

The Alpha's Captive Matew by Taylor Caine Chapter 17

Chapter 17

Where I had the kind of life any fairy-tale princess would be

envious of.

Love. Home. Family.

Belonging.

All the things I didn't have in real life.

Except as I slowly woke-trying to hold onto the fraying threads of the dream as it slipped away from me-the sensations of warmth, comfort and overall safety only got

stronger.

I blinked, trying to figure out why the bed I was laying on was

so firm and lumpy, and why it felt like a furnace radiating heat

underneath me.

It wasn't until I drew in my next breath that I also placed

a newly familiar scent. One that held all the strength and ferocity of a summertime storm.

Aaron.

I froze as I realized I was sprawled across his chest, fully laying on top of him.

Both of us were only wearing underwear, making my face go hot as I realized how much of our bare flesh was pressed

together.

There were thick blankets piled on top of us, pinning me in

place.

Low embers from the hearth cast half the room in a soft

orange glow, while the dim light of early morning filtered in around the curtains framing the large window.

Confusion and the lifting fog of sleep made my thoughts sluggish as I tried to remember what had happened and how

I'd ended up here.

The last thing I remembered was desperately trying to free myself from the hitching post in the snowy field as the freezing

cold had overcome me.

Aaron moved beneath me and I froze, not knowing whether

I should scramble away from him and out of the bed. But I

didn't know where my clothes were, and as much as being draped all over him was embarrassing enough, I didn't want

him to see me in only my underwear.

My hands flew up for purchase on his chest as he stretched

beneath me like an overgrown cat, almost sending me tumbling off him.

When my hands closed around his shoulder and biceps, he blinked his eyes open, staring at me in sleepy confusion.

For a moment, his blue eyes warmed with something like unguarded affection and it made my heart trip over itself.

I'd always dreamed of someone looking at me just like that.

Of someone loving me enough to be happy when they saw

However, then he seemed to wake up enough to remember

who and what I was.

He quickly set me aside as his expression shuttered, the light

dulling in his eyes as he glanced away from me. www.riv@LwO.com

I resolutely ignored the disappointed ache in my chest.

4/8

"Good, you're awake," he said gruffly, climbing out of bed and grabbing up his clothes.

"What happened? Where am I?" I asked, glancing around the

room.

It was decorated in soft masculine tones, his scent permeating everything, which told me the answer. I just didn't think I could

believe it.

"You nearly died," Aaron bit out, as if angry I'd caused him so

much trouble. "Hypothermia. The quickest way to warm you

up was to put you in my bed." www.NoVatWo.com

"I'm sorry," I mumbled, wondering why he'd even bothered

saving me if he hated me that much.

Oh right.

The blood debt on behalf of the Crawfords.

Because the tainted, cursed blood that ran through my veins.

was worth more than my life.

Aaron shot me a look of furious disbelief, and I shrunk further

under the covers.

5/8

"Where are my clothes? I'll leave as soon as I'm dressed."

Aaron huffed, as if he didn't even want to be dealing with me

right now.

"Your clothes were ruined. Stay here and I'll find you

something to wear."

He walked to the door and paused before he opened it.

"I mean it, Harper. Don't go anywhere." A hint of growl lowered his voice, the Alpha warning me of the dangerous ground I was treading. "I'm not in the mood to deal with anymore drama today."

I nodded quickly, pulling the blankets tighter around myself as if that could protect me, before Aaron stepped out of the

room.

I slumped once he was gone, but then realized I'd maybe made that promise too hastily. I needed to use the bathroom. www.NoVatWo.com

Shivering at the cold and trembling a little because I knew I was risking Aaron's wrath when he was already furious with me, I crept out of the bed.

One of Aaron's long sleeved Henleys was discarded over the

back of a nearby chair, so I snatched it up and tossed it over

myself.

A short walk across the room brought me to twin doors. One opened into an impressive sized closet-truly, it was the size of a small bedroom in its own right, complete with square picture-window overlooking the rolling hills of the ranch leading off to the mountains in the distance, everything looking blue and soft gray in the muted light of a snowy dawn -while the second door opened into a large, luxuriously appointed bathroom.

I found a toilet through yet another door in the adjacent wall, hurrying because I didn't want Aaron to come back and think I'd run off after he'd expressly told me not to.

After I was done, I glanced at myself in the mirror as I was washing my hands, grimacing at the sight I made.

My hair was knotted and matted, my features pale, while angry red slashes and dark splotches of dried blood covered my cheek and down my neck.

The cuts were nasty and I inwardly tested my magic, wondering if I'd recovered enough to heal myself yet. But I barely got a pitiful spark.

The last thing I needed was an infection. www.NoVatWo.com

blood, wincing at the sting whenever I strayed too close to one

of the slashes.

heard the outer bedroom door creak softly and then the

heavy tread of Aaron's boots unerringly crossing the room

toward me as if he knew exactly where I was, probably

because I'd left the bathroom door open.

I froze, wondering if he was going to be angry to find me in

here when I hadn't asked permission to use his bathroom.

Already, I could feel a lump forming in my throat.

I was so tired, weak and sore from everything that'd happened in the last twenty-four hours, I didn't think I could withstand his anger for doing the wrong thing again.

It was all I ever seemed to do, all I ever seemed to be.

Wrong.

I dropped my gaze, already submissive when the bathroom door swung all the way open and Aaron paused on the

threshold.

What would he do to me this time?

The Alpha's Captive Mate

Aaron

Harper stood in front of the mirror, head lowered in open submission, trembling and looking far too small in my long sleeve top that dwarfed her frame. She held a cloth in her hands, and I could see she'd been trying to clean the various cuts and slashes that marred her otherwise flawless skin.

The visual reminder of what'd happened to her-of the fact she'd almost died-last night only infuriated me further.

I'd already been seething about how warm and comfortable -hell, even tender-it had felt waking up to find her sprawled across me that morning, my inner wolf all but glowing in pride and contentment at allowing her to sleep so soundly in my

arms.

And that anger was only continuing to build.

At how Melody had pouted and not even asked if Harper was okay when I'd gone to her bedroom and asked if I could borrow some of her clothes for Harper to wear. How I'd passed Sandy in the hall, and she'd greeted me good morning as if nothing had happened. How I could hear and sense the Crawford brothers awake and moving about the house,