

## Chapter 44

I was awestruck.

“How long have you planned this?” I asked, in awe of my surroundings. He’d put a lot of effort into this, I could tell.

The restaurant was empty. The inside was lit up and it displayed a happy birthday message to me with lights. My eyes stung a bit with tears that I held back.

“Quite a while.” His thumb stroked the back of my palm. “Are you happy?” I nodded.

Yes, I was happy. I didn’t think I ever needed a grand gesture but it turned out I did. I felt special and cared for. Important. He’d taken his time to plan something this big just to surprise me and make me happy for my birthday.

My birthdays were never special after my parents died. Days were blurred into one and every day could have been yesterday because they were all the same, birthday or not. I didn’t pay much attention to it because other things called for my attention but I realized then how I’d missed surprises. Good surprises. The only surprises I ever received from the pack were bad ones.

“Thank you,” I whispered to Valens. His usual blank expression changed to a soft one.

“It’s my pleasure.” He looked like he meant that.

Soft music played in the background while we placed our orders. I’d never dined fancy so I ordered the safest option on the menu. We had

wine while they prepared our food and I continually looked around me in awe.

“You must have spent a lot of money.” I touched the neckpiece around my neck with a small smile. That alone must have cost a fortune.

“I searched for you for over a century. In those years, it was the thought of you that kept me going. I haven’t spent a lot of money. Not when it comes to you.” He smiled at me.

“My parents used to take me out on my birthdays just like this.” I remembered it was a family tradition to go out for dinner for everyone’s birthday. It was one of many memories that I had to force out of my mind so as not to be reminded of all that I lost because of my father’s greed.

“You miss them, don’t you?” It wasn’t a question.

I missed my parents as a kid but with time, I stopped missing them and started hating them. Everything I suffered was a result of what they did. I was the scapegoat to receive their lifelong punishment.

I used to wonder if they ever thought of me while they plotted. Did they think of how their actions would affect me if they failed? Or did they think they could have given me a better life as the Alpha’s daughter?

As an omega, I wasn’t really worth much in the pack. No one said anything because my father was an alpha and although my mother was an ordinary delta, I remembered that she made people uncomfortable. Maybe her profound silence bothered them because people tended to stir clear of her.

“I can’t –” I took a deep breath to admit something that bothered me for a while. “I can’t remember what my mother looked like.” There, I said it. It was something that bothered me a lot for a lot of years but I didn’t say it to anything so they didn’t look at me as if I was crazy.

My parents were killed when I was eight. It wasn't as if they died when I was an infant so I couldn't remember their faces. I remembered my father's face clear as day. I remembered my mother's voice, her skin color, her quietness, her submission, but I could never picture her face.

"Were you that young when she died?" Valens asked. I shook my head.

"No, I was eight when my parents were killed. I can remember everything about my father." I could even remember what he was wearing when he was killed. "I just can't remember what my mother looked like. I wasn't young so it really bothers me."

"Don't you have any photographs of her?"

Oh no. I forget he didn't know the despicable thing that made them kill my parents. He didn't know they were traitors and their house was burnt down after their demise. The only thing of them that survived was me. Alpha Zavier would have killed me too if I was older and could be roped into my father's crimes.

He didn't want anything that reminded him of my father because it put him in a violent rage. Even my clothes and dolls were burnt down with the house. I wasn't allowed to take out anything. I was immediately transported to the pack house after that so there was no way for me to find a picture of my mother.

"No, the house burnt down." I didn't tell him it wasn't a mere accident but a planned gesture.

"Did your parents die in a house fire?" His brows furrowed.

I should not hide from my mate. I should let him know everything about me before someone else told him but I was too ashamed of my legacy. I didn't want him to see me as a traitor the way everyone else saw me.

If he heard of what my parents did, there was no way he wouldn't hate me because I stood for everything he hated. Betrayal.

Who would want to have pups with traitorous blood? Lucien hadn't wanted that.

"No – I – I don't want to talk about them anymore." My voice was firm but my hands shook. I didn't want him to press forward. I wanted to enjoy this date to the fullest without a spat or reminder of my bitter past.

"My mother used to do something similar." He had a small smile on his face when he mentioned his mother and I could feel from that smile alone that his memories of her were fond memories.

"She used to take you out to dinner?" I asked, eager to hear about his past which he never mentioned.

"No, of course not." He chuckled then. "She used to have a small dinner prepared that only the three of us could enjoy. We never had less than twenty people at our table unless it was my birthday."

"That sounds nice." I smiled as his smile grew.

How could I forget that he was a prince from a time other than mine? We had no royalty left, just books on them and I'd never been interested much about their lives.

"It was. My parents led busy lives. We lived in the same house but we didn't run into each other often but they took time off every year for my birthday." He came alive when he spoke of his parents. They'd had a close bond, I could tell.

We had such different lives. We were so different yet we were mates. What criteria did the goddess use in determining mates? We came from different worlds, different backgrounds and different times.

We shared no similarities and contrasted in every way. He'd been close to his parents and while mine loved me, I never had a close-knit family like his. His parents were betrayed while my parents were betrayers. He was a prince and I was nobody. An alpha and an omega. Why would the goddess choose me for him?

“You’re frowning,” he said. “Do you not like the food?” He asked.

The food was good. Great, actually. They’d taken their time to cook and season the meat. It was soft and soaked up with mouthwatering spices.

“It’s nice.” I took a big spoon of my food to prove my point.

“Do you want to try mine?” I looked at his plate to see it was still almost full.

The dish caught my eyes and tickled my nostrils when it first came so I was eager to have a taste of it. But I was concerned that he didn’t seem interested in the food.

“Do you not like it? You’ve not been eating.”

“I don’t have most of my appetite yet. It’s a gradual process.” His voice was calm.

“What? You lost your appetite before?”

“Something like that.” He waved away my question. “Here, have a taste,” he held up his fork to me to taste his food and that was how I was deceived into eating my food and half of his.