

Chapter 0004

Anastasia

I froze time for a fraction of a second, long enough for me to skirt around them and get a head start. The warmth of blood trickled from my nostril as time resumed.

“What the f—” One of them grunted. I didn’t bother looking back to see who it had been.

Something agonizingly cold wrapped around my ankle, dragging me backwards until I fell on my knees. Clawing at the thing wrapped around my ankle, I looked back and froze in horror.

It was a shadow, bloated like some kind of demonic leech. The brother with the lip piercing yanked his wrist and it dragged me back another foot.

There was no way out of this, not with my magic depleted. I could call Ziva forward—Goddess knows she’d love to tear these brutes apart—but with the one guy’s shadow magic, I knew we wouldn’t stand a chance.

I let the two meatheads circle me, whimpering and quivering until they stood but a foot away. My lower lip trembled pitifully as I forced my eyes to water.

The one with the shadow magic sneered and leaned forward, inching his face closer to my own. “I guess the kitty’s been declawed. It’s a shame, really. I do love when they ght—”

I pulled myt back and punched him in the face.

The shadow that had been crawling up my ankle grew tighter, squeezing my calf until the point of pain. Another shot out from the guy, who staggered back with snarl. It wrapped around my wrists, pinning them together.

“Agh!” He spat out a mouthful of blood, “Grab her already, Damon.”

Damon, the one with the scar slashed through his lip, snorted. “No, I think you’ve got this one handled just”

The one I punched hefted me up, grumbling obscenities under his breath. I squirmed and threw my weight back and forth, kneeing him in the gut a few times.

He situated me over his shoulder, “Can’t we just knock her out?”

My face was almost with his backside, my hair dragging across the gravel as the two of them walked to the end of the alley.

“Pretty sure Caius will be pissed if she shows up with brain damage.”

The one carrying me snorted, “I wouldn’t give her brain damage. Just an itty-bitty concussion.”

Gritting my teeth, I snarled. “Concuss this!”

I reared back and clamped down on the closest thing to my face, which just so happened to be his ass.

Yes, I bit the guy on the ass.

Definitely not myest moment, but I was not about to let some supermodel with a lip ring kidnap me.

Of course, the guy didn’t let go. Instead he bellowed so freaking loudly that several lights in the apartment building behind us went out.

I’d have to bide my time and try to escape at a later point. The silent purr of an engine approached. I twisted myself to the side enough to peer past the male holding me.

A dark van had pulled up against the sidewalk. The door opened, revealing two—no, three—males inside.

“Of course it’s a kidnapper van.” I murmured, blood rushing to my head.

Damon slid inside, catching me as I was thrown into the back. I scrambled, darkness hovering in the edges of my vision as I began punching and kicking everyone within sight.

Several sets of hands grabbed at me, and I didn’t hesitate to bite each and every one of them.

“Knock her out, Chris!”

I snarled in pain, attacking from whoever’s meaty face I’d slammed it into.

A set of hands grabbed me by the shoulders. Their touch was like a drug injected straight into my blood stream. All strength, all resistance faded from my body.

My eyes rolled back as I fell unconscious.

When I nally came to, I was blindfolded, tied to a chair, and gagged. I suppose it was a good thing—for them, not me, of course—because I awoke the same way I went under.

Kicking and screaming.

The blindfold was ripped from my face, and I cringed as I was assaulted by an onslaught of light. Once the spots faded from my eyes, I looked around the room greedily.

The chair I sat in was bolted to the wall. The restraints used to pin me in place were made of silver. I forced myself not to cringe as they burned my wrists and left them raw.

Standing in front of a two-way window were three men.

Two of them I recognized as the guys who kidnapped me. Lip ring, with his crazy shadow magic, and the one with the scar. The third I had never seen before.

There was something unsettling about him. His eyes were so dark they blended into his pupil, and while his hair was shaved into a military buzzcut, I couldn’t help but notice it was the same color.

Rather than bury my fear beneath a layer of calm, I did what I did best.

“W-What is this? Where am I?” I cried, panic cracking my voice in two. “Oh, Goddess! Please don’t hurt me.”

Damon—the one with the scar—looked at the one with the lip ring and scooped. With a silent shrug, lip ring pushed himself o the wall and crouched down to meet my stare.

His lips twitched, drawing my attention to them. They really were lovely as far as lips went.

“Nice try, kitty, but we both know you’re not some damsel in distress.” His eyes churned like molten honey, “Maybe there’s something else you can oer me. You’ll have to make it worth my while, though. You’re not exactly my type.”

The nerve of this guy. I am everyone’s type!

I lashed out at him with my teeth bared, snapping them inches away from his face.

He stepped back and released a gravelly laugh, “Oh, man. Caius is going to hate her.”

