

## Chapter 49

A week had passed since my encounters with the Daltons. I haven't heard anything about it since, and Lukas had seemed more detached than usual. Meaning he probably knew what happened and that his parents knew.

I now felt awful. I didn't mean to hurt anyone, but I was so defensive of Maxim that at the moment, I wanted to hurt all his parents and Lukas for always hurting Maxim without so much of a look over their shoulders. But that's not me. I don't hurt people on purpose for spite, and I certainly didn't wish for any more divisions in their family.

Everyone has been extremely busy these past days. Fiona and Leonardo barely spend time with us anymore, and they are always in town. Maxim thinks they are just preparing for the barbecue at the end of the week, but I think it was something else.

On one hand, I didn't want to make too much out of it. What happened at the Dalton house did nothing to affect Fiona, so I didn't believe she was avoiding me for that reason. Lukas, on the other hand, was a ghost.

I don't think he's upset with me, though. He secludes himself and pouts around because he thinks he deserves it, and that's what I hate. Maxim, however, I don't know what to think.

We spent every night together, yet he never spoke about that day. I knew it bothered him, and I probably made his relationship with his parents worse, but even though how I did it was wrong, I think it needed to be done.

Maxim had done nothing wrong but be human. They shouldn't hate him for that.

I pushed myself back and forth on the old swing as the evening breeze brushed my hair all over my face. It was calming to be outside once in a while. Sometimes, the house got a bit too hot.

I had been on this swing for the past two hours just thinking. I spotted it on my way to the forest when I decided that I'd go for a run. But I saw the swing and thought otherwise. It was old and evident that it had been here for years, but it was still strong. It seemed like a contraption that a few kids made, and I already knew who those kids were.

I smiled at the thought of a simpler time when life was good. No mates, no dragons, just being kids. For me, it wasn't all sunshine and rainbows, but I could imagine the hell of a childhood that Maxim, Lukas and Leonardo had. They seemed so close in pictures.

"Hey, there you are," a voice I knew too well said, and I glanced up with a smile as Maxim approached me.

"I didn't worry you, right?" I remembered that I didn't tell him that I was heading out. He was busy in his office, and I didn't want to bother him.

He smiled as he leaned down to peck my lips. "No. I knew you weren't far. You okay?" he asked as he sat beside me on a tree trunk.

"Be careful. That has ants," I told him as I pointed to his makeshift seat. "And yes, I'm fine."

"Something on our mind?" he pointed out. His question even sounded more like a statement than a question.

He knew me quite too well. I sighed but shook my head. He knew I was lying, but he didn't push it.

"I see you found my swing." He chuckled a little as he glanced at the old ropes. "I used to come out here and think on this swing too when I was like ten years old. I always had a busy mind."

I cocked my head to the side in interest. "Yeah? You built it?"

"Uh-huh," he replied. "But Leo and Luke always bombarded me for turns on it." A light chuckle rumbled from his chest as his eyes glistened at the distant memory.

"Do you miss him?" I asked softly. "Lukas, I mean. Do you miss him?"

He stared at me, and his eyes gave me the answer, but he didn't say it out loud.

"There's something you might want to see," he said, changing the subject and getting up.

"Oh?"

He smiled. "Follow me."

I did as he said and followed him to his room. There was no one in the house. Not even Lukas. I really had no clue why they were always gone nowadays. It was unnatural.

As Maxim led me into his room, I noticed two dress bags on his bed. He had a crooked smile on his face as he gestured towards them.

"Go on," he probed, pointing at the bags.

With a small smile, I pulled on the zipper of the first bag slowly, revealing what seemed like a three-piece black and white tuxedo for Maxim.

I was stunned. I have never seen Maxim in a suit, and just the sight of one made me eager to. He'd look so handsome and dashing. My mouth almost watered at the thought. After seeing his suit, I could only guess what was in the other bag, and just as I thought, there was a beautiful dress sitting inside the bag.

I gasped as I held it in my hand. It was long and white with silver trimmings and rhinestones around the bodice. It was a sweetheart cut dress that seemed like it had a mermaid trail as well. It was nothing less than perfect, and my eyes watered at the sight of it.

"It came with these too," Maxim announced as he handed me a velvet box and a pair of heels.

I gasped. The heels were nothing I had ever seen before. Somehow, they went perfectly with the dress, and all I wanted to do was push my feet in them and wear them forever. But it was the box that had me swooning.

Blue stones stared back at me in all their magnificent glory. The necklace was the first to catch my attention. It was a silver chain with a heart-shaped pendant in the middle with the most beautiful stone I had ever seen. But what made it even better was that the stone was almost the same colour as my eyes. It was so unnoticeable that you would have to check really close to notice that they were different.

My eyes watered.

"And lastly, this came with them too." Maxim handed me a tube of blue fingernail polish as he pointed at a complete make-up set on his desk. I chuckled through my watery eyes.

