

## Chapter Two Hundred Eighty

Adrik

Everyone else grabbed a cup after Andrei was the guinea pig. I really didn't need the caffeine boost, but I wasn't going to turn it down either. It was another two hours before guys started returning to the apartment. The first ones back had no luck. Viktor marked off their areas on the map, further narrowing down where they were holding them.

Gus returned with Chen and Oscar. "We got them," he said walking to the map, showing Viktor where they had picked up the signal from Sephie and Ivan's earpieces.

Chen looked at me, saying, "I heard them, sir. They were speaking Russian, so I don't know what they were talking about, but I heard both of them when the earpiece connected. I talked to Sephie very briefly. I wasn't sure if she could speak English where they were, so I just asked her to clear her throat if they were okay. She did. I told her you'd be there soon to get her."

The flood of relief that washed over me almost made me stumble to the ground. Chen grabbed my arm to help keep me steady. He looked sympathetic. "I understand, sir," he said quietly.

"We have it narrowed down to two blocks and those two blocks don't have quite as many abandoned buildings as the rest of the area," Viktor said. "Andrei's idea might work."

"Is his idea to blow another building as a distraction, because that's the kind of idea I fully support," Oscar said. Andrei just nodded his head, a small smile on his face. Oscar clapped his hands once, rubbing his palms together. "Building demolition is my love language. When can we get started?"

"We need to make sure the building we choose isn't where they're keeping them, first," Viktor said, somewhat sternly.

"Of course, of course. Do you know how quickly I'd be dead if I harmed a hair on that woman's head? I'm not that dumb. What do you guys need us to do?" Oscar said.

"Searching the buildings on those blocks will be a little easier, since it's more populated, but it still won't be easy," Gus said. He

looked to DJ, then asked, "DJ, I know you know people in this part of town. Can you find out if anyone has seen anything suspicious on these two blocks? Somebody might've seen them bringing Sephie and Ivan to the building. If it's Sal that took them, they might've seen him showing up to the building."

We heard Stephen's phone beep. He took it out, reading the text message. His eyes went wide, then he walked to the map. He pointed to a building. "They're here," he said.

"How do you know?" I asked urgently, walking to look at the map.

"It was Keith. He said Armando has been acting weird. He left the house really early this morning, wouldn't tell Keith where they were going, just gave him an address. He made Keith and Chris wait in the vehicle while he went in the building. Keith said he has a bad feeling about whatever Armando was doing," Stephen said. "And for the record, Keith and Chris don't know about Sephie being taken."

The building he took Armando to was in between two occupied buildings. There was, however, another abandoned building at the end of the block. Andrei's plan could work.

"Tell Keith to keep us informed of Armando's movements to that building. Don't tell him why. We still don't know if Armando is on to Keith and is feeding him information. He might still be trying to play both sides," I said.

Stephen texted Keith, then got an immediate reply. "He said Armando is scheduled to go back to the building tomorrow morning again, but again won't tell Keith and Chris why."

I looked to Andrei. "How quickly can we make this happen? If we can catch Armando at the building, we can take care of him right then."

"I just need a few hours and Oscar's help setting everything up," Andrei said.

"It'll be ready by tonight," Oscar said.

"I don't think it's just Armando that set this up either. I have a feeling Sal is behind this too," Viktor said. "Maybe we can catch both of them at the building."

"Agreed. I need to let Trino know we have a good shot of taking Sal out, which means he should take care of Anthony and Lorenzo at the same time," I said. "Gus, Oscar, does Trino know Sephie was taken?"

"Si, Jefe. We called him to let him know the warehouses were taken care of. We told him they grabbed her. He said to tell you he'd do whatever you needed," Gus said.

I nodded, taking my phone from my pocket. I walked to the bedroom to have a private conversation with Trino. Now that we had confirmation that Sephie was alive, I was quickly becoming overcome with emotion. My anger had receded to a manageable level, but I was now feeling every single other emotion all at once. I didn't trust myself completely to keep it together right now.

"Jefe, tell me you found her," Trino said when he picked up the phone.

"We have her location, but it's going to take a little longer to get her out. We know for sure Armando is behind it, but they're in Sal's part of town, so it's likely he's behind it as well."

"What do you need? I hate to ask this question, but are you sure she's still alive?"

"She is. We had the dealers that helped us with the warehouses search that part of the city. The guys that grabbed her and Ivan didn't get their earpieces. The dealer that Sephie has known for years, Chen, is the one who found her. He heard her and Ivan talking. They're okay. He told her I was coming to get her." My voice cracked when I said I was coming to get her. I was fighting back tears.

Trino let out a long exhale. "Jefe, this is good news. What's the plan?"

"We have word that Armando is scheduled to go back to the building tomorrow morning. We're going to drop a nearby building to create a little chaos, hoping to flush them out. My hope is we'll catch Armando and Sal at the building. They won't make it out," I said, my anger level now rising once more.

"I'll take care of Anthony and Lorenzo at the same time. I have them locked up for safe keeping. After the attempt on me by the Mexicans, I'm not f\*\*king around. I grabbed them right away. They've been waiting for their sentencing ever since," he said.

"Sounds good, Trino. Even if we can only get Armando tomorrow morning, Sal will panic when he gets word that you've taken care of Anthony and Lorenzo. He'll be easier to take out then if he's not at the building in the morning."

"Let the dominoes fall, Jefe."