
ABSOLUTION SAVAGE
DUET PART TWO

Russo Saga Part Five

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's
advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

*These dark days are necessary, just as important as the rest,
For if we didn't have the worst, we couldn't recognize the best.*

*Change What Is To Come
By Anonymous*

Part I

Sacrifice

Chapter 1

Christian

Finding Kerry and Cecilia again is a lot more complicated than I'd have ever thought.

Have I changed?

Or do I just keep destroying?

I struggle against the wind next to her, slipping in the mud, trembling from the cold, and the shock of waking up only a few moments ago to find the front door slammed open, ice cold gusts of wind whirling through the room. Far off in the darkness I see the little light in the kitchen window. Too far. I can't believe she took the risk of taking Cecilia out in this weather. In the middle of the fucking night! I should've just kept her tied up and saved myself the trouble. She's so fucking stubborn. I have to admire her incredible strength, and I must admit my defeat, at the very least to myself. I've underestimated her.

Again.

History repeats itself.

When we're finally inside, I slam the door closed behind us, drowning us in darkness. Kerry stumbles and falls to her knees.

At this very moment I don't give a shit about how she feels, but I do care about the little life next to her

“Let her go now, Kerry.”

She's too weak to protest and, freeing Cecilia from Kerry's clutch, I unwrap the blanket and assess her status. Her cheeks are rosy and she's fast asleep, only stirring slightly when I push a tendril of dark hair off her cheek. She smells outdoorsy, fresh. I don't want to wake her, so I only take off the thickest clothes and then carefully place her back in her crib. I study the little person, something warm flaring in my chest, warmth that turns to black heat as I think about Kerry endangering her out there. I stalk back out to her mother who is still sitting on her knees on the cold floor, wet, with twigs, leaves and some mud on her jacket and in her hair, tears streaming down her face.

“What the fuck were you thinking?”

She answers with a sob.

I sway. As the adrenaline slips away, I realize how foggy my mind is. I don't recognize myself, and that I'd sleep through her leaving the house is extremely unlikely. My heart speeds up as fury fills me. The coffee. The overly sweetened coffee.

“Did you drug me?” I grab her hard by her nape, forcing her to look at me. “Answer me!”

All she does is wail and I let her go with a push that sends her tumbling to the floor. I have to occupy myself with something or I'll hurt her, so I go to the only person in this house who doesn't hate me. My little miracle of a daughter.

She's breathing regularly, her skin is warm and has good color. She seems all right. When I turn, I almost bump into Ker who's standing in the doorway, hunched, swaying.

“How is she?” Her voice quavers.

“What do you care?” I growl and push at her chest to get her out of my way. I flinch when she grabs my arm.

“It's a prescription, Christian. For her. From when she was a baby. It isn't dangerous. I'm sorry.” Her voice trails off.

Mm-hmm. I swallow and my dry throat rasps. I have slept much too little in the last few days, but I feel dizzy in an uncomfortable way that I can't seem to get rid of. I grab her wrist hard and twist it, backing her out into the main room. She winces but doesn't try to free herself.

"What the *fuck* do I do with you?" I snarl, forcing her down on her knees before me. I want to shake her, slap her, but I fight it. I want to think I've changed. I want to change. I don't want to hurt Kerry again.

Kerry

"I hoped you'd sleep. That it'd make you sleep deeper... that's all... I didn't try to kill you, Christian," I sob.

He's silent and then he barks out a laugh. "Did you try to drug a full-grown man with stuff prescribed for a baby?"

"Why didn't you just sleep?" I cry.

"It's fucking hard, sweetheart, with the front door wide open to a storm. You should've done a better job closing it. Why the hell did you try to go out there? It's insane."

"W—why?" I look up at him, sitting back on my heels. "*Why?* I only did what every sane person would do in my place!"

"What? Go out into a storm with a baby in the middle of the night? In a car that's not going anywhere?"

"I couldn't have known it wouldn't start!"

"What the hell were you thinking?"

"We're *hostages*, Christian! You're keeping us hostage! You're dangerous, unpredictable, a known killer, a... a murderer. You've hurt me..." I swallow hard. "God only knows what you'll do to us if we don't get away from you. I had to try and save my baby."

"You—What the *fuck!* I've *told* you I'm not here to hurt you!"

I glance at him. His face is a mask of deadly anger.

I scoff. “Everything you’ve done so far has proven otherwise.” I rub the back of my head. It hurts where he pulled my hair in the fight.

“And I’m not a ‘known’ killer!” he sneers.

“You’re known to me,” I mutter.

He regards me but doesn’t answer. Instead he starts pacing the floor. “She’s my kid too, Kerry.”

His? Who the hell does he think he is?

A shudder wracks my body. I’m so cold and wet. I don’t think there’s a dry thread left on me and the room’s cold, the floor’s even colder. I jerk when he grabs my arm and pulls me back up, pushing me in the direction of the couch.

“Sit!”

I fall onto the cushions. Swaying with defeat and bottomless exhaustion, I pull the throw blanket off the armrest and wrap it tightly around me. A sob escapes me. Then another. And another. “Why did you come here?” My breath hitches as I stutter out the words. Warm tears make their way over my cold cheeks, pooling under my chin. “Why did you have to destroy everything I’ve built up? Again.” I pull the blanket even tighter, still shivering violently.

He paces the floor in front of me and when he stops, I expect anything but what he says.

“I want you, Kerry. I couldn’t stop thinking about you, and about her. And then you had to go and fuckin’ disappear on me!”

