

Chapter 206 The Last Straw

Moana

The first day that my colleagues and students got wind of the bodyguard situation was already bad enough. By the second day, people were really beginning to pick up on the fact that a strange, intimidating man was sitting outside of the school and watching me with binoculars. Combined with the fact that everyone seemed to think that I was bad luck as a late bloomer, I quickly became even more of an outcast amongst the other teachers and even some of the older students.

What I was most worried about, though, was that this would somehow reflect on Ella. I could handle people looking negatively upon me, but if they began to look negatively upon Ella because of me, then I couldn't live with it.

When I went home on the second day, I decided that I had had enough. Yes, some horrible things had happened; but this whole bodyguard situation wasn't working out, and I couldn't risk it ruining both mine and Ella's reputations in an environment where our reputations were already fairly shaky because of my status as a late bloomer.

At first, Edrick seemed to be understanding. I thought that he would recommend a different approach; maybe he could talk to the headmistress about hiring a second security guard for the school or even put up cameras in my classroom just in case anything happened. But when he brought up

the danger of me shifting in my classroom, he seemed to make a good point. It was a dangerous potential, and I didn't want anyone to get hurt.

However, when he told me that I would have no choice but to allow a bodyguard into my classroom with me every day for the foreseeable future, I felt angry.

"No," he said. "You won't send them away. You're going to just have to deal with this new reality, Moana, or I'm going to have to take us to the mountain estate for real this time."

I felt my eyes widen. "You can't keep holding that over my head!" I insisted. "We stayed here because both of us agreed that we didn't want to leave our home. You can't just threaten to rip us away again because I rightfully don't feel comfortable with having a bodyguard inside my classroom."

Edrick glared at me for a moment. "You need to be kept safe, Moana," he urged. "You and Ella. I don't want you getting hurt."

"I can protect myself," I said. "I'm fine with finding an alternative method, and I understand why you're worried about me, but I don't need a bodyguard up my ass at all times. If something happens, I can handle mys—"

"Oh, can you?" Edrick growled. "Just like how you almost got yourself and my daughter killed just a couple of weeks ago? Hm? What about your supposed ability to protect yourself then?"

When Edrick finished speaking, the air between us felt thick and heavy. I felt tears beginning to well up in my eyes, and Edrick showed no signs of remorse for his harsh words. Nothing else was said between either of us before I whirled around and stormed out. I ran to my room and slammed the door behind me, not caring if it rattled the doorframe, then threw myself down on my bed and sobbed into my pillow.

Of course I knew that I f****d up by putting Ella and myself in danger. I saw that night over and over again in my head. I saw flashes of Ella tied to the chair, of Ethan holding the gun to my head. I would never forget that night, and I was well aware that I had made a major mistake.

But did Edrick need to be so cruel about it? Did he really need to make such a low blow during an argument and remind me of my fatal failure?

As I sobbed into my pillow, the images of that night flashed faster and faster through my mind until I felt sick and dizzy. I sobbed even harder, gripping my sheets so tightly in my hand that my knuckles hurt, just wishing that I could go back and undo everything that had happened that night. If I had just trusted Edrick... If I had just not listened to Olivia, and told him instead when she began talking to me...

Suddenly, I felt a familiar little hand on the back of my head. I quickly jerked my head up, drying my eyes and sniffing loudly as I forced a smile.

“Hey, love,” I whispered, looking up at Ella. She was sitting on the side of my bed with a concerned look on her face as she gently stroked my long hair. At that moment, she looked so mature. Her eyes looked so empathetic and comforting, like a little adult. And she didn’t say a word, either. She just continued to sit there, gently stroking my hair with one hand while her other hand curled up between my fingers.

The two of us laid there for a long time, Ella stroking my hair while I laid on my back and watched her. My tears slowly began to dry, and soon, everything else fell away. I knew it all along, but I really knew how much I loved her just then. The way that her sweet face looked at me wiped away the horrible image that I had of her sleeping, tied up in the chair beside me in that dark and terrifying warehouse.

