

CHAPTER 2

Maxine held up the scarf and examined it closely. Random stitches all over the garment, and Ruby hated clashing colors...why would she knit this? So far, Maxine had refrained from searching through Ruby's things. She knew that even though her sister was missing, she still deserved her privacy. The police didn't seem to take the case very seriously; her sister was an adult after all. But Maxine knew she'd never up and leave like this, especially not without her beloved Leo. As she looked around Ruby's cluttered room, she decided maybe it was time to disturb her privacy in the name of finding her. First, she needed to relay information about the scarf to her father. She stepped out of the apartment and headed toward the lobby to use the phone.

These days she almost dreaded talking to her father and only really did it when absolutely necessary. Her hands shook as she put in the phone number.

“Hello?” A gruff voice answered.

“H-Hi Dad...” Maxine managed.

“Ruby?” he said in disbelief. “Oh, n-no, it’s me, Maxine,” she corrected.

“Oh. Maxine.” He said flatly.

A silence fell as Maxine began to regret the call. “Did you find something?” Her father asked.

“I-I think I did, actually.” Maxine took a deep breath. “A scarf.” She continued.

“A scarf?” He questioned.

“An unfinished scarf that Ruby made,” Maxine said. “Okay?”

“I-uh, it’s covered in all these random stitches. No pattern at all...and the colors do NOT look good together.” Maxine stated.

“So?” her dad asked.

“Well, it’s just, Ruby would never make something like that. I mean, never.”

Maxine said, realizing how crazy it sounded now that she was saying it out loud.

A disappointed sigh came through the phone. “Maxine— ” the voice started.

"No, I know how it sounds. But I know it's a clue." Maxine said confidently.

"Okay, I... I need to get back to work," Her dad said.

"We'll find her, Dad," Maxine reassured.

"Okay, Maxine," he said sadly.

"Bye, Dad," Maxine said, almost apologetically.

He hung up. Suddenly she felt bad. Although she was confident the scarf meant something, she understood how it must have sounded to her poor father, who probably expected a stronger lead. But at the same time, he had always been very detached during their childhood, and when it came to the search for Ruby, he was no different. Maxine felt like she was the only one making any effort to find her sister. Maybe that thought filled her with just the fire she needed to find her.