



21 21-Even Selling Myself

Helanie: 1

While everyone unpacked their belongings, I sat and waited for Lamar to leave. He didn't unpack his bags.

After a few seconds of silence, he rose from his mattress, slid his phone into his pants pocket, and glanced at everyone while walking toward the door. I only gave him a few seconds' head start because I didn't want to be left too far behind. Immediately, I made my way to the exit.

"Hey! If you're going, check if the warriors are bringing food for us," I heard Sydney yell, but I didn't respond to her. I was already out the door and didn't plan to go back inside until I had this talk with Lamar.

As he had mentioned, he was waiting for me by the tree, a cigarette in one hand and some cards in the other.

"You said you could help me," I approached him, still carrying my bag over my shoulder. There was nothing in it worth unpacking—just a few



items I preferred to keep close.

"You need money," he said again, this time only raising his eyes.

"I do," I replied.

"How old are you?" he scanned me from head to toe and asked.

"I am eighteen," I responded.

He nodded his head before chuckling softly. "You look much older than your age. You have quite a body to die for—and I'm not flirting." Before I could even take it as a compliment, he clarified that it wasn't even that: "I just stated a fact. Anyway, I need to see your ID. I don't want to get in trouble."

Luckily for me, I had made my ID the day I turned eighteen, the cursed day of my life. It was our pack's rule that whenever someone turned eighteen, they had to register and obtain an ID right away.

I handed him my ID and watched him raise his brow, then smirk again. "You said you don't belong to a pack."

The moment he said that, I felt my heart flip inside my chest and snatched the ID out of his hands.

"You are one year younger than me," he chuckled and shook his head.

"They will pay you good money, but remember, they might ask for some really unholy work," he uttered, unfazed by how quickly I took my ID back from him.

"What kind of work?" I asked, and by this point, I could tell he was ready to leave. He had tossed his bag over his shoulder and was striding away from the cabin.

"Um, sort of pleasure. But you get to decide if you want to do it or not. They have tiers: you can do the strip dance, lap dance, oral, hand job—stuff like that. You will get paid based on it." I suddenly stopped walking behind him when I heard the kind of work he was suggesting.

The problem wasn't that I considered women who did that work to be of any less respect than others; the issue was my own trauma. I wasn't sure I could even imagine myself getting close to someone, let alone giving them any kind of



pleasure.

"Is there no other work?" My voice came out like a faint cry for help.

He halted in his tracks and turned around to look me in the eye as he said, "Sorry! This is all I know. Unless you can sell drugs."

It felt like one blow after another.

"And from the looks of your face, I can tell you're not ready for this field of work. Go find any of your family members and ask them to lend you some money." As he concluded my rejection, his pace quickened.

I seized upon my steps, contemplating what my life would be like if I didn't get admission to this academy. This was the only opportunity I had left. I couldn't lose it.

Otherwise, I would be on my own, without any direction, and the trauma would consume me. Just the thought of reliving that night over and over in my idle state caused me to shake myself back to reality and take a wild step. ³

"Wait!" I called after him, but noticed he had



already disappeared from my sight. I sprinted with all my might, finding him near the road where a bike was parked.

"I will do it," I yelled and stopped to catch my breath. He had hopped onto his bike when my words reached his ears.

"Huh?" He turned around, only his eyes visible from the helmet.

"I'm ready to do it," I repeated, watching him nod.

"Then what are you waiting for? Hop on," he said, shaking his helmet and gesturing to the spot behind him.

I stared at his bike and then approached him steadily, grabbing the helmet he was offering me. Climbing onto his back, I adjusted my posture and held onto the small support in the back.

"You need to hold on tight," he cleared his throat, making me close my eyes and then place one hand on his shoulder and the other around his stomach. The touch was not something I wanted to experience.



It's not that he was a disgusting creature or anything; I just wasn't comfortable touching anyone.

In the next few minutes, the touch wasn't the problem. He rode like his bike would catch fire. I kept my eyes closed even when the helmet shielded me from the crazy wind. I just didn't want to see the fast-moving traffic around me.

After about half an hour, the bike came to a halt, and I knew we had reached our destination. The ride had felt like it almost flew by, making me worry about whether we would make it safely. But now that we were getting off the bike, stress began to hit me hard.

I returned the helmet to him, my eyes quickly scanning the area around us. It was a bustling place, definitely a pack territory. From the unfinished landmarks to the poor condition of the roads, I assumed it wasn't a very wealthy pack. The street we had parked on had two tall buildings on either side, adorned with many lights and neon signs sparkling in the dusk.

Just standing there made me feel tingly. I began to wonder if I really wanted to go through with



this.

"At any point you feel like you don't want to continue, you can quit. Remember, we don't force anyone here. Women and men come here to earn on their own. You'll get to wear a mask too," he added, pointing at a few girls peeking outside the main gate. They were wearing porcelain masks to keep their identities hidden.

"So tell me, what do you want to do?" He swirled the keys around his finger, his eyes watching me intently.

"The—lap dance?" It was almost like I was asking him, and before he could check something on his phone, I added, "Is it okay if I suck at it?"

Of course, I did. I didn't know how people gave lap dances; I just wanted money.

"Oh no! You're supposed to do a great job. How about you just accompany an elite while he drinks? You just need to make sure he's having a good time. Just a little kissing here and there, and if you allow, a little bit more than that but no full penetration." He showed me a half mask on his phone to explain in better words that there were even masks for different kinds of jobs. 2

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No matter what, I was going to get money tonight. 5

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