

Excerpt

Razor's Traitorous Heart

The Alliance book 2

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"Razor," the deep voice quietly called out from behind him.

Razor didn't bother to turn. His eyes were focused on the three figures running, or should he say 'jumping', through the ruins of the city below. He was following one figure in particular. The slender form in the front was covered in black and slipped in and out of the shadows, at times disappearing from his view. He cursed under his breath when that happened and quickly switched to infrared so he didn't lose her. His gut tightened when he saw another human rise from behind a destroyed transport and open fire on the group.

"What is the current report?" He growled as his second-in-command approached to kneel beside him.

His eyes continued to follow Kali as she flipped in midair, sailing over a burnt out shell of another transport while pulling two firearms out from her waist. She landed and rolled, coming up on one knee, before firing the weapons in her hands in rapid succession. He released his breath when she hit both targets.

"The fighting between the two factions has escalated. Intelligence information states the two males identified as Destin Parks and Colbert Allen are fighting for control of

Chicago, as you know. It would appear some of Parks men may have been responsible for the theft of the military equipment used to shoot down the helicopter you were in," Cutter said quietly as he raised his viewer to his eyes to watch the conflict below. He whistled under his breath when he saw the figure take out the two men with a clean shot to the head. "Nice shooting. If nothing else, some of these humans would make good warriors."

Razor ignored the comment as he continued to observe the figure as it rose. Kali. His. That was all he could think about over the past two weeks since she vanished after flagging down several members of the search team looking for him and leading them to where she had left him. Since then, he had ordered every piece of information available on her delivered to him.

Tonight, there were two other men with her. He watched as she turned and called out to them. They knelt next to the dead men, talking for several minutes. Frustration ate at him that he could not hear what they were saying.

He reluctantly lowered his viewer as they turned and began moving away. It was the same each night. He was slowly piecing together a pattern of her movements. Kali frequently traveled with one or more men. Jealousy flared at the thought of other males near her. He wondered if these males meant something to her. He had seen them with her on more than one occasion. It wouldn't matter. He had already made his decision. She was his.

“Wasn’t that the female who saved your life?” Cutter asked suddenly, turning to look at him with a puzzled expression.

“Yes,” Razor bit out in a low, savage voice.

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Razor scanned the area once more before standing. Since he regained consciousness in the medical unit aboard his Flagship, the *Journey*, two weeks ago, he had been studying both forces with an intensity he hadn’t felt since he took command of his first warship. While each side was fierce and methodical in their attacks, there was a clear difference in their styles. Destin Parks’ followers routinely protected and worked at rebuilding the city, using more of a defensive rather than offensive strategy while Colbert Allen waged a war of terror and destruction. Those fighting under him were aggressive and ruthless; uncaring of the collateral damage done during their attacks.

This was why he found it difficult to believe that Parks was responsible for the attack on the helicopter. Something was missing, he could feel it in his gut. It didn’t make sense.

The question that continued to bother him the most was from the Intel he had read through during his recovery. Human military aircraft had routinely been crossing the area for the past six months and none had been attacked. Why would they fire on the human helicopter now? What were the odds of the rebels picking one that was flying an unscheduled flight, at night, with him on board, and attack it?

Only a handful of humans were aware of his sudden change of transportation. A handful of humans... and members of the council. An immediate report was filed every time a Trivator warrior was injured or reported missing. He had learned a very valuable lesson thanks to his younger brother's new sister, Jordan. Hunter had informed him four months ago on his journey here that information proving Dagger may still be alive had come to light. A rescue mission was currently in progress.

The incident two weeks ago left too many unanswered questions. He wanted answers, especially for the one burning a hole through his chest every time he saw Kali Parks in danger like she was tonight. She could easily have been wounded or killed. Why would Destin Parks' allow his sister to constantly be exposed to such danger?

Watching Kali in action reminded him of some of the stories his brother, Hunter, had told him about the feats of his *Amate*. When Hunter told him about how Jesse had saved his life, not once, but twice, he thought his brother had been exaggerating. Now, after meeting Kali, he realized that Hunter's stories had probably downplayed what really happened.

He pushed aside his disappointment that he had only caught a brief glimpse of her tonight. He needed to find the answers to his questions – he had to because time was running out. He had already delayed his decision to level the city by using his injuries as an excuse. He knew it was because of the female and his reluctance to give the order confused him. There was no rational explanation for his reaction to her.

When he regained consciousness, he was sure he had been mistaken about his response to her. At first, he tried to justify his feelings as being due to his injuries. He had almost convinced himself that was the case until he caught her scent from the cloth lying on the table next to his bed in the medical unit. It was the one that she had tied around his leg.

Razor slipped his hand into the pocket of his pants and touched the soft piece of fabric. He carried it with him everywhere, even though her scent had faded from it, replaced with his own. Angered at the traitorous response of his body to her, he had set out on a ruthless mission to discover any information he could find pertaining to her and her brother. What he had found out about them had been disturbing.

