

## Chapter 40 A Tough Decision

DENVER.

It was clear something was bothering Eliana the whole ride to Blood Hound. Occasionally, with my hands clutched to the steering wheel, I would dart my eyes in her direction only to find her lost in her thoughts.

Her eyes remained fixated outside the windows. I could tell she had been so through so much, especially after finding out about Elijah. I mean, raising a kid all by yourself over the last few years could've never been an easy feat. Only to be called back home that the future of your Pack rests upon your shoulders as well.

If there was something I hadn't noticed when we were married, it was that Eliana was just as strong as she was a beautiful woman. One of the reasons I was attracted to her but for some reason, I couldn't bring myself to stop hurting her even though it was never intentional.

Ever since the night we spent together, it has been hard not to think about her. Harder to take my hands off her as well. When I found out she had been with another man which resulted in Elijah, my jealousy was inescapable. It had been eating me from the inside for so long.

Eliana said they no longer kept in touch but I couldn't be so sure. I mean there was a whole human kid that would forever bind them. The thought of that forced my stomach into a knot as I looked at her again.

I knew how I felt about Eliana, one might even say I loved her. But it was the first time I was feeling such emotion and it was so hard for me to let my walls down, especially after what happened the last time. It wasn't fair comparing Aurora to Eliana because they were really so different.

But the last time I thought I was in love, it cost me my mother's life and my relationship with my brother. My father never forgave me up until he died too. And the only reason I was handed the crown was because when Blake was mourning Aurora, he fled.

It was in his absence that I became Alpha King. My brother never stayed, he just came and went whenever he wanted. But each time he was around, he made sure to make my life a living hell. He never forgave me for Aurora, and neither did he ever let go of the fact that I took the throne.

Love was impossible with the difficulties, I had a terrific relationship with what I thought was love, any kind of love. It made me the way I was, the ruthless, merciless Alpha who was incapable of love.

But that changed the second I met Eliana when I rescued her that night but somehow, I was stupid enough to let her go. But then she came back. Call it fate or whatever it was, but she came back.

Why was it so fucking hard to just tell her how I felt?

"Denver!" She screamed my name and I forced myself out of my head to see I was driving close to a deer. I swerved my hands and that was the only reason I didn't run over it. Eliana looked at me, clutching her chest.

"Careful man" Ivan muttered. "It was injured" She threw her eyes back at the roads and you could hear the sympathy in her voice. The compassion she has is something I could never relate to. And sometimes I wondered whether it was a curse or blessing for someone to be able to feel those things deeply—things like love.

"We're here" Ivan announced as I brought the car to a halt. He alighted but only to survey how safe it was for us to come out. In the meantime, I held Eliana's hands. I was wrong for what I said to her that night.

"What?" There was a crack in her voice and a hard lump that slipped down my throat. "Elijah will be safe, right?" I blurted out, feeling some connection with the boy that made me take pity on him. Maybe because I felt for his mother too. I watched an arch ravage her brows.

"You'll be away the whole night, I was just—"

"He's with my Grandma. I'm sure he'll be fine. Elijah's a strong little boy even though sometimes I wish he was just a little boy" Eliana whispered.

"But that isn't possible, is it?" For the first time, I saw the fear in her eyes as she spoke. I pressed my lips together. "What about his father?" I asked. "He's still in Tuscany, right?" At that moment, I watched something flash in her eyes.

Something I couldn't quite decipher.

"He does know about Elijah, right?" I questioned and Eliana pulled herself away from my hands. I arched my brows at her. He didn't.

"Can we just get through tonight first?" Her hands reached for the door handle but I held her shoulders. She turned only slightly for our eyes to meet. "You know I'm sorry if I've been somewhat of an asshole these past few days..." I muttered.

"It's just that I couldn't ever bring myself to allow something happen to you. We'll get through this," I paused and Eliana gazed into my eyes. There was a certain softness in the air between us. Just tenderness that oozed out of her. It always found a way to get to me.

"I'll make sure of that" And then she nodded. "And when all this is over, you will be reunited with Elijah tomorrow morning and all will be well" I assured her and she sealed her lips tight before echoing, "All will be well"

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"All will be well." That was my mantle with every step I took, barging through the doors of the chamber. I made Eliana a promise and I was going to show up. Right after I saved Ivan and ensured her father was safe. I'll make it in time back to the Ballroom.

But as my eyes fell to my watch, I realized the one thing that time wasn't on my side. "Ivan!" I called out, scurrying through the halls in search of him. I could barely scent him but the good thing was I knew my way around here because of the last time I came with Eliana.

So I knew the exact door her father was behind.

I thrust myself up the stairs, lunging forward with each step like my life depended on it. I had to save her father, tonight. There was no compromise neither was there another option.

"Ivan!" I barged into her father's room but in a split second, I was roped into the corner. "Careful!" He breathed into my neck. I looked back at Ivan. "We were trying to call you" I said. "Shuu" But he placed his hand against my lips before darting my attention across the same room.

"It's Nora" My eyes landed on a young lady who seemed to have heard something by how sharply she stood but half her concentration was in the book she was reading in her hands. A book she placed down for a second.

"Hello?" She called out in our direction. I remained still, holding my breath in the corner next to Ivan. Right behind her though was Eliana's father.

"We've got to get him" I mouthed. Ivan shrugged.

"Well to get to him, we must get through her" He whispered. "Eliana's stepsister" I muttered with my fist folding up. "Denver, you can't do anything to harm her—" "Hello!" She called out again.

