

**Chapter 45**

"I don't want to go back to my house, that place is no longer my home. Can I— live with you for a while?"

Leila's voice burns a hole in Tatum's chest as he's about to turn the door knob. It's not just the way she refers to their house as no longer a home that vexes him.

It's the coldness in her voice, the sadness that they carry and he acknowledges that it is his fault but she just won't let him fix it. 1

He has avoided coming to see her because she said she needed space but he never expected that the competent and hardworking Luna would neglect her duties.

He knows she is wounded but the woman he married would delegate duties and keep things running smoothly even if she was on her deathbed. 1

Why is she being so stubborn and hell bent on leaving their marriage, to the point of neglecting her duties.

"If it's not your home, then whose home is it?" he says as he opens the door and steps in.

He hears the way Leila's heartbeat changes when she sees him, it's the same way it always does when they see each other after a long time but the only thing difference is the soulless cold look in her once warm and bright eyes.

He can never get used to this look, he needs to find a way to fix things between them, to put the warmth back in her eyes, it worries him.

"I don't know," Leila replies in a cold tone, looking away from him.

The sunlight streaming in from the window lands on the side of her face and her naturally beautiful face becomes ethereal under the light even with the frown on her face.

Tatum resists the urge to smile, he's always thought that she was the most beautiful woman he ever laid eyes upon and he has seen scores of them.

"Amanda, how's her condition?" He turns his gaze to Amanda sharply.

Amanda looks from the Alpha to Leila and Tatum sees the way Leila subtly pinches the side of Amanda's hands but he doesn't say anything.

"She's getting better but still needs some time to get to her best, maybe a week or two," Amanda replies and Tatum smirks at her.

"You can go."

"Thank you Alpha," Amanda replies, patting Leila's shoulders and she scurries off.

"You shouldn't stay locked up in here all day, let's go out for some fresh air," He says, walking closer to her.

"The only breath of fresh air I need is space from you. Just sign the divorce papers Tatum," Leila replies, her cold eyes becoming colder as they bore into Tatum's, her words spewing out with venom.

A rippling pain tears through Tatum's chest and he clenches his fist to steady his emotions, holding her gaze and keeping his face straight.

Doesn't she get it? He needs her, without her, a lot of things will go wrong.

He cannot give her what she wants, not when she still looks at him with so much coldness in her eyes.

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Not when the very thought of losing her scares him.

"I'm not signing it," he replies in a whispery yet cold tone, looking away from her cold eyes with pain in his.

"Tatum, you can't keep me and Carmela," Leila replies, her tone losing its ice and becoming sullen.

"I know you say the pack needs me and you don't want them without a Luna until you heal Carmi's wolf but how is that fair to me? Besides, they already chose her over me, so just set me free, please."

Every word, every syllable, every single sentence that leaves Leila's lips cuts through Tatum's heart with a pang.

He knows she is saying the truth but something deep inside him, something even he cannot explain, doesn't want to let Leila go.

When it comes to the prophecy his hands are tied, he cannot get rid of Carmela. Even if he doesn't love her, even if he doesn't feel half as close to her as he is to Leila, that damn phoenix mark has him strung up.

If he lets Leila go, he will not just be losing his Luna and his wife but also his closest friend and the one person who truly gives him peace.

He sighs softly and turns to her with an expressionless face.

"This pack needs you, you are going to remain Luna."

Somehow, he'll find a way for her to look at him warmly again, he'll bring that joy back to her eyes.

"No, that phase of my life is over, I want a fresh start," Leila replies almost immediately, her voice cold and finite.

"Breathe all the fresh air you want, but when you are done, find your way

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home," Tatum replies, leaving her alone in the room with a pain he cannot explain slamming against his heart.

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