

## Chapter 24 Something I'll Regret

DENVER.

My eyes shot open to the darkness of the dungeon that surrounded me. My lips twitched with a growl stuck in the back of my throat. The door had opened and as soon as I heard Cory's footsteps draw close, I launched myself against the cage barriers.

The sound of my chains clanged against the hard floor and sent a reverberating echo through the walls. Anyone else would have been fazed, they might have even been scared. But not my beta, Cory.

Not when he has seen me in a worse shape and condition than this.

I panted heavily from my lips as I drew back. His hands wrapped around the cage as his eyes fell on me. My wolf turned away from him, hiding behind the darkness of the dimly lit, musty dungeon. Matted, dark furs stretched across every surface of my skin and my sharp claws strained against the shackles that held around my wrists and ankles.

I struggled to catch my breath as I shifted back into a human form.

Beads of sweat formed along the lines of my face and I looked at Cory with intense desperation in my eyes. No one knew the amount of pain I was going through. And it was all ever since I kissed her.

Eliana.

"Are you okay now?" Cory's voice echoed through the room and my chain dropped to the ground. He tossed me a bowl of water from beneath the cage and although my eyes fell to it, I was quite reluctant.

"No!" There was a crack in my disheveled voice.

"I have to let you out" Cory begged. "No!" I yelled at him. The truth was, this was my idea—being locked up. As soon as anger filled my voice, my eyes flickered with a feral hunger.

"All this will stop if you just feed" Cory whispered. I pulled the blanket over my body and strands of my wild hair clung to a sweat-soaked, anguished face. "This isn't just about feeding, Cory" I replied.

This torment was more than that.

"But it will help" He persisted.

"Do you not understand?!" I growled at him. "This is because of her" I muttered and her face flashed behind my eyes. She was all I could think about which made it a lot more worse.

"When your wolf is left mateless for too long, it's bound to go feral on you. But when your mate is close, it can sense it. That's what happened tonight. The kiss awoke something inside of me—this bottomless hunger and uncontrollable desire for her" I lifted my eyes to Cory.

"And now, I can't control it because all that's echoing in my head is that I simply must have her. But Eliana, she's—" I scoffed, pushing a hard lump down my throat. "Your body could be a lot stronger if you just feed and it wouldn't be as hard to withstand these desires" Cory replied.

"Pray you never go through this" I said to him. I wouldn't wish such anguish on my worst enemy. But I also couldn't pretend like Cory understood a word I was saying. He met his mate when he was a few months shy of eighteen. They got together soon after, got married. Had two kids they loved so much. His wolf was thriving.

Beyond satisfied.

But all my life, mine has just been searching for one person—Eliana. And when I rejected her, I was unknowingly doing myself more harm than what I put her through which was a lot I knew. That was why when she left, I searched everywhere for her. Heaven and earth, but she was nowhere to be found. I needed her so badly unless the torture would never end.

My wolf would be as feral, tearing through my skin forcefully. There was this hole inside of me that was forever yearning for someone. Someone I knew I could never have again. But these episodes have gotten a lot more frequent and intense ever since she got back.

Like my wolf could tell that she was close. What was stopping me?

Because nothing could stop it.

It hit me like a storm again and I fell to the ground. My chains clanked and rattled as I strained against them. I held the locks tightly until they burned through my palms. I could feel the anguish rise in my chest as I let out a deafening howl to the ceiling.

"I can't watch you like this!" Cory pushed himself forward as I breathed heavily through my lips. "No..." I panted. "It will all be over soon" The episodes lasted merely a few hours but at that moment, it always felt longer. "I brought this upon myself" I gnashed my teeth into each other.

"I was the one who kissed her."

"Now, my wolf wants more" I heaved. "Then tell her, you must go meet her" Cory was about to unlock the doors when I threw myself at him again. "No!" I snapped. "You must keep me in here. You must keep me as far away as you can from Eliana whenever I get like this"

"I can't afford to be close to her. I'm not certain I'll be able to control myself and I fear I'll do something I will regret. So I'm not taking any chances. I stay here until it's over" I looked Cory dead in the eyes and he pushed a hard lump down his throat before he nodded.

"Fine," He muttered. And with his hands in the air, he pulled away.

"Drink the water. I'll come back in an hour" On his way out, Cory threw me one last look before he walked out of the door. Frustration crept into my veins as I lunged myself to the ground.

Across the dark room was a piece of glass inside which I saw my glintful brown eyes filled with intense hunger and desire for Eliana. Every moment that I couldn't have her, I was only punishing myself.

She didn't want me. That much I knew.

But she didn't know that she was killing me.

Because for how long would I be able to control this? To live like this?

My wolf was being suppressed inside of me, starved and stricken. And it was a matter of time until it went against my body and ultimately, me. But until then, I was going to leave it up to Eliana to make her own decision. I already made mine, a terrible one six years ago.

Now, I needed her to make a choice. And I needed her to choose me.

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The next time I lifted my eyes up was when the doors opened again.

"It's not even up to an hour, Cory" My voice echoed through the room. I scented him even before he walked up to the cage and he had a phone in his hands. I knew that look in his eyes.

"Who is it?" I muttered.

