

Chapter 40

Zeke went in the library before sunrise the following Lay. Not that it mattered. He hadn't slept for Stat, he couldn't even remember now. The librarian seemed surprised to see him, but she didn't comment when he walked over to a shelf to start browsing.

The library was open twenty-four hours a day to allow students in keep up with their studies on top of their training schedules. It was the biggest structure on campus, with a vast atrium structure and several floors around it. It was usually full of students after training, but at this time, he known it would be empty. Most people were still asleep or resting before the start of another grueling schedule. Lucky bastards.

The night after Ava had been attacked, he had gone back to wait in the woods behind her room, switching between hoping Claire and her friends. would come back and hoping he could get into Ava's room to finish what he had started. He'd only gone home once he had followed Ava to her duties and made sure she had gone in.

When Ava had left the dorm, the sun hadn't even risen yet, and she hadn't looked behind her a single time. The human knew Claire was waiting to hurt her, but there hadn't been an ounce of fear in the air.

What the hell was wrong with that girl? Couldn't she sense the danger all around her.

Then, when he had been set to follow her back to her or after detention, that stand had been waiting for her. Breakfast together twice in an and now what? They were living together?

Shadow growled in his head, but he put his mental walls back up. Last night he had probably had the worst night since all this shit started. Ava was testing his limits in a way he had never been tested before. He couldn't even blame Shadow for its because he was the one who wanted in follow them. He was the one who'd wanted to make sure fand delict touch her. He was the one who'd been on her balcony like a pervert, Seeing them together had almost broken hint, and that wasn't right. He didn't want Ava like that. He didn't want the bond.

That shut ended today.

He turned back to walk to the middle of the atrium, to the librarian's desk and pulled a piece of paper from his pocket, Miss Donovan was a vampire who had been the librarian here probably since the old building had been built. She knew everything about everything and would know that one of the books on his list had nothing to do with any of his subjects.

"I need these books and others on those subjects," he told her.

Miss Donovan didn't cower. She was probably one of the few people who didn't reek of fear when he spoke to them. She took the paper from him without a word and started typing something on her computer.

“Some of these are restricted, but I’ll tell you where the other books are.”

Miss Donovan printed something out and handed it to him, and it was just his luck that the ones he needed were restricted. He frowned and stuffed the paper in his pocket.

“Is this about that business that happened during the break?” Miss Donovan asked quietly

Of course. She wasn’t in Dominic’s nest, but news like this was bound to have travelled. This was the perfect excuse he needed to find out what was happening between him and Ava.

“Yes,” he lied. “I need to find a way to solve this without more bloodshed. My father’s expecting a report this weekend, and I’ve made no progress.”

Miss Donovan regarded him for a moment. She was perfectly still, so he knew she was using her senses to figure out if he was telling the truth. On any other person, her allure would have been irresistible. He would have had to tell her the truth when she asked. But Shadow was stubborn and didn’t allow anyone to manipulate him like that.

“I’m proud of you for trying. You’ll make a great Alpha.”

Better than his father. That part was left unsaid, but he knew that was what she had implied.

“If you find a study room. I’ll bring you some of those books. Hut you must be careful with them and can’t check them out. They belong to the Council.”

He was so grateful he could have kissed the older woman if he didn’t think Shadow would bite her face off instead.

“Thank you” he said while a breath of relief.

He went to the nearest study room to wait. There were several of these rooms on each floor for when students needed to do group discussions without bothering anyone else or when they needed a more private square to study. They were usually busier when the exams were nearer, but so early the semester, they were hardly used. Tables and chairs were in the muddle, and a couple of computers were set up along one wall. He paced around the table as his anxiousness increased.

What if he discovered there was nothing he could do about this? What if it was permanent? He could feel Shadow practically wagging his tail at that thought.

The door opened, and Miss Donovan walked in with a few heavy books. They looked ancient, and he was almost afraid to pick them up after she set them on a table.

“Take your time,” she said before she left the room.

Zeke had to steel himself as he walked to the books and picked up the top one. It was simply called True Mate Bonds. When he sat down to read. even the very first sentence was a disappointment. Everything just

reaffirmed his fears. True mate bonds were for life. Ava was supposedly the other half of him. And if he marked her, and she died, he would never be whole again.

She would always be his weakness. Why anybody in their right mind would want that was beyond him. The bond he would create with the woman his father had chosen would not be like this. Not at all. He wouldn't even need to touch her unless he was ready to make heirs. But a True Mate bond was the opposite. He would want to touch Ava all the time. He was struggling with that already,

He chose to skip the other headings as he looked for the ones he wanted. How to stop himself from marking her in the first place. How to stop this bond from getting stronger.

He was looking through the last book when he finally found what he was looking for. Relief washed over him as he read every sentence carefully. Was that all there was to it! Was that all it would take to end this madness?

All he had to do was make eye contact and say, 'I, Ezekiel Michelson, son of Ezra Michelson, reject you, Ava Morgan, as my true mate.'

For the first time since she had ignored him on her balcony last night, his heart felt lighter. He was finally going to end this shit. Today.