

## 20 Somewhere Away From Home

~Sophia~

The sun and moon became a precious luxury, as I only caught fleeting glimpses of the moon and felt the warm rays of the sun through a tiny window in the room where we were being held captive.

In this confined space, my mother and I lived in fear, desperately holding onto hope for a miracle. Since the video my father had recorded, showcasing our plight, I hadn't seen him again.

My mother worried that something terrible had befallen him, but deep down, I couldn't believe it. Somehow, I had an inexplicable sense that as long as he was alive, they would keep us alive as well.

I had lost track of time, but it was evident that several weeks had flown by quickly. The phone I used to communicate with Liam had died, and I had no means to charge it, leaving me anxious about what might be happening on his end. Was he still searching for me, or had he given up and moved on?

The way the people around us handled our captivity gave me a strong inkling that Liam had indeed used his influence. It seemed evident that he had pulled some strings, and our captors had ensured we had no freedom as a result. The recent tightening of security further supported my suspicion that the search for us had intensified.

My mother believed that efforts to locate my father had also intensified, but I couldn't share her confidence. I knew Liam well

enough to understand that he never made empty promises, so I had no doubt that he was diligently working to find us and save us.

I regretted not attending Liam's graduation that night. Perhaps he could have found a way to help me escape this nightmare. But how could I have known?

My father had insisted that I skip the party, and now I couldn't help but wonder if he had orchestrated this situation intentionally rather than it being a mere coincidence. The thought of him intentionally risking our lives was infuriating, and I felt anger towards him and even my mother for failing to see his errors.

My mother seemed oblivious to his faults, which only added to my frustration. I understood support, but her blindness to his actions was unhealthy for both of us.

Suddenly, the sound of the lock turning on the door snapped me out of my thoughts. I turned to face the door, and my mother sat up on her single bed, her face filled with paranoia. I chose to ignore it; being paranoid wouldn't solve anything right now. The truth was, we were in a dire situation, and our lives were no longer in our control. These people held all the power, and they could end us at their whim, without anyone ever knowing.

The Alpha of the place where we were held captive entered the room, accompanied by another man carrying two trays of food. As the Alpha nodded, the man placed the food on the tables beside our beds.

My mother stood up and respectfully bowed to greet the Alpha, but he wasn't my Alpha, and I refused to show him any form of respect. I

had refused to greet him ever since our arrival. As expected, the man who was serving the food forcefully pulled me up and slapped me hard across the face, causing me to fall back down. My mother gasped in shock, as she always did, but I remained silent, showing no sign of pain. I knew I was intentionally frustrating the Alpha with my stoic response.

"You're quite the tough one," the Alpha remarked, amusement evident in his voice. The man was about to pull me up and strike me once more, but the Alpha intervened, halting his actions.

"She'd rather face death than show me any respect," the Alpha said aloud, accurately pinpointing my stance. He was right; I would rather endure any consequence than bow to the douchebag. Whatever his issues were with my father, it didn't entitle him to my respect. He shouldn't expect any kindness or compliance from me. I was resolute in standing my ground.

The Alpha approached me and forcefully made me stand up, then he lifted my chin to peer into my eyes.

"What connection do you have with the crowned prince?" he inquired, trying to search for answers in my eyes. However, I remained steadfast and refused to respond. I had made it a point to never speak to him or answer any of his questions. Seeing how my actions frustrated him brought me some satisfaction, and I intended to keep frustrating him until I was either freed or dead.

"Is he your boyfriend?" he probed further, and I couldn't help but find amusement in that question. Oh, how I wished that were true. I had secretly crushed on and admired Liam for many years, but he had

never reciprocated those feelings. He never asked me out or professed any romantic affection towards me. We remained good friends, but I knew I wasn't his type, and that reality was a bittersweet truth for me.

The Alpha released his grip on me and began to laugh.

