

Chapter 10 – By Fate I Conquer Cora Reilly

Nothing was better to drive bodyguards away than an embarrassing fight between love birds. Her bodyguards pretended not to pay attention to the fight, obviously embarrassed by the scene. Well-trained dogs, all of them. I slid my silver knuckleduster on in case Marcella's fiancé put up more of a fight than he looked.

"Closer," I said to Gunnar who steered the car toward Marcella.

She looked furious. Cheeks flushed, looking absolutely striking against her porcelain skin.

"Fucking Snow White," I muttered. The Marcella from my dreams had a remarkable similarity to the angry Marcella of the present, only that her flushed cheeks had a very different reason then.

Gunnar gave me a curious look but I ignored him. Marcella shoved her fiancé's shoulder and turned on her heel, so her hair hit him smack in the face. After a gob-smacked expression, he grabbed her arm and her bodyguards were all eyes now. We only had one chance. Soon they'd be swarming around the princess again and we'd have no chance to get near her. I shoved the door open before Gunnar had come to a stop and jumped out of the car.

I stormed toward Marcella with complete tunnel vision. Her eyes hit me and her face transformed from confusion to realization then shock. Those plump lips parted for a cry. Her bodyguards began running, pulling their guns.

Gunnar jumped out of the car, raised his pump gun and fired. The sound transformed the peaceful campus into a hellhole. Screams sounded and people scattered, running for their lives.

Their panic was to our advantage. They stumbled into Marcella's bodyguards who tried to reach us, slowing them down. I reached Marcella and her fiancé. He grabbed his gun, but I was faster and slammed my fist with the knuckleduster into his face. Blood shot out of his nose and mouth and he toppled to the ground. I didn't have time to off him, not with all hell breaking loose.

It was only a matter of minutes before dozens of Famiglia soldiers would enter the scene to protect their princess. I knew what would happen if they got their hands on me. They'd deliver me to Vitiello and what he'd done to my father would look like kid's play in comparison to what he'd do to me for attacking his precious offspring. Not going to happen.

Nothing mattered as I finally grabbed Marcella's arm and jerked her toward me. Her wide, shocked blue eyes hit me like a sledgehammer. Her eyes locked on mine, not

afraid, only surprised. The blue of her irises were accentuated by a darker outer ring. The momentum had thrust her against my chest. A cloud of her exotic perfume, something subtly sweet but also spicy, hit me. She was even shorter than I'd thought. Even with high heels, she only reached my nose. Before she could react, I pressed the chloroform-drenched tissue over her mouth.

Her eyelids drooped and she sagged against me. I hoisted her over my shoulder and ran toward the van. Gunnar was still firing at the bodyguards who didn't have a choice but to seek cover, even if their fear of Vitiello's wrath made them reckless. I put Marcella down on the loading area of the van before I closed the door and slid into the passenger seat. After a signal from me, Gunnar jumped in and hit the gas.

"I got one of them."

He held out the pump gun and I took it in case I'd have to deal with pursuers. Soon the campus disappeared in the distance and Gunnar steered the car into a parking garage where we switched cars for the first time. The new van with the laundry logo belonged to a family member of one of the old ladies. I doubted Earl had told them what we'd use it for. He didn't care if Vitiello got their hands on them, as long as our plan worked out. Unimportant collateral damage.

Marcella didn't stir when I carried her from one car to the other.

After thirty more minutes, when I was fairly sure that we weren't being followed, I set the pump gun down onto the floorboard. Snow White was slowly coming to, groaning and moaning in a way that reminded me of last night's dream. I twisted around in the seat to watch her. The dose I'd hit her with hadn't been very potent. Her black lashes fluttered against her pale skin.

I'd been almost one-hundred percent sure that her photos had been photoshopped heavily, but now from close up, I realized Marcella Vitiello was every bit as immaculately gorgeous as her Instagram and press photos had suggested. I had to resist the urge to move even closer, to touch her and find out if her skin felt as smooth as it looked. The short moment I'd grabbed her had been over in a flash and I hadn't had time to pay attention.