I knew that Edrick had told her about it, too. He had mentioned it the day before, that he had told her, but she hadn’t said a word about it yet. What went through her little head when he told her, I wondered? Was she

scared? Angry? Hurt? She didn't show any of those emotions now; she just seemed calm and empathetic, like a little cherub.

"Are you okay, love?" I whispered, reaching up to brush some of her messy blonde hair out of her eyes. "Do you want to talk about what happened?"

Ella simply shrugged. She seemed mostly unfazed by it; maybe because she didn't actually remember that night, but had just been told about it instead. Surely Edrick kept out most of the grizzly details of the night. Maybe, when she was older, she would want to know the full truth. But for now, she seemed content.

Although, part of me wondered why she hadn't asked about her real mom yet. Did Edrick tell her, or was he still waiting?

Suddenly, Ella popped up and jumped off of the bed.

"I'll be right back," she said matter-of-factly, before running out of the room.

I sat up and wiped my eyes, watching as she disappeared through the door. A few minutes passed, and I heard nothing. I began to think that she just got distracted from whatever it was that she was going to do, as children often did, and with a slight chuckle I shook my head and swung my legs over the bed to get up and shut the door the rest of the way.

But then, before I could get up, she suddenly returned holding Edrick's hand. With a mischievous grin, she pushed him into the room and shut the door firmly behind him.

Edrick and I just stared at each other in surprise, blinking slowly in the waning light of my bedroom.

Chapter 207 Stubborn

Edrick

Moana really could be far too stubborn for her own good sometimes.

At first, I thought that we were coming to an understanding; she seemed to be on the same page as me when we discussed the dangers of not having security to keep an eye on her.

When I told her that she would need to have a bodyguard in her classroom in case anything happened, however, her reaction was full of unnecessary anger. Of course I expected her to be upset, but I thought that she at least understood the reasons behind why it was so important. There was a possibility that she could shift unexpectedly while she was teaching and cause mayhem. There was also a possibility that if my father or anyone else who wanted the Golden Wolf dead found out that she was the Golden Wolf, someone could come and try to hurt her. Nowhere was safe, and it didn't matter if she was teaching in the middle of the day in broad daylight. If someone wanted her dead, it would be too easy to get the job done unless she had someone by her side to keep her safe. Why couldn't she just understand that?

Maybe I was a little too harsh when I told her that I would take her away to the mountain estate, but it was the first thing that came to my mind, and it was the truth. If she couldn't comply and at least attempt to have some sort of sense of self preservation here, then we would need to leave the

city after all. She had two choices: live with the fact that she would need a bodyguard in her classroom for the foreseeable future and stay in the city where she could keep her job and Ella could continue to go to school, or refuse to have a bodyguard in her classroom and go to live with me at the mountain estate. There was no in-between.

When I told her that she had no choice, however, Moana got even more angry. Her face got red and she clenched her fists at her sides angrily, glaring at me with her green eyes. “If something happens, I can handle mys—”

“Oh, can you?” I growled. “Just like how you almost got yourself and my daughter killed just a couple of weeks ago? Hm? What about your supposed ability to protect yourself then?”

Both of us fell silent. Moana stared at me for several seconds in disbelief; admittedly, I did feel a little bad for my choice of wording, but I was telling the truth. I was forgiving of Moana, and I knew that she had been skillfully manipulated into trying to run away, but I was still wary about her decisions. I needed to keep my daughter, my mate, and my unborn child safe.

Moana opened her mouth to say something, then closed it again and suddenly stormed out. A few moments later, I heard her bedroom door slam shut.

I cursed under my breath and whirled around to walk over to my desk, where I angrily plopped myself down into my chair and let out an audible groan while I buried my face in my hands.

Why did she need to be so stubborn? Why was it that these sorts of things always devolved into an argument, even when I was just trying to help her? Was it me? Was I the problem?

Sighing, I sank further down into my chair and rubbed my eyes exhaustedly.

“Was I too harsh?” I asked my wolf.

