



Making Waves (Miracle: Salvation Isle #6)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Glyn Webb had always fought for justice. He never backed down, even when fighting the leadership of his rookery of penguins. But when he and the rest of his town had been overrun and sold to one of the most dangerous countries in the world, he'd discovered he wasn't as brave as he'd once thought.

Cayman Dahl had been trained from childhood to defend the fever of manta rays by his Alpha father. It hadn't been easy, but in the end, he'd thanked his father for making him an invisible killer. He knew how to watch his enemy without ever being detected. It was this skill that had the Council turning to him since hunters had started taking shifters and selling them.

When the Council sends him on what is basically a suicide mission, Cayman didn't hesitate, despite the odds of him setting any of those captives free. But when he scents his mate, Cayman is determined to free them all, even if it means his own death.

Total Pages (Source): 19

CHAPTER 1

Hopeless. It wasn't a word Glyn Webb would have ever imagined using, much less feeling, but that was exactly the situation he was in, with zero chance of ever getting free. Then again, he'd also never once imagined being forced to work on weapons that had the potential to kill thousands of people. Hell, if his captors had anything to say about it, millions would die at their hands.

He had no clue how any of this had happened. Humans weren't even supposed to know shifters existed. But they clearly did or he wouldn't be there.

As surreal as it was, one minute he'd been at the town council meeting protesting their law that allowed over fishing for the two companies their colony owned and the next he was caged. Okay, so technically the town hadn't 'owned' either company, but it often felt that the companies ran the town since the two families who did own the companies basically ran their colony.

After three years of making his point with no acknowledgement of his arguments, Glyn knew despite his well-planned case nothing would sway them. That said he wasn't about to stay silent on the matter either. Humans were already doing enough damage to the environment, did they really need to contribute? They were shifters, after all. They, more than most, knew the impacts of harming the ecosystem.

Yet, their colony only seemed to care about one thing...The almighty peso. Money was the only thing their leadership seemed to care about. Though, not any longer.

He looked over at their 'former' mayor and nearly barked out a laugh. Not really. For

laughter was not only forbidden with severe punishment, but not warranted considering they were all being forced to make weapons for a third world country with a dictator that was even more self-centered than those who'd run Glyn's colony.

A feat he'd never imagined possible.

Sure, he'd heard of North Korea. Had seen the news coverage of them trying to become... Not bigger, but maybe 'more' than what they were. Why? Who the fuck knew. Glyn would have thought they would be better off staying in the shadows, trading with others and not making waves.

That thought actually did make him laugh, which caused two guards to point their guns in his direction. Fuck. Forcing himself to be silent again, Glyn kept transferring uranium – which was completely bare of shielding – to where his former leaders were placing the rocks infused with uranium onto a conveyor that passed through a laser in order to separate the Uranium from everything else.

How they had all gotten taken and exploited into working to destroy the world, Glyn didn't know. One minute he'd been listening to their mayor, Hugh Goldman, drone on and on about funding another ship to bring in even more fish that would both destroy their ecosystem – not that Hugh would have admitted that – as well as bring in money to their colony and the next minute they'd heard loud booming, which he'd later learned were cannons.

It hadn't taken more than fifteen minutes for their colony to be completely overrun. The citizens were either dead or captured and driven into cages. None of them had once thought they'd be placed into cargo containers and forced into working for a country who wanted to take down the world.

No. It was more than that. His parents and sister weren't there. Was it possible they'd died during the attack? Yes. But his brother, Jarvis, who had been with them when

they'd been taken, claimed they'd survived, which meant they had been taken somewhere else.

“We need to find a way out of here,” Jasiri, one of the colony's councilmen, hissed out which was just fucking stupid. Not only had they tried, but they all damn well knew their capturers were listening to every word they said.

Talk about stating the obvious. It had been something they'd all said over the past three months that they'd been confined. Yet, none of them had come up with one possible escape plan that didn't end up with someone dying.

“Then come up with a way we can all leave safely.” Glyn was fucking tired of them acting like it was all on the rest of the colony to set them free. Especially when every one of them knew any attempt to escape didn't mean death to the one who tried to flee. It meant death to someone he or she loved.

His brother, Jarvis, might be the only one there with him, but Glyn wasn't about to get him killed. If only their leaders had cared about their own loved ones. In the past three months twenty of their friends and family had died because of their resolve to free themselves of being confined.

Admittedly, in the beginning, he couldn't actually blame them. They had been warned, but as a shifter, stronger and more resilient to injury, they hadn't believed the humans holding them. But once they'd slit the throats of their mates? Fuck, there was no way Glyn would have ever put anyone he'd loved at risk.

Their leaders? Not only had their mates died, but then their children. With no other family left, their captors just killed them. “But unless you can, shut the fuck up.” There was no way he was going to die just because their colony's leaders refused to accept their fate.

That was especially true when he'd witnessed four others brought in and forced to work, despite appearing strong and more than capable of taking care of themselves. If those big Alpha types could be captured and forced to work right alongside him, what hope would he have to fight the humans?

"Move it," one of the humans watching them yelled as he pushed the gun he was holding into Glyn's back.

It took every bit of his control not to fucking punch the asshole, but Glyn did as he was told. He wasn't one to conform to doing what he knew was wrong, but he also wasn't willing for his brother or anyone else he loved to die because of his convictions.

"Do what he said," one of the newcomers, a tiger shifter if he wasn't mistaken, told him in what was more of a growl than words. "I get it is despicable but at least we're alive."

That didn't mean he was just going to take what they were doing to him and his people. Okay, so yes, technically he was – for now. But he was determined to find a way out. Not just for him, but for all of them. If only he could figure out a way to accomplish that goal without getting someone else hurt.

"Don't worry. They're looking for us," the tiger shifter kept his voice low so the humans couldn't hear him.

His heart sped up at that glimmer of hope this man offered. "Who?"

"My boss, Saber Thorsen."

And just like that, that sensation of hopelessness disappeared. If the Council Leader knew where they were, they might have a chance of being saved after all.

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Source Creation Date: July 16, 2025, 8:26 am

CHAPTER 2

Gliding through the water, Cayman Dahl let the peace and quiet surrounded him. There was nothing better than shifting into his manta ray and forgetting about life for a while. Not that it would last when their world was in chaos and he would once again be called upon to go in search for more missing shifters.

He shifted slightly, skimming the sandy bottom of the cove of Salvation Island. He loved it there. Well, usually. Admittedly, he would have preferred if the water was a bit warmer, but other than that, the island, especially the cove, were ideal for him and his animal.

It was removed from the rest of the world, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and only accessible by boat or helicopter. It provided the residents with the ability to live simply without the hassles of the outside world intruding.

A shadow alerted him that someone was waiting for him on shore. He glanced in that direction where Yosi – owner of Salvation Island – and Saber, their Chief Council, stood with his gaze fixed on Cayman. Damn. Apparently he was needed again. He had only just got back two days ago from a mission to find a group of missing shifters in Russia.

Shifting, he rose up out of the water and walked to the pair. Bending down, he picked up his swim trunks and slipped them on. “Where are you sending me this time?”

There were only about two dozen of them that could do what he did. Unfortunately, assholes were buying and selling shifters more and more, which kept Yosi and Saber

busy overseeing shifters like Cayman to infiltrate a place, find their weaknesses, and plan an attack to free the captives.

“North Korea.”

Cayman froze at Saber’s words. That was not what he’d expected. Not even a little. “Are you kidding me?”

Saber’s expression said it all. Not only was he not kidding, but it was clear, Saber feared it was a mission Cayman might not come back from. “Rip, Wizard, and Lael went in to try and find where a large group of shifters were being held.”

Frowning, he asked, “If they’re already there, why am I being sent?”

“They haven’t been heard from in three weeks.” The worry in Saber’s voice was palatable, which wasn’t a surprise. Saber had been Rip’s Alpha before taking over the Council and becoming chief. “We fear they were captured.”

Well fuck. That can’t be good. “Do we know where they’re being held?”

Yosi handed him a tablet. “They had trackers on them. They aren’t currently working because it is believed they are deep underground at a uranium facility. Their last coordinates are there.”

“Fucking great,” he muttered as he studied the satellite images from the site. “I not only have to get into North fucking Korea without being caught, but I also have to get inside one of their underground bomb making facilities. Talk about impossible.”

That was one country that didn’t fuck around. They tended to kill first and ask questions later.

“We realize this will be a nightmare to get to.” Saber wasn’t wrong there. Although, for Cayman not as much as others.

“But we will do everything we can to do so,” Yosi added.

That would mean Yosi and his team would have satellites watching him at all times. It would help, but it still wasn’t going to be easy as the North Koreans watched everything, including the route he would end up using. “When do I go?”

“As soon as you pack.” Saber wasn’t one to mince words, especially when one of his own was at risk.

Nodding, he turned to Yosi. “Tell Rus I’ll be ready in fifteen.”

He didn’t wait for a response. There was zero doubt their helicopter pilot was already warming it up to take off. But if Cayman had any chance of pulling the mission off, he was going to need his gear.

Landing in South Korea, Cayman was ready to get started. He’d discussed logistics with Saber and Yosi while in flight. He would take to the water. It wasn’t ideal because it meant risking what he’d take with him getting wet, but it would allow him to get deep into North Korea before needing to shift into his human form.

That would be a huge advantage, especially since the facility was built next to a river to use for cooling the uranium. But, it would mean swimming and, most likely, staying for long periods of time in fresh water. Not something he enjoyed. At all. In fact, he hated it. It made his skin itch just thinking about it, but it was necessary if he was going to get close enough to find Rip and the others.

Getting out? That might prove impossible. Saber might have millions of shifters under his command, but that didn’t mean they could just invade a country. Had they

done it in the past? Sort of. Not so much the country, but the mines that shifters had been forced to work in.

The difference was, even if the country had been behind the buying of those shifters, once they'd been freed, the country didn't come after Saber or the Council. North Korea just might. They didn't see things like the rest of the leaders in the world did. They didn't care if they got their hands dirty.

Setting the waterproof bag on the ground, Cayman quickly undressed and waded out in the water with the airplane pilot, Felix, right behind him, holding the bag. Once he shifted, Felix slipped it on his body, with the bag firmly strapped to his back so it wouldn't slide off while in the water.

"Good luck," Felix told him as he went back to the shore. He would stay in South Korea with the plane in order to get Cayman and the others out in a hurry. There would also be a large ship in the Yellow Sea to pick them up in case it was necessary, but he honestly didn't think they would ever make it that far. If he managed to get even one shifter out it would be a miracle.

The facility was basically in the middle of North Korea. As a manta ray, Cayman had a good chance of making it in and out of the country, but the others? No fucking way. Especially when one of them was a fucking tiger. Admitted, Rip could swim, but not down a river into the sea. As for the others, they weren't even certain what species were being held captive. The odds of them getting to freedom were slim to none.

Not that he'd let that stop him. But Cayman was still a realist. Because he would never leave anyone behind, he had zero doubt this was a suicide mission. But he wasn't going to shy away from it. Those people deserved to be free and he would do everything in his power to make that happen.

Gliding along the sea to the mouth of the river he and Yosi had discussed, Cayman

tried to block out everything but the mission. He would need all his senses if he was going to survive this.

“The river is less than a hundred yards from your position,” Yosi said into his ear.

He already knew that. His body could feel the difference in salinity from the fresh water dumping into the sea. Still, it was good to hear his voice, letting Cayman know they were keeping an eye on him even though he was still safe. Although that would soon change the closer he got to shore.

“There are soldiers posted at the mouth of the river,” Yosi warned him. “Stay as close to the bottom as you can.”

Thankfully, the river was deep enough to do that. There were parts where it would become shallower, but they were, hopefully, much further upriver, into the country, that no one would be watching any longer. That would change when he was closer to the facility.

He could just barely make out the shadows of the guards watching the entrance to the river. They weren't looking into the water, just the surface to block any boats from accessing it.

Relief washed over him when Yosi said, “You're past them all.”

Staying low and in the middle the whole way, he managed to move into position beyond the actual compound. He'd done a quick sweep as he glided past it, but had done so quickly, uncertain as to how closely they watched the water.

“Stay put,” Yosi told him when he'd started to head to the shore. “There is a small convoy about to pass close to your position.”

He could feel the vibration dancing along his body as the trucks got closer. He couldn't see them, but he damn well could feel them. Twenty. Fuck. He wasn't certain if it was just more guards or more prisoners being brought in, but it didn't matter. Either way, the situation wasn't good.

"If you want to abort for now, do it," Saber said into his ear after seeing just how many vehicles there had been. "We can wait for them to leave."

He couldn't do that. Not in good conscience. If he were the one there, he'd hope whoever came to help would do everything to get him out of there. Oddly, it wasn't just his desire to help. There was something pulling him toward that damn facility. He had no idea what, but he wasn't one to ignore his instincts, especially since he was still in his animal form.

He just prayed he'd be able to.

CHAPTER 3

It had been two weeks since the tiger shifter had given him hope of being rescued but so far, nothing. Not even an inkling they might be freed. Even worse, they'd been forced to increase their productivity. More bombs.

Not good. Hell, it was a nightmare.

The thought of what he was being forced to do...possibly hurting people was...No. He couldn't think like that. He just...couldn't.

In the past, he'd known evil existed. At times he even thought he'd witnessed it. But that was nothing compared to what he was experiencing.

"Are you okay?" he asked softly as the one person he'd always thought of as the devil, Hugh, dropped to the ground in a heap after a grueling day.

"No," he spat out viciously. "I think I'm dying."

Considering they were being contaminated by a deadly element, that wasn't surprising. As shifters, they were able to fight off a lot of the effects, but the constant exposure, and now for twelve hours a day instead of nine, yeah, they were all wearing down.

If they didn't get freed soon, they'd all be dead. Which he would have thought might concern their captors, but they'd just brought in another forty new shifters two days earlier. Worse, they'd laughed about having an 'endless' supply.

Glyn's brother, who was across the room because they didn't want their jailers to know they were related, rolled his eyes at the dramatics. Biting his cheek to not laugh, Glyn said, "What makes you say that?"

"There isn't a part of my body that doesn't hurt," Hugh bitched.

The thing about Hugh was that, even though he owned and helped run his family's fishing ships, he actually had never, not even once, worked on a ship. His feet had been firmly planted on the ground...no, that wasn't accurate. It was more like his butt had been planted on a chair his entire life. Hell, his parents had gotten him out of gym class in middle and high school because the teacher was 'too hard on the kids.' No one else had ever had that privilege.

