

## **Stolen by Raze (Super Early Terror in Captivity Sneak Peek!)**

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*\*This is a rough cut from an unedited book so please excuse any typos. Also some details may change between now and the book's release. Contains strong language.\**

### *Splinter Stronghold 22.7 Miles Outside Willow's Tears Planet Calyx*

*Pain is weakness leaving the body.*

Wracked with agony, Terror repeated the mantra that had been drilled into his brain from the first day of academy. The sizzling arc of electricity ripped through his body, causing every muscle in his body to seize violently. When it finally—mercifully—stopped, he twitched and jerked for a few seconds before managing to suck a harsh, almost sobbing breath into his lungs.

Sagging in his metal bonds, he clenched his good eye shut and ignored the relentless ache in his shoulders. How much more of this unending torment could he take? It shamed him to admit that he didn't know. He had lost track of his time in captivity some time ago. He thought it might have been ten weeks but he couldn't be sure. What he did know was that his body was slowly beginning to fail him and his mind wouldn't be far behind.

Before he let even one secret slip, he would find a way to end his own life rather than betray his brothers-in-arms. His honor would accept nothing less. His desperate need to protect his friends demanded it.

Since being taken from the scene of the crash, he had been moved four times, always under heavy sedation and chains. There had been no chance of escape and no sign of rescue. In the first few agonizing days of his captivity, he had been in the care of Devious, one of the Shadow Force's long-term undercover agents. Though the torture he had suffered under his friend's hand had been horrendous, Terror had trusted that Dev wouldn't kill him. He had been optimistic that Devious would find a way to get word to Torment about his location.

But that hadn't happened.

After three weeks in the main Splinter camp, he had been trucked out in the dark of night to a new place—and then another and another. This new installation seemed to be underground in the old mine shafts near Willow's Tears. The cold, dank wetness of the place assured him of that. The sooty purple dust that coated everything was evidence of the clean-burning fuel that had been mined here in decades past...

A heavy hand smacked his face, the sting of it bringing Terror back around to reality. "You still breathing or do you need another jolt to get you going again?"

He lifted his weary head and stared at the pock-faced man who had been trying to get him to talk for over an hour.

"You know I can keep this up all night." The interrogator motioned toward the battery array he had arranged in the cell.

Terror simply blinked his eye and waited for the threats to continue.

As if understanding that pain wasn't going to loosen his tongue, the man switched tactics. "I know you're hungry. I know you're cold. Give me something useful—just the tiniest piece of actionable intel—and I'll make things more comfortable for you in here."

Although his empty belly ached and his dirty skin desperately needed a good washing, Terror rejected the tempting offer by lowering his face and focusing on the floor. Muscles tense, he waited for a blow or another round of the electricity but neither came. The interrogator surprised Terror by unhooking the electrodes and winding up the cables. Certain this was some sort of trick, he mentally and physically steeled himself for an even more painful experience.

He consoled himself with the knowledge that none of the Splinter interrogators were as sadistic or cruel as Torment. There was a reason men broke the moment Torment walked into their cells. A lifetime in a Kovark prison cell or a quick hanging as a convicted Tier One Terrorist was preferable to even ten minutes under Torment's skilled, punishing hands.

The door to the cell was jerked open, the rusted metal squealing and grating, and the Splinter interrogator jammed his head into the hall. "Hey, Bruno, get D.D."

Terror perked at the mention of this new person. He imagined yet another pair of evil hands torturing him. They hadn't yet brought in a wetworks man to cut at him. Maybe that was next on their list of horrors. Razor blades, knives, chisels—there were all sorts of heinous tools of the trade to cause gruesome injuries in the hopes of motivating him to break his silence and talk about the undercover operatives, the long-term mission plans for Calyx and the current operations underway to neutralize the Splinters.

He suspected they had avoided causing him traumatic injuries so far because of the infection risk and the odds of killing him before they had extracted every last bit of information from him. Now that he had proven he couldn't—wouldn't—be broken, the Splinters might have decided it was time to step it up a notch.

When the interrogator stepped aside to allow a new person to enter the cell, Terror fully expected to be greeted by a much bigger, more menacing and dead-eyed specialist. What he actually spotted coming through that door perplexed and surprised him. It wasn't a man at all. It was a woman holding cleaning supplies.

