

Chapter 12

ALEXA

"Are you mated, Aeon?" My question came out desperate.

Our lips were just inches away from each other, and I wanted nothing but to have a taste of him. Just a taste. Then maybe I could satiate my hunger for him, and then I could let him out of my senses.

"No." He answered, his jaw tightening as my eyes bore deep into his. "Not yet..."

Not yet. He's not mated yet. He's still a free man.

Without warning, I crushed my lips into his, throwing all the rationalities away. I was kissing him with everything I had, knowing this might be my only chance because no matter how much I hated him, I couldn't deny that a part of me wanted him.

My arms coiled around his neck, pulling him closer to me as I continued to kiss him. For a long, suspended moment, Aeon remained frozen, before he slowly parted his lips and kissed me back.

Then, all at once, heat flowed everywhere in my body as he began kissing me roughly, his hand on my back, holding me in place before he stood up, taking me with him. He pulled my body closer as his hand cupped my ass and lifted me off the floor. My legs clung around him instantly like a moth drawn to a fire.

Aeon was kissing me bruisingly hard, but he was holding me so gently. One hand slipped under the back of my shirt, caressing my skin. Warmth blossomed in my chest as sparks ignited everywhere in my body. I never felt this desire within me as much as I do now.

"Aeon..." I moaned against his lips. My body was starting to melt at his touch, but he slowly pulled away and I whimpered softly, not liking the

way he broke the magic between us. His eyes were staring at me, beaming with happiness as he licked his lip before letting a wide smile tug on his mouth so I couldn't help but smile back at him.

"You're beautiful..." His voice came out raspy and I felt wetness pooling in my underwear. If he continued staring at me, he would smell my arousal soon.

His hand cupped my neck, and we both stiffened at the contact of his hand on my shackle.

"Fuck!" He cursed and rested his head on my forehead. "This fucking thing needs to go!"

He put me on my feet before he turned around and walked to the nearest wall. His next action startled me as he began punching the wall while muttering curses under his breath. "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!"

"Aeon!" I was scared to go near him. He looked so angry as he continued punching the wall. It was already cracking and I saw blood splattering around him.

"Aeon!" I yelled louder this time and he stopped hitting the wall and rested his forehead on it instead. I wanted to approach him, but I was terrified he was still upset and might hit me.

After a moment, he turned around to face me. His eyes were slowly swirling back from black to their original blue color. "I'm sorry. Did I scare you?"

"Just a bit. Did I do something wrong?"

"No. No. You're perfect." His eyes softened as he let out a deep sigh, placing his hands on his waist as he looked at my neck. "I hate the shackle on your neck. But if I take it down and you get upset or someone taunts you, you might shift, and I can't... I can't control our men if they attack you."

I bit my bottom lip as my eyes were drawn to his bloody knuckles, but I didn't say anything.

"You understand, right?" He asked, and it made me raise my head.

I nodded before my forehead creased as I looked at the man in front of me. "Are you crying?" His eyes looked red and wet.

"I don't want that shackle on you."

"It's okay. I'm getting used to it, it's like just a choker necklace. You don't need to be upset. If this will make you feel secure, then it's okay." I wanted to pacify him even if, in reality, I hated this shackle too. 2

"I don't want you dead, Alexa. I have never been more scared of anything in my whole life than the thought of you ending up dead..."

"Am I that important to you?" I chuckled as I fought my tears from falling.

He was warming my heart with the vulnerability he was showing me, and I doubt if he was aware of his behavior at this moment. But either way, I like him so much right now.

"You have no idea how much..." He closed his eyes, cutting off his statement as he steadied his breathing before he opened his eyes and walked up to me, his hands cupping my face. "All I'm asking is for you to trust me. If there are days you get confused, just remind yourself that you need to trust me. Everything I'm doing and will do is to save you, from your father and from mine."

I just nodded my head. I still have many questions in my head, but I liked the Aeon I was seeing right now. He looked like he liked me, and I didn't want to snap him out of this. So I held my tongue and just agreed to whatever he was saying. 2

He was still cupping my cheeks. His eyes were roaming around my face as



if he was searching for something.

"You're really beautiful..." This was the second time he said this tonight and I couldn't help but smile, but he was squeezing my face too much.

"You're hurting me." I giggled and his eyes widened before he loosened his hold on my cheeks, and just when I thought he would let go of me, his arms wrapped around my body and drew me closer to him, hugging me out of my breath.

Sparks. Tingles. Shivers. Goosebumps. I had no idea what to call them anymore, but everything was exploding and heightening my senses as he hugged me tightly.

And for the first time, since my mother's death, someone was hugging me as if I was an important person, that I mattered.

I closed my eyes and raised my arms and snaked them around his body, my cheek resting on his torso, hugging him back tightly. Aeon really smelled good. He smelled of mint and the rainforest. Something refreshing. Something I wouldn't mind smelling for the rest of my life. If only I could.

I had no idea how long we stayed standing and just hugging each other before I finally spoke. "The food. It won't be warm soon."

"Yeah, I'm sorry. I forgot about the food." He let go of my body almost immediately before brushing his hand over his hair. He gave me a sheepish smile, and I felt my knees buckle.

