

## Chapter 32

Daisy

I stay in the hospital for yet another day. Yato is no longer with me, but Alpha Xavier won't stop nagging me.

Yesterday, he told me I didn't need to be in such a rush to get back, but that only served to make me more determined.

Besides, who am I to listen to him? He is a vampire-loving fool. I'm still mad at him for trying to make me feel for the vampires!

When night rolls around, I begin packing my things. It isn't much, just some get-better cards and a bag with random items Sabrina left with me earlier. As I fold a soft cardigan, the door creaks open, and Alpha Xavier steps in, the scent of cold rain and pine following him inside.

"Where do you think you're going?" he growls.

"I'm leaving." I say, not bothering to look up at him. He can growl at me all that he wants. "You can't keep me here any longer."

In the blink of an eye, Alpha Xavier is suddenly beside me. I don't even have time to gasp before he raises his palm to press it against my chest. I'm too weak even to fight the smallest amount of force he is using. I sag against the hospital bed, gripping it for support.

“If you can’t even withstand that, you’re not ready to leave,” he says firmly, retracting his hand.

“Says who?” I challenge.

“Says me.” His gaze is hard as he meets my rebellious eyes. “I won’t be responsible for letting you rush recovery and potentially harm yourself.”

His words spark a new flame in me. “And I’m not some helpless creature in need of your protection!” I spit back at him, clutching my chest. “I didn’t ask for it, and I don’t want it.”

A wave of emotion washes over Alpha Xavier’s face surprise, frustration, and then anger. I hate to admit it, but the fire in his eyes makes me hot and needy. Fighting with him has become a game, one where he usually ends up showing my place by pleasuring me to show his dominance. Show me who owns my body.

“Is that so?” he asks in a dangerous tone as he steps forward, towering over me. “Because I don’t remember giving you a choice, Daisy. I’m your Alpha, and I command you to stay at the pack hospital until you’re fully healed.”

I lift my chin, meeting his emerald gaze without even a single hint of fear. If anything, I’m aroused. “I think we’re going to need a new command, Alpha. I’m not afraid of you.” I hold his gaze, my voice steady despite the pounding of my heart.

“Disobedience won’t be tolerated, Daisy,” he warns, his jaw set in a hard line.

“Maybe I want to be punished.” The words slip out before I can stop them, and my defiance drives me to challenge him further.

Alpha Xavier isn’t ready for that.

A shocked silence fills the room at my audacity. Then, his eyes widen for a moment and then narrow dangerously. He leans in, forcing me to lean against the bed with him hovering over me. I’m captured by his muscular arms that come down on either side of me.

“You’re playing with fire, Daisy,” he whispers, letting his minty breath fan over my face.

“I know,” I reply huskily. “And maybe that’s exactly what I want.”

His emerald eyes darken as desire flares within them. But there’s restraint, too – he’s fighting against wanting me, fighting against his desire. His lips are only inches away from mine, and his breath is warm against my skin.

“Don’t push me, Daisy,” he mutters.

“I’m not afraid of you, remember?” I smirk up at him. “But maybe you should be afraid of me.”

He chuckles darkly at that and grips my sides to lift me up on the hospital bed. When I’m sitting on it, we are nearly the same height—he is such a tall bastard. I hate that his ridiculous size is part of what turns me on. If I could have my way. I would rip off his white shirt right now and let his tanned arms and muscular chest breathe.

“Really?” he challenges, his gaze sliding down to my lips. I can see the lust building within him “You want to play that game, Daisy?”

“Why not?” I retort, a smirk playing on my lips. “Are you scared, Alpha Xavier?”

“Scared of you?” He raises a single eyebrow in amused disbelief. He’s so close now that I can count the dark lashes fanning his emerald eyes. “I don’t think so.”

We stare at each other for what feels like an eternity, neither of us willing to back down from this silent fight of dominance

Then Xavier leans in closer, his movement slow and deliberate as he cups my face in one hand.

“You will regret challenging me.” he whispers before his lips are on mine.

The kiss is everything I had expected it to be-dominant yet gentle, full of hunger yet restrained. His teeth nip at my bottom lip as he deepens the kiss. I welcome it, wrapping my arms around his neck and pulling him closer until our bodies are pressed together.

I’m so wet that it’s physically painful. My hands instinctively reach for his shirt buttons, but he catches them and holds them above my head

“No,” he says

“Why not?”

His lips twitch with amusement or anger-I can't tell. I keep staring at him until he finally says in a gentle voice, "Because I'm not yours."

"But you could be." I point out. "Call off the marriage and admit you're not into my sister. You two have nothing in common!"

He pauses at that, and, for the first time ever, I can see something akin to vulnerability in his eyes. But instead of agreeing with me, he lets me go and backs off.

"It doesn't matter what I want. You and I could never be together, Daisy."

"And why the hell not? Am I still too weak for you? Because I can promise you that I'm getting stronger every single day. Sera is powerful!"

He glances over his shoulder. "Who is Sera?"

"My wolf"

"That's a nice name, but remember that your strength doesn't come from your wolf."

I snort "Who does it come from then?"

To my utter shock, he smiles weakly. "You"

His voice is so gentle that it confuses me. Tears are burning behind my eyelids, and my heart is in shambles. Why is he suddenly being nice to me yet still rejecting the idea of being with me when it's clear he wants me?

“What must I do in order to be good enough for you?” I sob in frustration. The mate bond is making it harder to breathe. and everything inside of me hurts. “I’m tired of whatever sick game it is that we are playing!”

He turns back to face me, his emerald eyes holding a world of torment that resonates with my own. “Daisy,” he begins, the raw emotion in his voice piercing straight through me, “this is not about being good enough. You are more than enough.”

“But then... why?” I challenge him again, wiping away the tears that have started to roll down my cheeks.

He pauses a moment before answering, and when he finally does, his words come out more as a whisper. “Because you wouldn’t like me if you knew me.”

“What?” I hiccup, “What kind of stupid reason is that? And you don’t get to decide what I would or wouldn’t like. Xavier. You’re not me.”

He clenches his jaw visibly, the muscle ticking with restrained emotion. “You don’t understand, Daisy,” he says thickly. “There are...things about my past things that...”

“What? Things that you think make you unworthy of love? Of being with your true mate?” I seethe. He flinches at my words, adding fuel to my growing anger.

“Daisy” he begins again in a pained whisper.

“No!” I cut him off, a fire burning fiercely within me. At this moment, I don’t care that he is bigger than me or my Alpha or that he could easily push me away.

“No?” he repeats.

“No.” I press my finger into his chest and glare up at him. “You don’t get to decide who gets to love you, Xavier. You don’t get to keep pushing people away just because you’re afraid.”

His eyes widen in surprise and then he breathes a laugh before carefully cupping my face in his hands. “You’re batshit crazy for standing up to your own Alpha like this.”

“Don’t pretend as if you don’t like it.”

Amusement washes over his features, and then he bends down to kiss me, but even though it’s hot and passionate-just the other one-this one also feels like a goodbye.

“Xavier,” I breathe out his name as he pulls away, my heart hammering in my chest. I’m gasping for breath, and my limbs feel like jelly.

His gaze is intense as he watches me, and for a moment, I think he might return for another kiss. But then his expression hardens, and he steps back.

“That’s Alpha Xavier for you,” he says, his voice thick with emotions he won’t let me see on his face. “And this can’t happen again. I’m sorry.”

The finality of his words feels like a punch to my gut. Raw and uncontrolled sadness fills me. More tears threaten to spill, but Alpha Xavier is already leaving, and I don't make a move to stop him this time.

I think I've finally had enough...