

“Look at me.”

I have a hard time lifting my eyes. I simply don't want to see what I know I will find in his.

It was inevitable, really. I knew from the instant I found him in my house this afternoon, that this moment was coming. Oh, I'd grabbed onto every excuse that seemed reasonable to evade it, but every time he'd touch me, or kiss me, any resolve I had melted. His controlled restraint, when I could feel his body's need to burn, was an added aphrodisiac. He toyed with me and I was putty in his hands. He fed me grilled chicken and pineapple smothered in a spicy peanut sauce, and it was so good, I almost had an orgasm on the spot.

No, I had no doubt we'd end up right here. In my bedroom.

“You're thinking too hard, Pup. I can hear the wheels turning over here. It's simple, all you have to do is trust me enough to look at me.” His voice is gravelly, deep with a veiled need.

It's not that I'm unsure of his want for me, his interest in me. It's that once we take this further, there is no going back. No way back to the casual friendship, the occasional flirts, the delicious fantasies that inevitably followed. And no way to erase the look of recoil when I'm bared before him.

“*Look* at me,” he urges, and I slowly lift my head.

He's sitting on the edge of my bed, his hands holding my hips as I stand between his legs. All I see in his eyes is faint amusement and heat ... so much heat. His hand reaches up and with only his index finger, he strokes my cheek, follows the contour of my lips and skims along my jaw. My body responds to that simple touch with the lightest of shivers. With his eyes boring into mine and a little smile tugging at his mouth, he drags his finger down my neck, over the flushed skin of my upper chest and across the smooth tops of my breasts.

“Lift your arms,” he says softly and I don't think, I simply raise my arms and allow him to remove my tank-top. His eyes are like an anchor, never losing their connection with mine. He carelessly tosses it aside, his finger instantly back where it left off. My breath hitches when the calloused pad of his finger reaches my nipple, the slight abrasion sending tingles over my sensitized skin. When he leans forward and wraps his lips around the tight bud, I'm the one to break eye contact when my head falls back and my mouth opens at the sensation. Warm, wet heat, pulling all the way down to my core. The low vibration against my skin as he moans around my flesh. I'm mesmerized, seduced and virtually blind to all but the impression he leaves on my body. His hands, fingers wide, spread across my back, pressing me tight to the suction of his mouth. I don't notice one hand sliding around to my front, molding my breast until his mouth suddenly releases my nipple and fingers start tracing the raised, puckered skin underneath.

I stop breathing.

I can sense him leaning back, examining the deep divots left behind by the skin necrosis that resulted from my surgery many years ago. Behind my closed eyes, every last insecurity freshly surges in my head, making it impossible to take a breath. I knew once I gave myself to him, Neil would have the power to break me. No one else has, because no one really mattered. Not until him.

“Breathe,” his breath strokes over my skin, just before his lips touch. The small kisses he presses under my breast cause my breath to release in a sob. In an instant I’m on my back in the bed, Neil hovering over me, his forehead resting on mine and our noses touching. “Listen,” he whispers, his eyes staring into my blurred ones. “I’ve never tasted skin more beautiful than yours. Or softer. Even without ever touching or tasting it before, I knew I would. Just like I knew all of you would be as magnificent as what little you allowed me to see before now. There are no parts to you, there’s only all of you.”

There is no room to process his words, because the moment he stops talking with words, his body shows me in the clearest language. Skimming, stroking, brushing, licking, biting: each touch setting me further on fire.

*Excerpt from “Head Start” by Freya Barker*

