

Chapter 42 Abducted

DENVER.

"Oh thank Go—" Ivan halted his words once he saw me. The door was still open but there was no one else behind me. With the tears in my eyes and my shoulders that low, he was right to have concern knot his brows. "Where is she?" He asked.

"Where is Eliana?" Her name stung the depths of my heart as her Grandmother walked out. I closed the door behind me. "What's going on?" She looked at both Ivan and I. Words failed me at that moment.

How was I supposed to break the news that something bad had happened to Eliana? That instead of us coming back home hand in hand as we said, she was now missing. How was I supposed to tell them?

The tears in my eyes dropped down my cheeks as I stretched out my hands before opening it. Her broken necklace fell out onto the table. Her Grandmother sprung forward with shock and worry across her face.

"Where is she?" There was a crack in her already frail voice and I bit into my lips before shaking my head. She picked up the necklace and squeezed it in her hands. Her Grandmother cried so much and it was like I could feel her heartache. It was like I could feel Because the first person that came to my mind amidst all this was Elijah.

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"He's asleep"

Ivan's voice echoed from behind the door where I stood. I sniffled up my nose, wiping my tears before looking back at him.

"And her Nana?" I asked. "She's still up. She's looking after Eliana's father but she's so worried" Ivan replied and I closed my eyelids at the reminder of how much I'd failed that night.

Luckily, Elijah wasn't awake to ask of his mother. I could tell Ivan and her Grandmother but I knew there was no way I could tell him.

"How are you holding up?" Ivan asked.

"I only came back to spend the night. First thing when the sun rises, I'll be out in the forest to look for her" I croaked. "You and me both," Ivan paused but his hands settled on my shoulders.

"But Denver, I mean how are YOU holding up?" He reiterated and a hard lump slipped down my throat. "I'm not so worried. I know I'll find her" I muttered, even though I was worried at that moment. I was so worried it was sickening but I was used to assuring everyone else.

'It's going to be okay' 'Everything is fine' I was always so confident.

Something I sought after at that moment. My words were merely a consolation to myself so I could make it through the night without losing my mind. But I was worried sick. Each second that passed was the possibility that Eliana was still out there.

Somewhere I didn't know.

"Denver," I cupped my chin at his voice and a tear dropped again. This was the most I ever felt. "I'm not sure what would become of me if something were to happen to her" I muttered and Ivan held his arms out to me. "It wasn't your fault" He heaved.

"Except it was! I shouldn't have left her. I shouldn't have turned my back" I folded my hands in a fist ready to bury it into the wall but Ivan held me back. He fixated his eyes on mine.

"Hey, Denver!" He yelled and I attempted to catch my breath. Seeing my eyes, Ivan finally backed away and we both heaved deep breaths out.

"What really happened back there?" He finally asked. Because although he was successful in bringing Gerald back to the cabin, the second phase of our plan wasn't so much. I pushed a hard lump down my throat.

"She said she could take on Nora, that I should come and help you instead. Jaxon was after you when he found out—" Ivan arched his brows. "After me?" He echoed. "He found out our plan to rescue Gerald from Nora" I replied.

"Nora...I thought you snapped her neck back in the chambers?" Ivan asked. "Not enough to kill her" I muttered. "Although now I wish I had"

"And what about Jaxon?" Ivan asked.

"We got into a fight and I was able to distract him—" "What about Sienna?" Ivan continued and it struck me at that moment. How her stepmother had seemingly vanished after Nora showed up and the whole Ballroom ruptured in chaos.

"You know, I have no idea" I whispered.

"You think she was the one who took Eliana?" Ivan asked. I pulled out the necklace from my pocket and it was the pendant that was broken.

"Either way, I know she put up a fight." I lifted my eyes back to Ivan and he looked at the bloodied necklace. "Foul play" He heaved. I nodded. "Whoever it is, be it Sienna or anyone else, once I find them tomorrow, I won't spare a single soul" I scowled beneath my breath.

"What's your plan?" Ivan asked. "We're going to search the forest to every end, in and out. Whoever took her, they shouldn't be far" I replied.

"And what about Jaxon? He put up a fight today but what if he shows up again tomorrow?" I remembered his disfigured face and my blood-stained knuckles from earlier before I shook my head reassuringly. "I don't think he'll show up tomorrow. That I'm sure of" I said.

The only good thing to come out of our altercation was that it could buy us some time and at this stage in our grand plan to overthrow him, time was a luxury. But on the bad side, taking Gerald meant the Blood Hounds were left without an Alpha until further notice.

That was where Cory came in.

"Hello" I pulled out my phone to dial my Beta, knowing he was the one person I trusted and the one person who'd do exactly what I asked of him.

"Can you assemble two armies for me?" I asked. "What?" I could tell several things crossed his mind. "I need a bunch to watch over Eliana's Pack. We already have her Dad" I said.

"That's good..." Cory muttered but his voice was met with silence. "Or is it not?" He asked. I heaved a sigh. "Except someone took Eliana" I folded my arms, leaning against the corridor.

"No," Cory gasped and I nodded. "Yeah, that's why I need a second army. We're going into the forest tomorrow once the sun rises" I instructed and Cory cleared his throat.

"Can you do that for me?" I asked. "Yes, Alpha Denver" The line hung up and I swallowed yet another hard lump down my throat. There were footsteps behind which I immediately assumed were Ivan's. But when I turned around, I was met with the shock of my life.

