

Chapter 111

All like time, I was in emotional distress because I felt like Kane was in love with Maya and not me. I spent so many days being jealous of her. I spent so many days feeling angry that he always chose her over me.

And this whole time, I was her. I am Maya. This entire time I've been jealous of myself.

I don't know whether to cry or laugh at this new information. Everything she had I wanted, and I had it all along.

I held my heart as my mind raced with memories from my past. They were all coming back, one after the next. I was trying to cope, but it was too much for me to stand. I glimpse at my brothers and Kane. They're walking toward each other, and their hands have tightened into fists. They were preparing for a fight. My heart aches with fear at the sight. These were the people I loved the most, and here they were about to hurt each other over me. And it wasn't the first time this had happened. My memories were proof of that.

I want to call out to them, but I can't find my voice. I want to beg them to stop, I'm trying to force my body to move faster, but nothing is happening. It refuses to listen to me. It's too much of a shock from finally regaining my memories. And they were still coming at me. There was so much. So much of my life that I had forgotten, but it was all returning.

How could my body adjust to all of this at once? How could I make myself move faster to prevent them from hurting each other in front of me?

They aren't looking at me. They're too busy glaring at each other to realize I'm in pain. I don't think they realize yet that something is wrong with me. But would my brothers even care? They didn't recognize me in this form. They didn't care about me when they thought I was another woman. Kane didn't recognize me either, but he still loved me. Even in another form. Kane was able to love me.

My mouth opens, and once more, nothing comes out of it. My nails dig into the sand as I try to fight my own body. This was not the time for me to be helpless. They were about to harm each other. I had to find my strength before things got out of hand. The last time this happened, I almost lost Kane. I couldn't let anything happen to him. I didn't think it was possible, but I loved Kane even more than I loved him then. My love for him had been restricted because of his actions, but that was all gone now; I knew him more than I did in the past; he had my entire heart now. I was able to fall for him more because of the vulnerable side he showed to me when he didn't know I was Maya. It was another side to Kane that shocks me now that I learned so much of our past.

I loved him more than my little heart could take. It felt like it would overflow with all my emotions for him. And I would happily let it this time. He had suffered enough for his wrongdoings; it was time for him to forgive himself and be happy.

"You're a f****g disappointment to all males," Austin growls.

"Maya always deserved better than you," Lucas hissed. "I thought you had changed. I hoped you did. She's not the only one you've let down. And this time, we're not giving you any more chances."

"Your lucky days are over," James roars.

Kane is quiet. Why isn't he telling them? Why isn't he shouting to them the things he's said to me? How will they know I'm Maya if he doesn't explain to them that I remind him so much of her? It's like he wants them to hurt him just like he wanted them to in the past. I knew he must still feel guilty for loving me when he didn't realize I was Maya. But that doesn't mean he shouldn't fight back!

And why isn't anyone looking at me lying on the sand, fighting to breathe? If they looked away for a second, they would realize I needed help!

I gasp when another memory hits me. It's an image of Austin and me when we were children. I feel tears forming in my eyes. Everything makes so much sense to me now. I know now why I felt such a strong connection to him; I understand why my heart hurt when I saw Lucas. I know why I hated the fake Maya so much. She was making a fool of the people I cared about.

This is why I always felt a stir in my heart whenever I returned home with them. The reason was simple; that was my home, to begin with; I didn't know it then, but I do now. I had so many beautiful memories there.

My family. I knew them even though my memories were lost. My love for them never left my heart. I already knew, even though I wasn't letting myself believe the truth. My heart knew it from the time I saw them. It's crazy how the heart remembers when the mind is unable to.

"I'm sorry," Kane apologizes, and I can hear the sincerity in his voice. He still thinks that he's betraying me; he still thinks he's betraying his Maya. "I never deserved Maya; that is true. I tried my best to be the person that she deserved me to be. In the end, I failed to love her the way I was supposed to in the beginning. I fought my feelings for someone I knew I shouldn't love, but the more I pushed her away, the more I fell in love. As you can see, I've failed in even that. I loved another woman when my heart was always only supposed to belong to Maya. I know I should let you kill me, but I'm afraid I won't be able to do that without a fight. Because now I have someone to live for, someone I don't plan on leaving. Ever. So let's get this over with because, as I said, I'm not backing down this time. I will fight for her, and I can only hope that Maya forgives me."

His words have angered my brothers even more than before. And I don't know why he's bothering to tell them this. Of course, they won't understand or feel any pity for him. They think that he's hurting their sister once more. Doesn't he realize that it's useless to make them understand anything? He has a better chance if he tells them I reminded him of their sister.

