

The Cursed Alpha's Mate Chapter 76

He stepped forward and took my hands in his. I looked down at them to see sparks of fire that made me snatch them back.

Magic was something I struggled with. There were no mentors, no guides, nothing. I had to work my way through it. I'd spent the last few days getting used to the feeling of something more than blood coursing through my veins and noting triggers that made me lose control of that feeling.

"Are you trying to burn yourself?" I exclaimed. My magic wouldn't hurt me but it could hurt him.

"I'm not trying to hurt myself. I'm trying to get to you." He took my hands again but I snatched them back.

"What did Clover say?" I asked, taking a seat.

"She has an idea of Skylar's whereabouts. She is likely at Blood River pack." He sank into his set, moving the things in his desk to the side. "She wouldn't give me the full details because –" He broke off and I got the feeling he was hiding things from me.

"She could be in her mum's pack but the chances of that are slim." Skylar was too smart to be in such an obvious place. "If she's going to be anywhere, it'd be the last place anyone can think of." And what was the last place anyone would ever think of searching for her? It could be close or she could do something as daring as lurking around Redville.

“We have trackers on the way to the three Blood River packs. It’s a lead we must look into.”

‘Don’t be suspicious, Aysel. There’s no need to be suspicious.’ I chanted in my head. He didn’t want Clover. She was the one forcing herself on him.

‘But he has the power to make her stop,’ a sly voice intruded on my thoughts. ‘It’s not like with you and Lucien. You could not shake Lucien off but he can send her away.’

“Is that all she said? It doesn’t explain why you reek of her,” I said, my tone bland but he raised his brows. He looked at me as if he heard the words I didn’t say.

“She mentioned some elders who are diehard fans of the former Alpha. They are plotting something. I’ve asked Jabari to look into that. We’ve also launched a search for Strauss and his mate.”

“She didn’t have anything tangible to say then.” These were things that were easily known. I’d expected her to have valuable information.

“Skylar bought Andrew over. Andrew has been one of my loyal followers for decades. I want to know what she could have offered him to get him to betray me,” he said.

“Andrew the driver?” I asked and he nodded in response. “He said he’d been asked to take me to the airport to greet you as a surprise.”

“We can deduce that that was a lie. Skylar bought him over. He was to kidnap you but she changed her mind and decided to do it herself.” Somehow, that just didn’t sound like what Skylar would do.

Skylar’s tactic was to bully people into doing what she wanted. Her bargain was to do her bidding or get hurt. She was always confident on her hold over a person; enough that when she ordered them to do something, she expected total compliance.

She’d asked me to poison Valens. Then, he’d been nothing more than a scary, imposing figure to me. He certainly had more power than Skylar but when she asked me to do something so daring, she’d had the upper hand. She’d been the more imposing figure to me then. She knew I dared not disobey her so she didn’t have another person also try to poison Valens or even poison him herself. Because she didn’t work that way.

“Clover told you all this?” I asked Valens and he nodded. “And you trust her to be telling the truth?” I watched him closely.

He’d once told me he didn’t trust me and that the only people he trusted were Jabari and Clover. Did he still trust Clover that much?

He remained silent for a long time, refusing to give an answer.

“You told me once that she’s been through hell for you. She has had decades to prove her loyalty to you. Tell me, Valens,

do you still trust her so much that you'd believe everything that comes out of her mouth?"

He leaned back into his seat, his hands going to ruffle his hair. Then he pursed his lips before speaking. "Yes, I have known Clover for a long time. She's had decades to prove her loyalty. I have never seen what jealousy can do to her but I trust her not to lie to me."

"What if I said she's lying? Would you believe me or would that just be me speaking out of jealousy?" I asked.

"I –" he paused. "Why do you think she is lying?" He asked.

"Because I know Skylar and I know she would not give someone a job and then do it herself at the end of the day. I've known Skylar since we were kids and I've been her target all my life so believe me when I say I know how evil she can be and how smart she is."

"You don't think there's a possibility she did it? Who else would want to kidnap you if not herself and her family?" He mused.

"Clover," I answered his rhetoric question. He looked at me for a while. He blinked and then I laughed. "You don't believe me."

"She was not on Redville soil when that happened," he reminded me.

