

Chapter 3

ALEXA.

"Krane, give me a neck shackle." My mate said this with his face void of any emotions, all the while his eyes were fixed on mine.

A shackle? My lips quivered as a dark-skinned man with short curly hair approached us, handing Aeon a shackle that was still covered with dried blood.

Aeon looked at it, but he didn't take it. "Do you have anything that has not been used? I don't think the princess would appreciate someone's blood on her neck."

"But she already has blood on her face, Alpha. I bet she thinks rogue blood is delicious." One of his men chuckled, and I was fighting hard not to cry.

"Enough." He growled lowly before taking the shackle handed to him by another man and walking closer to where I was tied up.

He raked my body up and down. I saw the way his eyes lingered on my almost naked breasts, and I couldn't deny the tingles that rose from my skin just by the way he was looking at me.

He licked his lips before he swallowed hard, shaking his head as if waking himself up from a trance.

"What's your name?" He asked with a voice as cold as the winter night, and with his face void of any emotions.

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AEON.

"What's your name?" I asked, my eyes still fixated on hers. Her cerulean blue eyes were so mesmerizing that they immediately sucked me in at the moment our eyes locked.

But I almost lost it when I saw how thin her clothes were. I could see her naked body beneath her nightdress, and the only covering she had was her white underwear. And I knew my men were ogling her, especially her perfectly shaped breasts, but I couldn't do anything. If I wasn't protecting her identity as my mate, I would have ordered everyone away from here.

"Why do you care?" She snapped at me, her eyes blazing with hatred.

"Give me your f*cking name or I will force it from your mouth!" I snapped back at her. I was pissed off at her attitude when I just saved her from getting slaughtered.

"Force it out of me then!"

I knew I could never roll off an Alpha command to a rogue and this was pissing me off. For some f*cking reason, once they are considered rogue, the Alpha command doesn't work on them. Otherwise, life would have been easier if we could have commanded those we captured to spill out their plans and their hideouts.

"Alexa. Her name is Alexa, Alpha." Krane, my future Beta told me.

I flashed her a smug smirk the moment I saw her throw a glare at Krane.

"Alexa. Nothing special on your name, why are trying to hide it?"

"I don't owe you any explanation."

"Oh yes, you do. Did you notice how I just f*cking save your a\$\$? I can make you my slave and no one in my pack will bat an eyelid. You're under my mercy, Alexa."

"I hate you." Tears welled in her eyes, but she was fighting them off from falling.

"Sorry to break your heart, but you're not the only one who hates me. It doesn't make me feel bad anymore."

"I hate you." She repeated.

"Easy now, princess. You have no other way out but through me. Be an obedient female and I won't make your life miserable."

"What do you want from me? Why don't you just reje..."

I grabbed her jaw before she could finish her words. I didn't want to hurt her, but I had no other option. I had to stop her from saying the word 'rejection' or everyone else would find out she was my mate.

I leaned my face closer to her, our noses almost touching as I hissed at her. "No one will know. And if one more time something similar to that comes out of your mouth, I will bind your mouth and you won't be able to talk anymore." I warned her, gritting my teeth and trying to control my wolf, Thunder.

Thunder hated me for not claiming Alexa right away, but the moment she mentioned rejection, my wolf lost it and went into a total rage in my head.

"F*ck you!"

"Control your mouth or I will do just that. And I'll make sure I f*ck the hell out of you!" I let go of her jaw and she inched backward, her eyes showing fear and disgust at the same time. "Choose your battle, Alexa. It's either you work with me or you'll join those bodies on the ground."

"Then just kill me!"

"Too bad I can't. You have more use for me alive than dead. Now stay still or this will hurt more."

I saw her swallow hard as her eyes fell on the shackle in my hand. I knew this was pure evil on my part to shackle her neck, but I had no other choice. I didn't want her to shift and give my father the chance to roll out his order to kill her. Because I knew my father, he never bent his own orders.

So, I would rather have her hate me than end up dead.

"Please... I will behave." Her voice broke and I knew it was taking a lot of her to beg.

"Alexa..." This was getting harder than I expected. Her tears started to pour down her eyes, and I couldn't pretend anymore.

I turned my back on her, the shackle still in my hand as I looked at all the men watching us. "Round up the perimeter. Make sure no one is hiding and burn all the dead bodies. We're leaving soon."

"Yes, Alpha." Almost all answered in unison before they all scattered and went away. Only my future Beta, Krane, remained beside me.

I looked at Krane and I knew he had questions, but he didn't ask anything. Instead, he moved back, giving me and Alexa some privacy.

I let out a sigh before turning my attention back to her. "I know you hate me. And I can't do anything about that, but I want you to trust me."

"You're asking too much. How can I trust you when you... when you..." She stammered and I cupped her cheek, wiping her tears with my thumb, but I withdrew right away. I knew my father was still around and he had eyes everywhere.

"Do you want to stay alive?" I tried to lower my voice to calm her down.

She nodded her head.

"Then wear this. In my territory, no one will touch you as long as you have this."

"Have you tried that on your own neck? Do you think it's easy to move with that around my neck?" She asked in between her hiccups.

"Again, Alexa. Death or shackle?"

She didn't answer but she kept sobbing and it was breaking my heart. Years have toughened me. Not even my mother's death made me cry, but seeing the state she was in right now was slowly breaking the wall I was building between us.

I went closer to her and carefully placed the shackle around her neck while holding my breath. Sparks erupted everywhere in my body the moment my finger touched her neck. I stiffened for a few seconds before I was able to get hold of myself and continued to lock the shackle around her neck with a code. I then proceeded to cut the rope attached to the tree, and her body fell forward. My hands flew to her shoulders as I balanced her out, and the f*cking sparks danced around us again.

She wriggled her body away from my hold as if she was burning from my touch before she narrowed her eyes at me.

"I hate you..." I heard her murmuring, but I chose to ignore her this time. She was safe from my men - that was all that mattered now.

I turned around and tapped my Beta's shoulder. "Untie her. We'll leave as soon as the men cleared the area. She'll be on your back."

Krane, the Beta I chose to be my right hand once I took over the Alpha post from my father, was the only one I trusted at the moment. I knew he heard what Alexa said about rejection and the rest of our conversation, but he knew better not to ask any questions. The less information he knew, the safer he and Alexa would be.

My father, the current Alpha of our pack, the Blood Moon Pack, was known for digging into the heads of his people to get answers. And I was the only one he couldn't get into because I am also an Alpha.

Krane and I already had an agreement. For information we didn't want my father to know, I would never discuss it with him. Krane got used to doing things I ordered him to do without asking questions. It was safer for him.

Besides that, Krane was mated, so I knew Alexa would be in good hands. I knew my wolf would go on a rage and probably a killing spree if he found out someone touched his mate inappropriately.

Krane's eyes widened as my words sank in. I knew what he was thinking. We need to run back to our territory, which would be six to seven hours away by paws. And although running was nothing to us, having a female

on his back would be harder and more dangerous, especially since she's a rogue.

If we were spotted by any packs and she was smelled, they might corner us and take her. Rogues are the enemies of every pack. Especially in this part of the country, the South, where Achilles, Alexa's father, was known for creating attacks and slaughtering everyone, including females and pups.

No one would bat an eyelid and would immediately kill Alexa if they discovered she was Achilles' only daughter, the one he had been hiding for years.

My father wanted Alexa dead for the same reason. And I would too. I never care about rogues or anyone else. But I couldn't just let her die the moment our eyes locked. I had no idea what I was feeling, and I tried to ignore it, but I knew I wanted to protect her, not just from my father, but from anyone who wanted to take her away from me, including her own father.