

Her CEO Stalker and Her Second Chance Mate

Chapter 2

Adelaide

My entire body hurt down to my bones. My eyes refused to open fully struggled to focus with what little vision I had, everything was blurry. I flinched as a hand lifted my torso and a glass came to my lips. I then realized how thirsty I was. I drank it down greedily before two pills were pushed between my lips. I immediately spit them out, only to receive a slap across my face that made me see stars in my eyelids.

“Be a good little bitch and submit, Addy, baby. You're going to take back what you said the other day,” he cooed in my ear with a snarl. This time, his fingers followed the pills, shoving them to the back of my throat and forcing me to swallow. I gagged around his thick digits before he yanked my jaw to the side.

“You’ve denied me for too long, Addy, baby. Whether or not you like it, I see you now. You belong to me. You always have.” The next thing I knew, I blacked out again. I don’t know how many days I spent there drifting in and out of consciousness. Devoid of senses before, I became lucid enough to act like I was actually swallowing the pills before he walked away. I would discreetly slip the pills under the pillow. It took three days of pretending, acting limp as a fish, as he tried to claim my body for his own, in whatever sick and twisted game this was to him.

I endured it all; the rape the harsh unprovoked punishment, until one day he slunk away on a call, his phone in hand. I listened as his voice echoed down the hall until it disappeared. With aching limbs, I forced myself to roll out of bed, staggering to stand on weak and throbbing legs. I sifted through the dresser drawers. I pulled on a sweater I found, as well as a pair of men's jeans, five sizes too big. I sifted through the custom built closet to find a belt, before I tiptoed out of the room, feet bare. My eyes caught a glimpse of the clothes I was wearing that day in the office, bloodied, and in the trash.

Never again.

I strained my hearing, looking up and down the hall, seeing no one, I fled in the opposite direction that I had last heard his voice coming from. I had come to a curved staircase in front of an entry. He was nowhere in sight, but I found instead, another man who paced down below while talking on the phone. He had a gun at his hip, arguing in hushed tones, before he disappeared into another room. I listened again, his voice fading, before I dashed to the door at full speed. When I found it locked, I fumbled with the latch, but quickly released it to make my exit, closing it gingerly behind me, and fled out the front door. How was I going to get through the blasted fence around the property? My eyes

dashed to a tree near the fence with low branches. I thanked whomever was looking over me today for my country upbringing. A tree had no chance against the Appalachian girl. I sprinted as best I could for it, ignoring the aches in my limbs, and the stabbing pain in my chest, with each breath I took. I forced myself to jump up, only to have pain lash through my chest and middle, nearly causing me to fall. I breathed through it, hefting myself up with trembling hands. I guess being a country girl had its perks; climbing trees had been a favored pastime in my youth. Hanging from the branch on the other side, I dropped down to the ground, my feet and legs protesting as I landed hard on the asphalt. I knew where his house was. I had to get to the other side of the city fast if I wanted to be sure he wasn't on my tail.

Note to self, dangerous men are not worth it.

Slipping between the other bougie houses on the west side of town, I made my way east. Night fell not long after, and I finally made it to the first subway. I pulled my tangled hair out of my face and descended the concrete steps, catching a brief glimpse of myself as I walked past the shiny aluminum trash can. I looked like a meth head who got beat up for stealing something from someone they shouldn't have. Keeping to the shadows and dodging cameras, I limped onto the subway, and collapsed on a seat in the corner of the subway car, away from everyone else.

When the subway came to my stop, I looked out the window only to find it overrun with cops and too many men in business suits. Panic overcame me as I watched them board several cars ahead of mine. I fell to the floor cowering. They would find me and drag me back, he owned everyone he wished to possess, I was so stupid. The last few days of abuse and assault played over in my mind, tunneling me further into a panic, as I gasped for air.

"Are you okay, lady?" a young girl's voice asked. It drew me out of my panic, and when I looked up, her mother was beside her with a baby carriage, scrutinizing me. She had a scar across her face. My eyes darted to the window, and I turned away quickly and looked back at her.

Help me!

The words didn't come from my dry lips; something passed between us, and she just knew enough. She bent to whisper to an old lady knitting near her, the only other person in the last car with us at this hour of the night. The old woman glanced at me and made a few stitches in her blanket before breaking it off with her teeth and handing it to the lady who dug in her shopping bag, producing clothes probably from a thrift store.

"Come on, girl, and listen good. You're an actress, now slip these on." I crawled across the floor, staying under the view of the windows. I swapped the sweater for the oversized tee and pulled on a loose skirt over the oversized jeans. She dropped the blanket the old lady was knitting onto my head.

“Pull it over your forehead, look down, don’t make eye contact. You’re slow, drag your leg.” I fumbled to stand, then did as instructed. She placed my hand under hers on the handle of the stroller. The next thing I knew her daughter gripped my other one. My heart rate calmed, in sync with their energy, the racing a figment of yesterday. Right now, there was power, like a shield of strength and calm born from the women around me. When the door opened, my heart skipped. I needed to vomit but this was the only way out of this, shrouded by innocent women. A tear fell, the mother squeezed my hand, and the daughter did also. Towering men stood on either side of the door they firmly pulled me through.

My breath caught, and my lungs constricted with each step.

“Is there a problem?” the woman asked, before they could address her. She paused just over the threshold, her stance firm and unyielding.

“We are looking for someone of interest,” the man announced from my right.

I focused my eyes on the contented sweet baby in the stroller, keeping my head down, as he babbled and kicked his legs. He was so beautiful, so innocent. I felt the uniformed officer's eyes on me and fought the tremble that threatened to give me away. I sensed the old woman come out behind us. I heard the sound of her walker catching on the void between the car and the walkway, and then there was a crash. The officers darted behind us and the woman beside me sighed and kept walking. When we got to the street level I glanced at her.

“Run, girl! Don’t you ever look back.” Her eyes were sincere, yet at the same time, startled, as if seeing a ghost. I hiked up that skirt and ran for my apartment, several blocks away. The only place I knew to go.

I was homeless when I received my internship. I had been living out of my car since the bank took Mama’s house. Hopefully, they couldn’t track me to my recently secured apartment; I hadn’t had the chance to update my work profile before all this happened. Since I didn't have my keys, I had to break into the downstairs window of the two-story apartment building I lived in. Once I got in, I stripped down and boiled off a good several layers of skin in the hot shower, trying to burn away the memories of his unsolicited touches, as the steam plumed around me until the water ran cold, like the ice that now weighed on my soul. I was left in the shower shivering on the floor, hugging my knees to me. My mind was numb. The sound of my neighbors coming home was the only thing that jarred me from that numbness, that morbid place. I got to my feet, my mind racing.

What was I to do next? A rush of sleepiness overcame me, my body was crashing. I stumbled naked to my bed. I’d deal with the rest tomorrow. My new friend darkness cradled me to sleep.