

## Chapter 22

He grabs a kit with medical supplies and takes a piece of cotton in his hand. He's purposefully ignoring my question.

I know that I'm naked before him, but I don't feel even the slightest bit shy. I'm too consumed by wanting to know the truth that it's impossible for me to feel any other emotion.

"This may hurt," he says as he presses the wet cotton against my stomach, "but it will help with the pain until your body heals itself."

My fists tighten against the sheet beneath my body, "the physical pain is no match for the emotional pain that you've brought upon me."

I know I'm not supposed to admit it, but I felt like it was the right time to tell him that.

His hand stops just above another cut, and a muscle ticks in his jaw; it tells me that my words have struck a nerve. Still, he doesn't say anything; instead, he continues to tend to every wound on my body gently.

I'm surprised at his gentleness, but it will not distract me from finding out the truth. It would also not distract me from all he has done to me. My heart may want to move from this sudden change in his behavior, but it is not enough for me to forgive him for what he's done. This is far from over. I still want to see him suffer.

"Stop avoiding my question," I tell him. "I want to know what Anna was speaking about, and I want to know the truth right now."

He takes a deep breath, "I'm not avoiding your question; I'm refusing to answer it. That's all."

I grab his wrist; it stops him from tending to another wound. He lifts his gaze lazily, and I don't think his eyes have ever looked this blue before. They seem to be staring into my soul, and I hate how my heart skips a beat because of it.

I'm angry with myself again. And I'm mad at him. Why won't he tell me?

And why did he have to spoil everything for us? He destroyed any chance of us happening before anything could even begin between us.

"WHY?" I scream. "Why did you have to do this to me? What did I ever do to you? Why did you destroy the chances for us to officially be mates? Why did you have to end something that's supposed to be beautiful and precious? WHY?"

He seems taken aback by my outburst, but it doesn't take long for him to recover from his shock.

He drops the medical supplies kit onto the ground, and it shatters everywhere. His rage matches mine, and we're both equally pissed.

"Do you want to know?" He roars, and I swear that I spot tears in his eyes, but that's impossible. Someone as horrible as him isn't capable of crying.

"Yes!" I shout. "I want to understand you. I want to understand why you would hurt me so much without giving me a proper reason. I want to know what would cause you to hurt your mate. I want to know if you're truly so heartless!"

Because deep down in my heart, I can't accept that you're a monster. I want to believe that you aren't. I want to believe that my mate isn't such a horrible person. I don't say those things to him, but it's the truth of how I feel.

He grabs my shoulders roughly and stares into my eyes, "are you sure that you want to know the answer to your question?"

His hands are warm, and his warmth seeps into my naked skin, but I ignore how it makes me feel; I also ignore how much I wish those hands could touch me elsewhere but with love, not hatred.

I narrow my eyes, "yes!"

His body is shaking, consumed with anger and hatred, "your family took the two most important people in my life away from me. They took them away in the most brutal way possible and then went on with their lives like they hadn't done so. They were happy, you were happy, all of you went ahead to enjoy your lives after what you did, and I was left alone to mourn the loss of my father and sister."

What was that supposed to mean? How did we take his father and sister away from him? He needed to explain himself more.

"What are you saying?" I demand.

"Do you not get it?" He asks with venom dripping from his voice. "YOUR FAMILY KILLED MY FATHER AND SISTER!" He shouts.

His words pierce through my heart. It was the last thing I was expecting him to say to me. I was prepared to hear anything but not that. My family killed his father and sister? That's impossible. They have killed people before, but they were always people that threatened our family first. They wouldn't kill anyone unless there was an excellent reason for it. I knew my brothers well enough to know this. They were dangerous when it came to their family; they would never spare anyone that tried to hurt one of us. We've always been like that, but we were not the type of people to interfere with the innocent. We would never hurt someone without a good reason, and even hurting our enemies was sometimes hard for us. So everything he's saying doesn't make any sense to me. I still believe that he's mistaken; I still believe that we weren't the ones to do this.

"You're lying!" I shout. "My family would not harm anyone unless they tried to harm us first. There must be a reason, or you must be mistaken. Tell me who it is. Tell me who they were, tell me their names so that I can confirm this myself." I insist.

He takes a deep breath and pushes away from me. "It doesn't matter what you think. What matters is that they did kill the two most important people in my life; the only two that I had left of my family was taken away from me. I don't have a family anymore because of you and the people closest to you. Hurting you was the best way to get revenge for what they did to me. They took the closest thing to my heart, and I returned the favor to them. You mean just as much to them as my father and sister meant to me. You were the best way for me to hurt your family."

I feel the tears form in my eyes as everything he's done begins to make more sense than it did before. I still think he's been misinformed; I still believe that he doesn't know the whole truth, and I can't give him that unless he tells me who they were.

"Tell me who they are, Kane." I insist. "I need to know the truth. I need to know if there is truth to your words. I need to know what they did and why. I'm telling you that my family would not hurt someone without a reason. I still believe that you are mistaken. Please tell me more. I need you to do more explaining."

He doesn't wait for me to ask any more questions; he gets out of the room and slams the door behind him.

Two minutes later, he walks back in with a dress in his hand. He drops it onto my lap without saying anything and storms back out.

I clutch the blue dress in my hand and close my eyes. I can't get his words out of my head.

I try to think of anyone that looked like him, someone that could be linked to him, but no one comes to mind. I've never seen anyone like him before. Then it must be a mistake. I would not stop until he told me the truth. I would not stop asking and pestering him.

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~KANE~

I was never supposed to tell Maya this so soon. I hated the person she was turning me into. I was even forgetting why I was doing this in the first place. Anna's words kept replaying in my head. I was protecting the one woman I swore that I would bring only pain. I was going against my own words for her.

I've never done that before. I've never gone against my words for someone—especially not someone I'm supposed to hate.

I tried to think about my father; I hoped that it would help me remember why I needed to fight the feelings, but it wasn't helping anymore. Every time I entered a room and saw her, I felt like taking care of her and keeping her safe. I didn't feel like hurting her anymore, and I hated myself for it. I knew that I would regret this one day, but I couldn't help it; I can't help the way that she makes me feel.

I open the cabinet and grab a drink. I had to find some way to forget about these feelings. I had to do anything to make myself not remember.

Today, when I saw her on the ground, bleeding and beaten, all I wanted to do was keep her safe and kill everyone that had bruised her beautiful skin. I've never felt such a strong protective instinct before. I've never wanted to protect someone so much before. Wasn't it ironic that she was the same woman I wanted to hurt more than anything else? But was that even true? I felt like I was fooling myself from the beginning. I was never being true to my real feelings.

Then I held her naked body next to me, and I didn't feel to have my way with her; all I wanted to do then was make the marks go away. All I wanted to do was make sure that she was safe and healed.

I squeezed the cup in my hand before taking a big gulp; help me forget her, help me forget what it feels like to hold her close and protect her, help me forget how much I want her.