Small like Vee's Hallie, the younger woman entered the cell and glanced around the interior. She seemed totally composed and calm as she scanned the dimly lit space. The leather satchel resting against her hip caught his eye. It didn't move much as she took more cautious steps into the cell. Whatever was in it was heavy.

The long dark braid she wore fell to the small of her back. From his vantage point, her hair looked black as night, certainly the darkest he had ever seen. Garbed in dark gray

cargo pants and an oversized men's shirt over a cotton tee, she gave off the impression of coming from an all-male household. Not much of her skin was visible in those boyish clothes but what he could see was tanned and smooth. This was a woman who spent more time up top than down here in the shafts.

Young and sweet, she looked totally out of place among the hardened Splinter terrorists who inhabited this place. Was she a daughter? A niece? A sister? He considered what he knew of the cultures of these rural people. She might be a wife to one of his captors or even a mother to little terrorist babies.

His interrogator tapped her shoulder, waited for her to look at him and then pointed to the long coils of wire and the batteries. "Tidy that up."

She nodded and crossed the cell. Terror noticed the way she didn't spare a single glance for him, probably because he was stark naked and in chains. She seemed focused on the task given to her and was completely oblivious to everything else. A flicker of hope hit him. This was the sort of situation he could easily exploit. She was a tiny little thing and could be easily overpowered if she got close enough to him.

"You like her?" The interrogator mistook his keen observation and tactical planning for sexual interest. "She's even prettier up close. Ripe for the plucking, if you know what I mean."

Terror's gaze skipped from the interrogator who made a crude gesture to the young woman who had her back turned to him. She didn't stiffen at the suggestive remarks or acknowledge them in any way. Either she was very used to being talked about so nastily or...

"Don't worry about her," the man said with a dismissive wave. "There's a reason we all call her D.D. Deaf and Dumb," he spelled out cruelly. "She's in her own fucking world most of the time – but that's the way some men like them."

Terror considered D.D. for a moment. Better and better, he thought as that flicker of hope flared stronger. If she couldn't hear him, she would be even more easily overtaken.

"How long's it been since you touched a woman, Terror? You've been in our hands for nearly three months so it's been at least that long since you've felt the slick squeeze of a wet pussy around your dick." Coming closer, the interrogator motioned toward the woman. "Look at her. I mean – really look at her. That tight little ass? Those perky tits?"

Terror looked at her but not at her ass or her tits. He sized her up as his ticket out of here. What would it take to turn her against these people?

"She's never been fucked. I know that for a fact. How would you like to be the first one to sink balls deep in that virgin pussy? I can make that happen. I'll let you breed on her all you want."

Terror found the offer distasteful in the extreme but he feigned interest. Without saying a word, he glanced at his interrogator and held his gaze just long enough to show he was considering the offer. The man smiled, showing his brown-streaked teeth, and nodded.

He left Terror's side and moved toward the woman. When he drew near, she glanced at him, this time with apprehension. The interrogator leaned down and spoke slowly. "Clean the cell. Clean him. Understood?"

She nodded.

"Bang on the door twice when you're done." He held up two fingers. "I'll have Bruno let you out."

She nodded again. From the way she reacted, Terror confirmed his suspicion that she could read lips. What was it like for a deaf person in this bizarrely backward society on Calyx? If she had been born to his people, her hearing would have been fixed in-utero. The routine prenatal tests run on pregnant mates would have alerted her parents to the birth defect and allowed a skilled surgeon to make the necessary improvements to her ears. Here, though, she had no doubt been treated like a pariah.

Still not meeting his curious stare, the young woman finished tidying up the cell. He watched the methodical way she wiped and swept the space before unrolling a hose in the corner and turning on the faucet there. She brought the hose toward the center of the room and stood in front of him.

Their gazes finally met – and Terror's stomach did a wild flip. She had the bluest eyes he had ever seen, bluer even than those common in pureblood Harcos males. Her bright white teeth bit into a plump lower lip. Holding the hose in one hand, she used the other to make a gesture. Brow furrowed, he tried to figure out what she was asking. It was some sort of sign but for what?

