

Chapter 97

"Are you ready?" Arthur asks us.

I don't think either of us was ready for this. We weren't even sure that we would be able to find anything that would be useful to us. Kane's fake father would have wanted to hide all the evidence that proved Kane wasn't his son. It's crazy that Kane had a family that was alive, and he didn't even know. And now we would fight until we found the evidence we needed to show him the truth.

I exit the vehicle with Gabriella, and Arthur checks around to ensure we are the only ones here. We weren't sure if this place was truly abandoned. And we were trying to make this trip as successful as possible without anyone ruining it for us.

He returns a few minutes later, "everything looks clear. It doesn't look like there is anyone around. It's safe for us to go in."

The first thing I noticed when stepping into the house was that it was definitely not a little one. Apparently, Kane's father had enough money to build a nice home.

"Kane's father was rich?" I ask. "I didn't mean to say his father. I meant to say his imposter father," I added after the look Gabriella gave me.

"Rich because of the number of people he'd stolen from. We already know he wasn't the best person in the world. And neither was his daughter, putting Austin under a spell, making him think he was in love with her, plotting to kill Lucy, and trying to wipe out Austin and James's packs; those two caused too many problems. It's why they are dead now. They made too many people suffer."

Hearing these things from Arthur and knowing the story from Kane, I can see why there is so much tension between him and Maya. They were never meant to be together, with so many things tearing them apart. It would be too much for anyone to handle. If I weren't in love with Kane, I would have been amazed by their passion. Despite what went on with their families, they still found a way to love each other.

I wish I didn't have to stand in the way of that. I wish I didn't have to love him as I did. I wish the connection weren't there since the first day I met him.

I take another look at the house.

I could tell that we would be in here searching for a long while.

"I'll take the upstairs," Arthur tells us. "You two can search here."

"What exactly are we looking for?" I ask Gabriella.

She shows me the locket on her neck, "something like this. According to my parents, Kane also had one when he was taken on that dreadful day. I'm not sure what Eric did to it. It would make sense to get rid of it; he didn't want anyone to know that Kane was not his son. And I'm sure he wanted to make sure that Kane was the last one to find everything out. I don't know the full story of my parents. There are things they've still kept from me. They seem to have many enemies they've kept from me for my benefit. From the little I know after speaking to my other siblings, I don't think Eric was one of them, which would mean he was helping out a friend to do their dirty work."

"Something that small may take forever to find," I point out. "And it's just the three of us."

"In that case," Arthur says. "We should all stop talking and start searching before we get company. I'm still not so sure that this place is entirely abandoned. There could be enemies lurking around. I'll be happy if we can finish up here and get out before we can be spotted."

He was right. We needed to find the proof to show that Kane was Gabriella's brother, and after that, we had to get away from here. Something about this place gave me the creeps. And after learning how horrible Kane's father was, I didn't want to be here for long. There is no telling how many of his followers were still alive and looking for a chance to cause trouble.

Arthur makes his way upstairs like he said he would, leaving Gabriella and me here.

We started looking through drawers on any desk that we could spot. There weren't that many to search through. There was nothing in those things that could help prove that Kane wasn't Eric's son. There were a few pictures with the three of them together; none were baby pictures or when they were children. They were all when they were already grown up. It wasn't hard to see that the girl in the photo was Eric's daughter. And she looked nothing like Kane. They could argue that Kane looked like his mother, who, surprisingly, there isn't a single picture of. However, how would they explain the resemblance between Kane and Gabriella? And I'm sure Gabriella looks like her parents, which would mean that Kane did also.

If we couldn't find proof today, we would have to use their resemblance to get others to believe us. I'm not sure if it will work, but it's worth trying. I think it will be easier to get the others to accept us than it will be to get Kane to agree. The only ample proof we had was that they were both hybrids: half-vampire, half-werewolf.

Gabriella pulls at her hair in frustration, "none of these pictures. None of these papers. Nothing here is helping my situation. I want nothing more than to tell Kane the truth. I want to embrace him and show him that he isn't alone. But I can't do that without proof. I've been trying to find it, and just like today, there is nothing that is helping my situation!"

I rush to comfort her, "this is far from over. Arthur is still searching upstairs. We know that if there is any proof, Eric would not have left it out in the open for all of us to find it. We just need to keep searching. I'm sure that it is here somewhere. From what you've told me about this man, I believe that there is a chance that he wouldn't have gotten rid of everything that could prove that Kane was your brother. I believe that he would have kept it to use against your family one day. If he was still alive, I'm sure that he would have done it."

