

Chapter 84

~MAYA~

Right next to Kane is the woman that he's told me multiple times before that he's crazy in love with. The woman that is his joy. The same woman that he once told me was too important to him for him to mention her name to someone like me. I still remember how much those words had bothered me. She looks absolutely stunning tonight. She's wearing a short white dress, matching heels, and earrings that shone all the way from where she was standing. Everything about her screams beauty: even if they weren't mates, I'm sure she would have caught Kane's attention or any man that wasn't already taken.

I'm sure thinking about her beauty will not help the jealousy in my heart. I don't want to be jealous, but I am. It wasn't just because it was her; I would be jealous of any woman that had this man's heart. Because since the first day I met him, I've wished that his heart would belong to me.

Maya spots me, and the look she gives me tells me that she isn't happy that I'm here. She stops talking to Kane and focuses on me.

I'm not happy that she is here either. It's clear to see that neither of us likes the other. Kane follows her gaze, and his body turns to stone the moment that his eyes fall on me. I try not to shiver when his gaze takes in my dress; I don't think he's ever seen me this dressed up before. And it's all thanks to Gabriella. I'm not sure what he thinks of it, but I don't want to let it bother me too much.

His eye is back on Maya, realizing that she's still looking at me. He knows that we aren't on good terms, not after the last day we saw each other.

"I don't think Maya was truthful when she told Lucy she would be fine with me coming here," I tell Gabriella, who follows my gaze.

She takes my hand and pulls me towards everyone else, "let's not give her the attention she is seeking for now."

I let Gabriella pull me along until we stopped by Lucy and Isabella. Both women look fabulous, but they always do.

"I love your dresses!" Lucy compliments us.

"And we love both of yours!" I respond.

"There will be a dance in a few minutes," Isabella informs us. "We are allowed to switch partners during each change of song."

"I bet our mates are not happy about that," Eden says as she joins us.

Lucy grins, "a little jealously won't hurt them. Besides, everyone here is family and friends. Nothing for them to get upset about. Everyone here knows that most of us are already taken."

"Don't forget someone next to me," Gabriella says with a wink. "Maybe she can find a partner tonight."

Finding a partner was the last thing on my mind. I already knew that no one could take Kane's place. No matter how hard I may try to accept another man in my life, no one will live up to my high expectations. He was the only one for me, and it just so happened that he was already taken.

"You're right," Lucy agrees with Gabriella. "If there is anyone you're interested in here tonight, don't hesitate to tell us. We can help introduce you to them." She says to me.

I shook my head, "I'm not looking for anyone. I don't think it's wise to find a partner while pregnant."

The only person I would trust is Kane, no one else. He has repeatedly proven that I can trust him, excluding the one time he hurt me. And if I would want a father for my children, again, I would only want it to be him. I knew with all my heart that Kane would be a fantastic father. He had that protective instinct in him. He would protect my children as no other man could. I'm sure of it. But why was I even thinking so far? He could never be the father of my children. I didn't even know who the father was.

"Be sure to let us know if you change your mind," Isabella says.

I'm about to respond when Maya joins us. I look around for Kane, but he is with the men. And he isn't looking in my direction. I was hoping he would have been looking forward to seeing me, but I was wrong. It looks like he was happy that I had left with Gabriella.

"How are you feeling?" Lucy asks Maya.

"A lot better. Kane doesn't give me a chance to be sad; he's constantly finding things for us to do to keep my mind away from the bad stuff that happened to me. I'm lucky I have him." She tells us.

I know I'm stupid for thinking that she's only saying this to get to me, but I can't help but feel that way. It feels like it's directed at me. It's almost like she wants me to know that Kane only cares for her. She doesn't need to remind me; he's said it enough times for me to know this.

It's funny how much her words have changed since the last time I saw her. She seemed to have a problem with Kane back then. Now she claimed that she was happy because of him and even said that she was lucky to have him.

"I do not doubt in my mind after what I saw between the two of you today," Lucy teases her. "I'm sure I interrupted something special."

My heart stopped for a quick second after hearing Lucy's words. Did they already sleep together? Was that what she was implying? It was bad enough that I knew she had him, but to hear that they were moving so fast was hard for me to accept. I knew it was something I would have to get used to eventually, but I didn't want to be a part of a conversation surrounding the details of their relationship.

"The dance is about to start!" Lucy exclaims. "And everyone must take part."

I'm not sure that this is something that I want to do, but Lucy doesn't look like she's going to take no for an answer. The girls are already forcing all the men to join as well. They weren't kidding when they said they wanted every person here to participate.

