

Read Untouchable (Unstoppable 1) by Danielle Hill

Chapter 19-20

Nineteen

Riley

“You ready, hon?”

My hands dunked the mug into the warm water, lifted it, rinsed it, and then placed it onto the drainer. Then a bowl. Dunk. Lift. Rinse. Place. Then a fork. And a spoon. Then they ran out of dishes. I left them immersed in the sink, looking down until a drop of water plonked onto the surface, leaving a spiralled ripple. I squeezed my eyelids closed, holding off another bout of tears.

“Oh, hon.” Mom tugged me into her embrace. “He’ll be okay. You’ll see. Men don’t deal well with emotion, and he’s had a boat load dumped on him recently. Just be there for him.”

“He doesn’t want—”

“He does,” she cut in. “He might not say it, might not even realize it, but he needs you right now.”

I nodded, inhaling a shaky breath while steeling my shoulders and easing back out of her hold. Time. Everyone said to give him time. I could do that. But today, I’d stand by his side whether he wanted me to or not. I’d hold his hand while he buried his family, and I wouldn’t let go. Mom was right.

Today, at the very least, he needed me.

I’d never been to a funeral before. I’d never had anyone to lose, not really. My mom had always been so young that she’d seemed invincible to me. I’d never contemplated her death. I had no living grandparents that I knew of. My mom’s mom had passed only months after I was born. There were no aunts, uncles, or cousins. Death had never touched me. Until now.

Mourners gathered in black, heads low, faces drawn and pale, silent tears tracking over their cheeks. The weather matched the occasion. Ominous clouds hovered, threatening a downpour that came as the twin coffins lowered, side by side, into the ground. Heavy mud splattered on top of the polished surfaces, obscuring them from sight forever. Reno and I remained together, his hand clutching mine tightly, as it had all day, watching through a sheet of horizontal rain as earth slowly filled the space.

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I hadn’t cried. Couldn’t. Maybe I’d run out of tears. Or maybe it was seeing Reno standing outside his trailer, dressed in black, his proud body standing tall and his hands in his pockets. But the eyes that met mine had belonged to the three-year-old little boy who’d thought Brett was a superhero who’d saved his family. He’d looked so lost. I’d ran

to him. Took his hand. And never let go. I would be strong for him. I'd wait for him and I'd be there as long as he needed me.

He shook out of my grasp in the car on the way to the wake, which was being held at Trent Donovan's place. I let him go. Reluctantly. The next time I saw him, he had a glass of whisky in his hand. And by the looks of it, not his first. I got waylaid by Mrs. Donovan, Trent's wife, on my way over to him. Foot tapping with impatience and my concern building, I listened politely as she asked how Reno was doing and expressed how much Brett had meant to her and her husband. The Donovans were high school sweethearts, and both had attended high school with Brett. It was clear how much they cared about him, and by extension Reno. They'd been helping with the funeral arrangements, Brett's insurance, the running of the garage. All the grown-up things Reno shouldn't have had to deal with yet. I was glad he had them. When I scanned the room for Reno and came up empty a third time, I excused myself and made a beeline for Leon instead.

"Le, have you seen Ren?"

Leon had been at Reno's place almost as much as I had. I'd seen two guys, who'd both broken bones with hardly more than a wince, shed tears for men they loved and would never get back. They'd gotten over the awkwardness mine and Reno's relationship caused, quickly realizing how trivial it was. Death had a way of putting things in perspective.

[Nobody Knows What Time It is on the Moon!](#)

"He went to take a leak," he said, hands jammed in his pockets. His eyes narrowed as he glanced around the room. "But that was a while ago."

He turned to the guys just behind him. "You seen Ren?"

"Thought he left a while ago," Mack said. The others frowned.

"Left?" I hissed, my accusatory glare landing back on Leon. "You let him leave?"

He held his hands up. "He said he was taking a piss, Ri." His eyes softened and he placed his hands on my shoulders. "Don't worry, babe. I'll go find him."

"No." I shrugged out of his hold, heading for the door. "I'll go."

"You sure? You want me to come with?"

"No, it's okay. Thanks, Le." I glanced back. "And sorry. For yelling."

He shrugged and smiled, but concern carved his features. "Nothing to be sorry for, Ri."

