

Chapter 16

Verena

Holy crap, Alpha Niklaus wants me.

I mean, I kinda figured it out since he's always trying to come on to me, but to hear him say 'for now' as if we have a future is...something. After my last experience with an Alpha, I do not fancy myself a Luna again.

The role carries too much trauma; trauma I am not willing to give up my life for.

So I'll stick around, play housekeeper until I have enough money to leave. I may not be a shifter anymore, but I can still disappear like one. Another month or two won't hurt.

"Verena, Alpha Niklaus wants to see you in his office," Martha calls just as I'm about to clock out and it takes everything in me not to roll my eyes.

What is he going to try now after last night? Pushing me up against his desk this time? It's 7pm and I'm finished for the day, so I won't bother to change. Maybe the way I look will put him off.

But as soon as I stepped through his office door, I knew it wasn't about me. Two of his brothers were there, Laz and Ares, and they looked stricken. While Alpha Niklaus wore the same expression, the anger radiating from him nearly knocked me over.

"You- you called for me Alpha—"

"Sit down," he growls and my heart drops. Ares gets to his feet and starts pacing, so I walk over to the chair he was in and sit down, waiting for whatever it is.

I place my hands in my lap and wait for him to start, swallowing deeply. He stops, pinches the bridge of his nose and breathes out a long sigh. "Dimitrios is dead," he says and my heart fucking drops. [1](#)

Dimitrios... his Beta, is dead?

"W-what happened?" I ask, but I know I didn't even need to ask because the answer is written on his face. "Lucan."

Alpha Niklaus nods. "We overlooked the fact that Fabiano may have left a contingency plan if he were ever found to be the traitor in my pack. Mitri, his wife and twin babies were tortured last night and their bodies returned to me this afternoon," he says as a pained expression crosses his face. "In pieces." [1](#)

I lift a trembling hand to my mouth, horrified at what he's just told me. Lucan was cruel, yes ... but heartless and capable of killing children? I never would have thought this was how low he'd stoop to.

"I'm so sorry for your loss," I say, looking at him and each of his brothers. "I never should have come here. I'm so—"

"Enough of that, Verena. You gave us an in when we had none," Alpha Niklaus says. "This is why we need your information right now."

I nod. "I'll do what I can to help—"

"Hasn't she fucking helped enough?!" Ares roars, slamming his fist on the desk next to me, and I jump. "Kristina is alive because of her info, but now Mitri is dead because of it!"

"Ares," Alpha Niklaus warns, shaking his head. "She didn't just save Kristina, you know that."

I look between the brothers and know they must be talking through the mind link about something, because Ares growls and walks over to the wall. He leans against it and crosses his arms, but he's staring daggers at me.

"What we need your help with are the locations of his safe houses; places where he'd need to hide out if things get too hairy. Can you help us with that?" the Alpha asks and I immediately nod.

"There are five scattered around the country; some here in your own territory," I say before listing them all. Alpha Niklaus nods, then he looks at Laz and Ares for a few minutes. They then walk out, leaving me alone in the office with their elder brother.

My heart is still beating wildly when I hear him sinking back into his chair and breathing out a sigh. I lift my gaze to him and see he's leaning his head against his fists, as if trying to reel in his anger.

"Alpha—"

"He was my most trusted," he starts, his voice muffled. "His worst nightmare was his family getting caught up in his

feuds, and I fucking led them to him.”

I reach out to take his hand and he looks at me; broken. “This wasn’t your fault, Alpha. This was Lucan; it’s all Lucan.”

But I know nothing I say will help. He’s a true Alpha and will blame himself for any loss of his pack members, unlike Lucan. It’s even worse now because Dimitrios was his Beta.

He removes my hand from his. “I should’ve paid more attention and ensured we were all covered, instead last night I...” he trails off and scoffs. “Instead, I was in a pool with you, not thinking about my brothers at all.”

My heart drops ... Oh, Goddess, he blames himself because of last night. “No, Alpha Nik—”

“That will be all, Verena. If there’s anything else I require, I’ll have Martha call you,” he says, and I can literally see him shutting off his emotions as he dismisses me.

