

Chapter 1

It was a beautiful day in McAllister, California. The Sun was bright in the sky and there were little to no clouds. Birds sang their happy songs to the morning and everything was vibrant and alive with the colors of a day leading into the middle of Spring. He sat up with a soft sigh, his body almost refusing to wake up from his deep and comfortable sleep as he pushed the soft cotton sheet and comforter from his chest. He yawned softly, running his hands through his long wild strawberry blonde hair, his blue eyes starting to focus in the midnight dark room. The thick velvety curtains did well at keep out the pesky Sun's rays. The soft sound of shifting on his left made him turn his head, a smile coming to his lips as he looked at the lump under the covers in the bed next to him. Long strands of black and crimson peeked out from under the covers, resting on the pillow there. He reached out his hand and lightly caressed one of the wayward tufts of silken hair. The softness always made him marvel. He would let him sleep more, no real need to wake him up yet. He pushed the covers off of his legs and stood, his soft pajama pants rustling as he slid his legs off the side of the bed and stood, replacing the covers over his side of the bed. He started to walk across the large bedroom to the adjacent bathroom door, stretching his arms up over his head as he yawned quietly again.

He closed the bathroom door with a soft click and flipped the switch to turn on the light. It was more of a spa room than a bathroom really. Along the wall by the door, was a full-length mirror that took up most of the wall, with a counter and three sinks beside it. The counter and embedded sinks were black marble with silver mineral streaks and the sink fixtures were shiny chrome. On the far side of the massive bathroom was the walk-in shower that was surrounded by frosted glass and could comfortably accommodate five people. The toilet was in what looked like its own room and in the center of the floor was a massive swimming pool type tub complete with jets to relax muscles and swirl the hot water embedded in the marble tiled floor. He turned to the mirror and looked himself over. He was firmly muscled, his frame delicate and athletic. His hair had grown he noticed as he ran his fingers through it, it went from shoulder length to almost the middle of his back now and was silky, shiny and clean. His blue eyes glowed faintly from his almond shaped eyes. His skin was flawless and lightly tanned, the slightly long nails on the ends of his delicate fingers were painted a flawless and deep black as were his toenails. His eyes were drawn to his waist, the one imperfection staring back at him softly. A jagged but thin scar ran from his belly button to his right hip, standing out starkly against his tanned skin. He stared at it a moment, his fingers lightly touching the white line and tracing it from his navel to his hip. He'd been much younger when this injury had been given to him, nearly taking his life. And since his body was mostly hairless, it was an easy blemish to see. His perfectly manicured right eyebrow twitched but he sighed and turned from the mirror, heading towards the large linen cabinet to grab a towel, a few minutes in the bath would relax him and wake him up more. He glanced to the edge of the tub, pressing a button on the wall to turn on the heater and water jets causing the still, steamy water to churn gently. His soap and cleaning products were already by the tub, as he moved to the cabinet door, opening it and retrieving two towels. He slipped out of his crimson pajama pants and tossed them into the hamper along with his comfortable black boxer briefs before sliding into the bath's hot water with a contented sigh. The water was nice, almost instantly relaxing his muscles as it rose almost to mid-chest. He moved to the wall of the tub and sat down on one of the ledges that was under the water and by one of the

jets, placed them so that one could sit and relax in the tub. He placed the two towels behind his neck and rested his head back on them as a contented sigh escaped him at the feeling of the water washing around him. He looked up at the bathroom's skylight, marveling at the clear blue sky through the unbreakable glass a moment before he closed his eyes with a smile and just relaxed.

The sound of shuffling in the bathroom woke him and he raised his head from the towel pillow to look where the soft noise was coming from. A woman stood in front of the full-length mirror, looking at him silently. She was dressed in a form fitting black skirt suit with a short black skirt, a pair of house slippers on her feet and her glasses, possibly fogged from the steam coming from the bathtub, were resting on her head. Her black hair was pulled back into a tight bun, the white tuft of hair that took up a good four inches of the front of her hair, out and draped down her face to her chest. Seeing he was awake, she smiled and bowed respectfully.

"Did I wake you up, Anthony? I was wondering just how long you were going to sleep in the tub.", she smirked, standing up straight again.

