

Chapter 13

"Good evening Alpha," The three chorus, smiling from ear to ear when Tatum breaks the hug.

"I didn't hear you greet the Luna."

Tatum's voice is cold and with a command, his eyes flashing red, a sign his wolf is also agitated.

"Good evening Luna."

The three quickly bare their necks to Leila, feeling terrified by their Alpha's dominating aura.

"Evening ladies," Leila replies passively, grabbing her glass of juice and looking mindlessly away, knowing Tatum's full attention will be turned to Carmela. She may just as well pretend to be a ghost at the table.

"Can we sit with you Alpha?" Tracy eagerly says, smiling down at Tatum.

A deep growl from inside Tatum's throat is the response she gets and Carmela quickly pulls her back, smiling at Tatum.

"Forgive her Alpha, we'll take another table," she says, leading her group to the table behind Leila and Tatum.

"The Alpha was going to allow us to sit with him, you shouldn't have pulled us away," Philomena says the moment they sit down, frowning at Carmela.

"It's inappropriate. He's obviously having a date with the Luna, we

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should show some respect," Carmela answers in a curt voice, the corner of her eyes glancing at Leila who is ordering from a waitress.

Tracy scoffs. "You amaze me Carmi, I could never have your patience. If it were me, I would have taken what is rightfully mine the moment I got back."

"Perhaps Carmi is trying to be the patient dog or in this case, a wolf but the patient dog no longer gets the fattest bone, it starves to death and we are not going to let that happen," Philomena adds curtly.

"Stop it," Carmela's voice instantly turns cold, seeing how Leila's eyes are unable to peel away from them. "I already told you all, I have no intentions to do that."

"Say what you want but the choice really isn't yours to make, the Alpha loves you and now we are counting the days till he declares his intention. My father is an elder on the council, he tells me what they talk about. I'm telling you Carmi, her days are numbered."

Edna looks straight at Leila and catches her eyes. She sneers and looks away but Leila smiles bitterly at them, hearing all that they have said.

She looks at Tatum and stares down blankly at the meal she ordered. If the council are already talking about replacing her with Carmela, then there is nothing even he can do, not like he will do anything, Carmela is the true luna, the one born with the mark of the phoenix as prophesied by the oracle decades before even Tatum was born and she's just a wolfless friend that Tatum had pity on, Edna is right, her days are numbered.

"You don't like the food?" Tatum asks, noticing her stare. 1



"I'll pack it for take out, I want to go home," Leila replies, making a wry face.

Tatum drops his cutlery and leans back into his seat, heaving a sigh.

"What is it?"

"Nothing."

"Alright."

Tatum snaps his finger and a waiter appears immediately.

"Send the meals to my home. Lets go," he says to the guy and Leila simultaneously.

Suddenly, Carmela screams, jumping from the chair and pointing to the entrance, crawling back on her butt and hitting her friends as they try to touch her.

Before Leila can even turn to look, Tatum is already beside Carmela, helping her to her feet and hugging her tight.

Leila feels a pang in her heart at how quickly Tatum reacts to the whims of Carmela but her pain is replaced by guilt at how selfish she is being. Carmela is traumatised because she saved her, so she pushes her pain away and allows the guilt to move her feet towards them.

"I saw a man in a hoodie outside, he was pointing to me. I'm scared" Carmela says, holding Tatum real tight like she would die if she let go.

"A man?" Tatum says and his eyes glow, showing he is mindlinking someone to look into it.

"This is all her fault," Edna glares at Leila.

"Now Carmi will be traumatised for life, all because she saved someone worthless," Tracy adds.

"You shouldn't pretend like you care and stand here. We all know you don't wish her well, after all you stole her life," Philomena says with a mean scowl.

Leila bites back her words, feeling a sharp stab to her heart but it is not the bitter words of these women that causes her pain, no, she has become immune to it after so long, it is the way Tatum doesn't seem to care, it is the worried look of affection in his eyes as he soothes Carmela.

It is like she can see them in painfully slow motion and every movement of care and word of comfort that Tatum gives to Carmela burns her heart deep with an incurable pain and sense of loss.

The scolding of the other women gets louder and more abusive and Leila can hear them speak but their words are drowned out, like white noise in her ear as she watches Tatum pick Carmela up bridal style and Carmela gently cradles into his chest, throwing her hands around his neck.

Tatum brushes past her, not even sparing her a look or at the very least, a word to acknowledge her.

Does she even exist to Tatum when Carmela is around?



Leila slowly walks back to their table and grabs her bag. She makes a beeline to the restroom, opens the tap and blocks the drain, staring at her dejected self in the mirror.



"You'll never matter to him Leila," she mutters to herself, talking out the pregnancy test result and soaking it in the water, shuising it to nothing as it soaks, before she opens the drain and lets it all wash down. ²

If only her pain was this easy to get rid off.

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