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Chapter 1

JADA

I didn't know what was going on. All I knew was that something was wrong.

Autumn leaves crunched under my shoes as I made my way back to the cabin that was only a couple of metres away. My heart was beating too fast... too loud. Like it didn't quite belong with the rest of my body - a puzzle piece shoved someplace it wasn't meant to be - and I was very scared, hardly breathing at all.

I had heard screams coming from the cabin... terror filled screams and they had made my mind completely cloud up with fear. I could no longer control my hands; they were shaking in an odd trembling rhythm, and I desperately hoped that my parents, who were in the cabin, were okay.

When I was close enough to the cabin, I noticed that the front door was wide open and my heart started to beat even faster because my parents hated leaving a front door open but before I could walk around my dad's car which was parked in the driveway, movement in the doorway caught my attention. I instantly stepped back, using the car to shield myself, and the moment I peeked around it to see who was coming out of the house, my heart froze.

There was a wolf in the doorway. A huge grey one.

A loud chime suddenly filled the air while something buzzed in my pocket and my eyes opened with a jolt.

The first thing I saw was windows and strangers on seats across from me and I blinked twice in confusion before remembering that I was on a train. I was on my way to work.

"Right," I muttered hoarsely, pushing the dream I just had to the back of my mind because I really wasn't interested in thinking about what happened that day right now. Another chime filled the air and I sat upright, still feeling a little bit disoriented as I glanced at my surroundings.

“Attention passengers,” a voice announced on the overhead speaker while I rubbed my bleary eyes. “This is your conductor speaking. The train is about to leave the station. Please stand clear of the closing doors.”

It took me a moment to begin to process what I just heard and when I finally did, I decided to look out the window behind me to see if we were close to my stop. It didn’t take long for me to find the hanging green board which declared that this was Fletcher Station and I heaved a sigh as I faced forward.

“... Wait.” I jerked my head around to stare at the green board again, confirming that this was indeed Fletcher Station. This was where I was meant to get off the train!

I shot to my feet with wide eyes and quickly rushed towards the closing door. “No, no, no!” My protest didn’t stop the doors from closing right in my face though and a frustrated noise escaped me. “Crap,” I muttered as the train began to move and I pulled my phone out of my pocket, turning the screen on to see that the time was 4:22PM.

My shift was starting by 4:30PM so I was going to be late. I groaned in frustration while my shoulders sagged because this would be my third time getting to work late in a row and my manager who seemed to have it out for me was definitely going to notice. She had given me a warning when I was late the second time and she was probably going to give me more than a warning today. I just hoped she wouldn’t fire me because this was only my fifth week of working at The Hendrix Hotel and the pay and employee benefits were great.

I let out an exasperated sigh before going back to my seat dejectedly and proceeded to wait for the train to get to the next station. A couple of minutes later, the train came to a stop at the next station and I practically bolted out of it like I was being chased. Thankfully, the next train that was going through Fletcher Station had not departed yet so I took it back to my stop.

I finally got to my workplace by 4:46PM and I quickly made my way to the staff door which led to the backroom, hoping that my manager wasn’t there. I also hoped she hadn’t noticed that I wasn’t at work yet but that was highly unlikely.

The two people in the backroom were the witnesses to the dramatic scene I made when I pushed the door open and unceremoniously slipped on air, falling onto my knees on the polished tiles.

Gravity and I were not on the best of terms today seeing as I had already fallen more times than I'd stood on my feet and all I could blame it on was fatigue. Thankfully, I wasn't coming to work tomorrow so I was going to get some much needed rest.

"Jada!" Ashley's voice boomed in the backroom and I winced as I looked up to see my manager marching into the room. She had a stern look on her face but I knew she was secretly excited to reprimand me. "You're late!"

"I know, I know, I'm sorry," I said in a rush, pushing myself to my feet when she came to a stop in front of me while the other people in the room shot me a pitiful look. "You won't believe what happened."

"Oh, really?" Her eyes glinted with amusement as she folded her arms across her chest. "Lay it on me then. What happened?"

I made a noise in the back of my throat as I wiped my hands on my jeans because I hadn't expected that to be her response. I took a deep breath when she raised a brow at me, waiting for my response.

"You just... You just won't believe it," I replied with a slight shake of my head and she clicked her tongue, slightly tilting her head to the side. "... I'm sorry. It won't happen again," I added and she rolled her eyes before stepping to the side so I could walk past her.

"It better not," she called out after me and I pursed my lips because I knew that this wasn't the end of the matter. I then made my way to the staff room, grabbed my waitress uniform from my locker and changed into it before starting my shift.