

FREE CHAPTER 1 of

# FRACTURED

by

Zelly Jordan

(Book One of the Unbreakable Series)



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## **Chapter 1**

The plan had been easy to set up: pretend to be an interested buyer in Tanaka's product - a serum that can boost a human's strength and physical abilities to abnormal levels, animalistic in format and worth billions; arrange a discreet meeting in a semi-empty warehouse, down by the old disused docks to discuss this "alleged" super serum and money-terms.

He'd arrived with his two bulky sumo wrestler-type thugs, a skinny Japanese man with thinning hair, thick black glasses shielding his eyes from a nonexistent sun and looking every inch the stereotypical Asian businessman rather than the evil bastard he was.

I'd been waiting, hidden behind one of the many enormous, rusted out ship containers stacked neatly against the rear wall. I'd watched him as he'd gotten out of his pricy black Mercedes in his pricey suit, his bodyguards joining him as he strutted like a little rooster into the centre of the open area.

He'd been expecting me to walk in through the open sliding steel door, no doubt, but I'd purposely disconcerted him by walking out from behind the containers, his heart rate spiking sharply despite his well-hidden surprise, outwardly as cool as I was. His thugs had immediately gone for their guns until I'd called out my name and Tanaka had staid them with a raised hand.

The next several minutes had been spent discussing the serum and I'd poked and prodded at him verbally, deliberately pushing his ego till it got the better of him and in an effort to jack up the price even more, he'd bragged about how powerful it was; how he'd only needed tiny amounts to create "super humans" as he liked to call them.

With rage simmering beneath my ice cold exterior, I'd questioned him about his success rate, bullshitting that the "word on the street" is that this serum was a failure and not worth a penny but he'd come back with the outrageous statement that the initial experiments were successful and that's why the enormous price tag for a small dose. His genius had created the next evolution of humans, he'd claimed, smiling arrogantly.

My commander had warned that Tanaka would try to feed me lies, claim victories and ownership of things he had no right to. But what the greedy little ass didn't realise was that I could detect when someone lied; my animal senses able to zero in on all the physical tells: the minute nuanced giveaways that normal people couldn't detect.

And while he was lying about almost everything, he wasn't lying about something being "successful". My gut had clenched with tension, horrified at the possible meaning. Successful what? What the fuck did that actually mean? Successful because an innocent human had been used as a guinea pig? Or successful because he'd perfected the formula?

Either way, my stomach turned.

The slime-turd also didn't realise exactly how much I knew - not just about him and his evil doings but of his hideous theft.

Yes, I knew what he'd taken from me, the bastard - a theft he'd pay for with his life, because this was personal.

I was born a beast. Not made. Not created. A unique anomaly; a freakish mutation against the laws of nature.

And Tanaka was the man who'd stolen my DNA - his obscene efforts to create this serum a sin beyond redemption.

But he wasn't getting the chance to spread his evil further because it was my mission to eliminate him. My job as well as my pleasure.

I'm a soldier; trained in special ops.

Sergeant Kellan Douglas O'Ryan. Highly skilled and deadly. A killer.

And that's just my human side.

The fury had roiled through me as I stood there listening to his boastful claims of success and brilliance, knowing that he hadn't created anything himself - he'd used my mutated genes. And when I'd reached the end of my tether, so to speak, my blood fired and sparked with red hot rage and in an instant, I'd released my hold.

I'd shocked him, the maggoted little dick, when I'd suddenly transformed from my human - dark haired, hazel eyed, lean muscled 6 foot 2 - into my beast, unleashing him from his chains with an explosive roar: veins protruding and darkening thick and blue across my face and body, claws unsheathing into long sharp talons, putrid fangs and burning gold eyes distorting and twisting into terrifying monstrosity as I became my primal self - my animal - a distorted mix of wild creatures, mangled and hideous within flesh and bone and blood.

Roaring viciously, gutturally into Tanaka's stunned face, Tweedledee and Tweedledum had screamed like babies, all three frozen immobile in panicked fear for a moment before they'd run, Tanaka yelling at them to shoot. But they weren't quick enough to get a decent shot - my beast speed was faster than their eyes or aim could keep up with.

