

Claimed by the Alpha's Love

- Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 1

Chapter 1

Tori's POV:

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"Sullivan! Pack your things. Your four years are up."

The Beta guard's voice echoed through the concrete corridor of Silver Fang Detention Center.

He barely looked up from his clipboard as I approached the security gate, His indifference a final reminder of my status here.

I stood motionless as he scanned my prison-issued wristband, the silver material designed specifically to suppress an Omega's already limited abilities.

"Any questions before release processing?" he asked mechanically, clearly reciting from a script he'd delivered countless times.

"No," I answered quietly, knowing better than to say more.

Questions from Omegas were rarely welcomed.

The guard's nostrils flared slightly-an unconscious wolf gesture assessing my scent for submission. Satisfied with what he detected, he nodded curtly.

"Proceed to processing. And Sullivan?" His eyes finally met mine, a hint of warning in them. "Don't make us see you again. Second-time offenders don't get released."

Twenty minutes later, after changing into my civilian clothes and receiving my meager belongings, the heavy metal doors of Silver Fang Detention Center clanged shut behind me with finality.

I took my first breath of freedom in four years, letting the crisp autumn air of Moonhaven fill my lungs.

Freedom, it seemed, was an overrated concept when you returned to a world that had never wanted you in the first place.

I adjusted the threadbare backpack containing my meager possessions—a few worn clothes, a dog-eared math textbook, and the silver pendant my grandmother Eileen had given me before.

The weight of the pack was nothing compared to the burden of memories carried.

My wolf-Tracy stirred restlessly inside me, sensing my discomfort.

After four years of suppressing her with detention center-mandated wolfstane treatments, she was eager to break free, to run through the forests that surrounded Moonhaven.

I forced her down. Not yet. We need to be careful now,

The sight that greeted me at the detention center gates made my stomach clench.

A sleek black SUV idled at the curb, and beside it stood two figures I had oped never to see again.

Fiona Price and Ethan Grayson.

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Fiona looked immaculate in a pale gold dress that accentuated her noble status and the golden-brown undertones of her skin.

Next to her stood Ethan in an expertly tailored charcoal suit, the blue-gray of his eyes a stark reminder of his Grayson Pack heritage.

The sight of them together sent a sharp pain through my chest.

Four years ago, I had foolishly trusted Fiona as my closest confidante, never suspecting that this misplaced trust would lead to my

imprisonment.

I hadn't seen the signs—how she secretly harbored feelings for Ethan, how she would stop at nothing to eliminate me from the picture.

If I hadn't been so naive, treating her like the sister I never had, I might have noticed her ruthless determination to have him for herself.

And Ethan... he had been my first love, the one person I thought would stand by me no matter what.

I had been wrong about both of them.

As they spotted me, their expressions shifted.

Fiona's face arranged itself into a mask of practiced concern, while Ethan's eyes flickered with something complex-guilt, perhaps, or regret. Neither emotion would help me now.

"Tori!" Fiona called out, her voice carrying the artificial sweetness that had once fooled me. She took a few steps toward me, her designer heels clicking against the pavement.

"You're finally out! We came to pick you up specially."

My wolf Tracy growled low in my mind, a warning I didn't need.

Every Omega instinct I possessed screamed to keep my distance from this female who had proven herself more dangerous than any Alpha.

I remained silent, my face carefully blank. Years in detention had taught me to hide my emotions.

"You look... not bad," Fiona continued, her golden-brown eyes scanning me from head to toe, assessing the cheap jeans and faded t-shirt I

wore.

'Making mistakes is okay, as long as you've learned your lesson in there.'

The condescension in her voice was unmistakable.

In her mind, I had actually committed the crime I'd been accused of-killing Noah Morris in cold blood.

A crime she had helped frame me for.

Ethan stood slightly behind Fiona, his tall frame rigid with tension. When our eyes met, he stepped forward.

"Tori, please let us drive you home," he said, his voice lower than I remembered. "It's the least I can do."

I studied his face-the face I had once memorized in loving detail and fe away whatever feelings I once had for him. Where there had once been lay

nothing but cold emptiness. Four years in detention had burned and longing, now there was only the hallow reminder of betrayal.

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“No thanks,” I replied flatly. “I prefer the bus.”

I continued walking, head held high despite the weight of their stares.

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Behind me,

I heard the click of Fiona’s heels as she stepped forward, clearly dissatisfied with my composed reaction. She had come expecting tears or anger-some confirmation that she had won.

“Tori!” she called out, her voice artificially bright and deliberately loud enough for everyone nearby to hear.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you-Ethan and I are having our mating ceremony next week. The union of the Grayson and Price families. You should come-it’ll be the event of the season!”

Her words were calculated daggers, each one designed to pierce whatever armor I’d built around myself. I could feel Ethan’s gaze burning into my back, intense enough to leave a mark.

But it didn’t matter anymore.

“Congratulations,” I said without turning, the single word falling like ice between us.

I had no illusions about my place in this city.

As an Omega with a criminal record, I existed on the lowest rung of a society already stratified by wolf hierarchies.

The bus stop was empty when I reached it, the schedule board showing I had another fifteen minutes to wait. I stood with my back straight despite the exhaustion creeping through my body.

A sudden shift in the air made the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

My wolf instantly became alert. An Alpha was nearby-and not just any Alpha. The powerful aura radiating toward me spoke of exceptional strength and status.

I glanced up the road and saw it-a sleek, midnight-black sports car with tinted windows, its custom design and specialized plates unmistakably marking it as belonging to a high-ranking Alpha.

The vehicle moved with deliberate slowness past the bus stop, the driver invisible behind the darkened glass.

My wolf instinctively lowered her head in submission, even as I fought to keep my posture defiant.

The city bus finally rounded the corner, its brakes squealing as it pulled up to the curb.

As I reached for the handrail to board, movement in my peripheral vision caught my attention.

The sleek black car hadn't left after all.

In that moment, the tinted passenger window lowered just enough for me to glimpse a pair of eyes watching me. Even at this distance, I could feel their intensity-piercing, calculating, and impossibly deep, like looking into a frozen lake at midnight.

My breath caught involuntarily, and for a disorienting second, the rest of the world seemed to fade away.

The bus driver's impatient cough broke the spell.

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I hurried aboard, the doors closing behind me with a hydraulic hiss that seemed to seal me away from whoever had been observing me with such unsettling interest.

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