

Chapter 34

I lay on the bed, my head hanging over the edge as I stared at the couch. Its occupant was not in the room.

I sighed as I recalled that horrible event. It was reduced to nothing but a nightmare.

No one knew about what had transpired. I didn't even tell my friends.

They left the next morning, smiling. I saw them o with a smile.

But the chills crawled over my skin. Cain was right.

I didn't see Serra again, nor did I hear of her. *She was gone.*

Where? No one knew. I didn't try to ask.

But deep down...I knew Cain did something—something I couldn't name. *The less I knew, the better.*

I blinked, looking into Cain's eyes. He was crouching before me, watching me with one raised brow.

"Is this a new yoga pose you learned?" he asked, amused.

I jumped up and sat upright on the bed. My heart leapt violently, pounding against my ribs.

I hadn't even noticed him until he was before me, upside down.

"Ana," he cooed, making my mouth turn down in a pout.

Not of anger, but frustration. *Sneaky ass.*

I told him not to heal me with his powers, and he did the exact same thing. I couldn't face Cain.

Not after that vulnerable moment when I let my walls down around him. *I shouldn't mistake his ulterior motives for kindness.*

It was only for his wing. Everything was for his wing.

The thought started bothering me.

"Get ready. I'm dropping you today," he said, standing to his full height.

I only nodded, and he left without another word. I didn't want to go, but I refused to be a coward.

So I got ready and left with him. But not before he made me nish my breakfast.

My cute moans of protest didn't melt his heart. The ride was quiet.

But there were subtle glances, speaking silence and my thundering heart in his presence. It started beating...to him.

Cain dropped me outside the studio, then left. I went on with my day like usual.

*But the thoughts lingered.*

I stared at my re ection in the full-length mirror. My abdomen.

I looked at the ring on my nger and, without thinking, I touched it.

"What's wrong?"

I spun wildly, and Cain surveyed the surroundings before xing his hard gaze on me.

"You really came?" I asked.

"You called me," he said, poking my forehead with his nger. "Shae is with you. Stop worrying."

"You will pick me?" I asked thoughtlessly.

His smirk was a teasing one, and so was the look in his eyes.

"I mean—you dropped me in the morning." I tripped over my words. "If you are busy—"

"I will," Cain replied.

I focused on his lips. *Why am I staring?*

I shook my head, eyes still locked on his sinful mouth.

"You need a break," Cain said, bemused.

His eyes—I couldn't look away from them. They were mesmerizing, but now their abyss sucked me deeper every time I gazed at them.

"Are you okay?" Cain cupped my cheek. "You are warm."

*What am I doing? Why am I getting attracted to him?*

I stepped away, making him drop his hand. "I'll be careful." I forced a small smile.

Cain stared at me silently before vanishing. He wasn't nosy.

That, at least, was a blessing. I hurried out of the stitching room.

My phone rang, making me halt. I frowned, seeing Hannah's number.

She dropped the call before I could answer. I received a message right away.

She wanted to meet...me and Cain. I looked at Shae when she appeared behind me.

Before the unwanted guest entered my studio. Logan.

"Still angry?" he asked.

"What do you want?" I snapped.

"Just checking up on my tenant—"

"I'm ne," I cut him o .

He was clearly upset. I didn't care.

"I'm sorry for the way I treated you. I was wrong," Logan whispered, eyes full of remorse. "I had no right to decide for you."

He extended a cup of my favorite co ee. "Don't take it the wrong way. I bought it for everyone."

I took it reluctantly.

"I'll leave you to your work," he said. "Call me if there is any problem."

He left.

"He is plotting something," Shae said.

I stared inside the cup. At the white uid. The smell of vanilla wafted in the air. I wanted to throw it away.

"We've got a wedding dress to prepare," I said, taking a sip. "Come—"

A strange warmth spread through my limbs—not comforting, just... wrong. Like my body was sinking into itself.

"Ana?" Shae grabbed my arm. "Is everything okay?"

"I'm good. Just felt dizzy." I shook my head. "Let's go."

We went to the stitching room. The noon morphed into the evening.

I waited, but Hannah didn't come. So there was no point in waiting any longer.

I locked the studio and left the building with Shae. I rubbed my temples as we walked down the street.

My head felt so heavy. Cain didn't contact me. *He was never late.*

Shae wasn't informed of any changes. Meaning...he was coming.

She was about to call the driver, but I stopped her. I wanted to wait a little more.

*He was coming for me. He always did.*

We decided to wait in the co ee shop down the street. But I froze when we turned the corner.

Hannah was there—lying in blood. Cain was there—holding her dead body.

I was reminded of the night at *Rose Raven*. Of Laurel. Her murder. Cain drenched in her blood. *How can I be so stupid?*

There was a hole in Hannah's chest. Her body was mutilated with grave wounds.

"You—" I struggled to breathe. "Killed her—"

I staggered back a step when Cain faced me. Cold and emotionless.

"Why did you kill her?"

His eyes narrowed dangerously when I cowered away from him.

"Get here," Cain growled. "Ana!"

I wanted to go forward... But I ran back.

There he was...waiting for me. Logan.

I ran into his waiting arms to hide from the monster.

"Ana!" Cain raged behind me, making me shiver in Logan's hold.

"Didn't you hear her?" Logan embraced me protectively. "Your tricks won't work anymore."

"Ana!"

I looked at Cain over my shoulder. He extended his bloody hand.

"Come to me."

"Never," I shrieked.

"ANASTASIA!"

The sky roared when his eyes switched. My heart hurt hearing his voice...but my mind overrode my emotions.

"Will you trust me?" Logan whispered in my ear.

His glowing eyes were similar to Cain's except for the red slits.

"Let's go to Istrigus. He won't come there."

"Don't you dare!" Cain snarled.

"Yes," I consented. "Take me away from him."

Logan raised a whirlpool of blue ames. I felt dizzy with the sudden motion.

"Hey!" Logan held me. "Take a deep breath. You will be ne."

He turned me around. "Welcome to Istrigus."

"This—" I was awestruck. "Your home?"

The place was nothing less than heaven. Everything glowed as far as I could see.

The night was painted in beautiful blue hues.

"Yours too."

I looked behind me. A man in a royal blue gown, with long platinum hair tied in a ponytail, arrived with a male and a female.

His scrutinizing gaze made me uncomfortable. There was an unknown pain and adoration in his icy blue eyes.

"I'm Sorush. It's a pleasure to meet you, Anastasia."

"You know me?" I asked, confused.

"Later, child." His voice was aectionate. "Let her rest for tonight," he said to Logan.

They left as they came.

"Who is he?" I asked.

"Head of *Blue Bloods*," Logan answered. "Everything will make sense once you feel better."

Logan held my left hand. I frowned when he took o Cain's ring.

"You don't need it anymore." He smiled.

Something cold unfurled in my chest when he pocketed it. I should've stopped him, but my voice wouldn't work. ~

"You are safe," he whispered as he guided me toward a white castle-like building. "I will protect you."

"Will you kill him?" I asked.

Logan stopped and looked at me.

"Is that what you want?" he asked, his face cold and expressionless.

The words tickled my tongue. There was no holding back.

Nothing was left for it.

"Kill Cain and keep your vow to me."