

The Cursed Alpha's Mate Chapter 86

Celeste and Jabari were not doing well. I didn't need to get his number for her because she already had it but she still refused to text him. He texted her one day, exactly a week after Valens brought her home. She called me after that, crying her eyes out. I realised things were worse than I first thought. She was getting increasingly afraid of him with each day that passed. She made up numerous scenarios in her head and in every one of them, Jabari was the villain out to get her.

I'd asked Valens if she could move in with us. I knew being alone in her family house could not be good for her. He agreed but the girl refused so I was going to move her myself.

"Why are you doing this? I'm fine, really." She protested, unpacking the bag I just packed.

"You are not fine. You've lost too much weight and I know you aren't eating. There's no one to cook for you." I started packing the bag again.

"My therapist thinks I am improving," she lied.

"After five days? During which you've become a ghost of yourself?" I stuffed things into a bag. "If she really said that, we might have to find you someone else. "

"I am fine here," she said, flopping into her scattered bed.

The state of the house was enough to have me worried if I wasn't already worried. It was a total mess; coffee mugs collecting mould in the living room, the kitchen turned on its head, mud tracks on the ground, clothes all over the floor in her room and a rotten slice of bread on her bed amongst a number of other things. Celeste was a neat freak on a normal day.

"All right, I believe you are fine here." I flopped into bed beside her. "I am worried about you," I said but she didn't seem to be listening. "I'm not comfortable with you staying here alone so I'll move in with you instead."

She turned to look at me as if I was crazy. "I'm not sure the Alpha would want to stay here." She sat up, shaking her head. I laughed at what she was insinuating.

"Valens isn't my handbag." I snorted. I imagined the look on Valens' face if I mentioned moving in with my friend. Yeah, that was an impossible move.

"Ok, I can't move in with you." I sighed, defeated.

"How about the pack house then? I don't think your being alone here is helping matters at all."

In the end, I succeeded in getting her to move in with me for a week. We'd commute together from the house every morning seeing as I now had a job; a full-time, time-consuming and energy-draining job of being the Luna.

"You should be asleep," Valens said as he came into the room that night.

After picking up Celeste, I never went back to the office. We'd both come back home and after getting her settled in the farthest part of the house which was the only place she agreed to stay, she'd taken a bath and fallen asleep. I'd taken the time after that to prepare dinner for everyone before getting to the work piled on Valens' desk which I now made mine.

"Hi." I got out of the seat to place a distracted kiss on his cheek. "You are back late." It was almost midnight when he walked in.

"Did you not get my message?" He asked as I helped him out of his jacket.

"What message?" I went back to my seat, pulling my laptop closer.

"I told you I was taking Jabari on a run." My laptop closed as I tried to read a line.

"What are you doing?" I asked, confused as he closed my laptop and grabbed it off the table.

"You should be asleep," he commented, holding my laptop against his thigh. "Why are you still up? It does not seem as if you have plans to sleep soon."

"I skipped out on a lot of work to help Celeste settle in so I'm trying to go through them before I sleep.

"Can I have my laptop back?" I asked, my eyes trained on the silver devices in his hand.

“You woke up by four a.m. today,” he said as if I’d easily forget the fit he threw when I got out of bed early and woke him in the process. “And it is midnight yet you are still awake and I know you didn’t have a nap today.”

“How is Jabari?” I asked, pulling a stack of papers to me. If he wouldn’t give me back my laptop, I would have to work the old fashioned way. “Did you tell him he can’t come around this week?” I didn’t know how Celeste would react if he came here like he did every now and then, randomly checking in on me when the guilt from neglecting his duties caught up with him.

“Yes, I told him.” He put a hand on the stack of papers. “Can you stop working for a second?” He looked peeved when I raised my head.

“What is it? I want to get this done as quickly as possible so I can go to bed. I’m exhausted.” I suppressed a yawn after saying that.

I had a lot of work and I always kept falling behind every day. I didn’t want Valens to have to pick up even the smallest of my duties now that he was shouldering his and picking up the slacks Jabari was leaving.

It sucked that the duties were so specific to certain positions in the pack. There was only so much delegation that could be done. Valens could and would have to pick up after me if I started to slack off but I could not pick up any of his duties. Only Jabari could take on a bit of his work; a tiny bit.

