The sky cracked.

The thunder rolled around like a beast, splitting the sky in two. The downpour had to be the ugliest the city had ever seen. Weather forecasters kept urging people to stay at home . The winds were wrecking havoc!

But the rain, the weather. .it had no e ect on her.

Drenched to her bones, she kept walking forward on the dark pavement. Her eyes were glassy, one would think she rose from the dead. Her pale skin stood out against the wet fabric of her shirt. Her hair felt heavy. Her lips dry . .

There was hardly any person, any car on the road.

The rain frowned upon her but with an empty head , she kept going against the wind.

Emma had no place to go.

The front resembled a well while the back a hell. She was stuck in the middle. .not knowing what she could survive?

Sometimes you have to pick between bad and worse..

He did what he wanted.

She couldn't help but think this over and over again. He never wanted her in the first place. Always looked down upon her like an insect who had lost its way. .

It was over now. .the bitter smile on her face could split any beating heart but apparently not his. .

All she wanted was a safe house she could hide in until she moved into an apartment. Until she could stand on her own feet.

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The chill in her heart was stronger then the one outside. The dread kept spreading. . reminding her she had nowhere to go to. No one to ask for help. No one to pay her expanses. .

Is she going to end up begging on streets?

Just as she walked with her zombie like pace ,her heart in shambles over the darkly lit pavement. The only light coming was from the street lights casting yellow light. .but due to the heavy rain it kept zapping.

Glitching like in horror movie.

Emma didn't notice the two men hidden under the shade. Watching her doomed state. The leer in their eyes palpable as they glanced at each other.

Knowing well their huntwas coming there way.

One of them decided to step out from under the shade. His worn out overcoat giving him a cheap appearance. The hair matted to his forehead as he licked his lower lip. . checking out the delicate girl.

"She seems good enough for tonight." He said over his shoulder to his companion.

He was rewarded with a smirk.

"You first." Came the dirty reply.

He nodded sti ly. Wrapping his coat around himself . . feeling the cold all of sudden . His hunt was strange. .since she kept moving forward without an ounce of shivering.

So absent from her surroundings, she didn't notice the short sturdy man walking towards her .

Nearing her with each step.

The light kept going in and out.

One second you could see him.

And the next he would disappear in the dark.

He was ten feet apart from her. . rubbing his hands, he couldn't wait to get to her. Have her wrap around his—

A sudden light flooded the streets nearly blinding him. An SUV swerved around—the tires crunching in the water as it stopped right beside the girl.

The man stopped and leaped in the shadows. Not at all ready for the new comer.

The door swung open and a tall man slipped out—shutting the door loudly. He got drenched within seconds as he spotted the girl pass by him as if he was a ghost she couldn't see.

"Foolish girl." He muttered darkly watching her back . The skin of her so pale. .

He was doing this for DHe grounded. Or else this girl could die in the rain for all he cared!!

Not waiting for her to notice him, he moved towards her. Getting on the pavement. .his boots splashing in the water. .right behind her like a dark shadow overlooking her.

"Emma." He called her out.

She didn't turn back.

Gritting his teeth, he closed the distance between them and caught her wrist in his strong hold. Immediately halting her.

The rain tearing down on both.

"You alright?." He didn't know why he said what he did. He just didn't know what to say? What to do?

The situation was already forced.

She shook her head slightly.

Maximus sighed. Feeling his patience leaving the room bit by bit.

"Get in the car." His voice brisk and impatient.

He definitely wasn't ready for what happened next.

For a moment he thought there was something wrong with her—even the rain couldn't drown the sound of a whimper and her shoulders shook lightly—before he could decipher what was happening—she had turned around and latched herself around his arm!

The move was so sudden , he froze.

The girl was. . crying $\ensuremath{\mathcal{G}}$

Her thin arms were wrapped around his bicep, her head on his shoulder as she weeped without a care in the world.

Her fingers were digging in his skin , her breath so close—he could feel the tears leaving her eyes—feel them branding his skin—

For a minute he let her do as she pleased. Let her take him as a support. Let her wet his shirt and then he tried to shook her o his arm.

"Get a grip! You look like you saw a murder!" He said irritably, snatching back his arm as Emma stood there. .

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Uncomfortable at the tiny moment that sparked between them he turned around.

Expecting her to follow up.

But she stayed right there.

Maximus could feel his anger blazing back to life. What the fuck was wrong with this girl?! Why couldn't she follow a simpleorder?!!

Swivelling around, he tried not to lash out at the stupid girl standing like a mute.

"Get in the goddam—"

"I'm not going."

Her small voice was loud enough to stop him. Dumbfound him.

And his eyes brows knotted together.

"I didn't ask for your consent. Get. In!" He was barely holding up the sizzling anger he felt at her defying him in every way.

Emma glanced up at him.

The swollen eyes doing something to his being. The wounded look in her eyes making him forget what he came for. . Onlyfor a moment. .

"I saidI'm not going anywhere." She said it so clearly, leaving him speechless and he rarely got that.

Maximus breathed out, his breath fogging up in the rain. He knew well she wasn't going to move an inch for him.

Might as well pick her up and dump her in the car—

His phone began to vibrate and he took it out. Noticing **Miles calling** flashing on the screen.