Anthony sighed softly, raising his hand from the hot water to wipe at his right eye as he yawned.

"A long night I take it?", she grinned.

Anthony lowered his hand and looked at her.

"What time is it?", he grunted, still seated on the ledge.

"About ten.", she responded.

Anthony sighed and nodded, sliding off of the ledge to stand in the tub.

"Is he still sleeping?", he asked her, reaching for a bar of his soap from the side of the tub.

"He's awake and in the kitchen, I think he's making breakfast.", she responded with a smirk.

Anthony's eyes shifted to her a moment.

"Tell me, Aisha.", he said, knowing she wanted to share information with him.

She smirked, the action making her even more beautiful. It seemed to light her entire being, her caramel complexion seeming to glow. Her hazel eyes never shifted from him.

"His sister and brother are tearing the city apart looking for him. Since I can tell he wasn't brought here against his will, it's safe to say you didn't kidnap him.", Aisha grinned.

Anthony looked at her seriously as he lathered the soap over his chest and arms.

"Why would I kidnap my own boyfriend, Aisha?", he asked, just a little annoyed by her insinuation.

Aisha laughed softly.

"I know who he is, Anthony. This isn't my first time meeting him. But his siblings don't want to believe he would come with you willingly. They're worried about him.", she offered.

Anthony sighed and shook his head.

"Well, they can look all they want, he's not leaving me.", Anthony huffed, washing his body slowly with the creamy, sweet smelling soap.

"Also.....", she started.

Anthony looked at her briefly before going back to rinsing the soap from his back and sitting back on the ledge to concentrate on washing his legs and lower half.

"I got a call from Mark this morning. He asked if you knew anything about his whereabouts.", she asked.

Anthony huffed.

"Which means he will be here soon.", Anthony groaned softly.

"More than likely.", she answered.

Anthony shook his head.

"He's such a trusting brother.", he sighed, rinsing his leg off in the tub.

"He's the Mayor. He feels it's his duty to protect the City and his friends from you and your whims.", she offered.

Anthony huffed.

"He gives more of a damn about this City and his friends than he does me. Every time something goes array, he's looking in my direction.", Anthony grumbled.

"But it is usually you're doing.", she laughed.

Anthony looked at her a moment, then smiled at her wickedly.

"That's not the point.", he grinned.

She laughed and shook her head, turning towards the door to leave.

"I'll let you finish in privacy.", she chirped, moving to the door and grasping the handle.

Anthony looked at her but didn't say anything as she left the bathroom. He sighed as he put his soap back into its dish and grabbed his shampoo.

Anthony walked through the hallway of his house, heading towards the kitchen. As he rounded the corner leading towards the open kitchen/dining area, he was greeted by laughter. He smiled to himself, smelling delicious food as he walked. Aisha was seated at the bar that bordered the kitchen, facing the hallway Anthony would exit. Standing by the long, black kitchen counter was Anthony's boyfriend. His real name was Reese Crenshaw. He was an expert with all ballistic weapons especially guns. He had the ability to jump great distances and manipulate minds with a power called Mind Subjugation. With his sister and brother, he was part of their group called The Three Powers. They were active Superheroes within the City. Triplets that were usually connected at the hip. That was until Reese met Anthony.

McAllister was one of many cities in the United States that was known for its high Superhero and Supervillain population. A City that usually provided the United States with Heroes. There was a debate on how people gained their special powers, many thought it was due to nuclear testing, some thought it was genetic testing. It was really something that just happened because of the ever-evolving DNA within Humans. How people chose to use their powers was always led by the schools and society, some chose to be Heroes and some choose to be Villains. It was inevitably Free Will. Reese and his siblings actually attended the same Hero Course that Anthony and his brother Marcus attended, having been friends since early childhood. Anthony was infatuated with Reese since. Triplets were rare. And usually when they were born, they each shared two powers but had a unique power of their own. Reese's brother, Rand Crenshaw, had the unique power of being able to use any bladed weapon without previous knowledge of use of the weapon. He just touched the blade and he knew instantly how to use it efficiently. His sister, Rayven Crenshaw, had the unique power of Super Strength. Their Hero names were Ricochet for Reese, Shogun for Rand and Demolition for Rayven.