“Maybe a little,” he responded. “It wasn’t her fault that she got manipulated. You know how Olivia is.”

I sighed again. “I know that,” I replied, not caring if I spoke out loud. “It’s just that...”

Suddenly, I heard my door creak open. I looked up from my hands to see Ella standing in the doorway with a pout and with her arms folded across her chest. “Hey, Princess,” I said gently. “Is everything okay?”

Ella stared at me for a moment. She was still in her school uniform; we hadn’t even had dinner yet, and Moana was already furious with me. No doubt that Ella heard our argument, too.

“You made Moana cry,” Ella growled.

My eyes widened slightly. “I did?” I asked. I didn’t mean to make her cry. I was just telling her the truth. But before I could say that, Ella suddenly stormed up to me and grabbed me by the sleeve with a fiery look in her eyes. She yanked on me angrily and took a step back while still holding my sleeve in her little hand.

“Come on,” she said, her voice firm for such a little girl, almost as though she was a small adult. “You need to apologize.”

“I need to apologize?” I asked with a chuckle. Maybe Moana needed to apologize first, I thought to myself. She was the one who got so angry with me that she stormed in here as soon as she got home from work and dragged me into my study to fight with me.

“Daddy!” Ella shouted, stamping her foot on the floor angrily. “Apologize to Moana now for making her cry! She’s my mom now and I don’t like it when you make her sad!”

As Ella spoke, my eyes went even wider. Ella had referred to Moana as her mom. I hadn’t heard her mention that before, although now that I

thought of it, Moana had just mentioned that Ella told everyone that Moana was her mom at school. The thought of it created a sudden warmth in my chest, and I couldn't help but smile a bit.

Suddenly, during my moment of weakness, Ella dragged me to my feet. As she dragged me out of my study and toward Moana's room, I didn't resist. She then dragged me over to Moana's room, unceremoniously shoved me inside, and slammed the door behind me.

Moana was sitting up on the bed. We stared at each other for a few moments in shocked silence, and during those moments I realized that Ella was right; Moana had been crying. Her eyes looked red and puffy, and her cheeks had a slight sheen to them from the tears. She seemed to be trying to hide it, but I could tell right away. And the instant I saw that she had been crying, I realized that I had been far too harsh on her earlier. I shouldn't have said those things; I didn't mean any of them. I never wanted to make Moana cry.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, taking a tentative step forward. "I didn't mean it."

Moana said nothing. She just looked up at me with those reddened eyes with their emerald green irises. Her lower lip was quivering slightly, and she bit it to make it stop. Now, more than ever, I wanted to hold her and kiss her all over. I took another tentative step forward, taking in the way that her red hair was messed up from crying into her pillow, and felt an ache in my chest as I realized just how much of a jerk I had been.

Still, Moana said nothing. But then, without a word, she just held her arms out for me.

Chapter 208 Open Arms & Open Hearts

Moana

“I’m sorry,” Edrick whispered, his eyes wide as he took in my appearance. “I didn’t mean it.”

His face showed nothing but sincerity. I was hurt by what he had said, but I couldn’t stay mad at him. Without a word, I held my arms out for him.

Edrick looked at me for a moment with shock on his face before he slowly walked toward me. He walked right into my arms, and his scent overwhelmed me. That sweet, tantalizing scent that made a shiver run down my spine.

Outside, the sky had darkened and it had begun to rain. The sound of the rain hitting my windows filled the silence around us, and the darkness made me want to feel more of Edrick’s warmth.

I looked up at him then. He was watching me intently as he held me, his steely gray eyes searching my face with sincerity and pure emotion. In the dark light of the thunder storm outside, I thought that he looked so handsome. His gray eyes were ever so slightly glowing that same silver color as before, and I felt a slight smile spread across my lips as I noticed that tiny detail.