Exhaling with frustration, she pointed to his body and then the hose before nodding and shaking her head in an exaggerated way. He understood finally. She was asking for permission to clean him. The simple act of seeking permission surprised him. Since being captured, he had been at the total mercy of others. To have this small choice to make felt somewhat liberating.

He gave her a firm nod and waited to see what she would do next. After testing the water on her hand, she made a shivering motion to let him know it was cold. She waited to see if he would change his mind. When he didn't make any move to stop her, she carefully sprayed his body. The frigid blast made his teeth chatter and his heart stutter but he was happy for the chance to be clean.

Careful not to openly watch her, Terror used his peripheral vision to keep track of D.D. She wasn't skittish around him and that raised his suspicions. He wasn't the sort of man who inspired calm in women. One look at him – with his ruined eye and puckered, scarred eyelid – and most of them blanched.

But she wasn't looking at him with fright. Her gaze was almost clinical. What was she thinking? Was she counting the many scars marking his body? Was she trying to figure out how they had been caused? Knives, shivs, bullets, fire, shrapnel... Fuck, he had long ago lost track of the total count.

Why wasn't she afraid of him? What was her angle?

As she set aside the hose and grabbed soap and a rough looking washcloth from her satchel, he began to form a new opinion of her. This situation was too neat. She was too beautiful and too enticing to be true. This had setup written all over it.

Starved for affection, weak with hunger and frail from torture, Terror was a prime target for a black widow type agent. He had trained enough of them in his many years in Shadow Force to know how she would operate. This vulnerable woman with her hearing impairment and angelic face would find a way to get under his skin. She would provoke those protective instincts so strong within all Harcos males – and then she would strike.

There was only one thing for him to do. He had to strike first. With his arms chained overhead and his ankles bound with shackles, he couldn't move but his time would come. When it did, he would take it without hesitation. He would snap that fragile neck of hers before she even had a chance to gasp with fright at being caught by him.

Forced to endure the bizarre and unsettling sensations of being washed by a strange female, he kept his gaze fixed on the far wall. She didn't try to touch him inappropriately or even to arouse him. Her skin never made contact with his because she kept the rough cloth between her palm and his body.

Although thorough in scrubbing him, she never once let her hands get anywhere near his genitals. She seemed to be going out of her way not to make contact with the more intimate areas of his body. Part of that he chalked up to virginal fear. If she was as pure as the interrogator had said, it wasn't surprising that she shied away from him.

But, as an agent for these terrorist assholes, she was badly trained. Using "accidental" sexual touch was the easiest way to ensnare a man. She was failing miserably on that count.

Because he hadn't been touched with a gentle hand in weeks, Terror couldn't stop his body's natural response when she climbed on a crate positioned behind him and began to wash his hair. Without his usual monthly visit to the barbershop for the close trim he preferred, he had gotten rather shaggy. Her short nails scratched across his scalp, swirling along his skin as she massaged the woodsy-scented suds into his dirty hair.

Shivering arcs traveled down his neck, along the curve of his back, through his legs and out through the soles of his feet. His cock throbbed to life, the full length of it growing erect and pointing toward his navel. Even before being taken from the crash site, it had been weeks since his last visit to one of the poppies on a nearby pleasure ship. On edge and desperate for stimulation, he clenched his teeth together and tried to think of anything but the way he wanted those warm hands of hers to glide down his chest and into the nest of curls crowning his dick.

She stepped away from him, taking her body heat and the pleasant scent that accompanied her. A few seconds later, ice cold water splashed over him. He sucked in a sharp breath of shock but welcomed the cooling effect it had on his raging libido. The last thing he needed was to let his dick control him.

As his erection faded, he hardened his thoughts toward the tempting siren with her dark hair and big blue eyes. She was trouble – and he needed to view her as merely an

obstacle in his path to freedom. He would step on her and over her if it meant getting out of here and finding his way back to the *Valiant*.

She retrieved a towel from the satchel and wiped down his slick skin. When she produced a small tin from the leather bag, he narrowed his eye. She held it up for him to sniff. He caught the scent of something antiseptic. Certain the scrapes and cuts he had collected over the last few weeks could use some help in healing, he nodded to confirm that it was all right for her to treat them.

