

Chapter 32

ABBIE

My feet ache from running, my muscles protesting, and my lungs burning. I want nothing more than to collapse onto the cold concrete beneath me, to catch my breath and rest my weary body. But I can't stop, not when I know my window of opportunity is small. I have no idea if I am even running in the right direction or how far the town is, making decisions at each corner harder.

I run blindly through deserted streets, ignoring the pain and exhaustion. My heart races, fear and adrenaline pumping through my veins. The fact I can't read any of the signs makes it even harder. Yet still, I run, praying Ivy is on her way to me. I pray she picked up on my subtle message; hope is all I have, especially once the howls ring clearly through the sky.

His voice booms into the mindlink, hurting my brain, demanding I return home. When the screams and threats don't work, he tones it down. When that doesn't work, he yells again.

“You tell me your whereabouts, love, I will come get you. You stop at anyone’s door and hand yourself in, and we can go home and put this behind us,” he tells me, and I wonder if he actually thinks I’m stupid enough to believe him.

“Fucking whore! When I find you, I will make sure you can never run from me again!” he snarls angrily after a few minutes. Then back to the coaxing in gentle tones, only for his true colors to shine through once again.

By the time I am out of the town and on a long stretch of road, my feet are bleeding, my shirt is drenched with blood, and I am limping worse than when I started. My hand presses firmly against my side as I try to stem the bleeding. Hope comes in the form of a service station. Its light is a burning beacon in the night, and I pick up my pace, nearly there, but I’m not oblivious to how the howls grow closer, and the sound of revving engines of cars tear up the town behind me, heading my way.

The neon lights of the service station sign illuminate the dark night, casting an eerie glow on the deserted pumps and flickering windows.

Reaching the service station. I burst through the door of the run-down little building, panting heavily and my heart beating a million miles an hour. The man behind the counter jumps at the sudden commotion, his eyes widening in shock as he takes in my bloodied appearance.

“Ma’am?” he stammers, stepping back as I move toward him.

“Someone is after me! I need your phone!” I gush, desperation and fear evident in my voice. I frantically scan the area outside through the windows, expecting to see my mate hot on my trail.

The man seems stunned before shaking his head and looking for his phone.

“I have a first aid kit,” he tells me after passing the phone. He asks questions and unlocks the door while peering out. I reach into my pockets to find the piece of paper with the number on it that Alana had given me while trying to answer his questions. My hands shake as I punch the number into the corded phone to call Ivy. When the phone starts calling, I hold it to my ear.

“Pick up. Pick up,” I whisper, not realizing the call has already connected.

“Abbie?” she asks.

“There should be a microphone picture. Press it so I can hear,” Dustin says in the background; it sounds like they are in a car.

“Are you there?” I ask while glancing around the windows.

“Yes, can you hear me?” Ivy asks, the phone volume turning a little static and crackling.

A sob escapes me. “Ivy! Oh please, thank God!” I gasp.

“I’m right here,” Ivy tells me. And I can’t seem to get myself together enough to speak.

“Did she answer?” the man from the service station asks.

“She answered,” I tell him, peeking over at him as he watches out the window.

“Thank you so much,” I quickly tell him before listening to the static through the phone.

“Are you there still?” I ask.

“Yes, I am. I am...” The phone crackles before the phone drops out of reception. I curse and call again. It immediately starts ringing again, and Ivy answers it.

“Abbie?” she asks.

“Listen, I need you to come to get me. I was wrong about Kade, Ivy. Send Gannon. Please! I want to come home! I am...” she falls silent. “I don’t know where I am. I can’t read the sign. I am... Where am I?” I ask, turning to the service station manager.

“Metro service station. It is in Langley,” he tells me.

“Metro Service station in Langley. Abbie is there!” Ivy tells Dustin, obviously hearing him in the background.

“Are you okay, Abbie? We are nearly there,” Ivy tells me, and I sigh.

“You have to be quick. I know he already knows I ran. Wait, you are nearly here?” I ask.

“You never said it back,” Ivy tells me, and I break down sobbing into the phone. She knew something was wrong. I hoped she picked up on it during the call. Immense relief floods me.

“I thought you didn’t figure it out!” I choke, wiping my eyes on the back of my hand, and the phone goes grainy again.

“You always say it back,” she tells me, and I nod.

“What sort of car did you say your boyfriend drives?” the man asks beside me when a car pulls into the service station. Kade’s car. I gasp. “A black one,” I murmur when I see him climb out of his car, and I duck before I hear a bell chime as the door opens.

“Get down behind the counter,” the man says, and I hold my breath, dropping to sit and lean against the counter, with the phone still clutched to my ear.

“He found me! Hurry!” I whisper into the phone. I hear the service station attendant speak above me and glance at him.

“Can I help you, sir?” he asks before I hear Kade’s voice.

“I’m looking for a girl. Abbie, come out. This human won’t save you from me!” Kade’s voice growls, and I flinch at his tone.

“Sir, I have not seen a girl,” the man says.

“I can smell her. Now come out, Abbie, before I kill this man!” Kade’s menacing growl threatens.

I swallow, and my skin prickles with goosebumps as his footsteps grow closer. The man is suddenly grabbed by the collar of his shirt and ripped over the top of the counter. I scream, jumping to my feet in time to see Kade snap the man’s neck.

His eyes dart to mine, and I drop the phone. I race toward the rear of the building, where the man had gone to retrieve the first aid kit. Kade snarls and gives chase, and I find a door. My palms hit hard, and it bursts open. Once outside, I peer around briefly before taking off across the road toward the mountain to hide in the forest.

“Abbie!” Kade snarls, and adrenaline pumps through my veins, dulling all my pain as I run for my life. The howls grow louder in the distance as his pack closes in. I slip on the loose dirt and twigs as I force my body to climb the mountain, only to be tackled. Kade’s fist slams into the back of my head before my side, making me wheeze, and I feel my ribs crack. My scream is deafening and hurts my ears.

“Think you can run from me! Who were you on the phone to?” he says, ripping me backward by my hair.

“Fuck you!” I spit at him just as I hear a loud crash, like a car accident coming from above. I kick and thrash while screaming for help.

A furious growl tears out of Kade, and he tosses me into a nearby tree. Pain washed over me as all the air leaves my body. I get to my hands and knees, only for him to grab my hair.

“Ivy!” I scream out clearly through the forest, praying she can hear me, when he starts dragging me down the mountainside with my flailing and thrashing.

Kade hauls me out, down the hill, and onto the grassy patch. I escape his clutches and begin running again when his body hits mine from behind, and he pins me to the grass of the small meadow at the bottom of the mountain.

My gaze tries desperately to scan my surroundings, my vision attempting to correct itself. But everything looks extremely fuzzing except the neon sign, which blinks frantically. All I can hear is the static noise emanating from it. The service station is about 300 yards from me and across the road. I scream when Kade starts ripping me backward from the woods. Kicking and screaming, I thrash around, trying to loosen his grip, begging him to let me go. Those pleas fall on deaf ears, however. Kade ignores me and rips me out of the tree line again.