"Maxim... How... where did you get this? Where are we going?" I asked, finally meeting his eyes.

He chuckled. "Oh, I didn't do any of this. I wish I did, but I came here and saw them with this note."

I took the card from him as he retrieved it, and curly handwriting sat on its surface with two sentences.

\*Maxim, Melissa,

Come to our party tonight at the Pack Hall. Your presence would be highly appreciated and, quite frankly, mandatory.

Sincerely,

The birthday girl\*

"Am I the birthday girl?" I laughed a little as I glanced at the dress. "I mean, with this dress, I would probably steal all the spotlight from the actual princess."

"There's more on the back," Maxim said with a hint of amusement in his eyes.

\*P.S. Don't change the dress, Melissa. If you do, then you're going back home. \*

"This sounds like Fiona," I chuckled.

"It is Fiona," Maxim said.

"It's her birthday?" I gasped. "Oh my gosh, is that why she and Leo had been so busy?"

Maxim stared at me for a while as if I was an innocent baby.

"Fiona's birthday is in June. Leo's is in January. Obviously, Fiona is just up to something," he pointed out, getting me even more alert.

I thought about it, and it made sense. "You're right, but what?"

"I guess we have to go and find out."

"I guess we do." For some reason, I felt excited. I had never had someone send me a dress and shoes and lure me to a party. For some reason, it was all so bizarre for me yet excited me in more ways than one.

Maxim could see that I was thrilled too because he watched me like there was nothing else in the world to see.

"Do you know that your eyes shimmer when you're happy?" he mumbled, holding onto my waist.

I wrapped my arms around his shoulders as if on instinct. "Then they must shimmer all the time when I'm around you." I reached up to kiss him, and he wholeheartedly returned it.

"No one is home," he mumbled against my lips, trailing his hand further downwards as he grabbed my ass. "What do you say I make you scream for once without covering your mouth, thinking someone would hear you?"

My heart leapt as he said this, and my body suddenly got excited. Almost every night for the past week, Maxim had brought me to climax after climax and all that without sex. I think we were both subconsciously waiting on the full moon to take that final step, but we weren't shy about doing... other things.

I smiled up at him but shook my head. "I'm going to go to my room and start prepping to get ready. Without Fiona here, it will take at least two hours to do my make-up because I

With that, I skilfully slipped from his hands, causing him to pout in the cutest way.

"Ten minutes?" he begged.

I giggled. "Follow me to my room, and you'll find out." I winked playfully as I grabbed my dress and shoes. "Bring the make-up box, please."

"Why don't you just get ready here?" Maxim groaned as he grabbed the box, trying to hide his evident erection.

"You have nothing in here that aids a female to get ready."

"I have a mirror," he mumbled.

"Oh, and do you have a blow dryer, moisturiser, make-up brushes, dress hangers, nail file or even a simple hairbrush?" I asked in a 'matter of fact' tone.

He stared at me blankly. "I have a mirror."

I bellowed out a laugh as I moved towards the door.

"Why don't you just move in then? I have all the space to put your stuff," he said as he fell in line with my walk.

"I will..." I admitted. "Just a few more days."

"Fine," he huffed.

As we broke the corner, I almost stumbled as I bumped into no other than Lukas. I don't think I have seen him all morning. In fact, the last time I saw him was yesterday at breakfast.

Maxim evidently stiffened beside me, and so did Lukas.

"Oh, hi, Lukas," I mumbled awkwardly as he side-stepped us.

"Hi," he grunted, seeming like he was in a rush to leave.

"Are you going to the party tonight?" I asked even though he was walking away. He stopped to face me in confusion.

"What party?" he asked in confusion before his face lit up. "Oh... that one. Um, no, but have fun."

I frowned. "Why not?"

"Why would I?" he returned. I acknowledged that these were the most words he had said to me in days.

"Because the entire pack might be there."

"Exactly," he said in a 'duli' tone. I grew even more confused.

"But you're the Alpha. Aren't you, like, expected to go to these things?"

He sighed as his eyes flashed to Maxim quickly. "I'm not going, Melissa. But have fun."

"But-"

"Just let him go, Melissa," Maxim said as Lukas walked off. As I watched his retreating form, I

picked up on one too many meanings in what Maxim said. Let him go.

But what if I didn't want to?

Sighing, I resumed my journey to my room in silence, feeling bummed about the entire thing all of a sudden.

"You were right, you know?" Maxim asked suddenly. "Lukas did get everything he wanted. I think you have been the only thing he wanted and didn't get. It was new to him, and it's killing him." But Maxim's voice didn't seem happy or triumphant like he had won, or Lukas finally didn't get something in all his life.

He sounded sad and almost like he pitied him. It was a hard façade to put up-acting like he didn't care about his brother anymore. Perhaps he was still angry because he refused to speak to Lukas. But he felt the loss, and there was nothing I could do to fill that void.

We could only hope that they'd make it better somehow.



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