

## Chapter 20

"Athena, don't forget your place. Do you think you can stand up to us now

because you are not part of our pack? Want me to teach you a good

lesson?" Bianca scoffed, and Athena tilted her head before looking at Cole. "Well, only if your to-be-husband allows you to. I don't want people to say I am trying to sow a discord between you two."

Athena shrugged helplessly with a meaningful smile.

Bianca knew what Athena was playing at. If she asked Cole and he didn't

agree, it would be insulting, and if Cole agreed and Bianca created a scene in another pack's area, she would end up being called the bad woman.

"Well? Have you decided yet?"

"I don't want to fight you, Athena. Your blood isn't worthy for me to waste

my time on it. Why don't you do yourself a favor and run to your protector?" Bianca referred to Jake, and Athena smiled.

"You don't have to worry about that, sweetheart. I will run to whoever I want, and I bet no one can stop me from doing that. You just keep your man from approaching me. You will be able to do that, right?" Athena grinned before turning around.

"Athena, stop. Why do you act so indifferent? Do you not miss the pack?

Your home? Or your parents?" Cole asked, holding her hand, and hearing

him mentioning her parents' Athena froze in her place, her fingers

trembling slightly, which didn't go unnoticed by Cole.

Simon and Fabian, who wanted to check the mall security for all the alphas and their partners that might come later on the week, stopped when they

smelt Athena's scent not far away.

Walking in the direction of the showroom, Simon entered, his gaze landing on Cole's hand that was holding Athena's, and he couldn't help but walk to them.

"Simon, don't lose your temper," Fabian reminded his alpha before sighing. Alpha Cole was seriously looking for trouble, wasn't he? How can he act so shamelessly in front of his chosen Luna? Damn, he can't get his feelings

straight, can he? Fabian shook his head.

"You don't have to pretend to not care about anything, you know. I know you better than anyone else. We were best friends before everything happened. I am sorry for taking away your home. You can come to visit-

"Enough!" Athena turned around with bloodshot eyes that were filled with tears.

"How can you even act as if you care about me after everything? You were mocking me, Cole. When I was on the ground, wailing in pain because of the bonds you ripped me off of, you were standing there, enjoying the show. You did this to me but won't leave me alone when I have a normal life. Now you want to ask if I don't miss my home or parents? How can you even have the face to say all these things -?

"I know what I did was wrong and -" Cole tried to intervene, but Athena

scoffed before taking a step ahead.

"What is your regret going to do now, Cole? Will it give me the time I spend crying over you? Will it heal the wounds or take back the insults I have

suffered this month? Or better, will it give me the trust I had over a mate bond?" Athena smiled, a rogue tear falling from her eyes, and Simon

pressed his lips into a thin line when he heard her last sentence.

"You know what? You regret it, right? Why don't you do me a favor? Take that regret, and don't bother me again. That's what you can do for me,"

Athena turned and looked straight at Simon before walking past him.

"Alpha Cole-" Fabian started when he saw Cole looking at Athena's back. "I didn't know I hurt her so much. She hates me, doesn't she?" Cole said, and Bianca stomped her foot before walking away to the other section,

feeling angered at Cole's behavior.

"Well, you can't change what has already happened. Maybe Athena thinks you led her into the relationship before dumping her," Simon said, and Cole shook his head.

"That's not true. I was just Athena's best friend. That's it. She didn't even know I was her mate until I broke it to her when she caught me with Bianca. I bet she has even had her first kiss yet. I always imagined what our first kiss would be like, but then everything blew off," Cole sighed dreamily.

"It's better to let go of her. This way, you will hurt less. Your lady loves you, and you have chosen her, right? So thinking about another woman will only hurt you and her," Simon said, and Cole shook his head. "You don't know what it's like since you haven't found your mate, Alpha

Simon. Once you meet your mate, it's near impossible to stay away from

them," Cole's words made Simon scoff.

Oh, he knows exactly what it feels like. That's what he is going through too. "Well, you shouldn't have rejected her then," Fabian mumbled, but Cole

looked at him before nodding.

"I know, right? But she would come back to me. I can see she hates me.

There would have been no hate if she didn't feel anything for me. She will have to come to me sooner to help her," Cole walked away with a smirk, and Fabian looked at Simon, thinking the same thing.

What does Cole have up his sleeve for him to be so confident?

"Hey, Athena, are you okay?" Andrew walked to her when he saw her

leaning in the corner with a sad look.

"Yeah, I am fine,"

"Well, what are you doing out of the showroom if that's the case? I thought you were shopping," Andrew could see she was trying to hide her feelings again.

"Can I ask you something instead?" Athena's question made Andrew nod. "Who are you bringing to the alphas' meet as your partner?" Athena asked, and Andrew raised his brows.

"I was hoping to ask you tonight, and if you had denied it, I would've

arranged someone from the pack," Andrew answered honestly.