And I can do nothing but stand and walk out, because why would he confide in someone like me? Someone who he doesn’t know and literally pushed him away the night before?

Three hours later, I’m laying on my couch eating pizza and sipping on wine while watching a rom-com, only for my front door to slam open. I leap from the couch and rush to the landing with my heart in my throat, praying to the fucking Goddess that Lucan hasn’t found me.

But nothing could have prepared me for what I would see.

Alpha Niklaus is laying on the floor, face down and laughing to himself. I’d be laughing as well if I wasn’t so damn

confused at what I'm seeing right now.

"Alpha?" I ask, tentatively approaching him. "Alpha Niklaus?"

He turns on his back, still laughing, then he sighs. "Ah, there she is," he slurs. "My kitten."

Blood rises to my cheeks as I walk, then I close the door he's left open and lock it. "Is there a reason you're here? Your apartment is at least five floors up, Alpha," I say, crossing my arms.

I watch him sit up and rest his arm on his knee before he sighs and looks up at me. "Yes, I suppose you're right. I shouldn't be here..." he trails off. "But I can't stop thinking about you, and it's driving me fucking insane."

With my heart pounding, I feel brave enough to sit down next to him with my legs crossed. "Why are you thinking about me, Alp— Niklaus?" I ask, feeling a flush on my cheeks. "I'm not an Omega anymore—"

"I told you I didn't give a shit about your designation, Verena," he says with a slight slur, as if he's sobering up. "If I did, do you honestly think I'd be here making a fool of myself?"

I breathe out a sigh and get to my feet, then I hold out my hand. "Come, let's get you sobered up, Alpha Niklaus, then you can tell me why you're here."

He chuckles and stands up while ignoring my hand, and follows me to my kitchen. It feels weird as hell having him here in my apartment, and I honestly don't feel like fighting

off his affections again.

"Do you drink coffee?" I ask when I hear the scrape of the barstool at the counter and look over my shoulder. "I don't have the good stuff, though."

He chuckles at this. "Just water with some ice, please. I don't think coffee will help right now," he says, then he leans forward and hangs his head in his hands, sighing.

I feel a tug at my heart as the realisation sets in... he's just lost his brother, his Beta, and the one person he trusted above all. Something tells me he's been keeping a calm and collected face around his brothers when I know he must be hurting.

Dropping my hand from reaching for a glass, I walk around the counter and he turns on the barstool before I slip my arms around his waist and give him a hug. From the way he stiffens up, I can tell he didn't expect it. That, and I'm sure no one's ever hugged him before.

He slowly exhales and slips from the seat before returning the hug. His body moulds to mine and I can literally feel the tension leaving his shoulders.

"Didn't take you for a hugger, kitten," he says with a chuckle to his tone. "Does this mean I'm special?"

I scoff and pull away, hitting his arm lightly. "Way to ruin a moment, Alpha; and I only hug people when I think they deserve it," I say and a smirk forms on his face.

"Oh? What did I do to deserve that?"

"You're in mourning," I answer immediately, and his smile slightly drops. "I know you're the Alpha and you have to show everyone you're strong and coping, but even the strongest person needs a shoulder to lean on sometimes."

He looks at me with a thoughtful expression on his face, and it almost looks like he's about to close himself off. Then he crosses his arms and sighs; one long, painful sigh that I can feel right in my bones.

"Dimitrios was that for me," he says as he leans his forehead against his closed fist. "He was my confidante and ..."

Alpha Niklaus shakes his head before offering me a smile. "I'm sorry to have barged in here uninvited, Verena. I lost my manners for a moment; it won't happen again," he says, then he's walking toward the door.

It takes me a few seconds to realise he's backpedalling, so I run after him.

"Wait, Alpha—"

"Rest assured, you don't have to worry about me or my state of mind. It's unbecoming of an Alpha to do what I have been doing with you, I apologise," he says without even turning around. "Have a good evening further, Verena. Again, I'm sorry to have barged in."

Then, with that, he walks out my door and I stare at it, confused once again.