

Chapter 14 – By Fate I Conquer Cora Reilly

“I won’t go looking for the second shoe, no matter how expensive those heels were. And nobody cares how you look. You won’t need fancy shoes any time soon.” Not to mention that the girl looked like a sex bomb even in her ripped clothes. She’d probably still look like a fucking model in a potato sack.

Marcella smirked and came toward me, her hips swaying from side to side in the most mesmerizing way, before she stopped close to the bars. Last night when I’d caught Denver peeing against the hut, I’d seen behind her arrogant mask for a moment but now her expression was steel again.

“You care from the way you keep checking me out. I’ve been thinking about you all night...”

I raised an eyebrow. “I won’t release you for a quick fuck, no matter how fuckable you are. But nice try.”

Her lips thinned. “I’d rather sleep in a kennel with those dogs than fuck you. But I can tell you’ve given it plenty of thought.”

Her eyes held so much arrogance I had to resist the urge to shove open the door and jerk her against me to shut her up.

“Early in the morning, I realized where I’d seen you before. In the club a few weeks ago. You watched me like all men do, as if you would sell your left kidney for a night with me.”

I grabbed a bar, chuckling. “Damn, you are conceited as fuck. I was watching you because I was looking for an opportunity to kidnap you.”

Marcella grabbed the bar below my fingers, leaning forward, bringing our faces so much closer. The top buttons of her silk blouse had ripped off, giving me a view down her cleavage and the enticing swell of her breasts. I tore my gaze away but was met with her soul-crushing eyes. I’d never seen eyes as blue as hers, but with a darker ring around them, never seen skin so immaculate, almost pearlescent, especially against her black hair. It was as if she’d really materialized out of a fairy tale. A very dirty, adult fairy tale. Snow White indeed.

“But that’s not why you couldn’t take your eyes off me. I know the look you had on your face. You can deny it all you want, but I bet you fantasized about me after that day.”

I wished she was wrong. But the girl was right. She was so gorgeous, that even after a night in a kennel without any access to a bathroom, she made the dolled-up girls in the

clubhouse look like gutter rats. "Your beauty won't get you out of here, it won't save you."

Her smile widened as if she knew better, as if she was absolutely sure that she would be saved.

"Even your father won't find this place if that's what you hope for. He can't save you," I continued.

"My father's going to save me. He's going to kill everyone who stands in his way. Every man, every club girl, even your little brother. He'll kill them as brutally as he's capable of, and my father is the most capable man when it comes to brutality, Maddox. You'll watch them all bleed to death at your feet, their bowels strewn about the floor like confetti. Gray will die, and in the last moments of your life, you'll listen to his cries and feel guilty for bringing this upon him and yourself."

Her words caught me by surprise, especially the vehemence and fierceness in them. This girl didn't seem like she shied back from the dirty side of life, but I doubted she'd ever seen blood and death, certainly not like I had.

Her words also revealed how attentive she truly was. From seeing us interact for barely a moment, Marcella had already figured out that I felt very protective toward Gray and she was trying to play on my worry for him. She was good, and more dangerous than I'd given her credit for. I needed to be careful around her for more than one reason.

"You think you know everything, don't you? But you don't, Snow White," I growled. Marcella's eyebrows twitched upward. "I know how capable your father is. You only heard the stories, but I've seen him in action. I watched him dismember and skin my father and his men when I was only a little boy. I kneeled in their blood while your father kept hacking at their corpses like a goddamn maniac. I pissed my pants, terrified he'd find me and kill me too. I still hear the screams in my nightmares. And you want to tell me I don't know what your father's capable of?"

For the first time, my words broke through her cold beautiful mask. Her face softened with realization then understanding and worse, compassion.

Seeing the softer angles of her face hit me like a fist to the stomach.

I'd heard the stories, countless versions of the events. If my father's men told the story, it glorified him and his actions as if he was superhuman. If outsiders whispered the stories in hushed voices in my presence, even their words still rang with respect and sick fascination. I'd been proud whenever I'd come across that story. Now for the first time in my life, I wasn't. For the first time, I saw the other side of the coin, a very bloody, painful truth.

Maddox's words had been vicious, but I'd seen the pain the memory brought in his blue eyes. I didn't want to imagine how horrible it must have been for a little boy to watch his father being killed, especially in such a brutal way.

I masked my feelings, not wanting to feel pity for the man who had kidnapped me. Whatever cruelty he'd suffered as a boy didn't justify his actions now. "Then you should be reasonable and release me before my father gets his hands on you," I said.

Maddox stepped back from the bars. "I've been waiting all my life for the chance to kill your father. Nothing will take this from me. Nothing."

There wasn't a flicker of doubt in Maddox's eyes. He would go through with his plan and the whole club seemed to back him. My father's death was their only goal. They would stop at nothing. "So your biker friends are willing to die so you can get your revenge?"

"It's not just my revenge. Every single one of us hungers for revenge. Your father killed an entire chapter. My uncle lost his brother. None of us are going to rest before the score is settled, and we are all willing to die for it."

"You will," I said with a shrug, sounding certain even when I wasn't. Dad was powerful but he might act without thinking where I was concerned. He didn't have any weakness except for his love for his family. He wouldn't listen to reason if my life was on the line. And, Mom, the person who could usually reason with him when he was going berserk was probably in no state to think clearly.

"Revenge is a waste of time and energy," I lied.

Maddox smiled cockily. I had to admit I was surprised by his straight, white teeth, and pleasant smell. For some reason, I'd always imagined bikers to be a little raggy, with unwashed hair, matted from their stinking helmet, and yellow-tinged teeth. Even his hair looked silky smooth as it fell into his eyes. He pushed it back, a habit I'd noticed before.

"Do you use bleach to keep your teeth so white? With all the smoking you're doing, that seems like the only way for you to have nice teeth."

Maddox shook his head with a disbelieving look, a chuckle bursting forth. "Fuck, only you can think about someone's teeth while being in captivity by your father's mortal enemy."

He leaned against the bars, and I tried to see him as a man I might have met in a club, not my enemy and captor. He would have been off-limits then, with his tattoos and his non-Famiglia heritage, and so I wouldn't have given him the second glance I gave him now, but he wasn't hard on the eye with his sharp-angled face, blue eyes, and tall, muscled frame. The dark jeans, white tee, and black leather cut really worked in his favor, even when I'd never been a girl who liked the casual look.

Playing the only card I had, using my best weapon, wouldn't be impossible with him. If it were any other of the bikers, even my life on the line, couldn't have made me flirt with them. But with Maddox...

He had been checking me out from the first moment he saw me, and not just in a captor-captive way. A man's desire was a thing I was familiar with, at least from a distance. And Maddox desired me. Not as much as revenge. Not yet.

"There isn't much else I can do," I said, my voice less hostile, softer and almost playful.

"You could cry and beg for mercy."

"Would it change anything?" I asked dryly.

"No."

"I don't like to waste my time," I said. "Life's too short not to do the things we enjoy..."

He smiled, the dimple, which wasn't really one, but a scar, appearing in his cheek.

"Then why are you wasting your time flirting with me, spoiled princess? Maybe you think I'm an animal, but my cock's not running the show. Sorry to disappoint you."

He tipped an imaginary hat and stepped back from the bars, the smile dropping and his eyes becoming more vigilant. "Keep your feet still, and don't flirt with my club brothers, they might take more than you bargain for. But if you keep your head down, then you'll soon return home without a hair out of place. Your inheritance will guarantee you a life full of shopping trips after you've dried your tears over your daddy's death."