

Chapter 67

‘Valens – he – When Redville needed an Alpha, when I needed an Alpha, when my baby needed an Alpha, he wasn’t there. He is the Alpha that abandoned his pack.’

Those words played in my head as I sat outside of the inner shrine. The oracle sat facing me, her eyes closed and head lifted to the ceiling as if she was in a trance or asleep.

I was reaping the fruits of my lack of foresight.

‘Is it just a lack of foresight?’ Zino asked, yawning. I ignored him. He didn’t get to feel the brunt of her anger so I didn’t expect him to fully understand. I, on the other hand, felt the anger simmering just beneath her skin. And it was more than the anger; there was also resignation, sadness and an obvious lack of trust.

‘You subconsciously wanted to punish me!’ She’d yelled at me and I knew that was what she believed.

I searched my heart, my mind, and even tried to see into my soul. No part of me wanted to punish my mate when I saw those pictures. I’d been hurt and betrayed. I didn’t trust her enough to reconsider but I’d not once thought of punishing her. My main thought then was getting out. For the first time in a long time, I’d felt overwhelmed. I lost control of my wolf and the only thing to do was to go far away.

I ran for hours without getting exhausted. My anger in the face of what I called betrayal, served as an enduring energy source for running. I ran till the skies darkened and I was still running when the skies started to

lighten. I only paused for a short time before I continued into one of the packs under my control. I booked the next flight from there and in my mind, it was goodbye.

‘You knew of her history with the past Alpha but you didn’t care when you left,’ Zino said but still, I ignored him. We wouldn’t start the blame game.

“I warned you this would happen.” I looked up at the oracle who was still looking at the ceiling.

“When did you warn me?” Her cryptic words never helped me. She never spoke directly. I wasn’t an oracle. I couldn’t decipher the meanings behind cryptic, supposedly divine words.

“When you came here, I told you to let her wear the crown but you refused.” Exasperation made me finger my neckline.

My mother’s crown had been returned to its original place despite the oracle’s advice but I didn’t see how it would have averted the crisis as we hadn’t even had our Mating Ceremony!

“We haven’t had the Ceremony yet,” I reminded Selene. I’d often heard that oracles tended to mix up the past, present and future, as well as reality and visions.

“And you would never if the goddess didn’t love you so much.” She opened her eyes and stared straight at me with her disconcerting eyes. My heart slammed against my ribcage at the implication of her words.

“For the things you have done and the things you may do, you should start apologizing.” Again, more cryptic words! “You heard me when I said you needed to understand each other, to know each other. If you listened to anything I said that day, you would not be having these little misunderstandings growing into ginormous rifts.” I got the distinct feeling she was offended or angry with me.

I'd known Selene before she became an oracle. I did not know her well enough then but for ten years, she had been my oracle. She travelled with me from pack to pack and acted as the pack's official oracle whenever there was a takeover.

"I listened, but there isn't much I can do when I do not fully comprehend your words."

"The goddess communicates as she sees fit. Let me, as her oracle, independent of her voice at this moment, tell you something. You should never discard your mate especially when she opens up about who she is," she said, preparing to rise.

"Who is she? Those aren't very clear words, you know." It seemed more mystery awaited me in the future but I would try to avoid mistakes.

"She is Aysel but before everything else, she is your mate, your predestined. Love her, Alpha. It is your best shot at this point." She walked to the door.

She got to the door just as Aysel opened it. The two women stared at each other for a while and I felt a silent understanding pass between them while I sat to the side.

"Are you alright?" I stood as she approached me.

My heart ached when I saw her tear-stained face. Her eyes were red and her shoulders slacked as if she returned with all the weight of the world weighing her down. "I'd expected you to return less burdened," I said.

I wanted to reach out to her, to wipe her tears and hold her close but I remembered how she recoiled from me all those nights ago before Clover sent me those abhorrent pictures. I reached out to her anyway. I wiped her tears and I pulled her into a hug.

She stayed stiff in my arms, making me feel my touch was unwelcome. I felt as if I was pushing her boundaries which was something I swore not to do. I wanted her to heal at her own pace and reach out to me when she

trusted me again but I admit that my personality hindered me from giving her the space she obviously craved.

I thought she was to see the oracle for prayers. I expected the goddess to take a bit of her burden but the opposite had happened. When the oracle announced the goddess wanted to speak to her directly, I'd been unsettled. The goddess' voice, I'd heard, could break a person's mind. If it was something I could stop, I would have stopped it but I lacked the power to stop the goddess.

The hug lasted a long time. With time, she relaxed in my arms. I felt her body quiver against mine and I heard her sniffing. I held her close until she pushed away from me, wiping her eyes with a teary smile. Then she turned and walked out, leaving me to follow.

We got into to car. Rather than start the car, I turned to her. "What did yeh goddess tell you? You are sadder than you were when you went to see her," I probed.

She looked at me then looked out through the window next to her. It felt as if she didn't want to look at me and it stung but I refused to dwell on that emotion. I'd failed her. I was the Alpha that abandoned his pack; his family. Even I could not bear to look at myself.

"She said –" She turned from the window to look straight ahead. "She said a lot of things." I waited for an elaboration but she didn't say anything else. I didn't want to push so I started the car.

"Do you know what happened to my parents?" She asked all of a sudden.

"They died?" That was about as much as I knew about them. "Why?"

"They didn't just die. They were executed." My mouth almost dropped open in surprise. I'd thought of how they died a few times but I never imagined it would be by execution.

“For what?” I asked, sparing her a glance. She remained silent for a while. It made me wonder if I was not supposed to ask that.

“I’ll tell you about my parents,” she said after over ten minutes of silence. “If you’re going to hate me, it’s better you hate me now.”