

Alpha Twins' Forbidden Obsession novel by Ember Night

Chapter 1 No.1

I lay on my bed-though to call it a bed was generous. It was little more than a worn blanket spread over the floor beneath the staircase.

A chill seeped into my bones, and I curled tightly into myself. I didn't dare stretch out; the slanted wall was too close, and I'd learned the hard way about sudden movements in the night.

My small refuge was tucked under the stairs, a cramped space that reminded me of Harry Potter, though there was no magic here. Only the constant, dusty smell of old wood and loneliness.

Sleep wouldn't come. Tomorrow, we were moving. My mother, Alice, had decided there was work in Texas, another chance to start over in a new town.

My mind drifted back to my life in Oklahoma. It hadn't been rich, but it had been warmed by sunlight and my grandmother's love. I could almost feel the humid air on my skin, see the kind wrinkles around my grandmother's eyes when she smiled.

After Grandma passed, I became an unwanted relic. My father had vanished before I could form a memory of him, and my mother had seemed more like a distant relative than a parent.

It took a court order to officially place me in Alice's custody, making her my legal guardian.

So now I had a roof, of sorts. But Alice and I were strangers bound only by blood and a piece of paper.

I squeezed my eyes shut, forcing my breathing to slow.

"Just sleep. Get through tomorrow. Get through until you're eighteen. Then you can leave."

The mantra was a familiar lullaby.

Suddenly, a gruff voice sliced through the silence of the small house. "Sylvia! Where are you, you little bitch?"

My body went rigid. It was Robert, Alice's new husband.

His words were slurred, thick with drink. This was what I feared most.

When sober, Robert's eyes would follow me with a possessive gleam that made my skin crawl, but he usually kept his distance. Alcohol stripped away that thin veneer of control, unleashing a crude and terrifying boldness.

The heavy thud of his footsteps grew louder, moving from the living room toward the hallway.

I held my breath, praying he would stagger past, that he would forget I existed.

However, fate was not on my side.

The old floral sheet that served as my curtain was wrenched aside. Robert's hulking frame blocked the dim light from the hall. His face, flushed and sweaty, broke into a leering grin.

"Found you," he slurred, his voice triumphant.

Before I could scramble away, he was on me, his weight crushing the air from my lungs. The smell of cheap whiskey and stale sweat enveloped me.

"No!" I cried out, my hands flying up to push against his broad chest. "Get off me!"

My struggle seemed to excite him more. "Feisty tonight, aren't we?" he chuckled, one of his rough hands groping my side while the other pinned my wrist.

Tears of terror and revulsion welled in my eyes. I twisted violently, my mind screaming. This was wrong. This was disgusting. I was trapped, an animal in a cage.

As I bucked against him, he shifted his weight, and with a sickening thud, his head struck the low, slanted ceiling of my cubbyhole.

He went limp instantly, his full weight collapsing onto me.

For a long moment, I lay frozen, my heart hammering against my ribs like a trapped bird. The only sound was my own ragged gasps for air.

Slowly, the reality of the situation seeped in. He was unconscious. I was free.

With a surge of adrenaline-fueled strength, I shoved his dead weight off me. I crawled out from under the stairs, my body trembling uncontrollably.

I couldn't leave him there. If Alice found him in my space, the blame would somehow fall on me.

Gritting my teeth, I grabbed him under the arms. He was heavy, a dead weight of flesh and bad intentions. Grunting with the effort, I dragged him across the rough carpet, his boots scraping a trail behind us. I managed to haul him onto the living room sofa, arranging his limbs to make it look like he'd passed out there.

Then, I fled to the bathroom, locking the door behind me. I leaned over the sink, my knuckles white as I gripped the cool porcelain. Slowly, I raised my head to look in the mirror.

A strange girl stared back. A girl with wide, frightened eyes of two different colors—one a warm, earthy brown, the other a cool, ocean blue.

Heterochromia had always made me a spectacle. People would stare, their glances a mix of curiosity and unease, as if I were some kind of freak. But my grandmother's voice, soft and sure, would always echo in my memory. "One eye from the earth, one from the sea. You're my special girl. Your father has them, too."

The mention of my father stirred nothing in me. He was a ghost, a genetic contributor I'd never known.

My gaze drifted downward, to the delicate line of my collarbone. There, against my pale skin, was an angry red mark, a brutal souvenir from Robert's grasping hands. The sight of it broke the dam inside me.

Tears, hot and silent, began to stream down my cheeks. They weren't just tears for tonight, but for all of it—for the loss of my grandmother, for a mother who didn't love me, for a life that felt like a prison sentence.

I made a silent, desperate vow.

I would survive this. I would get to Texas. And I would count down the days until my eighteenth birthday. By then, I would run. I would find a place where no one could touch me. I would escape this nightmare.

The morning light, weak and gray, filtered through the bathroom window.

I had not slept. I had spent the hours curled on the cold tile floor, jumping at every creak and groan of the old house.

When the sky finally began to lighten, I splashed water on my face, the cold a sharp shock that barely cut through my exhaustion. The red mark on my collarbone had darkened into a faint bruise. I put on a high-necked shirt, hiding the evidence.

The house began to stir. I heard Alice moving around in the kitchen, the clatter of a coffee pot. I took a deep breath and unlocked the bathroom door.

The living room was a mess of half-filled cardboard boxes. Robert was snoring on the couch, right where I had left him.

Alice, a thin woman with tired eyes and permanent frown lines, was pouring cereal into a bowl.

"About time you got up," Alice said without looking at me. "We need to be on the road in two hours. Start packing your things. Whatever doesn't fit in one box, we leave behind."

I didn't reply. I walked past the couch, my skin crawling as I edged around Robert's sprawled form.

Back in my closet-sized room, I folded my blanket-my "bed"-and placed it into a cardboard box. I didn't have much: a few clothes, a worn copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and a small, framed photograph of my grandmother. It all fit with room to spare.

As I was taping the box shut, Robert groaned and sat up on the couch, clutching his head. "What happened?" he grumbled.

"You drank too much, again," Alice said flatly, placing a cup of black coffee on the table near him. "Passed out on the couch."

Robert's bloodshot eyes scanned the room and landed on me.

A flicker of confusion passed over his face. His gaze dropped to my neck, where the high collar of my shirt hid his mark. A nasty smile played on his lips. "Must have had a wild night," he muttered, more to himself than to anyone.

I was relieved that he didn't remember anything. Then I quickly looked away, focusing on sealing the box.

The next few hours were a blur of loading a rusty U-Haul trailer hitched to the back of our old sedan.

Robert barked orders, his headache making him especially irritable. I worked silently, carrying what I was told, avoiding his touch whenever he came near.

Finally, it was time to go. I climbed into the back seat of the car, the box with all my worldly possessions on the floor beside me. Alice took the passenger seat, and Robert, after a final check of the trailer, slid behind the wheel.

As the car pulled away from the curb, I turned for one last look at the small, dilapidated house. It had been a prison, but it was a familiar one. Now, I was heading into the unknown.