Damon thumped him on the back of the shoulder, “You can cease provoking her, Knight. She knows why she’s here.”

“Um, pardon me, but I have no clue why I’m here.” I snapped, “Is this some kind of kink thing? I’m not into the BDSM scene.”

Well, not that they needed to know of.

With a roll of his honeyed eyes, Damon procured a manilla folder from behind his back. He pulled a single photograph from inside and held it up for me to inspect.

It was very clearly an image of myself slipping into Alpha Caius’s car, but I wasn’t about to admit guilt.

“Oh, who is that. She’s stunning. I love her hair! It’s so soft and shiny looking. I wonder what shampoo she uses.”

Knight folded his arms over the leather jacket he wore, “We could just torture it out of you, you know. It’s always the snarky ones that scream the prettiest.”

I bared my teeth, anger surging in my veins.

“Lay a hand on me, Knight,” I spat oarthe his feet like the grimy little savage I was, “And you’ll regret it until your last breath.”

“Why is that? You’re not exactly threatening, kitty, even if you do have claws.”

I straightened my spine and ignored the agony of the silver cuffs burning into my wrists, “Every wound you give me I’ll return tenfold. I don’t care if it takes weeks, months, or even years.”

Damon stepped in between Knight and I.

“Let’s cease with the games. You stole our brother’s car. His favorite car, might I add. We just want it back and you’ll be on your way.”

Yeah, right.

I leaned back in my chair, getting comfortable. “Sorry, I have no clue what you’re talking about. In fact, I’d like to speak to my lawyer.”

I didn’t have a lawyer, but they didn’t need to know that.

Knight grinned, cold and cruel. “Sorry, kitty, but that’s not how this is going to work.”

The two chuckleheads threw me in a room and locked the door. Granted, it was better than being restrained to a chair and left in a holding cell. But still, I was o ended.

Were they not worried I’d escape? Leave it to the brutes in the Falling Star pack to not view a woman as a threat!

Hah! Well, I’d show them.

I had no intention on sticking around to meet Alpha Caius Blackwell. No, thank you.

While I waited for my magic to replenish, I started to pace. The entire room screamed bachelor pad with it’s dark wood and rustleplace. Even the chandelier succumbed to the shadow magic and rustleplace. The thing was made of actual branches woven together and bound by a thick silver wire.

There wasn’t a single throw pillow in sight.

“How nauseating,” Ziva griped. “Too much testosterone gives me a headache.”

Same, girl. Same.

I sighed with relief at the sound of her voice. My wrists were numb from the burns of the silver cuffs. With any luck I’d have enough magic to get out of this place.

All around me time came to a screeching halt.

I ran for the large windows overlooking a vast forest. Once I reached the tree line, it would be easier to escape from any trackers the Blackwell’s might deploy.

The windows were locked, but that was easy enough to get my foot down on the hinge again and again until the stubborn thing swung open.

Since time was currently frozen, the alarm system on this place wouldn’t be triggered.

I hoisted myself out the window and sent a quick prayer to the Moon Goddess that those free climbing classes I took would keep me from plummeting to my death.

When I reached the ground, I did a quick happy dance, then shifted and took o for the forest.

I was hidden within the trees when time resumed. With my heightened senses, I could make out the screeching of the alarm from where I’d broken the window.

I ran and ran when suddenly a chill skated down my spine. A shadow darted to my left, nothing more than a blur of darkness. A sudden bolt of lightning illuminated the sky and the massive wolf tailing me.

“Crap,” Ziva snarled. “We have to lose them!”

The snarling wolf vanished in between the blasts of lightning, melting into the dark backdrop of the forest. Still, I could feel their presence in between the frantic beats of my heart.

Using theal dredges of my magic I froze time, hoping it would give us a chance to lose them.

Lightning struck again as time resumed, but there was no sign of the wolf chasing after us. As we sprinted, our muscles burning from exertion, we looked scoured the surrounding forest.

Ziva released a sigh of relief just as a large, fur-covered body slammed into us.

The ebony wolf snapped and snarled as we rolled, eager to sink its teeth into our hide. What we needed to do was make ourselves smaller, that way we might be able to slip out of the wolf’s grasp.

I shifted into my human form just as we rolled out of the forest and into a small clearing. The claws digging into my back became hands as the wolf trying to tear my throat out shifted as well.

The air was knocked from my lungs as I landed on my back in the middle of the clearing. A heavy weight pressed down on me, keeping me pinned to the dirt. The form between my legs was distinctly male, covered in rippling muscles that moved with each of his heavy breaths. I was all too aware of my own appearance, and lack of clothes.

My eyes lifted, meeting a pair that shone like molten honey, ravenous with anger.

Alpha Caius Blackwell.

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