Her eyelids shot up and she looked at me, piercing and unafraid. I froze, stunned by the intensity of her gaze, by the way it grabbed hold of me and wouldn't let go. Luckily, the moment was over quickly. Her eyes rolled back and closed, and I stifled a sigh of relief to be freed of her penetrating stare. Fuck.

We changed cars two more times before we reached our new clubhouse out in the woods northeast of Morristown. My heart rate began to slow when we drove through the wire-netting fence gates. I'd half expected Vitiello and his soldiers to launch an attack on us. By now, Marcella was wiggling, still out of it, but growing increasingly more alert. This time I didn't make the mistake of looking at her again.

Earl waited on the porch of the old farmhouse, arms crossed. He'd received my message about our successful abduction. I jumped out of the van with a thumbs up in Earl's direction and opened the door of the loading area. Marcella sat up, supporting herself with one arm. She tossed her head back to glare at me when I towered over her.

"Time to move into your temporary home, Miss Vitiello."

I bent down to pick her up but she scurried backward. "Don't touch me with your dirty hands."

She aimed a kick at my crotch, but I grabbed her ankle before she could do real damage and jerked her in my direction. She didn't have any fight experience, so I had no trouble hoisting her out of the transporter. My attempt to set her down on the ground so she could walk by herself was thwarted when she aimed another kick at my shin.

"Fuck it, bitch."

Her indignant blue eyes hit me. Nobody had probably ever called her bitch before, and it wasn't usually a term I threw around, but she really pissed me off.

"Walk or I'll carry you over my shoulder so my brothers can see your perky ass."

She stiffened which gave me the chance to actually put her down on her feet and grab her arm to drag her along. Marcella struggled against my hold but I only tightened my fingers around her upper arm, snarling.

"Stop it."

She flinched before her mouth set in a thin, stubborn line, but at least she finally followed me without a fight.

Earl came down the three steps of the porch and met us halfway.

"Nobody followed you?" Earl asked, scanning Marcella from head to toe.

She shuddered. I wasn't sure if it was because of Earl or because she finally knew who we were. Unlike Gunnar and me, Earl wore his cut with the big Tartarus MC script on the back and smaller on the front.

"Nobody, don't worry. We were careful," I said. I moved toward the house but Earl raised his hand to stop me.

"The kennels," Earl ordered with a sharp nod in the direction of the line of cages down the slope from the house.

I hesitated, my brows pulling together.

Earl's eyes sharpened in warning. "Show the whore her rightful place."

Marcella tensed, but when I started dragging her toward the kennels, fight returned to her body. Eventually, I had enough and hoisted her up on my shoulder as I'd promised. She was a lightweight but what she lacked in weight, she made up with liveness and bite. She tried to scratch my neck and arms, every inch of skin that wasn't covered by clothes.

"You're going to regret this! My father will kill you."

Bearing the sting of her nails stoically, I muttered, "I'm sure he'd love to dismember me, but I won't give him a chance."

Barking welcomed us as we reached the kennels. They were one of the new additions to the property. Earl never went anywhere without a few of his fight dogs.

"Oh God," Marcella whispered. Maybe she thought I hadn't heard her. It certainly hadn't been meant for my ears, but for the first time, I sensed her fear and felt it in the tremor of her body.

It was strange, but I didn't feel any satisfaction at her distress.

I carried her into the only vacant kennel despite her struggling. Rottweilers filled the other cages, beasts that my uncle had turned into vicious fighting machines that only obeyed him, and sometimes me. Their barks and snarls rose in volume at the sight of a stranger.

I dropped her unceremoniously on her feet then turned and threw the cage door shut. The dogs sandwiching her kennel jumped against the bars, snarling and spit flying, as their vicious eyes fixated on Marcella, eager to tear into her. Earl earned good money with dog fights but rumor had it that he'd disposed of traitors that way in the past too, but that had been before my time.

Marcella flinched and backed against the wall of the dog kennel, clutching one of her expensive-looking black high heels. Earl watched everything with a satisfied smile before he strolled over to me. For some reason, seeing her in a cage gave me the same uncomfortable sensation I'd experienced whenever I'd seen a tiger in the zoo. She didn't belong in there, but this wasn't about my unreasonable feelings but about revenge. Her discomfort would be short-lived and nothing in comparison to the hell I'd lived after her father had butchered mine.

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