“You look awful,” he said. I leaned back in surprise.

The last time he made an unpleasant comment about my appearance was the day he told me I was not his type. “You need to go to bed. Now.” His tone left no room for debate but I had to debate. If I left it, I would have to attend to it the next day, piling my work.

“It will take me less than two hours to complete that account,” I said, trying to move his hand but all I succeeded in doing was wrinkling the papers.

“Can you stop, please?” I looked up at him but his face remained impassive.

“You are tired, Aysel.” I opened my mouth to argue.

“Get out of that chair.” Even if I wanted to argue, I could not. He’d let a bit of his Alpha power leak into his tone and my wolf could not disobey her Alpha’s command. “Take a bath and go to bed. I never want to see you in this seat, ever again.”

The Alpha’s command leaked into his tone and I had no choice but to obey. I tried to do the basic calculations while I was in the bath but once the water hit my skin, my eyes started to close. I managed to lather my skin with body wash, my limbs suddenly too tired to move.

The bathroom door opened and Valens joined me.

“I didn’t mean to command you,” he said, his breath tickling my ear. I felt him against my back, his hand on my

shoulder. He took the washcloth from me to scrub my back. “I just don’t like seeing you overworked.”

“We have an equal number of hours each day. You get everything done while I only ever manage to complete two-thirds of what I am supposed to do.”

I leaned against the bathroom tile as he cleaned me.

“I have to work longer hours if I’m ever going to do a good job as your Luna.”

“I told you that you would have to earn your place as my Luna.” His words were quiet. “I didn’t mean that.”

He told me that when we first mated. I had to make myself worthy of him. I knew now that I didn’t need to prove myself in any way, but that aside, I wouldn’t be a good Luna if I kept falling behind. I told him just that.

“Levana has one pack to manage and she has three assistants. You have forty-four and it is just you.

You are doing more than enough. I never want to see you working past ten ever again.”

I went to sleep shortly after that, my body shutting down the instant my back touched the bed. I woke up late the next morning, pissed that Valens purposely did not wake me. In fact, he already left for work by the time I got out of bed.

I rushed through my morning routine, packed lunch, and was about to grab my pile of work when I realised they

weren't on the desk anymore. There was a note waiting for me on the desk.

I completed the report and we found Skylar.' I screamed his name as I ran out of the house.

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"You could have woken me before leaving, you know," I grumbled as a way of greeting once I got into Valens' office. "Oh." I coloured when five heads turned to look at me, one of them with a particularly spiteful glare.

"We are in the middle of a meeting," the man with the harsh glare said, his expression turning more unpleasant with each second that passed with me standing at the door like a dimwit.

"Right," I said with a smile, fighting the burst of magic that came with the anger I felt at his dismissive tone.

There were speculations about my magic since the display I had in the dungeons with Zavier. The guards were more discreet than I gave them credit.

No one knew for certain that I had magic and Valens cautioned me against outing myself to the world. He didn't want the reminder of what my hands could do and I understood why.

"Did you sleep well?" My mate asked as I was about closing the door to his office.

I could feel the anger radiating off the other man.

He was a distant relative of Strauss' wife so naturally, he hated me.

"Yeah, it was fine." I was going to respectfully leave the office and go about my duties but Valens had other ideas.

"Did you bring lunch? I haven't had breakfast so I'm ready to eat now." He poked at his tie while I just stood awkwardly at the door with the other people in the room looking from me to him.

"We are in the middle of a meeting," the grumpy man said again, this time directed at Valens.

"Consider yourself dismissed, Elder James." He pulled off his tie.

You can't dismiss me in the middle of an important meeting because your mate walked in."

My blood ran cold at his words. My heart fell to the bottom of my stomach, red flashed through my vision and I felt a now familiar whisper of something ethereal in my blood.

The way he said 'mate' as if – the way a snob would say 'whore.' As if I was nothing more than a passing fling.

"What did you just say?" My mind had interpreted the derogatory way he pronounced 'mate' as 'whore' and my mouth reacted accordingly.

“Stand, ” Valens was standing as he said that. I fully entered the room, leaving the door open behind me.

“You are formally dismissed from your position as an Elder in Redville.” The man stood, aggression in his stance.

