

## Chapter 4

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PRECIOUS

"Miss, I was assigned to show you your room." A small voice pulled me out of my reverie, and I shuddered, watching her with wide eyes.

She was dressed like a maid, her black wavy hair standing on end, giving her a slightly disheveled appearance. She looked to be about my age, or slightly older by a year or two.

I offered her a weak smile, "Thank you." I followed her inside, my mouth hanging open in awe at the extravagance of the living room.

It was lavishly furnished to perfection, with plush sofas, gleaming chandeliers, and intricate tapestries that seemed to tell a story. A grand piano stood like a sentinel in the corner, its intricately carved legs gleaming in the soft glow.

The opulence was overwhelming, and I felt like a small, out-of-place creature in a grand, luxurious house.

I was led upstairs, the creaking of the steps echoing through the silence, until the maid suddenly stopped, pushing the door open with a gentle gesture of her right hand. "This is your room, miss. Feel free to call me if you ever need anything," she said, her voice soft and courteous.

Nodding my head, and muttering a thank you to her, she turned and left.

Nothing could have prepared me for the beauty of the room. I shut the door behind me, moving in slow strides, as my eyes took in the room. The walls were adorned with a rich, velvety paint in a deep, soothing blue, reminiscent of a clear summer sky, that seemed to glow in the soft light, while the wardrobe stood tall and proud, its intricately carved doors gleaming with a subtle sheen. At the left corner of the room was a big bed and without wasting time, I fell on it and sighed, content at its softness.

Maybe it wasn't a bad decision to be here after all. It was a far cry to the hard floor I slept on back in the slave house. At least now, my already tired bones would have a good rest after all.

Deciding a long shower would do me good, I rose and made my way to the bathroom, where a serene atmosphere enveloped me. The ash and white decor created a calming ambiance, and the sleek, modern bathtub looked new. I filled it with warm water and dipped my body into it, sighing as the coolness soothed my tired limbs.

By the time I was done, I wore my dirty clothes just as I heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," I said tiredly.

The maid from earlier returned with fresh clothes in her arms, and I heaved a sigh of relief. Noticing my expression, she offered me a small smile.

"Alpha Duke sent me to bring these," she pointed at the clothes with her chin, "He mentioned you'd like a change of clothes and I guess he was right."

My eyes widened at her words. Alpha Duke sent me clothes? Was this the way he treated all their slaves? I had thought his earlier treatment was just to set me at ease at the moment, who could have thought that he would be this generous?

I took the clothes from her, mouthed a thank you, and after she left, I glanced through them and settled on a black short and a blue top.

I tried to stay away from the triplets for the rest of the day, locking myself in my room and looking out the window to keep busy.

I did not want anything that'd bring them towards me, knowing how arrogant they were, or so I thought when the door opened and the boys walked in.

Seeing as Duke was not with them, my breath hitched, fear racing through me at the thought of what I'd do without him now.

They sauntered towards me, Tiger leading them. They stopped only an inch away from where I stood by the window, our breathing the only sound in the room.

Tiger's left hand slammed onto the windowsill, his other hand hovering menacingly above my head. He leaned in, his hot, harsh breath washing over my face as his eyes scoured mine.

"You can't just barge into a lady's room. What do you want?" I demanded, when he failed to explain their sudden appearance.

"I thought I'd make things crystal clear," he sneered, his voice low and threatening. "Our earlier words weren't a bluff, so take them seriously."

I raised an eyebrow, unfazed. "Excuse you? And who cares what you think?" I shot back, my gaze flicking to his brothers before returning to Tiger's seething face.

"You dare talk back to me?" he growled, his eyes flashing with anger. "Do you want a taste of my bad side?"

I shoved him away, but he didn't budge. Undeterred, I ducked under his arm and sidestepped him, creating some much-needed distance between us.

"Precious!" he roared.

Roar, roar, no wonder he was named Tiger!

"Keep screaming that way, and all the occupants would think there's a tiger in this place." I snarled, clenching my hands into tight fists as he held my gaze.

His brothers chuckled but I didn't spare them a glance.

If they found this scenario amusing, I deemed them utterly unentertaining.