“I know that but did you ever wonder if Andrew wasn’t ‘bought’ over? Maybe he was working with someone he trusted.” His phone rang before he could answer.

“He’s dead,” I heard Jabari’s voice from the other end of the call. “He was making progress but the bastard decided to die!” Jabari sounded seriously upset over the phone. “What am I supposed to do now? We’re now at a dead end.”

“Let’s focus on finding the she-wolf first and preventing any impending attacks.” He ended the call. He looked seriously pissed when the call ended. He pinched the bridge of his nose and I reckon if I wasn’t there, he would have punched something.

“Dead men tell no tales,” I said, ending a long stretch of silence. “They certainly cannot expose who sent them in the first place.”

“You really believe it was Clover?” He asked, leaning forward in his seat.

“It wasn’t Skylar,” I said, confident. “Skylar is more likely to send someone to stab me to death.”

“Why does she hate you so much? She seems to have a personal vendetta against you.”

“Lucien,” I replied without pause. I’d had enough time to think on it. Long enough to come up with an answer. Skylar hated me before she had any reason to or so it seemed.

She wanted Lucien. Even as kids, she wanted him. She may have wanted him as a friend then but he paid her no mind. Lucien barely had friends while we were growing up, none as close to him as Celeste and I. We were our own group even before the incident with my parents. We were best friends who were possessive of each other. We had other friends but they could be reduced to acquaintances.

Skylar wanted to be a part of that friend group. She was never friendly with me if my memory was to be believed but she wasn't hostile either. She wanted to be a part of their friend group because of Lucien who only had time for me.

"She had a crush on him since forever and he was only ever close to me."

"She wants you dead because of a boy?" His nostrils wrinkled as if the thought disgusted him too much.

"No. If she wants to kill me now, it's because she wants to kill you too," I told him. "You humiliated her dad and destroyed the small chance she had of succeeding him. Like you said, your enemies would come after me to get to you. Skylar is one of such enemies that I'm all too familiar with."

"I haven't taken her as seriously as I should have," he mused. "My enemy, huh?" He shook his head then dialed someone.

"Skylar will be hunted," he said once the person he called picked up. "Ten million for her head."

“Are you sure you want to do that?” Jabari asked. “We haven’t placed a bounty on anyone in decades.”

“She’s pesky,” he answered.

“Placing a bounty on her will be giving her importance. She could very well become the head of the rebellion against you.”

“Two birds, one stone. I can have her head or use her to draw my enemies under one umbrella. They would be easier to wipe out that way. Ten million. Make the announcement tonight.” He ended the call.

“I think I should pay Lucien a visit,” I said.

The Cursed Alpha’s Mate Chapter 77

“No.”

“You are being unreasonable,” I protested.

“I am not being unreasonable. You are not allowed to see him. You are not allowed anywhere near him!” His voice raised, his arms crossed over his chest and I knew he wasn’t relenting. But I wasn’t relenting either.

“I am going to see him. I’m going to see him today, in fact. You can either come with me or not.”

“There is no question here. No debate. You will not see him. That’s final.” He slammed his palms down on his desk to emphasize the finality of his words.

“Valens, I am your Luna,” I reminded him. “You should stop treating me like a mere omega.”

“I –“ He paused, his brows crinkling. “It is my duty to protect you. I must protect you.”

“What protection do I need from a chained prisoner?” I couldn’t help but snap. Something occurred to me then that made me frown. “Is this about my protection or is it just because it’s Lucien?” I frowned. The frown on his face melted away.

“It’s not about Lucien. It’s about you.” He sighed, raking a hand through his hair. “Jabari and his team will sort things out. There’s no reason for you to see him.”

“I want to see him and it doesn’t feel like it is about me. It feels like it is about you. I want to see a prisoner in our dungeons as your Luna but because it’s Lucien, I’m prohibited. What do you think would happen if I see him?” I challenged. “Do you think my feelings for him would be rekindled if I set eyes on him?”

“No, I don’t think anything like that.” I was vibrating as he spoke. I clenched my hands to stop them from quivering.

“Why do you insist on treating me like this?” My words came out broken and my voice small. “I know Clover is your ex. She’s still all over you but you don’t see me banning you from seeing her!”

“If you don’t want me seeing Clover again then I will not see her again,” he declared.