"What happened to my Mommy?" His shrill voice cracked and my heart sank in my chest. "Elijah" I called out to him but the tears already flowed down his cheeks. He was awake and he had heard the phone call.

"Who took my Mommy?" He cried and I sucked in air through my lips.

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After several attempts, I was able to finally get Elijah back into his bed.

"Your Mom is okay" I'd lied to him. "She just had something to do—" "But I'll see her tomorrow, right?" He asked for the umpteenth time as he laid in his bed. I hovered above him, returning a nod.

He was a lot calmer now. But even though his face was pale, at least he had stopped crying. He seemed so peaceful, without trouble. And on a closer look, I realized just how much he looked like his mother.

He had her innocent smile and her bright hazel eyes.

"You will" It hurt me to have to lie to a child but I held onto the glimmer of hope that beamed inside of me that Eliana would be found tomorrow.

"All will be well" I ran my hands through his thick hair but just when I was about to leave, Elijah gripped my hands. I halted, feeling the softness of his palms graze against my callous skin and my heart throbbled for a moment. I looked back at him and he pouted.

"Don't go please" He surprisingly begged and I furrowed my brows.

"Why?" I asked. Elijah sat up against his bed and I sat on the chair just beside him. He reached to his bedside to hand me a book and then he smiled.

"Can you read that to me...please?" His voice was so tiny that it was hard to say no to him. I rested back in the chair, flipping through the pages of the book and then I looked up at him.

"Mommy always read this to me back in Tuscany but ever since we got here, she's just been so busy. She promised me to read it when she got back tonight..." Elijah's eyes fell to his twirling fingers and he sighed.

"I should've known."

"No!" I exclaimed softly. "It isn't her fault that she isn't here right now. She tried so hard to make it. I want you to know that. Maybe it's even my fault..." "She just barely has any time for me now" Elijah replied.

"It doesn't change the fact that you mean a lot to her. You're her whole world I hope you know that." I assured him. "And it will all be over soon" I added and he looked at me. "She's said that before" He replied.

"I'm saying it now..." I shifted closer to him, reaching for his hands.

"Do you trust me?" I asked and there was a brief pause before Elijah nodded. "It feels like I'm supposed to" He said softly and it didn't take long for me to realize how smart he was for a young boy. His smile melted my heart at that moment as we locked eyes and hands.

And there was just this fiery spark about him that resonated in me. This was the first time I had ever spoken to him yet it felt like I'd known this little boy my whole life and I could tell he felt the same way too.

"Fine" I groaned, settling back in the chair. "I'll read you your story but you have to be ready to fall asleep" I said and in the flash of a second, he jumped into his covers, holding them just above his shoulders.

He opened one eye back at me and I chuckled. It was the one second that night that I didn't feel so terrible. "In a little town called Bjork, there was a little boy. He had bright blonde hair and skin as white as milk. He was a brave little boy who everyone had something nice to say about..."

"All the time" And I read the story to him, line by line. Page by page.

Until the very end.

And when I closed the book, I stared down at him sleeping. "Thank God" I was just about to slip away from the room when I heard his voice again and this time, he was screaming and jerking forward like he was having a bad dream. I threw myself at him, holding him firmly in my hands.

"Hey!" I called. "Hey, Elijah. Elijah, look at me!" I beckoned and then finally, he opened his eyes slowly. "It was another nightmare" He said.

"Another?" I arched my brows. He was almost out of breath as I helped him to the bed again. "Since when have you been having nightmares?" I asked and he pushed a hard lump down his throat.

"Since Tuscany?" It was me who asked. And he nodded.

"They stopped for a while but it just came back. They always do" He clutched the pillow against his chest and terror filled the little boy's eyes. Having recurring nightmares was never normal, especially for a human.

Elijah laid back down but he didn't let go of his tight grasp around my hand so I was forced to lay next to him, squeezed by the edge of his little bed with one foot out.

"What are in these nightmares?" I whispered into his ears and he replied.

"Monsters."

"Monsters?" I echoed. "Does your Mom know?" He turned to me and then nodded. My hand rested against his face. "And your Dad?" I asked.

And then he said those words that shocked me to my core.

"I don't have a Daddy" Elijah whispered. I felt my heart pound. "But he's in Tuscany, your Mom said he was in Tuscany?" I blurted out, not much of even a question to him but to myself.

"She said my Daddy was not in Tuscany. She said he was right here when we were about to leave" And even though his words were slow, they were serious. It didn't take long for him to close his eyes again and fall asleep. Elijah stopped talking but his words kept echoing in my ears.

As I slipped away from his grasp, it evoked inside of me a realization that stung deep. It couldn't be.

It simply couldn't be.

I walked out of the door, carefully closing it behind me only to find her Grandma already in the corridor. She was seated in her chair with her arms out to me. "I need the necklace" She whispered.

There was a crack in her voice and an arch between my brows.

"What?"

She sucked in a deep breath.

"What if I told you there was another way we could find Eliana?" She asked and slowly, my brows collapsed. I jerked forward. "I'll ask you what we're waiting for" I replied. She let her arms fall.

"But there is something you should know," She paused in all seriousness and a stint of regret clouded her eyes.

"And it's something I've kept secret for so long..." Her Nana finally said which only made me wonder what exactly that could mean.