"It's Eliana. She wants to speak to you, Alpha" He replied and my heart sank in my chest. He passed the phone beneath the cage again and I almost didn't pick it up. 'But what if she was in danger?' I asked myself.

"Hello" She'd said repeatedly. Her shrill voice struck a chord in my heart as I picked up the device. "Denver," She called.

"What is it?" My words may have come out more gritty and impatient than I intended. I didn't know how long I had till my wolf resurfaced again.

"I ran into Blake" And those words didn't make it any easier. "What?" I questioned. "I'd shifted in the forest and when I woke up, I thought it was you standing there. He was wearing exactly your face and your mannerisms and he brought me some clothes,"

"But I knew it wasn't you" She added. But only one struck me though.

"Did you say you finally shifted?" I asked. And even she didn't realize when she blurted it out. "Yeah" She echoed. Could it have been possible that she was almost nearly as affected by that kiss as I was?

"But that's not the point, the point is I saw Blake and on earth did he even make himself look like you?" She was paranoid. I could hear it in her voice and it was because of him.

"That's his ability...well, one of them. He can shape-shift, not just into a werewolf but he can make himself look like someone or something else. It's just one of his games. Don't let him get to your head" I muttered before feeling lightheaded a second later.

I cleared my throat, wedging my arm against the walls.

"I asked him what he wanted, but he didn't answer me. He said once that he came here because of his family" Eliana added. "That's a...That's a lie" I stuttered. My eyes met with Cory's.

"Can we talk...Later?"

"Are you okay, Denver?" She softly asked. "You sound weird from over the phone—" "Yeah, ye..." My spine cracked. And the phone dropped to the ground. Cory tried reaching for it when I threw myself at him and he fell backward with genuine fear in his eyes this time.

He crept back on his arms as I shifted into a wolf for the umpteenth time that night. My bones agonizingly cracked and my eyes turned fire-red. Claws shot out of my fingers and fangs from my teeth.

And at the end of it all, I let out an ear-splitting growl that thundered the walls and quaked the earth. And then I fell to the ground. It was over now and the last thing I heard was Cory's frightful deep breaths.

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Morning came finally and the sun in my eyes caused a spearing migraine to strike my head. I sat up, but not against the hard dungeon floors. It was on a bed this time and I looked around the room.

"Good, you're awake" Before my eyes fell upon Cory. He stood next to the bed with a glass of water in his hands. "Here you go" I'd barely collected it before I downed everything in its entirety. A refreshing sigh escaped my lips.

"Also, some painkillers" He threw a pill to the table.

"Last night was hell, Alpha Denver" Cory said and I looked across the bruises on my arms. "Imagine how it was for me then" I remarked and there was a crack in my voice.

"I'm only saying that It's getting worse with each episode. You need to be able to fight it. You need to have enough strength to fight it so your body doesn't give out on you" Cory added.

"We don't have another Alpha at Black Mountain, just you—"

"And we don't even want another Alpha." He continued and a smirk crawled to my lips. He was on his way out when he halted. "Also, one more thing—" And before he even completed that sentence, I could scent the poison that had immediately filled the air.

I got up defensively, so when Blake himself walked through those doors, I charged at him, throwing him against the walls with an elbow to his chin. He fought back and the only reason he was able to maneuver my attack was because I still felt weak from last night.

He kicked me down but I got up sharply, keeping a distance from him.

"That's one way to do a family reunion" He cackled from his lips.

"You really should learn pleasantries."

"Why are you really here and what do you want from Eliana?" I scoffed at him. He smiled at me with surprise. "Oh, I see she also ran to you. Makes a little jealous, you know I thought we had a moment" He said.

I couldn't resist my fists from folding up. All I wanted to do was snap his neck and gut his heart out of his chest.

"Careful there, brother" He noticed.

"Now you know of the two of us who are most likely to win a fight. Since you enjoy digging your own grave with this little game of self-control you like to play," He chuckled.

"Or is that what you think it is, self-control?"

"Denying your very primal nature...to be what, human?" Blake asked. "You were born to feed, to kill. Do you need me to remind you of your very role as an Alpha" He continued.

"I can be an Alpha without all of that." I croaked.

"Tell yourself what you want," Blake circled the room until he finally came to a halt. And then he met my eyes. "But you're only killing yourself very slowly—"

"Why are you here, Blake? Stop avoiding my questions" I snarled at him.

"Maybe that's why I'm here, who knows? To watch your tragic yet inevitable demise" He laughed and it took a world of self-control to hold myself back at that moment.

"Oh brother," He heaved.

"If this is about the crown or the throne, just know that you'll never get it. Not in this life, nor the next" I grunted. "The thing is even if I wanted to challenge you for Alpha, it would be a pretty easy victory for me. With your whole self-righteous search for humanity" He replied.

I did inch closer to him but I forced my hands to stay still.

"But that's not why I'm here. The truth is, telling you takes out all the fun, doesn't it?" I looked him dead in the eyes before parting my lips. "I will find out." I threatened him.

"I'll find out why you're really here or whatever you came for and I'll make my life's mission that you don't get it. And if I'm dying Blake, you sure as hell know that you're coming with me." I muttered to his face.