

Chapter 11

His smoldering gaze didn't waver from mine as he gestured to a seat that I fell into with my eyes trying to avoid his. Artemis was howling with joy, giddy with excitement but I held myself from reading any meaning into his actions. I learnt early that I couldn't be disappointed if I didn't expect anything.

'Did you not hear Beta Jabari?' Artemis panted, taking a break from dancing around to speak to me. 'He called us Luna.' As Beta Jabari didn't speak for Prince Valens, I didn't see her point.

"What is your name?" His clear, authoritative voice asked. I didn't hear anything in his voice and I expected to hear disgust, anger even.

"Aysel." I studied a scar on my index finger as if it was the most fascinating thing in the world. I did so I wouldn't have to look at his body like a pervert. Fear wouldn't let me look at his face but his body attracted my eyes. He had light brown nipples and a light tanned skin.

"A beautiful name." He pretended to sound impressed by my name.

Artemis howled. She hadn't been this giddy when we found out Lucien was our mate but at that time, she hadn't shifted so maybe the connection had been weaker.

"Will you look at me?" He asked and my eyes darted up for a split second before they lowered again. Omegas didn't look alphas in the eye, it was a basic rule of survival that I couldn't break. "Look at me." The silent command forced me to look up into his eyes. They were a dark, dark grey that had hardened over the years but the more I looked into them, the warmer they looked.

“That’s better.” The side of his lips pulled up as if he wanted to smile but he didn’t know how to, as if he’d forgotten how to. “The colors are beautiful but your eyes – magnificent.”

Ah I was going to keel over from a heart attack any second now. What was this man doing to me? Did he not understand that no one was to look him in the eye? Alpha Zavier would have smacked me to the ground ten times if I ever looked into his eyes that long. He may have even lost his restraint and killed me even but Prince Valens didn’t care that I held his gaze, something most alphas saw as a challenge to their authority.

“Come here.” He patted his thighs and I had a moment to wonder if he’d gone crazy or if he’d always been crazy. He would slap the daylight out of my eyes if he heard me think such derogatory thoughts about him but they couldn’t be helped. Why would he offer I sit in his laps? “You’re wasting my time, Sagira.” My butt was out of my seat before he completed his statement. The teasing tone held clear warning.

‘You’re wasting my time. Come here before I have to stand up to get you.’ That was what his tone suggested.

My shaky legs carried me across the table where the rest of his meal sat, cold and untouched. I put the poison in only his drink but he must suspect I mixed poison with the whole tray yet he mentioned nothing about that.

He put his hand around my waist in a possession manner, pulling me into his chest once I perched on his thighs. Artemis continued to howl.

My back went ramrod still when he sniffed me, his nose digging into my side, my armpit, trailing to my chest.

“And your smell.” He buried his face on my chest, between my breast. I knew he could hear the loud racing of my heart but he said nothing, only continuing to inhale my scent. I remembered I hadn’t taken a bath this

morning, only changed into fresh clothes as I hurried to get to the kitchen before Astrid did.

Astrid made sure she came into the kitchen at eight a.m. sharp every day and anyone not there before her got a tongue lashing from hell and depending on her mood, a spoon, plate or even knife, flying at their head.

“Won’t you reject me?” I asked after a minute of him doing nothing but committing my scent to memory.

When he raised his head to look at me, I couldn’t determine if he was angry or amused at my question.

“You tried to poison me.” Curse you Skylar. Curse you for always putting me on the spot and for forcing me to do something so dreadful as to poison the Alpha Prince. “I should punish you.” My heart slammed at that. Did punishment to him mean death or torture? I could only hope for the former but from what I heard about the cursed prince, I could expect both.

‘... the cursed Alpha Prince does not sleep so he spends his nights devising new ways to torture those that dare to cross his path. If you breathe the wrong way in his presence, his Beta will bundle you out of the room to await the most painful death only a cursed prince can formulate.’

“It is only natural I punish you, don’t you think?” He leaned into me, his teeth close to my earlobes so that I could feel his lips against them.

“Yes,” I agreed. It was the sensible thing to do. It was what we expected of a man of his caliber.

“How do you want to be punished.” Sitting in his laps with his teeth a fraction away from my earlobes made me quiver like a leaf as I wondered if he planned to bite off my ear as a form of punishment.

“Any – any how you deem fit, sir.”

“Valens.”

“W – what ?”

“My name, princess. Call me by my name.” My eyes threatened to fall out of their sockets.

Call me by my name.

What did he mean by call him by his name!? My brain short circuited at that point.

“Oh.” I didn’t say his name. I couldn’t say his name. Ha, imagine calling Alpha Zavier just Zavier, without his title as if we were equals or I was his superior. In fact, a few months ago, Bethel started stuffing sands into the mouth of anyone that dared to call him without using his title.

Beta and Alpha were more than just ranks. They were titles that people held dear, cherished and held with pride.

Valens.

Even thinking of it without saying it out loud sounded funny and disrespectful at once.

“It may change my mind if you say my name.” I didn’t need any more convincing. I actually didn’t need to be convinced. I just needed the courage to do something so daring.

“V – V – Valens.” I winced as a part of me expected it to be a trick, a trigger of some sort that, when muttered, spurred him into rage or something equally as dramatically deadly.

“Close enough but it’s just one v, princess.” I blushed at both his words and the accusation. “We’ll try again next time but I need to know something first.” His voice hadn’t really turned playful before but it hardened when he said that and it made me even more nervous. His hands around my waist slackened and I hated to say that I already felt the loss of his hold.

This mate bond already felt stronger than the bond I shared with Lucien.

“If another person did that to me, I’d have torn them open in a second but Zino has assured me he’ll destroy everything I’ve ever cherished if I dared hurt you.” I nodded as if entranced by his words and not scared.

“Seeing how fast you fled, I can already tell it wasn’t your doing so I need names.”

I need names.

Oh, the way he said it! His tone made it sound as if he needed more than names, like he needed blood to flow and heads to roll.

“It was my idea.” I blurted the words in a rush. “I – you –“ I had no explanation but the damage had been done. His hand tightened around my waist for a moment before it fell off and he sighed.

“You make me forget.” He said, his words a reflection of the cold man he was. “You make me forget I am the cursed prince.” He let me go, his hand retracting from my waist. I stood from his thighs with my legs shaking. Without a word, I turned to leave his room, considering myself dismissed by his tone. I knew when someone had no use for me anymore.

“I never said you could leave.” I froze again. “You’re not allowed to leave me, Sagira but you may go to your room.”

I ran to my room without waiting for a second verdict but then I wished I’d not returned because Lucien sat waiting for me with his legs crossed and a scowl painting his face.