"Good. I will come with you," Athena stood straight before holding his hand and bringing him back inside the showroom.

"Help me choose a dress," Athena looked at the vast range of dresses, and Andrew looked at her suspiciously.

Something definitely happened when he was away. Athena was still

smiling, but it wasn't what he left her with when he went to the men's

section, not to mention how he caught the scent of Simon, Cole, and Fabian while walking out earlier.

"I think this Blue one will look good on you," Andrew suggested a royal blue off-shoulder dress with a heart-deep neckline, and Athena smiled at his

choice. "We will be taking this one," Athena smiled at the saleswoman, who

clapped her hands in excitement and went away to pack it up.

"I know you are curious to know what happened," Athena looked at Andrew from the corner of her eyes.

"I met Bianca and Cole. You can imagine the rest. They think I am leading

some pathetic life away from the pack. So I am thinking of crashing the

alphas' meet as your partner for the night and show them that they have

got it all wrong," Athena said, and though Andrew was happy about her

decision to come with him, he didn't like what was going on inside her

head.

"And? Do you think that would make you happy, Athena? You are just trying to find temporary solace in their stiffened smiles, but will it make you happy as you think? Don't you think reacting to them is what gives them the upper hand over you? They think you still care, don't they?"

Andrew's words were like a smack to her head to put some sense into her mind, and the fake arrogant smile on her face froze.

"So what should I do, Andrew? Let them laugh at my face and take it all? Do nothing? Should I not seek happiness?" Athena's voice broke at the end,

and Andrew turned her around to face him before cupping her cheeks.

"My princess, who said you should not seek happiness? What I want is for you to stay happy for real and not just because you want to show them you are happy," Andrew bent to her eye level before smiling.

"I want you to come with me to the alpha meet and enjoy the party like the carefree girl you once were. Don't give them the satisfaction of driving a

reaction out of you, okay?" Andrew's words made Athena smile briefly

before she nodded.

"I guess you are right. Maybe it's because I react every time Cole keeps

coming back to annoy me and finds satisfaction when he sees how his

presence still affects me. If I just ignore him and stop reacting, he might

leave me alone," Athena said, and Andrew shrugged.

"See, it wasn't hard to understand, was it? You were doing so well this past month. I am proud of you. Now that you have me in your life, you are going to do even better," Andrew's words made Athena nod, and she was about to hug him when she smelt him again Simon Scar.

She stood on her tiptoes to look over Andrew's shoulders, and there he was

in all his glory, glaring back at her.

However, to her surprise, he just shook his head before leaving, making her

sigh.

"Let's go and eat something. I am hungry," Andrew said to get her in a good

mood, and they walked to a restaurant with Jake.

"Can you get me a cold coffee? I feel really hot right now," Athena

scrunched her brows.

"It might just be the pent-up heat because of all that anger and stuff," Andrew's words made her nod, and Athena huffed, feeling strange.

She doesn't know why, but it didn't look like normal pent-up anger. But maybe Andrew was right. If that's the case, she needs to get home and train a bit to let loose.

"So, just cold coffee or -" Jake couldn't complete his words as Athena rushed to the ladies' washroom before opening a cubicle and puking the contents of her breakfast.

The heat in her head increased with each passing second as she placed

her hand on the wall to support herself.

'Celine. What's wrong?' Athena finally called out to her wolf, but her wolf didn't say much and kept quiet, even turning her head away to not look into

Athena's eyes.

Seeing her wolf acting like this, Athena scoffed before washing her face and walking out. So much for the help.

"Hey, what was that all about?" Jake asked, worried.

"I don't know. It's just my head feels so hot that it's bothering me. I just puked my breakfast. God, it hurts," Athena slumped on the chair in an unladylike manner, and Andrew pressed his lips into a thin line.

"Stand up. We are going to see the doctor," Andrew pulled her out of the seat, making her head go dizzy, and she was about to fall when someone

held her in his arms.

Feeling the comfort in the touch of the person, Athena sighed before nuzzling her face into his chest, her senses coming back to her head when she recognized the smell.

"Geez, Athena. Stop acting like that. You are embarrassing us," Andrew

pulled her away, and Celine sitting inside her head opened her eyes in

anguish, not liking it.

Opening her eyes, Athena looked at a shocked Simon with his hands raised in his air, looking at her with wide eyes.

"Did you just rub yourself on me?" Simon asked, and it was Athena's turn to get shocked before she blushed heavily.

"I-I think we should go. You are right, Andrew. I might need to see a doctor, after all," Athena pulled Andrew and Jake out of the restaurant.

Simon, on the other hand, gazed at the back of the girl with a contemplated look. Something wasn't right. As much as he knows Athena, she isn't the type to do something so casually.

What is going on with her? And what was with the doctor? Is she ill? Simon thought, worried, before walking to where Fabian was sitting.