

Chapter 95

Skylar

I toss and turn in my bed, mumbling in my sleep at the horrid visions I'm seeing. There are burning cars on the street, and the sky is so dark you can't see the sun. Demonic beings without eyes roam the streets, devouring helpless victims and wreaking havoc upon cars and buildings. They look like aliens: big heads, sharp teeth, and no eyes. Their shiny skin is black, and they stand on two legs. Some even have wings.

I watch the monsters murder people and hug my arms to my body in pure terror. "Where am I?"

'In the future.'

The usual voice inside my head replies. This time, I don't push her away. "The future?"

'Yes, the one you can't prevent from happening.'

"What is that supposed to mean?"

Instead of replying, the presence inside my head materialized out of thin air. She takes the shape of a gray wolf. Slender and powerful. I stare at the wolf, shocked when its purple eyes meet mine. This is how I look in my wolf form!

“Y-you’re me!” I exclaim, pointing my finger at the wolf. Beautiful.

‘I am,’ the wolf replies inside my head and cocks its head to the side as if thoughtfully considering its next words. ‘I’m your wolf, and this time, you must listen to me.’

I glance away guiltily. “What if I don’t want to...”

‘Is it because you don’t want to be special?’

“I’m not special to begin with!”

‘You are! Why can’t you see that? The world needs you, Skylar! Something terrible is about to happen, and here you are, letting the past hold you back from who you truly are!’

I don’t respond, and the wolf sighs. ‘Okay, fine.... let’s deal with whatever made you this way!’

My heart speeds up, but not a sound leaves my lips. I can’t speak I can’t think. Instead, I’m sent to the past, forced to witness the exact moment I lost all of my self-confidence. It’s

terrible because no matter what, I can't suppress the memory from flashing inside my mind. It's a dark night at the orphanage, and Alpha Aron is removing his belt, smirking down at me,

"You won't tell anyone about this. Do you know why Skylar?"

A younger version of me looks up at him from her bed, her long red hair wild and untamed. Her freckles and blue eyes are just the same as mine, but this child has something I don't Her innocence. But soon, she will be broken down to pieces.

"Why is that, Alpha Aron?" she asks in an innocent voice, and I feel like screaming at the top of my lungs. I don't want to see this! Someone, please take me away. I don't want to hear his answer, but I can't fight back the memories!

'You need to see this!' my wolf says. 'If you don't, then you will never be able to work through it!'

I shake my head, eyes closed. "I don't want to see!" But it doesn't matter what I want.

Alpha Aron licks his lips before speaking, "Because you're not worth anything. Because nobody cares about you." He walks forward, eyes set on the younger version of me, and that's when I scream in real life. The scene immediately disappears like smoke, and then I'm panting, freezing when the lights go on in my room.

“Are you okay?” Irma asks. Her blonde hair is rolled up in curlers, and she’s wearing her usual pink nightgown. She looks concerned, her red eyes filled with worry.

My breaths come out in uneven pants, my throat sore from screaming. The terror is still fresh in my mind. “I... I had a bad dream.”

“No shit...” Irma comes to sit at the edge of my bed, her hand rubbing soothing circles on my back. “What do nerds even have nightmares about? Your books suddenly growing legs and chasing you around town?”

I muster a weak smile in response, relieved by her attempts at lightening the mood. “Something like that.”

‘You’re lying to your sister now?’ My wolf asks.

‘Hush!’

Irma yawns and stretches, her conditioned muscles flexing beneath her nightgown. “Well, try to get some sleep, Sky.” She rises from the bed before pausing at the door. “And remember...dreams are just dreams. They can’t hurt you.”

“Where are you going?”

“To drink some blood,” she says, opening the door and then snorting. “Well, hello, Lucas. How long have you been standing outside our room?”

“I heard Skylar scream,” he mutters before looking over her with his eyes meeting mine. “You okay?”

Even though I’m still mad at him for stealing my underwear. I swallow my anger and nod. “Just a nightmare...”

Lucas steps into the room, leaving the door ajar. His tall, muscular frame is silhouetted against the dim light from the hallway. He’s only wearing grey sweatpants, showing off his well-defined abs and broad shoulders. Despite our recent squabbles, there’s no denying that Lucas is one attractive Alpha.

He pulls up a chair and seats himself at the foot of my bed. Irma shoots me an amused glance before heading out the door. Once we’re alone, Lucas’s demeanor changes. His red and blue eyes soften, and he runs a hand through his disheveled dark hair

“You want to tell me about it?”

Instead of opening up to him, I feel myself closing off. I don’t know why, maybe because I’ve never opened up to anyone, and I don’t plan on starting now. “I’d rather not.” I murmur, choosing my words carefully. I can’t have Lucas suspecting something is wrong and figuring out the truth. He would only pity me, and pity is the last thing I want from Lucas.

“Nothing made you scream?”

My eyes narrow. “Why do you care!!”

“Because I’m your mate.”