Edrick opened his mouth to say something, but I couldn’t hold back any longer. I wanted him too badly; it had been too long, and now, as his scent filled my nostrils, I felt too compelled to be with him again. Before he could get any words out, I suddenly reached up and grabbed his face,

pulling him down to my level. I pressed my lips against his with fervor and felt my body become overwhelmed with sensation, with desire. As I kissed him deeply, Edrick let out a surprised moan. He pulled back slightly, only to give me an intense look of passion, before he firmly pushed me down against the bed and pressed his warm body against mine so that I could feel him entirely, which only filled me with even more desire.

Suddenly, Edrick scooped his arm under my back and pulled me up further onto the bed. I felt his hand then slide up my skirt and along my thigh, his fingers brushing my skin as he made his way to my panties. His kisses traveled down my neck and along my collar bone while he teased me beneath my skirt, and I ran my fingers through his hair while I felt my back arch beneath him as I was overcome with pleasure.

The rain beat down heavier on my window, covering up our heavy breathing and soft gasps. A lightning bolt struck outside, and at the same time Edrick suddenly stood and began to remove his belt. I sat up, breathing heavily, and pulled my dress off over my head. As I did, Edrick's eyes traveled down over my breasts, my rounded belly, and my thighs. I stood then and began to work at the buttons on his shirt while he buried his face in my hair.

We undressed each other in the dim light of my room, with only the sound of the rain to mask our own sounds. For a few moments, we stood there and took each other in. The Alpha billionaire's eyes studied me intensely in the dim light while his hand tentatively reached out and cupped my bare breast. I felt a shiver run down my spine and I bit my lip as he reached down further with his hand, feeling me between my legs. Then, with a smile, Edrick peeled the blankets down on my bed. He wrapped his arm around my waist and pulled me down with him, covering us in the warmth and safety of my quilt while he positioned himself above me.

His muscular chest pressed up against me firmly, like he wanted every inch of us to be touching. While I wrapped my legs around him, his lips

traveled across my skin, causing goosebumps to raise all over me. I felt his hand then travel down between my legs, and our eyes locked as I felt the pressure of him entering me next. I suddenly felt the long-awaited filling sensation of finally being with him again, which I had sorely missed since our one night stand. Slowly, and with a bit of a smile playing on his lips, he began to move. We both simultaneously let out a soft moan, and his hand cupped my face while we began to move together beneath the blankets. His dark hair fell into his eyes while he gazed down at me. I arched my back and pushed my hands up against his firm chest while I twisted my hips against him, feeling so full with him there, and our lips only parted from one another to make soft sounds or kiss different body parts while the rain poured relentlessly outside my window and thunder rolled through the sky.

By the time it was all over, I had almost forgotten entirely about why I was upset with Edrick. I only felt overcome with peace and happiness, and my body felt as light as a feather. It felt as though a great, huge weight had been lifted off of me, and as I laid on Edrick's chest and traced my finger along his skin and felt the bumps of his tight muscles beneath my fingertip, I couldn't help but smile.

Neither of us said anything. We didn't need to. It felt good just to lay in quiet together, listening to the rain and each other's breathing. Edrick lay beneath me with his eyes closed and his hand running through my hair. His breathing was deep and steady, as though he was on the verge of sleep. With the pouring rain outside, I felt as though I could have fallen asleep, too. I very much wouldn't have minded falling asleep there to the sound of the rain and the images of our shared passion flickering repeatedly through my mind.

We did fall asleep, for a little while. I laid on his chest and let myself doze off in the safety of his arms as I listened to the sound of his steady heartbeat filling my ears.

But we weren't asleep for long, however, as we were both eventually awoken by the sound of frantic knocking on the door. We woke up still tangled in each other's arms, and as the frantic knocking continued, Edrick quickly jumped up and put his pants on. I jumped up as well and hurriedly threw my dress on over my head, thinking that Ella or one of the maids might walk in at any moment and catch us in our post-passion embarrassment.

When Edrick opened the door, Selina was standing there.

"What is it?" he asked, sounding slightly worried by the look in Selina's eyes.

Selina looked back and forth between us for a few moments, clearly trying not to notice the fact that Edrick was shirtless and my hair was a mess, before her cheeks went slightly red and she finally spoke.

