

## xi. the kidnapper

She was falling through the chute, she fell out of one and coincidentally on Jack. She could hear him groan, from her weight. "Sorry," she managed to grunt out as she got up and out of the basket with Jack following her lead.

She tried to walk but she was very wobbly for some reason she couldn't understand why. Jack must've seen here not being able to hold her balance because he put his arms around her waist. "Hey guys, I think something's wrong with Ev," he called out ignoring the fact that he wasn't where he was supposed to be.

"Wasn't there suppose to be a truck?" Lula asked incredulous, looking around. They were in a kitchen instead of the back side of a building.

"Where the hell are we?" Jack asked finally seeing the environment.

There was a man yelling at them in Chinese. They were pushed around and forced out of the kitchen. Throughout the whole encounter, Jack held Evelynn because she does not seem to be okay at all.

"Did you mis-run the tube?" Daniel questioned Jack.

"No, I put it in the truck. I know I did," Jack told him.

"Are you sure? Because we are really are not in the truck."

"Somebody must have moved the tube, otherwise, why would we be in a Chinese restaurant?"

"I didn't move it, relax."

They were then pushed out of the kitchen into the dining area. Evelynn's mind was foggy and she was trying to process everything but it just came out with a blank mind. "Why are we here?" Daniel asked looking around.

"I'm freaking starving," announced Lula.

"Yea, I'm starving too," Jack said while checking on Evelynn and saw that she was acting in weird way. "Guys, seriously, Ev doesn't look too good."

Daniel and Lula both turned to look at Evelynn who was clinging on to Jack. Her eyes were open and always blinking, like she was trying to look at the thing in front of her and couldn't. "Evelynn?" Lula called for her attention so ly.

"Yeah?" she croaked out. "Hungry, yeah, I'm hungry, too."

"No, not that. Are you okay?" Lula asked cautiously.

She looked around wildly, trying to focus on her. "Umm, no, no. I don't think I am."

"That's a problem, that's a serious issue."

"She was just fine a second ago..."

"I guess since we're all hungry. At least and I know this isn't much consolation, apparently we're now surrounded by Chinese food. Right?"

Merritt came back to them from outside, "I think where we are right now, they don't refer to it was Chinese food, it's just called, food."

"Wait what are you saying? How is this possible?"

Just then, a giggle could be heard from a person at the table. "I believe in your particular parlance the word you're looking for is magic." The person turned around and faced them.

"That guy looks exactly like you," Lula whispered aggressively to Merritt and quite loudly. "He looks exactly like you. Are you seeing this right now?"

"Chase," Merritt said, greeting the stranger.

"Must confess, it's like what I always heard about meeting the Rolling Stones. They're a lot shorter in person."

"Remember when I told you about the guy who screwed me out of everything?" he asked the four confused Horsemen. "This is my twin brother, Chase."

"Wait," Daniel started walking up to the man. "Did you do this?"

Everyone in the restaurant got up, seemingly ready to protect Mr. Chase. The men all seemed about ready to tear Daniel to pieces if he tried to make a move on Chase. Daniel, who understood the situation, backed up when they all got up.

Case laughed, "As you can see, my boss don't mess around."

"I do not understand what is going on right now. At all," Lula spoke quickly.

"Seconded." Evelynn agreed wistfully.

"Okay, I'll break it down for you. You jump o a roo op in New York and you landed in Macau a.k.a the Vegas of China. Presto, chango. Don't you just love it when the greatest magicians in the world are the object of someone else's magic trick? Isn't that poetic?" He paused looking at them. "No? You know what? I'm not gonna let you guys yuck my yum. Shu shu, mu shu."

His men started to grab them and escorted them out of the restaurant. "You know what they say, what happens in Macau... Well, I don't know the rest of it because it's in Chinese. Hey, thanks, guys!" You can hear his annoying voice speak above all of the bustlings of the dining area. The guys pushed them all in a car. Evelynn, who still barely has her bearings, got stuck with sitting next to Atlas. She wasn't in the right mind state to start complaining, though, much to her dismay.

However, she started to realize that the seat was very comfortable. So the first thing she did was sleep, not exactly caring about what happened. She knew she needed to get better and what she's learned was that sleep was the best medicine.

"I'm borrowing this, thanks," she said as she laid her head on Daniel's shoulder. The rumbling of the car lulled her to unconsciousness.

She awoke to Daniel patting her cheek. "Hey, wake up. We're here."

"Where is here?" She asked.

"No sure."