So, with their bullets flying I'd had no choice but to kill them first - super-speed giving me the advantage over their guns and superhuman strength allowing me to snap their bulky necks like twigs.

Tossing his guards' broken bodies onto the concrete floor like unwanted toys, I headed after Tanaka's cowardly ass. He was running as fast as he could towards his Merc and just for fun, I let him get a little distance between us, letting him think he stood a chance before I sped over and grabbed him roughly and slammed him into a concrete pillar, watching his skinny ass crumble to the ground as he was knocked unconscious.

Then back in my human skin, I stood patiently waiting, hands in jacket pockets, until he slowly opened his eyes long moments later. He was disorientated and mumbling a little as he raised a shaky hand to his head, blinking his eyes and peering up at me, confused for a moment.

Any second now.....

Ahhh, yes, there it was.

I slowly smiled at him, my eyes glinting hazel with golden streaks, as terror leapt into his eyes, fear holding him frozen for a minute before he started to madly scramble backwards, grunting "no no no" over and over.

My smile widened, enjoying the hell out of this moment. Then with a sudden shake of my head and torso, I transformed fully back into my beast and snarled menacingly at him. He screamed and tried to scramble to his feet but I'd had enough playtime.

Time to finish this.

I had him in an instant and before he could utter a sound I shredded his jugular, blood pouring thick and warm over my claws, his choking gasps loud and desperate. I let my beast rage; vicious and violent in his deep swipes across Tanaka's chest and head, roaring with bloodlust, then grabbing his neck and snapping it in two, the crack of his bones loud and obscene. I let go and his body crumpled to the ground, lifeless and bloody.

I stood a moment, staring at him and calming myself, letting my adrenalin wind down till I was able to transform back, tethering him once again. He went willingly, his bloodlust sated. A deep shudder ran down my spine as the thrill of the kill slithered over my entire body, a throbbing release primal in nature and intent.

Cleaning up the "crime" scene was a quick and easy affair when you have beast strength and speed - install the two bodybuilding boof-heads into the front seat of the Merc, buckle them in and push the car over the edge of the pier to splash heavily into the dark water, the weight of the pricey vehicle dragging it quickly underwater. If the car was ever found, it would be assumed to be an accident. But I had no concerns that it ever would be. And even if it was, the Commander would get it taken care of, no doubt.

The only part that caused me a moment's hesitation was the car - that was a beautiful piece of machinery. Damn shame it had to go.

Tanaka - him I just tossed straight into the water as far as I could throw him - which was quite a distance. His torn and bloody jugular would attract sharks and other predators and soon destroy any chance of his body ever being found.

I stood for a moment watching as his body began sinking below the surface, the approaching evening casting long beams of twilight shadows on the vast stretch of deep ocean.

Mission complete.

I had turned and walked away without a backwards glance, intent now on getting back to the apartment and reporting in. But that was when I'd turned the corner and crashed into trouble.

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Oh shit, I thought as my eyes opened a crack and piercing light hit me like a laser beam shot straight into the back of my pounding head.

Jesus. What truck hit me?

I groaned quietly and closed them again for a minute, my head throbbing in giant painful waves. Taking a calming breath, I braced to try again, opening them slowly and squinting in the harsh light.

Crap. What the hell happened?

All I could see at first was white ceiling; very ornate white ceiling high above me and that was my first clue that I wasn't in my own place. Blinking groggily, I cautiously, slowly looked around, my vision blurry and distorted.

The room was huge; tall narrow windows with heavy drapes pulled back to let in the late afternoon light; black leather seating arranged around ultra modern furniture, all very sleek and minimal. Except along the left wall where several computers, monitors and microscopes sat on top of a large white U-shaped desk. Everything was either black, grey or white. No colour anywhere.

Except for the two fuzzy-edged people standing together near the massive white desk slash spaceship console. There was some colour there, mainly the bright blue of the shirt the shorter one wore. The taller one wore more white. I blinked several times, trying to focus on their indistinct shapes but it wasn't helping and I closed my eyes again.

Despite the pounding pain and nausea, I was nevertheless aware when one of the figures came forward, a slight tingling in my dulled senses alerting me to their proximity.

A feminine voice reached my ears, husky and compelling. "Kellan? Honey? Can you hear me?" And then a soft, warm hand came to rest on my cheek, small fingers caressing my skin slightly.

