

Chapter 196

The sun was still shining, and the guards were still positioning themselves all around them when Ava pulled his head down and kissed him.

She had never initiated anything before.

But like all the other times, it didn't matter what was going on around them when his mate touched him; her kiss floored him. He could taste the alcohol on her tongue as she grew bolder with each passing second. And he grew harder.

He reluctantly pulled his lips from hers.

"There are guards in the woods," he warned her as he stood and helped her to her feet.

This wasn't supposed to be what they were doing right now, but this could be their last day together. He wasn't going to deny his mate. At least that pain shed felt when they'd taken her father was in the background.

He had them in the bedroom in record time, then crashed his lips to hers again. Mate bonds were supposed to settle down after a few days, but with Ava, he still lost his head when she touched him. Heat spread through his body as he ripped her training kit off her

The thought of not getting to have this for the rest of his life stabbed his heart. He lifted his head and looked at his beautiful mate. Was he pushing her to make the wrong decision? They could live longer if they rolled over and took whatever Mr. Hansson did to them. Maybe graduate and live together. Find a pack that would accept them or start their own. And have children. Many of them so they wouldn't be lonely like he had been.

Ava's fingers fumbled with his clothes. Someone had given him a training kit to wear because he'd woken up in one of the rooms in the Administration building fully dressed. But he ripped the kit off to help Ava out and stood in front of her naked. Her eyes heated up, and the scent of her arousal filled the room. And when she looked at him from his toes all the way up, he felt like puffing his chest out with pride.

Ava's gaze stopped at his neck, and she bit her lip thoughtfully. Something was going on in his mate's head. He could sense it clearly as if her speaking to Nyx had somehow changed things...

Or it could have started before her wolf had spoken to her. For a moment, he'd thought he could hear the waves crashing into the shore and smell the ocean. His eyes were wide open, and he hadn't been trying to connect with her the way they had connected in isolation. He didn't think Ava even knew she had done that.

“What are you thinking of?” he asked.

“I... We want to mark you.” Ava said.

His brows shot up for a moment, and then he felt a smile stretch on his face. Vampires marked each other when they mated, not wolves. Be he couldn't help the excitement coursing through his body at her words.

They wanted to mark him.

After attacking him in the forest and then running away from him after her first shift, Nyx wanted to claim him.

“Yes. I'm already yours, but you can put your mark on me so I can proudly show it,” he whispered thickly.

And then her beautiful blue eyes turned blood red as she approached him. When he kissed her this time, he didn't stop. He wrapped her legs around him and pinned her against the wall, already lost to the chaotic feelings in his body. He couldn't tell which were his or Shadow's, which were Ava's or Nyx's.

And when he was lost in her body, he felt her teeth sink into his neck.

It felt like the world stopped.

Like it smashed into pieces and then reformed itself.

Ava was still in the middle of his world, but this time, Nyx was there, too.

And it didn't matter whose emotions he was feeling because they were one. He understood everything he felt and nothing at the same time. Everything was stronger. Different. And yet, it was still the same,

He lost himself in his mate for hours, connecting in ways he had not known were possible.

When the sun had already set, he surfaced from the hazy fog and looked down at the woman in his arms.

The woman who had claimed him.

The mark on his neck still throbbed, but it would look like Ava's in a few days. His fingers gently trailed the raised pattern on her neck, making her stir. She looked so drained, even in her sleep. He felt drained, too. With how intense everything had been, he wasn't surprised.

A smile touched his lips. Ava had spoken to her wolf, and then her wolf claimed him. He felt sort of electricity through his body that he couldn't explain. Something he knew instinctively that he had to hide from Hanson and the Council members.

Act's stomach rumbled, and a slight frown appeared on her face. She must have skipped lunch if Andrei and Iulia had trapped her to keep her to keep her from rampaging. and they'd skipped dinner. He had to feed his mate to get her strength back up for what was coming.

The gently untangled himself and then found a pair of boxers to throw on before he went downstairs. It was funny how taking care of his

mate's needs has become a priority above everything else, even the certain death banging user them.

He'd only just opened the fridge when he sensed someone behind him.

And he came crashing back into the real world so quickly it pissed him off.

He closed the fridge with a sigh and turned to look at Mr. Patrick. The Fae then motioned with his head for him to follow before he walked out of the kitchen.

When he closed the door to the basement, Mr. Patrick didn't waste any time.

"I don't know how he found Roland. I masked him and the house I put him in. He was safe there."

"He wasn't staying with you?"

"No. After you told us how easy it is for them to spy, I put him somewhere else," Mr. Patrick said, pulling at his hair. "He should have been safe."

"It was probably the councilors. Ava wants us to trust them, but my gut tells me we can't."

Since Ava's wolf was speaking to her now, maybe she could convince her.

“We’ll just have to take a chance on this, Ezekiel. It’s fifty-fifty, but I’m guessing he’s an Earth Far because of how vast and strong the forest is. We’ve run out of time.”

It was not ideal, but it was the best they could do.

“What do we need to kill him?”

“Me. My strengths are the opposite of his; I’ll find a way to amplify them. And since we can’t find whatever charm strengthens the forest, we’ll just have to hope that I will be enough to at least weaken him enough for us to finish the job,” Mr. Patrick sighed. “I’ll bring supplies to help you in the morning. Iron, ash and all that. I need to see how Ava is doing”

He looked like he was about to do his disappearing thing when he turned back to him and studied him.

“What did you do?” he asked.

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t have my protective magic anymore,” Mr. Patrick said.

Shit. That was all they needed on top of everything else.

“But I still can’t get into your head,” he mused.