

Chapter 22 The Kiss

ELIANA.

"We really should get going."

Looking back and forth at the empty halls, we made our way back down in the same direction that we came. From here, to the dungeon and then out through the stable.

"You see, you actually needed my help." Denver scoffed all knowingly. "You in fact couldn't have done this on your own" He referenced what I'd told him when we first got here and I rolled my eyes to the back.

Partly, because what he said was true.

"That makes two apologies that you owe me" He hissed and even though it may have been true, there was no way he was getting anything from me. We jumped into the dungeon and wasted no second to walk out through the door that led into the stable.

The air in here was warm and dry and I felt something prick the back of my throat. All that was here was just bundles of hay laying around and a couple of tools. I looked up at the door—and it wasn't so far off.

We were almost out.

Very nearly, in fact.

When suddenly, we heard voices echo through the door and footsteps that were drawing close. I stopped in my tracks, wide eyes falling to the handle that clicked. Someone was about to walk in.

I immediately looked at Denver and his eyes said the exact same thing.

We were doomed.

"We're fucked" My whole mind started to race because it would all be over if that person was Jaxon. And as the door drew open, panic surged inside of me. In a split second, Denver hooked his arms around me and before I even knew what was going on—a sudden, unexpected move, he pulled me close to him and kissed me on the lips.

"Oh!" We heard gasps from the people who'd walked into the stable.

"We're..." It must have been awkward to walk in on two people kissing. "We're sorry, we'll...just come back later" One of them stuttered and I threw my head over my shoulder once I pulled away from Denver. The door immediately closed as they scurried away.

"They were just guards" Denver scoffed but I couldn't even pretend like my heart hadn't dropped in my chest just then. My hands smothered over the corner of my lips. I could still taste him. Even though our lips met for a brief second, it was enough for the whole world to just vanish for a bit.

"Eliana," Denver called and with a gasp, I drifted back to reality. I turned my face away because I'd hate for him to see how red I'd gotten. "Are you okay?" Denver asked.

"Just thrown off, I guess" I scoffed lightly.

"Did you just kiss me?" Perhaps, the realization knocked me over again and Denver raised his hands in the air. "It was the only way, I mean I'd hate to walk in on two people just making out myself and this is an empty stable—it makes perfect sense. Away from the noise and parade,"

"That's beside the point!" I interrupted.

"You could have come up with literally anything else like fucking hiding behind that stack of hayys —" "Well pardon me for not taking a moment to think when clearly time wasn't exactly a luxury at that moment." He replied me sarcastically and I just dashed my hands over my lips.

He scoffed when he saw me. I wanted him to.

"I don't remember you coming up with a plan. Rather than freezing there as you had and allowing them to catch us, I had to do something and you were standing there. Your lips were wide open—"

"Definitely not for you to kiss them" I argued. Denver chuckled with his hands slipping into his pocket. "I know a lot of people that would happily want to be in the same position as you are right now" He croaked. One of the reasons I really loved wounding his ego.

"Good thing I'm not a lot of people" I hissed.

"I see that." He pressed his lips together in a way that wasn't exactly a compliment. The air around him was clustered with sarcasm. "And you're sure none of them saw my face?" I gritted through my lips.

"How could they, when your face was buried in mine?" Denver said and I pulled myself toward the door. "You're gross!" I countered.

"And you enjoyed the kiss" He replied.

We stepped out into the woods and the wind was the first thing to graze my heated face. I looked back at him.

"What?"

"I thought we were only telling the truth" He shrugged his shoulders and it may have been dark out here but I could always catch a smirk across his lips.

"It's written all over your face. How much you liked it. You were practically beaming red back in there" Denver teased and my stomach tied into a knot. "Because of a non-consensual kiss?" I scoffed.

Like there wasn't some truth in his words.

I wouldn't exactly say I liked the kiss, it was just so unexpected. And daunting even now, moments after. Like I could still feel him on my lips, no matter how many times I stupidly tried to rub it off. And there was my heart that was still racing in my chest.

His woosy cologne had clogged my nose and not even the strongest winds could blow it out. I'd hate for Denver to get into my head but unfortunately, that was exactly what was happening.

"I just want to go home" I muttered, turning to face the direction of where his car was parked and perhaps, he caught the expression across my face because he cut short the teasing. He just trailed behind and the whole hike up the hill was awkwardly silent.

The ride back home was even worse.

All that echoed through the car was just an old song by The Smiths, and although I caught him one too many times stealing a glance in my direction, Denver didn't say much either.

He pulled the car over in my driveway and I looked ahead at the old cabin. Damn, I was so lost in my thoughts I didn't even know when we reached here. And from the look across his face, Denver was lost in his too. I unstrapped my seatbelt, ready to alight.

