got a clue what sort of baggage you come with." Killian stood behind Lux, his arms folded as he glared daggers at me.

"Probably not." I swallowed. Willow brought her own furry baggage to our dynamic, but that didn't scare me. That she might want someone to help her with her family gave me renewed purpose. We needed to have that chat. Maybe I should have asked her to come by sooner. "Will you accept my apology, Lux?"

"You two are a pair of professional assholes." *She swiped at her eyes with the back of her hand, smearing mascara. "But you're my damn assholes. Someone has to look after you. Make sure you spoil your girl, Rafe. But for fvck's sake, don't terrify her."*

“Got the t-shirt for that already.” I gave her a rueful smile she returned with a roll of her eyes. I reached out to brush the smeared makeup away, but a glare from Killian gave me pause. “I promise I’ll stop being a d!ck. To you all.”

I pulled out my phone and sent off a quick message to Willow.

Are you free tomorrow?

“Good luck with that,” Killian called, a sneer lilted his voice.

He could forgive me later. For now, I strode away, watching the three dots for a return message.

What do you have in mind?

My lips curled up in a smile. This was going to be so much fun.