“I have been an Elder in this pack for all my life. I come from a long line of Elders that have served Redville since her inception. If you think you can do to me what you did to Alpha Zavier and Beta Strauss, then you have another thing coming. The Jameses will not let a tyrannical Alpha bully us into submission!” To reiterate his point, he stamped his feet into the ground, squaring his shoulder.

“Are you challenging me, James?” Valens’ voice went calm but Elder James was not to be cowed.

“Yes.” He puffed out his chest.

I stood at the corner, trying to get my magic under control. I practiced a bit of meditation and breath work over the last few weeks just to be able to manage my magic but my practices were failing me at that point.

“Are you sure you want to go down this lane with me, James?” I read something sinister in Valens’ tone. Something James could not read, or did not care to acknowledge.

“What will you do? Banish me?” The Elder sneered.

“You cannot banish me. I belong in Redville more than you and your ‘luna’ do.” He crossed his arms.

The other men sitting around looked uncomfortable. They followed the conversation with their eyes, some looking at me at intervals.

Was I to intervene?

“You are right; we cannot both continue in Redville. “

The expression on James’ face would make me laugh if I didn’t already pity him. Somehow, I knew what to expect and it was much worse than getting banished. “As your Alpha and prince, you have challenged me. There’s no need to accept your challenge when you are so far beneath me.”

“Alpha -” One of the other elders suddenly jumped to a stand, his eyes blown wide.

“Sit.” He fell back into his seat after that simple command. “This is between me and the James family.” I swallowed, as did Elder James. “I do not accept your challenge but to stop this increasing trend of people underestimating me in a pack I rightfully conquered, I will make a scapegoat of you.”

He smiled a smile that sent chills down my spine.

“Do your worst,” James said in a shaky voice.

“No, I will not do my worst. None of you are ready for that.” Again, he looked around the room. “But I will deliver a swift punishment. Elder Manson,” He turned to another elder. “Alert the pack. We shall have a gathering tonight.” He smiled for the umpteenth time.

“What sort of gathering?” Elder Manson asked in a nervous voice.

“An execution.” One could hear a pin drop in the room after he said that. James went stiff as a board. Manson looked like he would rather be the one getting executed than be the bearer of bad news.

The other elders tried to curve into themselves.

“May I advise -” An elder started but Valens cut him off.

“Keep your advice, Slade.” I did a double take when he mentioned the man’s name. He was the only elder in the room that I didn’t know but I knew his name. He was the Alpha’s adviser! “If anyone needs advice, it is James but it is too late now. He set himself up to be unfortunate.” To James he said, “You can try to run but there are men waiting outside for you.” He paused then said, “Get out. All of you.”

The elders saw themselves out one after the other.

I saw James bundled right as he stepped out of the office. I turned to Valens who was wearing an impassive expression.

“I hope you are bluffing,” I took a seat opposite him.

“Did you sleep well?” He asked instead. “You do not look like you have rested enough.”

“Valens, that’s beside the point. You are not executing him, are you?” I tried to make my voice stern but I failed.

“He asked to be executed. There is very little I can do for him. Are you going to answer my question now?!”

“You can’t just – kill a man!” Exasperation leaked into my voice.

“Why not?”

“That’s brutal and uncalled for!” He didn’t look bothered by my exclamation.

“What am I?” I didn’t know what to respond. “I have been called cold, brutal, unapologetic, a maniac at some point. I want to be someone else for you but I will not be underestimated,”

“I won’t let you act unreasonably,” I said, squaring my shoulders. He opened his mouth, about to say something but it must have gotten stuck in his throat. “There will be no execution.”

“I cannot take back my words.” He frowned. “He has had it coming, really.” His expression softened and with time, he started to look annoyed. “He has spoken out of turn more times than I would usually allow, undermined my authority, and insulted my luna,”

“You are not killing him, Valens. He will certainly be punished but he will not be executed.”

“Ahh, you are going to make me take back my words?” He shook his head. “He may not be executed today but he will certainly be my scapegoat tonight.”

“Right. Skylar? That’s what I am interested in right now.’

There is a report sitting on your desk but you didn’t even stop there, did you?” He smiled. “A hunter found her. She has been captured alive and will be here in a few hours.”

“Oh.” I couldn’t take a breath of relief as I realized that just gave me more work. “I have to ready her trial.”