"I know someone's in here, I heard the door" Her grating voice was followed by a low growl. She was inching closer and was a few steps away from our hiding spot. "Don't try me!" She yelled out. The sounds of cracking bones echo in the room.

I turned my eyes away from her for a second to look at Ivan but when I turned back around, Nora had disappeared. "Where is she?" I gritted through my lips as terror filled Evan's eyes. "Right behind you" He pointed just as she lunged at me, a wolf. But I was quick enough to crouch low to the ground.

My claws struck the wooden floor as I lifted my bloodlust-filled eyes.

"It's you!" She recognized Ivan. "You're the traitor" A growl escaped her throat but she was nothing I couldn't handle. My screech drew her attention before I grasped her by the fur. She rolled across the room, agile enough to land on her feet and then she bowled at me.

Of course, she knew me. Everyone did.

"Run. Take him" I ordered Ivan. "I'll handle her" Nora growled at me and it was obvious she wasn't going to give up without a fight. She pounced in my direction, clinging to the walls before jumping at me. Her claws sliced across my throat, causing it to bleed.

And just as Ivan grabbed her father, Nora zoomed in his direction to halt him. She howled. I lifted my eyes. I underestimated her, she was putting up a good fight but I just didn't want to hurt her.

"You're not the enemy" I said to her. She shifted her gaze back at me with a snarl. "Let him go. I won't hurt you" I said. "I know you're only just doing what your brother said but in as much as I want to hurt him, I don't want to hurt you too. Let him pass, Nora" I asked of her.

And even though there was a little hesitation, she still shook her head.

"You're going to have to kill me first" Her eyes raged at Ivan and I cracked my neck. "It didn't have to come to this" I moved to her in a split second and with my two hands on her head, I snapped her neck.

"No!" Ivan yelled, horror in his eyes and more so in her father's. I climbed over her body to him. "You need to get him out of here as fast as you can." I muttered. "And what about you?" Ivan asked. "Where's Eliana?"

"I need to get to her" I looked at my watch again. "Promise me, you'll be safe" I grasped Ivan's shoulders, letting my eyes fall to Gerald himself and he nodded reassuringly. "You too" He replied before I kicked my feet out of the chambers. I zoomed through the forest until I got back to the Ballroom and hearing a chorus of chuckling, I stopped in my tracks.

Right behind the door.

"Where is he? Your supposed mate?" I could recognize his voice from a distance and I knew this was the time. Eliana was out there, I had just one job and that was to show up. That was exactly what I did.

The door fell open with a tremble and as soon as I stepped in, everyone turned around with gasps on their lips. They all knew me, I could tell by the terror in their eyes. But I wasn't here for them.

I mounted forward, meeting Jaxon's vengeful eyes. I was here for him.

"I heard you were looking for me?" I croaked, pulling Eliana behind me and the whole room just erupted in an uproar. "What exactly is going on?" Jaxon asked. "I should ask you myself" I scowled at him.

"What do you think you're doing? I warned you the last time to stay in your Pack and let me handle mine" He replied. I inched closer to him. "The thing is I can't, not when Eliana's my mate" I watched his eyes widen. "That's ridiculous" He said, plain and simple.

"Surely the moon goddess might have made a mistake,"

"I'll be careful with my words if I were you. You don't want to make too many enemies in one night" I said. "I'm not afraid of you, Denver" Jaxon gritted through his teeth and I twisted my tongue.

"That's unfortunate" With Eliana behind me, I knew I wanted to protect her and there was a surge of courage that ignited my chest. "Because you should be," I paused. "Because at the end of the day, the one thing between you and that throne is going to be me" I said.

Eliana slipped her hands softly into mine and I clenched them tight. He stared astoundingly at the both of us. "You can't challenge me. Not when you have your own Pack. It's not possible, you can't do that" He fretted.

"I can do anything I want, Jaxon. I think you may have forgotten, you're not an Alpha but I am" I reminded him so condescendingly that it struck him like a knife in his chest. I could see the anger in his eyes as he folded his fist but then his hands opened after a tense second.

There was a brief silence.

"You didn't think it was going to be that easy, did you?" Jaxon smiled and a furrow came between my eyes. His lips curled.

"Get him." He said and suddenly, Eliana was whisked from my hands and thrown into the crowd. A distasteful howl echoed through my ears and I looked up to find Nora.

"They have him!" She said. "They have father" Jaxon's eyes narrowed as he shook his head at me before thrusting himself through the ceiling. As the debris came down with a tremble, the whole Pack started shouting and screaming and looking for a way out of there.

I lunged myself to save Eliana but Nora got to her first.

"Go!" She then whispered. "I'll handle Nora. Just don't let him get my father" Eliana said. I shook my head firmly. "There's nowhere I'm leaving you. I said we'll get through this together" I muttered.

But Eliana stood firm on her grounds.

"You also said you were going to save my father. That's what I want you to do Denver," She said. "If they get him, I'm not sure I'll ever see him again. I won't ever forgive you, Denver" Her eyes welled up with tears as she gripped my hands. "Please," She said.

"Save him." And I looked back and forth between the holed ceiling and Eliana right in front of me. "I can handle Nora" She said and part of letting my guard down meant I had to trust her too. But the thing was, if something were to happen to Eliana, I wouldn't forgive myself either.

And that just left me with an even harder decision to make.