

Chapter 54

I prepared myself to bare it all. I stood in front of a mirror and I prepared what I would say to Valens and how I would say it. All the time I looked in the mirror, all I could see was Lucien's hand all over my body and all I felt was a thousand bugs crawling all over my skin.

"I have no idea what happened but I woke up and I was in the basement and then – "I wiped the tears from my cheeks as I forced myself to look into the mirror. "And then there were pictures and I know I didn't – I didn't consent to them." My hands went through the mirror and it came down in a cascade of broken glass that dug into my fist.

"You son of a bitch!" I screamed, feeling numb all over as I gripped my head. My wolf still slept and I could only imagine how much wolf's bane I had ingested.

I wanted to kill Lucien. I never felt such a violent urge before, never wanted anything as much as I wanted to see his lifeless body then. The minute the thought entered my head, my mind seized on it flashing countless pictures of him bloody and battered.

Just as he used to do to me.

How would he like to be held down and lashed? How would he like to wake up in an abandoned building, groggy and confused, only to find himself naked and the whole world watching?

Because that was how I felt.

I felt as if the whole world was watching me. As if I'd been stripped naked in my sleep and paraded in a market square with people pointing hands at me and others sneering.

It was the reason I didn't step out of the penthouse today. I wasn't ready to face the world. I just wanted Valens to return so he could make sense of things for me. I regretted throwing my phone into the toilet then because there was no way to reach him.

I was restless throughout the day and I took at least ten showers. Someone knocked on the door in the morning and the person returned in the afternoon but I did not open the door. I paced around all day, bathed and plotted murder. Sometimes I paused to think of how Valens would react and other times, I thought of how differently I could have handled things.

I should have gone to him immediately I saw those pictures. I should have let him see the signs of wolf's bane poisoning and the threat that accompanied the message but I hadn't been thinking straight and I wasn't even now.

Morning gave way to afternoon and then early evening came. My wolf came awake slowly, disoriented like a human having a hangover.

'Something terrible happened.' Her voice was quiet and subdued, lacking in her usual exuberance

'It was Lucien. We are going to kill Lucien.' Of all the thoughts that ran through my mind throughout the day, that was the only one that stuck.

He'd wronged me once, twice and then a hundred times. How much longer must I wait before he completely annihilated me? Before he got out a pistol and declared I could not live if I didn't choose to live with him?

'It was Lucien and Skylar and their douche bag lackey, Bethel.' Artemis sounded too tired to rage but I sensed and felt the anger in her voice

because it was mine too. Then she calmed and her emotions changed. ‘I couldn’t protect you. I am sorry.’

Why should my wolf be sorry that Lucien was a piece of shit? We did nothing wrong but we’d been wronged in the worst way and those bastards would not go free.

‘I feel very strange.’ I told my wolf.

‘Is it as if something is missing?’ She asked, yawning.

‘No but when you mention that now, it does feel as if something is missing but that wasn’t what I meant.’ I felt very strange but I could not explain the novel and foreign feeling fluttering in my guts. ‘Maybe I’m just tired.’ I brushed off the weird feeling I had been getting for over a week now.

‘Where is Zino?’ Artemis curled up.

‘He’s gone to work.’

‘What do you mean? You didn’t tell him!?’ She leapt up but before I could answer, someone came knocking on the door again. I sighed, not in the mood to entertain anyone.

I ignored the knocking but it did not stop. Whoever was at the door seemed to be in a hurry so I stood and went to chase them away but I heard Celeste’s voice from the other side of the door.

Hotness spread from the pit of my stomach, up to my chest and then throughout my body. It scorched me from the inside out and made my hands shiver. What the f**k did she want with me? I pulled the door open with force and she jumped back.

“Oh, you are alright.” She came into the penthouse as if she couldn’t see that I didn’t want her anywhere near me.

“Why wouldn’t I be?” I left the door slightly ajar as I turned to face her.

“Jabari called and he sounded frantic so I feared something terrible had happened.” She looked me up and down. “Where is the Alpha?” The minute she asked me that question, unexplainable dread bloomed in my chest.

Yes, something was missing just as Artemis noted. It felt as if Valens and I were too far apart, as if the strings of our mate bond were stretched thin.

“He’s at work. Where else would he be?” My voice was snarky. “Why are you here?” My words were biting enough to get her to step back.

“Jabari asked me to check up on you.” She eyed me slowly as if I was someone else who she couldn’t recognize. “Are you alright?”

“Since when are you chums with the Beta?” I asked, suspicious of her. Of her involvement in the incident. Of the whole world.

Celeste and I had been friends since our childhood. She’s been my backbone for many years and I knew she loved me. She loved me and I loved her but I got a text from her and ended up in the basement with missing memories.

“I’m not chums with him. I hate that guy but he keeps pestering me. I just clocked in for my shift at work when he called me to check up on you and it sounded urgent so I rushed here. He mentioned something about the Alpha.” My heart dived down to my stomach.

“What exactly did he say?” The urgency in my tone, my wide eyes and the way I suddenly stepped closer to her made her step back again.

“He sounded out of breath so I’m not really sure but he said something along the lines of ‘find the Luna. I have to find the Alpha’ or something like that.”

“Give me your phone. I have to make a call.” I stretched out my hand and I realized for the first time; how contagious Valens’ authoritative behavior could be.

“I lost my phone yesterday and found it semi-destroyed under my bed this morning so you have to hold it a certain way for it to work.” She slanted the phone and held it out to me.

The phone looked battered. Ink covered a large part of the screen and the clear parts didn’t work properly.

“When last did you see Lucien?” I demanded, furiously trying to type in Valens’ number. It was one of four numbers that I had managed to memorize in my lifetime. The first two being my parents’ and the third being Celeste ‘s number.

“I’m not speaking to that idiot anymore.” She squared her shoulders, flipping her blonde hair behind her. “If it’s not working, then it’s better to use voice commands.” I told her Valens’ number and she used voice command. The call was on speaker so I heard when the dry monotonous voice said the number could not be reached.

Whatever thing Celeste saw on my face made her rush to grab a hold of me. She led me to a seat and felt my neck and forehead.

“What is happening?” Her panicked voice pierced into my panicked mind. “Aysel, look at me.” I fought the darkness pulling me to focus on her. “Babe, come on, talk to me. Why are you crying? What’s happening?”

He’d seen the pictures.

There was no doubt in my mind. He’d seen them and now he was gone. I choked back a sob. F**k! I wanted to carve out Lucien’s heart!

A swift knock sounded on the door and Jabari pushed in. He had sweat covering him from head to toe and his clothes were equally soaked.

“Where is he?” I asked, sitting up straight when he rushed in.

“Gone.” One word. One shattering word.