That felt so nice, I sighed and let myself enjoy the gentle touch for a moment before slowly opening my eyes again, wary of the harsh light. My sight was still hazy but not enough to dull the vision before me - and it was a vision. A beautiful brunette leaned over me, her long hair swinging down over her shoulder and deep concern in her slightly slanted wide eyes, dark thick lashes framing an otherworldly green gold colour so unique that I was entranced. My gaze locked onto hers and held.

"Kellan?" She said again and I could listen to her say my name for hours, I decided.

I knew I wasn't dead for a couple of reasons. One: if I was, I wouldn't be feeling this shit and two: this woman was the epitome of my dream-babe - dark hair, beautiful, soft husky voice, eyes I could drown in. She belonged in heaven, no doubt. And I'm pretty damn sure I wasn't going there. Sinner that I was.

So I couldn't be dead. Yet, if she was an angel - since when are they so fucking hot? Flawless, smooth skin, plumb kissable lips, soft hands.....

Her fingers slid across my cheek gently as she pulled her hand away and I immediately felt the loss of her warmth. Blinking groggily, as if waking from a deep dream, I sat up then immediately wished I hadn't as my head just about exploded off my shoulders.

"Ahhhhh crap," I gritted through clenched teeth as pain ricocheted to every nerve ending in my body and slammed back into my skull violently. I stuck my fingers on my eye sockets and rubbed, applying pressure to help ease the nauseating throb, afraid that I was gonna be sick. I dragged in a couple of deep breaths desperately. Jesus Christ. That was evil.

"It's okay. Just breathe. Take deep breaths, honey. It'll stop soon, I promise." The husky tone gently reassured. Her hand came to rest on my shoulder, comforting and calming. "Everything is gonna be okay now. You're home, thank God."

"Home??" I repeated, pressing my fingers harder against my eyelids, elbows on knees as I pushed through the wave of nausea. Did I hear that right? Nah, couldn't have. The pain in my head must be screwing with my hearing.

Fuck, what the hell happened to me?

"Kellan.....oh God....." Her voice cracked with these words, her emotions seeming to overwhelm her.

Looking up painfully as I lowered my hand from my brow, I could see the female - the one that had been calling my name.

It was her. The woman from the pier.

She'd been a distance away from me in the shadowed light of the early evening at the docks and I'd seen her only through my beast eyes, not my human ones until just a moment ago. So my fuzzy brain hadn't really taken in the fact that it was the same woman. She was only inches away, seated on the coffee table directly in front of me between my widespread knees. Now I was seeing every tiny detail of her.

She was stunning.

Gorgeous, in fact - long dark hair falling straight and thick to her blue draped chest. Tight body. Petite and slim. Dark jeans. Boots. No makeup. Minimal jewellery. And as she looked into my face with worry and concern, I saw smooth, fine skin, soft pouty lips and those amazing eyes. I've never seen that shade - jade green mixed with a sort of yellow green around her pupils, surrounded by thick black lashes, slightly slanted and exotic. Like a cat's.

I stared into them, caught and trapped somehow - I couldn't seem to look away. She stared back and I swear, gazing into them made my heart trip and thump in a weird-ass way.

What the hell was this?

I felt this pull.....Can't describe it any other way. Except.....how is that possible? She was a stranger to me.

Wasn't she?

Yes, she must be. I'd for sure remember if I'd ever met her before - she's too beautiful to easily forget.

For long moments that stretched out into what felt like hours, I stared into her eyes, she stared into mine and holy shit, I think I got lost for a minute there.



Disoriented and disturbed by the strange sensation pulsing through my system in that moment, I focused and regrouped, the receding sickness making it easier.

"Who are you?" I wanted to know, my voice dry and scratchy.

Her eyes widened, blinked furiously as a look of shock, of dismay, crossed her delicate features.

"What? What do you mean, who am I? Kellan, it's me .....Charlie."

Charlie? She didn't look anything like a "Charlie."

"Charlotte," she added.

Oh. Right. Of course....Charlotte.

"I don't know you. Sorry," I said and I was - she was striking, my attraction to her visceral and instinctive.

