

## Chapter 37

“She is moving towards the dungeons,” Jabari’s voice called through the phone. The people at the meeting tried not to stare at me as I took my call. “She wants to release the douche.”

“He’s allowed to leave. Take him to his family and make sure Celeste sees him. After that, I want him to disappear within the next twenty-four hours.” My fingers drummed on the table as I awaited confirmation that he understood what I meant.

“Where do you want him?” Jabari asked.

“Dead if I find him within ten feet of my mate in his lifetime.” I clicked the end button and went back to my meeting.

The men and women around me wanted me to consolidate the packs under me into one. It wasn’t something I had not considered before but I put off a lot of things for when I found my mate. Now, I’d found her.

It would take a lot of work to combine all packs, considering the fact that they were spread out in different parts of the world and none of them was close to another. I put in my men to rule in my stead and I knew some of them would have to be conquered again because when you leave people on your seat for too long, they start to think of it as theirs.

The meeting ended without us making tangible progress. If I didn’t speak, then no one else did and I didn’t speak much while I thought of my mate. My mate was changing and I realized I didn’t know her well enough to relate with her before and I was not sure how to do it now.

Clover was sat waiting for me in my office when I got back. She took my jacket when I shrugged it off, putting it up for me.

“Have you seen Aysel today?”

“You’re rather fascinated with my mate these days.” I flipped open my computer to get into work.

“I saw her talking to Lucien, that’s why I’m asking.” My hands closed the computer of its own accord.

I’d told her to stay away from that man.

Whether or not he’d been her best friend at a point in their lives didn’t matter. It should not matter to her because he was her ex. He would forever be her ex and their relationship made me uncomfortable. She was obedient but this was one thing that she refused to obey me on.

“Did they seem close?” Clover shrugged, stacking the things on my desk and then unstacking them.

“They did. I assumed they were best friends from the way he hugged her.” My brow lifted on its own. “They seemed like regular best friends, you know? But I was concerned since I knew it was Aysel and I know you don’t like sharing your women.”

“How did she react?” My fingers drummed on the table.

“She seems relieved. I was about to approach her when he came from nowhere and bundled her into a hug and she seems to sag against his body as if he was her rock and she was grateful to be held by him.” My hands slammed into the table and it made her flinch. “Goddess gracious, Val, you scared me.”

“Do you know what you’re telling me?” Her eyes widened and she leaned back into her seat.

“I didn’t mean to offend you. I just thought you’d be happy to hear about your mate since you seemed stressed when you walked in.” I blew out a breath.

‘I want his head. Lucien’s head, I want it!’ My wolf snarled in anger, his voice loud and deafening in my head.

“Are you alright, Alpha? People are usually calmed by talk of their mate, that’s why I told you that.” Clover placed a hand on the fist I had clenched on the table. I pushed her hand off mine.

“Would you be calm if you heard your mate was hugging her ex?” My words were unnecessarily harsh to her. I wasn’t angry at her but she was the unfortunate bearer of bad news.

“She has an ex?” Clover’s face transformed to a comical one of horror. “But – but she seems so virginal though.” I let out a harsh chuckle. “You let him live knowing he got to your mate before you? You’ve become more gracious than I recollect.”

I became hot with fury. There was no reason for that man to still have his head. There was no reason for me to let Beta Strauss go today after he insulted me by putting his hands on my mate. Why did I let these men go?

“Wow, I remember how you retaliated when you found the man who broke me in without my permission.” Her tone had a wry quality that made my head snap back to hers.

“Don’t go there.” I didn’t want to remember the things Clover had suffered because she chose to stick with me. The women in my pack had been harassed one way or another.

I blamed myself for what happened to Clover. I asked her to stay behind in one of the first packs we conquered. She didn’t want to stay because she drew strength from me as her Alpha, but I thought it was more

sensible to let the women settle in a place rather than for them to wander with the men.

Clover begged, pleaded and cried to go with us but I thought I was helping her by forcing her to stay behind. The former beta of the pack where I left our women did things to them that they never spoke about. Not even to me their Alpha. When they tracked us down, I was furious with them for wandering when I told them to settle. They'd seemed terrified but it didn't occur to me then that anyone would dare harm my people.

I was wrong. Bitterly wrong. The women never told me. I would never have found out if I did not develop non-platonic feelings for Clover. She was interested before but when I put in the effort to pursue her, she withdrew. When she finally agreed to be with me, her legs shook so badly that night and she cried. I would be a prick to go on so we ended up doing nothing that night and for the next three times we tried.

It took weeks for her to tell me what had happened, why she'd been so scared of intercourse. He penetrated her with everything from a pencil to vegetables, but he made sure to never use his penis. When I tracked him down, the bastard claimed he never assaulted her because he never entered her.

'It was only harmless fun. I never took her. I am certain it is something you understand, my prince.' He had the guts to laugh with me after that as if we were alike.

I made sure other men showed him how fun it was to be used like that before I slit his throat.

"Aysel has never been with anyone else," I said to Clover, dispelling the bitter taste in my mouth. I would find that man and kill him a second time if it was possible.

"Are you sure?" I paused at the absurdity of her question.

“I am a man. I know when my partner has had other partners.” My wolf snarled at the subtle insult to his mate. “And Zino does not like your insinuation.”

“Oh, I’m sorry.” She raised her hands. “I’m not trying to question your intuition or anything like that.” I didn’t correct her. I didn’t tell her he was offended at the insult to our mate and not his intuition. I didn’t need intuition to know I’d been her first.

‘But will you be her only?’ I ignored the nagging voice at the back of my mind.

She was not stupid. She knew that if she opened her legs for anyone else, I’d have their head.

‘I don’t like having her out of my sight.’ My wolf had a point which was exactly why I needed to have her out of my sight as often as possible. The longer I stayed with her, the harder it was to allow her to walk away.

I would not lie. I was a possessive man. My alpha nature wanted me to keep everything I called mine shackled to my side, especially my mate. I wanted to possess her in the most animalistic way possible but I understood it would frighten her if it didn’t break her first.

“I do not know much about this Lucien except that he was her first mate —” Clover opened her mouth to speak, looking scandalized but I stopped her. “I believe he would be stupid to try anything with her but I don’t trust that bastard.” I didn’t trust the bastard but I would trust Clover with my life.

She had been through hell with me and rescued me from the bottomless pit a number of times. “I want you to befriend Lucien. Make him trust you with his secrets and find out the ones that relate to my mate.”