Admittedly, they were being worked to exhaustion, but death? Yeah, no. Well, unless the radiation got them. Then all bets were off. The actual 'working part,' was hard, but not impossible. Mostly. Sort of. Okay, so yeah, he was fucking tired. But again, not to the point of actual death.

The tiger shifter, who Glyn wasn't entirely happy with at that point, dropped down next to him. "He's here."

Wait...what?

"Who is?" he made certain to keep his voice pitched low enough that only the tiger shifter would hear him.

"The one who is going to get us out of here," he said. "Be ready. Tell those you trust but no one else. Because of where we are, it will be difficult enough to get the fuck out of here. No point alerting the guards."

Then he got up and moved to a dolphin shifter. Based on his body's reaction, the tiger

had told him the same thing.

The problem? How in the fuck were they supposed to get out of North Korea? Don't get him wrong, he believed in the new Council Chief's ability to lead, but against a country that was as hostile as North Korea? Just no.

Still, if the tiger shifter was right, he had to tell his brother. Looking pointedly at Jarvis, then slightly tilting his head toward the tiger shifter, he gave a brief nod. His brother's eyes widen just enough to let him know he got the message but not enough for the humans watching them to notice.

He'd believed the tiger shifter at first. But two days later, he feared he'd been dead wrong.

But then he'd smelled it. Brine, salt and sand. It was intoxicating. It took every bit of control he had not to whirl around and find where it was coming from. But he wouldn't risk it, because he knew his mate was there. No way was he about to alert the humans someone that important to him was there.

He just didn't understand how? The humans hadn't brought anyone new there recently.

Where was he? It took everything within Glyn to not search wildly around. He just didn't understand how his mate was there.

Why?

Was he another prisoner he hadn't been around to scent?

He prayed the answer was no. Like seriously was willing to get on his knees and pray. Obviously, he didn't because that the humans would notice, but...fuck...he

didn't know how he would handle it if his mate was forced to make weapons.

Eyes were on him. That much he felt. But Glyn refused to look around and discover where his mate was.

Then he stood from where he'd been lifting the rocks infused with uranium and knew, without a doubt, his mate was beyond the fence that surrounded the property. He couldn't see him but he was there. Hidden – Glyn hoped. Who was he kidding? He prayed with every molecule in his body the enemy couldn't see him.

“That's him,” the tiger shifter said so softly he'd barely heard him. Then again, that might have been because he'd been too focused on locating and seeing his mate to hear him.

“He's one of our best,” the tiger shifter said as he once more passed by him and jolted Glyn to continue loading more rocks into the bin.

It wasn't often they were allowed outside. Only when a shipment of uranium came were they given this small freedom. Originally, Glyn had thought it would be the one time they'd be able to break free. Boy, had he been wrong.

Not only were there guards standing over them, but there was extra security at the gates, the truck and snipers on the roofs of the three buildings that surrounded the entrance of the building they were located in.

Yet, somehow the tiger shifter, as well as whoever was to rescue them, who also was Glyn's mate, thought one man was going to free all of them????? Nope. No fucking way was that happening. Not after everything he'd witnessed. Needing to save his mate, Glyn looked in the direction he was located and subtly shook his head.

He'd been hoping to warn him away, but somehow, and he seriously had no idea how

he knew it, his mate became more determined to save Glyn. Just fuck!

“Call him off.” Even though he’d kept his voice low so only the tiger shifter could hear him when they passed by again, there was a definite growl in it.

“No,” the tiger shifter didn’t even hesitate in his answer.

The thing was, as much as he wanted to argue with him, Glyn knew it was pointless. The mission was about more than him, or his mate, for that matter. There were hundreds, possibly a thousand, of shifters there. Some were kids. Even if he hadn’t been there, his mate would have risked his life to save them.

As much as it pained him to admit, he was proud his mate was such a fierce man, but...

He wanted to cry. To scream. To beg for divine intervention. Yet, he knew it wouldn’t do any good.

But it was his mate. How could Glyn just ignore that if he was caught, he’d most likely be killed? The thought of losing his mate before even getting the chance to meet him was too much to bear. Yet, he didn’t have a choice.

He stumbled, but the tiger shifter was right there and quickly caught him before he’d fallen, which would have likely caused one of the guards to put a bullet in his head. The North Korean’s didn’t tolerate weakness of any kind and falling down would be enough provocation to take action.

There was nothing he could do.

CHAPTER 4

The first day Cayman had watched from the river's muddy bottom. It wasn't until an hour before daylight that he'd swam to a safe position a mile from the encampment where he'd shifted and dressed in the tactical gear that was stored in his bag to check out the entire facility.

He couldn't explain why his manta ray had been practically vibrating with the need to get in there. At first, he thought his animal was on edge because it understood the danger surrounding them. But everything changed when he'd rounded the side where the gate was. Then he scented it; salt water and snow.

His mate was there.

What he didn't know was whether or not his mate was a prisoner or one of the sadistic guards. And it pained him to admit it, but he was afraid to find out. Then again, it wouldn't matter which his mate was, the chances of them having a happily ever after, was slim to...who was he kidding? It was impossible.

Cayman was under no illusion he was on a suicide mission. If his mate was one of the captives, the odds of either making it out of there, was implausible. Both of them getting out? Impossible.

And he seriously didn't even want to consider what it might mean if his mate worked there. Especially, since he'd witnessed more than once guards mistreating prisoners they'd brought to the place. It was appalling and he wanted nothing more than to break down the gates and kill every one of those fuckers.

On the third day he'd been there, massive trucks arrived filled with what he assumed was uranium ore. Needing as much intel as he could get, he once again shifted to his human form in order to observe.

It didn't take long to move to the closest spot he could get to without being seen. The trucks had just stopped and the doors of the building where they always took the incoming prisoners to, opened. For the first time in the three days since he'd arrived, the captives were brought out instead of going in.

Instantly, he spotted Rip, Wizard and Lael and breathed a sigh of relief. Not about to give away his position by telling Saber and Yosi, he was glad when he heard Yosi's voice in his ear. "We just picked up Rip, Wizard and Lael's locators."

He tapped on his earpiece to let him know he heard but couldn't speak at the moment. He was way too close to the fence to risk detection.

Another tap was also given. Even though he knew who'd made it as Cayman was watching him, Yosi said, "That was Rip."

That's when the aroma of the salt water and snow hit him. Mate. His gaze zeroed in on a man who was probably about the same height as him, with short dark hair and a lithe build. He couldn't see his eyes from his position, but damn , he was gorgeous. Like drop dead beautiful and for several long minutes, Cayman couldn't take his eyes off him, putting him in serious danger of being discovered because he was too distracted to know if anyone was headed his way.

Thankfully, no one was, but he needed to get his fucking head back in the game because there was no way, after seeing his mate, would he allow anything other than success to get his mate out of there. Nothing else was acceptable and Cayman didn't care what he'd have to do to make that happen.

The question was, how? And it was a very big question.

Security was beyond tight. Well, mostly. The fact was, they had a ton of guards and they were trained well. But, from what he'd observed, their technology wasn't up to par. It was a weakness he would be able to exploit, but as there was only one of him, and at a minimum of eighty guards watching every corner of the place, getting in to set up a bomb in order to kill them wasn't exactly a walk in the park. Nor feasible when it meant risking his mate.

He had no idea what the layout was inside those buildings. No matter where he would have placed an explosive it might cause his mate harm. That was something he and his manta ray wouldn't allow. Ever.

His gaze narrowed when his mate's shoulders tensed dramatically. Even though it was fairly obvious, to Cayman if not the humans, he was doing everything in his power to will himself not to look in Cayman's direction. His mate had scented him.

Rip must have told the beautiful man why Cayman was there, because his mate looked right at him and shook his head quickly before taking more ore off one of the trucks. It warmed his heart that his mate was concerned about him. But Cayman wasn't about to leave him to die in that place.

No. It was time to get them all out.

Cayman just wished he had a better plan than the one he'd come up with, because it would likely get him killed before he could get to his mate. That wouldn't stop him though. He might not get to meet him, but as long as his mate got out, Cayman would do it.

"They fucking have my mate ," Cayman growled out the moment the call connected.

He'd run more than three miles, which included going partway up a nearby mountain, because there was no fucking way he was going to be away from his mate longer than necessary. It was bad enough he wouldn't have eyes on him when he got back. Cayman had waited until the prisoners had gone back inside before taking off in order to call Saber and Yosi.

He hadn't expected the moment those doors closed, it would have brought him to his knees, but it had. He'd stared at them for another fifteen minutes, willing them to open once more, but they'd stayed stubbornly shut.

"Fuck," Saber swore knowing that it would mean. "So what crazy plan have you concocted?"

He wasn't wrong. The moment he'd laid eyes on his mate, Cayman knew there was no way he could blow anything up. He had no clue what the setup was like underground and he wasn't about to risk his mate's life over it. Even if he set the bombs to create a diversion only, they still might cause the ground to collapse over the prisoners' heads. No. He would need to do it on his own.

That meant drastic measures that he had to pray would get him far enough inside to arm Rip and the others. Even if he didn't make it, once Rip, Wizard and Lael made it above ground, Yosi would be able to contact them. And yes, he was thanking fuck their earpieces hadn't been found and were still in. But it also warned him once he'd secured outside and entered the building, he would be on his own.

He just wished Rip could have given them information about what was behind those doors. But there was no way for Rip or the others to speak without someone overhearing them. Even if the humans didn't actually hear the words, they would see his lips moving eventually and be stopped.

That meant Cayman had to go in blind, with no weapons alerting the enemy he was

there, yet still kill all the guards. There was only one way to do that. “I’m going to slit all of their throats,” he told the Council Chief and his Alpha.

Both of them swore several times.

“Are you fucking out of your mind?” Saber asked.

At the same time, Yosi said, “You’ll never make it inside. We’ve been watching and they always have a minimum of eighty guards on the roofs and walking the perimeter. And we counted another fifty that came out with them. God only knows how many more were still inside.”

He had been there; he already knew that much. Nor was Saber’s comment helpful even if it was accurate. Of course he was out of his mind.

“He’s my mate and I will do whatever it takes to get him out of there.” His voice had been low and deadly. It might be a suicide mission, but his resolve was absolute. He would get his mate out if he had to take down all of North Korea to do it.

“Now, either help me come up with a plan to kill the guards without any of them noticing – for that matter, also not alerting anyone inside - or get the fuck off the phone so I can return to my mate and get him out of there before he ends up dead.”

Did they really think he didn’t know exactly what he was getting into? That he probably wouldn’t survive. That by going through with his insane plan would mean he never would get the chance to be with his mate?

“Okay,” Saber said. “You’re the one with boots on the ground. Knowing you, you already have an idea on where to start.”

Forcing himself to focus on what has to be done, he got to work.

CHAPTER 5

Biting back the groan of disappointment when he felt his mate leave, Glyn did his best to try and be happy that his mate wasn't going to risk his life on saving them when there was no possible way it would ever succeed. Still, he owed it to the tiger shifter, who he could have sworn one of his friends called Rip, but that sounded too bizarre to be an actual name.

The guards 'graciously' gave them a twenty minute break to rest and get water before they were to get back to loading the ore they'd brought to the conveyor belts that would break them down to pure uranium. It had been during that break when he'd known his mate was no longer watching the compound.

The moment they were forced to get back up, he finagled his way over to the tiger shifter. "He's gone," he murmured too low for the humans to hear.

"Guessing Cayman is your mate," the tiger stated more than asked.

Glyn dipped his head once, since he refused to let the guards think they were communicating.

"He'll break in tonight." The tiger sounded so certain, but Glyn knew he was no longer nearby.

Subtly, he shook his head. "He's gone."

They were passing too close to some of the guards to speak further. But over the

course of the six hours of their work detail, fear clawed at him with the knowledge of the tiger, who confirmed his name was Rip, told him about his mate.

Cayman not only never backed down from a mission, he was usually sent on only the most dangerous ones. It was the reason he was there in the first place. There weren't many places in the world that were tougher to get in and out of than North Korea.

Plus, Rip reminded him, it hadn't just been Glyn who had scented his mate. Cayman knew his mate was there. Had scented him. Seen him. There was zero chance of Cayman leaving him behind.

Worse, it also meant, the moment he knew his mate was a prisoner, Cayman would get him out, with the least amount of risk to Glyn's life. At first, he'd been relieved because it meant his mate would take every precaution to be safe. But the next time Rip was able to say anything to him, which was when they were on their way back to the room where they slept, the tiger disabused him of that idea.

"He likely would have set up bombs to kill the guards above, as well as cause a distraction." Solemn blue eyes pinned his for a brief moment. "He won't take the chance with you here."

"Why not?" Glynn practically hissed out.

"Doesn't know what it looks like below ground and he won't take the chance of you getting hurt when they go off." Rip's words made too much sense, causing Glyn's heart to nearly beat out of his chest in abject terror.

When they were handed their one cup of water they were allowed after working, Rip murmured with the cup raised to hide his mouth. "Be ready. Because he will come before the sun rises."

Knots of pure dread formed in his stomach making it difficult to take a drink. But he forced himself to. If they needed to run, he needed to have consumed every drop of water and every bite of food they were given. No matter how meager the offerings were.

No way would he be the reason they didn't make it out of there. Not when it would mean his mate would be killed instantly for attempting to free them.

He made certain to signal to his brother when the guard's back was turned to be ready that night. Jarvis rolled his eyes after hearing that already a couple of nights ago and so far nothing had happened.

Glyn stared hard at him until Jarvis seemed to understand he wasn't kidding. When his brother slightly dipped his head, Glyn lay down and slept. He would be no good escaping if he was too exhausted to stay awake, much less run.

When he woke up an hour later for their barely there meal, Glyn once more sensed his mate close by. Fuck. Rip had been right.

As they formed a line to get their trays, he once again maneuvered himself behind Rip. "He's back."

"Be ready," Rip warned him again.

It killed him to know his mate was putting his life in danger, especially when the odds of freeing them were minimal at best. That said, he also hated the idea of knowing his mate was out there and he'd never get to meet him. It might not have been much of a chance that they could be together, but the allure of touching Cayman was too strong to completely regret that his mate was coming for him.

Not that there was a fucking thing he could do about it at that point. Hell, he couldn't

even stand up without permission and if he tried, he'd most likely end up with a bullet in his head. He'd seen it happen before.

All he could do was sit there and wait. The thought of trying to get more sleep after he'd taken the whole five bites of food they'd offered was laughable. Between the anxiety of his mate dying while attempting to infiltrate the compound and the joy that he might actually get to meet him, he was overwhelmed.

