

Chapter 100

Skylar

I run forward, ready to save Jaiden, who has turned to stone. He is staring into the depths of Lucas' mouth while our former friend, now a friend, is getting ready to breathe fire. There is this horrid sound coming out of his nose, and while I wish I could say Lucas recognizes us, I know he doesn't.

"Jaiden!" I shout. "Get away! He can't recognize you!"

Jaiden finally seems to snap out of his stupor, his eyes flicking to mine. But it's too late. Luca's chest begins to swell, and I know another blast of fire is imminent.

"No!" I scream, leaping forward and shoving Jaiden out of the line of fire. He stumbles and I fall on top of him just as Lucas lets out a roar, spewing forth a stream of intense flames where Jaiden once stood.

I hug Jaiden, feeling the heat of the flames pass over my back. When the heat fades, I scramble to my feet and turn around, staring at Lucas.

He is no longer trustworthy and Max's pack are all growling at him as if getting ready to attack. Lucas doesn't like that and screeches a warning before lifting his neck to make himself appear even larger.

"Skylar!" Alpha Max shouts in his human form "Get the hell out of there! We got this!"

Jaiden snorts. "He got this? Is he kidding me? A hundred-foot-tall dragon has lost all its sense of control, and he claims his pack can handle it?!"

I don't have enough time to answer him. Max's pack is already attacking Lucas, who easily uses his tail to smash two wolves into a nearby tree.

"Jane, Cleo!" Alpha Max cries out, but it's too late.

Jane and Cleo are dead.

"This isn't good..." Jaiden murmurs and I can only agree with him.

The winds are changing, and for a few breaths, everything stands still. Then, without warning, Lucas takes flight with a powerful beat of his angelic and demonic wings. The sudden gust of my wind almost sends me flying, but Jaiden holds me steady.

“Fuck...” He mutters. “The last time Lucas shape-shifted into a dragon, he wasn’t this big, and Xavier was there to beat sense into him.”

My eyes widen. “This has happened before?”

“Once,” Jaiden grits his teeth. “You see, Lucas can’t just change his appearance to look different in his human form. He can transform into any sort of monster you can imagine. But he seldom remembers who he is. His mom, the former Alpha, Daisy, thinks his instincts become too much for him to handle.

“I..I didn’t know that,” I mumble as I stare up into the sky, watching Lucas’s immense form disappear into the clouds, leaving behind only chaos.

“Skylar!” Alpha Max shouts again, this time from a considerable distance. He’s trying to regroup his pack and bring some order to the battlefield, which is now more like a graveyard.

“He’ll come back,” I murmur, my eyes still fixed on the now clear sky. “He won’t leave us...he can’t.”

But Jaiden shakes his head, pulling me away from the battlefield. “We need to leave,” he says insistently. “We’ve done all we can here. The shadow Lycans are defeated, but now we have to make sure Lucas doesn’t destroy the entire city in his dragon form.

“But Lucas-“

“He is not Lucas anymore,” he finishes grimly.” At least, not right now. We need to listen to Alpha Max. I know he isn’t our Alpha, but right now, we don’t have an Alpha of our own. Lucas isn’t himself.”

Reluctantly, I allow Jaiden to lead me away from the carnage and towards the tree line where Irma and a few others are already waiting.

“Lucas?” Irma asks anxiously as we approach. Her eyes scan my face for any sign of hope but fall when she finds none.

“We couldn’t reach him, I admit quietly, tears threatening to spill over. “He was too far gone.”

A heavy silence falls over our small group as each of us processes what this means for our pack and for Lucas. A new enemy has revealed itself tonight – one far more dangerous than anything we’ve faced before.

And it’s one of our own.

As we retreat into the forest, leaving behind smoldering ashes and fallen friends, I feel Jinx’s presence returning, and this time. I let her in.

‘What do you want?’

‘I want to help you,’ she says. ‘And Lucas.’

My heart clenches, and hope spirals inside my chest before my logic returns. What could my wolf possibly do to help Lucas.

‘Don’t give me false promises.’ I mutter.

‘I’m not,’ Jinx says. ‘You’re the psychic wolf, Skylar. If you trusted in yourself, you could reach Lucas through your telepath powers.’

‘And then what?’

‘Then you talk to him. You might have rejected him as your mate, but he didn’t reject you back. To him, you’re still his mate, and he wouldn’t hurt you.’

I process Jinx’s words, silent in my disbelief. “Are you sure about this?” I find myself asking out loud instead of speaking to her mentally.

Irma looks at me. “Who are you talking to, Skylar?”

“My wolf,” I answer, looking up to meet her gaze. “Fuck, I spoke out loud, didn’t I?”

“You did,” Irma says, but instead of asking me about my talking wolf, she smiles, “What did your wolf tell you?”

I hesitate before letting it out. “She thinks...she thinks I could reach Lucas through telepathy, talk him down.”

A flicker of hope sparks in Irma’s eyes. “You have telepathic abilities?”

“I don’t know,” I admit. But even as I say the words, I feel a strange surge of certainty, as though some instinctive part of me knows that Jinx is right and that I’m powerful enough to send out my thoughts through telepathy.

