

Chapter 77

“No.”

“You are being unreasonable,” I protested.

“I am not being unreasonable. You are not allowed to see him. You are not allowed anywhere near him!” His voice raised, his arms crossed over his chest and I knew he wasn’t relenting. But I wasn’t relenting either.

“I am going to see him. I’m going to see him today, in fact. You can either come with me or not.”

“There is no question here. No debate. You will not see him. That’s final.” He slammed his palms down on his desk to emphasize the finality of his words.

“Valens, I am your Luna,” I reminded him. “You should stop treating me like a mere omega.”

“I –“ He paused, his brows crinkling. “It is my duty to protect you. I must protect you.”

“What protection do I need from a chained prisoner?” I couldn’t help but snap. Something occurred to me then that made me frown. “Is this about my protection or is it just because it’s Lucien?” I frowned. The frown on his face melted away.

“It’s not about Lucien. It’s about you.” He sighed, raking a hand through his hair. “Jabari and his team will sort things out. There’s no reason for you to see him.”

“I want to see him and it doesn’t feel like it is about me. It feels like it is about you. I want to see a prisoner in our dungeons as your Luna but because it’s Lucien, I’m prohibited. What do you think would happen if I see him?” I challenged. “Do you think my feelings for him would be rekindled if I set eyes on him?”

“No, I don’t think anything like that.” I was vibrating as he spoke. I clenched my hands to stop them from quivering.

“Why do you insist on treating me like this?” My words came out broken and my voice small. “I know Clover is your ex. She’s still all over you but you don’t see me banning you from seeing her!”

“If you don’t want me seeing Clover again then I will not see her again,” he declared.

“Why do I need to spell it out?” I cried. “Of course, I don’t want you seeing her. She ruined our relationship once and I know she’s trying to do it a second time but I’m deciding to trust you yet you cannot trust me.”

“I really am just trying to protect you,” he sighed for the umpteenth time before picking up his phone.

“Why are you pestering me today?” Jabari’s voice filled the room in a second.

“I want you to move Clover. Take her home and make sure she stays there,” he said into the phone. There was silence on the other end of the line for a long time. Long enough for my heart to start racing. It seemed they were both mourning something as the atmosphere turned solemn.

“Clover can be a bitch,” Jabari said, his voice low and cautious, so low that I almost could not pick it up. “But are you sure you want to do this to her?” My heart sank at the emotion in Jabari’s voice. Then Valens swallowed and I wondered if I’d underestimated just how close they were to each other. Was I tearing them apart for nothing?

“I told her not to leave the pack house. Send someone to help her pack and another in a few hours.” He pinched his glabella. “Clover is not the girl we used to not know. This is me letting her off easily for all she has done. I could and should have been harsher with her. Let’s her consider this as my way of repaying her for all she has done for me.” He ended the call with a click then his eyes fixed on me.

“I have sent Clover away. There is nothing between the two of us and I would hate for you to have the wrong view about things.” He got out of his seat and came to perch on the armrest of my seat.

“You are everything to me, little moon.” He kissed my cheeks. “I love you. I am not certain how to convince you that you mean more to me than the world itself but you do.”

“It doesn’t change the fact that I have to see Lucien,” I protested even though I already felt weak in the knees. My whole body felt warm.

“I do not want you anywhere near that boy.” He stood. “Since you are hell-bent on going, I have no choice but to go with you.” He didn’t sound or look happy.

The temperature in the room dropped. His lips pursed and his words were unnecessarily sharp. I stood up and followed after him as he strode out of his office with stiff shoulders.

The drive to the dungeons was silent. I didn’t want to say anything because I felt the displeasure radiating off him throughout the ride. He kept stealing glances at me but I pretended not to notice because I feared I might ask him to turn around to please him. His irritation pricked my skin and made my wolf pace.

“We are almost there,” he said, breaking the stretch of silence.

“We can –“ I swallowed down but it was too late. I spoke without meaning to. “We can turn back if you don’t want to do this,” I said, facing him for the first time since the trip started.

“No, you are right. I should treat you like my Luna. An equal.” He winced after he said that. “I am not used to any of this. I have not had an equal in my life. These things are hard for me,” he mused.

“You don’t have to explain yourself. It’s written all over your face. You struggle with relinquishing control.” I leaned back into my seat after I spoke, propping my cheek on my palm.

“I am the Alpha. How am I supposed to relinquish control?” His words were flat. “And after the incident, I just want to place bubble wraps around you. I have to protect you, Aysel, you have to let me protect you.”

“Valens, it’s just Lucien,” I emphasized his name. “What can he do to me when you are there?” I asked.

“Not everything is physical.” My brows scrunched at that. He muttered something under his breath that seemed to piss him off even more. “It’s frustrating that I cannot protect you from everything.”

“I have magic now. If he tries anything funny, I’ll set him on fire,” I said in a confident voice even though the only times I’d ever been able to produce magic were the times I got extremely emotional.

“It’s not that,” Valens sighed. “How will you react when you see him again? When the memories you are trying to work through resurface, what then? I do not want to see you hurt, Sagira. I cannot protect you from them.”

“I –“ Things made sense then. “I’ll be fine, I promise.” I placed a hand on his and squeezed.

The second my feet touched the grounds in the dungeons, my heart started to race. Valens cut me a sharp look but I just smiled. Maybe I wasn’t ready. Maybe I didn’t want to see Lucien so early. Maybe I didn’t want to see him alive.

“Alpha. Luna,” a man greeted us as we passed but I was barely aware of my surroundings.

We stopped in front of Lucien’s cell and a guard came to open the door. His head was bent while we approached but he raised his head once we entered. Our eyes met. Valens was right. The pin was too much.

I looked at him and I saw the boy that fought for me as a child. That image quickly faded to show the man that put his hands on me after drugging me. I didn’t know what or how it happened. One minute I was staring at him and in the next, the cold cell resounded with the smack of my palm against his bloodied cheek.