I'm partnered with someone I've never met before. He introduces himself to me as Miles. And, of course, he's shocked to know that I don't have a name to introduce myself. He probably thinks that I don't want to tell him, and I'm okay with that if it ensures that he doesn't try to pursue me.

The song switches, and the next person I'm partnered with is Arthur. I'm okay with that since Arthur is already like a brother to me. We've spoken a few times since they'd offered their home for me to stay in.

"Are you annoyed that Gabriella is dancing with someone other than you?" I tease as Gabriella grins at us.

He growls, "she sure is enjoying herself. I'll see how she likes it when I get to her tonight."

Before I know it, we're switching again. My eyes widen when I'm practically thrown into Kane's arms.

I didn't once think that I would get the chance to dance with him tonight.

Kane's hand tightens on my waist as he pulls me closer to his body; out of all my dance partners, he's the first to hold me this close. It makes my heart do a little flip-flop, and I want to slap myself for letting him affect me so much.

The playing song happens to be a slow one, and I want to curse at my fate. We are forced to move in a slow-motion along with each other. His hands are warm on my waist, and I can feel the skin tingle where he's touching me.

What's wrong with me? Why couldn't I feel this tingle for a man that wasn't taken? I'm not sure if anyone notices the tension between us, but I can't seem to bring myself to care.

"You're very quiet." Kane finally breaks the silence between us.

"Am I?" I ask, feigning ignorance. "I haven't noticed."

His jaw clenches, and he brings my body closer to his, "is there something you want to say to me?"

I take a deep breath, "am I allowed to say anything? It seems like my opinion on anything important is a problem for you. I'll rather not say anything to avoid your wrath. I don't want a replay of what happened the last time I saw you. Speaking up in your favor is apparently frowned upon."

Kane's hand travels up my back and pushes me so close that my chest is pressed against his; he leans down so that his lips are close to my ear, "it's not frowned upon. I understood why you spoke up, but I don't think you realize how much your words could have hurt Maya. After everything she's been through, don't you think that was a bit too rough on her?"

I pull back to look at him, "And what about you? Are your feelings not important? You're so concerned about hurting her that you don't care that her words were hurting you. I'm sorry if my words offended her or you, but unlike everyone else in the room, I couldn't stand back and let her continue to hurt you. If she's your mate, shouldn't she not want to hurt you?"

He sighs, "my relationship with Maya is complicated. Our past continues to push us apart. And that's my fault. It's why I don't blame Maya for anything. It's because I know I'm the reason why things are how they are right now."

"When are you going to stop blaming yourself for everything bad that happens in your life?" I ask him.

Since I've met him, that's all he's ever done. He always believes that he's at fault.

He's about to say something when the song changes. It's time for us to change partners, but I know in my heart that I don't want to. I've missed being this close to him, and it may be the only form of physical contact that I can get since Maya was back in his life.

"I don't want to switch," I whisper, hating myself more for admitting this to him. "I barely know anyone. You're the only one I'm this comfortable with."

A muscle ticks in his jaw as he stares at me; I'm unsure what he's thinking. Is he upset that I've told him how I really felt about it?

The next guy in line to dance with me taps on his shoulder, and Kane gives him one of the deadliest glares I've ever seen in my entire life. The man quirks a brow, "if you didn't want to switch, you could have just said so." He says as he leaves us alone.

I look up at him in awe, surprised that he just did that for me, "thank you."

He nods, but I can sense that he's having a battle within himself, "how has it been living with Gabriella? Are they treating you good?"

I'm surprised that he's concerned about how they're treating me.

"Gabriella is one of the nicest women I've met in my life. Of course, she's nothing like Giselle. Both her and Arthur always make sure that I'm happy and comfortable." I answer him.

I wish I had the proof to show him that Gabriella was his sister. I knew how much she would want for him to see the truth.

Kane's hand travels back down to my waist, and I gasp with the rush of emotions that soon follow. It feels so good having his hands on my body again. And I desperately want more. I know that this would never be enough. I'll always want more of him even though I know he's off-limits.

"You know more than anyone else that I've always wanted you to be happy," I whisper. "Seeing you with Giselle always made me sad because I knew that she was the last person you wanted to be with. I know how much you've wanted Maya back in your life, and you finally got your wish. But I've noticed that you haven't been as happy as you should be now that you have her. What's wrong? Why aren't you happy?"

I don't know if it's my place to ask him this question, but it's been bothering me. I can tell when he isn't happy, and he is far from happy now.

"Hey," Gabriella interrupts us. "Can I speak to you in private?"