"The police are downstairs," the old housekeeper said, sounding both confused and concerned, and a little sheepish as she surely knew what she had just walked into. "They want to speak to you."

Chapter 209 Testify

Moana

“The police are downstairs,” the old housekeeper said, sounding both confused and concerned, and a little sheepish as she surely knew what she had just walked into. “They want to speak to you.”

Edrick and I suddenly looked at each other in shock.

“I’ll go,” he said, grabbing his shirt off of the floor and putting it on. “You can stay here, Moana.”

But Selina shook her head and pointed at me. “They want to talk to her. They asked specifically for Moana.”

As Selina spoke, my eyes suddenly widened. Surely the police wanted to talk to me about Ethan and Kelly, but why now? They really came in the pouring rain? Couldn’t they have called first? Edrick, who seemed to be thinking the same thing, narrowed his eyes. “Well, it’s not a good time,” he said. “Why didn’t they call first instead of just showing up?”

The old housekeeper shrugged. “I don’t know. But they asked specifically for Moana.”

Edrick looked at me again and opened his mouth to speak, but I shook my head and grabbed my sweater off of the chair. “It’s fine,” I said. “I’ll go.”

The police were waiting for us in the lobby downstairs, as our new bodyguards were given strict orders not to let anyone in who wasn’t one

of us. Edrick and I quickly put on our shoes and took the elevator down, and when we came out I saw two officers sitting on the bench in the lobby waiting for us. They both stood when we entered.

“What’s all this about?” Edrick asked, peering past them to look outside. Thankfully, because of the pouring rain, it seemed as though the paparazzi weren’t lingering around outside like a bunch of hyenas. If pictures went around of two police officers coming into the building so soon after what happened at the warehouse, it was certain that there would be more media harassment about it.

“Good afternoon,” one of the officers said, who I recognized as the one that gave us a ride home after the incident at the warehouse. “I apologize for the intrusion, but we wanted to come and talk to you personally.”

“What do you need to talk about?” Edrick asked. I could tell that he was feeling nervous, and so was I. I couldn’t help but wonder if something had happened to Ethan or Kelly in jail, or something of the sort.

“Well, we have some questions for Miss Fowler,” the officer said, looking at me. “If you’d like to come down to the station with us, we’d like to perform an interview. We’d like your side of the story as to what happened leading up to the events at the warehouse a couple of weeks ago, and we need to take a formal statement.”

Edrick suddenly frowned and protectively put his arm around my shoulders. “This is very sudden,” he said. “I don’t want to make my fiancée dredge up what happened that night without any time to prepare. If you call back another time, maybe we can set up a date—”

“I’m afraid it needs to be done today,” the officer interrupted grimly. “This whole incident is causing a lot of media attention, and Ethan said — on the record — that... Miss Fowler went to the warehouse willingly.”

My eyes widened. “I did not!” I said, feeling my anger begin to bubble up inside of me. “He’s a liar. That’s not what—”

“Whatever you want to say will need to be saved for the interview,” the officer said gently with a polite smile.

“So, you mean to interrogate my fiancée over something that my mentally insane, illegitimate half-brother said? You know he’s full of s**t, right?” Edrick asked, sounding agitated now.

The officer sighed and put his hands up in a gesture of surrender. “It’s not an interrogation, Mr. Morgan,” he said. “It’s just an interview. We know that Ethan is not telling the truth, but we’d like to get Miss Fowler’s statement first.” He turned then to look back at me. “Now, if you’d like a ride down to the station, we could get this all over with today. Eventually, you may need to testify in court.”

I was still shocked by it all. Of course, Ethan was lying, but... If the truth came out that I was trapped that night because I was trying to leave with Ella, would he and Kelly and Olivia get away with what I did? What if I got in trouble instead for attempted kidnapping since I took Ella without permission?

No, I thought to myself. That was a ridiculous thought. I was clearly manipulated into going, and even if it wasn’t clear enough, it didn’t really matter. Either way, Ethan still tried to kill a pregnant woman and a little girl.

