

Chapter 60

Jasper

I nearly had a fucking heart attack when Ashwell and the warriors returned, alone. Fortunately, whatever Jennine had done to them wore off soon. We predicted she might try something like this. The worst-case scenario, she would simply kill the backup. I was beyond thankful that she'd chosen the non-violent route. However, Ashwell didn't feel the same. Since Vies' phone call telling me she was fine and Jennine fell for the trap, he'd been ranting in the Jeep beside me.

"Cowardly bitch. I swear-"

"No offense, Ashwell, but can you just not? I'm a little more concerned about my mate right now."

"Yeah, sorry. I am too. Just don't like the fact that she magicked me so easily." He huffed.

We turned on the dirt road, anxiously searching for Violet or King. When I saw the wrecked SUV, my throat tightened, and I was out of the car before Ashwell even stopped.

"Violet!" I hollered.

"Over here!"

Hearing her voice had my knees going weak. I saw her waving at me, catching the scent of blood in the air. Her blood. Ehno and I growled at the same time. I ran to her, pulling her close and taking deep breaths, filling my nostrils with her scent.

"I'm so glad you're alright." I whispered.

"I told you I would be."

"Ugh. I'm going to puke."

Raising my head, I located Jennine sitting on the ground, arms crossed. Her expression reminded me a pouting child. For whatever reason, that pissed me off even more than I already was. Stepping around my mate, I took three confident steps towards her. Someone had drawn a circle in the dirt, indicating where her temporary prison was. Jennine looked up at me as if I was the most boring thing, she'd ever laid eyes on.

"Yes?" Her tone was petulant.

"You understand this is over, right?" I barked. "You're caught."

She exaggerated a yawn. "Whatever helps you sleep at night."

"You wouldn't be this calm if you knew who was on their way here."

"Is it dear old Daddy? Oh, that's right. You killed him." She grinned.

"You can't make me feel guilty about that Jennine. He was a monster, and deserved to die." I crouched down, getting at her eye-level. "Just like you."

She leaned forward, a mischievous glint in flat, blue eyes. "Who said anything about feeling guilty? Quite the contrary, in fact. I won't give you the whole 'we're more alike than you think' speech, but the fact that you can kill those who only you deem monsters, without thought or remorse really says something to your character, doesn't it?"

"You're going to argue that Warrick wasn't a monster?" Violet scoffed behind me. "That's a bad angle Jennine."

"Oh, no he was. All the way." She sat back. "But he was also your dad. Father to your half-brother too. Where is he by the way?"

"Shut up." I spat.

"One might think the fact that you're still hiding him at Blood Moon says something about you too. He already gave up any rights to be Alpha, so

what's your excuse? Or do you just not want the reminder that you killed his dad too?"

"I said shut up." I warned.

"Not to mention running the boys Mom off. You think she died as rogue yet? How will you explain that one to poor little Kiren?"

I lunged for her, but sadly, I was harshly pulled back by both Violet and King.

"Jasper, no! She's just baiting you!" Violet said. "You can't cross the line, or you'll be trapped in there with her!"

"She will meet a worse death than the one you want to give her." King reminded me. His words pushed through the anger I was feeling. Taking a breath, I glared at the girl in front of me.

"I didn't come here to argue with you. I want answers." I told her as calmly as I could.

"Answers for what? My big bad plan?" Jennine laughed bitterly. "Sorry kiddo. I'm not saying shit."

"Is that because you don't know the whole plan?"

"What are you talking about?"

King let me go, but stayed close in case I lost it on her again. "We know the plan, Jennine. I was just wondering if you do."

"You're making less and less sense kid."

"We know that Phoebus wants to exterminate all of Celestes creations. Wolves, bears, foxes- everything."

She blinked at me a few times. Then she began to laugh again-Louder this time, uncontrollably. The sound gave me chills.

"Well!" She gasped, "You're really ahead of the curve, aren't you? I'm impressed that you know about Phoebus! But honestly, no, I had no

knowledge in that plan. My only goal was to fuck up your mother's life." She looked at Violet.

"Tell me where he is Jennine." I snarled.

"As if I know! He's a fucking God! He comes and goes as he pleases." She waved her hand at me.

"Then tell us where you meet up." Violet said.

"He meets me where ever he wants, there is no set place." She looked between us. "I will tell you this though- You're fucking morons if you think you can defeat him. You may as well just roll over and accept your fate. You won't win."

"Interesting." A new voice sounded behind us. Jennine's eyes lit up, a wild, crazed fire in them. Lily stepped forward; her piercing gaze solely focused on Jennine. "You did always have a way of overlooking those you considered beneath you."

Jennine looked at me. "Is this who I'm supposed to be afraid of? Lower this shield and I'll show you exactly who's beneath whom."

"I don't think so." I shook my head.

"Violet, I want you to leave now." Lily said. Her voice was so smooth, so calm. That only made her sound more dangerous.

"Why?" Vie replied, confused.

"Because what I'm about to do... Well, I don't want my daughter to see me like that." She stepped closer, just barely behind the circle. Now she was speaking to Jennine. "You stalked me and my mate. My children. You made my son reject his mate, and you were going to kill my grandchildren." She kicked at a car seat I hadn't even noticed until now. It was black, burnt almost to ash. The emotion that burned in my veins when I realized what Jennine had tried to do had no name.

"I've done more than that Lily."

"Anything you say now will only inspire me to draw out your death!" Lily hissed.

"I had a good run." Jennine shrugged. "In the interest of closure, you might also like to know that Jasper and Sophia were under my influence when they slept together."