Still, the exhaustion of working so many hours of hard labor day in and day out with little food or water to replenish their energy, added to having to sleep on the hard floor against his aching body, he eventually did start to doze off.

He had no clue how long he'd slept, but he was jolted awake when the scent of his mate slammed into him. Opening his eyes, he looked around, certain Cayman had to be in the room with them. But he wasn't there.

He had no idea where he was, but Glyn was positive he was in the underground building. Glancing around, he saw pretty much everyone was sleeping, or possibly pretending to sleep.

Gently tapping the hard floor beneath him several times, he got the attention of Rip and his friends, who casually turned over as if they were trying to get into a new position and looked right at him.

In the dimly lit room, the human guards wouldn't be able to see that their eyes were open, but his shifter vision could. Casting a quick glance at the guard, who was roaming around the other side of the room near Rip and his friends, who had his back turned to Glyn, he mouthed, "He's inside."

Their bodies tensed, ready to spring at any moment. All of their senses were alert for any movement at the doorway of their assigned room.

While he waited, Glyn sent up a prayer that fate allowed them to have their happy ending.

CHAPTER 6

Frustrated that they hadn't made much headway after two hours of discussion, especially knowing they only had another seven before it got dark, Cayman closed his eyes and pictured everything he'd seen since he'd arrived three days earlier.

It hadn't been easy to make an approach, even in water. There were sensors in the river, but as a manta ray, while large, he wasn't the size of a boat, which he assumed was what the North Koreans were searching for. Stupid, considering they were kidnapping shifters? Fuck yes.

It wasn't like a fucking orca could have swam the river. But it had been to his advantage so he wasn't going to bitch. Even better, he'd noticed a large amount of the shifters there were penguins, otters and seals. Not all. He would still need to figure out a way to get those like Rip, Wizard, and Lael out. Still, it made the odds better.

The only thing they'd agreed on was there was no way to breach the compound on ground. But the pipe leading from the river to the facility wasn't exactly big. Sure, he could fit, but if it had any type of sensors, they would know he was coming.

Add to it, it would be nearly impossible for him to take the bag with his clothes and weapons with him. Oh, he had no choice to bring it, not for the clothes, but the weapons. It would already be difficult to kill the enemy with nothing but knives, but with nothing but his hands? Yeah...No.

The biggest problem? The fact that he needed to traverse the pipe, get inside, shift and somehow strap enough knives to his body – with or without clothes he had no

idea yet – without being detected. He had no clue what was beyond that pipe. For all they knew, the water went right into the chamber to cool off the uranium, which would most likely kill him even if he was a shifter.

“You can always do a test run,” Chadwick, Saber’s mate, said as if it were the most obvious solution.

The thing was, it was.

“If it isn’t an option, call us back and we’ll figure something out.” The bored affect in Chadwick’s voice was something that was often there. Well, that and sarcasm. Which, technically was also in his words.

“Fuck you,” Cayman said as he clicked off the call. Yeah, so Chadwick tended to see things others didn’t, but that time the obvious had been practically smacking them in the face and no one had mentioned it until Chadwick said something.

Running back to the river, Cayman stripped, putting his clothes in the waterproof bag and storing it under a small outcropping of rock, he waded into the water and shifted. As much as he would prefer to have his weapons with him in case an opportunity arose, he also knew he couldn’t chance carrying it in case it set off any sensors the North Koreans might have in the pipe.

As much as he wanted to swim quickly in order to discover what he needed to know to get his mate free, he didn’t. Caution was his best chance of not getting caught. Cayman let the flow of the water take him down river until he was near the pipe he needed to travel through. Studying it for several moments, he decided there weren’t any sensors at the entrance.

He could only pray he was right.

Entering, he only had to fold in his pectoral fins slightly. He didn't fight against the suction as he traveled closer to the interior of the facility. His senses were on high alert for any sign the enemy knew he was there but there wasn't anything amiss. Yet.

Light ahead alerted him that he was coming to the end of the pipe. A flick of his fins had him slowing as the water flowed around him at a faster pace. It felt like an eternity but eventually the water was pushed into a giant pool.

No. That was too simple of a description. A pond seemed like a too big description but it was more accurate than a pool. Cayman had no clue where he was inside the compound, or how to get to his mate, but he was inside. Even better, there were no guards in there. Not that it meant he was free and clear. He had zero doubts it was being watched.

The desire to go further was strong, but he refused to succumb to it. He stayed just on the edge. Not showing himself, even as he watched every fucking inch as the water poured out into what was basically a pool. Cayman didn't dare spill out into it. Not then.

All he could do in that moment was hover around the periphery and take everything in. It killed him to not go in. But he damn well knew there was no way he could take the chance of alerting anyone and instead turned to swim back to the river.

Yeah, he already knew he was going to go inside to rescue his mate. But, and it was a big but, knowing that and actually doing it was fucking huge.

Wait...

No...

Not huge. But definitely...

How did he say it?

Cayman had gone into some of the worst...? Situations? Hell? Fuck! At that moment, with his mate inside, there were no words. None. He needed to find a way in that would not only get him there, but also get the prisoners out without risking their lives.

That was easily said, yet impossible to do. No. He wouldn't use that word because it would be admitting Cayman wasn't meant to save his mate. That was something he would never allow to happen.

The question then was, what the fuck was he supposed to do?

As fast as he could, yet still moving slowly enough to not alert anyone, he made his way out of the pipe, into the river and back to where he felt reasonably safe enough to shift. Cayman had barely reached a place that hid him from anyone watching when he'd hit the send button on his phone.

"You there?" he winced when he was somewhat positive he'd practically shouted.

"We are," Saber growled out. "We're going through the video frame by frame as well as trying to map out what we believe you will find beyond the water tank."

It wasn't impossible to get inside, but it wasn't exactly a walk in the park either. The tank of water was exactly that. A giant tank with no way to hide once he was inside.

No rocks to hide behind. No sand along the bottom. Just cement and water. It would mean he'd be vulnerable. Not something he would typically mind, but it meant time for the enemy to capture him before he could arm himself properly.

That was something he couldn't allow. Not if he had any hope of getting his mate out of there alive.

Which left him where?

Fuck if he knew.

“How am I supposed to get them out alive?” Because even though his only thought was about his mate, the fact was, he had at least a hundred others to save. It was why he was there.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Chadwick exclaimed. “After what I’d just seen, you’ll be lucky as fuck to get out of that room alive, much less free anyone.”

Saber growled. “Not helpful, mate.”

“Helpful, my ass,” Chadwick claimed. “Like seriously,” as he stared into the tablet Cayman held. “If your mate is in there, that should be your only goal. Trust your manta ray. You have one shot in saving anyone, especially your mate. Do that and there is a chance you both might survive.”

Was that possible?

Cayman wasn’t certain, but as much as he wanted to only worry about his mate, the fact was, he was there to get everyone he could out. If he could get to Rip, Wizard, and Lael he would have a better chance as they would have the ability to help him fight.

Ending the call, he checked his bag to ensure his weapons were easily accessible. Stripping once more, he stowed his clothes. It was a risk to try and dress after exiting the water, but he needed to be able to carry as many of his knives as possible.

Minutes later, he went into the river and shifted. It wasn’t ideal to have to get his body through the strap of the bag without help, but he’d learned through the years to

make it work. Entering the pipe again, resolve settled over him. No matter what it took, he was not only going to save his mate but give them their chance of having their happily ever after.

Right?

If not, he was more than willing to die. Not that he would prefer it, but he also hated even the idea of not having his fated mate by his side.

Exiting the pipe, he did his best to stick to the side of the giant tank. When no alarm sounded, he searched the room and let out a huge breath when he noticed no one else was there.

Several minutes later, he shifted and pushed himself out of the pool. Quickly drying off, he dressed and started strapping knives to his body as efficiently as possible.

“Ready?” Yosi asked someone still connected to them. Since Rip, Wizard, and Lael weren’t in contact, he knew it was only a matter of time before he’d be cut off.

“Ready,” he muttered softly.

Did he want to kill anyone involved in capturing them? Yep. And, fucking yep. That said, he also understood it wasn’t always that easy. It took planning, something they hadn’t been able to do. He had no clue what was on the other side of that door and as much as it pained him, Cayman was willing to be patient and methodical if it got his mate out of there.

Typically, he was extremely patient, but not this time, and he needed to find a way to remain focused on his job or he was going to end up dead.

CHAPTER 7

Glyn's entire body was shaking. There was no way that was a good thing. Right?

A strong hand touched his arm. "Stop."

As forceful as Rip's voice was – considering they had to modulate their tones in order to not be heard by their human captors – Glyn was too far gone to 'hear' him. Actually, he was out of his fucking mind with worry and ready to kill everyone 'watching' them.

That was something he hadn't thought would ever happen. He'd been there for months, yet never once had he thought he could kill, until now. He'd seen too much. Experienced hell. Not just him, but what he'd witnessed his people had gone through. No. After all of that? He was more than willing to do whatever it took to annihilate those holding them. He just wished it was that easy.

It was a challenge, but he managed to take a deep breath and stop himself from freaking out. Mostly. Sort of. Okay, so not necessarily, but enough to not draw attention to himself. He hoped.

"Thanks," he muttered.

"Stop worrying," Rip said as they walked toward their 'breakfast.'

He wasn't entirely certain how tiny oatmeal-type bars equaled that designation but at least they provided some of the calories they desperately needed. Though it wasn't

even close for any of them to fight in order to ‘break’ out of there. Rip’s word, not his.

That Glyn was able to lift each rock he had to carry was a miracle. In what universe did Rip think he, or anyone else there, would be able to fight back?

Then again, to gain their freedom...All of them would be willing to do whatever it took.

That might not have been true before, but now?... after months of forced labor?...So ready.

He had no right to expect it, but when he’d scented his mate, Glyn had hoped he was there to save them. Then...when Rip had confirmed it, every single cell within Glyn prayed the fuck that it wasn’t true.

How was he supposed to not care whether or not his mate survived? From what Rip had indicated, his mate was the best when it came to infiltrating...well anywhere. Even fucking North Korea. That didn’t make him impervious to harm.

That said, what did it mean?

According to Rip, Cayman technically had the best intel, the most up-to-date satellites and people talking in his damn ear non-stop to guide him through the country. But none of it necessarily meant success.

“Seriously, stop worrying,” Rip muttered. “If anyone can get us out of here, it’s Cayman.”

“You said he would come for us last night.” It was why he was panicking. “What if he got caught?”

“Do you feel him?” Rip asked.

Glyn couldn't verbally answer as three guards walked in right then. But he did dip his head slightly. That was part of the problem. He had felt Cayman nearby. He'd arrived five hours earlier but there had been no sign of him.

When the guards moved on to another room, Glyn asked, “How long is it going to take?”

Rip shrugged. “Don't know. We were caught before we'd gotten a chance to case the place out to know just how big it is. But he'd need to be careful if he didn't want to be caught.”

That was the exact problem. Glyn had no illusions that him being there would cause his mate to take chances he shouldn't. He needed to find a way to help him. But how?

Brine, salt and sand suddenly hit him as Glyn and the others made their way to the pile of uranium they took to the conveyor belt. He was so surprised, he gasped loudly, causing the guards to look his way.

Shit. Not good.

Looking down, he headed straight for the rocks and lifted one, which thankfully was all it took for the guards to go back ignoring him. As he straightened under the weight of the heavy rock, he muttered softly, “He's nearby. I can scent him.”

Still nothing happened for the next thirty minutes as they continued to work their asses off. Yet, every once in a while, he would get a whiff of his mate. Not having any clue how one infiltrates a North Korean compound, much less get those imprisoned out safely, he had to trust that Cayman knew what he was doing and come find him as soon as possible.

Glyn just wished it would happen before he worried himself into a heart attack.

Fuck him sideways.

Nothing had gone smoothly since he'd tried to open the door out of the room with the tank to find it locked. And who the fucking hell put a lock on the hallway side of the door? For several minutes, he feared the North Koreans had installed it that way because they'd expected someone to do exactly as Cayman had done to get in there.

As he'd worked to free himself by picking the lock, which thankfully he had a lot of experience doing so it hadn't taken more than a minute, he'd been ready for guards to descend. They hadn't, but it had altered things. He had done that sort of thing for long enough, he damn well knew if something went wrong, it tended to set the tone for the rest of the mission.

Prepared for anything, Cayman had redoubled his efforts to remain vigilant and not rush anything. Thank fuck he had because he hadn't made it more than ten steps down the hall when he heard the unmistakable sound of boots on the cement heading his way.

Not having anywhere he could hide, he'd rushed back to the water tank room and rushed inside. Because things were getting dicey already, he had pulled out his lock pick and relocked the door in case whoever was walking toward him noticed it was unlocked.

That meant having to once more unlock it, wasting even more of his time. It also made it even more obvious things were bound to go sideways fast if he wasn't careful. But not having schematics for the compound, he was going in blind. That made it a challenge to remain unseen.

As much as it killed him to do, he decided on quick forays out. If he found other

rooms to hide in, he would use them, but until he did, Cayman would continue to return to the tank room. It would mean double or even triple how long it would take him to make a move against the guards, but he had too many moving parts he couldn't account for.

The main one being what would he do with the guards he took out. He had to find a safe place to dump their bodies or he would be discovered after killing the first few. The water tank would probably be his best choice, but based on the distance he'd traveled through the pipe, he was on the edge of the building.

If he had to keep carrying bodies all the way through hallways, it would not only take forever, but it would increase his odds of being found. After three trips back and forth, he'd found a supply closet of sorts. Thankfully, it was larger than a simple closet, making it ideal for storing bodies. He hoped.

Three hours later, he'd found two other storage rooms that could be used, as well doing a decent job mapping out the place. He'd lost connection with Yosi and Saber the moment he'd left the water tank room. But that was fine, he had a good sense of the layout and rotation for people milling about.

But then the guards changed shifts and suddenly there were double the amount of them inside. He'd had to hunker down and wait them out. That had taken an agonizing hour.

With new people, he needed to observe their movements in case they didn't follow the same routine of the previous shift. By the time he was ready to move, his manta ray was pushing him to grab his mate and get the hell out of there.

He'd left his scent for his mate to find, hoping he would warn Rip, Wizard, and Lael he was there. But it was when he had to watch his mate struggle carrying heavy rocks, his body appearing exhausted and ready to collapse that had him worried.

It wasn't just his mate either. Most of the prisoners looked beat down and ready to fall over any moment. No way were they going to be any help fighting the guards. Even Rip, Wizard, and Lael were beyond tired. He could see it in the lines around their eyes and mouth. The way they were dragging to move the rocks.