“Jabari will take care of that.”

“No way. It is my duty. Besides, Jabari deserves to catch a break.”

“You have never done this before and Jabari has caught enough breaks for this year. You can assist him in the trial but I have already given him the task”

“I -” I was a bit relieved. I didn’t want to handle something like that. “She is being tried for murder, right?” My hand grazed my stomach.

“Yes and the verdict is death.”

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‘Something doesn’t feel right,’ My wolf said to me as I worked.

I read through the report of what happened with Skylar. One of the hunters that picked up her case had found her and she would be in the dungeons by nightfall. Because she was a bonafide member of the pack, it was due protocol to give her a trial.

Although she could be sentenced without being considered for a trial, Valens and I agreed it was best to conduct a public trial so people knew exactly what she had done. Enough of calling my mate a tyrant when he punished people who deserved to be punished.

“I feel it too,” I replied my wolf out loud, my voice echoing in the space of my office which was right across Valens’,

I wanted to go into his office to tell him of my unease, to have him ease my distress, but today was a busy day.

The petition to free Lucien finally came in and it had close to a thousand signatures from those in and outside the pack. Lucien now had a fan page dedicated to him and the girls there wanted him out and about. Alpha Xavier’s people were louder about their dislike for Valens especially since someone leaked skylar’s news.

Valens was in his third meeting for the day and he still hadn’t had lunch. I could just feel his frustration from where I was sitting.

“Is it because of Skylar?” I asked my wolf but she went silent.

Artemis was a loud wolf. I’d learnt early that she would talk whether I listened or not but she was uncharacteristically quiet today. She didn’t pace, didn’t say anything, merely sat in one spot, unmoving.

‘Something isn’t right, Aysel,’ she repeated after a second of silence.

My arms burned and I shook them out to stamp out the glow that came with that burn. This was not the time for my magic to act out. Some days, like today, I wished I had asked for something other than magic but I couldn't think of anything that I could ask of the goddess that would make me feel closer to my mother who had faded from my memory.

“I think we are just worried about Skylar's return.

She bullied me all my life and it's been months since we were on the same soil,” I reasoned with my wolf but the explanation didn't sit well with me.

“That's possible.’ Artemis went quiet. ‘But what if this is another of her tricks? How can she just be captured like that after months of hiding from even Zino's trackers?

‘She has a ten million bounty on her head. The most skilled hunters have been out for her head for a while now. It was only a matter of time before she got caught.’

‘Call Jabari. We can't access Valens now but we can at least talk to Jabari. Something is not right.”

Due to Artemis' panic, I had no choice but to pick up my phone to call my Beta. He picked up on the first ring.

“Beta Jabari,” he said once he picked up. His voice sounded worn out. I could imagine the look on his face as he picked up his phone. These days, he looked gaunt and worked sluggishly. “Good afternoon, Luna.” He didn't sound like he wanted to talk.

“How are you?” I asked in a soft tone.

“I have drafted the schedule for the trial. It should not span more than seven days. Valens wants it quick. Do you have anything to add? The sentence is death but there is no decision what kind of death”

“It’s death for all three of them?” I asked, taking the bait to discuss something else.

“Zavier is being charged for murder and for breaking the code of Alphas. Yes, the verdict is death. For Skylar, being an accomplice to murder, evading justice and getting on Valens’ bad side, she could get something less but Valens has chosen death. Lucien will be a bit tricky but still, death is preferred. Every other person involved will spend the rest of their lives in the dungeons until something mysterious takes them out.”

“Is that – is that how it works?” Horror painted my face. I wasn’t a fool. I knew that the trial wasn’t going to be fair seeing as there was already a verdict before it even started but I didn’t think it would be this biased.

“Why do you sound surprised?” Jabari chuckled.

“Welcome to the world of Alphas, Luna. You stamp out the cockroaches before they multiply.”

“But Lucien – ” ven Skylar. I could care less about what happened to Zavier. In fact, I was truthful when I said I would like to watch Zavier executed in front of the people he once led but that feeling had faded now.

“I wouldn’t suggest a lesser punishment for any of them to Valens. Especially not Lucien, ” his words had a subtle warming in them.

