

Chapter 102

Skylar

It's decided that I will go out with Alpha Max on Friday. I'm not looking forward to it, but for now, I'm trying to focus on poor Lucas, who is lying in my bed. Irma is sleeping downstairs, and I'm alone with Lucas. He is still unconscious, and everyone suggested we share the same bed since my scent and presence are the only things that calm him. No one wants him to turn into a hundred-foot-tall dragon again.

I stroke my hand over his sweaty forehead, watching his eyelashes flicker slightly in response. I've never been this close to him before, but there is no time to be embarrassed about the fact he is naked under the blanket my dad draped over him. Even if we aren't even under the same one, I'm at least wearing my pajamas.

"Skylar...?" Luca's blue and red eyes snap open, and my heart stops. For a second, all I can remember is his dragon form and how he dwarfed the trees. How easily he killed those two girls. How easily he could have destroyed everything. Fear grips me,

but before I can create more distance between us, Lucas grips my hand.

“Don’t be afraid of me, Skylar,” he whispers in a sad tone. I know I’m a monster, but I wouldn’t hurt you-not my mate, never you.” His use of the word ‘mate’ sends a shiver down my spine. Even though I rejected him, he still sees me as my mate, which tells me he still hasn’t given up on us.

A few seconds pass by with me processing his words and Lucas doesn’t stress me. He just squeezes my hand while I take in his vulnerable state his sunken cheeks, his feverish skin, the tired shadows under his eyes. Eventually, I whisper, “You look like shit.” A dimple forms on the left side of his lip. “Thank you.” We both share a silent laugh before I gently squeeze his hand and bring it closer to my chest.

We lie on our sides, staring straight at each other. “You’re not a monster, Lucas.” My voice is the softest whisper in the room. “I wouldn’t have agreed to Alpha Max’s proposal if I thought so.”

Lucas looks at me, confusion crossing his face. “Alpha Max...proposal?” His words are slurred with exhaustion, and it’s clear that he’s missed some critical information while unconscious.

A sigh escapes my lips as I start explaining everything that transpired while he was out. His grip on my hand tightens ever

so slightly as I relay how Alpha Max has demanded a date with me in exchange for our packs' safety.

"You shouldn't have agreed," Lucas murmurs once I finish speaking. "I don't trust that guy."

A giggle slips out through my lips. "Are you jealous?"

"What? Jealous? Of Alpha Max?" His face takes on a brilliant shade of red, yet the great Alpha Lucas doesn't dare to admit the truth to me. "Never!"

His words hurt. I thought he was into me, and here he is, claiming he isn't jealous when he can't even answer the damn question without looking like a tomato.

"I see." I remove my hand from his. "Then I see no problem with letting me go out with Alpha Max."

"But it is a problem!"

"Why is it a problem?!"

Seriously? He isn't going to tell me the truth even when it's bloody obvious even to me?! "Lucas," I hiss at him in the dark room. "What in the great hell is wrong with you? Why won't you just admit that you're jealous and get it over with?"

His eyes narrow, but I'm not afraid of him. I might fear big men and what they are capable of, yet there isn't an ounce of fear in my body at this time. Frankly, I'm pissed off at the tall brute lying in my bed.

"Does it matter?" Lucas eventually growls.

"What? Why wouldn't it matter? Are you high?" It's a struggle to keep my voice down and not wake the others. "Seriously, are you on drugs or something?"

He pauses then, staring at me for a long moment before glancing away in shame. "Fuck, I know I'm out of line." He runs his hand over his face. "I'm embarrassed, okay? You don't want me so what's the point in being jealous?"

Those words make me realize what a good actor Lucas can be. Until now, he's appeared irritated with me and teased me for nothing. I thought a part of him secretly hated me. But that expression on his face tells a whole different story now. He isn't cool and collected. He's frustrated. "Okay," I say calmly because I don't want him to go back to being his asshole self. "Tell me exactly what's on your mind."

"It's a lot..."

"And that 'a lot' will stay as a lot if you don't start explaining yourself."

Lucas' miscolored eyes search my face. "You rejected me the first time we met without even giving me a chance. Why did you do that?"

My heart flips within my chest, and I suck in a breath, stunned into silence because of my own fear of telling him the truth: that I was raped as a child and swore never to accept a man as my mate. What is the point? I will just leave myself vulnerable to get hurt again. "Do you want me to reject you back?"

"I'm sorry-what?!"

"Do you want me to reject you back? That's a simple enough question. Would you prefer if I asked you in another language?"

