

Chapter 105

~MAYA~

"I'm assuming the man that's shooting daggers my way is the person Arthur told me you're in love with," Griffin says as he twirls me on the dance floor.

I attempt to look, but his hand moves from my waist to squeeze my cheeks, forcing me to look at him. "If you're trying to get him to man up and show his true emotions, I suggest you only look at me tonight."

I was only trying to look to confirm that Kane was the one staring at us. Who was I kidding? I wanted to look because I needed to see the look on Kane's face. I already knew he was looking our way; I could feel the heat in my back. I just wanted to see that Griffin knew what he was speaking about. I couldn't see anything from this direction. Maybe that was for the best. If I saw Kane, I might want to run to him. I'm good at that; running to Kane at the worst time.

My body shivered from the thought of him glaring at Griffin with jealousy. I've been the jealous one this entire time. It felt good to be on the opposite end for once. I know that I shouldn't be enjoying playing with Kane's heart, but I had no other choice. He didn't make it easy for me. He was stubborn like he usually is about everything. Gabriella may have only spent a few times with him, but she already knows him well. She knows how to get under his skin, and that's the benefit of having his sister as a friend.

"You're good at this," I note. "Are you used to girls asking you to pretend that you like them to get the guy they like jealous?"

I wasn't trying to be funny. I really wanted to know. He shouldn't be this calm and natural, yet he is, almost like he's done this a million times before. And Griffin was someone that could make any man jealous. He was handsome and had money, with girls running after him. No one would want their woman around a man like this.

He laughs and twirls me another time, "no. This is the first time. But I must admit that it's a lot more fun than I expected it to be. I should thank Arthur for giving me a chance to dance with you."

Why is he this kind to me? He doesn't know me. He knows nothing about me but is willing to help me without expecting anything in return. Maybe he's just trying to repay Arthur. They seem to be good friends. Arthur's family looked like they were well respected. Even the billionaires had great respect for them. They must be good at their job.

"Thank you," I whisper. "For helping me. You didn't have to. But here you are, helping a stranger and doing a great job at it. You don't know how much this means to me."

He smiles, "I think I should get something in return for helping you."

Maybe I spoke too soon. What could I possibly have to offer him? I hope he wouldn't ask for something that I couldn't give to him.

My forehead creased as I asked, "what do you want in return? I don't have much to offer."

He chuckles, "you don't have to look so worried. I don't want money or anything that you won't be able to give to me."

"Then what is it that you want?" I ask, curious. His words have definitely put me at ease. I wasn't as worried as I was earlier.

"I think a smile will be enough. You're too beautiful to be this sad." He tells me.

I'm taken aback by his words. Griffin was most definitely a sweet talker. How many girls did this guy have falling for him? I think I have my answer by the number of them looking our way with great jealousy. They didn't have anything to worry about. I wasn't interested in him. I was interested in the man that didn't recognize yet that I was his mate. He was making it hard for me by taking so damn long to realize what was right in front of his eyes.

I let myself smile, and he smiles in return, "see, now a face like yours always need to look this way. Your smile brightens up your face."

I didn't think Griffin would be this fun to be around. I thought he was just this player that would constantly be trying to flirt with me. While he was playful, I didn't think he was trying to flirt with me, at least not when he knew I loved Kane.

"I may end up in a wheelchair by the end of tonight," Griffin points out suddenly.

I know that he's looking directly at Kane. Was he challenging him?

"Why?" I asked him; I wanted to confirm if my suspicions were correct.

"He's getting angrier by the second," He says, telling me exactly what I wanted to hear.

I bite my lip; I still want to turn and look at him.

"Judging by your smile, I can tell this makes you happy," He notes with a chuckle.

"Am I that easy to read?" I ask him.

He smiles, "you are, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing."

I attempt to turn around, but he stops me again, reminding me that I can't let Kane know I'm thinking about him.

"You must love him plenty," Griffin says. "I hope that he's worth the trouble."

My mind replays all the times Kane had protected me when he didn't have to. All the times that he's made my heart flutter. All the times he's said things that touched my soul.

There was no doubt in my mind that he was worth all the heartache. I couldn't be upset with Kane for choosing the woman he thought was his mate. It was the only logical decision. Kane was also filled with so much guilt over the past that it prevented him from seeing anything else. If he were thinking straight, he would have been able to tell that the woman he thinks is Maya is not her.