The only good thing was there were three different work groups and the guards watching them didn't seem to interact with the other groups. It would give him the opportunity to take out each set of guards without the other ones having any clue what was happening.

The problem? There were twenty guards per group. That was a lot of guards he'd have to take out without someone sending out an alarm. Second issue? His mate and Rip were in the middle of the three sets of prisoners. That meant he'd have no help from them until he completely cleared the first twenty guards.

Good thing he was damn good at his job.

Approaching the area, he kept to the shadows and slipped behind a single guard who was off to the side. There were enough piles and equipment around, he might not have to move the bodies, which would help.

Before the guy knew what was happening, Cayman struck. One hand was placed over his mouth so he couldn't shout out at the same time he sunk his knife deep into his neck, severing his spinal column so he wouldn't be able to fire his weapon.

The hand that had been holding the knife slid it effortlessly back in place so he could grab the man's gun before it clattered to the floor. Then he pulled the body behind a pile of rocks. The entire thing had only taken seconds, the others not having seen a thing.

It wasn't until he'd killed three that he was noticed. Not by the guards, but the

prisoners. He placed a finger at his lips and shook his head in a warning.

The two men and one woman, just picked up their next rock. But he did notice, they did their best to shield him from the other guards each time he took another one out. Methodically, he took them down, until they were all dead.

But when the prisoners started to react, he held up a hand to stop them. He still had two more sets of guards to take out, not to mention another twenty that were guarding the stairs and entrance to the building. It would be detrimental if those outside were alerted to his presence.

He gestured for them to continue hauling rock. He hated making them do it, but it was paramount for the guards in the room next to them not realize they'd stopped working.

Several nodded, seeming to understand the plan. When they'd gotten back to work, he made his way to the next area, where his mate was. He had to hope he could stay calm when he saw him. There could be no mistakes.

He knew the moment his mate had scented him when he'd slipped into the workspace. His shoulders tensed and he inhaled sharply. Only because the guards were human had they not heard him, but the shifters in the room had.

Several eyes landed on him. If one of them let it be known he was there, they were done for. But they didn't. The only ones that changed their pattern were Rip, Wizard, and Lael as they slowly inched their way in his direction without being obvious.

He had six guards down when Rip was close enough to pass a knife too. Wizard blocked what they were doing with his body as he hefted another rock and purposely tripped. He didn't allow himself to fall, but it did take the guards' attention.

Three knives were quickly stowed in Rip's waistband. He would pass one each to Wizard and Lael as they worked. Not worrying about them, Cayman continued taking out guards. It was messy work and he had blood sprayed from head to toe. But he didn't let it alter his smooth movements.

His mate was straining with the effort not to look in his direction but it was obvious he kept shooting Cayman looks. Needing to protect him at all costs, Cayman moved swiftly before a guard noticed his mate was distracted and followed the direction of his gaze.

When the last guard went down, he pointed to Wizard and Lael and gestured for them to guard the others while indicating for Rip to follow him. He knew Rip's ability to not be seen despite being large. Man was still light on his feet.

It would be quicker for all of them to take out the remaining guards, but four of them going in would likely be noticed. Four minutes later, they were leading the prisoners from the last space with them.

They took them to the area closest to the hallway that would lead them out of the building. As low as he could, he warned them they were a long way from out of danger. Not only did he have to take out the remaining guards inside, but the ones outside if they had any hope of being free. Even that wouldn't guarantee they'd get to safety.

Once it was discovered they were gone, the North Koreans would be after them en masse.

CHAPTER 8

Glyn wasn't certain what he thought would happen when his mate found him, but it wasn't to basically be ignored. Okay, yeah, he got it, they weren't exactly out of danger yet and he could see it would likely be better if Cayman wasn't distracted, but he hadn't even asked if Glyn was okay. Or, fuck, for that matter, what his damn name was.

Working for the Council it was possible he had the resources to discover Glyn's name, but he highly doubted it. Was it too much to ask for him to show a little bit of concern?

Worse, he planned on leaving them all right where they were while he took out of the rest of the guards. Glyn wasn't too proud to admit he was terrified of being discovered and shot while his mate wasn't there to protect him.

"Rip and Wizard will come with me. Lael, stay here and protect them." Those rich mahogany eyes pinned Glyn with a look of near panic.

It shouldn't have made him feel better, but it did. Knowing his mate was worried about him, settled something within him. "Go grab some rifles," he told Rip and Wizard and then he did the one thing Glyn feared he wouldn't, he came up to Glyn, took his hand and led him away from the others a bit.

"I'm so sorry I can't stay here with you, but if we have any shot of getting out of here, I have to take the rest of them out." He leaned close enough he could feel Cayman's breath on him as he said, "I will be back for you."

Then their lips touched and for a brief moment, despite being in hell, he was certain kissing his mate was what heaven felt like. “Glyn,” he blurted out when the way too brief kiss ended.

“What?” Cayman asked as he brows pulled close together in confusion.

“My name.”

Damn if those beautiful eyes didn’t soften and those firm lips curled up into a heart stopping smile. “Nice to meet you, Glyn. Stay safe.”

That might have been easier said than done. “I will.” It wasn’t exactly something he could make happen, but that’s not what Cayman needed to hear in that moment.

A gun was shoved into his mate’s hands. They shared one more poignant look before Cayman turned on his heel and strode back to Lael. “Once we have the building cleared, take them up the stairs and wait for us there. We need to be ready to run the moment the guards are down.”

Lael gave him a nod and then Cayman left without looking back. All Glyn could do was send up a prayer that he would come back like promised.

The guards inside the building were lazy and not even paying attention. Most likely they didn’t think anyone would be stupid enough to attack them and even if someone did, they would have been alerted by the ones outside. Clearly, even though they used shifters, no one considered there were other ways for a shifter to get into the place besides the front door.

Believe it or not, taking down the guards outside would be extremely difficult. Not only did they have eyes in all directions, making it more of a challenge to move about unseen, they were more likely to notice a guard no longer at his post. Add in the fact

they should be more alert since it would be the likely route for someone trying to get in.

That was their only real advantage. They were already inside. The guards wouldn't be expecting that.

They took the stairs up to the roof two at a time. Guns were tucked tight to their bodies as they were a last resort. They didn't want the sound to draw unwanted attention.

"Good to have you back gentlemen," Yosi said in their ear. "There are five guards on the roof of the building you're currently in. It is currently raining, which should help mask the sound of the door opening as well as give you some cover."

They hovered at the door waiting for Yosi's signal. "There is one guard with a spotter on the northwest corner. The other corners have one guard each."

Cayman was silently questioning his decision to leave Lael protecting the prisoners. But there was no way he was about to leave his mate with no one to keep him safe in case they'd somehow missed anyone else in the building.

He pointed in which direction Rip and Wizard were to take. He would take the shooter and spotter as well as the last remaining guard. He was fast and his kills were far more efficient. It would hopefully give him the edge.

"Breach," Yosi said and Cayman didn't hesitate to open the door as silently as possible. It squeaked but fortunately with the pouring rain and human hearing, no one heard it.

Keeping low, he raced to the shooter and spotter. Both men dropped to the roof seconds later. The second one hadn't even completely fallen before he was dashing

across the expanse to the last guard. He didn't bother to hide the bodies. No one would see them lying on the roof through the rain. But they would eventually be missed at their post.

Rip shifted, his tiger leapt down off the two-story building and took off after his first prey on the ground. Wizard, who was an eagle, shifted and plucked two knives in his talons before taking off for the roof of one of the other buildings. While they did that, Cayman took off for the door and flew down the stairs.

Slipping out the front by barely opening the door, he started his hunt with Yosi whispering in his ear, just as he was doing with the others. The rain worked to cover their movements, which made their mission far easier than he had imagined.

Humans were strange. Sure, the rain had been teeming, but they were going to get wet no matter what, so why bother trying to huddle under shelter. It meant leaving one's post and not paying enough attention to their surroundings.

"There are no more heat signatures," Yosi reported.

Finally, his mate was relatively safe. He wouldn't be completely until they were safely in South Korea, but considering the weather conditions, as shifters they would fare far better than the humans if they started chasing when the next shift came in for duty.

"Come on," he told Rip and Wizard. "We need to get moving before the next crew reports in."

"We're going to need to take some of the trucks," Rip told him. "Not everyone fared well inside. Some of those shifters could barely stand after being worked to death."

He was afraid of that. There weren't many trucks and splitting up wasn't ideal. "We

need to figure out a way to stick together.”

“Not certain that’s possible.” Rip knew their conditions a lot better than Cayman did. “It will be nearly impossible to keep everyone safe if we have to split up. Plus we need to load everyone on boats to be taken to a ship in the Yellow Sea.”

Once inside, he gave everyone instructions. It would suck, but Rip had been right. At least thirty wouldn’t be able to make the journey if they had to walk. Hell, he wasn’t certain any of them would be able to do it.

It would mean splitting up into small water shifters to swim down the river and those who would go in the trucks. His mate was a penguin shifter as were many others who had come from Glyn’s colony.

“The current is headed in the direction we’re going. So long as you have the ability to shift, I need all small water animals to do so and get into the river. Wizard will fly above us and I’ll be swimming with you.” It wasn’t ideal to have so many try to pass the guards watching the mouth of the river, but hopefully the rain would stay with them, helping to obscure their animals from the humans.

“Rip and Lael will drive two trucks loaded with everyone else. I won’t lie. The North Koreans will be watching. They don’t allow anyone to escape any more than they allow someone into their country. For those in the water, you will need to move cautiously and stay as deep as you can and stay in the middle of the river when I give you the signal.”

He turned to the others, mostly Rip and Lael. “All I can say is be in contact with Yosi. I have no idea how you’re going to keep from being seen.”

Not that they had any other choice, but Cayman wished there was another way. “If you need help, let me and Wizard know and we’ll try and get to you.” It wasn’t ideal,

but they were out of other options.

“Load up,” he ordered. The moment they had the trucks filled, he headed to the river just outside of the gates with the others.

Stripping, they got into the water. He once more had the backpack with his weapons strapped to his body and they headed downriver, praying they wouldn’t be seen.

CHAPTER 9

In an ideal world, the first time they had shifted and swam together, it would have been to let their animals get to know each other. Nothing about their situation was ideal though. It downright sucked.

Admittedly, things were looking up after his mate had arrived, but he was tired. Like bone weary tired and he knew many of the others felt that way as well. His penguin might be better equipped than his human half to get in the water and swim, but what he wanted more than anything was a weeklong nap. Preferably in his mate's arms.

He preened a little when he noticed Cayman kept close to him while in the water. He did check on the others from time to time, but he spent most of their time with Glyn. That made him feel better about being somewhat ignored when they first met.

From what his mate had said as they'd been getting ready to get into the water, someone named Yosi would keep Cayman informed if all was safe for them to keep going to the surface. Penguins might be great swimmers, but they were birds, not fish, so they still needed air.

They still could hold their breath for long periods of time, twenty minutes if they pushed it. It would make passing under whoever is watching the mouth of the river more of a challenge, but they all knew what was at stake, so they'd do it. It was the kids he was most concerned with. Their lung capacity wasn't as developed, nor did they swim as fast.

Even an adult, they might be considered fast, but there was zero chance of them

outrunning a boat. Then again, Cayman's team had had fast boats coming in to get them, but it would mean more of them above water for the humans to notice, which they wanted to minimize as much as possible.

His mate flapped his pectoral fins several times, indicating they were getting closer so if anyone needed to take a breath, now was the time to do it. As one, they rose, took their breath and dove back down.

Only the children stayed next to an adult in case they needed help. Otherwise everyone spaced themselves out to head as deep as they could go down the center of the river. His mate flattened his body and stuck to the bottom, while he monitored each of them passing under the somewhat watchful gaze of the North Korean soldier.

Each of them sighed in relief when they headed out to the sea. So long as no one noticed, they would swim to the ship in order to stay undetected. When his mate joined him once more, Glyn knew they were all safe. Now they just needed to cross their fingers that the ones traveling on land had the same luck.

They had just arrived at the ship when his mate suddenly turned on a dime and raced back toward shore. Damn. The others must have run into trouble. And why did it have to be his mate who put his life on the line once again?

Glancing up at the sky, he noticed Wizard was already gone, his wings much faster than Cayman's fins.

"I need everyone to shift and climb aboard," a man said from up on deck. "We need to get underway and try to help the other group."

Not wanting to lose anyone, they rushed to climb up, gratefully taking the towel and shorts that were stacked for them. "Do we know what happened to the others?" he asked the captain.

“They were spotted and are currently being chased.” Crap. That couldn’t be good. And his mate was diving right into the middle of it.

The moment he heard Rip’s panicked voice in his ear, Cayman spun around and raced back to shore as quickly as he could. There was no way he was going to get there quickly, but he had to try. No way was he going back into North Korea to rescue them again when he’d already gotten them out once.

“Get down,” he heard Lael yell just as bullets pinged off the vehicle they were in. “Shit, we blew a tire, we’re not going to make it if they manage to hit another one.”

The trucks they had taken had four tires in back, allowing for damage to happen without stopping the vehicle. It wasn’t entirely ideal, as they were also slower. But in a situation where they were being shot at, at least it didn’t disable them.

He needed to get there, but he hadn’t wanted to hang back until he knew his mate was safely on that ship. With both Rip and Lael driving, no one could shoot back at the enemy. He knew splitting up was going to bite them in the ass. Then again, if they hadn’t, Glyn would be in one of those vehicles getting shot at.

“You need to get someone to shoot back at them,” Saber growled out. “Someone has to have used a gun in those trucks.”

They probably had, but firing a weapon at a range and aiming at a human being were two very different things. A sharp cry came over the earpiece and he knew someone had just been hit.

“Fuck,” Rip yelled. “We’re too exposed in this thing. Yosi, do you see a way out of here?”

“No, and I have even worse news, there are three combat vehicles ahead of you. You

are about to be cut off.” As news went, that was definitely worse. “But Wizard is coming up on your six. He should be there in less than two minutes.”

Thank fuck. At least there would be someone who could accurately fire a rifle. Cayman just wished there was something more substantial in the vehicle. Like maybe a rocket launcher.

“Another tire’s out, but on the other side so we’re not dead in the water yet,” Lael called out.

“Get to Rip’s vehicle, Wizard, and Rip let Lael pass you. He loses one more tire and the North Koreans will be on them before we can do anything about it,” Saber ordered.

Arriving to the side of one of the fast boats, Cayman shifted and climbed up, scaring the crap out of Wesley, one of the drivers. “Fuck, Cayman. Are you trying to give me a damn heart attack?”

