

## CHAPTER 149

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LISA When moonlight fades and the sun rises, I can see my cell with more clarity. Rust clings to my wrists and ankles, the metal biting into my skin with every trembling movement. Chains rattle against stone, a sound that mocks my rising panic. No matter how I strain and yank, they hold fast, ignoring the blood that streams down my arms when my skin breaks under the pressure. This cell, this prison, is a nightmare made manifest. Cold, damp air seeps into my bones, and the stench of decay fills my nostrils. No comfort of a bed greets me, only the unforgiving hardness of the floor beneath my body. A single, rotting bucket sits in the far corner, a cruel taunt of basic needs denied. My eyes dart around, desperate for some sign of escape, but the walls offer no salvation. Rough-hewn stone and brick, marred by the telltale stains of suffering, mock my desperation. Those dark splatters, 149 Lisa: Enthralled (1) rust-brown and eerie in the dim light filtering through the tiny window above, speak of horrors I can't begin to imagine. But I don't need to imagine, do I? I'm living it now. Why? The question pounds in my head. Why me? What does my captor want? I grasp at my memories, trying to make sense of the jumbled pieces. The party, the laughter, the punch that made my head swim. Bren. The vampire. But nothing else. Tears sting my eyes, hot and bitter as they slip down. my cheeks. I want to scream, to yell until my voice gives out, but some instinct warns me against it. Don't let them know you're awake. Don't give them a reason to come. It's been peaceful so far, but that can't last forever. But oh, how I want to scream. I did, all night, and no one came to save me. Though no one came to shut me up, either. The tears come harder now, my body shaking with 140 Lisa Enthralled (1) silent sobs. I curl in on myself as much as the chains. allow, trying to make myself small, trying to disappear. But there's nowhere to hide, nowhere to go but the confines of my own mind. And in my mind, the questions swirl, dark and insidious. What do they want with me? Why go through the trouble of taking me, of keeping me alive? The possible answers terrify me, each more gruesome than the last. Ransom, torture, some sick game... I shudder, bile rising in my throat. Scraping sounds and whispers pierce the silence, dragging me from my thoughts. I tense, straining to hear more, to understand what's happening beyond my cell. It's only then that I realize the odd dripping sound, the one that had been my constant companion, disappeared while I was lost in fitful sleep. Fear has my gut tightening into a cramping pain as the scraping grows louder, closer. It's a grating, unnatural noise that sets my teeth on edge and causes my head to ache. The whispers, too, become more distinct, though I can't make out the words. The voices are low, urgent, and filled with a malevolence that makes me 16:14 • 3/8 want to curl up and hide. But there's nowhere to go, nowhere to run, because I'm chained to the floor. The scraping stops, and for a moment, there's only silence. Heavy, oppressive, making it hard to breathe. And then, a grinding sound, like stone against stone. My eyes widen as part of the wall slides into itself, revealing a dark passageway. A figure steps through, tall and imposing, and my heart nearly stops. It's him. The vampire from the party. He looks just as I remember, all pale skin and dark hair, with eyes that gleam with a predatory light. His lips curve into a smile, but there's no warmth in it. Only a cruel amusement that makes my blood run cold. "Hello, kitten," he purrs, his voice like silk over steel. I shrink back as far as my chains allow, despite the pain in my wrists, bleeding and swollen from many attempts to get out of these manacles. "What do you want?" My voice is tremulous, despite my efforts to keep it steady. 140 Lisa Enthralled (1) He laughs, a sound that echoes off the walls and makes me flinch. "Oh, we'll get to that," he says, taking a step closer. "But first, let's have a little chat, shall we?" His movements are almost hypnotic, his steps slow and measured as he approaches. I can't look away, can't move, can't breathe. It's like I'm frozen, trapped by the sheer force of his presence. He crouches down in front of me, close enough that I can feel the chill emanating from his skin. Close enough that I can see the hunger in his eyes, the way they seem to darken as they roam over my face, my neck, my body. "You're a pretty little thing, aren't you?" he murmurs, reaching out to brush a strand of hair from

Updates... my face. His touch is like ice, and I jerk my face away. "And feisty, too. I like that." "Don't touch me," I whisper, but it comes out more like a plea. Not the demand I wish I could throw out, defiant to the end. He chuckles, his fingers trailing down my cheek, my jaw, my neck. "You're not in a position to make 5/8 149 Lisa Enthralled (1) demands, kitten," he says, his voice low and dangerous. "You're mine now, and I'll do whatever I please with you." Terror claws at my throat, making it hard to breathe. I don't want to imagine what he means by that, don't want to think about the horrors that await me. But my mind races ahead, conjuring up images of pain and blood and violation, each more terrible than the last. "Please," I whisper, hating the way my voice breaks, hating the tears that sting my eyes. "Please, just let me go." His smile widens, a flash of white teeth in the gloom. Two are long and sharp, shooting pure terror down my veins. "Now, why would I do that?" he asks, his hand coming to rest at the base of my throat. "I went through so much trouble to get you here, kitten. I'm not about to let you go now." His fingers tighten, just a fraction, and I gasp, my pulse pounding beneath his touch. He leans in closer, his breath cold against my skin as he whispers in my ear. "You're going to be my little pet, kitten," he murmurs, 10:15 6/0 bin wow a dark pesme "My plaything to do with as I phrase. Aund trust me we going to har no mauch Bate Bog I shudrs goowpumps pimping my skin at the soatd coat Mys words. Worstelison and fead with an any charad I want to scream To fight. To do anything to get away bad I'm from as he leans forward parang a hilly kas against my marck, his tongue earthing out to hunting Heck the shan there it's a horrible feeling "Se smerter whispers, and even los barwach is cold "Why me?" I manage to chokeret my voice barely about whisper "Why are you doing this!" He pulls back, his eyes meeting mit There's a glint of something there, something dark and hungry and terrying Tere I

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