

Chapter 75

“Clover, what is it you want, really?” I’d known this girl since childhood. She had never undermined my authority like this before.

“Valens, are you going to treat me like this because of – because of some –“

“Pick your next words carefully,” my wolf growled. “They’d determine whether you keep your head or not.”

“I know that she’s your mate but I’m your friend. Doesn’t that count for anything? I bore your curse with you. I stood with you when no other woman would and now you’re threatening to banish me?”

“You didn’t break my curse,” I reminded her.

“I would if I could!” I pulled the phone from my ear when she yelled, peeping to see my mate still sleeping. “You know I wanted to be your lucky clover but it’s not my fault and you know I tried. We tried everything,” she emphasized the last word.

My heart pricked at the words that were little more than accusations. Yes, I tried everything in the early days of my curse. I was desperate to be free of the spirit of a wanderer. I didn’t want to be the cursed prince. I tried everything suggested and Clover was by my side through it all. We always assumed we would be mated so it was natural to think she’d be my curse breaker.

“Clover, what is it you want?”

“Not to be tossed aside like a used rag by my best friend who I sacrificed my life for,” she yelled.

There it was. The price for her loyalty. Her sacrifice. I knew this day would come. When she would demand to be repaid but I still didn't have an idea how she could be repaid.

“You're not my mate,” I told her. “And my mate does not want you near me.”

“I was with you when you had no mate. I'm not trying to be your mate, Vee. I just want to be your friend. I need a friend. I need a friend, Valens!”

“I cannot be your friend now. Maybe in the future.”

“So that's it? You used me all my life and now you're done with me? You can't be friends with me anymore because I made one mistake trying to protect you?”

“Clover –“

“I was raped because of you!” She screamed. “I was beaten, bruised, kidnapped numerous times because of you. I have a body decorated with scars because of you. Every whip that ever touched my back was because of you –“

“That's enough.” I stopped her. “I am not ungrateful. I understand the magnitude of your sacrifice for me but I will not displease my mate to repay you.”

“She comes into your life and none of the rest of us matter,” she laughed.

“I've entertained you for long enough. You don't have a reason for calling me and it shows.”

“Right. I must be a fool. Despite your lack of interest in my friendship, I still consider you a friend. I know you’re trying to get information out of Andrew and I think I might be able to help.”

“Jabari is in charge of Andrew and everything relating to my mate’s kidnapping. If you have anything that may help, tell it to him.” I ended the call and turned off my phone for extra measures.

What she had to say plagued me all the way to work. When I got to my office, I saw she’d left numerous calls on my work line. Rather than get into work so I could get back home quick, I dwelt on how best to handle Clover.

She’d sacrificed a lot for me. She’d been forced to go from a dainty omega to a warrior. I stole her youth. Like she said, I’d used her and now I was letting her go. I had to consider my relationship with my mate first.

My phone rang when I powered it on.

“Clover called. She’s not saying anything to anyone but you and she claims she has valuable information,” Jabari said immediately I picked his call.

“If she’s hoarding it then it must be valuable to her. How do I know it will help me in any way?”

“I can’t believe I am about to say this.” I heard Jabari sigh. “We have no leads. We don’t know where Skylar is or who bought Andrew; bastard still won’t wake. The faster we act, the better. If Clover says she knows something, then we need to hear it.”

“I am sure you have ways of getting information out of her,” I said, unrelenting.

“I am not going to torture our friend,” Jabari’s voice went grave. “It’s Clover, man. You know she has a high resistance to pain.”

Again, I was reminded of the suffering I put her through. The suffering my people had to endure while sharing my curse with me. Sometimes I still heard Clover's screams echo in my mind from the first time she'd been taken and tortured by a group of Alphas. They took her because of me. I'd found her less than twenty-four hours later but the damage had already been done.

"I know she has a crush on you. I know the part she played in creating this mess but she is not our enemy."

"My mate doesn't like her," I informed him.

"I know that. Let's just find out what she wants. We can work things from there. Maybe she'd be happy to go back home now that our curse is broken."

"My curse is broken. We are not sure when the others will."

"It has already. I found my mate. I'm sending Clover in tomorrow by ten." He ended the call before I could completely process all that information.

I grinned. Then I laughed. I had only one person to thank for this. I picked up my phone and dialed her but she didn't pick up. She had a bad habit of leaving her phone everywhere but on her. On that note, I packed up my work with me and went back home.

The next day, I didn't have the luxury of working from home. The pack elders had scheduled a meeting, another Alpha was visiting, I didn't get to complete half the workload I took home with me the previous day so now I had an even larger backlog of work.

Work was hectic. The pack elders were talking nonsense. Some of them were still loyal to Zavier and it showed. Alpha Trenton from Blue Moon pack needed protection from ongoing rogue attacks.