But what really scared me the most was the thought of having to be interviewed on what had happened that night. I had seen clips of interrogations online where distressed victims were made to cry or have mental breakdowns over bringing up everything that happened, and I didn’t want to be one of those people. Right now, the last thing I needed was to have a flashback and wake up in the hospital.

Suddenly, Edrick pulled me aside and spoke quietly. “You don’t need to go if you don’t want to,” he said. “And if you want a lawyer because of what happened that night, I can get you the best lawyer in town.”

I shook my head. “No,” I said. “It’s okay... I’ll go. It’s better to just get this over with now, and there’s no reason for me to get a lawyer. Unless... The situation with Ella...”

“Don’t worry about that,” Edrick reassured me. “This is all Ethan’s fault. You don’t have anything to worry about.”

I nodded reluctantly, then took a deep breath and turned back to face the two waiting police officers.

“I’ll go with you,” I said, pulling my sweater more tightly around my shoulders. “But I want Edrick to come with me. Otherwise, I won’t go.” I nodded my head toward Edrick and stood up straight, holding my chin high.

The officer who was speaking before nodded understandingly, then smiled politely again. “Of course,” he said. “If you’d like to just grab your things, we can take you both.”

Edrick and I quickly went back upstairs to grab a few things before heading out. Neither of us knew how long exactly this “interview” would take, so we told Selina to just give Ella dinner and that we would handle it ourselves later. Selina seemed worried about me, but I was intent on going. So long as I didn’t have any flashbacks about that night, I was certain that I would be fine. I just needed to answer their questions truthfully. They already said themselves that they knew that Ethan was bending the truth.

On the way there, however, as the rain battered against the window of the cop car, I felt my anxieties beginning to rise again. I kept seeing intermittent flashes of the gun in Ethan’s hand, and it made me begin to wonder if the flashbacks would become too much during the interview.

“You can do this,” my wolf said, offering me some words of comfort on the drive. “If you get through this interview, it will ensure that Ethan and Kelly can never do something like this ever again.”

I swallowed as I looked out the window, feeling comforted by Edrick's arm around my shoulders.

"I hope you're right," I responded. "I really hope that you're right."

Chapter 210 The Interrogation

Moana

When we arrived at the police station, Edrick helped me out of the cop car and held me closely as we walked inside.

Once we were inside, I immediately noticed that the other people who were there suddenly got very quiet and started giving Edrick and I strange looks. I tried to ignore it, but it was hard to do that when I had spent the last two days at work being whispered about. Only this time, I didn't know whether they were whispering about my "unluckiness" as a late bloomer or whether they were whispering about the warehouse incident.

Either way, I felt myself getting somewhat sick as the officer led us down a narrow and fluorescent-lit hallway to the interrogation room.

We stopped outside the door and he opened it, letting me in. It was a small room with a metal table in the center, a couple of chairs, and a fluorescent light on the ceiling. I could see a camera in the corner of the ceiling and a "mirror", which I was certain was a one-way mirror. I instantly felt even more sick as I wondered just how many people were watching this.

Suddenly, just as Edrick was coming in after me, the officer stopped him.

"Sorry, but I'm going to have to ask you to wait outside," he said. He sounded amicable, but his words made me nervous, and I could tell that Edric was just as nervous.

“You promised that I could be with her,” Edrick said somewhat angrily. “Why can’t I be with her now?”

“I said that you could come to the station with her,” the officer clarified. “But the interview needs to be completed with just her. She’ll be fine; this will only take a short while.”

Edrick looked at me with concern in his eyes. I felt terrified, but I hid it well and nodded at him, even going so far as to shoot him a reassuring smile before the officer closed the door.

“Take a seat,” the officer said, gesturing to one of the chairs. I sat down sheepishly, holding my purse in my lap as he sat across from me and pulled out a notebook. “Now... Let’s begin. Can you tell me, in your own words, what happened that night before the police arrived at the scene of the crime?”