Liss dropped me at the entrance to the trailer park and I raced to Reno's place. The trailer sat in darkness, every window shuttered, but when I tried the door, it swung open with ease.

"Reno," I called, keeping my voice low.

I only had to take one step inside to find him. Slumped on the worn carpet with his head hanging low, one leg bent and the other stretched out in front of him, a bottle of whiskey propped against his thigh.

"Hey," I whispered, crossing the distance between us and dropping to my knees. "Hey, I'm here."

He made no move to touch me, but when I shifted the near empty bottle and took his face in my hands, he didn't stop me.

"I'm here." I breathed the words over and over, against his cheeks, his half-closed eyes, his head and his lips, as moisture tracked from the corners of my eyes and coasted down my face. He was so utterly broken and so fucking alone. But he still had me. I hadn't been able to get that through to him, and tonight, I needed him to know he would always have me. No matter what it cost me.

I kissed him, once, twice, with no response. Gripping his face harder, I pressed my mouth hard against his, my tongue sweeping against the seam of his lips, and he stirred. His hands shifted, grabbing each of my butt cheeks and dragging me roughly over his lap until I was straddling him. With a feral growl, he kneaded my flesh, his movements desperate, and then his head lifted, his mouth capturing mine with a brutality I hadn't expected.

Before I knew what was happening, he lifted me from the ground, his solid arms circling my body and carrying me through the narrow hallway. His lips never stopped their onslaught against mine. Pushing me through a door backward, I broke contact to get my bearings, but then I was airborne, my back landing on the thin mattress with a winding thump. I pushed my elbows into the soft surface, trying to catch my breath, but he was on me before I could suck in a lungful of air. His mouth biting and sucking at mine, his hands tearing at my clothes. I was naked and shaking underneath him in seconds. He shifted back on his haunches without looking at my face and unzipped the black pants he'd worn to bury his family, the look in his eyes distant, unfocused. He wasn't here with me.

"Ren."

I wanted to bring him into the moment, to make him look into my eyes and just see me. We hadn't done this yet; he'd wanted to wait. Wanted to make sure I was ready. But now he freed himself, fisting himself in his hand before dropping between my legs and thrusting forcefully into me. Choki

ng on a cry, I instinctively tightened my thighs around him, squeezing my eyes closed against the searing pain. I'd only ever wanted my first time to be with him, but not like this. Not with him off somewhere in his own head. Breathing through the pain my body hadn't been given time to adjust to, I tried to force myself to relax, to allow him to pour some of his heartbreak into me. He was drowning, fighting for breath. I could offer him some relief from that.

With a grunt, he dipped his head into the crook of my neck. Gingerly, I rested a hand against his head, trying to soothe his anguish. All the while he continued driving into me wordlessly, relentlessly pumping his hips until eventually he shuddered and stilled.

I lay there, my heartbeat echoing in my skull as his thundered against my chest. Neither of us moved, except for my fingers stroking through his damp hair. His heart rate slowly decreased, and when his breaths evened out, I carefully rolled his weight off me and crawled off the bed. Stumbling to the bathroom, I dropped onto the linoleum floor with a wince.

A sob worked its way up my throat and heaved from my body as I curled onto my side, wrapping my arms around myself. I was sad for him, for me, for us. I didn't regret being with him, giving him my virginity. I'd come here intending to give him whatever he needed, doing whatever it took to make him understand I would always be here for him, and he didn't have to face all of this alone. I just... didn't think I'd managed to do that.

I'd allowed him to use my body to ease his suffering, but I hadn't come close to touching his pain. I hadn't gotten through to him; I'd barely comforted him. All I'd done was give him a momentary release, but it would all still be waiting for him when he woke up. All this time, I'd saved myself for him without even knowing it, and he hadn't even been able to look me in the eyes. And while I'd willingly handed over one of the most important parts of myself, one I'd never get back, he'd fucked me as if I weren't even there. As if I was Raya Mitchell or some other random girl he used to sleep with before me.

Unable to leave him alone, I climbed up from the bathroom floor and padded back to the bedroom. Sliding beneath the covers beside him, I pulled them over both of us and allowed sleep to take me. When I woke the next morning, the bed was empty. My eyes scanned the room and found Reno sitting on a chair, his head lowered, legs braced apart. His fists were closed so tightly, his knuckles were white.