“Why do I need to spell it out?” I cried. “Of course, I don’t want you seeing her. She ruined our relationship once and I know she’s trying to do it a second time but I’m deciding to trust you yet you cannot trust me.”

“I really am just trying to protect you,” he sighed for the umpteenth time before picking up his phone.

“Why are you pestering me today?” Jabari’s voice filled the room in a second.

“I want you to move Clover. Take her home and make sure she stays there,” he said into the phone. There was silence on the other end of the line for a long time. Long enough for my heart to start racing. It seemed they were both mourning something as the atmosphere turned solemn.

“Clover can be a bitch,” Jabari said, his voice low and cautious, so low that I almost could not pick it up. “But are you sure you want to do this to her?” My heart sank at the emotion in Jabari’s voice. Then Valens swallowed and I wondered if I’d underestimated just how close they were to each other. Was I tearing them apart for nothing?

“I told her not to leave the pack house. Send someone to help her pack and another in a few hours.” He pinched his glabella. “Clover is not the girl we used to not know. This is me letting her off easily for all she has done. I could and should have been harsher with her. Let’s her consider this as my way of repaying her for all she has done for me.” He ended the call with a click then his eyes fixed on me.

“I have sent Clover away. There is nothing between the two of us and I would hate for you to have the wrong view about things.” He got out of his seat and came to perch on the armrest of my seat.

“You are everything to me, little moon.” He kissed my cheeks. “I love you. I am not certain how to convince you that you mean more to me than the world itself but you do.”

“It doesn’t change the fact that I have to see Lucien,” I protested even though I already felt weak in the knees. My whole body felt warm.

“I do not want you anywhere near that boy.” He stood. “Since you are hell-bent on going, I have no choice but to go with you.” He didn’t sound or look happy.

The temperature in the room dropped. His lips pursed and his words were unnecessarily sharp. I stood up and followed after him as he strode out of his office with stiff shoulders.

The drive to the dungeons was silent. I didn’t want to say anything because I felt the displeasure radiating off him throughout the ride. He kept stealing glances at me but I pretended not to notice because I feared I might ask him to turn around to please him. His irritation pricked my skin and made my wolf pace.

“We are almost there,” he said, breaking the stretch of silence.

“We can –“ I swallowed down but it was too late. I spoke without meaning to. “We can turn back if you don’t want to do this,” I said, facing him for the first time since the trip started.

“No, you are right. I should treat you like my Luna. An equal.” He winced after he said that. “I am not used to any of this. I have not had an equal in my life. These things are hard for me,” he mused.

“You don’t have to explain yourself. It’s written all over your face. You struggle with relinquishing control.” I leaned back into my seat after I spoke, propping my cheek on my palm.

“I am the Alpha. How am I supposed to relinquish control?” His words were flat. “And after the incident, I just want to place bubble wraps around you. I have to protect you, Aysel, you have to let me protect you.”

“Valens, it’s just Lucien,” I emphasized his name. “What can he do to me when you are there?” I asked.

“Not everything is physical.” My brows scrunched at that. He muttered something under his breath that seemed to piss him off even more. “It’s frustrating that I cannot protect you from everything.”

“I have magic now. If he tries anything funny, I’ll set him on fire,” I said in a confident voice even though the only times I’d ever been able to produce magic were the times I got extremely emotional.

“It’s not that,” Valens sighed. “How will you react when you see him again? When the memories you are trying to work through resurface, what then? I do not want to see you hurt, Sagira. I cannot protect you from them.”

“I –“ Things made sense then. “I’ll be fine, I promise.” I placed a hand on his and squeezed.

The second my feet touched the grounds in the dungeons, my heart started to race. Valens cut me a sharp look but I just smiled. Maybe I wasn’t ready. Maybe I didn’t want to see Lucien so early. Maybe I didn’t want to see him alive.

“Alpha. Luna,” a man greeted us as we passed but I was barely aware of my surroundings.

We stopped in front of Lucien’s cell and a guard came to open the door. His head was bent while we approached but he raised his head once we entered. Our eyes met. Valens was right. The pin was too much.

I looked at him and I saw the boy that fought for me as a child. That image quickly faded to show the man that put his hands on me after drugging me. I didn’t know what or how it happened. One minute I was staring at him and in the next, the cold cell resounded with the smack of my palm against his bloodied cheek.