He swiped the screen, placing it next to his ear. A sense of dread filling him. Not at all feeling good about him calling right now.

And he heard it.

His frantic voice.

"Diana isn't home!! She vanished!!"

The car was heading. . somewhere.

The companions silence to the point of being uncomfortable. The air forced. .she could feel the pressure on her lungs. Her peripheral vision giving her his rigid pose. His eyes on the road and his large hand on the wheel.

Was he breathing?

Knowing well how much he loved his sister, Emma envied Diana.

Also. .

Emma loved the fact she ruined his car seat. Water was seeping from her clothes onto the seat. Giving o a strange unpleasant odor.

Maximus pushed a hand in his hair, the wet hair gelling back. His green eyes not wavering from the road.

Emma knew he was tensed.

So tensed , he didn't seem to be noticing her presence. It was as if he was alone. All by himself.

Emma couldn't take it anymore.

"Don't worry. We will find her." Her so voice broke the tension, as he nodded stilly.

"If you hadn't been fucking stupid, D would be here." His voice was low and his harsh words hurt her. It really did. .her heart throbbed painfully at his accusation.

"You kicked me out." Emma defended herself.

He turned his face at her, his green eyes boring into hers.

"I'll kick you out again once I find my sister!" He said it in a promising tone.

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Emma's eyes widened at the acid in his voice.

She was about to open her mouth when the screen of his cellphone lit up on the dashboard. Breathing hard, he took it o , swiping up.

Putting it on speaker.

"Did you find her?" A frantic Miles asked.

"How the fuck did you let her out ?" He asked in a deathly calm voice and Emma couldn't help but feel her skin crawl.

Him yelling wasn't scary.

Him being quiet was earth shattering.

"I—i didn't know she—she had gone out all by herself—" Miles stammered.

"Hear me clearly. If I didn't find my sister within twenty minutes, you're dead." He said it in such a casual voice Emma glanced at him. Seeing his jaw twitch.

He didn't let Miles talk further.

He turned his cellphone o and nearly slammed it on the dashboard. Cracking the back of it.

"You shouldn't talk about killing anyone." She said it so ly.

"Yeah? Guess I should talk about killing you How does that sound?" He looked at her , eyes so serious. .Emma couldn't help but lean against the door.

Seeing her scramble to the door, he didn't say anything further.

"I'm not afraid of you." She said quietly.

"Sure." His reply clearly said he didn't believe her one bit.

The car turn around the corner and Emma frowned . Where were they heading to?

Maximus sighed, slamming his designer shoe on the brakes. Halting the car suddenly. Emma had her seat belt on so luckily she didn't get her head bashed against the dashboard. Maximus was ripping o the seat belt over his chest as he switched o the engine.

"What is this place?" She glanced at him, the darkness outside the car and the unfamiliar territory spooking her out.

"Get out." His curt answer didn't relieve her nerves as she watched him open the door and stepping out in the semi darkness.

The downpour had stopped.

Her clothes had barley dried out.

Emma watched his lean figure going around the car and—was he leaving her behind?!!

Quickly, Emma took her seat belt o and scrambled against the door. Slipping out the car into the cold night.

Hastily, she walked behind him. Not wanting to get lost and as her eyes adjusted to the surrounding. . .she could spot an old Church within ten feet of them.

The lights were on . It was more of a chapel than a church considering

the small size of it. The outer walls had cracks in them. Spider webs adorning the building. .the chapel looked straight out of a horror movie but strangely the man in front of her made her feel safe. .

The entrance was open.

Maximus entered first.

As she entered, she could see the Virgin Mary statue and — Emma clapped a hand over her mouth. Seeing the figure in the feet of the statue.

"Diana. .," She breathed out.

Maximus walked towards her, he seemed exhausted.

She saw him sitting over his knees, his hand stretching out . . . placing it on his sister's shoulder.

As if electrocuted, she sat up suddenly. Her red rimmed eyes finding him looking over her with a tender look.

"D. . .,"

Emma was surprised to hear the vulnerability in his voice.

"I'm sorry." He said so ly, ashamed.

Diana smiled at her brother , her hand reaching out—cupping his cheek.

"I know I know. .," She said gently.

Hastily, he covered her hand with his.

He whispered, his eyes calming down at seeing her alright. " If I upset you, go ahead. Kill me. You can't leave me like her. ."

Diana shook her head, taking his hand in hers. Squeezing it with all her might.

"I would never. I was just. . ru ling with your feathers." She tried to lightened the mood.

"You put my life on line and you're joking now?" He didn't like it.

She chuckled. "How did you find me?"

"You always come here when you're upset. Mother brought us here all the time. And I brought herback." The last sentence was uttered quietly.

Seemed like Diana just noticed her presence because she turned to take a look behind her brother and sure enough. .Emma was standing there.

Watching them.

"Emma!" Diana cried out, stretching her arms and smiling, Emma came towards her. Bending down, she was engulfed in a hug. As she said the sweetest things to her...

To Emma, it was clear as day.

Maximus loved his sister more than anything in this world. He would walk through hell for her. No matter how much he hated her guts, he brought her back for Diana's sake.

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