I cleared my throat, lifting on one elbow and tugging at the sheet to cover my bare chest. Reno raised his head slowly. When our eyes met, his overflowed with guilt, a storm of regret etched all over his beautiful face. He coughed lightly, dipping his gaze.

I felt my face heat as his eyes returned to mine. Shifting my gaze, I clutched the cover tighter, resisting the urge to look down at the evidence of my lost virginity. The evidence of my stupid failed attempt to heal him.

“I shouldn't have been so... I wasn't thinking—”

“It's okay,” I cut him off quickly, my voice almost frantic. We didn't need to address what had happened. I didn't want to hear it out loud. The last thing he needed was more regret. The last thing I wanted was an apology. “It's okay,” I said again, quieter this time.

He opened his mouth as if to say something else, then closed it again and dropped his head. Rising to his feet, he walked to the door.

With his back to me, he murmured, “Take as long as you need, Ri. Just let yourself out when you're done.”

The door clicked into place quietly behind him, but it felt like a bomb detonated inside my chest.

Twenty

Reno

I'd never felt guilt like it. I'd lost my brother and Dad on the same night. It had hollowed me out in a way I doubted I'd ever recover from. Not sure you're supposed to. But the way I'd felt after waking up the morning after the funeral, Riley naked beside me and the bed sheets stained with her blood. That was like taking a round from an AK-47 straight to the chest. We couldn't recover from that. She'd never recover from that.

The worst part was I couldn't even remember it. Couldn't remember what she felt like. I'd imagined fucking her in more ways than I could count for years. Imagined making love to her for the past few months. Held off because I wanted to do it right, to make it fucking special for her. Something she'd look back on, no matter where we were in the future, and remember fondly. And when it came down to it, I hadn't even looked her in the goddamn eyes. That morning, I'd wanted to ask her if she'd wanted it, but I was too damn scared of her answer. So, I'd walked. Like a fucking coward. And just left her there.

Swiping a hand down my face to cover a groan of pure despair, I let my head hang back off the couch. How the fuck could I have done that to her? She'd called to check on me since, left a voice message asking if I was okay. I couldn't bring myself to answer her call, but I'd listened to that voicemail a hundred times, needing to hear the sound of her voice. I didn't deserve it, but it was all I had left. I'd been an asshole to her since they died.

It wasn't about her. It wasn't that I didn't want her there. I did. Fuck, I did. But I'd been on the verge of falling apart every second, and that wasn't something I wanted her to see. That wasn't me. Not the guy she knew or thought she loved. I didn't know who the fuck I was anymore. So, I'd pushed her away. And when she kept coming back, I'd treated her exactly like I swore I never would.

Even if she could forgive me—and because she's pure heart, she probably would—I wouldn't let her. I would never forgive myself. I was a fucking tragedy. A train wreck. I had nothing to offer her. Could never give her the things she deserved. And I'd already taken enough from her. I would never be the guy I was before. Not now.

"You ready, man?"

I straightened, bracing my forearms on the sides of the couch before looking up at Leon and Mack. Danny and Jase drew up behind them. All tall and brawny, they'd been on the team with me for as many years as I could remember. We'd had each other's backs on and off the field, practically lived in each other's houses and eaten at each other's tables. These guys loved Brett and Owen like family. They wanted retribution almost as much as I did.

Big palms landed on my back as I stood. I hadn't fought more than I'd needed to through school. If a score needed to be settled, I'd settle it. Usually with my fists. Word got around. Meant I didn't need to use them much, not that I couldn't. Brett's cousin trained fighters. Until he'd moved to Florida a couple of years ago, he'd owned a gym. O and I used to spend hours there, sparring with the guys, hitting the bags. So yeah, if I needed to fight. I'd fight. And I was fucking good at it.

I'd had the guys looking into what happened with O. Brett, I couldn't do anything about. His was an invisible killer. But Owen? Today, I'd put a name to the asshole who took his life for a bag of dope. Some strung out, druggie waster who'd raised a knife instead of his fists. Who'd robbed a twenty-year-old of his entire future. Yeah, Owen was no angel, far from it, but did he deserve to die on a street corner before he'd even had a chance to live? Fuck no. And I couldn't sit back and let that shit go. That wasn't me.