"What?" I gasped.

"Fucking bitch!" Violet shouted.

Lily just stood there, shaking from head to toe. Jennine grinned at her.

"I've been slowly breaking your precious little boy for a long time. The next Alpha in line- The important one. But you," She waved a finger at Lily, "You broke your daughter all by yourself. What kind of Mother keeps her child on lockdown? Each time she snuck out, to get away from you, I had the opportunity to hurt her, even kill her if I wanted."

"So why didn't you?" Violet spat.

"Where's the fun in that? I was already fucking with Garrett. But then you got pregnant, and I wondered just how much it would hurt if you lost, not only your son, but your daughter and her babies too?"

"You're fucking insane." I said.

"Jasper, take Violet now." Lily ground the words out. I turned my mate away, hearing the distinctive sound of shifting. The Mother Wolf's tail brushed against my back.

"Jennine." Violet suddenly turned around. "I just want you to know. If you had any hope of seeing your wolf again when you die? That's not going to happen."

Jennine's body jerked, as if Violet's words had physically hurt her.

"What do you know?!" She screamed. It was clear her old wolf, Violet's wolf, was a touchy topic for her.

"I know that the Goddess decided to give Nia another human. Someone who would look after her, love her, and care about her. And I know for a fact that she is happy now."

Vie smiled knowingly at her. Jennine's eyes filled with so much hatred and rage; I felt an automatic need to shield my mate. I stepped in front of her as Jennine started shrieking.

"No! No! She didn't give her to you! She can't! You fucking bitch, I'll kill you!" Her words ended on a sob. Lilys wolf jerked her chin at me, so I took Violet's arm, turning just before the screaming started. Only this time, it was a scream of agony. Ashwell was in the Jeep, watching the scene behind us with wide eyes. King took the passenger seat while I helped my mate into the back. I glanced back only once as we started driving away. The sight was enough to make my stomach roll.

The ride back to Silver Moon was quiet and tense.

"Let me see your arm." I took it without waiting. "Does it hurt?"

"Not so bad." Vie shrugged.

"There's glass in some of the cuts. You need to see Kettler."

"Alright."

King escorted us to the hospital, where nurses flocked. I shooed them off, taking Vie to an empty room to wait for Kettler. She hadn't looked at me this whole time. After our brief exchange on the way back, she hadn't spoken to me either. And I was beginning to get frustrated. When Kettler arrived, he immediately got to work pulling out glass shards and cleaning the cuts. I waited rather impatiently, leaning against the wall.

"That should do it." He set aside the last of the bloody pads. "Nothing too deep. They should heal quickly."

Vie nodded, flexing her hand.

"If that's everything, I have another patient I need to check on." He nodded at me as he left.

She was still sitting on the bed, head down. Her black hair made a curtain around her face, making it impossible to tell what she was thinking. The air around us was thick, and finally, I couldn't take it anymore. Pushing away from the wall, I came to stand in front of her. Placing my hands on either side of her face, I tilted it up so she would look at me. Shock and concern took over as I saw the tears running silently out of her eyes.

"Talk to me." My voice was a whispery rasp.

"I..." Her chest heaved as the first sob broke through. "I'm so sorry!" She clutched the front of my shirt. "A-all I can t-think about... is when she... set the seats on fire!"

"Vie-"

"It was a s-stupid plan!" She wailed. "I c-can't get that i-image out of my head!"

My hands fell from her cheeks, reaching around to grab her in a hug. I held her tightly, letting her cry into my chest. When her sobs had turned to hiccups, I pulled away so I could look at her again.

"It wasn't a stupid plan. It worked, didn't it? Jennine is gone, and she will never, ever be able to hurt our kids. Or anyone else. Okay? I'm sorry you had to go through that."

"I want to see our babies." She murmured.

"Then let's go see them."

I helped her off the bed, keeping an arm around her waist. Nurses glanced at us as we passed, but I ignored them. When we got outside, King was standing by the door, along with Gideon. They both took one look at Violet and understood what she needed.

"Tracy, can you bring the kids to our room please?" I mind-linked her.

"No problem, Alpha."

"Thanks."

I didn't know if it would help or not to tell Vie that I'd also had terrorizing images in my head. Of course, she'd seen it first hand, and I'd only seen the aftermath. Still, it was not something I wanted to picture, but now it felt like I no choice. The more I tried not to, the more my brain conjured up images of my babies being killed. We both stepped up our pace, leaving Gideon and King behind. I reached the door first, wrenching it open with a loud bang! Violet shot past me, almost tripping on the stairs.

It was torture waiting in the elevator; It seemed like the ride up was years long. The door seemed to take the same amount of time to open. Finally, we were in front of our bedroom door, our hands reaching for the knob at the same time. But the door opened from the other side.

"Hey. I thought that was you-"

Vie took Drew from Tracy's arms, her face pressing against his tiny cheek. Tears leaked from her closed eyes, a small hiccup escaping. Tracy observed with a curious expression. I stepped past her, finding Camellia and Carson on the bed, pillows placed around them so they wouldn't fall off. Kicking off my shoes, I crawled onto the bed, scooping them up and snuggling them close. Their mother and brother joined me shortly after, while Tracy quietly and discreetly left the room.

We stayed in our room all day, playing with the babies, soaking up their love and attention. When night fell, we moved back to the bed, the triplets holding onto each other as they slept. We stayed awake for a long time, just looking at them and holding hands on the pillows. Somewhere around two in the morning, Vie fell asleep, her nose against Carson's back. And I stayed up, watching over my family while my tears stained the fabric of the bedsheets under me.