“I think – I feel he was used. Skylar used him.” I pressed a hand to my forehead, feeling chaotic. The feeling of discomfort was mounting and my heart was speeding up as the clock ticked.

“He is not a child. He availed himself to be used.

Whatever punishment Valens chooses, you should not try to argue it. It might trigger him for no reason.”

Would it seem to him like I was supporting my ex again even though Lucien and I never had such a relationship? Why did I care what happened to him after what he did to me? I couldn’t dwell on that for long.

“Is this how it will always be?” I asked, flipping through a book of spells that Avalon sent me.

“I have never known Valens to put up a front but he is doing that with you. You will see through that front soon enough to realize how he has managed to remain at the peak of power for so long; why no one dared to gang up against him.

The key is to make a statement; a loud statement.”

“Would I ever learn to play his games?” I mused to myself.

“Did you call me for relationship advice?” He sounded exasperated and I caught myself.

“No.” I sat up straight. “Of course not. I am uneasy about the whole Skylar situation.”

“I will handle the trial. I understand it is not something you are comfortable doing so you don’t have to worry.” His voice had gone back to sounding bleak and lifeless.

Thank you but that’s not it. Something feels off about everything. ” I sighed. “Who found her? Why did it happen so suddenly? Is she injured? Did she put up a fight? She has a number of supporters now so she should have had people protecting her at least.”

“Her supporters are being rounded up. She put up a fight but she didn’t have the upper hand this time. The hunter that captured her is new and rumored to be skilled. He calls himself The Ghost Ninja.”

“He sounds like a dork ” I paused. “He callshimself what?”

“The Ghost Ninja. It is a strange name but I’ve heard worse. Black Night? Blueberry Mulberry?”

Hunters have had weirder names.

Yeah, I didn’t know anything about how hunters picked their names but the gears in my head were turning and they weren’t telling me good things.

The hunter’s name sounded so familiar which it shouldn’t have since I’d never come in contact with a bounty hunter in my life. Then it clicked.

‘Fvck,’ Artemis whispered.

“Jabari, listen to me and listen carefully.” I took a breath, clutching my hands into a fist as they started to quiver. “Secure the borders. Find whoever is supposed to be transporting her and stop them. I have to speak to Valens now.”

“What’s happened?” His voice sharpened as he became alert.

“Prepare Redville for an attack. There is no ghost anything. That was something foolish Bethel used to call himself years ago!” I hung up and ran into Valens’ office to see him hoisting a man out of his seat by his collar. The man had turned purple in the face by the time I came in.

“Hey, love.” He let the man go and turned to me with a smile. “You look pale.” He wiped his hands on a handkerchief while I turned to the men, pretending I hadn’t seen what happened.

“If you will excuse us, I have something to discuss with my Alpha.” The two men were quick to leave.

“He provoked me.” He tried to explain but it didn’t matter at that point. “Say something. Why are you losing colour?”

There is no ghost of the ninja or whoever contacted you. This is all part of Skylar’s scheme,”

I rushed out. D*mn, Skylar really did up her game!

She was always scheming and conniving but never to this extent. She had gotten slicker. “This is an ambush.”

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What happened after that was a flurry of events which barely registered. I flew around like a headless chicken trying to get the people who Valens couldn't get in touch with. The elders had been alerted but some of them fell off the grid. The borders had been secured, Valens and Jabari in a meeting while I gathered the other elders.

"Elder Malek?") I asked Luna Levana who was running around with me.

"A traitor."

There's still one elder left that I haven't been able to contact." I sank into my seat, my back aching along with my feet.

"Is it the Elder that was taken to the dungeons this morning?" My attention snapped back to Levana.

"Yes! Goddess, I'm already out of it!" I sighed, realizing I'd already forgotten about the earlier incident with Elder James. Everything was happening all at once and I just woke up. It was already driving me insane.

How much trouble would skylar cause me before she actually succeeded in ruining my life? How much longer would I have to deal with her terrorizing me? I was honestly sick of it and I hoped

I could get rid of her once and for all. Yet, I knew she was coming with a blazing fire.

My phone rang as I reviewed the plan Jabari sent me before they went in for a meeting. It seemed foolproof. Whatever Skylar was bringing, it would not be enough. If I was her target, she would have another thing coming. But it didn't stop my heart from beating faster as the seconds passed. We were expecting a full-blown confrontation in a few hours.