“Then try,” Irma urges. “We can’t just let Lucas destroy everything.”

I nod resolutely, closing my eyes and opening my mind. I push past my own fear and doubt and reach out into the invisible realms of psychic energy.

‘Lucas,’ I think. “Lucas, it’s me...Skylar.’ I feel awkward talking to Him, yet I press on. ‘Could you come back?’

At first, there is nothing. Then suddenly, a flare of recognition. A blinding surge of rage and pain floods into me so intensely that I gasp and stagger backward.

‘Lucas!’ I cry out mentally, desperate to hold his attention before the torrential emotions swallow me whole.

But then something shifts. The firestorm of emotion recedes slightly, replaced by a cold emptiness that’s somehow even more frightening.

‘Lucas?’ I search for him with my mind again, but there’s nothing but an icy void.

Suddenly, an image flashes before my eyes- a dragon crashing down upon the city, fire spewing from its maw, and death trailing in its wake.

“No!” I scream internally, and before I know it, I’m scolding Lucas as though he weren’t a huge killing machine but a tiny little puppy. ‘Bad dragon! You’re not allowed to hurt people in the city. Come back right now!’

There is no response, yet I have hope that the image he sent me wasn’t something that has already happened but something he might do.

“Lucas,” I think again, trying to keep my mental voice steady. ‘Come back to me.’

Again, there is no response, but then I hear him snort inside my head. A new emotion washes over me: irritation. It almost

makes me laugh. Is he angry that I'm not allowing him to kill hundreds of people?

"Lucas,' I plead one final time, pouring every ounce of desperation and determination into my thoughts. 'I know you're in there. We need you. Your pack needs you. Please...come back.'

Suddenly, the connection snaps closed like some sort of door slamming shut. For a moment, panic floods over me. Did I fail? Is Lucas gone forever-lost to the relentless storm inside him?

But then, there it is again-a spark of something familiar, an overwhelming sensation of warmth and tenderness that washes away the icy emptiness. And then I hear it, a loud screech coming from the skies above.

'Get ready,' Jinx warns me. 'If you want to tame a dragon, you can't show fear.'

Easier said than done.

I swallow hard as I look skyward. It's already gotten dark, but I can still make out the white and black dragon approaching us. Lucas. As he draws closer, I realize how truly massive he is. His wings blot out the stars, and his body seems to radiate heat, like a furnace hurtling towards me.

"Everyone, get away!" Alpha Max shouts,

People run left and right as Lucas gets prepared to land. My heart beats wildly in my chest. My breath hitches. Every instinct screams at me to run, to hide, to flee from the monstrous beast barreling towards us.

But I fight against those instincts, grounding myself in Jinx's words: Don't show fear.

As Lucas descends, the glistening scales of his white and black body reflecting off the moonlight, I can feel all eyes on me. Are they waiting for me to calm him down?

Behind me. I hear Irma whisper a prayer under her breath. Jaiden is standing by her side, holding on to her while preparing for whatever may come next.

But I can't afford to pay them any mind. All my focus is on Lucas – on reaching out to him with my thoughts while standing my ground.

'Lucas,' I think urgently as he lands before us with a mighty thud that shakes the earth beneath our feet. His red and blue eyes bore into mine, sparking with a fiery intensity that takes my breath away.

Yet I don't hide.

I force a smile. 'It's me... Skylar.'

There is still no verbal response from him. Instead, he lowers his head until our gazes are level. It's terrifying. His nostrils are larger than dinner plates as warm air releases from them, and his huge teeth are mere inches from my face.

Honestly, I want to hide. But like before, I force myself to remain still even as my heart thunders in my chest.

'You wouldn't hurt your mate, right?' My gaze remains locked with his as I carefully reach out my hand, hoping he won't bite it off. 'And you sure as hell wouldn't bite me. I can touch my big, bad dragon, right?'

With a shaky breath, I extend my arm, palm open. My fingers twitch in the air, giving me an all too vivid image of Lucas snapping forward and crushing my hand in his monstrous jaws.

But he remains still, that same fiery intensity in his gaze that doesn't let me look away. His nostrils flare a bit as he likely picks up the scent of my fear. But even then, he doesn't move.

So, I continue to reach out, my fingertips just about grazing the underside of his snout when he finally lifts his head. It's a - subtle movement but enough to make me go rigid with anticipation of a sudden attack.

But none comes.

Instead, Lucas continues to observe me with what seems like curiosity. His eyes soften around the edges, the fiery rage ebbing away to reveal something else entirely.

I dare to breathe, allowing myself a moment to regroup. That's when I feel it again-the icy void in my thoughts where Lucas had been before, but now there's warmth seeping into it-his warmth.

Understanding washes over me – this is not anger; it's sorrow and regret. The cold void is guilt and the warmth... that's the real Lucas trying to break free.

I gather all my courage and send him a mental message again. 'Come back, Lucas...' I plead through our connection.

Silence.

I don't expect Lucas to do anything, but he sighs before smoke envelops his entire body as he finally shape-shifts back into a human. He isn't conscious, and I catch him in my arms, only for Alpha Max to command his pack in a cold voice, "Kill him."