

Chapter 78

I hold Maya tightly in my arms, but my eyes are glued to Giselle's maid. Her eyes are surprisingly both sad and happy. I couldn't look away. I knew that I should but I couldn't find the strength. I know that she's happy that I've found Maya; she's never tried to turn my mind against my mate, not that she would have been able to even if she'd wanted to do it. However, she cannot hide the hurt in her eyes from seeing me with another woman. She has never really come forward and asked for anything from me, but her actions did show that she had feelings for me. She didn't have to tell me this for me to know the answer.

I can tell that she knows I'm in pain. I've seen that look on her face many times before. She always tried to comfort me whenever I was missing Maya. Even when she didn't know anything about me or my past, she always thought of me as a good person and she kept that opinion even after I told her everything I'd done in the past.

Maya wraps her arms around my neck, and I force myself to look away from the girl. I promised myself that no one else would have my attention after finding Maya. I intended to keep that promise.

There were just a few things that bothered me.

Something felt off about this entire thing. I didn't feel the instant connection that I always felt around Maya. It was almost completely gone, and it worried me. This was not how I remembered feeling around her. But she was still my mate, and I had a duty to love and protect her no matter what was happening to my messed-up heart.

Maybe the witch who had her did something to affect my feelings around her. Her scent that I was so addicted to was barely visible. Giselle's maid had more of Maya's unique scent than Maya did. I wasn't sure if I imagined this or not. I always thought that the girl smelled like Maya because I was making it all up in my head. Now that Maya was in my arms, it didn't feel that way. It made me wonder if the witch used a spell on her to make it impossible for me to find her by blocking her scent. Whatever it is that she did, it was incredibly good. She wasn't an amateur. And that worried me. What else did they do to my mate while I was gone? I was terrified to ask her. I don't think I'll ever be ready for it.

It will only remind me of how much of a failure I was. I'm not sure what any of this means for both of us. I know that I want to stay in her life. I don't want to let her go again. But I'm not sure she will want me back after everything I've done. I am prepared to fight for her, however. No matter what, I will not give up.

The way she held onto me gave me hope. She didn't act like my presence made her sick. At least that was a good sign. However, she can be in shock from everything, and that's probably why her anger for me hasn't resurfaced as yet. Only time will tell. For now, I will enjoy these moments I have with her. Or at least try to enjoy it. The news about my baby has left a scar in my heart. I never got a chance even to say hi, not once. My baby never knew me.

And maybe that was for the best. I would be ashamed to show myself after what I did to Maya.

I tighten my hold around her. "Are you okay?"

"I am now that you are here." She tells me.

I'm surprised to hear her say that, but I'm also happy. Another sign that she may have possibly forgiven me or at least considered forgiving me for hurting her.

"I think you should give me a chance to hug my sister," Austin tells me. He doesn't look pissed at me anymore, but I can't say that we are friends now either.

"Do you want that?" I ask her.

She looks between Austin and me before nodding. I slowly let her go, and before she could get to her brother, her eyes fell on the maid. Maya pauses and stares at her for a good few seconds. Her reaction to her surprises me. I know they've never met before, but why does Maya look so shocked to see her?

Austin pulls her in for a hug, but she doesn't look relaxed. What could have possibly made her react like that after seeing the girl? It's not like she'll know that something happened between us? Would she?

And was I planning on telling her? Maya was traumatized; I didn't think telling her about the details of my relationship with Giselle's maid would make the situation better. The last thing I wanted to do was make Maya wish to leave me again.

But it's not like I could keep this from her forever either. She deserved to know the truth. I just had to wait until she fully recovered before explaining everything that happened between the two of us.

I wouldn't even know where to begin. Did I tell her that the girl reminded me of her, and that's why I kissed her the first time? Being drunk wasn't an excuse, even though the girl wanted me to believe it was. She was kind-hearted, and that's why she thought that way, but I knew better. I was wrong. Just like I've always been.

"I don't think I know who this woman is," Maya says suddenly as she points at the maid. "Who is she? Why is she here?"

My body goes still as she waits for someone to explain.

"It's a very long story," Gabriella tells her.

I don't think anyone wants to mention to her about Giselle.

"I think I have plenty of time to listen to a story now that my family is with me." She says.

"I don't think that's a good idea." I intervene. "You're tired, and you've been through a lot. We can tell you more about it after you've rested. Let's at least get you home."

I don't know if Maya can sense my hesitation, but she doesn't look happy.

I didn't want her to know that I almost got married to another woman while she was locked up and held captive by a witch.

I didn't want her to think that I was weak. She needed an explanation for why we took so long to rescue her, and she will hear the entire story. But I don't want to tell her now. I don't think the rest of her family wanted her to know that they held a funeral for her either.

Austin looks at me, and I can see that he's thinking the same thing I am. I was the reason they decided to get up and search for her again instead of accepting what the witch had said.

"I want to know." She repeats, drawing our attention back to her. "What are you not telling me?"