The Cursed Alpha’s Mate Chapter 78

“It wasn’t supposed to be like this,” he said, his head hanging to the side and his voice cracked. “I swear to you, it

wasn't supposed to be like this. I never meant to hurt you.” He raised his head and looked at me.

When I didn't say anything, Lucien turned to Valens.

“Alpha, it was all Skylar's idea-“

“I am not your Alpha,” Valens cut him off, his voice hard.

“Can you give us a minute?” I turned to Valens.

“No,” he answered without missing a beat.

“Please,” I begged him with my eyes to understand.

I needed to talk to Lucien. Only then would I get the closure my heart desperately craved. Despite how much he had hurt me and how much I hated him, I could never forget we had been best friends. I needed to know when he became comfortable with hurting me the way he did. I wanted to know what happened.

“Aysel, I'm sorry, but I cannot.” He looked solemn. His eyes also begged me to understand. “I cannot leave you with him. My wolf will not allow it.”

“Very well.” I turned back to Lucien who already had his eyes on me. “What did I ever do to you? When did we fall off?” It was something I used to ponder in the early days of the end of our friendship.

We'd been so close. Lucien was everything to me. Why did I suddenly stop being important? When did he start to hate me?

“I was stupid. I’m sorry. I never meant – it was never to be like this, I promise. I – I – “ He looked at Valens and decided Valens shouldn’t hear what it was that he had to say.

“You can’t tell me you never expected this,” my heart raced as I spoke, beating fast for reasons I couldn’t pinpoint.

I wasn’t scared of Lucien. Now anymore. His hands were chained and Valens’ presence beside me calmed me but my heart still raced. I chalked it up to anger. I was angry at him. He’d ruined me in a way I never expected to be ruined; done something to me that I never expected from anyone, least of all him.

“What did you think would happen when you lured me there? You said you loved me but you – how could you do that to me?” My voice cracked on that statement. Valens put his hands around my shoulders.

“It wasn’t supposed to be like this.” His eyes looked redder than they did when he first looked at me. “I love you, Aysel. You were mine before he came along!” Even with his weakened state, he could still muster up a look of fierce hatred for Valens.

“The goddess gave you to me and I know I messed up.” He sounded defeated. “I only wanted to fix things.” His head bent. I felt maniacal laughter building in my guts but I held it back, pressing my lips together firmly.

“You rejected me,” I felt the need to remind him. “You said I wasn’t worth it. You spit in my face and forced me to accept your rejection.” Valens’ hand went stiff around me. “You

broke me but that wasn't enough for you, was it?" Some of the laughter spilt from my lips.

"I know I messed up. I've known that for a long time but you know me, Aysel. You know I cannot leave a mess I created. I was desperate to fix things and Skylar took advantage of that desperation –"

"I don't know you," I cut him off. "You stopped being my friend and you changed but even then, I never expected you would do something like that to me."

"It was not supposed to be like that! You were never supposed to be hurt. They were just pictures, I swear, I never – I never did that to you. They were just pictures and Skylar swore you would never see them. We knew Valens would leave once he saw them. I knew you would be hurt but I planned to comfort you. I am sorry, Aysel. It was never supposed to be like that. I am sorry," he ranted.

"Am I that predictable?" Valens asked, his voice grave.

"It is what I would have done," Lucien said.

"I am nothing like you," he snarled.

"It's pride, isn't it? Whether or not you are like me, it's pride that drove you away," Lucien said, confident.

"It wasn't pride," Valens turned me to face him. "Pride had nothing to do with it. I was stupid not to trust you but it had nothing to do with pride."

“I understand,” I smiled at him though my lips had trouble stretching. “Your wolf’s anger frightened you.”

“Thank you.” He squeezed my shoulder. “Are you not done with him yet?” He asked. I looked at Lucien.

It was never my fault. I knew that and I told myself that every time but there was always a part of me that wondered if I ever gave him the wrong signs, if I led him in any way to believe that I wanted to be with him. I used to wonder if I ever gave him the impression that if he tried harder, we could be together. I never gave him such an impression. He deluded himself and that was all on him. I was just the unfortunate object of his attention.