What is wrong with me? Why can't I fight back? All I need to do is open my mouth and speak. It's the only way to get this madness to stop. But the memories aren't stopping. And I don't want them to either. I'm happy that they're coming back to me. I'm so glad to know what my childhood was like. I was a lucky girl since the day I was born. I was always protected and loved, not to mention spoiled. I got everything I ever wanted since the start. My family tried their best never to make me cry, and if anyone ever did, my brothers made sure to make them pay. They were my protective shields, and even now, they're trying to protect me without knowing they were protecting an imposter.

And who was that imposter? Was it really that blasted witch that caused this entire thing, to begin with? She asked me if I hadn't remembered anything. It must be her. Who else would bother causing so much trouble? And she clearly knew that I was the real Maya. She wouldn't go through all this trouble if she thought I was any other person. When I find her, I will bloody murder her for everything she's put the people I love through and me. She will pay. I will make sure of it.

My head snaps upwards when I hear a roar. It's Austin. I watch helplessly as he grabs Kane by his neck. I gasp in distress. Get up, Maya!

Lucas punches Kane straight on his nose. Kane growls and grabs onto Austin's throat as well. They're both hurting each other at this point. There is so much hatred between them; it's tearing my heart apart. I hate to see it. I hate to see the people I care about the most harming each other like this. Why is this happening again? Why am I even more helpless than the last time?

Lucas and James join in then. I can hear Kane's roar as he fights against them. It isn't like the last time they fought. Kane is fighting back this time. He's fighting for me. I know that he is. He thinks they would hurt me, but he doesn't know yet that I'm Maya. None of them know the truth.

That damn witch turned me into another woman. The people closest to me didn't recognize me even though I had been by their side for so long.

I try to scream their names, but I'm still unable to speak. The tears are flowing now. I'm crying. I'm crying because I have to watch them hurt each other over me.

'You're my little sister,' I hear Austin say in another memory. 'I will always protect you. Anyone that dares lay a hand on you will wish that they'd never been born.'

'Troublemaker,' I hear Lucas next. 'He's right. We will protect you even though you annoy the s**t out of me.'

'We promise,' James adds.

I remember this day. It was the day a guy had made the mistake of trying to hit me when I had turned him down. His screams echoed throughout the forest. They made sure that he would never try to hit another girl again in his life. It's one of many memories I had of my brothers protecting me.

My heart rate increases when Kane bites down on Lucas's wrist. He roars, and Austin pulls his head off. James grabs Kane by his neck and shoves him down on the sand. I watch in horror as Austin places his knees on his back, and it looks like Lucas is about to rip his head off his body.

My grip tightens on the sand, and I push my head back and scream at the top of my lungs. It was the first time that I was able to make any sound since I'd gotten my memories back. I was grateful to have it before, but I'm not sure it will be enough to save Kane from them.

How did I convince them that I was their sister? What did I have to do to make them believe me when I looked nothing like I used to? It doesn't help that someone is pretending to be me. It will make it much harder for me to convince them, and that's the last thing I need right now.

My gaze connects with Kane's. His head is still pressed against the sand, but he's looking at me now. It reminds me so much of the past. He feels guilty; I know that he thinks he's somehow failed me again. Except, he doesn't know what I do. Maybe he does. He's said multiple times how much I reminded him of Maya. His heart already knew it was me; his mind was refusing to accept it.

He's not the only one looking at me now. My brothers are also staring at me. That's expected since my scream must have rocked the forest. It was deafening, no doubt.

I don't know where I got the strength from, but I'm standing on my feet now. I'm no longer begging for help from the sand beneath me. They're no longer trying to kill each other, and I think that at least is a good sign. Kane wasn't safe from danger yet. None of them were.

"I need you to let him go, Austin," I tell him, and I know I've used this tone with him in the past.

His eyes look puzzled for a second, and I know he's heard my voice; I know he remembers it. But he quickly pushes whatever thought was on his mind away. I know because his eyes are ice cold once more. He's trying to hate me because he thinks I'm the woman that is trying to destroy his sister's life. He doesn't know how wrong he is. And Austin has always been extremely stubborn. If he believed something, he stuck with it until it reached a point where he had no choice but to look at the other option.

His knee pushes down harder on Kane's back, it angers me.

"I said to let him go!" I shout; there is no hiding the authority in my voice. He looks at me as though I've lost my mind. It's almost like he's asking who I am to order him around.

