

## Chapter 0025

Anastasia

We took a seat on one of the many velvet sofas and quickly ordered some drinks once a starry-eyed server appeared. A few others in the VIP area approached us wanting a conversation with Alpha Caius, and once they realized who I was, myself as well.

Surprisingly, Caius was doing fairly well at selling our relationship. He didn't smile, which I had expected, but he wasn't scowling either. As we made idle small talk above the pounding bass, he'd place a hand on my thigh or drape his arm over my shoulders.

What was unsettling about the entire ordeal was my reaction to it.

Objectively, I knew Caius was attractive. That was like saying water was wet, or that pistachio ice cream was the superior ice cream flavor. I had met several good-looking men, but none made me flush and squirm the way this one did.

After the twelfth person of the night stumbled away, Alpha Caius released a groan.

I fluttered my lashes at him, "Let me guess, you'd much rather charge into battle and kidnap maidens then socialize?"

He gave me an unamused look that shouldn't have made my heart skip a beat, yet it did. "When said maiden hijacks my favorite car, yes."

"Consider it payment for the life-altering lap dance I gave you." 1

Those thick brows of his furrowed. "Excuse me?"

I poked him in the chest with the tip of my nail. "You sir did not pay me for the dance, and you were incredibly rude sending me on my way like that. The car was merely me taking what was owed."

Alpha Caius blinked, "I assumed Knight had paid you. It was him that dragged Damon and I there."

Ziva laughed, "That's not at all surprising."

"You pay after the dance is over." I shot back, "Who doesn't know that?"

"Considering it was my first and last time, I'd say I didn't."

The fire in my veins receded until it was only smoking embers. "You've never had a lap dance before?"

He cleared his throat. "I've never been to a strip club before."

I laughed loudly, my voice ringing clear alongside the music. Caius didn't look away, even as I giggled and snorted, waiting for him to tell me he'd been joking. Only, Caius didn't joke.

"You seriously have never been to a strip club before?"

His scowl was laced with confusion and made him look younger. "Why is that such a surprise?"

"I don't know." I shrugged, taking a sip of my mojito. "Looking back on it you didn't seem particularly pleased to be there. Knowing what I know now, I realize you're just not a very pleasant person." As his scowl morphed into a glare I scoffed, "Well, you're not. I have yet to see you make a face that isn't some variation of a grimace. You're all

work and no play.”

The beer in his hand hit the table hard. “Has it not occurred to you that there’s no reason for me to be pleasant when I’m in your presence? You know what my brothers and I have been looking into this past year. Not all of us are able to run away from our problems. Unlike you, I cannot hide from the world.” 1

I set my own drink down, my face flaming with embarrassment. It wasn’t an emotion I was particularly used to, and one I had no intention of feeling again. 1

“Right,” I cleared my throat and stood, smoothing down the form fitting dress I had on. “As despairing as it was speaking to you, I’d much rather enjoy myself tonight.”

“Where are you going?” He barked.

“To the dance floor.”

“I don’t dance.” His hand shot out to grab my wrist and I froze time, moving it out of the way. When time resumed he found himself grabbing air.

“And I don’t care.”

I was on the lower level of the nightclub deep within the throng of writhing bodies when I felt hands glide along my hips. With a certainty that left me uneasy, I knew they didn’t belong to Alpha Caius. Feeling his eyes on me from above, I didn’t push the male away.

What I did was give Caius a taunting smile.

I let the music guide me, rolling my hips in tune with the dark beat. Every now and again I let my power seep out until time came to a halt. I'd take a moment to look around, scanning the place for anyone suspicious. A few times I thought I saw the air shimmer but had written it off as a trick of the light.

A she-wolf with dark skin and long braids spun in place, our eyes meeting as the lights flashed a brilliant blue. Her lips curled as she wedged me between herself and the man at my back. Her hands slid up my shoulders, curling around my neck, when I saw the air behind her shimmer.

I froze time again, the bodies around me locked in place, but the strange light had vanished.

Time resumed and I continued dancing, but I couldn't shake the feeling that someone was watching us. Lifting my chin, I looked up at the balcony only to find the velvet sofa empty.

A few seconds later another set of hands replaced the ones clutching my hips. These hands were larger, rougher. My breath hitched as they slid up to my waist, taking in each inch as if committing it to memory. I licked my lips, a quick breath escaping me as those hands slid around to my front.