“I never wanted you. I told you all the time but it didn’t matter, did it? What I want never matters because you’re nothing but a selfish person.” It took too long for me to see how self-absorbed he was. “And you don’t love me, Lucien. You only want me because you can’t have me. Somehow, you created an image of me in your head, one in which I am your property, but I am not.” I had said these words to him multiple times but it was the first time he actually listened to them.

“When I say I hate you, Lucien, I mean it with every fiber of my being.” I looked him in the eye and I was satisfied to see the shock deep within his eyes.

“You – “ He stuttered, his mouth agape.

“Yes, I was never pretending. I was never playing hard to get. I hate you and wish you the worst possible luck.”

“You – you are – your hands are on fire!” He exclaimed, horror on his face. I looked down at my hands, startled by the startling fear in his voice. My hands were really on fire and the fire was spreading, inching up my forearm. I shook out my hands while Lucien panicked and Valens tried to stop the fire on my left by suffocating it with his jacket.

It caused a racket that drew more people than I would have liked. A guard rushed in with a fire extinguisher but before he could use it, the flames died down. No, as I watched, the flames seemed to sink back into my skin. The three men who had rushed in to help me looked on with horror painted their faces.

“Are you – are you a witch?” The man holding the extinguisher, still poised to blast the fire, asked, his mouth opened in what could have been a comical way if I hadn’t just been exposed.

“You are a witch!” Another of the men said and there was no missing the accusation in his voice as he took a step back. He reached for his holster but he wasn’t armed.

“Get out. All of you,” Valens barked at the men who were frozen, looking at my arm which had been on fire a few seconds ago. Valens grabbed said arm and laced our fingers together. “Come on, Sagira.” He started to pull me out after the men scrambling out of Lucien’s cell.

“Wait, please. Wait!” The force of Lucien’s yell stopped us in our tracks. “I will do everything to make amends. I can’t be in your life. I understand you hate me but I would like –

let me make it up to you, Aysel. I don't deserve it but – but for the sake of the friendship we once had – please – “

“We lost our child because of you,” I turned to him. “We never got to meet them because of you and your little friends.”

“I – You – You were pregnant?” He looked wrecked. Utterly destroyed by that single news.

“You are on death row, Lucien. Make amends with the goddess.” We left his cell with whispers trailing after us from the guards in the dungeons.

“How do you feel?” Valens asked, his grip firm on mine as we walked out.

“Strong enough to see Alpha Xavier.” He almost stumbled with the abruptness with which he stopped walking.

“No.”

“We are here already. I might as well see him. He knows where his daughter is,” I said with a shrug that I hoped hid my shiver.

“Aysel –“

“After all this is over, I want him publicly hanged the same way he did my parents.”

The Cursed Alpha's Mate Chapter 79

I didn't need to be led by the hand to where my worst enemy was being held. My wolf sniffed him out from the numerous scents in the dungeons. Valens grabbed my forearm as I walked away from him with all intentions of finding Zavier.

"The people know about you, now. I suggest we go home. We can do this another day." The expression on his face made it clear that he'd made up his mind and he had no intention of backing down. Unfortunately, I too had made up my mind. After seeing Lucien, I would not rest until I saw Zavier.

I wanted to see him in the most humiliating position. I wanted to see what he looked like defeated and on his knees. How did he feel knowing his legacy would end with him? There was no chance for Skylar. Their lineage ended with them which was a shame really. Centuries of ruling Redville and the entire lineage of what used to be great men would end with them.

"We can do this another day but I want to do it today." I tried pulling my arm from Valens' grip but it was too strong. "I'd appreciate it if you let go of me," I said as I turned to him. "You said you let him live for me to decide his fate. He cost me my child, Valens. I want to see him now."

"They were my child too." His voice went quiet. "I lost my child too, Aysel. It's fine if you insist on seeing Zavier now but don't forget we lost a child. They were mine too."

“I –“ I looked away. “I never said – I’m sorry if I made it seem you weren’t hurting too.” I felt something awful in my guts when I realized I’d been doing that all along. I’d made it seem as if I’d created the child alone.

“Good, because I am. I have waited for a child for over a hundred years.”

“I know that. I am sorry.”

“It’s fine.” He sighed but he didn’t look fine. His face had creased and I felt awful knowing I’d hurt him with words that I’d been repeating for weeks now. “Let’s just see Zavier. I have a lot waiting for me.” I followed after him feeling like an awful person.