Evelynn was disappointed to find that the Macau incident was very much, reality and not a dream. On the bright side, she was considerably better. She felt at one with her mind and body. She stood up, properly and walked out of the car. "Just follow the guards, they'll lead you to my boss," Chase informed them. "Had fun playing this cat and mouse game broski... Meow."

They all went into the casino doing as instructed. "Man, I am so, so, so sorry," Merritt apologized to Daniel.

"Yeah, don't ever accuse me of betraying us again, okay?"

"Wait, what did I miss? So, we're in Macau because we've been kidnapped, right?" Evelynn asked no one in particular as they boarded the elevator.

"Appears so and there's other stu too, regarding Merritt but let's ignore for now," Jack answered.

"Great."

"Do you ever think that the Eye is watching us? You know, maybe this isn't what they want? At the exact right moment, they're gonna swoop in and we'll be like 'Yes! Thank God you're here. You're here just in the nick of time, Eye!' Then, we'll just celebrate and it'll be all worth it in the end." She paused to see everyone's reaction. "Yeah, I don't think like that either. So, it's cool"

"Cute," Evelynn muttered.

As the elevator dinged to show them that they had arrived at their floor, rock music could be heard playing from the condo. The elevator opened from the back, so they all had to run around to be greeted a man in a white suit with his back facing them. He seemed to be playing with cards, it even looked like he was practicing. He looked at their direction and smiled at them, taking his remote out to turn o the music. "Ta da!" he exclaimed. "Sorry, I'm gonna be working with you. Please, come in. Come in."

The man was completely bonkers. The manner of his attire could only tell you that, he seemed to have no care for things. He travels a lot but only goes outside if he's needed. He seemed to have the air of authority, he's a higher up. He's also very smart and tricky, but like Daniel, very controlling. Perfectionist, even though his appearance is horrid he loves it when things go his own way.

As she deduced, the guards then grabbed them and pushed them into the room. Evelynn didn't say anything as she was thrown in, observing the man. "I'm sorry, how are you working with us?" Daniel questioned.

"Well, as much as a magician who pulls a rabbit out of a hat, I am working with that rabbit." He started walking towards them. "We'll be working together, yes. Allow me to introduce myself."

"Yeah, you're Walter Mabry," Jack interrupted him. "The one who died a year ago."

"Yes and I did, which I got from you Mr. Wilder and Ms. Park, of course." He addressed both of them.

"Lovely," Evelynn mumbled.

"You fake your death and the world puts their guard down. I was able to control quite a few companies, including my old partner Owen's. As a consulting merger, so-called anonymous shareholder," he explains.

"And that violates how many SCC laws?" Lula asked.

"I believe it breaks all of them," he answered enthusiastically.

"All of them," Lula echoed quietly.

"You see, you all want an audience. Need one, desperately. It's quite sad really, hence my ability to nab you all. I, on the other hand, want the opposite of that. I just want to be, and I am, one hundred percent o the grid. You know a way?"

"Yeah, because the grid is for actual human beings," Daniel answered and Walter chuckled at his answer.

"No, because in the world of total surveillance the only freedom lies in not being seen. You can't control the grid, within the grid," he informed them. "Follow me." When they didn't move, he repeated himself and the guard pushed them towards Walter.

"You pulled a hat out of a rabbit," he pointed to Lula. "That was very gullible."

"Almost eight and a half years ago. So, no need to bring that up."

"Yeah, I mean, we can't be accountable for our adolescent personas. Can we, Magic Holio?" he asked Daniel.

"Magic Holio, that, that was fi een years ago." Daniel was obviously embarrassed at his old stage name.

"Don't get me wrong, I love that name. Like you and many others, who I suppose, weren't getting any sex in high school years. I um I'd dabble with it but unlike you, I was able to transition upwards towards actual magic." He waved his hand towards a machine.

"Science, as you may have heard it be called."

The machine was big and Evelynn hadn't had a single clue as to what it could be used for. "So, do you want to now how I got you here?" Walter asked.

"We know how you did it," Merritt replied.

"No you don't," Walter quickly said.

"Yeah, you stole our files for the show and obviously hypnotized us," Jack informed. During that time Walter kept saying 'No' and 'Stop talking'.

Evelynn began to explain, "The strobe was a combo with the beat, so it's eas-"

"I said stop!" He quickly grabbed her face, successfully seizing her chatter. His face was very close to Evelynn's and her heart raced in shock. "You may not be having fun, but I am!"