

Chapter 8

Verena

Nothing has really happened for about a week after the incident at Alpha Niklaus' apartment. He hasn't walked around half naked in his kitchen, either. I'm not sure whether that disappoints me or makes me happy.

I'm settling in nicely, with a routine planned out after I finish work just after 3pm. Cleaning has become easier with the other two girls around; they do their jobs and we keep out of each other's hair.

As for my so-called hobbies? I've been calling my mother every day. She's been worried sick about me after finding my letter and the news spreading about how I rejected the Alpha. Apparently, Anabella has been in a foul mood since she came home from the banquet, and she's been holed up in her room.

I wonder if Lucan finally kicked her out after all this time. But I don't see why he would; I mean, he's free to have her now without the burden of a mate.

Anyway, my mother doesn't want me to move her out of her home, even after I insisted because she's not safe there. But she believes in the Alpha and that he has the pack's best interest at heart.

I don't know how to convince her otherwise. She'll probably think I'm crazy if I have to tell her I've been sent here from five years ago. 1

Sighing, I'm about to walk back to my room after a long day, when Martha calls me back. I turn to face her and she beckons me over. "Oh, thank Goddess you're still here! Alpha Niklaus wants to see you in his office."

I blanch. Goddess, what is it now?

"Did I do something wrong?" I ask, worried that he might just decide he's done paying me back for saving his sister, but Martha shakes her head.

"I don't believe so, no. I think he just wants to do a quick review of everything with you," she says, but I don't believe her. So after she gives me the directions, I make my way to his office with my heart sitting in my throat.

I swallow deeply as I stand in front of the office door, my palms sweaty and my heart beating a mile a minute. But just as I pluck up the courage to raise my hand and knock on the door, I hear his voice.

"Come in, Verena,"

I nearly yelp at the unexpected sound, and after trying to calm my heart once again, I open the door and step inside. Then I wish I had turned and ran far away from here, because Alpha Niklaus is not alone.

There's someone occupying the chair opposite him and someone leaning by the window with their arms crossed over the expanse of their chest. The one seated looks like a younger— no wait, both of them look like a younger version of the Alpha.

"You called for me, Alpha?" I ask, placing my hands in front of me and looking straight at him. I have a feeling these are his brothers and that thought just makes me more nervous.

He nods. "These are my brothers, Dimitrios," he says, pointing to the one sitting down, then gesturing to the one leaning against the window. "And Ares. We need some information from you."

I nod. "If I can help, I will."

The one named Dimitrios crosses his arms. "Is there any place Lucan holds close to his heart?"

"Vita Mia cottage in Sicily," I answer almost immediately. "It's where he scattered his sister and mother's ashes."

The grin on Alpha Niklaus' face grows. "Now wouldn't that be poetic justice?" he says and chuckles darkly before turning to his brother and speaking in a different language. It sounds like ... Greek? Well, that would make sense, I suppose.

"One question," a voice snaps me out of my thoughts and I see it's the younger brother, Ares. "Why the fuck are we

believing this woman when we know nothing about her?"

The look in his eyes tells me he's ready to tear me in two, but it will take more than cockiness to scare me.

"Why did I warn you about the plot to kill your sister when I knew nothing about her?" I say, crossing my arms. "You can believe me or not, I don't care; but I have absolutely fucking nothing to lose by lying."

Alpha Niklaus chuckles and leans back in his chair, while Ares now seems just about ready to murder me. "Sheath your claws, kitten, my little brother is merely being cautious," he says with amusement all over his tone while Ares and I glare at each other.

I'm this close to growling at him, but I won't give him that satisfaction.

He speaks to his brothers in Greek again, then they both leave. But not before Ares gets one last glare in. Oh, I wanna strangle that punk! ¹

It's only when the door closes with a click, that I realise I'm now alone with Alpha Niklaus. Crap, I didn't want to be around him so soon after what happened in his apartment!

"I-is there any other reason you wanted me here, Alpha?" I ask, sounding like a school girl about to get reprimanded.

He rests his chin on his steepled fingers as he leans forward. "Tomorrow night there's a function at the casino; a

get together with a few Alphas I'm close to," he says as his gaze slowly sweeps over my body. "I want you to be one of the servers at the bar, and to help around the event when they need you."

I blink twice. "You want me to be a bottle girl?"

