

### Chapter 35

Gabe chuckled, he looked toward the door and heaved a breath.

"Let's go," he said and expected me to follow him.

A move like that was something I would run by Trixy but seeing as she wasn't awake yet I was left to make the choice alone.

He walked as though he knew I'd follow and I thought about it for a second. He didn't seem too strange and he'd been nice just now. However, the last person who was nice to me ended up dead. I was stuck in limbo and felt like a scared lamb, it annoyed the shit out of me so instead of questioning his intentions, I decided to follow him.

We walked through the long halls that stretched and turned throughout the palace.

There were more doors than I could count and I found it hard to believe that one single person knew what each room contained.

I counted our steps and memorized the hallways, painting a map in my mind for when I planned to go.

I wasn't worried about following him, he's a royal guard with a high standing based on his uniform - that was until all of the hallways and stairs led to one last door after which we stood outside on the grounds around the palace.

Somehow we made it out but not through the front doors, we stood beside the wall on top of which the bridge crossed over our heads connecting to another part of the palace.

I was outside, again, without permission.

"Wait I can't be here," I said and stepped back.

Panic washed over me and all I could hear time and time again was Darian giving the order that killed an innocent man and all I could see were his kind eyes suddenly lifeless as he fell to the ground.

Looking at Gabe it was like I allowed history to repeat itself. I didn't know if he was nice but he took me outside of the palace walls and by doing so he practically signed his death sentence.

No, not again.

I huffed a breath, feeling the anxiety rise in my throat and my stomach clenched as I pushed past him to run back inside.

His hand shot out and he grabbed my arm, he pulled me into his chest and pinned my arms down to keep me from running. His rough grip held me put but it wasn't hurting me and he held me close - close enough for me to feel his heartbeat, it was slow and steady unlike mine which felt like a ticking bomb.

"Relax," he said against the side of my head, "I'm not going to hurt you," he whispered. He bit down and his jaw clicked, he looked down at me with no mask covering his intense gaze to let me see the truth.

But he didn't understand that my life wasn't the only one in danger.

"Someone died because of me and I can't let that happen again." I backed away but Gabe's hold only tightened.

"Nobody's going to get hurt. We're just going on a little trip,"

Was he deaf or dumb? I couldn't tell.

Anything where my body wasn't directly located within the palace walls was enough to make Darian go berserk.

I refused to have another person's death on my hands.

Gabe saw that I was having an inner dialogue so he rolled his eyes and his entire head followed. He let go of my arm but held onto my wrist and dragged me behind him across the narrow path that led to the front of the palace.

I didn't make much of an effort to break free but when a driver opened a car door and I was shoved inside I began to wonder if maybe I should've. I looked back and watched the palace get smaller while envisioning the terror that would wait for me when I got back.

We drove past the palace gates and through a town that continued for an hour. The colors were shifting on the houses the further away we got and everything turned more dower. The houses were withering and the bins overflowed with garbage while the side of the street was filled with junk that people threw out of their windows; plastic bags blew in the breeze across the silent streets.

Gabe had told the driver earlier that his services wouldn't be needed so it was Gabe that drove us through a part of the kingdom that I had never heard about.

"Rogues," he said and looked back at me through the rearview mirror.

"Why are they all here?" I asked in an exhale.

"They needed shelter after the last war, not all rogues wanted to start over in dysfunctional packs,"

"And this is all they got?" I asked.

He paused a beat and shrugged his shoulder.

"It's all they deserve." His voice lowered an octave.

I shifted in the seat when he drove down a dark alleyway with a group of men sitting in shreds alongside the brick wall. The alleyway led us out onto an even more depressing road and an old woman limped her way over to a small store on the corner of what used to be a house.

"Why did you take me here?"

"Telling you will ruin the surprise," he mused.

"I'm not big on surprises,"

Our eyes locked in the mirror and I saw a recognizable mischievous glint that sparked back at me.

"Then you might hate this," he grinned.



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