



## TWENTY THREE – RAGE

Luke was worried.

It's been twenty four hours since Nina and her friend, Kayla were last seen. The police were currently questioning Lacy, but she'd already told them everything she knew, nothing which proved useful.

The last time they were seen was when they both went to the alleyway. The police had conducted investigations but other than traces of Nina's vomit and suspicious footprints, nothing else had been recovered.

Luke was currently questioning the manager of the place.

"Why on earth would you allow two unprotected women to go to an alleyway alone. Didn't you realise how dangerous that was?"

"Once again, sir, I sincerely apologise. Please exercise a bit more patience. They will be found soon."

Luke paced from one end of the office to the other. This was all his fault. He should've never allowed Nina to go to that party alone at such a late hour. He should've accompanied her.

Just then, an officer barged into the room, appearing out of breath.

"Sir, there's been a development."

Luke ran to him, his heart pounding.

"Have she...they been found."

"Yes, sir. I mean no. Not both of them. Only one of them has been found."

"What? Who?"

"Kayla. Kayla Macphersom. Her unconscious body was found about two miles from the club. She's currently being rushed to the hospital, but we should be able to interrogate her once she's stabilised."

Luke was slightly disappointed that it wasn't Nina, but that was not important at the moment.

"Which hospital is she?"

He got the information he wanted and within minutes, he was on his way to the facility. Once he got there, he alighted without waiting to be helped out. The hospital grounds were already swamped with policemen and police cars.

Immediately Luke had gotten the information that Nina was missing, he relayed same to his grandfather who made sure that the entire police department were on the case.

Luke burst into the reception and ran to the first nurse he saw.

"Where is she?"

"I'm sorry, who are you talking about?"

"The lady who was just admitted here. Kayla Macpherson."

Her fingers flew over the keyboard.

"Yes, we do have a patient by that name who was just admitted here. What's your relationship with her, sir?"

Luke didn't hesitate.

"She's a friend to my fiancée. They're both victims of kidnapping."

"Okay, sir. I'm afraid you'll have to wait like the police are doing. The patient is currently in a critical condition. She's not receiving guests at the moment."


"Okay, thanks."

Luke paced the room throughout the hours it took for the doctors to get Kayla out of danger zone, then he continued pacing until she woke up and was proclaimed fit to speak.

"Mr. Luke?" He looked up when he heard his name to find a doctor dressed in white coveralls.

"Yes, that's me."

"You can speak to Miss Macpherson now. It appears she has a lot to say."



Luke did not wait for any further invitation. He asked for directions and hurried to Kayla's room. She was hooked to a lot of beeping machines, but she looked wide awake.

Immediately she saw him, she tried to sit up.

"Luke? Luke Bradford? You have to help Nina. Th-they took her..."

Luke walked over and held her hand.

"Calm down, Kayla. I'm here. What do you mean? Who took her?"

"I...I don't know who they were, and it was very dark so I couldn't see their faces. Nina was not feeling well and she was throwing up due to the alcohol so I walked her to the alley to empty her stomach. I remember hearing strange sounds in the dark before these men ambushed us and told us not to scream else they'll kill us."

Luke's heart dropped in panic, but he managed to control himself.

"Do you know how many men there were? Were they with weapons?"

"I don't remember their numbers exactly, but they were more than three, and I remember one of them had a gun."

"How were you able to escape?" An officer asked her from behind.



Her brows furrowed.

"I'm sorry, I don't really remember that. We were drugged and forced into a vehicle at the back of the club. That's all I remember." She turned frantic eyes to Luke. "Please, they still have Nina. I have no idea what they've done to her. Please help her." She was crying now.

Luke felt the need to assure her.

"I promise we will find Nina and bring her back home safely, okay?"

She nodded. "Okay. Thank you."

"Sir, we just received information about a CCTV footage." One of the officers said to the deputy.

Luke turned his attention to them.

"I'm coming back to the station immediately. Let's check it out."

Luke hurried over.

"Deputy, I don't think we have the time to be running up and down right now. I'll ask the doctor if we can set up a mini work station here in the hospital with one of their spare rooms. What do you think?"

"That will be wonderful, Mr. Bradford."

Luke hurried over to speak to the doctor who gave his

approval. Soon enough, the police set up their computers, transmitters and other equipment in the provided spare room.

The CCTV footage was connected to the computer and the video began playing.

"I think the CCTV cameras were either ruined or tampered with. The quality of the video is very poor." Luke observed.

"Yes, sir." The deputy replied. "They've been reports of recurrent vandalism in those areas, plus, it was dark."

The video showed a sleek, black car without number plates parked on the silent street. Two minutes later, two men in black ski masks and black overalls appeared and stood guard.

The entire room was silent and the air, stiff with tension as they watched two more men run over and hold the passenger door open. A few seconds later, three men appeared, grabbing a struggling Nina and Kayla.

Luke tightened his fingers into fists as anger exploded in his veins. Two of the men pressed white handkerchiefs against the ladies' noses and within seconds, they went completely still.

"Holy shit. I guess this is where they were drugged." The deputy muttered.

The footage ended and all the officers shot into action.

"I need our best detectives on that site right now. That's a crime scene. The place should be completely cleared out. I need intel on tyre marks and results on those footprints as well. Get to work everyone." The deputy ordered.

"Yes, sir."

Luke heard a beep in his pocket signifying an incoming message and hastily pulled his phone out.

It was a video message. The sender's number looked strange. Without hesitating, he called the attention of the deputy.

"Uh, officer? Come check this out."

The officer grabbed the phone from him and accessed the number.

"Looks like a scrambled number to me. Quick, connect this phone to the monitor. We need to view that video."

That was done immediately. The video took some time to load. It finally opened in a house that looked unused and empty. From what he could see, the walls were dirty and rid with moulds, but the house itself was in good condition.

Just then, the angle changed to a man in a black ski mask.

The motherfuckers!

"Luke Bradford."



"He's using an electronic larynx. His voice cannot obviously sound that deep." The officer interrupted.

The kidnapper continued,

"We are going to keep this video simple and short. But first, we'd love you to see something."

Panic ate at Luke's guts when the angle changed once more. His heart nearly stopped beating when the camera showed Nina tied to a chair. It was almost a physical effort to keep himself from lashing out.

She was struggling and mouthing things, but he couldn't understand anything she was saying because the bastards had gagged her.

Luke quickly assessed her for injuries. Apart from the swelling on her left cheek, she looked unhurt. Another man, apparently their leader, walked into the video with his hands behind his back.

He was completely covered. Even his hair was covered. But those eyes...Luke was sure they looked familiar.

"Luke Bradford. You have forty eight hours to provide one hundred million dollars, otherwise..."

He walked over to a struggling Nina and grabbed one of her breasts violently, causing her to scream through the gag.

Luke almost saw red.





"Otherwise, not only will I chop your little girlfriend here into tiny little pieces, I will let each and every one of my men have their way with her before I finally kill her.

Your time is ticking."

Then the screen went blank.