

FIVE HOURS

I sit down with a *thump* on the bed, sighing heavily. “I have nothing to wear. This is my most high profile target yet, *and I have nothing to wear.*” I finger the different outfits with reverence, no closer to a decision than I was an hour ago. Do assassins always have to kill in style? Then again, not every hitman gains the knowledge of every murder they conduct.

“Your most *intelligent* target yet, Aiyana. You don't win a Nobel Prize for nothing. Though I'm quite surprised the government wants Finian Hadriel dispatched,” Drystan muses, frowning deeply as he lies down next to me. Needless to say: he's quite used to my temper tantrums by now, which manage to happen before every mission without fail.

“I'm well aware of that fact,” I drawl, tone obviously sarcastic. “But he's been conducting some suspicious activity lately. With the war going on with Yaritza, no risks can be taken. I guess we'll find out what he was up to after he's stone cold dead.”

Drystan's eyebrows shoot up into his unruly hair. “*Finian Hadriel? I never* would have thought—”

“—yeah yeah yeah, Drystan. This is all classified information, so I really won't hesitate to slice your throat if this goes out of this room, dude.”

He holds up his hands in defense, smirking. The same banter has been going for years, and we both know my words hold no real weight. After letting a serious expression linger for a few seconds, I laugh heartily.

“What about the green one?” He holds it up, scrutinizing with care. “It really brings out your eyes.”

“I don't need to look pretty while slicing people in half, you know.”

“You don't have to, but that doesn't mean you can't,” he replies, not missing a beat.

A smile slowly uncurls on my face, a mischievous gleam twinkling in my eyes. “I like that.”

Waiting for the night to fall, I gaze at the stars out the window, silent.

I'm coming for you, Finian Hadriel.

Five hours later...

The blood splatters my shirt, the work of a different kind of artist. The stench that fills the room makes me want to gag, and my blade gleams in the moonlight.

What have I done?

This was, *is* a mistake. A huge, irreversible, horrendous mistake.

What have I done, what have I done, what have I done?

I clutch my head in agony at the rush of knowledge entering my mind. I fall down on my knees, barely able to contain the urge to scream my lungs out. *What is this? What's happening to me?*

Finian Hadriel's heart is still fighting for his life. My eyes wash over his limp body, the grin on his face that definitely shouldn't be there. It just makes me want to slap him on the face. I try to shut out his rattling breaths that echo in the silent room but to no avail. I shouldn't have done this.

I glance weakly his way once more. An unexplainable sudden urge to defend myself rises when I look into his eyes, but I fail to find the words. "I-I. Look, I'm not a monster." When his grin only widens, I go on. "I'm not a monster. I'm not. I'm doing this for the greater good. You're the bad guy, you're the villain in this story. *Stop.*" I hiss, willing him to believe me. "Stop."

Assassins don't ramble. Assassins do the job and move on.

My life flashes before my eyes. *Everything's going wrong.*

"You'd really like to believe that, wouldn't you?" He smiles sadly now, the madman grin fading away.

And with that, I send the final plunge to his heart, not able to bear the pity in his eyes, the light in them now gone. *I should pity you. You're dying. You're weak.*

And that does it. Everything he knew makes me scream, everything he knew makes me want to tear my hair out and never stop. His knowledge becomes mine, and with that, I know that I have carried out the worst mistake in my life.

I had just doomed the whole of humanity with the plunge of a worthless dagger.