Opening the car door, my feet struck the ground when he suddenly appeared next to me. A gust of wind blew in my face and I wasn't as startled this time.

"I can tell what your favorite superpower is" I remarked and Denver scoffed lightly from his lips. Being a werewolf, especially being an Alpha, came with a lot of added abilities such as super strength, super speed, heightened senses like sight and hearing and taste.

And even of the mind, because there were some of us who could see visions of the future and even perform magic. As long as you'd seen your wolf, you could have either of one. But there were also people like Denver who had all of them.

My arms folded across my chest and the winds filled my hair. He let his eyes fall upon me. He was clearly standing in my way.

"I did," He suddenly muttered and I arched my brows. "What?"

"The kiss...I liked it" Denver's voice fell into a whisper and there was a spark inside of my chest as I straightened myself up. I could see that genuineness in his eyes once again which made my heart start to throb.

"What?" I could barely get another word out before his eyes fell to my lips and Denver inched closer to me. I stepped back but my sides soon wedged against his car. His arm towered over me but the second one held firmly around my waist. His lips grazed the corner of my face and his heated breaths raised all the hair across my skin.

I melted in his hands almost immediately. Like he had some sort of power over me. I could see how satisfied he was when I looked into his eyes. Denver had wedged himself so close that all of a sudden, I was wet inside my pants. His fingers traced the right spots over my skin.

He'd always known exactly where to touch to absolutely drive me mad. It was why we spent barely one night together but I already had his son.

Elijah!

I remembered.

The thought of him flashed behind my eyes as I faced the moonlight. Denver's hands were only getting faster and his breaths deeper, when I suddenly pulled away from him. I escaped from his grasp.

I couldn't do this.

I forced my mind to remain firm even when deep down, I wanted Denver. My soul was yearning for him beneath my skin and my wolf was almost tearing through, if she even existed. But there was this undeniable, strange feeling that bellowed inside of me whenever he was near.

Like all of a sudden, I'd lost my ability to think and I just wanted to surrender into his arms. Denver panted at that moment, his arms still against the roof of his car as I smothered my jacket.

"I can't" I heaved, just as breathless as he was. But at least, still with some brain cells. I couldn't go through with this. Not when there was Elijah and everything could get really complicated again.

"This isn't why I came back to Oakland. I can't afford to let things get so complicated again" There was a crack in my voice and when I looked up at him, for a moment, our eyes met. His was glistening with a golden brown color. And Denver was still panting heavily. Beads of sweat had formed along the lines of his face.

He didn't look so good.

"Denver," I called his name. "Are you okay?"

"You should probably get inside" He growled. "And I don't think I can stay here tonight—" I arched my brows at his words. "It's the mate-bond Eliana. It's only going to get stronger if both of us keep denying it" He said, stumbling into his car and my hands clutched my chest.

He was right. I could feel it inside of me.

Perhaps, it was that strange sensation that beamed inside my chest but what I didn't understand was why all this happening if he had clearly rejected me six years ago.

"Go!" His voice thundered from the car and the engines picked up. I scurried across the driveway and was standing in front of my front door when I looked back at him. A second later, Denver drove off.

But just as I was about to knock upon my door, something happened.

I couldn't tell but all of a sudden, I became lightheaded. And my vision dazed a bit. I fell against the railings of the portico as my breathing grew heavily through my lips.

There was a chilling sensation that crawled down my spine and an overwhelming amount of emotion that hit me like a storm. My grip around the railings intensified and I could feel pain especially around my fingertips and my eyes. And my chest.

"God!" I screamed in agony. I'd never felt anything like this before. I'd never felt everything like this before. Suddenly, I could hear voices beyond a five-mile radius and see the dust particles floating in the air. The wind was ice against my skin and the pain became even more excruciating.

I fell to my hands to knees and as soon as I heard my spine crack, I fear I knew exactly what was happening—it was my wolf. She was coming out.

So much as the guttural growl that rumbled in my throat. My arms cracked and twisted, filling me with a fusion of fear and exhilaration. My skin burned to touch as the shifting continued. For minutes, the pain became even more unbearable and I didn't think I'd survive it.

It was usually like that the first time for everyone.

But then it will pass, just as all things do. My bones had reformed into something else and I was covered in fur. Claws shot through my fingers and fangs out of my teeth. I could finally catch my breath before lifting my eyes to the skies and I let out a deep howl of freedom.

Why was my wolf only coming now, after so many years?

Was it because of the kiss? Was my wolf finally awoken by Denver's kiss?

I turned away from the door and was headed into the woods. Regardless, I knew inside of me that could never mean a good thing. And I was right.