

## Chapter 0023

Verena

I open my eyes and blink a few times, my surroundings looking slightly unfamiliar. But it doesn't take me long to realise that I'm not in my own apartment.

Groaning, I sit up and look around the room feeling extremely disoriented. It's night out and something feels... wrong; like I'm missing a limb but they're all intact. I swing my legs over and stand up, swaying slightly.

It is then that I realise why my surroundings look familiar—that painting, the drapes, the massive bed and the soft bedding... I'm in Alpha Niklaus' apartment.

How did I get here? No, rather, what the hell am I doing here? The last thing I remember was rotting in bed with the flu... How long has it been since then? What the fuck is going on?

After checking that I'm wearing appropriate clothing, I walk out of the bedroom with the intention of finding him. There has to be a reason why I'm here, right? There was no cell phone on my nightstand, no note or anything. He has some explaining to do.

I try to strain my ears to listen out for him, but I don't hear a thing. Not even the sound of my own heartbeat. It must be

the meds making me groggy. The hallway to the living room and kitchen seems extra long tonight, but as soon as I step into the space, I see him.

He's standing in his kitchen with his back to me. Not wearing a shirt and the gray sweatpants he has on seems to be drenched in sweat as if he's just worked out. The way his skin is glistening tells me he must have come from the rooftop gym, but I can't smell his scent, which is odd.

"Hello, Verena," he says, then he turns to face me and takes a sip of the water bottle he has in his hand. "How are you feeling?"

I scoff as I pad over to him, crossing my arms. "How am I feeling? I woke up in your apartment, Alpha Niklaus; I feel confused as hell."

"But you're no longer feeling ill, yes?"

"Uhm..." I blink, thinking about how bad I felt when I was sick and how I'm feeling right now. "Yeah, I guess so. Why am I here??"

He smiles and then gestures to a plate on the marble kitchen counter. "There's some food for you over here, you must be starving right now. I would explain what's going on but—"

"No, you have to explain what's going on!" I say, walking over to him before he can leave. "What am I doing in your home?"

He sighs. "Verena—"

"Alpha Niklaus, please. What happened to me? I'm feeling so damn confused and now you're refusing to tell me what's going on!" I exclaim, pushing against his chest. "I deserve to know what happened to me and you're not leaving until you've told me what you did to me!"

Alpha Niklaus has me gently pinned over the marble counter before I can even breathe. He has both my wrists in one of his large hands, while the other has my face planted into the counter.

"You're a smart girl, Verena; please tell me what happens to unmated Alphas on the night of the full moon?" he asks, his voice low and filled with menace.

I swallow deeply, trying to turn my head, but he stops me. "I... uhm...unprovoked anger and rutt—"

"Rutting, exactly. And since it's the night of the full moon, more specifically an hour before it crests, I would advise you not to fucking test me right now," he growls. "Give me until morning, then I will explain what has happened to you. But until then, stay the fuck out of my way and do not enter the room with the black door."

Then without another word, he walks away and I don't dare to lift myself up until I hear a door slam.

Swallowing deeply. I walk around the counter and my

stomach, the traitor, decides to rumble at the smell of food. Well, there's nothing I can do but wait until morning, then.

Plopping myself down at the counter, I start to eat the food and my mind involuntarily goes to what Alpha Niklaus just said. It's the night of the full moon, and I'm not allowed in the black room—

Wait! If it's the night of the full moon, that means I've been out for a few days! Gods, I doubt I'll be able to sleep tonight; I need to find out just what the hell has been going on and why Alpha Niklaus decided I should stay here.

But I won't get any answers; not until tomorrow, at least.

Resigned, I finish my food and walk back to the guest room, inching closer to the wall as I get to the room with the black door. But as soon as I walk past it, I hear something that makes me stop short.

A whimper.

My cheeks grow hot when I think about what it could be, then I scurry away before Alpha Niklaus realises I heard his rutting partner moaning.

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Surprisingly, I fell asleep quite easily after eating last night and when I woke up this morning, I nearly forgot where I was again. Some of my clothes and toiletries are in a duffel, so after a shower and feeling more like myself, I walk into the

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kitchen.

While vehemently ignoring the blush on my cheeks when I walk past the black door. I've kinda figured out that the room must be where Alpha Niklaus fucks women in, especially after that whimper I heard last night.