It would also explain why he couldn't find her when they blindfolded him. He was so confused by his actions that he was even disappointed in himself when in truth, he didn't do anything wrong; that woman was not Maya.

The only part of the entire game I couldn't understand was why he chose me. Other than the clothes that Lucy gave me to wear, I don't see how he came to my side thinking that I was Maya. He did say my voice reminded him of her, and so did my scent. I was beginning to feel strongly connected to Maya in some weird way. Her name always made me feel a specific type of way, and then there was the fact that I had a soft spot for her family. . . Not to mention her mate.

"I know that he's worth it," I tell Griffin.

It may not look that way to others, but if they knew the things Kane did for me, they would understand why I love him as much as I do. They would know why I was fighting so hard to get him by my side even though he begged me to let him go.

He nods, "I think so too. That man loves you. I can see it in his eyes. I have brothers who are deeply in love with one woman; I know the look they have in their eyes. He has it in his. Is he your mate?"

I sigh, "I think that he is, but he doesn't seem to think so. I'm not sure if I'm the only one that realizes our connection. That's why we're here today, pretending to like each other."

"Pretending?" He asks, feigning disappointment. "I thought this was real between us!"

I laugh and playfully hit his chest, "stop it!"

He wiggles his brows, "was that a real laugh? I didn't think it was possible."

I roll my eyes, and he laughs, "I should win a medal for this," He teases.

"I know this isn't my business, but do you think they will be okay?" I ask as I look at Atticus and Autumn.

He quirks a brow, "it seems you know that this marriage was forced on my brother," He says. "Atticus is strong. He may have it hard now, but I know he will overcome this. And Autumn is a darling; she will surely win him over in no time."

"But isn't Anya his mate?" I ask.

He sighs, "she is, but she has my other two brothers. To be honest, don't tell anyone I said this, but I'm glad Atticus married Autumn. Things have been tough since the three of them realized Anya was their mate. It was pushing them further apart. I saw my brothers begin to lose their bond because of that woman. Maybe this will help. It won't be easy, but I think it's for the best."

The song finally ends, and I'm surprisingly sad. Griffin somehow has made me happier than I've been in a long time. He was like a breath of fresh air. I could see us being good friends.

"I don't think just one meeting will be enough to let him to confess his true feelings," Griffin says as he glances at Kane again. "We're having a party at one of our private islands later to celebrate the success of the wedding. I can get everyone you came with today on the yacht with us. That is if you're willing to come. We can continue this conversation there."

My lips part in shock. It's the last thing I was expecting him to say to me. Why would he invite me to a private island with his family? And he wasn't only inviting me; he was asking everyone I came with. Griffin kept surprising me.

"I'm not sure that's such a good idea. It's last minute, and I don't think everyone would agree," I explain.

While it did sound like fun, we all had to return home soon. We didn't plan on getting on a yacht and going to a private island. I'm not sure we would have everything needed for a trip like this one.

Griffin looks disappointed with my response, but he also seems unwilling to take no for an answer. I want to laugh at his persistence. Never have I met a man like this in my life.

"I can promise you to make him the most jealous he's been in his entire life," He says, trying to convince me. "He's already near his breaking point. We can push him past it if you just let yourself have some fun. And I can tell that we will be good friends after today. As your friend, I think that you should give me this one wish. I promise that you're not going to regret it."

I sigh, "you don't like to take no for an answer, do you?" I ask.

"No, as a matter of fact, I don't," He says as he takes my hand in his once more. I'm not sure why he did it when the song was over.

I try to pull away, but he holds onto it tightly. "Trust me. We need to do this to push him over the edge. I'm not going to do more than this; you don't have to worry. I won't make you uncomfortable. And I can assure you that I don't have bad intentions towards you. I don't have any ulterior motives. You can ask Arthur. He wouldn't have introduced us if he thought I would ever hurt you. He's smarter than that."

I did trust Arthur. This meant he had to be telling the truth. I could trust him as well. And if this was all to get Kane to act right, then I should at least try. Shouldn't I?

It felt awkward holding his hand, but I had already started this game; I had to keep it up until I got what I wanted. Besides, Griffin didn't look like someone who had bad intentions. Just like he'd just said to me. He was only trying to help me.