I didn't know her but she knew my name. How? Who was she to me? And what exactly was going on here? I tried to use my beast senses to read the situation but he was out of action, the drug still sloshing through my system.

Her eyes welled up for a split second, disappointment flooding through the pretty green gold but she regrouped and took a deep breath before asking; "Okay, well.....umm.... Finn said you don't remember him either?"

She gestured to the guy sitting in an armchair to my left. I'd only vaguely been aware of his silent, still presence but now I tossed a brief glance his way to see the dude who'd shot me - a tall, model-handsome guy, square jaw, floppy dark hair, thick black nerdy glasses that didn't detract one bit from his looks, only making him look intellectual. Although he was sitting, I knew he was lanky - skinny in his loose white tee shirt and dark jeans. He was watching me like a hawk yet I sensed no threat from him at all. And he still didn't look familiar to me.

Unlike the beauty in front of me. She was a threat - this I knew immediately. I just wasn't sure what kind of threat.

A slight twinge pinched beneath my skin at the thought of who he, this Finn, was to her. Husband? Lover? My gaze was pulled back inexorably to her, like I was mesmerised or some shit, I thought with irritation.

"No, I don't know him. I don't know either of you," I told her, watching their reactions carefully.

Now both of them looked confused, the dude's dark grey eyes turning owlish behind his black framed lenses.

She looked very distressed, glancing over at him with dismay as he frowned back at her. Her hand dropped from my shoulder as she kind of floundered, blinking rapidly and looking lost for words.

"Buddy, it's me.....Finn. Your best friend.....?" The dude leaned forward, his eyes concerned and serious as he stared at me.

Best friend? Don't think so.

I didn't know these people, or what kind of game they were playing. Didn't know what the hell they wanted from me or how they fucking knew my name. But my head pain was easing up; I was starting to think clearer and soon my innate lie detector would be in full swing. Even without him though, it was obvious something was seriously wrong here. Maybe, they were counter-intelligence? To go to the trouble of shooting me down with tranq darts... How the hell did they know to use them on me and how did they know I'd be there, in that warehouse, at that time?

That wasn't pure dumb luck.

No. They had known I was a beast and came prepared.

Right. What now then?

The job was the highest priority, of course, but I wanted to know why they'd come after me, what they wanted. And why were they claiming to know me? A hundred questions churned through my brain but I was too edgy to try to sort them all out right at this moment so I pushed it aside, deciding that my job had to come first and foremost.

With that thought, I stood up but the sledgehammer was back, slamming full force into my skull at the sudden movement and I collapsed heavily back onto the sofa, nausea surging once more. Fuck.

I pressed my fingers into my eyes again to prevent them from falling out of their sockets on the next pounding thump while her voice, Charlotte's voice soothed "Take it easy. It'll go away soon. I'm so sorry, honey. Do you want some water? Finn, can you.....?Thanks."

That's the third time she'd called me honey. I tried to ignore the fact that I liked it. Once again, her small hand landed on my shoulder and I looked up into her face, her touch bringing the realisation that my jacket was off and I only had my tee shirt as a barrier between her skin and mine.

Had she removed my jacket? Or the guy? I didn't know which made me more uneasy.

The dude appeared next to her, holding out a bottle of water, his grey eyes meeting mine with trepidation. When I didn't take the bottle, he placed it on the table and stuck his hands in his pockets.

"I'm sorry, man. Really. But we had to stop you and you were out of control, like..... really crazy." His voice was deep, smooth and apologetic. "I'm sure it'll pass soon."

They had to stop me, did they? So they knew of my plan to kill Tanaka? How? And why fucking bother to save a piece of shit like him?

"It's all gonna come back to you, I'm sure it will." Her eyes were clinging to mine. "But.....If you don't remember me or Finn, what do you remember? Anything?? Did they hurt you? Are you okay? Where have you been all this time? We've been so worried....." Her husky voice held equal notes of confusion and anxiety as she fired questions at me, my blood pressure rising with each one.

Where have I been? Hurt me? Who?

What the hell was she talking about?

I could barely sort out my own questions let alone hers.

Lowering my hand, I looked up into her amazing eyes and for a moment I felt calmer, the pretty green gold soothing my agitation, the nausea and aching head easing as the drug wore off. My senses were still dull, slack and mostly non-existent, beast completely comatose within me.