The guys shadowed me to the door and into Le's car. It was less than a five-minute drive to the old warehouse on Bleaker Street. Less than five minutes until I could release some of the rage that consumed my head night and goddamn day. Five minutes too fucking long—my body thrummed with restless anticipation the entire drive.

We parked the car and jogged the rest of the way, rounding the side of the building. The shutters were fully raised along one side. A mass of screaming people circled two bloodied, bare-chested guys as they grappled with each other. Adrenaline buzzed in my veins, my heart pumping double time.

Just inside the door, some gold-toothed, gold chain wearing motherfucker tried to educate us on why we shouldn't be here. Tried to tell me I wouldn't be kicking the shit out of the guy who killed my brother.

"Got a score to settle with someone in there. Won't be going fucking anywhere until I do."

"Nah, bro, you can't just show up and expect to fight. It don't work like that."

Teeth bared, I stepped forward until we stood nose to nose, forehead to forehead, and his sniggering face touched mine. He laughed, like this was all some big fucking game. I pulled my head back and slammed it forward, cracking his nose wide open. A smirk pulled at the sides of my lips as I watched him go down, folding like a deck of fucking cards and screaming like a bitch as his hands slapped to his face. Red liquid oozed through his fingers. Everyone rushed forward. My boys moved in to flank me. I wasn't leaving tonight without getting what I came for.

The crowd in front of us, three rows deep, bayed like wild animals. They were only happy when they smelled blood. I knew about the bare-knuckle fight scene. I'd been a few times. It was exactly what I needed tonight. Hollers from behind drew my attention outside and I edged back.

My eyes narrowed when they landed on the murdering fucker I came here for, and a shot of pure energy burst through me. I was up, bouncing on the soles of my feet, hot blood coursing through my veins like molten lava readying to explode. I wanted to get my hands on him. Fucking destroy him. I drew a hand up and pointed right at his face as my smirk twisted into a manic smile.

This is for you, O.

Font Size:

A

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And then I was moving. One target in my sights. The guy rose to his full height, raised his hands and curled the tips of his fingers inward, smirking as he beckoned me in. He knew who I was. He didn't know I was going to bust his skull open. He was about to find out.

My fist slammed into his face the second I was in reaching distance. I'd shocked him. I didn't g

ive him a chance to recover, to go for the knife I didn't doubt he was packing. I lifted my arms and rained down on him like a fucking storm. Satisfaction seeped further into my

veins with every hit, but none of it touched the pit of agony caving my chest. The grief only intensified, until I couldn't fucking breathe. The smile slipped from my face and I shut it all down. Until I couldn't fucking feel anything anymore.

I watched my right arm pull back again with a sense of surreal detachment, an almost out-of-body experience, like I was a spectator, like I needed to see every second. There was a sickening crunch of bone as my knuckles connected with his cheekbone, the skin splitting open. Chaos erupted all around me, but a blissful numbness settled in as his head snapped to the side, blood spraying from his mouth in slow motion. I kept hitting.

When his body tried to fold in on itself, my left hand fisted his shirt and held him upright, while my right swung again. The skin over my knuckles bust on impact, but I didn't stop, didn't even feel it. A roaring blasted through my ears and I swung again. And again. And again. I didn't stop when his eyes rolled back in his head. I didn't stop when his nose cracked, or his body went limp, hanging from my grip like a wet noodle. I didn't stop when screams and shouts tore through the cloud of rage shrouding me, fuelling me. I never wanted to stop. Not until his face was unrecognizable, until his mangled body would need scraping off the floor. Until there was nothing left of him, and he was six feet fucking under like my brother.

Hands caged my arms behind my back, hauling me away. The noise in my head became deafening as I fought to get loose, to go back and keep pummelling until I fucking undid it all. With a guttural cry, I sank to my knees, my chest heaving, my mind crazed. Owen was never coming back. Brett was never coming back. My stupid, selfish bitch of a mother was never coming back. Eventually, every fucker left. They promised they'd stay. They were all supposed to fucking stay. But they'd all left.

And now I just wanted it all to fucking go away.