“Was!” I correct him. “I rejected you, remember?” I regret my words as soon as I register my own sharp tone. Lucas winces, too, and my heart bleeds when I see the hurt look on his face. Fuck-fuck-fuck! Surely, he must hate me now, right? I’m so stupid! I don’t want to hurt him, but I’m broken and alone, and I have no idea how to trust people!

He studies me for a moment before he slumps his shoulders, a hint of frustration flashing in his eyes. “It doesn’t matter that you rejected me.” a sad smile spreads over his lips. “I won’t reject you back.”

I gape at him. “Wh-why?” I utter in shock because I honestly don’t deserve patience-not from the boy I rejected on his own birthday, never from him.

“Because even though you’re weird, I can’t make the same mistake my dad did. He rejected my mom, and it broke her heart, yet she couldn’t give up on him.”

“Why not?” I whisper. His smile widens, but it’s more sad than happy.

“Because it was obvious my parents were made for each other. The moon goddess had aligned their stars and fuck, call me a big, stupid idiot if you want, but I’m hoping you’ll see that our stars are aligned too.”

I look into Lucas’s eyes, shocked by the maturity he is showing me tonight. For the past few days, he has been nothing but a big, mean bully. He stole my underwear, for fuck’s sake! Yet here he is, wearing his heart on his sleeve. And I’m going to be honest, his words confuse and scare me. It’s too much to take in. I’ve rejected him and hurt him in the worst way possible yet here he is, offering me unconditional patience, understanding, and a chance to amend things between us. “But...why?” I ask again, my voice barely audible.

His voice is quiet when he answers. “Sometimes, we reject what we want or need the most because we’re too scared to confront it,” he says. “We don’t have to rush into anything, Sky. I don’t know you, and you don’t know me, but I...” His face flushes red, and with a grumpy expression, he shyly glances away, “I wouldn’t mind dating you.”

His words hang in the air, his sincerity echoing painfully in the silence that follows. ‘Well, what is your answer?’ my wolf asks.

‘I don’t know yet.’ “You want to date me?” I ask. “But I thought you disliked me!”

“Dislike is a strong word...” Lucas mutters. “I might think you’re strange, Skylar, but I don’t dislike you.”

“Okay, but that still doesn’t-explain the suddenly ‘wanting to date me’ thing!”

His face takes on a reddish color, and I watch him scratch the back of his head with a pained expression. “Seeing you look so small and terrified after whatever nightmare you had is making me want to hold you, but I can’t do that unless we are dating...”

Oh... I sit there, my heart thundering against my ribs as I take in Lucas’ confession. His blush is endearing and contrary to the rough exterior he usually puts up, showing me a softer side of the tough Alpha. And yet, I can’t accept his offer.

As if reading my thoughts, Lucas glances up at me again, his eyes softer, I tilt my head, and he clears his throat, shifting uncomfortably in his seat. “You don’t have to answer right away,” he says quickly. “Actually, don’t answer yet. Just give me a chance to show you that I’m not the asshole you think I am.”

I laugh a hollow laugh. “You’ve got a lot of work to do.”

“I know,” he murmurs, running a hand through his hair again. “But I’m willing to try if it means I can spend time with you and learn to get to know you.”

The raw honesty in his voice makes my heart ache. It's the kind of ache that numbs you and leaves you staring at the void in silent contemplation. Lucas is sweet, but how could anyone like me and treat me nicely when I hate myself? When I, myself, think that I am worthless?

"What if you won't like what you find?" I whisper.

A soft chuckle leaves his lips. "Scared I find out embarrassing things about you, Skylar?"

"Wh-what?!" I shriek before glaring at him, but my anger fades when I find him grinning at me. Understanding dawns on me. "You're making fun of me..."

"Yup," he cocks his head to the other side in a wolflike fashion. "But don't worry, I'm sure there is nothing you can say or do to chase me away."

"R-really?"

"I grew up with a crazy mom, so my standards are pretty low when it comes to finding my future wife..."

"Lucas!" I exclaim. "You can't speak like that about your own freaking mother!"

He winces. "Right...sorry..."

“You’re such an idiot...” I mutter before processing his earlier words again. “And I...I can’t promise anything, but I will think about the dating thing,” I say, even though I doubt I will change my mind. My fear of men and sex will always prevent me from dating someone. But Lucas, who doesn’t know about my past, looks happy with my answer.

A look of surprise flickers across his handsome face, quickly replaced with a warm smile that gives me a severe case of butterflies. “Thank you,” he says in a quiet voice and I’m forced to look away because my heart is pounding way too fast. Why does he have to be so gorgeous, damn it?!

“A-anyway!” I stammer. “You should probably head back to your room.”

He grins but doesn’t tease me. Instead he stands up with amusement dancing in his eyes. “Try to get some sleep.”

“Likewise.”

Lucas leaves my room, and once he closes the door, I let out a deep breath I didn’t know I had been holding. Date Lucas, huh?

I lay back down on the bed, staring up at the ceiling, my heart still pounding like a wild drum. Is it dumb to be happy about the fact that Lucas is fighting for me even though it’s a losing battle?