"Ah, is that what they call it?" he says with a chuckle. "Then, yes. I'll ask Martha to replace you for the day. The uniform for the event will be sent up to you as well."

"Do you need my size?"

"I know your size," he says in a husky voice and I can feel my entire face go red.

Cheese and rice. He wants me to be a bottle girl in a room full of Alphas. It wasn't even a question or anything, this is an order. I used to work all kinds of jobs before marrying Lucan, so I'm not a stranger to what he's asking of me. 2

I am dreading the uniform already.

I nod. "Sure, I'd love to help. What time is it starting and what time do I have to be ready?"

"Rest for the day, because it will most likely go on till late. Be ready by four, come to the main conference room at five because we start at six," he says, then he leans back in his leather office chair. "That will be all for now, thank you, Verena."

Why does my name sound like a moan on his lips? I realise a

few seconds too late that he's just dismissed me, so I mumble a 'thank you' before rushing out of his office and into my apartment.

I was exhausted before, but now I am wide awake. Gods, I'm going to be walking around in what will probably be a skimpy uniform in front of Alphas. I'm going to be parading myself, saying 'yes, sir' and 'you're welcome, sir' the entire evening.

I sit down on the sofa and sigh. Oh, well; the money will be good and I can send some to my mother to help her. So there's a silver lining ... I guess?

Okay, I was wrong! The uniform isn't skimpy at all, but gorgeous. It's a form fitting little black dress that doubles as a cocktail dress that doesn't show a lot of cleavage, and ends just above my knees... But has a narrow thigh high criss-crossed slit.

At least it has pockets! 1

They paired it with a black pump that I'm comfortable walking in, but the strangest thing they sent along with it, is a dainty leather collar with a heart shaped ring. I have to admit that the collar ties the whole outfit together, though. 2

It's ten minutes to five, so after taking a deep breath, I walk out to whatever awaits me tonight.

Chapter 9

Niklaus

The second she walked into the place, I knew I shouldn't have asked her to help out. That dress clings to her like a second skin, those legs that go on for miles makes me want to wrap them around my neck.

And fuck...she looks perfect in that collar.

I'm sitting in the VIP section with my brothers, going over everything for the 'funeral' this weekend. My mind should be here, I should be focussed on this and not the beautiful brunette across the room.

It's been five hours. Five fucking hours and all I can think about is bending her over that bar.

"Fuck, she's got him," Ares comments as he hands me a glass. "And don't even try to deny it."

I scowl at him. "What is that supposed to mean?"

"It means a week ago, you would have banished that Rogue from our territories, and now you have her playing waitress," he says with a shrug. "Do you want to fuck her that bad?"

I pinch the bridge of my nose. "Are you forgetting she has given us valuable information, not only once, but twice?" I say, referring to the cottage Lucan is at as we speak. "If I

have to butter her up to make her trust me more, then I will.”

He doesn't believe me, but fuck him. Ares is the one who doesn't trust easily, so it's expected, but I won't allow him to speak to me as if I have an ulterior motive. Even if I wanted to fuck her, it's none of his business.

“I have to go mingle,” I say and get to my feet.

The three Alphas I invited tonight are ones I trust with my life, ones who I would die for and would die for me. We had a meeting before this about them going along with the funeral arrangements and attending out of respect. But to not make it seem obvious, they brought their Betas along, as well as a few others who run at their flanks.

Liam Callaghan of the Emerald Storm Brotherhood. Irish, bloodthirsty, and has no qualms about killing people with his bare hands. He specialises in torture, is a vampire / wolf hybrid, and runs the Irish Mob out in Boston.

Dante Rios, Alpha Dragon shifter based out in Vegas. He's head of the Duskfall Syndicate, and every bit as deadly as you can imagine. Don't venture into the desert at night, because rumour has it, he can't control his own beast. Little do they know, he likes not being in control.

Last but not least, Anastasia Terrero; better known as the Empress of Pain. She rules the Bratva out in California after killing the entire family of the original Pakhan. No, she's not of the original leader's blood, but the council chose to

ignore that since the Pakhan had her as a sex slave for years before she discovered that she's a Lycan of royal blood. 2

And, yes; these are the people I trust.

"Klaus! Join us!" Liam calls me over as I'm about to get a bottle of bourbon from the bar. Deciding that I need to take my mind off things, I walk to his section, where he's nursing a glass of crimson liquid while a woman is on his lap.

