

Finding Hope Excerpt  
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Hope Jennings nearly fell out of bed at the shrill ringing invading her dreamless sleep. She blinked a few times to clear her head and focused on the digital clock on her nightstand. Four in the morning? Better be important.

“Yeah?” Eyes, closed, she fell back against the pillow.

“Your time is coming.” A voice she didn’t recognize reverberated through the phone line.

She groaned and tried to open her eyes. “Don’t you have anything better to do than bother people this late?” She rolled over, ready to hang up when the voice stopped her.

“You’re going to pay for what you did to my face.”

Her heart stuttered and she sat straight up, shoving her comforter out of the way. All thoughts of sleep fled as her heart pounded mercilessly against her ribcage. “What did you just say?”

“That got your attention didn’t it little girl?”

“What do you want?” The question came out hoarse and scratchy.

“I want you dead.”

“That’s mighty tough talk over the telephone.”

Instead of responding, the caller hung up. The staccato beat of her heart and her shallow breathing was the only sound audible in the quiet room. She walked outside

onto her small balcony and inhaled the salty ocean air. Being near the ocean soothed her. Maybe because the ocean had saved her life in more ways than one. Her heartbeat slowed as she breathed in and out, taking deep, steady breaths.

Unfortunately, her thought process sped up. There was a slim chance the call was a prank, but the realistic part of her brain knew that was a lie. She wrapped her arms around her chest and tried to block out the memories. Twelve years had passed and she could still feel his clumsy hands on her body. Could still smell the scotch on his breath.

She turned back inside and went to the kitchen. After she prepared a pot of chamomile tea, she returned to her room and opened the book lying on her nightstand. She wouldn't be able to sleep now. No use in even trying.

An involuntary shiver raced down her spine as past visions haunted her.

Her hand itched to call Mac and tell him about the call, but she would handle this on her own. As far back as she could remember she'd learned never to show fear. Fear was weakness. And the predators of the world preyed on the weak.

Never let them hear you scream and never let them see you cry. That was her motto.