"What is it?" I asked as I picked up my phone without checking the caller.

"There's a problem in the dungeons and we can't connect with the Beta," a male voice called from the other end of the line.

"Who is this? What is the problem?"

"I am Boris, the head of the guards around Zavier today." The man's voice was deep, his speech hard to make out. "There has been an attempt to break out the Alpha just now. We rounded up some people involved but half of my men are seriously injured."

"The Alpha and his aides are in a meeting now. I'll alert them when they are out. In the meantime, how many men do you need as backup? I'll send over You are not the Luna yet. You still do not have the power to command the warriors," the man on the other end of the call gently reminded me.

"Tà like to see someone disobey my order at this point." I pinched the point between my brows.

“How many men? I don’t have all day for this call.”

“Fifteen men should be enough.”

“Good.” I ended the call. I picked up the office landline as I searched through the directory of squad leaders.

The casual reminder that I hadn’t been officially installed pricked my skin and made me pause over every number I decided to call.

“Is there a problem?” Levana asked, coming back into the office after stepping out for a second during my call.

“They are trying to break out Zavier once more. A guard just reached out to me as he couldn’t contact Jabari. His men are injured and they need backup.”

That’s weird,” Levana said, taking a seat. “My mate just called. We are expecting attacks on all forty-four packs and our dungeons were attacked too.”

“Can Skylar really do that?” I asked out loud.

“She has good connections now. That’s my best bet.”

It was mine too. It was weird to think of the number of enemies Valens had amassed in his lifetime, enough to form an army enough to threaten forty-four powerful packs.

“The man says he needs backup so I’m thinking of the fastest troop that can get to him at this point considering everyone is engaged one way or another.” I left out the part

where there was a possibility I wouldn't be able to order a troop considering my status as Luna was still unofficial.

"Let's wait for Jabari. He knows what to do best at this point. This is his jurisdiction."

My phone rang again at that point. I checked the caller id before picking up this time. It was a call from Celeste.

"What's up, babe?" I asked once I picked up.

"Where is Jabari?" She demanded.

"They're in a meeting. They will be out soon," I answered.

"Someone needs to go to the dungeons right now.

I just received a call from Lucien." I was out of my seat once she mentioned that name.

"What? What did he say?"

"The line kept breaking but I know prisoners can't just make calls so I'm worried something happened.

I've been trying Jabari but he isn't picking up." I almost ran to the meeting room but Jabari came bursting out before I got to the door.

He didn't look like the Jabari I knew. He was scary.

The expression on his face made me stumble out of his way as he strode over.

They broke them out,” he hissed. I knew who he was referring to without him mentioning names.

“Im going to crush that bastard’s skull.”

Valens came striding out after him, his expression calm but I knew him too well for his neutral expression to fool me. His shoulders were tight and I felt him. I felt the bristle of anger that stiffened his shoulder and made his eyes colder than I’d ever seen them.

“Jabari, take her home.” Jabari and I exchanged surprised glances. “I want the Alpha squad and Bane stationed around the house. No one comes in or goes out. Anyone who strays too close to the fence should be taken out.”

“What – what do you mean?” I asked the same time Jabari said;

“What are you saying? I have to find them and round up those involved.”

“I’ll handle everything. Your duty is to keep her protected.” His words were flat and his eyes cold.

“You have to be kidding me.” I turned to Jabari, then to Levana, and then my mate. “You must be joking.”

“Your life is the last thing I would joke with. You are at the top of their hit list and I am not risking it.

Come, I’ll walk you to the car. Your guards should be here by now.” He took my hand but I ripped it out of his.

“I am your Luna. I am not going to hide out with your Beta when –

“You are my Luna and that is exactly why you will do as I say. You will not argue with me on this, Aysel.” He took my hand and proceeded to pull me with him to the elevator.

“Valens, I have not trained every day for –“

“Aysel, you are giving me a headache. Do not argue with me.”

“I – I am giving you a headache?” I asked incredulously. “I am giving you a headache, Valens!?”

I almost shouted.

He turned to Jabari who got into the elevator with us. “Celeste is alone at home. Pick her up on your way.” He totally ignored me as I stared at him. He turned to Levana and said, “You will stay with her.” Levana nodded although I read the displeasure on her face.

