



Tracking Down

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Tristin

I stare at the people sitting around the conference table, all waiting for me to start talking or to give them a chance to talk.

But I can't do anything.

I stare at the screen of my phone.

It's been three days—three days since I failed to protect Grace and she disappeared.

One more failure.

Another person I care about is gone.

I know who did it, but I have been sitting here like a fool, instead of turning the world upside down to find her and bring her back to my side.

Panic threatens to bubble in my throat but I push it down, hide it behind the facade of indifference. People stare at me, trying to gauge my emotions, but all they meet is ice. Yet, my heart is...

Burning.

Every second that passes brings me closer to losing my grip on my sanity.

I tell myself that I just need a little time. And it sounds similar again.

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The phone on the table starts ringing, and my cold hand reaches for it. I pick it up and place it against my ear.

Heavy breathing sounds from the speaker. My muscles freeze, my heart beginning to beat again.

The wall I have been building around myself for three days, to not show that I am crumbling breaks and I find myself springing to my feet and marching towards the glass wall behind me.

"Did he hurt you?" I ask, hoping for a negative answer.

But I receive none. Just the sound of her breathing soothes an ache inside my chest and adds fuel to the fire that's already burning in my veins.

"He—He has...my...friend and—"

"I am asking about you." My voice rises, my palm reaching for the cold glass, to keep myself plastered here. "are you in pain?"

What do I hope to hear? I know she is. Her voice is weak—too weak.

It's all because of me that she is in this state again. I shouldn't have let her go. I should have kept her by my side even if she hated me for the rest of her life.

"He wants you to...give up." She whispers in a croaky voice instead of answering me.

I close my eyes and stay there, just listening to her breathing again. She doesn't understand the hell I have been through.

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The moment I got the call that someone had taken her, a switch flipped inside my head. It didn't take long to understand that Carlos took her, and her parents played a part in it. They wanted to get back at me, for taking their favorite daughter Lily.

Fucking sick bastards!

Now, they are in my basements, ready to get what they deserve. But I can't bring myself to focus on that.

I have been busy searching for her day and night. But Carlos has her in a place where I can't trace her.

I have been desperate, panicking, and burning all the time. It felt like someone had stolen a part of me.

Until now, I didn't even know if she was alive. A few pictures or videos were not enough to make me believe that. I had to hear her voice, I had to know I still had time to get her back.

Or else...I didn't know what I was going to do.

"I...told him that you...will never give up—"

"Don't fight. I know you are strong and smart...but don't fight. I want you to stay safe until I come for you. And I will. I will be there soon." I whisper and open my eyes.

"Tristin." Her voice lowers.

"It's love." I admit, a lump lodging in my throat. "I think it is. I think that's why I can not forget about you."

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She doesn't say anything, but hearing her breathe and knowing that she is alive is all that I need.

"Tell Carlos to keep his hands off you and I will give him what he wants." I tell her and then hang up.

Luca's figure is already reflected in the glass in front of me. He steps closer, and whispers.

"We have located his father and brother, Boss. We don't need to give in."

"I can't take the risk. Let him have whatever he wants." I turn around and face him. "Call off this fucking meeting."

Luca has a lot to say. Before he started working for me, he worked for my brother. He was always here, raised with us, trained with Sebastian to become his close man one day.

And now here he is, stuck with me, unable to do anything about the way I do things.

"I will make it work." I say, blinking calmly.

I haven't tried to make him believe in me before. Maybe, I should have. Perhaps, I should do it now.

"Yes, Boss." Luca nods slowly.

If I back down today, inevitably tomorrow, shareholders will unite and strip me of my position with their right to vote. If I lose the power, I will become the target of their attacks.

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But I can't bring myself to care. When tomorrow comes, I will deal with it then.

Today, I will save the woman I care about.

I walk out of the conference room without a word and approach my office, my mind swarmed with thoughts. I should send Mom and Ania out of the country for a few days, to make sure they are safe.

I am just close to my chair when Luca comes barging inside my office. I stop in my spot and face him.

The look he has on his face tells me everything I need to do.

"They took Celine, Boss. " He informs, taking a deep breath.

I hate what he is about to say next, but I am glad it has happened.

"Ethan Calder has ways of tracking down Celine. He is moving. I think he is going to get Ms. Whitlock, Boss. " Luca blurts.

I am rushing towards the door and the elevator in no time. Luca is hot on my tail, calling our men.

If we just follow that bastard, I can get to Grace. Once I have her with me again, I will never let her out of my sight.

I love her. Now, she knows. There is no going back from here.