

Mate

Sage POV

My body was in agony as blood poured from the wound, but Kendric's men came to my aid and wrapped it with gauze while handcuffing me.

"What the hell? I did what he f****g asked." I snapped as one of his guards tugged me up from the ground by the cuffs behind my back and pushed me forward.

"Lord Kendric requests your presence, and it's not up for negotiation," He hissed.

"I'm not going anywhere; you want me to go, then drag me." I snarled, pissed off.

"Fine, princess." He responded as he yanked hard on the chain attached to the cuffs.

If I hadn't lost so much blood in the fight, I would have broken free and run, but thanks to the dead dog, I could barely stand. Pathetic.

Once we arrived outside a suite, the Vampire shoved me in the door, causing me to fall on my knees and hiss.

Warm hands immediately pulled me from the ground, holding me tightly against their body protectively.

"Mind letting me go," I muttered, but they did not release me under my request.

"Release her until we settle." Kendric's voice boomed in the room, and I was finally set free, only to be pulled again by one of Kendric's guards.

"Fuck." I moaned as blood trailed down my leg from the gauze coming undone.

"Let me at least tend to her wound." Alpha Zane's voice greeted me.

"Lovely, you again," I whispered.

"She's survived worse" Kendric sneered as the room became blurry.

"Ya, sure, this is just a scratch." I laughed, causing the guard to yank on the cuff chain.

"Alpha Zane offered to take over your contract with me; after all these years, someone actually wants you, Sage." Kendric laughed as he handed Zane a document.

"Joy," I muttered, not amused.

My contract with Kendric never held me back. Sure, he caught me a few times, but I could avoid him and stay alive.

Now a damn werewolf wants me, just another reason for me to hate them more. No one owns me, regardless of what a document says.

Zane skimmed the document and handed it to his beta. "Give him what he asks so we can be on our way." He ordered.

After a few minutes, a bank check and documents were swapped, and the guard removed my cuffs and quickly led me toward Zane.

"She's your problem now, enjoy." Lord Kendric said, as Zane stood up and grabbed my arm.

"Can you walk, or do you need me to carry you?" Zane asked.

"I can walk," I muttered, focusing on when I should make a run. My injury was pretty bad, so if I ran now, the damn wolf would catch me; I'll give him the night so I can heal and then leave.

My legs felt like they were being weighed down as I tripped a few steps into walking. Zane growled.

"You clearly can't walk; I'm carrying you," He demanded, lifting me into his arms like a child.

My shirt and lower body were drenched in blood as he took a moment to look me over. "You are letting me tend to that without a fight once we get in the car." He ordered.

"If you give me the supplies, I will do it; I don't like being touched," I responded.

"Deal with it. I refuse to accept no for an answer and will restrain you if need be." He snarled.

"Fine," I muttered as his Beta opened the back door to a large SUV and he laid me down in the back seat.

"Scissors." He ordered his Beta.

"This is all I have, Alpha." His beta said as he handed him a pocket knife.

Zane held onto my shirt and cut it off with the knife. But instead of being rough like any other wolf would have been, he was gentle, doing his best not to hurt me further.

He reached for the bra strap I had on, but I snapped at him, "I'm not injured up there." And he luckily refrained from cutting it.

Zane poured a bottle of solution onto my injury and then grabbed a new bundle of fresh gauze and held it with pressure against the wound, causing a hiss to escape my mouth.

"I'm sorry." He whispered.

Was he seriously apologizing for helping me?

His hand was so soothing that I was getting lost in his touch as he wrapped a bandage tightly around me, and then he helped me up against the seat and got in the back with me.

"Lean against me, so you are not uncomfortable." He offered.

"Why are you being nice to me?" I whispered, half out of it from the blood loss.

"I told you earlier, Sage, you are special to me." He responded.

"I'm not anyone special; I'm just a nobody," I whispered as the car pulled up to the hotel, and Zane picked me up and carried me out of the vehicle.

"I'll have food sent to your room." Zane's Beta said as he carried me into his suite and then into his room and placed me on the bed.

"Fresh clothing will be delivered by the morning, but until then, you can use one of my shirts." Zane offered as he handed me a fresh shirt.

"Thanks," I whispered, confused at how kind he was compared to anyone in my life, but I refused to let him fool me. Unfolding the shirt, I tried to pull it over my head, but the pain from my wound caused me to moan.