“Valens, this is ridiculous. At least take Jabari with you.”

“Aysel –

You have never fought without him. You can’t do everything yourself!”

“And you’ve never been under siege. Stop arguing with me.” There was nothing more to say after that. I let him be as the elevator took us down and he walked me to the car waiting in front of the office.

It was surprising that everyone was going about their work as if nothing had happened while I was on my way to hide. Hadn't they heard?

"I love you." Valens caught my hand as I was about to get into the car. He pressed a kiss to my lips before letting me go. I kept quiet as I got into the car with Levana, Jabari driving. Another car followed behind us while I stewed.

Jabari's annoyance made the whole car ride unbearable. I was tired of the silence. It felt as if I'd ruined everything for the people in the car with me.

They were stuck babysitting me when they could be helping the pack.

It didn't matter that I'd trained hard every day to be able to defend myself. It didn't matter that I was the only person on the planet with magic. It didn't matter that I was supposed to be the Luna to a powerful Alpha. I was going to hide out at home while my pack fought a battle.

"We can work from home and we'll be updated on whatever is happening. I'm sure the Alpha will have everything under control by himself," Levana said, placing a hand on my thigh.

I didn't say anything as Jabari pulled into Celeste's driveway and my skin pricked, my stomach churning as a familiar sense of disgust crawled up my spine.

"Lucien is here."

The Cursed Alpha's Mate Chapter 90

I flew out of the car and rushed to the house but Jabari caught me before I took five strides, pulling me back.

“My friend is in there. Your mate is in there!”

I yelled at him when he stopped me. “Do you know what he is doing in there?” I asked but his expression was unreadable.

“Stay in the car. Whatever is going on in there is a potential danger to you. I’ll deal with it.”

He tried steering me back towards the car but my feet were quicker than his. I dashed past him and raced through the familiar front doors into Celeste’s home.

I was surprised to see her wrestling her brother to the ground. She was beating a bag into his face but he gained the upper hand in a matter of seconds, struggling weakly against her.

“Just listen to me for a second!” He called in a harsh voice. “I am still your brother.”

They both noticed my presence at the same time. He paused, looking up at me. Celeste took that time to push him off her with a violent force. She scrambled to a stand and in a flash, he was after her.

“Stay back,” Lucien said but his words were not directed at me. I felt Jabari’s presence behind me as Lucien hustled to

his feet. Jabari took a step forward but my hand shot out on instinct as I watched, horror-struck, as Lucien grabbed his sister and used her as a shield between himself and us.

“Stay back or I will – I will cut her.” He held a small knife to her throat and looked like he would stab her throat if any of us dared step forward.

“Lucien, that’s your sister,” I said slowly.

It was mind-boggling that I still expected anything from Lucien. It was even more mind -boggling to witness how far he had fallen from the sweet boy he once was. He was holding a knife to his sister’s throat and he didn’t look like he was bluffing. If any of us took a step forward, he would hurt her without a second thought or remorse.

I’d watched Lucien go from a caring friend to a stone-cold killer in just a few years.

“I know that!” He snapped, his scratched voice still conveying his irritation. “Do you think I want to do this? Do you think it’s fun holding a knife to my sister’s throat? You all have left me no choice!” He almost screamed, his eyes darting around the room wildly. Celeste quivered, frozen to the spot with her eyes wide open in obvious disbelief.

“You are not going to make it out alive,” Jabari said, his words calm yet tight.

“Oh, I am if you want your mate in one piece,” Lucien proclaimed, pressing the knife closer to Celeste’s throat. I

almost took a step forward when I saw how close the tip of the blade was to her throat.

“What do you want?” I asked when I saw the sweat gathering on my friend’s forehead. “Let her go and you’ll get whatever you want.”

“I may not be the smartest person, Aysel, but I am not stupid!” I took a startled step back at the ferocity of his scream. “You think you can deceive me? You ruined my life, you b!tch. You think I will still believe a word you say!?” He snorted, his voice loud.

“I didn’t ruin your life. You did that yourself,”

I answered, forcing him to talk long enough for us to get Celeste away from him.

“You were my mate but you chose to mate with that bastard who had the guts to imprison me after he stole from me!” The knife touched Celeste’s throat. Tears spilt from her eyes.

