

Chapter 5

By the time Catalina reached the lobby of the office building that housed Lark & LeClair, she was a little winded, tense with anger and vibrating with anxiety.

Daniel was already behind his desk. He took one look at her when she came through the door and got to his feet.

“Are you all right?” he asked.

“I’m fine. Has there been any word from Olivia?”

“No.” Daniel frowned. “Should there be some word from her?”

Catalina glanced at the clock. “In another five minutes she’ll be late. She’s never late.”

Daniel raised his brows. “The hot date, remember? She’s probably having a late breakfast with Mr. Perfect.”

“Probably,” Catalina said.

Daniel exhaled slowly. “You think something’s wrong, don’t you?”

“Olivia knows I would be worried about her by now,” Catalina said. “She should have checked in. She’s not answering her phone. I’m going to call Ferris.”

“I’m not sure that’s a good idea,” Daniel said.

“I can apologize later.”

Emerson Ferris answered on the fourth ring. He sounded groggy; maybe hungover. Maybe angry. Whatever the case, it was clear from his first words that he was not in a good mood—certainly not in the mood one would expect from a man who had spent the night with a lover.

“No, Olivia isn’t here,” he growled. “Who the hell is this?”

“Catalina Lark, her friend and business partner. We’ve met a few times, remember?”

“Oh, yeah, I remember you. Well, you can tell your friend and business partner that I got the message. But, shit, she could have texted me to say it’s over. She didn’t have to ghost me. I spent half the day on that meal and she didn’t even bother to let me know that she wasn’t going to make it. I thought she cared. I was so wrong about her.”

Catalina stopped breathing. She clutched the phone so tightly it was a wonder the device didn’t shatter.

“Are you saying Olivia didn’t show up at all last night?” she whispered.

“Yeah, that’s exactly what I’m saying.” Emerson paused. “Why? Do you know something I don’t know?”

“No,” Catalina said. “I don’t, and that’s got me scared half to death.”

“What the hell?” Sudden alarm erased the growl in Emerson’s voice. “Where’s Olivia?”

“I have no idea,” Catalina said. “Why do you think I called you? I’m going to hang up now and make some other phone calls.”

“Holy shit, do you mean you’re going to start calling the hospitals? Do you really think something happened to her?”

“I just told you, I don’t know,” Catalina said. “But something is very wrong. I’ve got to go now. Give me your word that you’ll call me if you hear from her.”

“Yeah, sure.” Emerson’s voice sharpened. “I’ll get in touch right away. What about her car? Is it gone?”

“Her car is still in the apartment garage. She said she was going to use a ride-hailing app to go to your place.”

“Maybe the car service can tell you when they picked her up and where they took her.”

“Trust me, I’m going to start there.”

“Let me know what you find out, okay? Call me immediately. Now you’ve got me worried, too.”

“I’ll be in touch,” Catalina said.

She hung up the phone and looked at Daniel. “Olivia never showed up at Emerson Ferris’s condo.”

Daniel reached for his own phone.

“I’ll call the hospitals,” he said. “You deal with the ride-hailing company.”

Twenty minutes later they both put down their phones. Catalina had to fight to suppress the raw panic that was eating her up inside.

“The car service guy says Olivia canceled the pickup,” she managed, trying to maintain a semblance of calm. “I called all of her other friends. No one saw her last night.”

“The hospitals have no record of admitting anyone by that name,” Daniel reported. “What in the world is going on? It’s not like Olivia to just up and vanish.”

“No, it’s not,” Catalina said. She grabbed her coat and handbag and headed for the door. “You stay here and start going through the morning news reports. You’re looking for anything that happened in the Seattle downtown area last night. Car accidents. Fires. Shootings. Robberies. Kidnappings. *Anything.*”