I allowed myself a little time to wallow in them but the longer I did, the stronger the magnetic pull between us. And with that pull, in complete contrast to moments ago, anxiety started to rise in my throat, like something was crawling out of me. It was heavy and raw and I felt an almost desperate need to be away from these people, especially her. The conflicting sensations rasped and swirled through my body, elevating my heart rate and clenching an already shaky stomach. The pressure felt like a vice around my whole body, grating and scraping at my nerve endings.

Fuck. I needed out of here. Right now.

"I gotta go."

This time I stood without too much drama, forcefully fighting the lingering effects of the tranq dart and heading for what looked like the front door there towards the right, grabbing my jacket that had been sitting beside me on the leather sofa.

"Go? Go where?" She exclaimed behind me but I ignored her. However, I hadn't gone five steps when suddenly she was in front of me, throwing herself into my path so quickly I nearly ran her over and I had to slam my brakes on fast. I snarled at her a little, nostrils flaring in temper when the guy came into view, standing at her back about ten feet away on the left. Either protecting her or helping her prevent my departure. Didn't matter which - they weren't enough to stop me.

"No! No!" She demanded, reaching out as if to grab my arms but pulling back at the last second. "You can't leave, Kellan! We just found you!" Her wide eyes stared up at me fiercely, her smaller height putting the top of her head at shoulder level.

"Listen, babe," I growled. "I don't know who the hell you people are or what games you're playing but I don't have time for this. You need to move before I move you. And as much as I'd like to get my hands on your smoking hot self, you might not like how I go about it. So, step out of my way before I hurt you and your pretty boyfriend there."

Her eyes popped wide in shock, blinking madly for a moment before she exclaimed; "Boyfriend?!!!"

Strangely, the dude echoed her and the two of them looked at each other with dumbfounded expressions, as if what I'd said was completely illogical.

Okay, what the fuck is happening here?

This was not the reaction I'd have thought she'd have to my intimidating threat. She should be scared, dammit.

"Finn, find something quick. Proof of some kind," she ordered GQ and he scrambled over to his spaceship desk to rummage through drawers, muttering to himself.

I dismissed him and went to step around the babe but she sidestepped with me, blocking me again and I growled. This was insane.

"Please.....Kellan....don't leave. Wait, please.....just give him a chance to find you proof of who we are." Her eyes pleaded with me, not a bit fearful of me and what I am. Not that my beast was any danger to her at the moment, still dormant inside, but she didn't know that.

Why the hell was she not intimidated?

I needed to be gone right now, away from these strange people; to be focused on reporting to my Commander instead of this woman who churned my insides in ways that I couldn't fully understand.

Her eyes held me immobile as tension built higher, anger brewing at my inability to move, to just leave.

"Hurry, Finn," she ordered, eyes locked on mine, bewitching me.

"I'm hurrying, I'm hurrying," the dude grumbled back to her.

"Please don't leave. I don't know what's happened to your memory but we'll get to the bottom of it. Kellan....Just trust me, okay?" Her husky voice was loaded with emotion, thick with pain yet reassuring at the same time.

Reassuring of what? Her words made no sense to me.

From the direction of the desk came an excited shout. "Got it!!" And the dude rushed over, wildly turning the pages of some sort of photo album clutched in his hands.

"Look," he said, shoving it at me in triumph and pointing to something on the page. "That's you right there. And that's me. Our high school senior year book."

Dragging my eyes away from Charlotte's, I looked down to see him holding open the album to a page that had the classmates' headshots all lined up in rows and he was pointing at a head shot of me. Younger looking, longer hair but still me. And right next to that picture was one of him, still with the black frames, still with the model good looks.

Holy shit.

My whole system jolted painfully with the shock of seeing this dude and I in a school year book together.

What the fuck??

I looked up to see him staring hard at me. "That's us, man," he said. "We go back a long way."

I looked over at the babe. She had her lips pressed together tightly, her beautiful eyes full of cautious hope.

My heart pounded hard against my ribs and I hardly breathed as I looked back down at the album. Shock had me immobile as I took in the seeming evidence that this guy and I did indeed know each other.

That was definitely me. And it was definitely this dude too.

Shit, things just got really weird.

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