He keeps staring into my eyes, demanding me to give him an answer. It should be easy enough to answer him, but I hold my tongue until the bedsheets start to itch underneath me. I have the strangest urge to flee... Why is that? We aren't dating. We barely know each other, yet it hurts to think about Lucas breaking our bond, Forever.

"I'm going to take a hot bath and use one of those big bath bombs with rose petals in them," I tell him, forcing a smile onto my lips.

"You know-those that cost over twenty dollars each?" Lucas gives me a look. He isn't dumb and knows what I'm doing trying

to change the subject and avoid giving him an answer to his question.

“I...I love the smell of roses,” I say, squirming underneath his intense gaze. “And I love hot showers and clean clothes.”

“Skylar?” he asks in a warning voice.

“Lucas,” I imitate his tone. He frowns in response, and I glance away from his handsome face. It isn’t strange for me to be confused about how I feel. Lucas hasn’t been living under the same roof for very long. It’s natural that I’m still trying to figure things out, but I also realize that being my mate must be a living hell for Lucas. Lucas feels the magnetic pull whenever we are in the same room.

His soul is constantly drawn to mine. It doesn’t matter if he dislikes me himself; the mate bond will always tell him I’m the one. “Why did you change the subject? Don’t I deserve to know what you’re thinking, Skylar?”

A sigh leaves my lips and I clench the top of my blanket, scrunching it up while avoiding his eyes.

“Why aren’t you answering?” I fight off the urge to grimace.

“Because it’s a hard question, Lucas.”

“It’s a yes or no question, actually. You either tell me to reject you back or give me a reason not to.”

If only it were that simple. How do I feel about him at this point Butterflies swarm my insides whenever his eyes meet mine, and even though it frustrates me, I also like it when he messes with me. But it’s too early to tell if I like him or not. What if I’m just distracted by his good looks? It’s definitely possible. Lucas looks like a model, a very hot one with an eight-pack... Damn, how do I tell him all of this without sounding like a total asshole? No matter how hard I try to put my thoughts into smart words, I can’t. The words get stuck in my throat, and I end up staring at him.

“You’re pressuring me,” I growl and sit up in my bed, my hands dusting off invisible dust from my pajamas. Lucas sits up beside me, and my heart immediately starts pounding in my chest. Why does he have to be shirtless? I’m trying to talk sense to him, but it’s harder now that his hard nipples are flirting with me. The only thing that keeps me from reaching out to touch them like the secret pervert I am is the fact Lucas is seething.

“I’ve never pressured you to do anything. I’ve given you five years to think about your answer-it should be easy enough to give me a reason, Skylar. I deserve to know why you rejected me and if you still don’t want to tell me, then just ask me to reject you back. It isn’t rocket science.”

I feel my face turning white. It's true. Keeping the truth from Lucas is a lousy thing to do, especially since I have a feeling he has never been with anyone else. He has waited for me for all these years, hoping I would come to my senses somehow.

Sudden tears prickle behind my eyelids. "You're trying to make me say something that I'm not ready to reveal," I choke on my tears, looking away.

Lucas releases a sigh before placing an arm over me. I let him and when he realizes I'm not about to push him away, he pulls me in for a hug. "I'm sorry," he mutters into my hair, bold enough to place a kiss on my scalp. "I'm just trying to figure out where we are going. Skylar. I already know you like me."

I pull away to glare at him in shock, and he shrugs. "What?" he blinks at me as if he didn't just shock the hell out of me. "It's obvious by how fast your heart is pounding around me. The fact that you can't admit the truth, however, is a problem. I like you."

My lip trembles. Pathetic, but it does. I even feel my chest heaving in an effort to breathe. He likes me. "You can't say it back because you don't trust me. And if you don't trust me, then I can't be with you."

Sudden panic bubbles up in my chest. Is he threatening me? He stands up from the bed, giving me the perfect view of his round, bubble butt. It takes great effort to pull my eyes away from it

and stand up to glare at him. But it doesn't do much good because he is still almost two whole feet taller. I growl and climb up on the bed. Lucas turns around, eyeing me with a raised eyebrow. "What?"

"I hate you," I say, and he starts laughing.

"You fight like a child, Skylar. I'm not dealing with you right now. The shower is calling." With those words, he turns and walks away, leaving me in a state of confusion yet filled with excitement. It's clear now- Lucas has feelings for me. I collapse back into my comfortable bed, gazing up at the ceiling with a flutter in my chest.

"I like you," I imitate his voice and smile. Lucas likes me.