

## Chapter 88

‘Something doesn’t feel right,’ My wolf said to me as I worked.

I read through the report of what happened with Skylar. One of the hunters that picked up her case had found her and she would be in the dungeons by nightfall. Because she was a Bonafide member of the pack, it was due protocol to give her a trial.

Although she could be sentenced without being considered for a trial, Valens and I agreed it was best to conduct a public trial so people knew exactly what she had done. Enough of calling my mate a tyrant when he punished people who deserved to be punished.

“I feel it too,” I replied my wolf out loud, my voice echoing in the space of my office which was right across Valens’,

I wanted to go into his office to tell him of my unease, to have him ease my distress, but today was a busy day.

The petition to free Lucien finally came in and it had close to a thousand signatures from those in and outside the pack. Lucien now had a fan page dedicated to him and the girls there wanted him out and about. Alpha Zavier’s people were louder about their dislike for Valens especially since someone leaked Skylar’s news.

Valens was in his third meeting for the day and he still hadn’t had lunch. I could just feel his frustration from where I was sitting.

“Is it because of Skylar?” I asked my wolf but she went silent.

Artemis was a loud wolf. I'd learnt early that she would talk whether I listened or not but she was uncharacteristically quiet today. She didn't pace, didn't say anything, merely sat in one spot, unmoving.

'Something isn't right, Aysel,' she repeated after a second of silence.

My arms burned and I shook them out to stamp out the glow that came with that burn. This was not the time for my magic to act out. Some days, like today, I wished I had asked for something other than magic but I couldn't think of anything that I could ask of the goddess that would make me feel closer to my mother who had faded from my memory.

"I think we are just worried about Skylar's return.

She bullied me all my life and it's been months since we were on the same soil," I reasoned with my wolf but the explanation didn't sit well with me.

"That's possible.' Artemis went quiet. 'But what if this is another of her tricks? How can she just be captured like that after months of hiding from even Zino's trackers?

'She has a ten million bounty on her head. The most skilled hunters have been out for her head for a while now. It was only a matter of time before she got caught.'

'Call Jabari. We can't access Valens now but we can at least talk to Jabari. Something is not right.'

Due to Artemis' panic, I had no choice but to pick up my phone to call my Beta. He picked up on the first ring.

"Beta Jabari," he said once he picked up. His voice sounded worn out. I could imagine the look on his face as he picked up his phone. These days, he looked gaunt and worked sluggishly. "Good afternoon, Luna." He didn't sound like he wanted to talk.

“How are you?” I asked in a soft tone.

“I have drafted the schedule for the trial. It should not span more than seven days. Valens wants it quick. Do you have anything to add? The sentence is death but there is no decision what kind of death”

“It’s death for all three of them?” I asked, taking the bait to discuss something else.

“Zavier is being charged for murder and for breaking the code of Alphas. Yes, the verdict is death. For Skylar, being an accomplice to murder, evading justice and getting on Valens’ bad side, she could get something less but Valens has chosen death. Lucien will be a bit tricky but still, death is preferred. Every other person involved will spend the rest of their lives in the dungeons until something mysterious takes them out.”

“Is that – is that how it works?” Horror painted my face. I wasn’t a fool. I knew that the trial wasn’t going to be fair seeing as there was already a verdict before it even started but I didn’t think it would be this biased.

“Why do you sound surprised?” Jabari chuckled.

“Welcome to the world of Alphas, Luna. You stamp out the cockroaches before they multiply.”

“But Lucien – ” vent Skylar. I could care less about what happened to Zavier. In fact, I was truthful when I said I would like to watch Zavier executed in front of the people he once led but that feeling had faded now.

“I wouldn’t suggest a lesser punishment for any of them to Valens. Especially not Lucien,” his words had a subtle warming in them.

“I think – I feel he was used. Skylar used him.” I pressed a hand to my forehead, feeling chaotic. The feeling of discomfort was mounting and my heart was speeding up as the clock ticked.

“He is not a child. He availed himself to be used.

Whatever punishment Valens chooses, you should not try to argue it. It might trigger him for no reason.”

Would it seem to him like I was supporting my ex again even though Lucien and I never had such a relationship? Why did I care what happened to him after what he did to me? I couldn't dwell on that for long.

“Is this how it will always be?” I asked, flipping through a book of spells that Avalon sent me.

“I have never known Valens to put up a front but he is doing that with you. You will see through that front soon enough to realize how he has managed to remain at the peak of power for so long; why no one dared to gang up against him.

The key is to make a statement; a loud statement.”

“Would I ever learn to play his games?” I mused to myself.

“Did you call me for relationship advice?” He sounded exasperated and I caught myself.

“No.” I sat up straight. “Of course not. I am uneasy about the whole Skylar situation.”

“I will handle the trial. I understand it is not something you are comfortable doing so you don't have to worry.” His voice had gone back to sounding bleak and lifeless.

Thank you but that's not it. Something feels off about everything.” I sighed. “Who found her? Why did it happen so suddenly? Is she injured? Did she put up a fight? She has a number of supporters now so she should have had people protecting her at least.”

“Her supporters are being rounded up. She put up a fight but she didn't have the upper hand this time. The hunter that captured her is new and rumored to be skilled. He calls himself The Ghost Ninja.”

“He sounds like a dork ” I paused. “He calls himself what?”

“The Ghost Ninja. It is a strange name but I’ve heard worse. Black Night? Blueberry Mulberry?”

Hunters have had weirder names.

Yeah, I didn’t know anything about how hunters picked their names but the gears in my head were turning and they weren’t telling me good things.

The hunter’s name sounded so familiar which it shouldn’t have since I’d never come in contact with a bounty hunter in my life. Then it clicked.

‘F\*\*k,’ Artemis whispered.

“Jabari, listen to me and listen carefully.” I took a breath, clutching my hands into a fist as they started to quiver. “Secure the borders. Find whoever is supposed to be transporting her and stop them. I have to speak to Valens now.”

“What’s happened?” His voice sharpened as he became alert.

“Prepare Redville for an attack. There is no ghost anything. That was something foolish Bethel used to call himself years ago!” I hung up and ran into Valens’ office to see him hoisting a man out of his seat by his collar. The man had turned purple in the face by the time I came in.

“Hey, love.” He let the man go and turned to me with a smile. “You look pale.” He wiped his hands on a handkerchief while I turned to the men, pretending I hadn’t seen what happened.

“If you will excuse us, I have something to discuss with my Alpha.” The two men were quick to leave.

“He provoked me.” He tried to explain but it didn’t matter at that point.

“Say something. Why are you losing color?”

There is no ghost of the ninja or whoever contacted you. This is all part of Skylar's scheme,"

I rushed out. Damn, Skylar really did up her game!

She was always scheming and conniving but never to this extent. She had gotten slicker. "This is an ambush."