Marcus Matomoi, Anthony's brother, was older than Anthony by about four years and he had the power of detection and location. If he knew the person, he could find them in a matter of moments through meditation. His Hero name was Radar. When Anthony was born, he was a sickly child, almost dying in infancy due to a rare respiratory ailment. He overcame that but had no power that his parents could tell until one day, as he played with the Crenshaw triplets, he touched Rayven during a game of tag and accidentally "borrowed" one of her powers. He had scared his parents half to death when he accidentally destroyed a tree in their backyard, turning it to a pile of splintered wood. Though the triplets were a rarity, Anthony himself was even more rare. He was what was classified as a Mimic, one who could imitate the powers of others by simply touching them. Mimics usually died in their infant years, which explained his early near fatality. To make him even more unique, he could imitate up to three powers at once. His Hero name was Leech. But in time, he grew to hate it and once he decided he no longer wished to be a Hero, he changed his name.

His Villain name is Duplicity.

He was the most feared Supervillain in McAllister, though his brother still treated him like a sickly five-year-old. He was broken from his thoughts as a pair of strong arms wrapped around him. He opened his eyes to look up into the calm, loving deep chocolate eyes that looked into his own with concern.

"You didn't hear me call your name?", Reese asked, his smooth, deep voice sending a shiver along Anthony's spine.

Anthony blinked up at him a moment, then looked towards Aisha who was also looking at him with concern in her eyes. Anthony looked back at Reese and smiled, raising his hand to lay it upon his cheek lightly.

"Sorry about that. Was just thinking.", he said to him, leaning in to lightly kiss his cheek.

Reese smiled at Anthony and, for a moment, he marveled at just how handsome he was. Reese had long black hair with streaks of crimson in it that hung to his waist, he was much more muscular than Anthony and stood about four inches taller than him. His voice was like the richest honey and his eyes always reminded Anthony of smooth, melted chocolate. Reese and Anthony started to see each other in their second year of High School and Reese, though he knew of Anthony's desires and intermittent sickly

disposition, never saw or treated him as weak. He didn't see him as a Villain. That was one of the things that Anthony loved the most about him.

"Come eat.", Reese said, kissing him lightly on the forehead before releasing him.

Anthony smiled and nodded, moving to the bar to sit down with Aisha. Reese sat a plate in front of him, he had made bacon, sausage, eggs, hash browns and toast. Anthony smiled as he started eating. Aisha leaned her elbow on the bar and looked at Anthony a moment as she rested her chin in the palm of her hand. Anthony put a forkful of eggs in his mouth and looked at her out of the corner of his eyes. Aisha smirked.

"I do believe this is the most docile I have ever seen you.", she commented.

Anthony chewed his food and turned to look at her fully.

"Yes, well, even I have moments when I am the calmest and at peace.", he said.

Aisha grinned.

"So, you're not leaving any time soon, are you, Reese?", she asked, still grinning at Anthony.

"I take it Rand and Rayven are out looking for me?", Reese asked, standing at the counter and eating his own breakfast from a plate he held in his hand.

Anthony sighed softly as Aisha nodded, sitting up and turning her attention to Reese.

"And Mark should be here--", she began.

A sharp knock at the door cut her off as they all turned towards the front of the house. It was a very large and expensively elegant two floor estate, so one could see from the door to the kitchen with the only obstruction being the fireplace in the middle of the living room. Reese was about to go answer it when Anthony stood from his stool and moved towards the door.

"Finish your breakfast. I'm sure he's come to chastise me.", Anthony sighed.

He moved through the dining area and living room, coming to the frosted glass front door in a matter of moments. He clicked the lock open and pulled open the door. Standing on the large front porch was a man that stood about the same height as Reese, his golden blonde hair cut short but it was still long enough to flow in the slight breeze that blew through the estate's grounds. He was dressed in a pair of loose blue jeans and a white button up shirt, the sleeves rolled up to his elbows. The blue tie cinched closed at his throat and a pair of blue sneakers on his feet. His arms were folded over his chest and his hard green eyes glared at his little brother through the thin frames of his glasses. He was only twenty-five but had been the Mayor of McAllister for the last four years. He did what he could to keep the citizens of the City happy and protected, even if their biggest threat was his little brother. Anthony looked at him a moment.