Gabriella sighs, and I can see that my words have helped, "you're right. I can't give up now. We're close to finding what we need."

"How about we join Arthur?" I ask her. "Let's see if he has more luck than us."

She nods, "I hope that's true."

"I can save you the trouble of walking up those stairs to meet me." He tells us as he walks towards us. "There is nothing upstairs as well. Eric hid the evidence well, just like we knew he would."

"We know it can't be out in the open," I say. "Then there is something that we must be missing. There has to be a hidden door or something. Somewhere that he kept all his important stuff."

"She's right," Arthur says as he begins checking the wall for any sign of a hidden door.

We do the same as him, but again, we find nothing that can help us. I hate seeing Gabriella this upset. I'm used to her calm and cheerful nature.

I sigh and try to look around some more. I didn't want to leave this place until we found what we were searching for. I refused to let this go without spotting the one thing we needed. I had to do this for Kane and also Gabriella. I wanted to help them both; after all, they would have done the same for me.

"Do you notice that?" I ask Gabriella. "That rug seems out of place. Like it doesn't belong there."

She follows my gaze.

"Like it's hiding something." She says to me.

Arthur removes it, and we all pause at what we see next.

The secret door we were hoping to find.

"A basement," Gabriella whispers.

Arthur pounds on the lock until it's broken and opens the door wide for us to climb down. I'm hoping there isn't anything like a pile of dead bodies down there. It wouldn't be surprising from the man's awful past and the things he's done to people.

"No dead bodies so far," I say thankfully as I get my first look at my surroundings.

"It looks like where he planned all his attacks," Arthur says as he watches the board in front of us. "The last thing here is the plan he plotted to get rid of Austin's family. The plan that failed big time."

"That plan is why we're here." Gabriella mumbles. "He messed up all of our lives in some way. Kane wouldn't have had to suffer like this if he wasn't in the plan."

"Should we start searching?" I ask her. "We need to get out of here soon. We've already stayed for too long."

She nods, "let's search as quickly as we can. We can grab some stuff and take it with us if it becomes too much."

I watch as Arthur and Gabriella search through some more drawers; they're desperate to find that one thing that can give us what we need.

My eyes are suddenly drawn to a painting in front of me. I slowly walk towards it and run my hands over it. I don't know why it caught my attention but I can't seem to look away. I removed it from the wall and continued to stare at the little boy in the painting. Somehow I believe this is what Kane would have looked like at the age of nine.

"What are you doing?" Gabriella says right behind me. Her closeness surprises me, and the painting drops from my hand and smashes to the ground. I gasp as the glass shatters and makes a mess around us.

"At least we don't have to clean that up," Arthur says.

My eyes narrow as something stands out to me. I bend over and pick the cloth up in my hand. It must have been inside the painting. It looks like a baby's blanket.

"Look at the symbol," Arthur says to us.

I did, and I know where I saw it before; on Gabriella's locket. This can only mean one thing. This was the blanket they had wrapped Kane in as a baby. They must have taken it when they'd kidnapped him.

Gabriella takes it from my hand and opens it; we are both shocked when we see the locket wrapped neatly inside.

This was it.

The proof we needed.

Kane was indeed Gabriella's brother. We didn't need anything else to make others believe us. I sigh with relief and turn to Gabriella with a huge grin.

She's smiling too, and Arthur looks happy to see his mate like this.

"I can't believe it," she whispers as she hugs the blanket to her chest. "We finally have it. There is no way that Kane can doubt me now. He must know I'm telling the truth when I say that he is my brother and that I love him with all my heart. We can finally start our sibling bond after losing out on it for our entire lives."

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~KANE~

Maya slams the door loudly as she exits the bathroom. She wasn't speaking to me after what happened today. I'd tried to talk to her multiple times already, but nothing was working. She was pissed with me, and even that was putting it nicely. I couldn't blame her. What I did earlier was unforgivable. Not to mention what I did last night.

If I thought I had to tell Maya about what happened with the girl before, I wasn't sure that was a good idea anymore. Not with the way she was reacting now.

"Please," I beg as I walk towards her. "Just talk to me."