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## Chapter 0024

No, I am definitely not jealous. Stop it.

I still have that odd missing limb feeling, and still can't figure out why I feel so weird. Hopefully, I get some answers from him today.

He's sitting at the kitchen island when I walk inside, all suit and tie gorgeousness, and gestures to the plate opposite him without looking up from the tablet in his hand. I swallow down my irritation and sit down to eat, knowing that if I push, he'll probably shut me down.

So, I wait for him to break the ice while I eat the yummy as hell omelette in front of me. This man surely knows how to bribe me with delicious food.

"So, Verena, what do you remember?" he says suddenly as I'm swallowing and I nearly choke from shock. He's put his tablet down and is staring at me, his fingers laced together in front of him.

"I was sick in bed," I say with a shrug, then I take a sip of my orange juice. "I don't remember much from when I was sick."

He nods thoughtfully. "And tell me, can you hear the sound of my heartbeat right now? Or smell anything other than the food in front of you?"

I frown at the random shift in conversation, but I strain my ears and focus on what he's just asked of me. "Uhm..." I trail off, my heart thumping when I realise that I can't hear his heartbeat or smell anything besides the food.

Wait, what happened to me? Why can't I...? I try calling out to my wolf and everything is silent; I can't even feel her! "No, I- I can't. Did being sick do this to me? What did I have? Where is my wolf?! Why can't I feel her? Why.... Why...!"

Alpha Niklaus is next to me in the blink of an eye and places a gentle hand on my shoulder. "Calm down, Verena. I need you calm for what I'm about to tell you. Can you do that for me, kitten? Can you calm down?"

I nod as I breathe in and out, trying to calm my heart as it threatens to explode. The white spots dancing in front of my eyes start to clear the more I breathe, and when I look up, Alpha Niklaus seems concerned.

"I'm... fine," I say as I take one last deep breath. "I'm okay. Can you please tell me what happened?"

Do I really want to know what happened?!

He nods. "I had Shelby take a look at you when you were sick and she said ... because you rejected your Fated Mate and with the blood magic used to bring you back here, the Goddess has taken her gift back."

I frown. "Taken her gift back? What..." my eyes slowly widen

when I realise the implication of what he's just said.

My hearing isn't as good as before, I can't smell anything but the food in front of me and I can't feel my wolf. The feeling of something being missing finally hits me ... This is what Shelby meant by the Goddess cursing me, isn't it? She's taken my wolf!

"I'm no longer a shifter," I murmur and Alpha Niklaus slowly nods.

"That's what Shelby said, yes. She's looking into my bite possibly..."


But I don't hear a thing he has to say. It feels like my head is being held underwater; everything is muffled. My entire world has come crashing down at the same time; I've lost everything in the span of a month. My home, my mate, and my unborn baby... what else can be taken from me at this point?

"... breathe with me, Verena ... Hey, it's okay, I'm right here,"

I snap out of my thoughts and realise that Alpha Niklaus is holding me in his arms... and we're on the floor. He's stroking my hair and has me wrapped up in a tight embrace, while I know his shirt will be smeared with my tears.

He pulls back and cups my face in his hands, swiping his thumb against a tear slipping down my cheek. "I can't believe she took my wolf," I breathe as I look into his ice-blue eyes, my bottom lip trembling. "I didn't even ask to be



 +20 BONUS

back here; I thought she was the one who brought me here.”

“I know, but I don't think she's looking at the why; she's only seeing the how. To her you've broken her rules,” he says, offering me a sad smile. “If you don't feel safe out there by yourself, you're more than welcome to stay here at the hotel for as long as you wish.”

I sniff and look into his eyes. “I think ... I may have to take you up on that, Alpha Niklaus.”

“Good,” he says with a nod. “If you're feeling 100%, you can go back to your own apartment and go about your time as usual. I, unfortunately, am late for a meeting.”

I blush. “Oh, of course! I'm sorry to have kept you waiting,” I say and scurry to my feet, then I stand there awkwardly. “Uhm ... thank you for...taking care of me.”

“That's what Alphas do, and I apologise for losing my temper with you last night,” he says with a smile, then he grabs his tablet from the counter and walks out of his apartment.

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