Tiger closed the gap between us, his eyes blazing with intensity. Despite my mind screaming at me to step back, my legs seemed rooted to the ground. He reached out and grasped my jaw, his grip strong and unyielding, his fingers digging into my skin like a vice. "Never you raise your voice at me again, if you still want to wake up alive. Look at you, making jest of your alpha when all you are and will always remain is a slave!" he sneered, his spittle landing on my face like a vile insult.

Tears blurred my vision and they soon fell down my face. I was hurting but my strength did not match his.

"You should be grateful to be in a room like this. Slaves of your kind are usually kept in the attic, hidden from sight!"

Richmond sneered as he walked towards us. The animosity in his eyes made me gulp down in fear, and I quickly averted my eyes.

Tiger shoved me, and my back landed on the floor. The four brothers hovered around me, and Nate chuckled just as Richmond kicked me. Hard.

"Stay out of our way if you want to last here, or I'd make sure I strangle you myself." he kicked me again, and I moved backwards to avoid another kick.

With that the brothers left me alone, and I stayed sprawled on the floor, mourning my pathetic life.

I was already beginning to think it was better if I had chosen Alpha Rodriguez's choice, then maybe, I wouldn't have been experiencing all these.

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"Hey, prishy baby." A voice called, accompanied by a soft knock on the door.

I groaned, still smarting from my earlier run-ins with the alphas.

When I didn't respond, the door swung open and Duke walked in, a warm smile spreading across his face. I sighed, unaccustomed to such kindness, but I still managed a smile of my own.

"How are you feeling?" His voice was laced with concern, and he sat down at the foot of the bed. "Father sent me to shop for you, here," he handed me a small bag that I did not notice earlier.

"You didn't have to."

"Sure enough, but I needed to." He smirked, and I couldn't help but smile. He stood up and heaved a sigh. "This was all I could get, but don't worry, we'd go shopping together when you are up for it."

"Oh—"

He smirked, then suddenly turned serious. "I want you to know that my brothers didn't mean what they said to you earlier. They..." he sighed, and I raised an eyebrow, "Are just hurt at the way our Dad spends so much money."

"I see."

Duke bobbed his head up and down, "Yes, Precious. They really didn't mean to be harsh on you."

I didn't know what to say, so we remained in silence. But I was thankful for the quiet time, which helped me think clearly and choose my words carefully, so I wouldn't accidentally make him feel even more guilty.

"Thank you, Duke. You didn't have to apologize on their behalf, I totally understand them." I finally said, offering him a small smile that didn't reach my eyes.

He beamed. "Well, in that regard, dinner will be served in a few minutes. Please come down and have dinner with us."

The word 'no' trembled on the edge of my lips, but I swallowed my refusal, unable to bring myself to disappoint someone as courteous as him. How could I possibly refuse him, when he was being so kind and considerate?

"Sure, is the Alpha back?" I asked with hope. With their father around, his brothers wouldn't be able to hurt me.

Duke shook his head. "I'm afraid, no."

Panic gripped me, but I forced a chuckle to hide my unease. "Well, in that case, I'll have to decline."

Duke's mouth opened, ready to protest, but he snapped it shut, seemingly thinking better of it. After promising to bring me dinner, he left me alone once again.

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The metallic scent of blood hung heavy in the air, and the lifeless bodies of our pack members lay strewn about.

"Run away from here, my dear," my mom urged, her voice laced with panic. "Run and hide, so they can never catch you!"

But I stood firm, defiance burning within me. "No, Mom, I won't do that. I won't live the life of a coward who fled when her family and pack members were being slaughtered!"

The last look on my father's face, frozen in shock as his head tumbled from his body, wrenched a blood-curdling scream from my lips.

My heart lurched in my throat, my right hand flying to my chest, as I fought hard to control my racing nerves.

I looked around, noticing I was in a different place - not our pack house, but a strange room I didn't recognize.

Memories of how I came to be in this room suddenly flashed in my mind, and I instantly flung the duvet wrapped around me, my mind reeling with the horror of it all.

Calm down.

I kept repeating those words in my head, afraid that if I'd stop, I would break down.

It's going to be alright.

Except it's not going to be.

Nothing would ever remain the same. I had been sold to a ruthless alpha, whose sons had made it clear how much they despised me.

Their cold, unforgiving faces kept appearing in my mind until I started drifting off to sleep, haunted by the memories of my past and the uncertainty of my future.

## Comments (7)