

Chapter 13

Niklaus

"All the bombs are planted, we're ready to go,"

These were Ares' words over the mind link as I set Kristina's pyre alight. I give the signal to detonate just as the first branches caught alight, knowing the poetic justice was served.

Nothing about the explosion lead to me since we were all present, even those close to me were here, so I am sure that fucker Lucan is running around trying to pin the blame on someone. But no one is supposed to know that cottage meant anything to him; no one but those he trusted.

And Verena wasn't close to him yet, so none of that blame falls on me even if someone from his pack happened to see her here. Well, it seems like things are all working out for me, given it's been close to a month since that cottage went up in flames and I've had no blowback from the cunt.

But now I am growing anxious. I have no fucking idea what he's about to do next.

"Klaus, are you paying attention?" Mitri's voice snaps me out of my thoughts and my gaze settles on him frowning at me. "We need to discuss this, but your mind is elsewhere."

I shake my head. "Sorry. The whole Lucan thing has me pissed off," I say as I straighten up. "It's been quiet on his side and it's setting my fucking teeth on edge."

“Well, sign off on these orders so we can get to that. There's something about this that has me questioning Verena; things you should be questioning, too,” he says.

I look at my brother and narrow my eyes, then I turn my attention to the paperwork in front of me so I can hear what he has to say. Mitri is my most trusted, so his opinion is important to me, especially when it comes to something like this.

He takes the papers from me, leans forward, and has that look in his eyes that lets me know this is important. “One thing I've noticed is that you've never truly questioned her,” he says.

“I questioned her the second she dropped the news about Kristina on me. Every time she tells me something new, I question her so I don't know what the fuck you mean,” I say, crossing my arms and leaning back in my chair.

He shakes his head. “But are you asking the right questions?” he asks, and I frown. “Who are her family? Why has she never spoken about them? I mean, yeah, she mentions her sister and how Lucan cheated, but who exactly is she?”

I think about his question and bite the pad of my thumb. “She mentioned sending money to her mother, but that's it. Laz hasn't found anything on her or her family. They're not ghosts, but they're not exactly...important, if you know what I mean.”

“It's just a little too convenient for me,” he says, shaking his

head. "She pops up out of nowhere, saves our fucking family from something we never saw coming, and now you've basically marked her as untouchable. What exactly is her end game here, Klaus?"

I mull his words over in my head and my thoughts immediately go to my last conversation with Verena. She spoke about being free and possibly moving when she's saved up money, finding love and possibly having a family.

She doesn't want anything from me, except for me to keep my distance and to earn her keep. I mean, I get why Mitri is so apprehensive; he doesn't really know her.

Then again, do I?

"I'll ask Laz to dig a bit more," I say. "That's all I really can do. I don't want to fucking scare her away, not when she's been helpful."

He nods. "I get it. But I just think you need to be a bit more careful when it comes to her, brother. Don't let your guard down," he says, then he gets to his feet and gestures to the papers in his hands. "I'll get these sorted."

I watch as he walks out, his words echoing in my head. It's true that I am usually more cautious and guarded than I have been with her, but I've just come to accept her in my life. She hasn't done me any harm. In fact, I've been the one coming on to her, only to get rejected.

Then there's the fact that she might be from the future; something that, even with the evidence, I can't find myself believing. It's too amazing to believe, but Shelby confirmed

it.

"Fuck," I say as I swipe a hand over my face before picking up my cellphone. Martha answers on the second ring. "Send Verena up to my office."

There's a pause on the other end. "Apologies, Alpha, but Verena has been ill for the last three days. She's not in today; I have sent notice up to your office, and you signed off on an alternate cleaning crew that can come in to clean your apartment."

Fuck, when was that?

"Thanks, Martha. What's wrong with her?" I ask.

"Really bad flu, by the looks of things. She's taken medication, so it's just for her body to heal. Odd for a shifter, if you ask me," she mutters the last bit and I say goodbye.

