

Chapter 24

She has given him her heart a long time ago, laid it down at his feet and he picked it up, giving her hope, hope that he would care for it, nurture it and cherish it but the moment his first love returned, he tossed it to the floor and crushed it under his feet.

She turns to Kelvin with a wry look in her eyes.

"Can I trust you with a secret? A secret you must take to your grave."

"Of course Leila," Kelvin replies with a serious expression, her words and tone holding every bit of his attention. "You can trust me with anything."

Leila swallows slowly, hoping she does not regret her decision.

"I'm carrying his child Kev," Leila replies. "I'm pregnant."

—

Tatum watches with weary eyes as Kelvin carries Leila in his arms, her arms carefully curled over Kelvin's neck, her head resting peacefully on Kelvin's chest and he feels an odd pain in his heart.

He knows....he understands that their marriage is not really real but why does he feel like this, what is this feeling of something squeezing his heart painfully?

He has always been close to Leila and wanted her to be his mate as a little boy but everything changed when he turned thirteen and Carmela got the phoenix mark.



It is his duty to his people, to be with Carmela, to care for her, but then, when Carmela got the mark and even now, that is all it feels like to him. 2

A duty.

Leila is the one he feels comfortable with, happy to be around, it is her smile that fills him with joy, not Carmela's.

How did Leila even end up in the cells?

He told her to wait for him to come back and sort things out.

He kicks the door to the torture chamber open, Leila's smell hanging heavy in the air and before he looks at the eyes of the head warrior, his eyes first fall to the whip clutched in his arm.

"Alpha, I can explain," Clayton says in a cautious tone, seeing that the grey eyes of his Alpha have gone completely dark red, his claws elongating.

A sign of trouble.

Clayton knows he is walking on a very thin thread and one step out of line could cause him to lose his head. He might be the strongest warrior in the pack but he is still second to the Alpha.

"You have one second," Tatum's voice sounds animalistic, blended with that of his wolf.

"She came to me Alpha, she said she wanted to pay penance, that she regrets hurting the phoenix luna," Clayton replies, watching

Tatum calculatingly.

His confidence is that Leila seems like a woman of her words and if Tatum asks her, she will not expose his misdeeds.

He might be able to get away with it.

"Bullshit," Tatum replies coldly, closing the gap between them and grabbing Clayton by the collar, slamming him against the wall.

"I swear Alpha, on my mother's grave. She is the Luna, what else would have given me the courage to bring her here, knowing the consequences?"

Clayton keeps his voice steady, leaving no room for doubt even as he chokes in Tatum's hold.

Tatum releases him roughly, thinking it made sense for Leila to go to him, Clayton is the head warrior, upholder of law and order within the pack, but why would she make such a request?

"You still should have consulted your Alpha," Tatum glares at him, his eyes still holding the coldness to them.

"She is the Luna, I could not disobey her order. In her words, she broke Carmi's wrist out of jealousy and regrets it. She said breaking her wrist back is not enough, that she needed a punishment that would remind her of her sin for a long time." 1

Tatum heaves a sigh, looking down at the pool of blood under his boot, Leila's blood.

Why would she put herself through so much?

She has never shown any form of jealousy towards Carmela and she only sees him as a friend.

She even asked him what he was planning to do now that Carmela has returned, she did not even object to Carmela moving in with them.

A jealous woman would not do that.

But is it possible that Leila has somehow developed feelings for him? She has been quite aloof since Carmela returned.

"She left this for you, Alpha. She wants to step aside for the true Luna," Clayton says, breaking Tatum's thought and he reaches into his pocket, handing Tatum the document he took from the desk, having read it himself.

It's Leila's divorce paper. What better "evidence" could there be, to prove that the Luna came and demanded the punishment, than the paper that shows her desperation with her own husband?

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