I just finished with Trenton when Clover sauntered into my office with a winning smile.

“Hi, Vee.” She took a seat without asking.

I watched her without saying a word. When had we become so casual? We used to have boundaries; she knocked before coming into my office and she certainly would not have taken a seat without being invited to a few months ago. When did those boundaries cease to exist? She came into my office with the confidence of a favorite mistress.

“You have twenty-five minutes to say what you have to say.”

“A few weeks ago, you’d have asked about me but now I don’t matter anymore, do I?” I’m just the filthy ex your mate doesn’t want you around.”

“We never dated,” I reminded her.

“Right. I’m just the filthy whore you used to satisfy your urges before your virgin princess arrived.” She snorted. “I can’t say I blame you. Who would choose a used car over a brand new, untouched one?” I already told myself I would let her vent so I ignored her provocative words.

‘How dare she compare my mate to a car?’ Zino was ranting. ‘The nerve of this bitch!’

“But I don’t understand why she’s so threatened by me. It’s not as if I can take you from her.” She smiled. “Or is there a possibility I can take you from her?”

“You have wasted ten minutes of the twenty-five minutes and you are getting on my nerves. If you have anything to say, it’s best you say it now or I’d have to extract it from you.”

“Pain doesn’t faze me.”

“You have been protected from my wrath. Perhaps you want a taste of a new level of pain?”

“Don’t threaten me, Vee. Your mate is in danger and I’m the only one that can help you or don’t you want to protect her? You lost a child already. Imagine if you lost her.” I saw red.

When the b***d cleared from my eyes, Clover was wedged between me and my desk, my claws creeping to her throat. I withdrew them, leashing my wolf.

‘Let me f**k her up.’ Zino raged. ‘She threatened my mate!’

“I like it when you get angry,” she breathed in a low voice. “It’s like old times again, isn’t it? You get so angry that no one else can calm you down. No one except me. Do you want to take out your anger on me like before?” I stepped away from her, surprised at her reaction.

Even Zino went quiet at her unexpected reaction to our anger. “Will you release your seed in me like you used to? Now that you are fertile again, your seed can take plant in my womb. I promise I’d keep it. I’d protect our pup with my life, Vee. Not like the bitch you call –“ Her words died. “You –“ She coughed. “You are choking me.”

“What do you know about the kidnapping?”

“I – It’s Skylar. It’s starting to hurt, Vee –“

“That’s Alpha to you. Where. Is. Skylar?”

“I don’t know that but I suspect she will be at B***d River. That was her mum’s pack.” I let her go and then I called Jabari.

“Send trackers to B***d River pack.” I paused when he asked which of the B***d River packs. “All three of them.”

“Right, I’m on that.” I could hear cars honk from the other end of the call so I knew he was driving.

“Pick up Aysel. She’s alone at home. She must be bored.”

“You couldn’t have called earlier? I just drove past that area,” he complained. “Right, I’m going back. Don’t kill Clover –“ I ended the call.

“As for you,” I turned to the girl, “To repay you for the last century, I will be lenient with you one last time. Go to the pack house and stay there. I will decide your punishment for the slurs against my mate. One more step out of line and I will slit your throat myself without an ounce of remorse.” Her eyes fell to her shoes, head bent.

The haze of red never fully cleared from my eyes. My wolf never quietened. My claws kept extending every now and again. I paced my office to keep my wolf contained.

“Andrew was working with Skylar. She arranged for him to kidnap Aysel but changed her mind at the last minute because she feared he was loyal to you. You shouldn’t trust him and you should keep your eyes peeled for Elders Bane and Maxwell. And you really need to find Strauss and his wife.”

“How do you know all these?” I demanded.

“I was foolish enough to love you. I infiltrated their circle and risked my life just to help you but you don’t need me anymore. I am sure your mate can act as your informant in the future.”

“Thank you.” I owed her that much. “Now get out of my office.”

I tried to get back to work after that but I could not. Clover had taken to crying outside of my office. She was far enough for me not to bother about but my skin still pricked from having her in the same building as me.

An hour later and she was still crying. Exasperation made me slam my system shut but just as I stood to throw her out of the building, I felt a calmness only the presence of my mate could bring. And Clover finally stopped crying.

When my mate walked in, she smelt strongly of Jabari. I understood they'd been in the car together for long and they must have hugged. My wolf was still not settled and the scent of another man on her unsettled him more. I tried to tell the mutt that it was her Beta but he wasn't listening.

I made a joke of it to lighten the mood but she looked at me – she looked at me with disgust in her eyes. Disgust and betrayal.

If I could smell Jabari on her, she could certainly smell Clover on me.

“Have you seen Clover recently?” Her tone held accusation, her eyes held fire and her fingertips were literally on fire.