He guides me back to everyone else who are already looking at us. I felt nervous under all the stares. I think everyone wants to know if I enjoyed the dance with Griffin. It must be strange for them to see me with someone. I've never acted interested in anyone else before because Kane was always the only one who held my heart. That didn't change, but I wanted him to at least think that it did.

"You two seem to be getting along well," Gabriella says. I can see that she's enjoying this. She planned everything, to begin with; of course, she would enjoy it since it's been going according to her plans.

She grins and winks at me. I try not to laugh. She shouldn't be doing this in front of Kane. What if he realizes that she's the one behind everything? I'm not sure if this will make him closer or further away from her. He wouldn't be happy to know that his sister was plotting against him. Of course she was only doing it because she thought that I would be the better option for him. She felt like I was the one that would be able to make him happy and that's all that both of us have ever wanted from the start. For him to be happy.

"We are," Griffin says. "She's a real joy to be around. I can't remember the last time I've had this much fun. And I have Arthur to thank for introducing us. When he said he had someone interesting for me to meet, I never thought she would exceed my expectations. But she's truly special; she caught my attention in a split second. And she's going to hold it for much longer than that. We were discussing something earlier. Will you tell them what I asked you? I think it will be better if they hear it from you."

Everyone is staring at me, waiting for me to answer his question. Would they agree to go with us? I knew that I wasn't going if they said no. The whole point of this was to piss Kane off. And if he wasn't going to be there, I would stay out of it. I know that Griffin was fun to be around but I wasn't willing to go on such a trip without everyone here.

"He invited me to a party he's having at their private island. He said that every one that came with me was also invited. We can all get on his yacht," I finally say. "I think that it's a good idea. I'll be happy to go with him, but I'm not going unless each of you is also coming with us."

There are surprised looks all around me. I don't think anyone expected him to do that when he just met me. Even I was surprised, but he looked like a kind person. Was his entire family this nice? I only spoke to his brothers a little, and they didn't seem like horrible men. Maybe they were all like him.

"I mean, I'm in!" Isabella says. "I can do with a mini-vacation."

"I'm in as well," Gabriella says. "Wherever she's going, I am as well," She says as she winks at me.

I knew I wouldn't have had to ask Gabriella more than once. I can always count on her. And she, more than anyone else, couldn't wait for me to get under Kane's skin. Gabriella was already acting like Kane's sister, meddling with his life and making it miserable, but only because she wanted the best for him.

"It's safe to say that all the men are going as well," Austin says. "There's no way our women are going on a trip like this without us present."

"Well, I guess that settles it then?" Griffin asks. "I'll inform my family that we'll have a bit more guests than planned. After, I'll come to get you guys."

"Are you sure they'll be okay with it?" Arthur asks. "We don't want any trouble. I know this is very last minute, and you usually plan these things carefully. You don't need to do this if it will be too stressful. I know it's plenty of us."

Griffin shrugs his shoulder, "they won't. And if they do, I'll have you in my yacht instead. We own a few. It's not going to be an issue. I just need to mention it."

Griffin excuses himself, and Lucy nudges my shoulder. "You go, girl. Look at you attracting a billionaire. And getting us all invited to a private island with just meeting him once."

"She's someone you can't help but fall in love with," Gabriella teases. "Griffin was able to spot her uniqueness in a few seconds. I think that says a lot about him."

"I have to say," Isabella says. "You have great taste in men. You go, girl."

Hunter growls, "she has good taste in men? Do you think he's that great?"

Isabella laughs, "not as good as you, sweetheart, of course not. I'm saying he's good for her."

"Isabella was only speaking the truth," Gabriella says.

She gives me a look that says our plan is working. Kane hasn't said a word since I returned from the dance. Maya hasn't said a word either. She's too occupied looking at all of the guests. What was she looking for?

"Should we prepare for the trip?" Gabriella asks. Everyone agreed with her and left me alone. I was supposed to wait until Griffin returned.

It takes me a second to realize that I had company. And I knew who it was by the way my heartbeat increased.

I gasp as I feel Kane's hand on my arm, "Can we talk, just for a few minutes, please."

His hands on me are making it hard for me to say no. But I know that I have to.

"I'm sorry, I'm busy right now," I apologize. "Maybe next time."

I see the hurt and surprise in his eyes, and I try to ignore it. I couldn't let it stop me from doing what I had to. Gabriella said to ignore him, and I was listening to her. It would be all worth it in the end.