

Chapter 29

Abbie

AN HOUR EARLIER

The time finally comes for me to leave, and I am waiting out front of the castle, sitting on the steps. A small bag sits between my feet that Clarice has made up for me, so I have a few things to take with me until Kade organizes for more clothes. As the car pulls in, I jump to my feet and rush over to him. The bond tugs me to my mate, and I am ecstatic that Ivy can come with us. That I will eventually get Tyson back. Today is a good day, everything's coming together, though I will miss this place. Miss Gannon and Clarice, but Kade promises I can visit whenever I want.

I smack into his chest the moment he gets out of the car, and he wraps his arms around me, burying his face in my hair before pecking my lips softly.

“Get in the car, my love. We need to head home,” Kade whispers, cupping my face in his hands. Peering around, I try to find Gannon but can’t see him. So instead I turn to the king and give a quick bow to him. Surprisingly, Damian gives me a brief hug before I glance again. He was just here seconds ago. Where did he go?

“Where did Gannon go?” I ask, a little disappointed. Alpha Kade grips my shoulder, turning me toward the car.

“You said goodbye to your friend?” he asks me, and I look up at him, nodding. He inclines his head toward the car, and I slowly walk back to it before climbing into the passenger seat and clipping in my belt. Kade shuts my door, and I watch as he talks to the king, my hands sweat and I wipe them on my pants.

After a few minutes, he climbs into the car, starting it. I wave to the king and those waiting. The king stiffly waves back, and I peer up at Kade. “The king looks angry,” I tell him.

“Probably busy,” is all Kade offers. We drive to the bridge where we are supposed to meet Ivy, yet as time slips on, and the closer it nears to 7 PM, the more nervous I get. I pace along the walkway, looking to the path below. Once 7 PM comes and goes, I hear howls fill the sky, and Kade gasps.

Nervously I look at Kade. “I don’t think she is coming, love, she must have changed her mind.”

I shake my head, knowing she wouldn’t have.

“No. She’ll be here,” I tell him, pacing again.

“Abbie!”

“No, she will be here,” I tell him, and he growls behind me. I peer over my shoulder at Kade, and he presses his lips in a line.

“The king knows of her plans. The gardener told him when he heard you speaking,” Kade tells me. But the gardener wasn’t there to listen.

“Abbie, don’t make me do this, I don’t want to hurt you, but we need to leave. Kyson will come for me when he finds out I was in on it.”

“How do you know about the gardener?” I question.

“One of the guards sent me a message just now,” he says, coming over playing with his phone. He shows me the screen.

“You know I can’t read, do the voice to text thingy,” I tell him.

“My phone doesn’t have that feature,” he tells me.

“No, we need to wait. She will come. I know she will,” I tell him.

“Abbie, get in the car,” he repeats, and I shake my head.

“Just go,” I tell him, waving him off and turning toward the steep incline to go look for her when I feel his aura slip out and wash over me.

“Stop this nonsense and get in the fucking car! You are testing my patience. Now!” he bellows the order, and I whimper as I try to fight his command, but my feet carry me to the car with frighteningly quick steps.

Kade growls, slamming my door before I barely get my legs in. I sit there, shaking at his command. He climbs into the car and starts it before he sighs heavily.

“The king is mad at me. You don’t want me hurt, do you? What would the Moon Goddess think if you got your mate killed, all because you foolishly wanted to wait?” he asks.

“What if she tripped or something? What if she’s hurt?” I ask, worriedly.

He puts the car in drive, and it starts moving. I reach for the door handle, but Kade’s hand drops on my thigh, his nails digging in.

“Do you not love me? Did you not hear what I said about the king looking for me?” he growls before once again his aura slips out. “Sit there and be quiet! Think about the consequences if the king finds me. Imagine all the ways he could hurt me,” he orders, and I blink.

My mind is overpowered and does everything he asks. For hours, I imagine possible torture scenarios, my bond aching and cringing when finally he squeezes my fingers.

“I dropped my command. I’m sorry, love. I shouldn’t have commanded you,” he tells me, and I peer out the window, feeling sick. If only he knew how tortured my mind already was

and then he does that. Forces me to envision his death while my bond tugs painfully in my chest. The guilt forms an endless pit in my stomach.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper.

“That’s okay. You are forgiven. I bet you’re hungry. There is a truck stop ahead.” At the mention of food, my belly rumbles. He pulls in and there is a small diner. Stepping inside, we take our seats and Kade orders for us. But when the food comes out, I stare at the measly plate.

“You need to watch your figure. Can’t have a fat Luna,” he says as I stare down at the bowl of lettuce. “Lucky, I am here to look out for you. I’ll make a Luna of you,” he says. I look at his eggs and bacon, but not wanting to sound ungrateful, I tuck in. My belly rumbles after we finish eating and climb in the car. I am still very hungry, and I pinch my shirt that is far too loose, wondering if I am overweight. Surely, someone would have told me? Maybe not, but I don’t think I am. I’ve never had enough to eat, and I’ve always thought I looked sickeningly skinny, with the way my hip bones jut out and my ribs show.

The drive takes hours, and I reach into the backseat to retrieve my bag, pulling my phone out. I have multiple text messages from Gannon. Yet something tells me not to listen to them in

the car. Kade makes it very clear about his dislike for Gannon and Liam, and I don't feel like arguing with him over any message he sent.

So I tuck the phone back in the bag when my fingers touch a wrapper. Excitement bubbles in me and I pull the bag of candy clouds out. I open it and pop three in my mouth while reaching for the dial on the radio. Only Kade slaps my hand.

He had never done that before. He always let me choose the station when in his car. "I'm listening to that! What has gotten into you? You're acting out of sorts!" he snaps, glancing at me.

Am I acting out of sorts? Is it me? Why do I suddenly feel so uncomfortable in his presence? It's like all the warmth and safety have melted away. Guilt smashes me for even thinking I was uncomfortable. The Moon Goddess would strike me down for my terrible thoughts about my mate. A gift she bestowed me.

"What have you got?" Kade asks when I pop another candy in my mouth. I show him the bag, offering him some.

"Strawberry clouds, do you want one? They are..."

He rips the bag out of my hand.

“I knew you were acting up! For fuck’s sake, you shouldn’t eat candy. The sugar goes to your head.” He winds the window down, tossing the bag before I can try to grab it. “You’re so talkative and loud whenever you eat that shit he gives you!” he snaps and I shrink in my chair.

“Seriously, Abbie, think of your health. And my sanity. It drives me up the wall when you’re blubbering and bouncing on your feet!” he scolds.

He never complained before, and Gannon never said I talk too much. That sinking feeling returns, and I turn my gaze out the window.

Wiping a stray tear with my fingers. “You’re not seriously crying over candy?” he huffs, and I feel myself slip into a mask I had learned at a young age. A mask Mrs. Daley earned from us. One of emptiness. Tears won’t help you, no, they would get us beat back at the orphanage. Kade mutters something under his breath.

I turn my thoughts inward, blocking out the world and everyone in it. Going to a place no one can touch me. Going to a place I only visit in my dreams. Grandma's house. Where my childhood was good before it all got taken away from me when we had to go on the run.