

## Saved By Venom (Grabbed #3)

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### Sneak Peek #4

A short time later, Dizzy anxiously eyed the closed bathroom door. Any second Venom would step out of there freshly showered...and then what?

She twirled some of her hair around her finger and thought about the dinner. In some ways it had been very much like a first date. Except that it had taken place in a hospital bed while she was half-dressed and looking like a hot mess.

As she played with her hair, the scent of the shampoo provided by the hospital wafted toward her nose. It wasn't unpleasant but it was a bit too stringent and manly for her tastes. Surely they had stores that sold feminine soaps and shampoos? She hoped so—otherwise Venom was going to have to get used to snuggling up to a girl who smelled like one of his comrades.

Thoughts of snuggling with her giant sky warrior left her feeling a bit light-headed. It wasn't the sickness that made her feel that way. No, it was the memory of Venom's thick corded arms wrapped around her in the bathroom while she washed her hands. Even though he had shifted away from her she'd still felt the very hard—and very big—evidence of his attraction toward her nudging her backside.

When he had dropped those ticklish kisses on her neck she'd nearly fallen into the sink. Her knees had gone all wobbly and her tummy had trembled wildly. If a couple of kisses and a hug did that to her, how the hell was she going to survive Venom making love to her?

And he wanted to make love to her so badly. There was no doubt in her mind about that.

When he had accompanied her into the bathroom for her shower she'd been sure he would try to finagle his way into the stall with her. He had surprised her by giving her some privacy and space. Though he wouldn't leave the room he'd turned his back and kept his arms crossed. A few times she'd caught him sneaking peeks in the mirror but she couldn't fault him for that. Had the tables been turned she would have wanted to get a glimpse of his naked body too.

Even though he was obviously trying to be respectful of her need to recuperate he couldn't hide the burning lust darkening his blue eyes every time he looked at her. Considering how long he'd waited for the chance to have a wife she couldn't really blame him for being so hot. That he'd shown this much restraint proved his self-control.

Her experience as a young woman living alone in The City taught her to be wary of men who were so kind and gentle. Usually they had ulterior motives. But she didn't think Venom was one of those men.

Talking with Risk had given her some insight into the man who had snatched her from the planet's surface. He had survived so much to earn the points needed to enter a Grab. He seemed to want nothing more than to take care of and love her. After being emotionally and physically abandoned by her father after her mother's traumatic death, the idea of having someone to lean on for support was incredibly enticing.

She wasn't silly enough to think that it was going to be smooth sailing between them—they'd only just met, after all—but she had a growing hope inside her that life with Venom could be very good.

First they would need to deal with that bossy streak of his. She felt conflicted when he gave her orders. She naturally rebelled at the idea of being told what to do by anyone...but she would be lying if she denied there wasn't some tiny part of her that found Venom's commanding nature rather exciting. There was something about that gruff voice of his that made her shiver inside.

The bathroom door opened and Venom exited in a small cloud of steam. Her eyes nearly popped out of her head at the sight of his half-naked body. She had to clamp her teeth together to keep her jaw from dropping. It was rude to stare but she just couldn't help herself.

Oblivious to the way he affected her Venom strode into the hospital room and dropped his neatly folded uniform onto an empty chair. He wore only black shorts and when he bent down to adjust the boots he'd left under the chair she got a rather enticing view of his taut backside. The sight inspired some rather naughty visions of this gorgeous man between her thighs, thrusting into her and showing her all the secret delights of a marriage bed.

A wicked thrill raced through as she ogled his massive and muscular body. He straightened up and walked to the end of her bed. She took in his broad chest and toned arms. Tattoos marked the right side of his body, swirling around his arm right down to his knuckles and arcing up the side of his neck. His left side remained bare. She had heard they reserved the left side, the side closest to their hearts, for telling the stories of their families while the right side told of their military history.

"Do they bother you?" As if self-conscious, he ran his hand over the dark ink.

She was surprised to see such a tense set to his square jaw. "No. Why would they?"

"Some of your women don't like them."

"I think they're beautiful." At his funny face, she added, "You know, in a manly sort of way."

Laughing, he walked over the bed. She took advantage of his closer position to reach out and touch one of the tattoos. He inhaled a sharp breath and she instinctively pulled back her hand, worrying she'd crossed some line. Grabbing her wrist, he dragged her hand back to his arm. "I want you to touch me. It surprised me. That's all."

With his fingers wrapped loosely around her wrist, Dizzy traced the symbols on his skin. How long had it been since a woman had touched him like this? Too long if his heavier breaths were any indication.

Her finger moved to a series of squares with slash marks through them. He had them rolling up his biceps and onto his back. "What do these symbols mean?"

Venom didn't answer her immediately. Seeming reluctant, he explained. "They mark my confirmed kills as a sniper. Every box equals five."

"Five?" Her astounded reply escaped her lips before she could stop it. There were just so many of them on his skin. She didn't have the stomach to add them up.

"Yes." The harsh, pained whisper of his voice cut her to the bone. She could feel the cold waves of regret and discomfort radiating from him. Venom dropped her wrist and took a step back. "I'll put on a shirt."

"Stop." She reached for him, clasping his hand and tugging him down onto the bed. He watched her with a mistrusting eye, almost as if he feared what she would say next. Fully aware this was a chink in his emotional armor, she wanted to tread carefully. "I can't even pretend to understand what war is like."

"You probably understand better than most brides." His thick finger moved aside the thin collar circling her neck to touch the gnarly scars dotting her skin.

"Maybe," she said uncertainly. "Venom, I don't know you that well—but I don't think you're a monster. I think you're a highly talented soldier who did his duty. I won't judge you for carrying out orders."

"Maybe not," he said quietly, "but these tattoos will be a constant reminder of the things I've done and of the lives I've taken."

Searching for the right words, she swept her palm over the markings on his hard biceps. "This is your past, Venom." Her hand moved to his left arm where the skin remained pristine. "This is your future. That's all that matters to me."

He swallowed hard, his throat visibly moving, before taking her hand and dragging it down to the space above his heart. "You are my future. This is our future."

The huskiness to his voice made her chest tighten. Since surviving the bombing Dizzy hadn't really allowed herself to think too far ahead. In the back of her mind, she secretly doubted there was a future. Terrorists like the Splinters wouldn't stop with one bomb. No, they were biding their time and waiting for the next opportunity to strike.

She had allowed herself to plan as far ahead as next month. Thinking in short-term bursts—tomorrow or next week—didn't make her nervous. After all, she had design and production deadlines that had to be met—but daydreaming about five years down the road? Never.

Sitting there with Venom Dizzy allowed herself to imagine for the briefest of moments what her life could be like in a year or two. She remembered all the things he'd talked about wanting with her, especially a family, and liked the possibilities that flashed before her eyes.