

## Chapter 17

“Hey, wench! Clean this up and fetch me a glass of water!” Bethel the former alpha and premium asshole yelled, pushing his plate away while glaring at me. I walked over to him and filled his glass with water. Lucien followed my movement with smoldering eyes and a sharp glare at Bethel but I paid him no mind.

If these people knew that I was the prince's mate, would they treat me differently? Or would they not care seeing as the prince himself didn't seem to care? Or perhaps they would want to hurt me for breaking his curse?

“We need to talk.” Lucien pulled me to a corner as soon as I stepped out of the kitchen. I looked around, expecting to see one of the men from the Alpha Pack walking about but I saw nobody. I felt like a fugitive or an adulterous woman, in fact. I didn't want Lucien to be anywhere close to me.

“What is it you want this time?” I pulled my hand from his, putting a bit of distance between us. His brows creased and he looked hurt as I stepped away from him.

“What's your relationship with the cursed prince?” He asked, gripping my bicep till it hurt.

“I have no relationship with him. Let me go.” I tried pulling my arm from his grip but Lucien was strong. Stronger than I hoped to be.

“Stop hiding things from me. What is your relationship, dammit!” He growled, further tightening his grip on me. I closed my eyes to fight back the stinging tears of annoyance.

Today started off as hell. I woke up in the prince's bed without him in the room as usual and I went late to the kitchen. Astrid now marked my face as a late comer and she chose to give me special grief. She called me names as I worked and everything I did, she found mistakes in. She even called me a little bitch.

I didn't like it when people called me that. I wasn't promiscuous. I didn't sleep around. I wasn't in any way like a bitch but some boys crudely told me I had the face of one. I'd heard a lot of nasty things about what my mouth could be used for because I had full bow lips.

"Go ask him. He was the one that said it, wasn't he? I didn't say anything." The more I pulled my bicep from his grip, the harder he tightened it.

"A lot of girls are trying to seduce the prince to be his princess or his Luna or some shit. I hope you're not one of them." I glared at him with all the hatred in my heart. He might as well have called me a bitch like his girlfriend liked to do.

"What is it to you if I chose to seduce him?" I snarled, frustrated and tired. It angered my wolf when he spoke about girls lining up to take her place in her mate's life. The alpha prince may be cruel but he was mine. The thought of him being with someone else made my stomach tighten.

"Don't joke with me." Lucien let out a sharp laughter. "I already told you I want you back but you're playing hard to get. You're mine. I must claim you. I don't want your eyes on anyone that isn't me."

"You rejected me." I reminded him but he wasn't listening. He never listened to me. As a matter of fact, no one ever listened to me. Even the alpha prince who was to be my mate. It was as if opening my mouth didn't serve any purpose. It was the reason I chose to be quiet. It took energy to speak and that energy was wasted when I spoke and nobody listened.

“I told you I regret that decision. We can reverse it in an instant. In fact, we can do it here.” He stepped closer to me, his chest brushing mine. We were pressed together so tightly that anyone passing would misinterpret what was happening.

Then I realized we were at the back of the pack house where people hardly came to during the day, expect in the evening to receive cool breeze. No one would come here and his suggestion made more sense then.

Did he really think I was that cheap? That I would accept him after he humiliated me in presence of the whole school? Did he think I would be so cheap to want to have sex at the back of the pack house during the day when anyone could walk upon us? Did he too see me as nothing more than a sexual object for his gratification? Someone that had no dignity and sense of self respect?

“I don’t want anything to do with you. I accepted your rejection because I don’t want to be your mate. Don’t make me report you,” I warned him. My stern tone made him laugh.

“Your mouth would get you in trouble.” His eyes dropped down to my mouth and his eyes darkened and his pupils dilated. I squirmed under his gaze and his eyes fell further to my chest. I crossed my arms to hide them but it turned out to be a wrong move as I only pushed my chest up. He smirked, thinking I did it to entice him.

“I know you want me too. We can go back to how we used to be. Don’t you want that?” He brushed my hair away from my face with a soft look in his eyes and a small smile on his lips. He seemed to have gone far into his thoughts; entertaining thoughts of us going back together. We’d been good friends before but now I didn’t want anything to do with him ever again.

“I wanted that last year. I wanted that two years ago but you made it clear that we were never going to go back to how we used to be. We’re

adults now. There's no need to go after me. I'm sure you'll find a pretty girl to waste your time with before you settle down with Skylar."

"I know I've deceived you before but I'm serious this time. I broke up with Skylar. She and I are only friends now. You're the one on my mind now. I sleep with you on my mind and I wake up with you on my mind. I see a future with you, Aysel. Let me love you the way I want to." His eyes were soft and sincere and things clicked then.

He was feeling the loss already.

He didn't even know it himself but a part of him could sense that I was a short way away from being someone else's for life and that way, I couldn't be with him anymore. If I mated with the prince, he could never take back his rejection and his subconscious was telling him that. His subconscious recognized the loss before the man in him did and he was trying to fight it.

"Baby, we can start our lives now. I've been thinking. I remember when we were little, you wanted a big family. Two girls and two boys. I'm ready to give them to you. The girls will look like you and the boys will look like their daddy. You just have to agree to be with me and we'll start the life you always wanted."

Two years ago, these words from Lucien would put me over the moon. I may have dragged him to his room and let him have his way with me but those dreams were long gone.

This was typical Lucien behavior. When he felt like he was losing me, he came back with promises of the life he could give me. He didn't want me until it felt like someone else could have me, then he remembered I was his. He got possessive and stuck to me, giving me the illusion that the past could be fixed but I knew better now.

My wolf already formed an attachment to another so his words didn't even stir anything inside of me. Nothing but annoyance. My bond with

the prince was new but already stronger than the bond I ever shared with Lucien.

“Lucien, you rejected me and I accepted your rejection. We are never going back to the past. I don’t want you. I don’t –“

“I love you.” My vision blurred as he interrupted me. “I’m in love with you, baby.”

“Lucien!” I exclaimed in horror.

“I fucked up but I love you. How can I not? You were made for me. Please just give me a chance to show you that I’m not lying. Give me a chance to prove my love to you. We don’t even have to mate now. We can date for a while until you’re sure my intentions are true then –“

“What is going on here?” A cold voice called from behind me. I froze as did Lucien.

“A – alpha!” Lucien let me go as I turned but he still kept his hand on my waist. Valens glared at the hand until it fell from my waist.

“I have work for you in the dungeons, Beta Lucien.” His words were tight with anger. “Come with me, omega.”