"Let him go?" Austin growls as his hands tighten into fists. "He deserves this. He played Maya multiple times; he f****g hurt her. He promised to protect her and love her. And when we all finally believed and trusted him around her, he turned around and betrayed her with you! Why should I listen to the woman that had an affair with my sister's mate? Why the hell should I listen to you?"

"Lucas!" I hiss when I see him move closer to Kane. "If you touch him, I swear I will never forgive you. You as well, James. I will never forgive any of you if you hurt the man that I love."

They're all looking at me like I'm crazy now. I know what they are thinking, but I do not care how I look to them. I'm thinking of a way to get them to believe me. I don't know how to break the news to them, and I'm trying to buy myself some time.

But telling them that I was their sister was the only way for me to save Kane. Or it may make things worse. They may think that I'm lying. They will never believe me without any proof. But if they loved me as much as I loved them, there may be one way for me to get them to hear me out. There was something I had with me now that I didn't have before, something that the imposter would not have. And that was every single memory I had with them. When we were children and when we'd grown into adults. I had everything with me now. Everything that could get my brothers to believe the truth.

And they would be stupid not to believe me.

"Why would we care if you don't forgive us?" Austin demands. "You're the reason my sister is in tears. Both of you are the reason for her sadness. The last thing any of us would ever care about is your feelings."

"Are you sure about that?" I ask him. "Are you sure you don't want to protect me right now instead of that fake Maya?"

All of their bodies go rigid at my question.

"Fake Maya?" Lucas asks. "What are you talking about?"

"Pretend that you don't see me right now." I say, "and listen to me. Listen to my voice. Listen to the words that I say to you. Feel the connection between us. And then tell me you still don't know what I'm talking about."

Austin looks at me and then at Lucas and James. They're all puzzled by my words, and maybe that's a good thing. It was taking their attention away from Kane.

They weren't the only ones confused; he was as well. I'm unsure what his reaction will be when I tell my brothers who I am.

He's been searching for me, and all this time, I've been right by his side. It's funny the way life works sometimes.

"I think she's just trying to distract us," James growls. "I don't like being played with. Let's finish him and get this over with before anyone tries to stop us. By now, Gabriella must be close to finding them. She will surely try to stop us from killing her brother. And I don't want to hurt her to get to him. Definitely not while she's pregnant."

Kane's fingers dug into the sand at the mention of Gabriella. And I saw it then, the love he already has for her. He's been hiding it this entire time. He was fighting their sibling connection, but he couldn't hide it this time. I saw straight through him. He would hate for anything to happen to his sister. If only Gabriella could see him now. She would be so happy.

"I'm not trying to distract you, James!" I shout. "I'm trying to make you see the truth that's been in front of you this entire time! I'm trying to show all of you that you've been around an imposter this whole time. I want you to see that she isn't the real Maya. How could you three be so dumb not to realize she isn't your sister? How would you fall for her lies? I would think with now; you would each know better than that. It's not the first time you've been fooled by a witch or someone associated with one. Yet you keep letting others make you look like fools!"

Lucas quirks a brow, "why does it seem like she's said words like this to us before? Why does she seem so familiar?"

"Because I have, you dumbass! And I can't believe you're taking so long to figure out who I am, Lucas!" I shout. He's always easily gotten on my nerves, and nothing has changed.

Austin finally lifts his knee off Kane to stare at me. This time he's taking his slow time to examine me. I'm not sure what he's thinking.

"Are you trying to tell me that she isn't Maya?" He asks. "That's hard to believe since she looks exactly like my sister. I think I would know what my sister looks like. I think her brothers would be able to pick her out of a crowd. And I would refrain from the name calling if I were you. It will not work in your favor when you're strangers to us."

I laugh, "stranger?"

"Yes," Austin growls. "Are you going to keep talking in circles, or will you finally open your mouth and say what's on your mind? We don't have all day for this."

I run a hand through my hair and roll my eyes at them, "I can't believe it's taking my brothers so freaking long to see that I'm standing right in front of them!"

Everything gets utterly silent from my latest confession. All I could hear was the crashing of the rough waves, the wind against the trees, and the sound of nature accepting it all.

"Your brothers?" James asks. "What are you trying to say?"

"Isn't it obvious, James?" I demand. "I know you've always been slow but come on, I'm spelling things out for you guys now."

"Are you out of your damn mind?" Austin asks. "Do you hear yourself? Are you expecting us to believe that you are somehow our sister? Did you hit your head?"

I cross my arms over my chest, "I am Maya. Your sister. Nothing you say or do can change that."