"Where is he?", Marcus demanded.

"Hello to you too, Mark.", Anthony smirked.

"Don't 'Hello to you too' me, Ant. Where is he?!", Marcus growled loudly.

Anthony's brows furrowed, he hated when Marcus called him "Ant". To him, it insinuated that he was a small insect.

"He's having breakfast.", Anthony answered with a growl.

Marcus stepped through the doorway and moved through the house, moving with determination towards the kitchen. Reese watched him with mild interest.

"You had us worried to death. You shouldn't be here. Shogun and Demolition are out looking for you right now.", Marcus said to Reese as he moved towards the kitchen.

Reese sighed softly.

"Call them by their real names when you speak to me about them, Marcus.", Reese huffed, setting down his plate of half-finished food.

"Why are you here, Reese?!", Marcus asked, his voice hard and stern.

Reese raised an eyebrow and looked from Marcus to Anthony and back again. Anthony had closed the door and was moving back to his breakfast at the bar.

"I came to see Anthony. What business is it of yours??", Reese asked with a huff.

Marcus ran his fingers through his hair and growled softly.

"You are one of the City's most influential Heroes, Reese. Ant is one of the City's most feared Villains. What will happen when --", Marcus began.

"Don't call him that! It's demeaning!", Reese growled.

"A Villain?", Marcus asked, a little confused.

"Ant. An ant is a small insect. He's not an insect and you, his brother, calling him that is insulting and demeaning. You have called him that for years and have never taken into account the way he reacts when you do. I don't like it and neither does he. If you don't call him by his name then call him something else. Tony is fine.", Reese said, not moving from his spot leaning against the counter.

To Marcus, Reese wasn't taking into account the gravity of the affair he was having with Anthony. He slammed his hand down on the counter as he stood next to Reese.

"His nickname is the least sensitive subject here, Reese! I have told you to stop seeing him! Your sister and brother have told you to stop seeing him! The City looks up to you as a Hero and you having a sexual relationship with a Supervillain is not only going to diminish your standing but the standing of your brother and sister as well", Marcus growled.

Anthony had stopped eating and bowed his head; he was obviously upset by what his brother said but was doing his best not to let him see it. For years, he had tried to harden his heart to his brother's feelings toward him after he had decided he didn't want to follow in his family's footsteps. He even allowed Marcus to know where his estate was despite it being an invitation for him to send Heroes here to capture him. Which, surprisingly, he never did. But his hurtful words were more upsetting than any

Hero's intention to capture Anthony. Reese, sensing how Marcus' words were affecting his younger brother, turned hard brown eyes on Marcus.

"Our relationship is far more than just for sex, Marcus! I love him and he loves me! You, my sister and my brother have all failed to see that these last few years. You all think that because he is a Villain, I should forsake him.... like you all did! You are his brother; they were his friends. Now all he has is me. I refuse to treat him the way you three do. And I could give a damn about my standing with the City or my brother and sister's standing. I will NOT forsake him! Now, Marcus, stop talking!", Reese yelled.

Marcus opened his mouth to respond but no words left his mouth. He realized quickly that Reese had used his power upon him and moved back quickly, reaching into his pocket. Reese smirked.

"Go to sleep, Marcus.", Reese said, moving towards him quickly.

Instantly, Marcus' body stopped moving and relaxed, his eyes closing as he dropped his cellphone from his hand to the floor. Reese reached out to catch him before he could fall to the hard marble floor and hurt himself, tossing his limp, sleeping form over his shoulder. Anthony watched with emotionless eyes. Aisha sat silently with her eyebrows raised. Reese looked down at the cellphone on the floor and bent down easily to pick it up. The screen showed that Rand's contact was already pulled up, all Marcus had to do was press the icon that would send an S.O.S. signal to him and he and Rayven would be sent Marcus' immediate location to come help him. Reese moved to the garbage compactor and opened it, tossing the phone in and turning the compactor on. He looked over his shoulder at Anthony and Aisha.

"Be right back.", he said calmly, moving out of the kitchen with Marcus.

Aisha smiled and looked over at Anthony who was still sitting silently, it was clear he hadn't expected what had just happened.

"Well, that was unexpected.", she said softly.

Anthony simply nodded.