“Y-Yes,” I replied. Slowly, I began to recount my experience that night. I started with the taxi ride, followed by discovering that Kelly was actually driving the taxi. But then, just as I was about to tell the officer how I was hit in the head and woke up in the warehouse, he stopped me.

“Hold on,” he said, holding his hand out as he furrowed his brow. “You said that you took a taxi at...”

“Midnight,” I said.

“Why were you taking your daughter in a taxi headed away from Mr. Morgan’s penthouse at midnight?”

As the officer asked this question, I swallowed. I didn’t know where to begin... If I revealed everything about Olivia, then it would potentially mean that the fact that I wasn’t Ella’s biological mother would be revealed to the public, which could cause a lot of problems. Not only that, but it could potentially get me in trouble for an attempted kidnapping. Of course I knew that Edrick wouldn’t press charges, but once again, that sort of information being given to the public could be disastrous.

“I... I...” I stammered, my heart racing. I felt myself get even more sick.

“We’ll come back to that,” the officer said. “I’m sorry for interrupting your story. You can continue now.”

Swallowing again, I started to tell the rest of the story. I told the officer about how I was hit in the head, and how Ella tried to run away. I then told him about waking up in the warehouse, tied to a chair with Ella beside me, a bright white spotlight in my eyes, and a... a...

Suddenly, I felt even more sick as I tried to say the word that I couldn’t seem to get out: gun.

“Are you alright, Miss Fowler?” the officer asked. “Keep telling your story.”

“I-I’m sorry,” I said quietly. “He was holding a... a g-gun...”

As I spoke, I felt my vision begin to fade. The image of Ethan’s twisted grin while he held the gun up to my head flashed through my mind. I felt myself slipping away from reality, being transported back to that horrible night. I saw Ella’s sleeping little body tied up to that metal chair. I saw Edrick’s head split open, blood pooling up on the floor around him. I saw Kelly, turning around in the driver’s seat, sneering at me as she went on a tirade about killing us. I felt Ella burying herself in my side, and I heard her little terrified sobs.

“Ma’am?” the officer said. “I need you to cooperate, otherwise this is going to take a long time...”

“R-Right,” I said, snapping back to reality for a few brief moments while beads of sweat began to form at the nape of my neck. “As I was saying, he was holding a gun to my head, and there was a bright light... H-He told me that he was going to kill me and Ella because he w-wanted Edrick to suffer...”

Once again, my voice faltered. My throat felt dry and cracked, and I reached for the glass of water sitting in front of me. I drank several gulps, but it didn't help.

"Suffer for what?" the officer urged. "Did Edrick do anything to Ethan at any point?"

I shook my head. "No, that's the thing," I replied. "Edrick didn't do anything. Ethan's mother killed herself... Well, Michael probably did it, in all reality..."

The officer furrowed his brow and wrote furiously on his notepad. "Michael who?" he asked.

I felt my eyes widen. I had said too much. "M-Michael Morgan," I replied.

"Hold on." The officer set his pen down and folded his arms across his chest. "That's a very serious accusation, Miss Fowler," he said. "Are you accusing Michael Morgan of murdering Ethan's mother?"

This was too much. I suddenly shook my head, feeling shame for bringing it up. I had said too much, and for all I knew, Michael was connected to people in the police department. Ethan had said that his mother's murder was covered up. What if the cops helped? What if they would tell Michael that I was trying to rat him out?

As all of this whirled around in my head, I felt myself getting more and more dizzy. Suddenly, I felt as though I would throw up. I stood, clamping my hand over my mouth as vomit began to bubble up. The officer jumped up as well; he was saying something with a worried look on his face and was holding his hands out to me, but I couldn't hear what he was saying over the ringing in my ears.

"I-I don't feel so w-well..." I murmured. I saw a flash of Ethan's face. Ethan was the cop! No... I was just seeing things... I looked up at the mirror then, and jumped when I saw Ethan standing behind me, holding

the gun to my head. I whirled around, but he wasn't there. I started hyperventilating.

“Miss Fowler? Miss Fowler!” the officer said.

My knees buckled under me, and everything went dark.