My conscience plagued me all the way to where Zavier was being held. The minute I saw him, anger washed over me. I sneered at the once great man now emaciated and chained, on his knees.

He raised his head when he heard the sound of his cell door opening. I smiled at what he looked like. It was ironic he would be in this particular cell because I remembered it all too well. It felt like yesterday when he took out his anger on me right in this every cell. A beautiful reversal.

“You are no different from your parents,” he said when I sauntered in. Yes, I sauntered. “A traitorous bi – He didn’t get to complete his statement. The guard who opened the cell had walked in with us and closed the door behind him. He landed a blow to the side of Zavier’s head, startling us all.

“You will speak to our Luna with respect.” The man had a voice that sent chills down my spine. It was cold, almost whispery, and with a frightening quality. Coupled with the expression on his face, it was clear that this man was a cold killer.

“I should have killed you then,” Xavier still managed to croak. “I should have gotten rid of your tainted blood. Your traitorous blood –“ I jumped back when he started to spasm uncontrollably like someone being electrocuted. I soon realized that was indeed what was happening. The guard held a taser to his side.

“If you are going to kill me, do it already!” He screamed before a bout of electricity passed through him again. “Are you too much of a –“ The guard hit him again and I feared he would be knocked out before I got to speak to him.

“Stop.” The guard stopped halfway away from punching his brains out once I spoke. “His words are irrelevant. I don’t care but I’d like to speak to him before he passes out.”

“You think I am that weak?” He laughed and spat blood at my feet, almost on my shoes. “An Alpha never passes out.”

“But you are not an Alpha anymore,” I said to him with a smile.

I never expected to enjoy another’s misery the way I did Xavier’s. It scared me how much hate boiled in my veins. I felt cruel but I didn’t care. I wanted Xavier to suffer and I wanted to watch his suffering.

“You are nothing more than a rogue at this point,” I reminded him. “I can’t even express how much I love seeing you on your knees, broken and destroyed. Knowing your lineage expires with you is sweeter than honey.”

“Skylar is out there. Your days are numbered,” he spat the promise, his voice fainter than it was when we first came in.

“The same Skylar you refused to name as your successor?” I laughed in his face and it felt wonderful. “You have proven to be a useless father, Zavier. What makes you think she cares about you at this point?” I asked just to antagonize him.

“She is my daughter, not a deserter or a traitor like you. You may have me here now but believe me, it won’t be for long.”

“How does it feel knowing the only person you have to rely on will be rounded up in a few hours? We have men on the way to Blood River now to put her down,” I told him.

“As if Skylar would be foolish enough to go to her mother’s pack.” He snorted. I turned to Valens. I tried to resist it for all of two seconds but I ended up giving him a look that clearly said, ‘I told you so.’ “The last place she’d be is where you expect her to be. I know my daughter and she won’t be easily caught.”

“She can’t be that hard to find,” I said offhandedly. “Not when she has a ten million bounty on her head.” I loved the fear that flashed in his eyes when I said that. It was fleeting

and quickly masked with a false show of arrogance but I couldn't miss it because I'd worn a fearful face for the better part of my life.

"You think that is wise? You are making my daughter a hero without even knowing it." He laughed.

"That's the plan, isn't it?" I smiled, turning to Valens when I heard him mutter something. "I plan to publicly disgrace you and your family. The more people that know her name, the more fame she gets, the sweeter it will be to pull her from her pedestal." I grinned at Xavier.

"You are as sick as your father," he snarled at me. Being compared to my father used to sadden me before but not anymore. If he thought I was like my father, then I was like my father. My father was a traitor but looking at Xavier, I wished he'd eliminated this nasty man.

"For everything you have done to me, Xavier, I will return it ten folds," I promised him. "The legacy your family has held for centuries will be destroyed because of you and the brats you raised."

"I am ready to die because I am certain Skylar will avenge me," he bragged. I admired his audacity.

Valens phone pinged then. "The bounty had been posted," he said, reading from his phone. "Maybe I will bring you her head if I keep you alive long enough." He pocketed his phone and raised his head to Xavier. I watched the other alpha shrink.

