

Chapter 4

I thought I had forgiven him. I thought I was at peace with what happened, but seeing my former mate standing in the doorway triggers a fear I forgot existed. He killed me. He intentionally left me in the dungeon to die. My heart hammers in my chest as the fear solidifies and spreads, trying to overtake me.

“No. No, please! Bronx, don’t hurt us!” My voice is scratchy and desperate. I try to scramble up to grab my children, but my arms are so heavy. The nurse holding my baby boy uses her other arm to pull me toward her to protect me from our Alpha. The sudden movement makes me dizzy. I shut my eyes and hear a scream.

I sit up in bed and look around. Where am I? Wherever this is, it’s nighttime outside and I’m alone. I had a nightmare, but damn, it felt so real. Someone was trying to take my babies away from me. Who has them now? I need to find them. I wonder if Nurse Diane is here? Maybe she has the pups. She’s my friend. I can trust her.

After a quick check, to make sure Lex is with me, we decide to get up and figure out where we are. Maybe we can find Beta Lenora too. I think I can trust her. I slide off the bed, but my legs give out from under me, so I pull myself back up on the mattress. Damn. I’m weaker than I thought. How long was I asleep?

A rustling sound from around the corner of the room catches my attention.

“H-hello?” My voice is hoarse and dry.

A gruff voice calls out. “You’re awake!”

Alpha Bronx comes around the corner with the biggest knife I’ve ever seen. He smiles when he sees me. My heart clenches. Was he was waiting for me to wake up to murder me again? If I scream, he’ll only kill me faster.

I need to run! I try to stand again, but I fall to the ground. I scramble on the floor, trying to escape. I have no clue where I’m going, but I can’t stay here. I look up to see if I can find a door, but he’s right in front of me. He doesn’t have the knife anymore. He’s going to strangle me with his bare hands.

“Lex, they tricked us! He’s going to kill me!” I close my eyes and brace myself for the end of my life.

“Hold on, Kas!” Lex huffs for a breath as her muscles strain. “We’re gonna make it!”

“Hurry. Lex!” I push her to run faster.

The thundering of her heavy black paws makes the birds scatter through the air. Squirrels and rabbits scurry back into their holes to hide from her. We don’t have time for rabbit chasing. The sun is setting in the distance. I’m running out of time.

“I’m trying, Kas.” Lex pants, trying to keep her footing on the loose earth that is turning to slippery tile. “Just be ready.”

“Ready as I can be.” I watch through her eyes as the world morphs into a white marble hallway. The solid white eyes of the towering statues set in the niches of the corridor track us down the long hall.

“There it is!” She lunges forward and skids to a stop in the circular white marble room with twelve thrones ringing the edges. She places her paw on the strap of the harness the way Hephaestus and James showed her and rears back so we can shift back to my human form. The mechanism inside the strap whirs and secures itself against my bare skin as the tension tightens it into place. When our transformation is complete, I turn in place until I see a lone woman sitting on a throne in the room.

“Ah, Iokaste. You made it just in time.” The woman looks at the setting sun. The golden glow makes her even more deceptively beautiful. Dark red lipstick that looks suspiciously like fresh blood accentuates her natural beauty. She looks back at me and motions with her hand. A loop attached to her middle finger holds a billowing sheer cape, adding to the dramatic effect. An invisible force pulls me into the middle of the ornate compass rose at the center of the room. “I’m glad you changed your mind, but I don’t see what I asked for, silly dog child.”

“That’s because I didn’t bring it and you’re a fool if you thought that I ever would.” I hold my ground against her. “I would rather die.”

The woman rises from her throne with a bitter smile. When she stands tall and looks down her nose at me, her seven foot tall frame casts a shadow that leaves me in darkness. Her low cut, dark green silk dress lays perfectly on her curves and flows around her even though there is no breeze in the air. A gold crown, encrusted with jewels, encases her ornately braided hair, which seems to move as if it has something caged inside.

“Maybe you thought Selene would be here to protect you? Well, sadly, your mother is on a fool’s errand to find her missing lover.” There is a glint in her eye when she licks the corner of her lip, assessing me. “Today, you die alone, Iokaste.”

I feel a soft stroke on my cheek. It feels so warm and inviting. Silky fabric comforts all my senses and makes me feel relaxed for the first time in months.

“Kas, I’m here, Honey.” A voice as smooth as velvet calls me from the darkness. “Ashley, Reggie, and Milo too. Your babies are waiting for you. Everyone is safe now.”

“Lex?” I whisper. Just like my mother warned me, I sense her, but my wolf is not really with me. I should wake up so I can make sure the person calling me is really my friend Diane. I would love to see her.