But before I could go to my chair and sit down for support, his hand took mine and tugged it. My body spun around, and before I could find out what he wanted to do, his arm coiled around my waist as he pulled me down onto his lap, resting my back against his chest. His mouth went down to my neck, and despite the presence of the shackle, his breath fanning over my skin was sending shivers of pleasure down my core. 2



"Let's forget anything and everyone for tonight. And just enjoy each other's company, if that's okay with you." He said, his lips trailing kisses on the back of my head.

I swallowed hard as I closed my eyes. This only meant one thing – tomorrow when I woke up, everything will be back to reality. And he might be back to the cold and angry Aeon that I knew. But I would still take this because this night might be my only shot of happiness.

I tilted my head slightly to look at him before nodding my head and smiling at him. I couldn't stop myself from pressing a kiss on his cheek, and butterflies fluttered in my stomach when his mouth twitched into a wide smile as his arms around my waist hugged me tighter.

Just for tonight, Selene, let me be happy.

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LADY KATARINA.

It had been two hours since dinner, and Darwin wasn't home yet. Earlier, I handed him the piece of paper with Lucas' number and told him to call him, but he just looked at it and told me to leave the paper on his desk, which I did.

But now, the day was almost over and I was assuming that since he hadn't returned since he left, he hadn't called Lucas yet. And I was worried that Lucas might think I didn't relay his message to my brother.

And I didn't want him to think that way.

So I grabbed my mobile phone, the one that I had but never really used since mindlink worked better than this. And besides, I didn't have human friends, and if I wanted to call Nadia, my best friend, who was the Luna of the neighboring pack, all I needed to do was call her on the regular phone or visit her.



With my mobile phone in my hand, I hurriedly went out of my room and down the stairs, aiming to go directly to my brother's office when I bumped into Sofia and Beta Dominic in the hallway.

It looked like the Beta was tickling my younger sister, and she was shrieking like a banshee, and it just made my eyes roll before I slipped past them and walked towards Darwin's office. A part of me envied Sofia. Beta Dominic asked for her hand, and although Darwin hadn't made any final decision yet because Sofia was still seventeen, it looked like the two of them were falling for each other already. 1

Unlike me and Aeon.

As much as I wanted to see him differently, I just couldn't. My stomach never fluttered at the sight of him or my breathing never hitched whenever he stood beside me. And no, I didn't think him tickling me would be a great idea. I might end up kicking his groin if he ever tried to. 2

I had always dreamed of having my own mate. Growing up, I always thought that one day he would come for me and it would be perfect. But then, that was the reality of it. It was just a dream because he never came.

And now I have to be with someone for whom I didn't have any feelings at all. But I shouldn't be complaining. Alpha Aeon was the perfect Alpha in every sense. Tall, dark, and handsome. The only thing was, there were no sparks or tingles between us. But maybe in time, I would learn to love him.

I pushed the door open to the office and sat on my brother's chair after grabbing the piece of paper that had Lucas' number and saving it on my phone. I knew I was just making an excuse to message him, but what the heck.

Soon, after my union with Aeon, I would never be able to do this. And for the life of me, I couldn't even remember flirting with any men my whole life, so I might as well do it now rather than later.



I just hoped he wouldn't think I was being too aggressive. Or worse, I hoped he wouldn't ignore me.

Katarina: Hi, Lucas. This is Katarina. I told Darvin to call you, but it looked like he didn't call you.

It took me a full ten minutes to compose this message, and if I hadn't hit send, I would surely be editing this again because it sounded so lame and lousy.

I tapped my fingers on Darvin's desk as my eyes focused on the phone in my hand.

Ping.

My heart thudded loudly when Lucas' name appeared on the screen. Did he just answer in less than a minute? I smiled widely as I opened his message, only for my cheeks to burn from embarrassment.

Lucas: Good evening, Lady Katarina. Your brother called me this afternoon. So there's nothing to worry about. Thank you.

Katarina: Oh, okay, did he call you on the landline? Because he didn't take your number from me.

Oh, Goddess! I was so defensive. This was going down.

Lucas: On my mobile. I assumed he got the number from you because he didn't know this number.

Katarina: I swear to the Goddess, he didn't even take the paper from me. He just glanced at it and told me to leave it on his desk. Now you think I'm lying and just making excuses to message you.

Lucas: :)

Did he just send me a smiley face? Did it mean he didn't believe me? Oh, Goddess! This was embarrassing. I stood up from the chair and made my



way to the door. I didn't want to reply anymore since I had just made a fool out of myself.

I bit my lower lip as I gripped the phone tightly, tears threatening to fall from my eyes as I walked back up the stairs when the phone pinged again.

Lucas: It seems like you don't know your brother too well.

My forehead creased as I sent him a reply.

Katarina: ?

Lucas: Darwin has a quick eye when it comes to numbers. He can memorize them in a single glance. So I never doubted when you said he didn't take the paper from your hand. 1

Katarina: I didn't know that.

Lucas: Now you know.

My shoulders sagged at his reply. He didn't want to talk anymore. But just when I reached the floor of my room, my phone pinged again.

Lucas: So how was your day?

Katarina: Quite boring. And yours?

Lucas: Do you mind if I call you instead? My fingers are too big for this keypad, and it was hard to reply. I'm not used to texting. Only, of course, if you're not doing anything or with anyone at the moment. 2

I pushed the door to my room and closed it before I let out a shriek as I pressed my back against the wall, clutching the phone in my chest. 1

I steadied my breathing before I replied to his message with trembling fingers.

Katarina: Sure, call me.