

## Chapter 3 No.3

The precinct was a chaotic hive of misery and bureaucracy. The fluorescent lights overhead hummed with a headache-inducing frequency. The air smelled of stale coffee, floor wax, and unwashed bodies.

Aurora sat on a hard wooden bench, her suitcase tucked protectively between her legs. She had given her statement. The officers were impressed, but suspicious. A woman of her size taking down two armed assailants raised questions they couldn't answer.

Across the room, standing near the Captain's office, was Elias Thorne. He had been brought in separately to provide a witness account. He stood in a bubble of silence; the chaos of the station seemed to part around him. His suit cost more than the precinct's annual budget.

He hadn't spoken to her. He hadn't offered her a ride. He had simply observed her with those cold, grey eyes as the police ushered them into separate cars.


Now, as he finished speaking with the Captain, he turned. He walked toward the exit, his path taking him past her bench.

He paused.

Aurora looked up. Up close, he was even more imposing. But she also saw the tension in his jaw, the slight pallor of his skin.

You have a unique survival instinct, Elias said. It wasn't a compliment; it was an observation.

Necessary in this city, Aurora replied, her voice cool.

Elias looked at her bruised knuckles. Then his gaze drifted to her face. He seemed to be searching for something—fear, pride, recognition. He found none of it. 


He reached up to adjust his cufflink, his hand trembling slightly. It was a microscopic movement, a glitch in his perfect composure.

Aurora's eyes narrowed. She didn't touch him. She didn't need to. She saw the way his pupils were slightly unequal in reaction to the harsh lights. She saw the sheen of cold sweat on his temple despite the cool air.

You should see a doctor about that tremor, she said softly. "And the migraine wrapping around your left eye."

Elias froze. His hands stilled on his cufflink. His eyes sharpened, the grey darkening like a storm.

Excuse me?

Your median nerve isn't the problem, Aurora continued, lowering her voice so the nearby officers would not hear. "It's systemic inflammation triggering a neural spike. You're drinking too much coffee and not sleeping. It's degrading the myelin sheath." 

Elias stared at her. The air between them grew heavy. He had seen the best specialists in Switzerland. None of them had diagnosed him from a glance in a dirty police station.

Who are you? he demanded, his voice low and dangerous.

Just a witness, Aurora said. She stood up, picking up her suitcase. "Try magnesium and valerian root. And sleep."

She didn't wait for his response. She walked toward the exit, her heels clicking rhythmically on the linoleum.

Elias stood rooted to the spot. The pain in his head throbbed, a brutal reminder that she was right.

Graves appeared at his side. "The car is ready, sir."

Elias didn't move immediately. He watched the automatic doors slide shut behind her.

Graves, Elias said.

Sir?

Forget the standard check. I want a full dossier. Where she was born, what she reads, and who taught her medicine.

Yes, sir. Did you get her name?

Aurora, Elias murmured, testing the weight of the word. "Find her."

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