For a moment I’m stunned by his honesty, then a red haze of fury washes over me. “Well, you can’t *have* me,” I scream. “You blew that, *Chris!* I’m never forgiving what you’ve done to me! How can you even *think* that I— that *we*... You’re so pathetic!” I stare up at him in defiance.

His jaw clenches and he’s a frightening vision with the growing rage flaring as an aura around him. It electrifies the air between us and wraps me in the storm that suddenly boils inside my living room and not only outside. He takes a step closer, his

moves measured, unnaturally calm, controlled, showing no emotion. I cringe, closing my eyes to block out the sight of him as he grips my chin and squeezes it, tilting my head.

“You really don’t know when to stop, do you?” he rasps, his breath hot on my face.

When he removes his hand, it leaves a cold patch on my skin. He sighs heavily and I open my eyes again to peer at him. His eyes are closed. He’s still bent over me and with his nostrils flaring, it looks as if he’s inhaling my scent.

“I’m trying, Kerry, I’m trying so fucking hard.” His eyes are pitch black when he opens them, soulless, and my gut clenches.

“Well, that’s the thing, isn’t it? It’s not there. You have to try. There’s no compassion, no humanity—”

I scream when he slams his palm to the wall behind me, an inch from my head, and my heart darts up to my throat. “You don’t get to talk about compassion!” he growls. “You risked her *life!* If I hadn’t woken up— What the *fuck* did you think you were doing? You’re just as much of a monster as I am, reckless and stupid. I should fucking take her. She’d be better off.”

New tears well up in my eyes and I swallow hard against the panic that threatens to cloud my mind, forcing myself to meet his dark gaze. His words hit home. I don’t want to admit it, but they hurt, because they carry some truth. Did I still really think he was going to hurt us when I left, or am I just so stuck in old tracks that I’d rather risk Cecilia’s well-being than actually stop and think?

Guilt consumes me, tearing through my chest as if I have eaten barbed wire. “Please,” I whisper, “please, don’t take her from me. I’ll do anything. I can change.”

His eyes are cold as he glares down at me. “Anything? Is that so?”

I realize my mistake too late. That’s not something you offer a man like him. “I...”

I don’t know what to say, and from the glint in his eyes it’s

obvious he sees my inner conflict, the turmoil that makes my head spin. His hands come up to my cheeks, cupping them, rubbing away the tears with the pads of his thumbs.

“You’re dancing on razor blades, Kerry. Push and pull. All the fucking time. I know you think you know me, but it’s nothing but your own made-up stuff. You don’t know shit about who I am and the things I’ve done.”

But I do. I know him so terrifyingly well. With his hands on me again, his skin on mine once more, I remember it all. The pain, the violence, and the hurt. He’s just... incapacitated. This is all he knows. The cruelty, the force, the power games.

I’m not excusing him, but I get it.

This is not what he wants, the threats, the rage. I know it. I cup my hands over his. His skin is so cold. Mine is just as cold.

“I won’t run again. I promise.”

“I’m not sure I believe a word you say.” He pulls his hands out of mine and straightens, magnificent, terrifying, where he stands, towering over me.

I scoff. “That’s rich, coming from you.”

He frowns as his eyes dart to mine, then he shakes his head and drops onto the couch next to me. Lifting the blanket, he stares at my soaked clothes.

“What the fuck, Kerry? Go and change or you’ll catch a cold.”

“I’m too tired.” And I am. I have no energy left whatsoever; our last fight took the very last ounce I had, and I just want to sit here. I just want to sleep.

“That’s not good enough.”

“Since when do you worry ‘bout my health?” I slur. “That’s just so... not you.”

“Since now. Raise your arms.”

I obey and he yanks off my wet pullover and my thicker sweater in one move. My two T-shirts cling to my body and I have goosebumps all over as I hug myself, shaking violently.

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“You have two choices. Either I undress you, or you do it yourself, either way you’re getting in the shower.”

His suggestion shoots heat straight between my legs. I want his touch. But I can’t have it. How can I let him close again? I can’t. Yet again it washes over me. I could have been dead, murdered by these hands, the hands that rest hot on my cold arms, making me tingle in all the wrong places.

Then the moment passes, and the choice is taken away from me.

“Arms up, Ker.”

Our eyes meet. He doesn’t let go and I’m sucked into the depths of that dark gaze that is filled with too many emotions for one human to carry alone. I inhale erratically as I obediently raise my arms. Christian grabs the hems of my T-shirts and pulls them up and over my head. I have no bra and my hands fly down to cover my breasts as I stare at him.

Christian shakes his head, and puts a large palm against my cheek. “Sweetheart, relax. You’re frozen blue. No matter how hot I normally find you, you look like a wet puppy right now, and that’s not a great turn-on.”

I scoff. My arms remain where they are.

“Stand up, hon.”

I dart up. “I can take it from here.” I am *so* not getting naked in front of him. That’s... No way. “I’ll go shower.”

He smiles, and it’s the most beautiful sight ever. “Good girl. Hop into the bathroom. I’ll bring you a bunch of dry clothes.”

“You’ve sure made yourself comfortable here.”

“Had to. Had to look for anything you could use as a weapon.”

I snort. “And here I was thinking you’d turned domestic.”

“Nah. It’s me ‘needing’ to be nice.”

I shake my head and stumble into the bathroom, locking the door behind me.

“And Ker!” he shouts.

“Yeah?”

“I really am sorry.”

Sure. Okay. I know *he* thinks he means it. I fall back against the door once I'm alone and exhale. I tremble hard as I pull off my pants and underwear, and it's not only from the cold. The roller-coaster that is being around this man makes my head spin.

“*I want you, Kerry.*”

Good God! How do I get out of this?