

## Chapter 0021

Blinking up at him, I cupped my chin. "Why don't you want to find your mate?"

Knight sucked in a breath while Damon went rigid in his seat. Their reactions led me to believe this wasn't something Caius told most people. How interesting.

Not wanting to play our little game of a question for a question, Caius went silent for a handful of seconds.

"Your father won't stop trying to find you, will he?" He ran a hand through his tousled hair, wincing as he pulled a sharp twig free. "There has been no publicity on your disappearance, nothing that would draw attention to you."

I flicked my gaze out the window. The storm clouds were clearing up, causing beams of golden unlight to stream through the gaps within the curtains.

"Should the world know my father's only heir and daughter ran away from him, it would run his reputation. He would never do such a thing." I snorted, "He has friends all over this country. It could be any one of them that spotted me. It's not like your men were discreet in raiding my apartment."

Knight flicked an invisible speck of dust off his leather jacket. "Hard to discreet when the girl you're tasked with picking up decides to scream her ass off in an alleyway."

"I believe it was you who did the screaming," I pointed out, "You know, when I bit you on the ass."

Damon huffed out a quiet laugh, which was more like a puff of air, but

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Damon huffed out a quiet laugh, which was more like a puff of air, but I was still going to count it in my favor.

I directed my words to Caius. "We can't let my father's men screw things up. Once we're seen out in public as an item, my father will have to be even more careful about meddling."

"He's going to be furious with you, won't he?" Knight hummed, gazing at the shadows slithering around his fingers.

Rolling my eyes, I worked on combing the knots from my hair. A few leaves tumbled to the ground, causing Knight to smirk. "He's used to it by now, just as I'm used to his wrath. There won't be much he can do without risking Caius's wrath."

"I know we're far from trusting these meatheads, but maybe we should give a little? I'm just saying that we're stuck in this contract. Like it or not, we're here and we're not going anywhere. Maybe it's time to show a little bit more of our hand." Ziva murmured, choosing this once to be the level-headed one. "If Jasmine really is one of the missing girls then we're going to need their help in finding her."

I held my breath for several seconds, counting them out one-by-one in my head as my mother had shown me many years ago. Even now, I could hear her voice.

Own your fear, Anastasia. Do not let it get the better of you.

The mere thought of trusting another person shouldn't have coaxed this reaction from me, but it did. Trusting the wrong person could easily cause me to fall behind, could allow Jayden and my father to

get one step closer to my whereabouts.

I stood from the chair, too antsy to sit still. Caius stepped back, allowing me to pass. As I moved to the other end of his office, I swore I heard him inhale through his nose. Was he taking in my scent? 1

"I haven't exactly been forthcoming with all of you. I have my own motivations for this contract that I haven't mentioned..." When Knight snorted loudly I tossed him a glare. He mimed zipping his lips shut, then threw the key at Damon's face. "I have this friend. She's more like a sister to me, but still. She's missing. I've lived with her for a year now, and I know her. She would have never up and left me. We were planning on leaving the state together, starting over somewhere new." I chewed on my lower lip anxiously. "It wasn't until I heard you three talking about missing wolves that I realized she had been taken too. The human police refuse to put a missing person out on her since she's legally an adult. I've combed over everything from that day and there's nothing. No sign of a struggle, no inkling to where she'd go. She just vanished."

Reluctantly, I turned to look at Alpha Caius. His jaw flexed while the gold in his eyes danced like warm honey.

"You're absolutely certain she didn't leave on her own?"

"Yes."

He gave me a curt nod that caused his tousled hair to fall forward over his brows, "Then we will find her along with the rest of the missing wolves."