

## Chapter 23

“You look like shit. What happened to you?” Skylar said, closing the door to her room behind her.

“What do you think?” I snarled at her, collapsing into one of her seats in exhaustion.

“Stand up!” She shrieked. Her sudden loud voice startled me up like a soldier responding to a command. I flew out of her seat at once before glaring at her. “I don’t want you to get blood on my seats.”

“You really are a bitch,” I muttered under my breath. Her eyes narrowed dangerously.

“What did you say?” She hissed, her eyes darkening in a second.

“Nothing. I came here for a reason.” I could feel a pulse all over my body. My eyes were swollen but my left eye was worse. I could not see through it as I spoke. I walked with a limp and a sharp pain in my left leg with blood trickling down countless parts of my body.

“Does the reason have anything to do with why you’re all bruised and bloody?” I shrugged in response.

Skylar was a very smart girl. Smarter than people gave her credit for. I knew she already knew why I came here before I even did. She must have known what the alpha and beta did to me after catching me with Aysel.

I can’t believe the bastard stole my mate from me!

“What do you think?” I asked in reply to her question.

“Before you say anything further, I want to ask one thing. Just one thing. How angry are you?”

“I want to kill him.” She smirked as I snarled the words from the depth of my heart.

I wanted Valens’ head severed from his body. I wanted his tongue cut out, his eyes gouged out! I wanted him to suffer like no one else ever suffered before. I wanted him to know pain worse than any man ever thought of before.

The bastard stole from me!

Aysel was mine and mine alone. So I made a foolish mistake two years ago by rejecting her but it didn’t give him the right to come and steal her from me and my wolf. We were both livid. As if he hadn’t caused enough destruction, he wanted to have the one person the goddess herself made for me?

Because of him, I would never be the Beta of Redville pack; a position that had been mine even before I was born. He threw my alpha out, disgraced him like a commoner but it didn’t anger me as much as his mating with my mate did.

“Good enough for me.” Skylar grinned and took a seat while I leaned against the wall. She complained about me staining her fresh pink wall paint but I pretended not to hear.

How could I leave my mate for such a selfish, self-centered girl? It felt as if someone had put a film across my eyes to deceive me. Sure, Skylar was beautiful; drop-dead gorgeous, but Aysel’s innocence and purity were more attractive. The innocence that the alpha prince had stolen from me. My fists clenched at my sides.

“He stole from me. Aysel is mine.” She waved my words away with her hands decorated with many rings.

“Do you think it’s wise to talk about another girl with your girlfriend?” Her words were calm. Neutral. I couldn’t tell if she was joking or not but she had to be.

“What girlfriend?” I asked, bewildered. “Skylar, we broke up!”

“We can never break up, Lucien. You promised to be with me forever.” She must be joking because she had a semi-smile on her lips. “You said you’d marry me. If I couldn’t be the Alpha nor the Luna, I’d be right by your side. Have you forgotten you said that to me?”

“I was seventeen.” I reminded her. Sure I said those words but that was only because her beauty blindsided me then.

Even while I was with her, a part of me had still been with Aysel and she made a big deal of it so I had to promise her something. Maybe I thought I could pretend with her forever but obviously, I learnt I couldn’t.

The minute my wolf sensed something amiss, he’d started calling out for Aysel. It was unfortunate that I didn’t realize in time that the goddess was trying to warn me about a cursed prince stealing my mate.

“Are you telling me what you said to me doesn’t matter because of your age?”

“Skylar, I was young and stupid. You and I both know you don’t want me. You only dated me to hurt Aysel and I foolishly let you use me but we are past that now. I forgive you for everything but don’t hold words I threw out without thought against me.”

She said something in a low voice that I couldn’t hear then she laughed; a quick bark of laughter that sounded both disturbed and disturbing.

“You’re still foolish, Lucien. You want Aysel back but she’s mated to the conqueror. Not just that, she doesn’t want anything to do with you.” She laughed again, this time her laughter mocked me but I didn’t care.

Call me desperate or whatever but nothing could hurt me as much as Aysel leaving me could. We were best friends for the better parts of our lives. We shared our secrets with each other and loved each other. I knew she loved me more than friends. My mother speculated about her being my mate but not in a good way.

In a sense, I had known and believed that Aysel would be with me forever, whether as a mate or not. I know it sounded selfish but those were my thoughts before. I chased away any guy that had the slightest interest in her because she was mine. I rejected her but she was still mine.

I didn't think much of it then but I realized now that it was selfish of me to want her to remain with me when I was with Skylar. I realized now and I regretted my actions. I wanted to apologize to her and get back together with her but whatever I did, she didn't listen to me. She didn't believe in me anymore but I knew I could convince her. I just had to get her away from the man that took her from me.

'I'm so sorry Aysel. I'm sorry I hurt you. I'm sorry I left you. I was a stupid boy, chasing a title that means nothing compared to you. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I love you. I love you so much it hurts to breathe knowing you're not with me.' I wanted to tell her exactly that but she wouldn't believe me. No, she wouldn't listen to me.

"That's why I'm here, isn't it?" I snapped at her, wincing because my mouth still hurt from all the blows Beta Jabari dealt me for reasons he never mentioned but I wasn't a fool. I knew she mated the alpha which now made the beta her protector and bodyguard. "You hate Valens. I hate Valens. We both want him dead. We could work together."

"What makes you think I hate Valens?" She raised a cool brow but I could see right through her.

"He disgraced your father. He took what you always wanted."

“How do you propose we kill Valens?” She didn’t drop her brow, crossing her hand and feet as she held my gaze in an unflinching, unwavering stare.

“If I had a plan, I would have executed it myself and I’d have done that already. I don’t have a plan but I know you do. I’m going to help you.”

“You’re not all stupid, Lucien.” She laughed. “I know how to frame omegas and get out of trouble but do you think I can take down the cursed prince? What plan do you think I can come up with to kill someone that has taken over forty packs?”

How do you think I can stop someone whose word is the law and has the backing of thousands of hefty men to carry out his bidding!? What do you think I can do to a man that has never lost a battle in his life!?” I blinked at her as she continued to scream. It occurred to me then that she may not have a plan. For the first time since knowing Skylar, she didn’t have a plan to destroy her enemy.

“We’ll figure something out.” I stepped closer to her and put my hand around her. She was fierce to the world but she broke down easily.

She didn’t want anyone to see her as someone weak because she wanted the pack to see her as more suitable to lead than her brother. It was the only reason I still stayed with her because she needed someone whether she admitted it or not.

“Won’t your words change tomorrow?” She sneered. “How can I trust you when you easily admit to making empty promises?”

“I’m doing this for Aysel.” I reminded her. She knew what Aysel meant to me. “Let’s take down the cursed alpha prince together. I want my mate back.”