

Chapter 45

“I look pregnant.” I looked down at my tummy which my figure-hugging dress could not hide.

Despite knowing I was overeating, I continued to eat because the food was just too good. Valens, rather than caution me, encouraged me to eat and eat until I became too full to even have a sip of water.

“You will look good with my pups.” His eyes fell to my stomach and a spark of possessiveness lit his eyes but they faded fast. “I am not certain I can have kids.” He looked away from me, pain in his voice.

“Why not?” I took his hand in mine. We sat in his car, still in the restaurant’s driveway.

“It is a part of my curse. My lineage ends with me.” He shook his head and my heart fell to my stomach but I refused to believe that. I knew it deep in my heart that we would start a family together.

“You told me you’d give me twins. A boy and a girl,” I reminded him. It was meant to be reassuring but it failed. It seemed as if I’d reminded him that he could not always carry through with all his promises.

His expression closed off and his eyes became hard as granite. He pulled his hand from mine and started the car. I stopped him, placing my hands on his.

“Let’s walk.” He looked at me as if I was crazy. It was a crazy idea because the pack house was on the other side of the town we were at. It wasn’t a walkable distance but I didn’t want the night to end yet. I especially didn’t want it to end on a sour note.

“Please, I’m not ready for tonight to end yet.” His expression thawed a bit. “I desperately need some exercise.” He sighed and I did a little victory dance in my mind because I knew he had relented.

“Fine.” He got out of the car and came over to my side to open my door. He’d opened every door I walked through today and it was a big deal. It was an omega’s place to serve an alpha but tonight, he served me.

I gathered courage and laced our fingers together as we walked back to the pack house.

“It’s a pleasant night,” I said, to which his answer was a grunt. “Have you ever gone stargazing?” I probed again but he shook his head. “Do you want to?”

“Not tonight.” Stars lit up the night. It was a perfect night for stargazing, but he was, as usual, in a bad mood. Frankly, I was getting tired of his mood swings.

“Why are you pouting?” His eyes were fixed on the road ahead. I caught myself pouting and I wondered how he saw me.

“Will you ever love me?” I asked tatter than answer. The question came out of nowhere, surprising us both.

He’d never mentioned anything about liking me. Tonight was the most affectionate I’d ever seen him. The only times aside today, when I felt he might not hate me for trying to poison him and kissing my ex-mate, were the times after he released in me and pulled me close to him. Every time, I got to listen to his heartbeat return to normal before he fell asleep or picked up work to do.

“Why do you ask that?” My heart fell.

I knew not to expect a straightforward answer from him but I wished he would say yes. I’d hoped he’d say yes. That he could love me. That he didn’t love me now but saw himself feeling that way soon. Because I did.

“I apologized for what happened in the past. I explained it to you but sometimes- sometimes it feels as if you still hold that against me. It feels as if you look at me and see someone about to betray you. Someone you could never love.”

“You know better than to betray me.” Calmly spoken words that pricked my skin.

Why did I have to try so hard to get crumbs of emotions from him?

“Do you trust me?” I asked.

“No.” The answer came naturally. I laughed but not because I was happy.

“It has nothing to do with your past behavior. I know you didn’t try poisoning me of your own volition even if you are yet to tell me the person who sent you. I know that you’re not in love with that boy because you have given yourself to me.

I have claimed you, owned you and marked you in a way no one else can and I’m confident you will never find satisfaction outside of my arms.” I gaped at the raw possessiveness of his tone.

“My lack of trust in you has nothing to do with you. There are only two people in this world that I trust and that is because I have known them since my boyhood. They have laid down their lives for me countless times without thought. They will never betray me and I know that because they have had over a hundred years to prove themselves. You, I have known for seven weeks.”

“Will it take me a hundred years and multiple attempts to die in your stead for you to trust me?” I couldn’t help the annoyance in my voice.

Sure, he’d been with Jabari and Clover for many years and they must have been through a lot together. I could not begrudge them their place in his life because they’d earned it but it was unfair that I couldn’t even compete.

He stirred me by my shoulder to face him. “It will not.” Tipping my chin up, he made sure I held his gaze. “And you are never to attempt dying in my stead. I forbid it.”

“Of course, I can’t go against your wishes.” I turned away from him but he brought my face back into position.

“Do not cry.” He wiped underneath my eyes and I realized tears had gathered in my eyes and started to spill.

“I am not crying.” I pulled away from him.

“You are.” He pulled me back. “You are everything to me, little wolf. The things you want, I will try to give,” he vowed.

He would not lie to me but I wished he would sugarcoat the truth a bit. I wished he would tell me what I wanted to hear rather than what I already knew. I wanted him to make me believe that my wishes had already come true.

“It’s okay.” I gave a shaky, watery smile. “It’s my birthday. I want to be happy.”

“I want you to be happy whether it is your birthday or not.” I nodded at him, wiping my eyes as he let me go.

Once again, the side of me that was a crybaby made an embarrassing appearance. Why did I get so worked up because he told me he didn’t trust me yet? As if I didn’t know that already!

“Can we go there?” I pointed at an alley that led to the woods closest to us.

He gave me a strange look as he no doubt wondered what I wanted to do in the woods after asking him to walk such a long distance. I thought he would question me but he shrugged and obliged.

Hundred steps in and he still didn't ask what we were doing traipsing through the woods at night. He followed me quietly, his eyes scanning the dark forest until I stopped.

"Help me with my zipper." I took my hands from his and pulled off my jewelry with my back to him.

"What are you doing?" The question on the tip of his tongue finally fell.

"I want to shift but I love this dress too much to rip it." My meaning clicked in his head. "Artemis has been dying to meet Zino."

"And he has been dying to meet her but perhaps a more private woods would be better?" His hand paused on my zipper.

"No, here is fine. No one will dare come in here when they perceive your scent."

I think he promised himself to give me everything I wanted because it was my birthday. He didn't protest, rather he helped me out of my dress. Then he got out of his suit – and then his underwear.

My skin heated and I looked away. Artemis was already pushing to the fore while I wondered if it was necessary for me to take off my underwear. I was wearing one of the red lingerie he requested and it would rip easily.

"I love those panties too much for you to rip them." My skin heated further and I knew he wasn't joking. I stepped out of my underwear and let Artemis take over before he got other ideas.

Shifting still hurt as I hadn't done it often enough to get used to it. Pain exploded around me as I shifted for the fourth time in my life.

When it ended, I was staring at a black wolf twice my size. Artemis howled in joy and her mate replied with a howl of his.

When I suggested shifting, I expected our wolves to spend time together, maybe run around. I should have known Artemis was too perverted for that.