

Chapter 66

Zeke looked down at the beautiful, fragile face of the girl asleep on his chest. She hadn't let go of him all night, but that was okay because he hadn't let go of her either.

He didn't know how she had done it or if she had done it at all. He and Shadow had been so close to breaking. The darkness had started to invade, even with Shadow's stubbornness. Several times, he had been pulled into his nightmares, watching all his sins play out in front of him like a horror movie. He had felt the pain in his head, all over his body, a pain he couldn't even describe.

And then Ava appeared.

The darkness had disappeared in the blink of an eye, and he found himself on the cliffs with his little human mate.

Maybe it was Shadow's longing for her that had conjured her. Perhaps it was his longing

Or maybe it was the little human's.

He pushed her hair out of her face and watched her, memorizing everything. Did she even know she had been calling him? Pulling him to her so strongly that she chased all his darkness away? He thought he was imagining things, but the moment he was let out, the Council's magic released him, and all of Ava's pain and longing hit him like a truck.

Derek had been waiting for him outside, which he was thankful for because all his strength was gone, but he'd needed to get to Ava quickly. He knew his friends wanted to talk, and they wanted to know if he was okay, but he hadn't been able to concentrate on anything except getting to this little woman.

The woman who had taken all his carefully crafted plans and shot them to shit.

There was a soft knock. His friends had waited long enough. The sun had long since risen, but he couldn't bring himself to let her go.

He mind linked them to come in without untangling Ava from his body. After what he had just gone through, he would let the dice fall wherever they fell. They wanted him to trust them. He was giving them their chance.

They walked in slowly and watched the human in his arms.

The little human who was going to blow their whole pack apart.

His arms tightened around her, something they both noticed. He couldn't tell what they were thinking. Shadow was having a well-deserved rest, so he wasn't back to his whole self yet.

“She could feel you when we were completely cut off from you,” Derek stated. ‘She was in pain.’

“And she stayed in here for days, like she was in a coma. I think everyone could feel her pain for miles,” Myles added.

He looked down at Ava’s sleeping face again. The bond was affecting her, too. Did she feel it the same way? Was it as strong? As overwhelming?

‘She’s yours,’ Derek stated.

He nodded. He hadn’t asked for this, but here they were. Rejecting Ava was out of the question now. She was a part of him, even if he hadn’t marked her yet. But what the hell was he supposed to do? He had a mate chosen for him waiting for him at home and a father who would exile him and ruin his plans if he didn’t go along with it. And he had a human who would weaken him and all the pack if he marked her. Not if. When.

He buried his face in her hair and filled his lungs with her fruity scent.

It was only a matter of time. Ava would be his in all the ways he could have her,

‘How is it even possible! We haven’t heard about true mates in centuries; I didn’t even think they were real,’ Myles asked.

‘I don’t know. But here she is. The human that Shadow would kill for.’

He almost laughed at that. Given the chance, Shadow would kill over any little thing. But Ava... she calmed him. Though the beast was weak now, he was still content. Their minds had finally aligned when they'd been stuck in that room. Ava was in the picture, no matter what. He just had to find a way to nuke everything else fit around her.

'Your father called. He's going to want an explanation,' Derek said somberly. 'I didn't know what to tell him.'

He looked at his Beta sharply.

'I didn't tell him anything at all. I told you, you can trust us, Zeke. It doesn't matter who the Alpha is; you're still our brother.'

Myles sighed as he sat on one of the chairs.

'We can't tell him, but we have a lot of our park members here. It will reach him sooner or later. So you need to tell us what the hell we're going to.'

Ava stretched, pulling his attention away from the conversation. Then she opened her big blue eyes, and he drowned in them straight away. He wasn't fighting it anymore, there was no point,

She smiled. It was a little smile, but after the darkness in Isolation, it felt like someone was pouring a bucket of sunshine over him.

And then the smile slowly started to fade.

Last night had been different. The separation had caused this need to be together, to heal the pain by touching each other. But his mind was settled now, so he knew Ava was also okay. She would start to think more clearly now.

She moved out of his arms quickly. The separation nearly killed him, but he had to give the human time to process this. He had already warned her she would end up in his bed. The only thing that had changed was that it would be sooner rather than later, and he would welcome it.

The human would have his mark by the next full moon.

“Sorry.” Ava mumbled

Her face went red. probably from the realization that she had been clinging to him. And then she looked down at her hands and realized she was holding his shirt. He’d seen it on the bed and realized she had needed something with his scent to comfort her, the way a wolf would have done. Her face turned redder as she put it down and rushed out of the room.

“She doesn’t know what’s going on,” Derek said. “She was half out of her mind the night you went into isolation. I still don’t know what was happening, but we had to sedate her. I don’t think she remembers any of that.”

‘Don’t tell her. I don’t want to scare her off.’

He would find the right time to tell her. For now, it was enough that she was safe in his house.

‘So shall we discuss what we will say to your father? We can’t miss another call, and he’s already angry that there has been no progress for a whole week with the vampires.’

He sighed and sat up in his bed.

“I’ll shower and eat first. I can’t think of my father right now,” he said aloud.

When his friends didn’t make a move to leave the room, he knew what they needed to hear.

“I’m okay.” he assured them.

It was a lie. Not because the Council had broken him, but because the times they had gotten into his head, they had shown him just how broken he already was. He and Shadow were the same. He deserved his demon wolf.