"If someone had told me that capturing you would lure the brat right into my trap, I would have dismissed it as a lie. But let's see what unfolds. If your presence doesn't bring him to us, then we'll have no choice but to dispose of you, your mother, and your father," he taunted, his laughter echoing through the room. I frowned, trying to comprehend what Liam had to do with all of this. The urge to question the Alpha about his cryptic words arose within me, but I knew it would be futile; he would never give me a straight answer.

In fact, I didn't even know his name or any pertinent information. It all felt like a twisted mind game, and I was left in the dark, unaware of the significance of Alpha Thompson's death or how it tied into our captivity. It seemed I would remain clueless for now, confined to this small room with its tiny window and locked door, limiting my ability to uncover the truth. There was only so much I could discover under these conditions.

"If you behave, I might allow you and your mother some time in the sun. Of course, that's only if you cooperate and provide the information I seek," he taunted, his laughter echoing as he turned around and exited the room. He didn't even give me a chance to respond, likely assuming my reply already. But he was right; I had no intention of saying a word. No matter how many times they resorted to violence, I wouldn't give in.

This was my father's mess, and I wouldn't let these despicable individuals drag my friend into it. They could slap me as much as they wanted, but my lips remained sealed, resolute in protecting Liam from whatever tangled web my father had woven.

After they had left, my mother began to scold me for antagonising the Alpha.

"You need to stop provoking him, Sophie; you really do," she chided.

"Call me Sophia, Mom; only my friends call me Sophie," I retorted, making it clear that I was upset with her and we weren't on friendly terms.

"Why are you mad at me?" she asked, and I couldn't believe she would ask such a question.

"How can you side with Father in all of this? Look at what he's done. Did he really have to kill the Alpha? If he disagreed with Alpha Thompson's methods, he could have resigned and left Grizlo peacefully. Instead, he robbed us of our future and freedom by taking the man's life and that of his family," I expressed, my frustration evident.

She seemed haunted by my words as she replied, "You wouldn't understand, but he had good intentions, Sophia."

I shook my head in disbelief, unable to accept her explanation.

"Then tell me why he did it. Tell me why, Mommy?" I pleaded, hoping for some clarity. But she remained silent, refusing to divulge my

father's reasons for his heinous acts. I sensed that it must be something she believed I wouldn't approve of, something that could deepen my resentment towards them, something inherently selfish.

"Anyway, I hope Li..." I began to say, but she interrupted with a chuckle.

"The Royal family cannot intervene in this matter, Sophia. I've told you this countless times. Don't get your hopes up. Liam may be the crowned prince, but that's the extent of it. He holds no official power. The king and queen won't get involved; this matter falls solely under Alpha Christian's jurisdiction. Only he will decide our fate. Grizlo's issues rest on his shoulders; he has no reason to bring it before the council unless it spirals out of control," she sighed, bowing her head in frustration.

"Hunting for a murderer isn't an issue; it's not like your father is a serial killer roaming different regions and killing people. The royal family can't intervene, and Liam can't assist you either. It might have been different if Liam were King, but he's just a prince, and there are protocols in place. Please, Sophia, stop dreaming that he will save you because he can't," she urged, and though I had tried to convince myself otherwise, deep down, I knew there was some truth in her words.

"If he's not pulling any strings, then why is that alpha trying to dig into our relationship?" I pressed her, and she shrugged, attempting to act nonchalant, but her eyes betrayed her. It was evident she was hiding something, and that only fueled my frustration. How could she keep silent about something so significant?



"Trust me, Liam can't assist us. He's probably focused on his first assignment and searching for his mate. Your paths were never meant to align in that way. If he truly had feelings for you, he would have asked you out by now. He's royalty, and we're just a middle-class family from a small town. It's just not feasible," she asserted, trying to persuade me to let go of any hope involving Liam.

"We don't have to be dating for him to help me. Liam is a loyal friend, my best friend, and I know he won't rest until he's done everything within his power to aid me," I responded confidently.

Having known Liam since I was eight, I knew he had never broken a promise to me. I would hold on for as long as possible and keep my lips sealed. I wouldn't divulge anything about the royal family or Liam to the Alpha. I was determined to persevere until my very last breath.



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