Ignoring the question, he pulled out his clothes and shoved them on as he barked out. “I’m at the fast boats. Where are Rip and Lael? I’ll get the boats in position and set up a surprise for the North Koreans but I’m going to need about five minutes once I’m in position.”

“Head south about ten miles,” Yosi told him. “What kind of trap so I know where to land you?”

“An explosive one.” Before learning his mate was being held captive, Cayman had planned on blowing part of the compound up. He still had those explosives in his bag. “I don’t need much. I will set it off manually right after Rip and Lael pass it.”

“Then yeah, ten miles there is an inlet that will make it somewhat easier to unload

everyone.” Yosi informed him even as Cayman raced south with the second boat on his tail. “Lael, Rip, there’s a turn in one mile to the west, take it and follow it to the water.”

“Copy that,” they both responded.

“Where’s the fucking gun?” Wizard yelled above the gunfire that was still pinging around them.

Relieved they would be able to fight back even if it was only one person, Cayman headed for the inlet Yosi told him about. The rain was still coming down hard, providing them with enough cover to not be seen. Then again, it could have been more about whatever soldiers were in the area were headed for Rip and Lael.

“How many vehicles are on their tail, Yosi?” The more there were, the harder it would be to set everything up in time before they got to Cayman’s location.

“Six,” Yosi’s news was not good.

Grabbing his bag, he handed controls back to Wesley and vaulted out of the boat and onto land. Running flat out, he made it two miles before Yosi said, “You have exactly five minutes before they arrive at your location.”

Dropping down right there on the road, he ripped open the zipper and took out his Semtex and remote devices and got to work. They were crude, but he also knew they’d been effective. Racing along the road he placed them so they would all go off at the same time, hopefully each with an enemy vehicle traveling over them when he detonated.

Then he got the hell away. Far enough to not get caught up in the blast, but to where he could still see in order to set them off at the right time.

“Make certain you pick me up when these go off,” he told Rip and Lael.

“Copy that.”

“They are a minute out. You should be able to see them,” Yosi told him.

“Got ‘em,” he confirmed. “I’m three-quarters of a mile from where the explosives are.”

Lael’s truck went over the devices, with Rip hot on his heels. The lead enemy was really close. “Tell everyone to hold on,” he called out. At the last possible second when the back end of the enemy’s vehicle was still over the explosive but Rip was hopefully far enough away to not get caught up, he hit the button.

Their world exploded in a fiery ball. Rip’s truck rocked heavily but it remained upright. The enemy’s trucks, not so much. Two rolled onto the roofs, the other four literally flipped in the air like they were toys.

Rip slowed down and Cayman stepped onto the running board and slipped his hand through the window and held onto the door frame as they sped off once more. Skidding to a stop, they called out, “Move, move, move.”

The vehicles might have been out of commission but the odds were some of the people inside survived and would be coming after them. Those they’d rescued streamed out of the back of the trucks. If someone was having a difficult time walking, someone helped carry them, including Cayman, Rip, Wizard and Lael.

They hauled ass onto the fast boats and ducked down when they saw soldiers heading their way. “Get us the fuck out of here, Wesley.

The engine revved just enough to make the boat vibrate with its power but otherwise

it was relatively silent. At least to human ears. Cayman could definitely hear it. They took off like the hounds of hell were after them, which wasn't far off.

It wasn't until they had everyone loaded on the awaiting ship and racing for South Korea that he took his first real breath since finding his mate imprisoned in that hellhole.

Speaking of his mate, it was time to become better acquainted. Rip, Wizard and Lael could take care of everyone else.

CHAPTER 10

Unable to handle the tension of waiting for word, Glyn threw himself into helping those who needed it. He helped make the kids peanut butter and jelly sandwiches as well as handed out juice boxes. The captain assured everyone there was food waiting for them at their destination before they boarded a plane and headed to either Miracle or Salvation.

As a water shifter, he was hoping for the island but he'd have to talk to his mate about where he lived. All he knew for certain was he wasn't about to go back to his colony. Not after being attacked and imprisoned. No. He wanted to be somewhere safe.

Once all the children were taken care of, he started working on making more sandwiches for the adults. He had only gotten about four of those made when arms encircled him from behind and the scent of brine, salt and sand sank deep into his lungs.

"Do you need help, my mate?" Cayman murmured in his ear, making Glyn shiver with the need of finally being in his mate's arms.

He set the knife down and turned in those strong, sure arms. "As much as I would love to say that I think we've done enough and should go find somewhere quiet where we can be alone, we were basically, slowly, being starved to death."

To prove his words, his stomach made a loud growl. Cayman flashed him a smile and damn if his heart didn't melt at the sight. "Then I guess we should feed you and the

others.” He reached around Glyn and picked up one of the sandwiches. “Since you’re the one in here, standing on your feet to help others, eat one now. I wouldn’t want my mate to faint.”

Then he grabbed another knife and another loaf of bread and started slathering peanut butter and jelly on the slices. Deciding Cayman had a point, he wolfed down one of the sandwiches and got back to work.

“Saber said they had a hot meal waiting for us at the airfield before we take off,” his mate told him. “Nothing too heavy since I had already warned him when I saw you working in the yard yesterday, they were clearly starving all of you.”

“Smart.” The last thing they needed was to gorge themselves and make themselves sick. “I was told we are being taken to either Miracle or Salvation. Do you live in one of those places?”

That earned him another smile as those mahogany eyes turned their complete attention to Glyn. It was...well knee weakening to have his mate’s focus on only him for a moment.

“Salvation. I live in a two-bedroom home overlooking the cove, which is where I spend most of my time swimming.” His grin got even bigger as he described it. “It’s a beautiful island with a beach, cliffs, a stream and even gorgeous woods with a couple of walking paths. We are surrounded by the Northern Pacific Ocean, so the cold waters should be nice for your penguin, although it’s not nearly as cold as what you’re used to. But it truly is a gem.”

“The natives are starting to get restless,” Wizard said as he came into the galley. “Can I start handing out the sandwiches you have done?”

The reminder of what they were doing heated his cheeks, which caused his mate to

chuckle softly. “Sorry, Wizard,” Cayman said. “I was too enamored with my mate to remember what I was doing.”

Touched that his mate admitted that, Glyn gave him a smile, but got back to working making more sandwiches. “How long will it be until we’re in South Korea?”

“About an hour.” Cayman waved a hand at the simple sandwiches. “Which makes the perfect snack before we get there.”

Damn. If his mate was going to be that sweet all the time, Glyn would be head over heels in love with him before they got to Salvation. He might already be halfway there.

“Do you go out on these kinds of missions often?” Even though Glyn understood what he did was important, the thought of him going away a lot bothered him. Then again, they hadn’t sealed their bond yet either, making him far more sensitive about it.

Cayman shrugged but that time he didn’t stop what he was doing. “In the past couple of years, more often than I’d like. We’re still not certain why humans and unscrupulous shifters are attacking shifter groups. I mean, obviously we’re tougher than humans for the hard labor.”

“Or being around uranium,” Glyn added. Not that it didn’t affect them at all, but it took a lot longer and the effects weren’t as severe unless they were put through long-term exposure.

“Exactly,” Cayman agreed. “We’ve found some of the higher ups recently, but still not who’s pulling the strings. Until we find that asshole, I can’t in good conscience leave innocent shifters in their hands.”

Oh. When he put it that way, Glyn felt like a jerk for resenting even the thought of his mate being sent on missions.

A large hand reached over and touched his arm, caressing his skin as if he just couldn't help himself. "Hey, know that now I'm mated, you come first. Yes, I will still have to go out into the field, but I won't take as many assignments as I had been."

Damn, if Glyn didn't feel both warmed by his words and guilty. He didn't want their relationship to be about Glyn forcing him to stay home with him.

"Thank you for saying that, but you're right. Those people need you. I needed you and not just because you are my mate." He turned and reached up to cup Cayman's cheek. "You saved me. There was no doubt I would have died in that place if it weren't for people like you. I just don't want you to always be gone."

Cayman leaned over and gave him a peck on the lips. "That, my mate, I promise you will never happen."

He hoped so. But if he was right and more and more shifters were being captured and forced to work with little to no food or water, was it fair to not do something to save them?

He already knew the answer. He could only pray they managed to find a balance because the last thing he wanted was for either of them to end up resenting the other one.

CHAPTER 11

Who would have ever imagined he'd end up with a mate who was so damn...adorable? Yet, that was exactly who he was currently staring at as they arrived in Salvation.

The fact that he would swear there were stars in Glyn's stunning hazel eyes, made it that much better. Not once in his life had he ever imagined the way his mate looked at him. It was as if Cayman was the king of the world. Or...was that just wishful thinking?

Yet, each time he gazed at Glyn he swore that was the exact look he saw in those gorgeous hazel eyes. Even though he loved being everything when it came to his mate, he also hated that Glyn seemed to also be...worried? No. Not that, exactly.

"You get that you saved me, right?" Glyn asked as he looked around at the beautiful vista that was their home. And it was. Theirs. Glyn might have only just laid eyes on it for the first time, but the place was his as much as it was Cayman's.

His mate's words cut him deep. Technically, yes, he got him and the others out of that hell but that's not how he wanted Glyn to think. They were equals. Meant to be together.

"I understand what you are saying but that is the last thing I want you to feel." And he was serious. "Never believe, even for an instant, that you owe me anything for doing what I did. We belong to each other. That is the only reason we deserve to love each other."

Glyn wrapped himself around Cayman as they crashed together in a kiss that was all teeth and tongues. It was as if they were trying to fuse together until neither of them could tell where one started and the other began.

When his mate's legs went around his waist, Cayman didn't even stop to grab their things from the helicopter. He just started walking the familiar route to their cabin.

Need made them both desperate as he pushed open the door and kicked it shut with his foot. Hands tore at clothing and more than a few times material was torn, but neither of them cared. They just wanted skin on skin.

He hadn't gotten further than the living room wall when they were pushing down their pants and aligning their cocks for the first time. And fucking damn. The hot, hard length of his mate was...everything.

He was almost dizzy with the sensation of it slotting next to his as they frantically thrust against each other. Even though he was fucking eager to be inside Glyn, or feel that long, slim cock inside him, there was no way he was going to last. He needed to come...Now.

"Please," Glyn gasped as Cayman's mouth latched onto his shoulder, right where his mating mark would go. "Fucking need to come."

There was nothing sweeter than hearing his mate beg for him. It made him want to worship his body all fucking day and night just to hear it. That was something he definitely could do. But first, he needed just as much. They were too on edge.

In part from finding each other, but he also knew it was due to the danger they'd gone through. It was one of the reasons he would rather just get off with his mate this time. Because when they made love...mated...he didn't want frantic. He wanted to love on his man.

Glyn was too important to him for some quick fuck, especially their first time. He was everything to Cayman. His entire world meant nothing without this amazing, caring man who, despite everything he'd gone through, took the time to care for those who'd needed comfort.

Pinning him to the wall, Cayman used the leverage it offered to wrap his hand around both of their cocks. "Fuck, you feel amazing," he told his mate because he did.

The heat, the silky texture, even the hardness of his dick was bliss personified. There was no way a lifetime of being able to touch him would ever be enough. They could live for eternity and somehow Cayman knew it would never be enough time.

Don't get him wrong, he would be grateful for every moment he had to spend with his mate, but he already knew he wanted it to last even longer. To spend his days and nights loving this body.

It made him more determined than ever to cut back on the missions he was sent on. He was tired of it. His body weary of the cruelty of 'humanity.' Like that was even a thing. There was no such emotion as far as he was concerned.

No. All he wanted was to wallow in his mate's embrace. To love on him. To bring him pleasure until their dying breath.

"Fuck yes," Glyn cried out. The back of his head hit the wall with a thud as his body tensed for a moment before his cock twitched and fluid poured over Cayman's hand.

That was all it took for him to find his release too. It was almost painful how powerful his orgasm crashed over him as he leaned hard against his mate. He knew he was probably crushing Glyn to the wall, but Cayman couldn't move. He was completely wrung out.

Then again, Glyn wasn't complaining. Good thing they were pretty equal in strength. His mate was a bit taller, but Cayman worked out to make certain he was in top shape for his missions. All in all, they were perfectly matched.

"As good as that was, and trust me it was perfection," Glyn said as he tried to catch his breath. "I want to be inside your ass and claim you."

Just like that, Cayman's cock perked right back up.

He smiled against Glyn's shoulder. Then he pressed his lips to the spot he really, really wanted to mark. "That sounds like heaven, mate. But I'm not sure I can move quite yet."

And damn if that wasn't the truth. He was spent. Between the risks of the mission, finding out his mate was in danger and adrenaline of actually getting everyone to safety, to end up getting the opportunity to frot with his mate...yeah, he was done. Like put a fork in him done.

That said, he also wasn't about to disappoint his mate. Lifting his head, he kissed Glyn with all the emotion he felt for this one special person made just for him. "I think I love you," he admitted. "I mean, I know we just met, but..."

He had nothing. No explanation. No...nothing. Just the feeling.

Glyn placed a finger over his mouth, stopping him from trying to explain what he wasn't sure he could. "I love you, too," his mate told him. The green specks in those hazel eyes practically glowed. "And I get it. We hardly know each other. Yet, somehow..." he smiled and shook his head. "I feel like we've known each other from the beginning of time."

Grinning, Cayman was thrilled that his mate felt the same way he did. "Exactly."

Then he gripped that taut ass and pushed away from the wall. “I think it’s time to claim each, babe.”

Glyn held on tight. “I completely agree, mate.”

Cayman had seen a lot. Been through hell and back with each mission. Seen the worst of humanity. There were times he was certain there was no such thing. Yet, in that moment, he knew true happiness.

For the first time in a fucking long time, he believed there was a heaven. There was peace. There was...happiness. And he was determined to wallow in it.

CHAPTER 12

Was it possible to feel so...damn if he could truly say it...but elated? Even as he held onto his mate's shoulders, Glyn knew nothing had ever been so...blissful? Maybe. No. Not maybe because he damn well knew it was everything he'd ever dreamed of and they'd only frothed.

The thought of either being inside of Cayman or being filled by him was all Glyn needed to get him hard again. "Need you."

Glyn's desire was frantic. Even as his mouth latched onto a nipple and sucked, he knew he wanted so much more.

"Need you too, babe." Strong hands stroked his back, sending tingles through his body at the way they made him feel.

Glyn was suddenly with the mattress at his back, while talented lips trailed heated kisses along his throat before they landed on his mouth in a searing kiss that made his toes curl with delight. Damn, but he was addicted already to kissing the man.

