

Teaser 2 from Torn

Spoiler Alert If You Have Not Read Connected

Chapter 5
Catch My Breath

*“Love, like a river, will cut a new path
whenever it meets an obstacle.”
~Crystal Middlemas~*



Neither one of us says another word and River continues to lean back in his chair, finishing his beer, and not even glancing my way. So after a few more minutes of silence, I walk the rest of the distance separating us and stand directly in front of him. He tilts his chair back down, but still avoids eye contact. I decide to break the silence with a neutral topic.

“Do you know your brother’s passed out on the couch?”

“Yeah, well he did his best to keep up with me.” Setting his beer bottle down next to the others, he cocks his head to the side, and just barely glances at me. “So where does all this leave us?”

My heart breaks a little as I grab his hand and I pull him out of the chair. A bag of ice falls to the ground and I notice his other hand is wrapped in a kitchen towel. I swipe his hair from his forehead and try to look at him, into his eyes, but they are unfocused and one is bruised. I cup his face and he closes his eyes. I run my fingers around the outline of his swollen bruise. “Does it hurt?”

“Nah, not anymore,” he shrugs.

I lift his hand and can see that it’s also swollen and bruised. “God, River, is it broken?”

He laughs a little before saying, “You know I have no fucking idea, but it hurts like

hell. Xander had me move my fingers and when I did, he told me to suck it up. That's what I get for punching walls."

"You can't go after him every time you see him. Fighting with him isn't going to change anything."

"Might not change anything, but makes me feel a hell of lot better."

His body tenses and I know this still isn't the time to discuss Ben, but it is the time to tell him how I feel.