“You rejected me,” I reminded him.

“It didn’t matter! You were supposed to be mine forever.” I felt a spark on the tips of my fingers. I tightened my fist.

My magic was still raw, still out of control. I could not direct it yet and I didn’t know the full extent of the damage it could cause.

Celeste was too close to Lucien to try anything.

I didn't want to risk hurting her. I'd never forgive myself.

"What do you want, Lucien?" I asked, getting back to the subject at hand.

"I can't continue to stay in this pack now, can I?" He asked. "Im leaving but I have nothing.

How am I supposed to survive without any money? Celeste has refused to give me money but since you two are here, you can help her out."

"I don't-I don't have any money My friend choked out.

"I don't have any cash with me but I have my card - and - and Valens'. Please, just let her go,"

I pleaded with him.

"Do you think I'm stupid? I should take your card so you'll be able to track me?"

"We don't need -I elbowed Jabari to stop him from aggravating Lucien.

"I- what can we do then? I can - do you want me to go make a withdrawal?" I looked around.

Yes, you can go and return with a troop but I'm not sure you'll meet her alive." He nodded his head at Celeste. "You have to come up with something better than that, Aysel. I've lost everything because of you. You owe me at this point."

“You really shouldn’t have come here,” Jabari hissed but he thankfully didn’t take a step forward.

I have I touched the hoops around my ears.

Valens had give them to me for my birthday.

Solid diamond earrings. I took them off my ears and held them out to Lucien. These are diamonds. You can have them. Just let her go.”

“Drop them.” He pointed at a spot a few steps away.

I walked cautiously to the spot and dropped the earrings. He motioned me away with hand gestures and I walked backward.

“Here is what will happen,” he started, swallowing thickly. “I’ll take her car and you will let us go.”

“We can’t let you take her, Lucien,” I said in a steady voice despite the increasing shiver dancing through my spine and making my hands shake.

The hell I can’t. She’s my sister! Our parents are out there somewhere, displaced because of you and your stupid mate,” he hissed. “You know, I’ve always known that underneath the façade you put on, you’re just a whore like all the other girls.” I swallowed, my throat clogging. My vision was starting to get blurry, tainted with red. “You pretended you wanted me all those years but a more successful man comes around and it doesn’t take you a second to spread your legs for him like the slut you are.”

His words were scathing, spittle flying out of his mouth as he uttered them with vehemence.

“I can’t believe I loved you!” He laughed like a maniac. “I loved you but you cheated on me and had me thrown into the dungeons. You are a b!tch, Aysel, but I still love you. You are going to regret choosing a finished prince over me.

He dragged Celeste suddenly and she let out a small squeak, still petrified.

He picked up the earrings and walked backward, still holding Celeste as his shield.

“I ‘ll drop her at the borders. You better not follow me. Tell your people to let me pass, else she’s dead.” I raised my hand in a show of surrender.

I watched as Lucien dragged Celeste with him out the back door of the house. I closed my eyes for a second, the sight of my friend frozen in her brother’s arms as he held a knife to her throat made my stomach churn. I felt a burning fire sign my palms as I clenched my fists even tighter.

The back door closed behind them and Jabari turned to me. “Go back to the car,” he said, starting forward.

You – You are going after them?” I asked.

“I’d be stupid to let him take her.”

“But he could hurt her He didn’t wait for me to finish. He raced after them.

I paced the house, thinking of what to do. I decided to follow after Jabari, my heart in my throat. By the time I made it to them, Lucien was surrounded by a squad of warriors.

“Tell them to let me go else she’s gone.” His voice was shaky and I saw fear in his eyes. He hadn’t finished speaking when we heard a shot. I looked, horror-struck. Someone had shot his shoulder. He stumbled backward and Celeste wrenched out of his grip but he’d cut her. It wasn’t a deep cut but blood beaded her throat.

“You bastard -“I ran to my friend while Jabari charged Lucien. I caught up with Celeste just as her legs gave out, releasing her full weight on me as she fainted.

Jabari tackled Lucien to the ground, slamming his head into the ground. There was a loud crack that gave him pause, his hand freezing in mid-air.

“Well sh!t,” he muttered as blood started to sip out from underneath Lucien’s head.

I swallowed down bile.