

20. A Renewed Determination

SEBASTIAN.

"I can't believe you never told me any of this," Jai says quietly.

The sunlight is shining through the hospital window as we discuss everything. I did tell Dad what had happened, but of course, he simply blamed me for it.

This pack is meant to be my responsibility, and it should be. It is my fault that someone was able to get in and try to kill her. As the Alpha, it's my job to keep everyone safe.

"I know, and I should have. But it was my mistake to act so blindly."

"Ashbane in your system, remember?" Jai reminds me as if it's obvious and enough of an excuse.

But it's not, I should have been more careful, everything I did was wrong.

"No Jai, it's not an excuse. I fucked up, and it's on me to make amends, not blame it on something else. I can't make an excuse for myself." I sigh. "Also... We won't mention the Ashbane to anyone. The doctor also knows this, and I have the only copy of the report. He didn't file it in my reports. I don't want to alert whoever it is that we figured this out.

"Well then, be careful what you consume. You've somehow been ingesting a large amount on a daily basis if we go by the test result." Jai says, picking up the paper that sits on the hospital table between us.

Two cups of steaming tea that a nurse had brought in not long sits between us. I pick mine up, nodding in agreement to what he said as I take a gulp, but it does nothing to warm up the cold and emptiness I feel inside.

"I don't know how...but with Ashbane it means someone would have had to be near to instigate me into thinking what I was thinking. It doesn't just work on its own. Someone is telling me what to do..."

That thought alone is chilling, especially for someone in my position.

"And since you don't seem to remember, I'm assuming they knew exactly when you were consuming it and when it'll take effect," Jai mutters, folding the test result and passing it to me. "Keep it safe."

I slip the piece of paper into my pocket and tilt my head. "Or it's someone who I'm around daily or often enough, so because they're always around... I wouldn't realise."

"I bet it's that awful woman that you really need to get rid of. I mean, I get why you did what you did but flaunting an ex in front of your mate, really? Even as a cover is fucking stupid." ³

"I know. Like I said, I fucked up." I glare coldly at him. He doesn't need to remind me.

"Ok ok, fine. I'll drop it but I really wouldn't put it past her to be the one administering it."

I shake my head. "She's not had anything against Zaia..."

She has. The negative vibe and the remarks and jabs she's always made towards Zaia now seem a little too obvious, but I just turned a blind eye to it... is it her? ²

I mean, I've felt she is dangerous, stupid and annoying, yes... but is she really this cunning? 4

The chance that it is her is low, but I can't rule her out, I need to find out about her apparent kidnapping. 3

Anger flares inside of me and the glaring reality of how foolish I have been screams inside of my head.

I was blinded... I can't blame Dad for being so disappointed in me.

"The pregnancy... I mean... I have a confession." Jai mutters.

I cock a brow, waiting for him to continue.

"I knew the twins were yours... but you were with Annalise, and when Val explained to me that Zaia was scared, you'll take the kids, she didn't want you to know. And yeah, I agree, you were being a dick and so I respected her decision." Jai admits, making me look up at him sharply.

"So you knew."

He sighs. "Valerie told me when that entire report fiasco happened. Plus, there's more..." He sounds uneasy as he glances around as if making sure no one can hear us.

"What is it, Jai?"

He picks up his cup and takes a gulp.

"It's about Zaia... when they did some tests on her and she found out she was pregnant, they also discovered she's really weak. Valerie felt she was being poisoned and had some tests done ... Zaia was being poisoned. Right here under our noses."

My stomach twists, and I look down, my heart thundering in my ears.

"And why didn't you tell me something so important?" I ask quietly. 1

"Because you weren't listening, Sebastian, you didn't deserve to know. I know you would have become possessive of the babies, but in the process, you would have only hurt her more." He answers.

I look away, guilt washing over me, and here I was, not thinking I could get any angrier at myself.

She is going through so much and I've been blind to it all...

Zaia poisoned... and me taking Ashbane, it isn't a coincidence.

"There's more." He begins hesitantly.

"What is it? Tell me everything, Jai." I warn.

"The day after you handed her those divorce papers, she asked Valerie about the risk of a rejection. She asked if her babies would be ok."

"And what did Valerie say?" I ask hesitantly.

I know I won't like this, but I pray that my pups are ok.

"The babies will be fine, Seb... But Zaia, that rejection has cost her. Due to her weakened state when she was rejected, the chance for her to get pregnant again is next to nil."

I close my eyes, turning my head away.

What have I done? ①

I place my head in my hands, trying to calm the storm of guilt that is threatening to destroy me.

"It's not too late Sebastian... do the right thing by her..." Jai's voice is drowned out by the agony and self-hatred that is screaming at me, in my own mind.

It's worse than the pain of the rejection.

Fuck, what have I done?

Ashbane...

My eyes flash as a sudden thought comes to me and I sit up straight.

Sleeping pills. I've been taking them pretty often to help me sleep better.

"I know that look. What is it?" Jai says.

I frown as I look at him.

"I've been taking sleeping pills almost every day. What if it is those pills that have been tampered with?"

His eyes widen before he frowns. "Where did you get them from?"

"The pharmacy... it was a sealed bottle."

"Then possibly the ones you have at home? Maybe it's worth getting them tested by someone down at the squad.

I nod, "I think I will... I will get my woman and children home." I say, standing up.

Jai smirks, his eyes looking a little alive. "You hear that Val? We're bringing Zaia home."

I look at the woman who is lying in the bed and I know I do need to tell Zaia about her... and not as an excuse to make her come back, but because she deserves to know. She and Valerie have always been close and the best of friends along with their other friend Cara.

I down my coffee and glance at Jai. "Let's go, we need to tell the Scotts."

He nods as he stands up, his gaze falling on Valerie before he steps around the table and caresses her hand softly.

Leaning over the bed, he kisses her cheek softly and I turn, exiting the room to give him a moment.

I lean against the wall, staring at the white walls opposite me.

The only thing on my mind is that I have hurt Zaia in so many ways.

I'm fucking sorry... and I'll bring you back. I'll fix this. I have to.

The visit to Valerie's family is rough, breaking the news wasn't easy. The Scotts' didn't take it well and I could practically feel their pain.

Along with the devastating news, they were angry we waited so long to break the news to them, but I didn't want to alert anyone. The fact she's alive makes me wonder if she knew

something that someone wanted her to keep quiet about.

And does it mean they might attempt to come back to finish the job? 🤔

These are things I didn't share with her family, her grandmother's health isn't great and unless its necessary, we don't want to stress her even more. But she had ended up almost fainting as she sobbed her heart out and I felt like a failure.

I just wish there is something I can do aside from having guards posted outside her hospital room. Jai has gone back too, which will give both me and him some peace of mind. 🙏

Even though the security squad is on watch, I don't know who I can trust, even in my own pack. The search of her apartment and of the crime scene didn't bring up anything.

There was no sign of a break-in, and the locks had not been tampered with, so either someone had a key, or they were let in, to make it worse the security cameras were coincidentally not recording anything due to a glitch for over a week, leaving us with even more disappointment.

The guard who was on duty at the apartment block that night didn't spot anything unusual either.

So many answers yet no answer. 🤔

But I'm not giving up... I want the answers.



Moonlight Muse Author



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