I sit and tap my pen in a staccato rhythm on the table, my thoughts already going the way I do not want them to go. It's not my job to care for her. She doesn't need me, and I don't need to care for—

And yet I'm already out the door and on my way to her apartment. What the hell is wrong with me? This woman calls to me like a siren and no matter what I fucking do, I cannot stop this obsession.

Her guard is stationed at her door, and nods when he sees me before opening the door. I don't know why, but I expected to see her laying on the couch, watching

something on TV while curled up in a blanket.

What I did not anticipate finding was her lying on top of her sweat-drenched sheets in nothing but a tank top and panties, shivering and looking pale. Bottles of medication and glasses of water are on her nightstand, some knocked over, pills strewn and left unopened.

She's asleep as I approach her, goosebumps puckering her skin. The sight of her causes my heart to clench... for three fucking days she's been this ill, and no one has helped her?

After calling Shelby over the mind link to meet me here, I walk to the bathroom. I roll up the sleeves of my shirt and grab one of her face cloths before going back to her. Sitting down next to her, I dab her warm face with the damp cloth, freezing when she lets out a whimper.

Her eyes flutter open, and a slight frown creases her brow. "A-alpha—?"

"Shhh, you don't have to say anything. Just rest, I'll take care of you," I say, but she tries to push me away and sit up, only to fall back down, breathless. "Stop being so damn stubborn, kitten."

"N-no... I'm fine, I just...just need to rest..." she trails off and reaches for something on her nightstand. "Thir...so thirsty."

After getting her clean water, I scoop her into my arms, but this time she doesn't protest. I lift the glass to her lips and she gulps it down as if she were dying of thirst. At that moment, Shelby walks in, takes one look at Verena, and shakes her head.

"I was scared this would happen. Lay her down," she says, walking to the bed with a bag in hand. I remove the drenched sheets and do as Shelby asked, but before I can ask her to elaborate, she starts chanting.

I step back from the bed and watch her work, waving her hands over Verena's body, getting tinctures and cold compresses ready. It takes about half an hour before I see a visible change in her; she's stopped shivering, there's colour in her cheeks and her breathing is laboured.

"It's been nearly a month since she rejected Lucan and now her wolf has fully left her," Shelby says as she walks toward Verena's cupboard, pulling out different clothing and placing it into a spare duffel she's brought with. "She's going to be out for the next few days, and will wake at the next full moon."

"That's in four days," I say as I watch my cousin packing the duffel with a frown. "What exactly are you doing?"

Shelby looks at me as if I'm stupid. "She's going to stay with you; it's not safe for her to be alone while she transitions into a human," she says, then she walks to the cupboard to pull out another sheet. "Cover her with this—"

"Wait, wait, wait," I say with a scoff. "She can't stay with me."

"And why not?" Shelby asks as she places a hand on her hips. "Do you trust anyone else with her?"

"No," I answer way too quickly, and she grins. "Fuck."

"Fuck, indeed," she chuckles and hands me the sheet again. "

Now, wrap this around her body and we'll walk to your apartment. She'll need to be sponged down since she's positively ripe right now, but that's where I'll help."

Without arguing, I wrap Verena in the sheet and cradle her in my arms while Shelby gets her things together. "Will she need a catheter or IV since she'll be out for a few days?" I ask.

Shelby shakes her head. "Think of Verena's body as being in magical suspension rather than a coma," she says as she picks up her bags. "When she wakes up, she'll be confused; so it's best she's around someone she knows instead of being alone."

I sigh. "She doesn't exactly like me," I admit.

Shelby raises an eyebrow. "I'm sure that's what she wants you to think. Anyway, let's go and get her settled," she says and I lead the way.

A few more days and she would have been here by herself, confused, as she no longer had her wolf. Is that why I was so drawn to her? Because I could feel that she was in trouble?



J. Tarr Author

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I'm going to try my best to get another chapter out later tonight x
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