Allen's forces outnumbered Parks' by almost two-to-one. Unless something was done, and soon, Chicago would have to be declared a hostile zone and he would be forced to order the Destroyers in. When that decision was made, all inhabitants that resisted would be immediately eliminated without prejudice. He had a feeling Kali and her brother would be two of those who would refuse to leave. He would not risk his men's lives in trying to negotiate with the remaining rebels; enough Trivator warriors had been wounded or killed over the last six years. Yet, the thought of ordering Kali's almost certain death had been more than he could do.

A frustrated growl escaped him as he stood. "I know the fighting has escalated. I want you to tell me something I don't already know, Cutter. I want a meeting set up with

Parks," Razor snapped out as he slid the viewer back into the clip at his waist.

"Are you sure that is wise?" Cutter asked cautiously. "So far both sides have refused to negotiate. Allen is demanding he be recognized as the leader of Chicago and given assurances that neither the World Government nor the 'fucking alien bastards' as he likes to call us interfere. Parks refused to meet with any alien representatives, he didn't give an explanation as to why, but I found out Badrick made a personal call two years ago. He was his usual charming self I suspect."

Razor glanced at Cutter, noting a fresh cut on his face. "I will meet with Parks before I make a decision as to whether the Destroyers should be brought in. What happened to you?" He asked, nodding to the thin cut on Cutter's cheek.

Cutter grimaced and touched his face. "I got a little too close to a resident of the city on my way here," he replied with a slight curve to his lips. "I'll have to be a bit more careful next time."

"Did you kill him?" Razor asked as he stepped into the small transport and nodded to his pilot.

Cutter stepped in behind him and sat down on the narrow metal seat. He pulled the straps over his shoulders and hooked it. He was quiet for several long moments before he looked up to see that his commander and friend was studying him with an intense expression that made him wince. Razor always seemed to know when he was

trying to think of a way to avoid answering a direct question.

“No,” Cutter sighed, looking out the open door as the small, military transport rose off the roof of the building. “I need to know in advance if you plan to level the city.”

“Why?” Razor asked bluntly.

Cutter turned and glanced at Razor with a penetrating stare. “I have to find someone.”

“I assume it is a human female,” Razor said with a raised eyebrow. “She will leave once it becomes clear the area will be cleansed if the two factions refuse to cooperate and lay down their arms. If we can get Parks to agree to a truce it will be easier to contain the southern half of the city.”

Cutter shook his head and turned to look at the darkening city below him. A few scattered lights glimmered from burning fires, but that was all. Everything else looked abandoned.

“I don’t think she will,” he replied quietly. “These females... they aren’t like any others I’ve met before. You saw what the female that rescued you did tonight. They fight right alongside the males, especially if there are young involved.”

“If a female has young then she will be more willing to leave,” Razor remarked, looking at the tablet in his hands as he pulled up the new information Cutter sent to him about the two men fighting for power. “She will want to

protect her young so she will leave when the order to abandon the city is given.”

“She can’t,” Cutter bit out. “The kids aren’t hers. They are children whose parents have died or abandoned them. She will not leave if she thinks any remain behind.”

Razor looked up at the hard tone in Cutter’s voice. “How do you know this?”

Cutter touched the cut on his cheekbone. “One of the little devils she protects told me,” he admitted ruefully.

Razor’s eyes narrowed on the teeth marks also gracing Cutter’s hand. “This female, she bit you?” He asked, an amused glint lighting his eyes for a moment.

Cutter chuckled as he turned his hand and looked at the tiny set of marks. “Yeah, she bit me. I was surprised how strong she was considering she was so small,” he admitted. “Just so you know, I also found out that Parks protects them as well. From what one of the boys she protects told me, Parks has provided protection, food, and medicine for the northern half of the city for the past six years. It was only in the last two years that Allen made a move to take over the northern half of the city.”

“Why?” Razor murmured, looking at the data on the tablet with a frown. “Why does Allen suddenly want the northern section of the city? He could have seized it six years ago by eliminating Parks when he had a chance.”

Razor turned his gaze to look out over the remains of the city. He could clearly see the border separating the southern half of the city from the northern half. A crude

barrier of collapsed building rubble had been piled up to make a twenty foot high wall that went in both directions as far as the eye could see.

It didn't keep all the intruders out. That was evident from the conflict he had observed earlier. Parks didn't have enough men to guard the entire length. Instead, small teams patrolled the line. Kali's group was one of dozens that moved through the shadows of the city.

For a moment, he became lost in thought as he remembered back to that fateful night two weeks ago when Kali had risked her life to save his. He resisted the urge to rub his leg where she had pulled the shrapnel out of it. The wound was already healed. It had been minor compared to what would have happened if she hadn't suddenly appeared. He would have been dead. He had no illusions of what his fate would have been without her assistance. For that he owed her a life debt, something that did not sit well with him.

"Razor," Cutter said, breaking into his thoughts. "Did you get the information that I sent to you?"

Razor gave a brief nod before he pushed his memories aside. He wanted to know what would drive two men who had been friends at one time apart to the point they were trying to kill each other. He also wanted to know how two men with such different views could have been friends at one time. The more he studied the situation, the more questions he discovered he had.