Zane took the shirt from my hands and pulled it over my head, and as he pulled it down, his hand brushed against my skin, causing me to inch.

"Are you scared of me?" He asked.

"No, I don't trust you, and I don't like being touched," I responded truthfully.

"I will earn your trust, Sage. Please give me that chance," He whispered as he stood close to me.

"Why, why did you come for me and buy out my contract? I don't understand?"

"You're my mate, Sage." He responded softly.

"No, no, no," I muttered trying to back away from him.

"I know you hate werewolves, Sage, but please let me change that; give me a chance. I don't own you; you are free to leave once healed, and I'll make sure you are safe if that is truly what you want." He explained.

"I'll stay until healed, but I can't accept being your mate; your kind is why I'm here in the first place," I responded.

I could see the hurt in his expression, and for a moment, I felt terrible, but I would not let that change my mind.

"What did my kind do to you, Sage? Tell me, and I will help you seek revenge for whatever changed you." He demanded.

"What do you mean, change me? I have always been this way." I asked.

"Does the name Shadow mean anything to you?" He asked.

The mention of the name caused a shiver up my spine as I looked at the Alpha directly in the eyes.

"How do you know that name?" I snapped.

"So the name is familiar." He asserted.

"It's the name I was told was originally mine, but Kendric renamed me Sage," I whispered.

"How long has Kendric owned you?" He asked with his fist clenched.

"No one owns me." I hissed.

"You are right, Sage. No one can ever own you, yet some believe a piece of paper entitles them to you. How long has Kendric held a contract with you?" He questioned.

"Since I can remember, so maybe forever," I whispered, not wanting to think about it.

I tried to mask my emotions; I could not show him he was upsetting me by bringing this stuff up.

"You said since you remember, did you lose your memory?" He asked as he sat down next to me on the bed.

Shifting slightly on the bed so I was further away from him, I responded, "Yes, I don't remember my early childhood. Kendric said the werewolves sold me to him and killed my family."

A knock on the door stopped the questions momentarily as Zane got up from the bed, opened it, took a bag from someone on the other side of the door, and closed it again.

Placing the bag on a small table in the room, he took out several Chinese food containers and arranged them on the table with a few paper plates and plastic cutlery.

"I was unsure of what I should have my men order, but I assumed Chinese was a safe option. I have not seen you eat a single thing since we met, so I'm sure you are hungry," he stated.

"I'm not, but thanks for the offer," I responded.

"I don't believe that, but I won't force you to eat. The food is here when you are ready to eat," he explained.

"Thanks," I muttered.

"Is there anything else I can get you right now?" he asked.

"If you want to keep talking, a bottle of whiskey would be nice." I laughed.

"Although I doubt drinking while you are healing is the best, I will have my men grab you a bottle, and it will be delivered to the room shortly," he responded as he sat back on the bed beside me.

I shifted my body on the bed to gain distance from him, but this time, he reached out and grabbed my arm, stopping me from moving.

"Release my arm," I snapped.

Zane released my arm but remained next to me. "I won't make a move to touch you again, Sage, but please allow me to sit near you, even if for a few moments. My wolf will not calm down right now until he knows you are okay," he begged.

"It's unlike an Alpha to beg; you are too nice to be in this city. The Vampire Lords and other alphas are going to eat you alive." I scoffed.

"It is not in my blood to act as the scum in this city, and I have every intention of leaving this hellhole the moment I am done conducting my business," he admitted.

"Lucky you," I mumbled.

"I want you to leave with me, Sage, but I will not force you to do anything," he stated.

"I can't," I said under my breath.

"Why not?" he asked.

"I'm surprised you don't know this; the city has a protective barrier you had to travel through to get here, correct?" I questioned.

"Yes," he responded.

"The barrier is not to keep people out, Alpha Zane; it is to keep people in. I am marked, meaning I cannot leave past the barrier. I may be strong, but I can't get past it. The mark on me will claim my life if I attempt to leave." I explained.

"They f****g marked you," he snarled.

"Yes, I was too young at the time to understand what they were doing and not strong enough to escape it. You may hold my contract, Alpha Zane, but I will never leave the City. It is unheard of to have a mark removed." I informed him.

Zane stood up from the bed without saying another word and walked to the door, exiting and closing it behind him. I should have been thankful to have a moment alone, but oddly, his sudden departure left me feeling empty. What was this werewolf doing to me?