



## Chapter 1: Time to Go

**\*\*Mila's POV\*\***

"Come on sweetie, I need you to hurry." I urged my daughter. We were already behind schedule and it was making me nervous. Today was the day. The day we start a new life. I threw my long brown wavy hair into a messy high bun and picked up my suitcase. My brown eyes were now swollen with bags from the crying and lack of sleep. My 5'3 thick and curvy frame is covered with bruises and broken bones that never healed right.

"I twying mommy. Where lamby?" Amelia cried. My little princess has sandy brown straight hair, big light brown eyes and a pouty mouth and fat cheeks.

"I packed it. Here." I handed her the small stuffed lamb that she has been carrying around for the past year.

I remember when I gave it to her. She has been inseperable from that thing since. Even when I needed to wash it she sat by the laundry room until it was done. "Time to go." I said wrapping my hand around her tiny wrist.

"Is daddy coming too?" Ugh. I don't know what I saw in him. His dark black eyes and black curly hair matched his dark empty soul.

"No, baby. Daddy has to work. This is going to be a vacation, just you and me." I know she is going to miss him, but I hope when she is old enough she will understand.

I walk down the hallway, passed the pictures on the walls, showing our perfectly happy family. If only people knew the truth behind those pictures. I know everyone will ask why I left, but all that matters is that he knows why and that I am no longer under his control. We walk out the door and into my best friend's car.

"Are you sure you're ready for this?" Rosanna asks me as I nish strapping in my daughter into her car seat.

My best friend of almost ve years is the only one who knows everything about me. She is 5'6 has black straight hair, green eyes, killer body, and big full lips. Even women notice how beautiful she is.

"Yes. I need to do this. Not only for me..." I look down at my precious child, "but for her too."

Rosanna gave me a tight smile and started driving towards the bus station once I was settled. On the way there I think about the day I nally decided I needed to runaway.

FLASHBACK

(5 days before)

"I can't believe he hit you again! You can't keep taking this from him Mila, you need to report him!" Rosanna cried as she took out the tiny pieces of glass I had in my left arm. Sebastian had hit me and I ew into the glass coffee table, breaking it. He stood over me with such anger. He then stepped on me as I tried to get up, and my left arm dug into the shards on the oor.

"I can't report him Rosanna. You know no one would believe the foster kid over the Chief of Police's only son and he is a cop. The whole city loves him. He will just lock me up in a looney house and take Amelia from me." I didn't even feel any pain as she started to bandage my wound. Sebastian has done so much worse. It's like I am numb to it already, used to it. Thank God he hasn't hurt our child, but how long will that last?

"Mila, let me help you runaway." Rosanna said as she put on the last piece of tape.

"I can't runaway, Rose. He will never stop looking for me. I'll always be looking over my shoulder." I shook my head, wishing it was that simple.

"There is an organization. A secret organization that helps women in your situation. There success rate in rehoming women and them never being found is 100%. They are THAT good." She has my attention now. I mean complete success? That is unheard of.

"Tell me how it works." I replied.

That day, I took the rst step in becoming a free woman.

END OF FLASHBACK

"Mila. Mila. MILA!!!!"

"AHH. What? What happened?" I jumped.

"We're here. You zoned out." Rose said as she got out of the car. "Good, you packed light. It's easier that way." She then walked around the car to hand me my suitcase as I was unbuckling Amelia.

"Don't forget to throw out that carseat. Sebastian can't know you helped me." I said as I shut the back door.

"Don't worry. Everyone thinks I went to visit my brother in Virginia. I'm going to drive there now and explain to him the whole situation. He'll alibi me."

We stood there, both trying not to cry. I don't know when I will see her again. She has been with me through the worst and I can't believe there is a possibilty we could never cross paths. She gave me a tight hug and slipped a small box in my hand.

"Don't open this until you are at your nal stop. Take care of yourself Mila." She gave Amelia a tight hug and a kiss on the cheek and she drove away as we entered the bus station.

I walked up to window three like Rose said. There was an elder lady there, small frame and grey hair that reached just above her collarbone.

"Hello, dear. What can I help you with?" Her voice sounded so tired and fragile.

"Two bus tickets please. To the farthest destination you have scheduled." I said not looking into her eyes.

"Okay sweetie that will be to Illinois. It is almost a fteen hour bus drive, so the drivers will change three times." She said looking up from her computer.

"Yes that is ne, I'll catch another bus from there."

"Can I have your I.D please?"

"Runaway Angel." I said. Hoping she understood.

She looked up and for the rst time we locked eyes. She has so much pain in her eyes as they started to water. Just as a tear threatened to fall she blinked it away and nodded. "As you know, these are already paid for by the organization. Here is a packet to let you know your next step. I wish you the best of luck, dear." She slid everything to me and I thanked her and walked away.

Not even ten steps and Amelia was already asking to be picked up. She missed her nap so she was understandably tired. I scooped her up and headed towards our bus. Once seated I placed Amelia on my lap and began humming until her body relaxed in my arms. There wasn't a lot of people on our bus. Including the driver there was eleven people in a bus that t at least thirty people.

I was able to get my baby to lay down comfortably so I could look at the packet the lady gave me. It included: an envelope with some cash, a card with a lady's name and number, and a small instruction manual that was only about 20 pages. It was in different languages so I am guessing there is only about four or ve pages I need to read. I'll just skim through it. I open the book and begin reading.

Dear Runaway Angel,

For whatever reason you are reading this, we are truly sorry you are going through these lengths. But always remember you are not weak for running, you are strong for making a change for yourself. We are a secret organization that is funded by the women that have been through what you are going through. We have been helping thousands of women since 1987, and we are proud that our success rate is 100%. The women we have helped have been relocated and have never been found unless they returned home by their own choice. Do not worry. We will take care of you. In this packet you will nd some money for food along your bus ride. When you get to your destination there will be an 18 wheeler gas station just across from the bus station. Look for a lady with a red baseball cap that has an angel on the back. She will be your driver who will take you to a town that we use for these purposes. You will also nd a card with a name and number, that is your emergency contact. Only call when you are afraid you have been found or when you decide to leave the organization. In this manual you will nd guidance on how to remain under the radar. It takes work and discipline but it can be done. Good luck, runaway angel.

Sincerely, .....

I look down at my daughter and send a silent prayer up to the heavens that this all goes well.