Swiping her finger through the ointment, she applied it to the wounds on his body. Like the other times she had touched him, she never lingered. She simply did what was necessary and moved on to the next scrape. When she was finished, she wiped her hand on the damp towel and tucked away the salve.

While she dug around in her bag, the door to the cell opened. A man he recognized as his jailer Bruno appeared in the shadowy entrance. "Hey, Dum Dum, you finished jerking this asshole off or what?"

With her back turned, she didn't hear the ugly remark. Before Terror could make a movement that would garner her attention, the bastard in the doorway pulled an orange, one of the native fruits these Earth-descendants had brought in their generational ship and cultivated on Calyx, from the pocket of his hooded sweatshirt. He threw it at the woman. It bounced off the back of her head and caused her to lurch forward.

Rubbing the back of her head, she spun around and glared at the asshole. She made an outraged gesture and a strange noise that Bruno mocked with jerky movements before shouting, "Hey, retard, hurry it up! Your step-daddy wants you to make a supply run so get moving."

Jaw visibly clenched, she shot the finger at Bruno. The cruel jailer laughed harshly and slammed and locked the cell door. Wincing, she rubbed that spot where the heavy fruit had ricocheted off the back of her head and pivoted toward the corner where it had rolled. Unable to see her when she was behind him, Terror relied on his highly-trained senses to keep track of her.

When she returned to his field of vision, she held the orange in her hand. Bending down, she retrieved a black object from her boot. With a few graceful flicks of her wrist, she produced the gleaming blade of a knife from the folding handles. He recognized the style of the knife from the Blue Shores community along the ocean. The people there had been islanders back on Earth and had fostered and protected their culture here on Calyx. It wasn't uncommon to see the knives—*balisongs*—sold in the open air markets in the seaside city.

Considering the way she wielded the weapon, it was clear she was handy with a blade. Perhaps she wasn't totally helpless. Somewhere along the way she had learned some self-defense techniques. After watching Bruno abuse her, he had a bad feeling she had been hurt and bullied her entire life.

The strangest pang invaded his chest as he imagined a smaller, younger version of D.D. suffering at the hands of others. Annoyed by the flare of concern, he pushed it aside. *She's the enemy. She's one of them. She wants to kill you. Don't be fooled.*

She cut a slit in the top of the orange and then expertly peeled the rind from the juicy flesh. The citrus scent that tickled his nose made Terror's mouth water. It had been so long since he had eaten anything but the watery broth and stale bread they infrequently provided. To watch her peel and eat the fruit in front of him was yet another torment.

But she didn't take a bite of the plump orange wedge that she plucked from fruit. She held it up to him, eyebrows raised questioningly, and waited for his reaction.

Terror wavered with indecision. What if the fruit had been injected with poison or a serum that might loosen his lips? What if Bruno's cruelty had been planned? He felt sorry for her, didn't he? Now she was offering him this bit of food with a shy, nervous smile. Was this the way she planned to enthrall and eventually trick him?

That endearingly sweet expression she wore confounded him. He needed to know if it was real or an act. To do that, he would have to embrace the cold bastard within him – and be exceedingly mean.

Parting his lips, he leaned forward as far as his chains would allow and lowered his head. She took a timid step toward him and brought the orange segment toward his mouth. This close, he was able to inhale the clean, earthy scent of her and to see the deep flecks of color in her blue irises. The light freckles dusting her nose and cheeks drew his interest.

D.D. pushed the cool, plump flesh of the fruit between his lips and waited until he had sunk his teeth into it to drop her hand. She pulled back as fast as an inquisitive child touching a stove for the first time. His eyelid drifted closed as he relished the succulent citrus flavor washing across his parched taste buds. It was like tasting fucking sunshine.

When he had extracted every last bit of the delicious juice from the pulpy meat of the segment, he balled it up with his tongue – and spit the entire soggy mess right back into her face. Startled by the chewed up fruit and saliva splattering her cheek and eye, she yelped and jumped.

In that moment, Terror understood that she was more complicated than he had ever imagined. In times of shock, it was difficult for any agent, even the best trained, to mask a true response. Provoking a real reaction with such a disgusting deed had been the easiest way to tear away her mask and see what was underneath.