"Lube, need lube," he managed to get out when they broke the kiss for some much needed air. He might just have gotten off a few minutes ago, but Glyn was already hard and aching for his mate.

He bemoaned the loss of Cayman when he rolled off him and lurched toward the bedside table. Glyn couldn't help but chuckle when in his haste, Cayman jerked the drawer so hard it landed on the floor, spilling its contents.

His mate swore up a blue streak as he scrambled to the floor in search of the lube. His chuckle turned into laughter when he heard Cayman say, “Ow, fuck. Stupid fucking phone charger.”

His mate looked up at him with a look of adoration on his face. “You have an amazing laugh,” he said sincerely and damn if Glyn’s heart didn’t melt a little.

Cayman found the lube and crawled back up on the bed until he was hovering over Glyn with a dopey smile on his face. “I know we barely met, but I’m fairly certain I have fallen in love with you.”

Tears sprang to Glyn’s eyes. He reached up a hand to caress that gorgeous face. “I love you too.”

Their kiss started out slow and sweet as they learned each other’s mouth, but it didn’t take long for heat to flare back to life and then they groped each other as they tried to touch every inch of skin they could reach.

It was a kind of magic that Glyn had always wanted. When he’d been sold to the North Koreans and shoved in a building with armed guards, he’d never thought he was going to have this. If it meant getting to have this in the end, those torturous months were worth every second.

“Make me yours, mate,” Glyn begged when he felt Cayman’s now slicked fingers along his hole. “I need to feel you inside me.”

He pushed into the touch, desperate to have his mate inside him even if it was just his fingers at the moment. When it did, he swore he was in heaven.

“Fuck, babe, you’re so damn tight and hot.” Mahogany eyes darkened with lust.

He needed. No. He craved to seal their mating. He was on fire to have Cayman claim him body and soul. “More. I need more.” Was he seriously whining? Not that it mattered. He’d have done anything Cayman wanted in that moment. Said whatever it took to get him inside of him as fast as possible. “Please, mate. Please...”

Another finger was added, making his groan long and loud.

“Fuck, you’re perfect. I’m so going to love sliding my cock inside of you, mate.” Cayman’s words made his dick throb and his hole clench around those fingers.

“Damn, you feel so amazing.” Cayman’s jaw was clenched as if he was trying to fight back his orgasm. Then he added one more digit as he worked to open Glyn up.

He pushed onto them, wanting them inside him even deeper. “Please fuck me,” he begged as his body writhed on the mattress for more of those amazing fingers. Then they were gone and he cried out in desperation for them to return. He was too empty when he ached to be filled.

The blunt head of Cayman’s length was suddenly there and Glyn cried out happily. His eyes met his mate’s as that thick cock pushed into him. His channel was stretched wide and it felt amazing to be so full.

“God, babe, so tight. So damn perfect,” Cayman panted out as he continued to thrust into his body until he was balls deep.

“So full,” he told his mate, loving every damn minute of it. “You need to move. I need you to come inside of me.”

“Shit.” Cayman pressed their foreheads together, jaw tense as he stared deeply into Glyn’s eyes and said, “I love you.”

“I love you, too, now fucking move,” he demanded as the need to find his release was almost too painful to stand.

Cayman pulled back his hips until he was also completely out of Glyn before slamming back in. In the next instant, he was kissed within an inch of his life. Holding onto the back of his mate’s head, he held him there, kissing him with teeth and tongue as his body undulated in time with Cayman’s.

Their coming together was frantic and desperate but Glyn didn’t care. He needed his mate. He craved the thought of Cayman’s seed deep in body while they mated.

Their bodies moved together as if they’d been doing this for years. “Stroke yourself,” Cayman demanded.

Not one to disappoint, Glyn did as ordered and with just a few pulls, his balls drew up and he could feel his release was right there and he was about to come.

Typically, neither of their animals had canines, but when shifters mate, their human ones still drop down to form the mating bond. Teeth pierced the flesh on his neck and his orgasm slammed into him as he did the same to Cayman.

Blood flowed onto his tongue for a moment as his hole clamped down on that thick cock at the same time he felt hot cum fill his channel. Licking the bite closed, he panted as he slowly came down from the euphoria of mating Cayman.

His mate dropped down on top of him, breathing just as hard before rolling off of him, but keeping his arms around Glyn to hug him tight. Curled up against that hard body, Glyn couldn’t stop grinning. He loved this man and now they belonged to each other.

Yeah, he’d willing go through hell all over again for this. Cayman was worth it.

CHAPTER 13

It wasn't actually possible to do, but Cayman was grinning at his mate's penguin. Yeah, yeah, he knew. Manta rays didn't smile. But the sensation of it still filled him with happiness.

Damn, Glyn was so fucking adorable as he waddled to the cove. Then to see him dive in when he was in deep enough water was like paradise. He was so graceful and fluid as he glided over the sandy bottom.

Not all of the cove was sandy. Parts of it were rocky, but his manta ray preferred the sand, which was why they entered where they had. Where they always did.

They'd been home for three blissful weeks and Cayman hoped like hell to spend every day of his life just like this. Not necessarily shifted because then they couldn't make love. But he loved whether they were in human or animal form, and they sought out to prove just how much they loved each other.

Even now, his mate's penguin turned and swam up to him to rub against his pectoral fins. It was...amazing...sweet... perfection. Even as he thought that, he knew it wasn't going to last.

The shadow that formed over them proved that.

He glanced up to find Yosi and his mate, Kylo, standing on the shore, looking directly at him. Fuck.

He already knew, without speaking with them, he was needed on another mission. Yet...how? How could he leave his mate? They hadn't had enough time together. Not that there would ever be enough time...But still.

Mentally, he sighed. But when Glyn noticed them and he physically backed away, almost as if he wanted to distance himself from Cayman, he was pissed. Not at his mate, but at anyone trying to take him away from the most important person in the world to him.

He just couldn't. Right?

Yet...even as he thought that, he knew, especially being recently mated, they wouldn't ask if there was anyone else who could do it. Which either meant, they were strapped, because there were too many shifters being taken, or it was extremely dangerous.

Either way, it meant leaving the man he loved more than life. The thing was, Cayman just wasn't certain he could do that.

Swimming to the shore, he shifted. His mate right behind him. They pulled on their sweats and instantly gravitated together until they were pressed hip to hip with an arm around each other.

"I can't do it," he blurted out before he had to listen to whatever horrible situation they needed him to enter. "I can't leave my mate." Even as he said it, he knew it would always be the way he felt, but also damn well knew he would have to do. "Not yet."

Both Yosi and Kylo eyes were filled with remorse. Kylo's was mixed with pity, but it was the determination in Yosi's that put him on alert. He wasn't going to be given a choice. Which meant another hell like North Korea.

Fuck!

“I need you to come to the situation room,” Yosi told him, not asked him.

“You can’t ask this of him,” Glyn tried to insist. “He barely just got back from the last mission you sent him on.”

Admittedly, three weeks wasn’t a long time to decompress; it wasn’t exactly unusual for him to be sent out again that soon either. But he was now mated. He had someone else to think about.

“Saber is waiting.” Yosi’s words struck hard. This wasn’t something he could turn down.

Grabbing their shirts off the ground, he handed Glyn his and said, “Fine. My mate comes too.” Not on the mission, because...fuck no. But if Saber was going to send him away from Glyn, his mate deserved to hear the reason why. Not to mention, there was a chance – not a good one – that Saber would remember he was newly mated and needed time to bond with Glyn.

Yosi dipped his head once. “Agreed.”

He and Kylo led the way as they walked around the cove to the manor where Yosi and Kylo lived as well as where the entire operations of Yosi’s enterprise was. His boss was one of the best hackers/tech gurus in the world. He hired anyone who managed to hack into his systems, although there weren’t many.

It was one of the reasons he’d bought Salvation Island. There had been too many countries after him for his ability to infiltrate their systems as well as to harness his intellect. Because of that, their island was well protected, both by technology and some of the fiercest water shifters in the world.

“Cayman, Glyn, good to see you again, although I wish it were under different circumstances.” Saber’s voice had both Cayman and his mate tensing.

“We just mated.” Glyn’s arms were crossed over his chest as he glared at the image on the screen. “You can’t possibly think to send him already.”

Chadwick, who was next to Saber and flipping his usual knives in the air like a juggler, chuckled. “I did try to tell you,” he told his mate.

Saber scowled for a second, but when he looked over at his mate, he was smiling affectionately. “And we both know Cayman is probably the only one who has a chance of succeeding.”

Chadwick rolled his eyes. Glyn, on the other hand, was incensed. “Why don’t you go? Oh, wait...I know, because you don’t want to leave your mate, right?”

Technically, he wasn’t wrong. Yet, as great as Saber was in battle and as a leader, infiltrating a secured location without a war...? Yeah, not so much.

“Babe...” he started but Saber cut him off.

“I get this is a huge request, but I wouldn’t make it if there was another option.” His tone was hard, unforgiving and more importantly, determined. Never a good sign. “If I had the skillset of Cayman, I would do it myself, but I don’t. If I did it would start an actual all out war with the humans, which none of us want. That’s why I’m sending Cayman.”

He hated the way his mate sagged and leaned into him in defeat. It killed him to have to leave him, but he also knew Saber was right. They either declared war on the humans, something that would end up in utter chaos since many shifters lived side by side with them, or they found a way to free those in captivity.

It was that reason, and that reason only, that he squared his shoulders as he looked at the Council Chief and asked, “Where do you want me?”

And damn if it wasn't exactly the last place he'd expected. “North Korea. But this time, we need you to destroy that fucking facility so they can't bring more of our kind there.”

Fuck him.

“Are you out of your damn mind?” he blurted out without thinking. Mainly because going back in would definitely get him killed.

Saber winced. Something Cayman doubted he rarely did. “As much as I wish to God I didn't have to admit, we fucked up by not destroying that place the first time. You getting everyone out of there only disrupted their operation for three damn days. That's it. By then they had brought in enough shifters and, from what our satellites show, three times the amount of guards, to have it completely operational.”

“No.” Glyn's voice was hard and resolute. “I'm sorry for those that are there. I am. But I know what they are capable of. The only reason Cayman got in there the first time was because they hadn't expected him to get in the way he had. They will be now. There is no way to do it again. Just destroy the facility.”

There was sorrow in Saber's eyes as he looked at them. “Unfortunately, I know that. I'm not sending him in to extract those imprisoned.” Cayman's heart dropped knowing what he was going to say. “I'm sending him in to destroy everything.”

He just...Fuck.

“Are you seriously asking me to kill shifters?” Because he couldn't. Right?

The word wasn't needed. He could see it in Saber's expression, but their leader wasn't one to shy away from the hard shit. "Yes."

Well...just damn it all to hell.

CHAPTER 14

Even though Glyn understood his mate was needed, he wasn't okay with any of it. If anything he was pissed off.

That said...it killed him to hear the reason why their Council Chief asked...No, it was more like demanded Cayman to go. Still, even hearing the horrifying details, he hated it...No...wait, actually hearing them made it that much worse.

The thought of Cayman heading into danger was bad enough, but he knew, probably better than most, that there was no possible way that he would return to Glyn.

"Are you serious right now?" Even though he'd asked the question Glyn already knew the answer, even if he didn't want to. Ever. "How?"

Yeah, he just...couldn't.

Their Council Chief looked positively remorseful but it didn't take away from his words. "I hate even thinking it, but I think we all realize there is no way they won't safeguard against us coming again."

That was likely true. Truly. But that said...

"And exactly how do you think Cayman could get close enough, without dying by the way, to destroying the facility?" he screamed out.

It was wrong to speak to him like that. No. Not wrong, but he damn well knew he

shouldn't be yelling at their Council Chief. Yet he honestly didn't fucking care.

"I wish I knew," Saber admitted. "But we have no clue how to either free those taken or take out the facility remotely without starting a war."

Chadwick grabbed one of the knives he'd been casually tossing and pointed it him. He might not have been in the room, but Glyn felt afraid just the same when he said, "Talk to my mate like that again and I'll make you pay."

Cayman stepped in front of him, blocking his view of the screen. "You might be deadly with those knives but trust me, I'll take every one of them off you before you even know I'm there. Don't threaten my mate."

Saber growled.

Fuck. Glyn needed to diffuse this situation before it really got bad. "Look, I'm sorry to have yelled, but threats aren't necessary. The fact is there is no way to get Cayman into North Korea, much less into that facility and we all know it. They will be prepared for him. You'd have a better shot with a non-water shifter and getting in another way."

"Glyn has a point," Cayman said as he put his arm around his waist in support. "The river most likely has sensors by now."

"That's why you'll go in by land," Saber told him. "And yes, I get the risk and I hate sending you, especially when you just found your mate, but we have to shut it down by any means necessary."

"Even though it will end up with my mate dead?" Glyn asked already knowing he wasn't going to like the answer.

Saber's gaze hardened. "Yes."

"No." Cayman's refusal eased some of the anxiety rising within Glyn.

"I'm not giving you a choice." There was power in Saber's voice, but Cayman shook his head, still refusing.

"Too bad," Cayman told the Council Chief. Then he turned to Yosi and Kylo. "I'm not doing this. If my mate and I need to find another place to live, let me know. But I'm not going to go on a literal suicide mission when it would mean hurting my mate." Then he turned back to Saber. "I officially resign from working for the Council."

Then he took Glyn's hand and they walked out.

He wasn't foolish enough to believe that was the end of it, but Glyn couldn't help but fall even deeper in love with his mate for putting him first. It meant everything to him.

"I'm sorry," Glyn said when they entered their home several minutes later.

Strong, calloused hands cupped his face, tilting it until Glyn was staring into resolute, mahogany eyes. "You have nothing to be sorry for. Their plan is shit. They know it. Hell, if it wasn't for me, they never would have thought of it because there is no one else who has a shot of doing it."

Leaning forward, he kissed those lips he loved so damn much. "I feel horrible about those shifters, but I just can't lose you."

"I know, babe." Cayman took another kiss then pressed their foreheads together. "I promise to do everything in my power to always come back to you if I do another

mission.”

“Are you really going to quit?” As much as Glyn wanted the answer to be yes, how could he be happy about it when it would mean his mate wouldn’t do what he loved? “You don’t have to you know? I understand that your job is a part of you. I would never want you to give that up because I’m afraid of losing you.”

