

## Chapter 8

It's early morning by the time we get to my sister's town. We took turns sleeping in the car so we didn't need to crash anywhere today and could continue working. Heading straight for Thrive after we'd stopped for some coffee and breakfast at a little diner on the outskirts.

"Luciano!" My sister was already outside waiting for us.

"Luca!" Luca yells sarcastically as he jumps out of the car to embrace her. He's always has too much energy.

"Oh yes, haha, I didn't forget you Luca" she says as she wiggles her way out of his embrace.

She kisses me on the cheek greets the rest of my men before we all make our way inside to her office. I never liked this club much; it's one of the smaller ones I own and doesn't bring in the same profits the others do. Probably because of the crappy town it's in but my sister loves it and true to its name, she thrives off of it.

"Okay so as you can see from the security cameras outside at the back he was captured here last

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night for a few minutes." <sup>3</sup>

She shows us the footage and we sit around discussing it for a while until I leave my tech team to investigate further. Hopefully they can find footage from other cameras around the town to find out where he came from or where he went. Meanwhile my sister pulls me aside and away from everyone else.

"How's Lilly?"

"Who?"

"Lilly! The girl I had you transfer to your club!? Don't tell me she didn't make it there".

"Oh right, you mean Violence." I said with a smirk. I didn't remember her name was Lilly, if I'm being honest, I had just been thinking of her as 'my angel' or 'violence', but I'm not about to tell my sister about that first one just yet.

"Violence? Hmm well I guess that's an appropriate stage name for her considering how many sleazy guys asses she kicked while she was here. I swear at one point I thought about firing the bouncer and just using her instead."

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"Haha, a little thing like her?"

"You'd be surprised what that 'little thing' can do Luciano."

"I'll believe it when I see it." Truth be told I never wanted to see my angel getting into a fight. I wouldn't allow anyone to hurt her. She just doesn't know it yet. <sup>3</sup>

"Anyway, I actually wanted to talk to you about her while you're here. The manager of the hotel she was staying at called here looking for her. Said she hadn't paid for the week and needed to get her stuff out. Do you think you could swing by there and do that for me? I don't think she has much but I'm sure there might be some personal stuff she might want."

"Yeah, I can do that, I'll take Luca with me to help carry some stuff and get him out of your hair."

Luca always had a thing for Stacy. Ever since we were kids, but he pulled the typical teasing boy act on her too long and now she just sees him like an annoying big brother.

We pull up to the shittiest looking motel and head into the office.



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"What?" The grubby looking, fat bald guy behind the desk says.

"We're here to pick up things for Lilly" Luca says before I can snap at the rudeness from the owner's mouth.

"Yeah good. Stupid slut hasn't paid for the week, so I need that stuff out, today."

I took three big strides to the desk, reached over and pulled the oaf forward by neck. Catching him off guard and now looking like he might regret calling my angel such profanities.

"What did you call her?"

"N n nothing man, look I'm sorry, here's the keys" he pathetically stutters out.

Luca grabs the keys and give the guy a wicked grin before I say "Thanks" and slam his head down on the desk before releasing him.

"You like her, don't you?" Luca says with amusement written all over his face as we make our way around the building. Luca and I have never had secrets. There's not a thing we wouldn't share with each other, so I don't hesitate when I

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stop and look at him. <sup>1</sup>

"I think she's the most beautiful woman I've ever met."

"Ahhh! Yes brother!" he says as he jumps to slap me on the shoulder with his golden retriever attitude.

"Alright man, settle down. It's not like we're getting married. I just met the girl, and I think there's something about her, okay?"

"The wedding might not be set my friend but in our 30 years of friendship you've never once admitted to liking a girl. That right there, tells me she's special".

I stick the key in and unlock the door. It creaks open and go to step inside, but I blink. I take a step back out and look at the number on the wall. "Stacy said room 23, right?" I said to Luca.

"Yep" he says, popping the P. "Why?"

We step in and both of us just stare at each other, then back around the room. Then back at each other.

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"Maybe the guy who's head you cracked opened already emptied it?"


"Well, if he did then why was he telling us to get her stuff out?"

We walk around the room a little. Untreated wood floors, dirty yellow walls, broken blinds, a tiny kitchenette. There's nothing in the kitchen draws or cupboards. Luca walks out from the bathroom having found nothing either and shrugging at me. I open the one closet in the room and there, at the bottom of the floor is a blanket and a pillow. It's so small she would have to curl herself up to sleep there, but the way it's laid out, that's exactly what it looks like. Luca and I exchanged a glance. For once his energy looks like it's non-existent.

"Why would she sleep there?" he says in an almost whisper.

"I don't know". I clench and unclench my fists trying to relieve some of the anger than boiling up inside me. My angel should not be sleeping in a closet on the floor. At the top of the closet there's one duffle bag. It's not even full by the feeling of it. I take it out and open it hoping to find something that will tell me more about this girl, but I only have more questions now. Not one personal item. Just a hairbrush, toothbrush and

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toothpaste and a couple of pieces of clothing. This will not do. We take the bag, blanket and pillow and put it inside the trunk of my car and head back to Thrive to see what the tech team has come up with. 

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
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