

Chapter 51

Something tickled my nose and my eyes opened slowly as if in a trance. It took me a good ten minutes to figure out where I was. I was in bed in the basement of the pack house where I once stayed but I had no recollection of how I got here.

I cast my mind back to try to remember if I came here to get anything but the only thing, I could remember was the text I received from Celeste. I gr0aned at the pain that exploded in my mind when I tried to force myself to remember. There was a mental barrier that no matter how much I pushed, I could not get through.

‘Artemis?’ I called my wolf but she still seemed to be asleep.

I was tired and groggy when I came out of the pack house basement. A man greeted me as I passed but my head felt as if someone was banging drums inside. My feet were shaky and my vision blurry but I managed to get into the elevator and move to the penthouse.

My legs carried me to the bathroom because for some reason, my skin crawled. I felt dirty as if I fell into a gutter. I sniffed myself to check if I had really fallen into a gutter and to my surprise, I perceived Lucien’s scent on me.

The scent was faint which meant I must have met him hours ago but I couldn’t remember meeting him today. I concluded I must have picked up the scent from Celeste who may have been around him before she came to see me.

My mind would not settle with that explanation because I didn't smell like Celeste at all so why Lucien? There was also a foreign scent on me. It was faint too but it bothered me.

"What the hell happened to me?" I asked out loud in the empty suite. Echoing silence answered me.

The feeling of dirt clinging to me made me scrub my skin in the bathroom. I used the flowery bath scent and I spent a long time in the shower but I could not wash away the feeling crawling all over me.

I scrubbed my skin until it turned red and I smelt too much like flowers for my liking but the feeling did not go away. In the end, I decided to use Valens' body wash. The smell reminded me of him and calmed me instantly. After my bath, I dried myself and wrapped myself in his robe.

I heard a knock on the door. Octavia came in when I opened it. She had a small, uncertain smile on her face when she entered.

"The Alpha didn't send me but you were absent at dinner. I felt you may still be sick so I brought you dinner. I hope I'm not being too forward." She set the food on the table.

"Thank you. You're very thoughtful." I hadn't eaten dinner. "I'm a bit disoriented today and I can't figure out why," I said as I started to eat.

She sat on the floor with her legs crossed underneath her and it made me frown.

"Why are you seating on the floor?" I asked and she waved off my concern with a small chuckle.

"I like seating on the floor. It's more comfortable and this way, I don't have to worry about staining the Alpha's expensive furniture." She laughed, the sound free and lighthearted.

“I don’t want you seating on the floor. It makes me uncomfortable.” She tried brushing off my concern until I fixed her with a stern look. She scrambled up to a seat in record time.

I was slowly getting the hang of Valens’ ferocious glare. I patted myself on the back because it wasn’t an easy thing to learn. His glare was enough to make a lesser man piss his pants.

“Have you eaten?” I asked Octavia halfway into wolfing down my dinner. She shrugged; her smile fixed.

“I haven’t yet but I’m not very hungry.” She couldn’t look at me after she said that. I wouldn’t have been suspicious if she didn’t suddenly find interest in something invisible on the ground.

“What did you have for lunch?” I paused my eating to stare at her so as not to miss any of her movement.

“I had fish and chips.” Nothing suspicious about having fish and chips for lunch but she acted like someone that had something to hide so I figured she had something to hide.

“What did you have for breakfast?” She shrugged again. “And did you have up to ten chips for lunch?” She shrugged again. “Octavia, are you starving yourself?!”

“What? No, of course not!” She exclaimed but she crossed her fingers just before she said that. I’d never met a more obvious liar.

She wore baggy clothes so I couldn’t really see what she was like underneath them but she was certainly smallish. She didn’t look like someone who had any weight that she could afford to lose.

“Octavia-“ She flew to her feet as if something in the seat stung her.

“Luna, I just remembered I have duties to attend to.” She ran to the door before I could stop her and then she disappeared.

We weren't close enough for me to be all up in her business but as her Luna, it was my duty to ensure her safety. I didn't need to be her friend to help her. Unfortunately, once I stood to follow her, my stomach lurched and I had to run to the bathroom.

"What is in the goddess' name is this?" The sudden movement made me lightheaded. I didn't think much about my stomach's reaction when I rushed to throw up. What threw me off was the trickling of dark b***d down my nose when I finished throwing up.

Wolf's bane.

It was the first thing that came to my mind when I saw my reflection in the mirror. I'd never seen anyone bleed black b***d from their nose but I remembered a movie about a man poisoned with wolf's bane.

Our system rejects wolf's bane and tries to get it out in any way possible. When consumed, wolf's bane is vomited as a black substance but when inhaled, it had to be taken out of the bloodstream.

"Oh goddess." I sat on the floor of the bathroom, letting the poisonous substance leak out of my nostrils.

I'd been drugged. The realization hit me like a smack of bricks to the face. I'd somehow gotten wolf's bane into my system and my body was pushing it out. But who drugged me? When? Why? How?

I thought back to the text I received from Celeste. I'd gone to meet her but I knew now that I didn't meet up with her. I didn't see her but I'd seen Lucien because I smelt like him when I returned. The other foreign smell on me must have been wolf's bane.

Oh goddess.

The pieces were coming together but I didn't want it to mean what I thought it meant. I didn't want to believe Lucien would drug me. For what?

I picked up my phone but I didn't know who to call. My first thought was Valens but I paused. Then I thought of Celeste and decided against it. What if she was in on his plan too? What was his plan?

The earlier feeling of disgust slammed harder into me and I shivered. What did he do to me? Why couldn't I remember? My stomach lurched again. My wolf stirred weakly but she did not wake.

I pulled up the text Celeste sent to me, wondering if I could get any clue from it but it only showed 'Message deleted.' The message from Celeste was gone. Hysteria rose to clog my throat. My eyes smarted. More b***d dripped from my nostrils.

"What happened to me?" I staggered to my feet when my stomach lurched again but there was nothing inside. I had nothing more in my stomach to vomit so I just retched and retched, the black b***d dripping into my open mouth.

I sat back down with my back against the wall when the retching stopped. Grabbing my phone, I made to call Valens. I didn't know what was happening to me but I needed my mate. Just as I swiped to unlock the device, a message came in.

I opened the message and my heart stopped. The message was from an unknown number and it contained five pictures. Five pictures that destroyed me.

Anger. Horror. Disgust. They flooded into me at once.

How could he?

Lucien hated me but how could he?

Disgust crawled all over my skin like a thousand bugs running about.

I deleted the pictures because they hurt to see. It hurt even worse knowing they existed.

Another message came in just as I hit the delete button.

‘Cancel the ceremony if you don’t want the world to see you for the slut that you are.’