Cayman closed his eyes for a moment before opening them and staring right into Glyn’s with regret. “I don’t know. If it is a choice between quitting or going back into North Korea...” He let out a sigh and shook his head slightly. “It’s going to be a hard line for me. Last time it was already a suicide mission. Yeah, I did it, but I didn’t have a mate. I don’t mind some risk, but I no longer am willing to sacrifice my life. Not when I have you.”

When they kissed again, it was desperate and needy. Filled with teeth and tongues as they dove into each other, craving to be as close as possible.

Hands tore at clothes until they were skin on skin. Moaning, they sank against each other for several heartbeats. Then Cayman lifted him up under the back of Glyn’s thighs.

Wrapping his legs around his mate’s waist, Glyn held onto his shoulders without breaking the kiss as Cayman carried him to their bed. The weight of his mate’s body pressing him to the mattress was heaven. It reminded him they were there, together.

It was a heady sensation to know Cayman belonged to him just as much as Glyn belonged to Cayman. He knew there was no such thing as perfection, but in his mind, this was it. His life with Cayman might have its ups and downs but it was still perfect. And he was never going to stop remembering that, even when his mate had to leave to save others.

He'd never regret loving Cayman. For one minute with his mate was better than a lifetime of never having this.

CHAPTER 15

“I said no,” Cayman told Saber the next morning when Yosi asked him to come to the manor. He’d hated leaving his mate’s side, but Glyn had been sleeping and he hadn’t wanted to wake him. Had he known it was to have another meeting with Saber, he might have refused to come. That Saber had flown to the island to talk to him wasn’t going to change the fact that he wasn’t about to destroy his mate by agreeing to go to North Korea.

“Look, Cayman, I get...”

But he wasn’t about to let Saber finish. “No. I don’t think you do. If I die, Glyn would suffer. Hell, many mates don’t live when one dies. I appreciate that the North Korean facility needs to be destroyed, but I’m not willing to die to do it. Nor am I okay with killing all the shifters inside.”

Then he looked at Yosi. “Again, if Glyn and I need to leave, tell me. Otherwise, I would prefer you not ambush me like this.”

Yosi shook his head. “You don’t need to leave. But I would like you to at least hear Saber out. This isn’t what you think.”

He doubted that. But he did focus on Saber once again. “Fine. Talk. But I’m not going, period.”

Saber dipped his head once. “I get why you don’t want to go but we both know that facility has got to go.”

He did. “That changes nothing.”

Chadwick, had been standing against the wall behind his mate, doing what he always did, flipping knives and catching them. “Then how do you propose we do it? It’s not as if we can send a rocket into North Korea. Not only would we start a war with them, but every human government would use what we did as a reason to come after us.”

He had a point. But it still wasn’t going to be enough to send him back there. “I don’t think either of you understand that trying to go back into North Korea isn’t possible. For anyone. Not just me. Anyone . They will be anticipating it, especially if they’ve got the operation running again.”

It killed him to have to say it, but there was only one option. “I suggest you do nothing. It will suck for those shifters stuck there, but I’m not certain they would choose to be blown up either. We need to concentrate on finding those behind capturing shifters to begin with. It won’t stop North Korea since they had no problem using humans before they found out about shifters, but it will stop shifters from being forced into situations like that.”

“We have been trying to find those behind the attacks and kidnappings,” Saber said. “We haven’t been able to discover who it is.”

“Then send in a spy.” He honestly hadn’t understood why they hadn’t already done that. He’d even suggested it a time or two before, but they never listened.

Saber sighed as if he’d already been through the reasons that it wasn’t a good idea too many times to count. “That’s easier said than done. We have no clue who any of these people are until we’ve captured them. As much as we try to interrogate them, they don’t give up who they’re working with.”

“Please tell me they didn’t talk you into going?” Glyn burst into the room with fire in his eyes.

Damn but his mate was fucking adorable when he was angry. He honestly didn’t know he could love anyone as much as he did Glyn. Standing up, he put his arms out to hold his shaking mate. “No, babe. They didn’t. I already told you, I will not go and I meant it.”

That lithe body sagged against his in relief. “I know, but I also know they aren’t above using your need to help and protect others to get you to do what they want.”

“That’s not what…” Saber started.

“Actually, it’s exactly what you do, love.” Chadwick chuckled as he cut his mate off. “You have a knack for knowing everyone’s weakness in order to get your way.”

Saber scowled over his shoulder at his mate. “Who’s side are you on?”

Chadwick stopped tossing up his knives in order to step up to Saber. Leaning down, he kissed his mate. “Always yours,” he said. “That doesn’t mean I can’t call you on your shit. But I still love you.”

Cayman swore there were hearts in Saber’s eyes as he gazed up at his mate. It was something he’d never understood. How could someone as fierce as Saber turn into a marshmallow when his sassy, sometimes irritating, mate was around. Now that he’d met Glyn, Cayman got it.

Holding his own mate a little tighter, Cayman made an offer. “Give me a shot at interrogating anyone still in custody.”

He’d never done it before but to get in and out of hairy situations, he had the ability

to read people. More importantly, he'd learned to get them to say things they hadn't meant to.

Saber tilted his head slightly while still looking at Chadwick. His mate shrugged. "It's not like it could hurt."

The Council Chief nodded at Cayman. "Fine. He's still in a cell here." Then he turned to Yosi. "Can you arrange it?"

"Of course." He typed something on his tablet before looking Cayman's way. "Are you ready now?"

There was only one person who could answer that for him. A glance at his mate, told him Glyn wasn't loving the idea, but it was better than going to North Korea. Glyn sighed and took a step back and turned to Yosi. "Will there be security?"

Yosi shrugged. "We can send in guards but he's in a cell and we're not about to let him out."

Those pretty hazel eyes latched onto him once more. He hated causing Glyn any worry, but it was part of his job. And his mate was right, Cayman needed to help and protect innocent shifters. It was the reason he did what he did.

"Fine, but then I'm going with you," Glyn told him.

That wasn't ideal, but Cayman also knew he'd do anything his mate wanted. And if they could find a clue as to how they might be able to infiltrate those responsible for taking shifters, they had to try.

"Agreed," Cayman told his mate before turning to Yosi. "I'm going to need everything you have on him before I go talk to him."

Yosi tapped on his tablet then pointed to the tablet that had been on the table before Cayman. “I sent everything we have to that for you to read through. Just let me know when you’re ready and I’ll take you to the cells.”

There wasn’t much on him, since the Council only knew where they’d captured him as well as what shifter packs he’d attacked. But he had been one of the leaders, which was all he’d needed to know. For the moment.

Everyone else the human would tell him. How? Cayman wasn’t entirely certain, but one way or another he was going to find out what they needed to know to stop more shifters from being kidnapped and sold. That way he wouldn’t be needed to go rescue anyone and leave his mate’s side.

He was resolute to make it happen.

Taking out his phone, he called Yosi. When he answered, Cayman stared at his mate and told Yosi, “I’m ready.”

CHAPTER 16

Even as they made their way to the cells, Glyn felt the guilt roiling off of his mate. Not entirely certain how to comfort him, Glyn stuck close, but he couldn't help but sense that the closer they got to the cells, the more agitated Cayman got.

He damn well knew it was due to Glyn being there. Not about to put his mate in more danger than Cayman needed to be, he turned to Yosi, when they stopped on what he assumed was the cell floor instead of on the stairs.

“Do you promise the cells are filled with cameras?” he demanded more than asked.

He didn't know for certain, but he sensed Yosi's desire to help put him at ease as he nodded non-stop and said, “I swear. There is no one who can possibly hurt Cayman, much less kill him. And, you can come with me and watch everything.”

The thing was he had no idea why but Glyn trusted Yosi's voice, which he wasn't quite certain he should. But a reassuring hand on his arm as they descended the last of the stairs had him believing he could. “I promise every inch of this floor is covered by a camera and...” he pointed to an armed guard at the end of the hallway and next to where they came out of the stairwell. “There are men stationed to kill anyone threatening to kill one of ours.”

That was the first time Glyn actually relied on someone else with his mate's life. Okay, yeah, technically, he hadn't had that luxury until that moment but he also sank in the sensation of Cayman's complete and utter trust.

He might hate to allow Cayman to do this without him by his side, but Glyn also knew there was no way in hell the prisoner would confess anything with him, or probably anyone, there. Not because of who Glyn was, but because he wouldn't necessarily trust someone other than Cayman.

Hell, he already assumed Cayman had no fucking clue what he was doing, yet at the same time believed in his mate's ability to get this guy talking. If any of them were right, and he assumed they all trusted Cayman, it still was a huge assumption his mate would get this asshole to talk.

Where that put them...? Fuck if Glyn knew.

"Stop," Chadwick growled out behind him. They all stopped before they entered the stairwell that would take them to the cells below. It wasn't the only level from what Cayman had told him, but it held some of the worst evil...

Glyn shook his head. No. He just couldn't imagine. Right? No. No way.

"I promise there is no way he will be able to get to Cayman." That was Kylo, Yosi's mate. Somehow, Glyn trusted him more than anyone else.

His mate seemed to understand what he was thinking and Cayman turned to pull Glyn into his arms. "I love you," Cayman murmured. "I swear I'll come back to you."

Did he trust that? Oddly enough he had.

There shouldn't have been a chance in hell that should have reassured him but it had. Holding Cayman tightly, Glyn nodded against his shoulder.

"Please don't disappoint me." Even though he hated how fragile his voice sounded, Glyn damn well knew there was no denying his fear. "I need you."

Was it wrong to make his mate feel guilty? Fuck yes. Was he going to feel better? No. Even though he wished like hell that he didn't make it worse for Cayman, it was impossible to ignore his feelings.

"I love you." One of Cayman's large hands cupped the side of his head just before their foreheads touched. "I won't leave you."

"I know." Even as he said it, he knew it was true. It made Glyn ashamed for not showing his mate what he had actually felt and was determined to be there for him.

Like, seriously ? How had he allowed the one person he loved beyond...well anything...feel as if he had to be a certain way in order for Glyn to love him? He was such an asshole.

Touching Cayman's shoulder, he leaned in for another kiss. "I swear I will be here waiting for you."

He meant every word.

Those strong hands that he loved cupped his face as Cayman prolonged the kiss. "I love you too, babe," his mate said when they broke apart.

"I swear I'll come back to you," Cayman said levitating Glyn's heart.

It meant the world to him. It did. That said, Glyn also knew if Cayman and the Council didn't find a way to stop those responsible for capturing shifters, like those who had taken and sold him, he wouldn't have survived.

He hated that thought, but it was true.

There was no other reason to live than his mate. Still...He also knew the harsh

realities of the world. Life wasn't all one hoped for. At least that was what he'd thought before finding Cayman.

"I love you so damn much," Glyn said.

There was regret in Cayman's eyes that he wasn't able to do more to comfort his mate. He pressed their mouths together for a long, hard moment. "I love you too."

Even as he said the words, Glyn's heart soared.

Cayman's hand went to his chest as if it physically ached. "I hate that I'm hurting you."

Glyn's hand covered Cayman's over his heart. "Never," he promised. "You could never hurt me, love."

Cayman didn't look convinced. "I didn't..."

Before he finished, Glyn placed a hand over his mouth. "Stop. I get you had nothing to do with any of this."

"I know." The relief in Cayman's voice was prevalent as he sank against Glyn's body. "I love you."

Just hearing those words from his mate helped. It wasn't all he needed, but it was enough. Because if he lost Cayman his world would be shattered. In a perfect he would never leave. "I love you too." Yeah he admitted and meant each word.

Pressing their lips together for several moments, he reluctantly pulled back. "I swear, I'm good."

If only it was, he could have his mate by side every day for the rest of their lives. But he damn well knew his mate needed to help others. Needed to go out there and bring those who had been like Glyn, home.

It killed Glyn to know that, but he also knew why.

If it was up to him, all shifters would be safe and find their mate. Like him. That made him luckier than most people he knew.

A smile Glyn hadn't had for quite some time, formed. Then again, since meeting Cayman, he found himself smiling more. Glyn was slowly finding his old self again. He hoped his feisty personality would return in full force one day.

The past, being what it was, didn't make him hopeful.

CHAPTER 17

Oddly, Glyn was shocked at the stark difference of what he'd imagined the cells would look like and what they actually were. When he'd heard the Yosi talk about the one human they'd managed to imprison who was part of those taking and selling shifters, he'd imagined a jail of some sort. That didn't even come close to what awaited them when they emerged from an elevator that had taken them down several floors.

It wasn't even the last floor. Apparently, there was an underwater entrance to the manor as well. His penguin was very curious about that, not that it mattered, but still.

There were a total of eight cells, four on each side of the room. They were more or less carved out of rock on three sides but instead of bars going across the front, it almost looked like glass. Yosi informed him it was actually six inch acrylic that was indestructible in order to stop any shifter they contained from escaping.

He had to admit, hearing that, the knots in his stomach began to unwind. He hated the idea of his mate talking to this man, but if it meant not having to go to North Korea, he'd take it. That the human man couldn't get out of his cell and try to attack Cayman, eased his anxiety to a huge extent.

Because he was in the last cell on the right, the man hadn't seen them, although based on his sitting up on his cot, he'd heard them. Glyn could see him only because there were monitors lining the ceiling. Because he was the only prisoner at the moment, they all showed him and not the other cells.

“Stay here, okay?” Cayman asked at the bottom of the stairs.

Feeling more reassured that his mate would be fine, Glyn nodded. Then he smiled when Cayman quickly kissed him before heading to the cell the human was in.

“What’s his name?” he whispered to Yosi, who had taken them there.

“Christian Levy,” Yosi whispered back. “He was captured in Peru when his group tried to attack a shadow of jaguars. Unfortunately, they did manage to take quite a few kids, but because even shifter jaguars are fairly isolative, Christian’s team had a difficult time taking anyone else.” Yosi actually smiled when he said, “And most of his men died.”

Good. Fuck them all. Glyn had never thought like that before he’d experienced the hell of being taken and sold, but now that he knew what it was like, those assholes all deserved to die as far as he was concerned.

“Good morning, Christian,” he heard his mate say, drawing his gaze back to the monitors overhead. They now showed a split screen of Cayman and Christian.

The prisoner just stared at Cayman blankly. He had no idea how his mate planned to get him to talk, but Glyn didn’t doubt he would. As far as he was concerned, there was nothing his mate couldn’t do.

There was a chair in front of the cell that Cayman sat on. He didn’t say anything more as he waited for a response. Hell, Glyn was ready to call out ‘good morning’ just to be polite. It had to have been at least fifteen minutes before Christian finally said, “What do you want?”

There wasn’t anything obvious in Cayman’s expression, but Glyn could tell his mate was happy about Christian speaking. He honestly couldn’t have pinpointed what

made him know that, but Glyn did.

