

## Chapter 74

[Vivienne]

After climbing three or four flights of stairs, we reach the rooftop.

At first, I'm not sure how being on the rooftop could solve any of our problems—problems like the bunch of men still pounding the hallways downstairs, looking for us.

But just as I'm about to ask him if the plan is to jump or do something even more ridiculous, the loud sound of a chopper pulls my gaze toward the night sky.

I squint up at the helicopter.

It's sleek, black, and clearly expensive—because of course it is.

He glances over at me, catching the disbelief on my face, and a slow, knowing smile spreads across his lips. “Not exactly the jump you were imagining, is it?”

I glare at him, the absurdity of it all starting to sink in. “You've got a fucking helicopter on standby?”

“Always be prepared, darling,” he says, his tone infuriatingly casual as if we're discussing nothing more than the weather. “You never know when you might need to make a quick escape. And it looks like tonight, you'll be joining me for that little ride.”

The helicopter descends, and he tugs me along as he starts to jog toward it. The wind is even worse now, and I have to shield my face with my hands to keep from getting hit by the debris.

He steps inside, then holds out a hand to help me up. "You can thank me later."

I roll my eyes and let him pull me into the helicopter, unable to hide my annoyance. "Trust me, that's the last thing on my mind right now."

I sit down and put on my seatbelt, trying to calm my racing heart. It's not every day you witness a shootout in a hotel elevator and then end up riding in a helicopter with a dangerous mafia heir.

The chopper ride isn't a short one, but almost half an hour later, it starts descending, with Alexander and the pilot talking in some coded language that I can't understand for the life of me.

The chopper finally touches down, and before I can even unbuckle my seatbelt, Alexander is already out, offering me his hand again. I ignore it this time, climbing out on my own. He raises an eyebrow but doesn't comment.

"Where are we now?" I ask, looking around at what seems like a deserted airstrip.

"Safe," he replies, a charming smirk playing on his lips. "Finally."

"Great. That's real specific," I mutter, neither having the energy nor the mood to be nice.

This... this was the last thing on my mind when I got ready for the music festival tonight. But I guess that's not how life works. Weird things happen when you least expect them to.

The only problem? I don't know how I'm ever getting out of here.



“But seriously, where are we?” I keep looking around, hoping to find something familiar. But I don’t. Maybe it’s because it’s really dark right now, or because I have no clue where the hell we are.

“Patience, Ms. Sinclair.” He chuckles, leading the way to a black SUV waiting nearby. Not one, but at least half a dozen. One of his men opens the door of the backseat, and Alexander doesn’t waste a second to signal me to get in first.

I stare at the inside of the car, still not sure where this is all going. “I’m scared. I don’t like this.”

This time, however, he doesn’t try to tease me or distract me with his charming smiles or quirky winks. He simply opens the door wider and looks directly into my eyes.

“You saved my life once, Ms. Sinclair. Remember?”

I nod, because I do. It was the very first time we met.

“Then I must tell you that we, the Banes, have a very important saying in our family. When someone saves our life, we owe them whatever is left of it. And you know what that means?”

I shake my head.

He chuckles and, once again, tucks a loose strand of hair behind my ear. “It means that the value of your life is much, much more important than mine. And whenever it comes down to it, you will always be the one I protect first. I do feel terrible for dragging you into this. But trust me when I say this: there’s simply no reason to be scared. Alexander Bane is here to serve you, not to hurt you.”



From what I know of him and what I've learned in the last hour, I should probably have kept my distance—it seemed like the most logical thing to do. But for some reason, the honesty in his gaze makes my heart calmer, and I end up nodding.

“Okay,” I say, and then, with another deep breath, get inside the car.

The ride to wherever his men are taking us is long enough to keep me on edge. But when the cars finally drive through the biggest estate I have ever seen and stop in front of the grandest palace I've ever seen, my eyes bulge out of their sockets and my jaw drops onto the car floor.

“Where—” I start to say, but Alexander cuts me off.

He steps out and then extends his hand for me to step out, his dark eyes glinting with more than just charm.

“Welcome to the Bane family residence, Ms Sinclair.”

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