"You look like you're enjoying yourself," I say, nodding toward the woman, and he smirks.

"Aye, perks of not having a mate," he chuckles, then he gestures behind me. "Now, who is that beauty over there? I'd like for her to join me here."

I don't even have to turn around to know he's talking about Verena, but I do anyway. She's standing with one hand on her hips while talking to the other bottle girls. She's the only one wearing a collar, a clear sign to the others that she's off limits.

"She's wearing a collar, pick another one," I say, trying to keep my voice neutral and hoping he doesn't pick up on my possessive tone. But this is Liam we're talking about; he can sniff things out before you're even aware of them.

He chuckles. "Ah, I see; keeping all the beauts to yourself, I see how it is," he says, flashing me a wink.

But I shake my head. "She's important, but not in the way that you think," I say, turning back to him, then continuing in Gaelic. "She's my informant."

"Ah," he says, eyes widening. "Is that why she's wearing the collar, then? I see, I see. Well, I won't be touching her if she's that important to you."

I offer him a nod of thanks before getting to my feet. "I need a fucking drink," is all I say before walking to the bar. But fuck knows I need more than whiskey to get this woman off my mind.

What is it about her that has me feeling so obsessed? She's burst into my life, warning me about enemies close to me and saving my sister. Is it because I know nothing about her and she's refusing to be open with me?

"What can I get you, Alpha?"

I'm so lost in my own head that I didn't even notice she's standing in front of me. She's wearing a smile that doesn't seem to be fake, which is something I am not used to seeing on her.

That and her eyes are glazed.

"Dalmore 62, the entire bottle, please," I say as I lean my elbow against the counter and watch her work. She's flushed, so I know she's aware of my gaze, and when she turns back with a bottle and a pitcher of ice, I can see

something's off. "Have you been drinking?"

She blinks and shakes her head, placing both things in front of me. "N-no... I mean, I had a sh-shot with one of the guests, but I know how to hold my liquor—" then she sways and stumbles backwards.

I growl and move behind the counter before she falls, gesturing to Laz to come over as I scoop her into my arms. "What's up?" he asks when he reaches me.

"She's been drugged. Have a look at who gave her a shot a few minutes ago," I explain. "Let everyone know I'm just taking her up to her apartment and I'll be right down."

He nods, then he pulls out his cell phone and walks back to our VIP section. I don't chance a look at my other two brothers because I know what they must be thinking. This girl is supposed to mean nothing to me and yet I'm always jumping to her rescue.

"You, come with me," I tell the warrior I've sent to guard her before I give him instructions as we walk. He rushes ahead to open her apartment door, and as soon as I step inside, I tell him no one else is allowed in but my pack witch.

She's incredibly light in my arms, weighing next to nothing, and it's an odd contrast to the tough person she portrays herself as. This kitten isn't afraid to show her claws, so it's odd to see her so vulnerable.

I can't help but chuckle as I walk into her bedroom, spotting

the stuffed animals strewn all over her bed. As soon as I swipe them to the side and lay her down, I remove the collar around her neck and place it on her nightstand.

"Klaus?" my head whips towards the door as I see Shelby standing there. She's one of my cousins and my pack witch; one of the strongest in the country as she belongs to the Lunar Sisterhood. "Is this her?"


"Yeah. I have a feeling she was drugged. Are you able to see what she was given?"

Shelby nods and walks towards the bed. "It won't take too long," she says, before she raises her hands over Verena's body. Her eyes widen and the glow from her hands dissipates before she turns to me with a worried look on her face.

"She's been given a drop of henbane, and normally it shouldn't affect shifters like this, but..." Shelby trails off, shaking her head. "This woman has recently committed taboo and is in the process of losing her wolf and becoming ... human. That's unheard of!"

I digest this information slowly, crossing my arms and frowning. "She committed taboo? What the fuck does that even mean? She—"

"She rejected her mate not too long ago," Shelby interjects, flooring the fuck out of me. "The Moon Goddess warns us against doing this, which is why so many choose to stay in

 +20 BONUS

even when they're in abusive relationships. But..." she trails off, looking down at Verena.

"But what? Can you see what happened?" What the fuck did Verena do?

Shelby shakes her head. "I know of people who have rejected their mates with the only repercussion being they're unable to have children with their new partners. This woman ... She must have done something unforgivable on top of rejecting her mate. The Moon Goddess has cursed her."

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