“Nothing,” Cayman said.

“I’m not saying anything,” Christian told him.

Cayman shrugged. “Okay.”

Silence once more filled the room as the two stared at each other. At one point, Christian closed his eyes as if trying to block out Cayman. His mate shifted slightly and had Glyn’s eyes not been glued to him, he might have missed it, but again without an obvious sign, he would swear Cayman was ecstatic that Christian was trying to block him out.

He had no clue how any of this would get the guy to tell Cayman anything, but Glyn assumed it would. At least, he hoped that was what it meant. Because he needed the assholes behind selling shifters to be stopped in order to keep his mate by his side instead of going on dangerous missions.

He had no clue how long they all sat there in silence, but it had to have been at least a half an hour, possibly longer, when Christian sighed and opened his eyes. “What the fuck do you want?” he barked out.

“Nothing,” Cayman told him, without explaining why he was just sitting there staring at the man.

Glyn still didn’t quite understand how not asking any questions was going to get him answers, but he had to admit, based on what Saber and Yosi had told them about the previous interrogations, Christian was far more agitated and vocal. He may not have said much, but he’d absolutely refused to speak before.

They'd only gotten his name from fingerprints. They had no clue where he lived, only that he'd been born in Mexico. His parents were dead and he had a brother that was three years younger than him.

Silence once again descended but it only lasted about five minutes that time when Christian said, "I don't know what your game is, but I'm not telling you shit."

Cayman didn't respond.

"I mean it, you asshole." Christian's voice had gotten louder. "I'm not about to rat out anyone so you can just leave me the fuck alone."

Cayman remained silent.

Christian once again shut his eyes. But his breathing was harsh and erratic. His fingers twitched as if he wanted nothing more than to wrap them around Cayman's neck. His whole body jerked once, then he pushed up from the stone slab that was his bed and started pacing the width of his cell.

Four steps one way, then four the other. He'd done it six times when he whirled to face Cayman once again. "What the fuck do you want?"

"Nothing," Cayman told him once again, his demeanor not changing in the slightest.

Christian pounded a fist on the acrylic. "Then leave me the fuck alone."

It was the first time Cayman responded to a non-question. "No."

That was all he said. He hadn't given any reason for being there. Asked no questions. Just sat there staring at the man.

Glyn had to admit, if it had been him in that cell, he would have freaked out too.

CHAPTER 18

Cayman had no clue what he was doing. Yet, his silence was getting Christian to talk. He hadn't said anything important yet, but he'd known from the first time the human had spoken he'd gotten under his skin. That was something no one else had managed to do.

Would it get him the answers he wanted? That was something he didn't know, but at least he was getting a reaction no one else had. He would take that as a win.

The agitation coming off Christian was visible as he paced his cell after banging on the glass wall. He was falling apart and Cayman prayed it meant he'd start saying things he hadn't planned on.

"You know what?" Christian said as he threw up his arms in a defeated gesture. "I don't care. Sit there and stare." Then he stomped back to the stone shelf that was his bed and flopped on it. He laid down and closed his eyes.

He might be pretending he didn't care and was planning on sleeping, but Cayman could see his too stiff body wasn't relaxed in the slightest. No, Christian wasn't okay with him still being there.

Being left alone or interrogated was something he could control. Cayman just sitting there and staring at him was too unnerving for Christian to handle.

Six hours of not moving was a long time, but Cayman forced himself to remain still. His muscles were screaming at him to move, but he didn't. His mate had gotten up

several times to move around, but he never left. It wasn't necessary, but Cayman appreciated that Glyn felt the need to be there with him.

If their roles were reversed, Cayman would do the same. He might have more experience fighting, but he still loved that his mate felt the need to protect him.

Food was brought in and stuck through a small opening in the door. Still, Cayman just sat there. He watched Christian eat and he could tell it was really pissing the guy off.

When the tray was taken away, Cayman decided it was enough for the day. He was hungry and he was certain his mate was based on the way his stomach was growling. Without saying a word, he stood up and left.

He'd just gotten next to his mate when he heard Christian softly said, "Thank fuck." He smiled knowing just how much he had gotten under Christian's skin.

Neither of them said a word as he and Glyn went up the stairs and out the door. Yosi, Saber and Chadwick were right there waiting. "Impressive," Chadwick said.

"That's the most he's said in the month he's been here," Yosi said. "I'm not certain he's going to give away yet, but at you got him to talk."

Saber gave him a nod. "Good job."

For three days, Cayman and Glyn went down to the cells and Cayman just sat there watching Christian. Each day, he babbled more and more. It was almost as if he couldn't help himself. It was always either anger and complaining that Cayman wouldn't leave him alone, but there were a few slips mixed.

Like the fact that he'd blamed shifters for getting his parents killed. Which was

technically true, but since it had been a car accident, it wasn't as if they'd done it on purpose. And the fact that he lived in Guatemala. They didn't know where in the country yet, but Yosi and his team were searching.

"Fucking Christ. You're seriously back?" Christian cursed loudly. "Is this how you get your rocks off, by just watching people? You're worse than Eduardo, and that man can out stubborn anyone. He actually did surveillance on some sort of hog group and despite the fact that it rained the entire time, he never left his post."

Cayman didn't move a muscle. It was a challenge to know they were starting to learn names. They had no way to know if they were alive or dead, but it was something.

By the time he left eight hours later, they had six names and four shifter groups that needed to be checked on, although, it was fairly safe to assume they'd already been taken. Now they'd just needed to be found. It was something he'd continue to do when he didn't feel it was as dangerous as going into North Korea, but he would make certain his mate was okay with it any time he went.

This time, he and Glyn went all the way up to the command center, which was where Yosi was most likely working on finding more information about what Christian had told them. Saber, who was back in Miracle, was already on the screen waiting for him.

"I can't believe he talked," Glyn said the moment they entered the room. "I honestly thought he wasn't going to say anything important."

"I gotta hand it to you," Saber told him. "That was great work."

"Were you able to find those shifters he talked about?" Cayman asked.

The look in Yosi's eye was all he needed to see that they were already missing.

“Unfortunately, they are missing, but the good news, if there is any, was that he was telling the truth about their locations. Which means the names he let slip are probably real.”

“Yeah, but we have no idea if they’re alive or dead. We have managed to kill a lot of the people hunting us even though it doesn’t feel like we’ve made a dent in their numbers,” Cayman reminded them.

“True, but it’s a start.” Yosi was going for optimistic but Cayman was more of a realist.

“Plus, it might help us find more of them,” Saber added. “The more names we can track down, the easier it will be to find connections.”

That much was true. Sooner or later, they would come across someone high enough to find who was behind all of it. At least Cayman hoped they would.

“I’m working on tracking those men down but it’s going to take time since he only gave first names and where they’d been.” If anyone could find them, it would be Yosi. “I did manage to find the town Christian lived in. It’s a coastal town called Las Lisas. I’m trying to find where he lived so we can send someone in to search his home.”

That was big news. “That’s great. I’m not certain how long this is going to last. Sooner or later, he’s going to realize all he’s told us.” Cayman just hope it was later rather than sooner.

They needed a solid lead or they’d never stop shifters from being taken or killed.

“I’m not certain it will matter,” Glyn said. “I know you’re the one who’s watching him, but it sounded like he honestly couldn’t help himself from talking.”

“Glyn’s right,” Saber agreed. “His body language is screaming that he doesn’t want to say anything but he can’t stop himself from doing so.”

Cayman sure as hell hoped so.

Taking his mate’s hand, he smiled at him and planted a peck on his lips. “Come on, mate. I’m starving and I can hear your stomach rumbling.”

“Well, we were there for eight hours, you know?” Glyn reminded him, not that he needed to. “I feel like fish.”

Yosi pointed upstairs. “There’s food already for you in the kitchen.” Yosi shrugged when they looked startled by the offer. “What? I knew you’d be hungry and I figured it was the least I could do considering what you’re doing.”

Thanking him, they headed to the kitchen. Then, it was lucky, Glyn would agree to shift with him down at the cove. He wanted nothing more than to just spend time with his mate. He was one lucky man.

CHAPTER 19

Two whole fucking weeks of spending their days sitting with Christian and Glyn was getting tired of it. Especially, when the man continued to whine about being watched all the time.

How his mate had done it, Glyn would never know. At least Glyn got to move around some. Cayman sat still as a statue for up to eight hours every damn day. Talk about exhausting. But it had worked. They finally had several solid leads.

Yosi had found Christian's home and Saber had sent a team in to first watch it and see if anyone was coming or going that might have seemed suspicious. When no one had, they had gone in and torn it apart piece by piece in order to find any information on who Christian worked with.

That's where they'd hit gold.

"Are you certain about this?" Cayman asked Yosi after he read the file on two humans they thought were helping to run the operation. They still weren't the top guys, but they were fairly high up based on Yosi's research.

"We are," Saber said from the video screen on the wall. "I've got three people ready to work on infiltrating their operations."

"Good." Cayman had been happy to no longer sit and watch Christian. He had the patience of a saint, but his mate preferred action to just waiting and that worried Glyn. "What about the shifters taken, have we found any of them?"

Glyn couldn't help but stiffen. Now that he no longer had to deal with Christian, he'd be sent out on another mission and he honestly didn't know how he felt about it.

"Yes," Saber informed him. "When you're ready, we need you to go into Venezuela. There is a state run coal mine that we believe is using shifters."

"I'm going to need a couple of days to work the kinks out of my sore muscles from sitting so fucking still, but then I should be ready." Cayman's casual acceptance of the job sent a chill down Glyn's spine.

His mate hadn't even talked to him about it. Not about to sit around and be completely dismissed, he got up and left, not stopping until he was at the cove. Quickly stripping, he shifted and dove into the water, letting his penguin take over for a while.

He just couldn't handle that his mate didn't take him into consideration at all. It hurt far more than he would have imagined. He had no idea how long he swam, but he was exhausted when he went back to the shore to find his mate waiting there for him.

As much as it had helped somewhat to let his penguin take over for a while, he was still too emotional to deal with him at the moment. Still, he needed to get to his clothes because even though shifters didn't really worry too much about nudity, he also wasn't about to walk around naked.

Shifting, he reached for the towel Cayman held out for him. "I'm sorry," Cayman told him. "I should have talked to you first. But we've already discussed that I couldn't just stop helping people."

Yeah, he knew that, but he also swore he'd clear it with Glyn first. "Since my opinion clearly doesn't matter, go." Like he said, he so wasn't emotionally ready to have that conversation.

There was hurt mixed with guilt in those mahogany eyes. “That’s not true. You’re everything. But I have to do this. It’s just not something I can bury my head in the sand about.”

That much he knew about his mate. They might still be learning about each other, but Glyn knew his mate was too strong-willed to not do something about a problem. He just wished he’d do the same when it came to him.

“I get that, I do,” Glyn conceded. “But I’m not okay with being pushed to the side whenever you need to go play hero. And that’s what you did by accepting that assignment without discussing it with me first.”

Cayman dropped his head for a moment. When he looked back up at Glyn, his gaze was filled with sorrow. “You’re right. I should have talked to you. I’m sorry. Do you want me not to go?”

“How dangerous is it?” Fear of losing Cayman when they’d only recently found each other was painful and it was making him a bit irrational. He tried to force it down or he was bound to beg Cayman not to leave him.

“Every mission has some danger to it, but I swear I’m very careful.” Cayman pulled him into those strong arms. His lips gently brushing his temple as he said, “Once I find out for certain they’re using shifters and come up with a plan to get them out, I’ll be able to call in reinforcements. I won’t be going in alone like I had to in North Korea.”

That did help ease the huge knots that had set up residency in Glyn’s gut. But there was no way they would completely go away until his mate was safely home with him again.

“Okay. Go, but you better come back to me in one piece.” He didn’t like it, hell, he hated it, but he also couldn’t get in his mate’s way. Glyn refused to be the one who

made Cayman miserable.

Warm lips met his and Glyn just sank into the kiss, pouring all his love into the act.

Five days. Five whole fucking days. That's how long Cayman had been gone and Glyn was going out of his mind with worry. Yes, he'd heard from his mate every day, several times, but troops had gone in two hours ago and Glyn had been too damn chicken to watch in the main command center with Yosi.

Instead, he'd shifted and swam. He let his penguin take over so he didn't have to think about it, not that it had helped. His penguin was just as panicked as he was.

Unable to take it any longer, he shifted back and got dressed before sitting on the beach just staring at the water. He desperately needed his mate to come home safely.

"Want some company?" his brother asked as he plopped down next to him.

"I want my mate home," was his reply.

Jarvis nodded. "I know. But hopefully our family is still out there somewhere and I'd like to think they will one day be found. That can't happen without people like Cayman."

Glyn knew that. He did. And yes, he definitely wanted his family found. "So what you're telling me is to put my big boy panties on and deal."

"Pretty much," Jarvis agreed. "And yep, I know that's easier said than done, but worrying yourself to death isn't helping anyone."

He knew that. He did. Hell, his mate had taken risks calling him several times a day. It had put him in more danger to keep leaving his hiding spot while he'd watched the mine for weaknesses. "I know. It's just..."

“Hard?” Jarvis finished for him. “Obviously, I have no idea what it’s like to have a mate in danger, but I can imagine and yeah, it definitely sucks. But we’ve seen Cayman work. He’s damn good. Trust that he will do everything in his power to safely come back to you.”

“Because I always will.”

Glyn whirled around at the sound of his mate’s voice and leapt up straight into his arms. “I love you so damn much,” he told Cayman.

His mate held him tight. “I love you too, mate. And Jarvis is right. I am going to do everything in my power to always come back to you. You are my world and I would never do anything to hurt you.”

When their lips met, it was like coming home. There was nowhere in the world he rather be.

Cayman grinned down at him. “I have a surprise for you.”

“Oh?” he asked.

Cayman looked over at Jarvis. “You too. Follow me.”

They went up the front of the manor where dozens of shifters were being fed. His gaze zeroed in a sight he’d feared he’d never see again.

“Mom,” both he and Jarvis yelled before running to where she, dad and their sister, Camila were seated. They surged to their feet and did a group hug.

Glyn looked over his sister’s head to where his mate was grinning at them and mouthed, ‘thank you.’

He really was the luckiest shifter in the world to have just an amazing mate. And now he had his family back. Yeah, he might have to deal with what Cayman did, but he would do it, because without him, he wouldn't be holding his family again.

Didn't hurt that Cayman was Glyn's world and he'd do anything for him. Even if it meant Making Waves once in a while.