“I thought you were a sensible man. I respected you for putting your pack before the pride of an Alpha but you dared to cross me.” He smirked. “It is unfortunate that you have nothing because I would enjoy tearing down everything you own,” Valens took my hand and I knew the conversation was over.

“Are you even sorry, Xavier?” I asked before we left. I knew the answer before he answered.

“Why should I be?” He sneered. “I did nothing wrong.”

“You ruined your children’s lives. You failed to train them. Bethel is dead because of you and Skylar will have her head hanging on a spike pretty soon. Don’t you feel sorry that you failed them?”

“I –“

“If you can call your daughter to order, we could work out something for her.” I threw the promise over my shoulder.

“Why? Are you scared she’d finish you?”

“Scared? Oh, you haven’t heard I am a witch?” I laughed as we left the cell.

Valens had a pensive look painting his face as we walked out of the dungeons. His new mood reminded me of how we were before, how I used to walk on eggshells around him a few months ago. I didn’t like it so I broke the silence.

“He doesn’t know where she is.” He didn’t say anything to that. “But he will certainly be sending us a list of her hideouts,” I added.

“I already placed a bounty on her head,” he said, followed by a sigh. “Did you enjoy gloating in there?” He asked, his face unreadable.

“Yes,” I answered without pausing to think. There was too much bad blood between Xavier and I. He’d also cost me my child. I wanted him to know that the calamity waiting for him in the future had my signature on it.

The Cursed Alpha’s Mate Chapter 80

“Why do you keep sneaking glances at me?” I asked when I noticed from the corner of eyes that my mate had once again glanced furtively up at me.

“I am not sneaking glances at you,” she defended but there was no missing the guilt in her tone or how she coloured.

I closed my laptop and moved it to the side of my desk to give her my full attention. “What do you want to say?” I asked, leaning back into my seat.

“Can we go out for lunch?” She asked. I knew that wasn’t what she wanted to say so I refused to play along.

“Are you bored?” She shook her head. “It’s okay if you don’t want to be here,” I reminded her for the tenth time.

The new house was too big. She wouldn't admit it because she wanted a big house and a lot of space in the first place, but she was lonely in that house. I was going to ask Octavia to move in with us and the women who would train her but it kept slipping my mind.

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"What's fun in watching me work?"

"The way you frown and look as if you could hurt someone from a computer screen," she answered then went sombre. "I've been shirking my responsibilities."

"You have," I answered without missing a beat.

"Valens!" The look on her face was comical when she exclaimed.

"I'm giving you a break because once you start, you have a lifetime of work," I told her. I knew firsthand how true that was. The minute one takes over an Alpha position or its equivalent, there was no resigning, no breaks, no delegating the responsibility.

"Not a lifetime though," she looked away.

"We'd have a successor." I had no idea how to reply to that.

I'd become so used to immortality, wandering, and without a companion that I naturally did not expect help. I'd completely forgotten that I could have a successor, that one day, I would hand over my workload to my child.

"Yeah, and his mate would be the Luna," I said, my response weak.

"Or her mate." She held my gaze. "Our daughter could succeed you, right?"

That question had never come up in the days of my father. If an Alpha could not produce a male successor, the title went to another alpha male in his family. If there weren't any, then the title left his family. There was never an option for women to rule a pack.

"We would have to have the daughter first," I said, feeling as if I had successfully dodged the question.

"I don't want what happened with Skylar to happen to our daughter. I don't want what happened with my father's mother to repeat itself. The oldest Alpha in our family after you succeeds you," she said with finality in her tone.

"The most capable of the Alphas in our family succeeds me," I answered. I'd thought on it a few months ago and decided my successor wouldn't necessarily be the older alpha or the male alpha. If our daughter proved more capable to lead the pack than our son, then she would undoubtedly be named my successor.

“Oh, oh, I have an idea!” Her face lit up as she all but jumped in her seat to say what she had on her mind. “We could split the packs under you between all our kids. That way, none of them is overburdened the way you are!” She beamed at me.

The smile on her face was contagious. It made me feel warm. I imagined we already had the kids and they were all alphas which would be impossible since she was an omega. We would have an omega and at least one beta. We may not even birth a child with an alpha wolf.

“It’s a smart idea.” She beamed at me, obviously pleased with herself. “What if we only have one kid?” I asked.