But there was no irritation or anger in her expression. No, there was only confusion and hurt written on her face. The raw sincerity of it made his gut clench. And there was something else, something haunting in those brilliantly blue eyes of hers that he couldn't quite decipher. Perhaps she wasn't an agent after all. Perhaps she simply was an innocent, naïve young woman who had been pressed into Splinter service.

With his own face a stony mask of indifference, he watched her carefully. Would she prove herself to be just as nasty as the people she lived with and worked for? Would she lash out or injure him for his ugly stunt?

She reached up and slowly wiped the soggy mess from her face. Still holding the partially peeled orange, she carried the chewed up fruit to the dented bucket used for refuse and dropped it inside. She retrieved a handkerchief from her bag, wiped the sticky juice from her skin and turned her back toward him.

Senses on edge, he inhaled measured breaths and listened carefully. She stepped just beyond his line of sight again but he could feel her moving around behind him. Remembering that wicked looking knife she had so masterfully wielded, he started to doubt his estimation of her as an innocent. He had been in captivity long enough that he might be losing his touch.

Terror stiffened when she poked his back. Wondering what she was playing at, he held his breath and fully expected the sharp bite of that blade at any moment. When her fingertip began to tap against his skin, he frowned. Flummoxed by her odd behavior, it took him a few moments to recognize the taps as the elementary signal code he had memorized his very first year at the academy.

D.

E.

V.

I.

O.

He didn't have to pay attention to the next few taps to figure out that she was spelling Devious. Thinking of the undercover operative, Terror experienced a rush of hope. If Devious had put this strange creature in contact with him surely that meant his rescue was imminent. He just had to hold on a little while longer. He had to keep fighting.

The pressure of her finger disappeared. He heard her crouch down but couldn't see what she was doing. A few moments later, she was walking away from him and then he heard the scrape and jangle of metal as the chains holding his wrists high overhead were finally lowered. He hissed at the horrendous pins and needles sensation that traveled from his fingertips to his shoulders but figured that he should just be glad he could still feel anything.

With freedom of movement for his upper body, Terror collapsed to his knees as D.D. scurried to grab her bag and the cleaning supplies she had brought with her. He instantly tested his chains but realized she had given him only enough length to sit, sleep or reach the exposed hole in the corner where he was forced to relieve himself. It wasn't much but he was grateful for the chance to rest.

She banged twice on the door and exited without casting a single look his way. It wasn't until the cell door had been locked again and the lights were switched off to plunge him into darkness that he caught the enticing scent of the orange again. Reaching behind him, he patted the cold ground until he felt the soft handkerchief she had used to clean her face after he had spit in it. His fingertips moved to the left and he felt the segments of the orange laid out for him.

Grabbing the package left for him, he dragged his chains to the wall and leaned back against it. He stretched out his aching, tired legs and placed the handkerchief on his thigh. One by one, he savored the orange pieces. They would probably upset his stomach after eating such thin, bland food for weeks but he didn't care. He was starving and refused to waste the chance to ingest even one extra calorie.

When the last succulent morsel was gone, he closed his eye and rested his head against the wall. In a moment of weakness, he brought the handkerchief to his nose and inhaled deeply. Behind the citrus notes lingered the smell of leather and grass and that barely floral hint that he had detected on her.

Hating himself for being so pathetic, he lowered the handkerchief but continued to clutch it in his fist. Refusing to think of those big, beautiful eyes, he turned his thoughts to Devious. Years and years of building trust and earning his reputation as a loyal member of the terrorist group had taken their toll on the covert operative. There had been a few times during his captivity in Devious' stronghold where Terror had seriously questioned which side the man was on these days.

Of all the people Devious might have chosen to serve as his contact, why this girl? As an asset, she was an interesting but fairly useless choice. Assets were supposed to be the invisible eyes and ears of the Shadow Force. Unable to hear, there wasn't much intel this woman could gather.

Unless...

A glimmer of an idea began to form, one that intrigued and unsettled him. How far would Devious go to keep tabs on the many strands of his tangled web of terrorists on this planet?

As Terror began to sift through his memories of Devious' status reports, he made a decision on D.D. He wasn't going to snap her neck, after all.