She laughs, "talk to you? Talk to a man that's so weak that he can't find his mate amongst five other women. You weren't even in a crowded place, Kane. It shouldn't have been that hard for you. Your actions embarrassed me in front of everyone. It made me feel like we had the weakest connections out of all the couples present for the game. How do you think that would make me feel?" She demands. "And all of this is no one else's fault but yours. Everything is your fault. You caused this to happen. You made us look bad in front of everyone else. Not me. You're an embarrassment. I can't believe out of everyone else; I'm stuck with you. Lucy's mate found her quite easily. The same with Eden and Isabella. And even though they cheated Arthur, it's quite clear that he also won the challenge. You're the only one that couldn't do it. What happened? Why couldn't you find me? And even if you couldn't find me, why did you choose an entirely different woman? A woman that I don't even like!"

Maya's words were excruciating. I knew that she was angry and had every right to be, but I didn't think that there was ever a chance that she would try to make me feel this bad on purpose. I knew that I was the only one that had failed; I didn't need her to remind me. It was on my mind every second of the f*****g day since it had happened. I didn't help the situation when I ran after Giselle's maid the moment that it happened. I should have stayed and comforted Maya, yet she was the one I had gone after.

Why?

I had no f*****g clue.

Well, I did have a clue. One. She smelled like Maya. More like her than the woman who looked like Maya in front of me. And because of that, I wanted answers. Answers that I was hoping she would be able to give to me. Of course, she didn't have the answer I was seeking. But she made me feel like I was about to combust into flames.

I was never supposed to confess the things I said to her today. They just slipped out, and it felt like I had zero control over my mouth. I was spilling things that I promised to keep inside of me—forbidden feelings and desires that were supposed to be buried and never brought back to life. I went against all of that today. I guess I figured that I couldn't mess up more than I already had. Choosing another woman while my mate watched? I was a f*****g disaster. And it seemed like every day; I found a new way to make life difficult for myself. I couldn't wait to see what my body had planned for tomorrow.

I take a step toward her, and she says, "please don't come near me. I can't stand being close to you after what you did. I want my space, and I think that's best for the both of us right now."

I close my eyes and try to calm myself before opening them back to look at her. At this point, I was forcing myself to feel something for the woman in front of me. It should never be like this. It's never been this way before.

"I'm sorry," I finally whisper. She didn't deserve the things I was doing in front of her and behind her back. "You have every right to be angry with me. What I did earlier is unforgivable. I know this. I'm sorry for being so weak when you need a strong mate, someone who doesn't keep messing up. If you give me a chance, I promise to make it up to you. I promise to work harder to fix what we have. I know there has been a strain in our relationship because of me, and I'm willing to work hard to make things right. The way it should have been since the beginning."

Maya crosses her arms over her chest and narrows her eyes, "I don't think you mean those words. I lost our baby, OUR BABY Kane, and you have done nothing to help me recover. You're continuously worried about another woman. Didn't you think I would realize that she's the one you've been running after since I returned home? Don't you think that I see you staring at her? And you don't think I see how she looks at you? At first, I thought I was crazy for thinking my mate would be so stupid to do things like that in front of me, but after what happened today, I know I'm not mistaken. Something is going on between the two of you, and after everything I've gone through because of you, I'm saddened and disappointed that you would still treat me like shit."

My jaw clenches, and I can't find the words to say to her. Every word that she said was the truth. My attention has been on another woman when it should have never been, not when I found her back. My attention was always supposed to be only on her.

"Maya—"

She stops me from saying anything else, "you can't try and deny it. I'll never believe you. I saw everything with my own eyes. It's time for me to speak. You've done enough; you've said everything you needed to. How would you like it if I did the same thing to you? Would you enjoy seeing me with another man? If they had blindfolded the women, would you have been happy if I had chosen Arthur instead of you? Do you think that's something you would have enjoyed seeing? I've had enough of this. I don't want a mate that treats me like you do. If you don't start acting right, I'm leaving, and you'll never see my face again. Whatever we have will be over. If you still want me in your life, I suggest that you start treating me like your mate and not some random woman you picked up from the street."

The thought of never having Maya in my life again sends my body into instant panic. I don't want to lose her. I don't want to lose my mate before I get the chance to love her the way I should have since the beginning.

I crossed the room and closed the distance between us. She doesn't stop me as I pull her into my arms, "I'll never look another woman's way again. This is my one more chance. I'm sorry for the way I acted. I wish I had another explanation for why I did it, but I'm grateful you're willing to give me one more chance. I'm not going to let you down again. No matter what, I will be the mate that you have needed from the beginning. I promise you, Maya, I will love you the right way. No one will come in the way of that. Not anymore."