“No, you said you’d give me twins,” she reminded me. She took that promise very seriously. Even when I felt I might have become infertile, she reminded me of that promise. It once felt like something I would not be able to fulfil despite my power but now bile rose in my throat along with a desperate urge to persecute Xavier and his daughter in the worst way possible.

“Hey,” I heard and felt hands on my shoulders. “You suddenly went green.” I blinked and saw my mate was no longer seated opposite me.

“Valens?”

Maybe I hadn’t lost a child. Maybe I’d lost children. Of course, I couldn’t say that to the one who was hit the hardest.

“I’m fine. I just thought of something.” I squeezed her hand on my shoulder.

“It occurred to you that we may have lost twins, didn’t it?” Her voice was low.

“No,” I lied to spare her. “Are you still interested in lunch?” I pushed my chair back, planning to get out of the seat but she got into my laps before I could stand.

“I think it’s best we spoke about this,” she said.

“It’s too painful for you to talk about,” I reminded her. Talking about the miscarriage had become taboo between us. I could always tell when she remembered the incident because she went quiet and no matter how she tried to hide it, pain reflected on her face.

“I want to share this pain with you. I can see you’re hurting, Vee. I – I hate that it’s taken me this long to realize how much you’re hurting.”

“You do not have to. I am fine, I promise.” I held steadfast to my denial. “It hurts but it is fine.”

“I thought of a few names when I got the positive results,” she said, her voice dropping.

“My mum was named Miriam and I think it’s a pretty name. I also thought of Valencia.” stopped breathing. “I couldn’t think of any suitable masculine names but I’d really like a Valens Junior or Thomas.”

“Stop,” I choked out. “Stop it.” On second thought, I added, “Please.”

“If you glaze over the hurt, you’d be covering a pit with a plastic wrap and that’s dangerous.”

“I said I am fine,” I bit out.

“You waited for over a century to hold them.

You are allowed to be angry, love.”

“Are you purposely trying to make it hurt?” I demanded.

“I’m trying to remind you where it hurts. You shouldn’t have to hide your pain.”

“I am not hiding my pain. I would feel so much better after I have Skylar’s head and disgrace Xavier in the most humiliating way possible.”

“I want that too,” she sighed. “But I know that it wouldn’t make it hurt less. The satisfaction will fade and we would still have lost our firstborn.”

“Aysel, I have work to do.” I tried to remove her from my lap but she hooked her arms around my neck and clung on.

“Aysel, really “

“Valens, will you tell me how you feel? I’ve told you how I feel but you won’t say anything.”

“I feel awful, okay? Is that what you want to hear?” I could feel my heart race. “Can I go back to work now?” I felt like adding please’ at the end.

“You can’t just work and work and pretend nothing happened. You have to tell me how you feel,” her voice pitched a tinny bit higher.

“I feel awful!” I snapped, my heart racing faster.

“I was supposed to protect you and I failed. Do you know how many women I have tried to conceive with? For a year, my seed never took root and the first time in over a century that it does, I fail to protect it.” I pushed my hand into my hair, pulling. It was a bad habit I never seemed to leave behind.

“And sometimes – sometimes I wonder how things would have been if I wasn’t me. If I was just a regular man, if I was not the cursed prince, I wonder if I would have loved you differently. And other times, I blame my wolf.

If I did not have a wolf as volatile as Zino, I may have looked at those pictures differently.”

I felt Zino stir. He whined and put his head down but I shut him out.

“You can’t hate your wolf.” Aysel put a hand over her mouth. “You are your wolf.” I didn’t need a reminder of what I learned as a child.

“Sometimes I hate myself. Other times I hate Xavier and everyone in between. It was a mistake I could have avoided but it didn’t and it ended up costing too much.”

“I think we should see a therapist. Together.

Octavia recommended one and -” my phone rang. I’d never been happier to hear my annoying ringtone than I was then.

“It’s Jabari. I have to take this.” I pressed the green button and Jabari’s voice flooded into my ears.

“We have three hunters who claim to be close on Skylar’s tail but I just received news that Alpha Braxton is hiding her.”

“I forgot about that a*****e.” This was what I was good at – battle- not talking about things left unsaid. “Raze his pack to the ground latest tonight.” I could have her head and destroy old enemies as I did so.