Kane's hand tightens around me like he doesn't want to let me go.

"Now!" Gabriella pressed.

I look between Kane and her before nodding and following after her. She doesn't stop until she's found a quiet place for us to talk. After checking that no one was around, she turned to me. "What the hell are you thinking?"

I frown, "did I do something wrong?"

She holds her head in frustration, "did you not see what you and Kane were doing in the middle of the dance floor? I could swear that the two of you wanted to be on top of each other with how close you were dancing. Nothing could possibly pass between you two. I don't know if you've realized, but he has a mate. Honestly, what is truly going on between you and my brother? And I don't want any excuses. I want to know the truth. What I saw out there didn't look like two friends talking. I also saw him practically glare at some guy who wanted to dance with you. That's not how the game goes; you're supposed to switch partners between songs. But you already know that since you were switching before he came around. What's baffling me the most about this entire thing is that he's already a bonded man. He has a mate who he can't live without. He's not supposed to be looking at another woman as though he wants to eat her alive. And believe me, that's precisely how he was looking at you. I consider you like a sister; I would appreciate it if you could tell me the truth and not lie to me. Something is not right at all. I don't know if either of you even realized what you were doing. You're lucky I was the first to see and no one else. If Maya's brothers had seen what I just did, there would be an uproar inside there right now, and I don't think I would have been able to stop them from hurting him this time."

I was not sure how to respond to Gabriella when I barely knew what was happening between us, but I knew that I couldn't lie to her; if I wanted our relationship to continue to be as good as it was, I had to be honest with her like she was honest with me.

"I promise to tell you everything," I assure her. "But not here. They are too many people here, and it's a long story. When we return home, I'll tell you every detail without leaving anything out."

She sighs, "okay. You both nearly gave me a heart attack after what I just saw. It's like you aren't careful around each other."

I swallow; how bad must it have looked to her for her to react this way? It was true that I did get lost and forgot about everything else whenever I was next to Kane. It happened so often that I was surprised that it took Giselle so long to catch us. And still, she never saw us while we were being physical. She only caught us alone together, and it was enough for her to try and kill me.

Somehow or the other, I always got so caught up in Kane that I forgot that there were people around us.

"I'm sorry," I apologize. "Thank you for stopping us before something serious happened tonight."

She nods, "I care about you both. Of course, I wouldn't just stand back and watch you two do something that could hurt you both. Now let's get back to the party before someone hears this conversation."

When Gabriella and I return to the party, I'm both devastated and shocked to see Kane now dancing with Maya. She's laughing and kissing his cheek, breaking my heart into two.

Just a few minutes ago, I was the one next to him. I was the one he had his hands on. Now I had no choice but to watch him with the woman he wanted.

I don't know why I always did this to myself.

"We just spoke about this," Gabriella whispers. "You're not exactly hiding your emotions well. I can see straight through you, and if I can, everyone here can as well."

I bite my lip to keep from screaming in frustration. This is so hard. How can I hide my feelings? I couldn't do that! It just wasn't possible. I know that Gabriella is trying to protect me, but I don't know how to keep my emotions in check.

"I think we should leave now," I tell her. "I don't want to see any more of this. And it will give me the chance to explain everything to you."

Gabriella looks at me for a few seconds, and she finally seems to realize that I was telling the truth. And I was. The more I had to stand here and see Kane with Maya, the more my heart would break, and I might do something stupid that would cause problems for all of us.

She walks over to Arthur and tells him that it was time for us to leave. He looks surprised, but he doesn't try and stop her.

"You're leaving so soon?" Lucy pouts. "There are so many other activities I had lined up for us."

"I'm sorry, Lucy, but I don't feel well. You know how it is when you're pregnant. It's not something you can control," Gabriella apologizes.

Lucy gives her a sympathetic smile, "I understand. Been there and don't want to have to go through it again. At least not anytime soon. We can plan a different day and have the activities done on that day instead. Go home and rest."

Gabriella thanks her, and we both say goodbye once more to everyone.

I can feel Kane's eyes on me as I leave the room. Even though Maya's in his arms right now, he doesn't take his gaze off me, and for some reason, it makes my body overjoyed. I'm happy that he's noticed me tonight. I'm happy that, for once, I'm the center of his attention. At least for a few seconds before it goes back to her.

As soon as we're near the vehicle, Gabriella doesn't even bother going to the front with Arthur; she jumps into the back seat with me as well.

"You have some explaining to do," She says.

I thought we were waiting until we got home?

"We have time now," Gabriella says as though reading my mind.

I guess it was time for her to know the truth.