“There you go. Keep trying to open those eyes. I know you can hear me, Honey.” Diane’s face comes into view with her short blonde hair pulled back with a headband. “Open your eyes for me, Kas.”

“D-Diane?” Seeing the familiar face, the first werewolf who ever showed my kindness overwhelms me. I try to grab for her shirt, but she stops me.

“Careful, Luna. Don’t overexert yourself.” She takes my hands and holds them.

She’s only a few years older than me, but she’s the closest thing I think I’ve ever had to a mother figure. When I was younger and thought no one cared if I lived or died, she was there for me. She helped me when the Alpha from my former pack tried to whip me to death. She was there to care for me before Bronx and Lenora brought me to Blood River. When the Elder Council ordered us to take responsibility for the Silver Moon pack, she was the first person I sought. I made sure she was part of the first group to be transitioned to Blood River and had a job with the pack hospital before she even stepped foot off the bus.

“I-I’m so glad you’re here.” My throat burns with each scratchy word.

“Oh, Kas… I’m so glad you’re awake.” She lifts me and holds me close, rocking me and rubbing my back. I feel the soft fabric of the medical gown against my old scars. Diane moves pillows behind me, so when she lets me go, I’m able to sit up.

“Diane, I think I had a vision, but it doesn’t make sense. My abilities are all gone.” I take her hand and try to remember. The more I try to think about it, the faster the details fade. It seemed so real, but maybe it was just a dream.

“Yeah, it seems like you had a vision. You’ve been asleep for two days, Kas. Do you remember what it was?” She hands me a cup of water with a straw. “Careful with the IV. They’re trying to get you hydrated, but you should drink too. Just a few sips at a time for now.”

“Always a nurse first. Huh, Diane?” I sip through the straw and wink at her. I try to remember the details of the vision, but the more I try to remember it, the faster it turns to dust and blows away. “I-I can’t remember the vision.”

“Well, if it comes back to you, let someone know.” She pats my hand. “I can only stay for a few minutes, Kas. Beta Milo and our Gammas need to speak with you privately. Now, let’s get these adorable pups to their mama. You need to be close to them and vice versa.”

“Thank you, Diane.” I watch her wheel two bassinets to my bedside. She grabs a ‘U’ shaped pillow from a container next to the bed and arranges them next to me, then she settles the babies into them so they are within my reach.

“You said the Alpha should choose, so he named your little girl Maya. He said that’s what Cora wanted.” She smiles at my daughter. “They are a little malnourished, which is expected since you aren’t looking so hot yourself right now. Since you’re underweight too, no breast feeding. They are being bottle fed a formula with extra vitamins and milk fat. The nurses will show you the ropes at their next mealtime.”

I look past Diane and see Milo, Reggie, and Ashley. Ashley gives me a little wave and an excited smile. Reggie rubs her back, also smiling, and whispers something to her. I feel relieved to see them.

“Did they do blood work for Andreas?” I look at my sweet little boy. He doesn’t look as pale as he did when he was first born, but his wispy white hair and eyes are still concerning. “The nurse in the hospital wing said they would.”

“Yes, and he’s as healthy as we could hope for.” She looks at Milo, who is sitting in a chair with his elbows on his knees, looking at his hands, then back to me. My heart stirs when our eyes connect. “Beta Milo will explain more once I leave.”

“So? There’s something wrong?” My heart clenches in my chest. “Milo? Please tell me.”

“Kas, calm down. Don’t let yourself get worked up, Honey.” Diane takes my hand. “Everything is fine. I have to get going, okay? I told Carly I would only be gone an hour. We have two babies of our own now. I’ll be back in a few days to visit. If you need anything, there are two nurses right outside the door. All the doctors are on call, and Tyree is on guard out there.”

I nod, only paying half attention to what she’s saying, while I stare at Milo. “Thank you for coming to see me, Diane. It means a lot.”

Diane quietly sees herself out. As soon as the door closes, I turn to Milo.

“Milo? What is it? What’s wrong with him?” I sit up, careful not to disturb the babies beside me.

Milo comes to the bedside and takes my hand between his. He looks at me like he knows he’s about to be in trouble and he is apologizing in advance.

“Milo?! What? What’s wrong with Andreas?” I take my free hand and hold Andreas’s little hand.

“Kas, I’m going to ask you a question, and it’s going to sound really fucked up. I’m not asking because I’m accusing you of anything. We’re just trying to connect a lot of dots right now.”

“Milo, knock it off. What is it?” I feel like my eyes are bulging out. He needs to get to the point.

“Okay, uh, Kas, is there any possibility that Bronx isn’t Andreas’s father?”