

Chapter 56

Lukas's Pov

My paws basked against the dry leaves as I ran. The full moon shone down on me as if it was mocking me-jeering and punishing me for my past sins. No matter how much I hid under trees, it always peeked through the leaves.

I kept running. By now, Melissa would be deep in her heat, and I held onto every bit of self-control so I wouldn't turn back. Perhaps putting my wolf in control wasn't the best idea because I had to stay at the edge of our link, so he didn't take over completely, and it was exhausting. By tomorrow, I would've been just as tired as Melissa and Maxim would be.

It pained me just to think of them. I love my brother, and I love Melissa. This was why I made the decision to leave. It would be the best for them. I was in constant battle with myself, trying to keep my wolf on the path away from home. Just a few more hours, and I can rest.

I was already out of the pack borders, going south. My wolf dashed through the trees faster than any power vehicle, and that was exactly what I needed. I needed to put enough distance between the pack and me tonight so that if I somehow turned back, I'd have enough time to snap back to my senses.

Yet every time I think of Melissa... every time I see her face flash before my eyes and hear her laugh, my feet go weak for a minute.

How did I allow this to happen? How did I manage to fall in love with my brother's mate? Before I met her, I told Maxim that if he found his mate, it would've been better than if I had taken an innocent girl who undoubtedly had her real mate out there. But at the time, my brother wasn't interested in finding his mate, and that innocent girl I took so happened to be his.

Maybe that's the reason I got so defensive over Melissa. In my mind, Maxim didn't even want her, and I did, so she should've been mine. Then, when I learnt that Melissa didn't want him either because of what he did when they were kids, I guess I thought this was my shot to be the man she desired.

But I was naïve. I should've known that the mate bond would bring them together. Even if they hated each other's guts, they were still connected. Deep down, I always knew. On the night when she drove with him to the barbecue instead of me, I knew I'd lost her.

I got so angry and jealous that I swore I'd do anything to get her back. I was selfish. I didn't realise how much I had hurt her in my impossible quest of getting her back. But I say 'back' as if she was ever mine. I remember when I just brought her home. The way her eyes lit up when she caught Maxim's scent showed me that she was never mine. Even though I tried to think she was.

It's my fault that my wolf imprinted on her. If I hadn't been so pushy and love-crazed and obsessed with getting Melissa, my wolf wouldn't have believed that she was mine.

Sometimes I wonder what my life would've been like if my mate didn't die. Sometimes I feel like she's not dead-that's he's out there somewhere. But I didn't want to get my hopes up. I didn't want to dream falsely and spend the rest of my life searching for someone who was in the ground. I saw her grave. And I feel ashamed to admit that I wanted to dig the dirt away in tears and ensure that she was in there.

When I went to her house that day, I knew I'd found her. Her scent lingered in the Alpha

House, but it was faint. In fact, I soon realised that I was the only one who could smell her scent. She had been gone so long that her scent faded within the walls of Brightmoon Pack's Alpha house.

Her brother showed me her room, and I remember staying in there all day, just enjoying her scent and accepting that she was gone. I took a dog tag that I found on her nightstand before I left with her name on it.

Felicity.

I wear it every day around my neck, and I ensured that I'd take it off each time I was about to shift, so I didn't break it.

Perhaps I needed it right now as I ran through the woods, pining after someone else's mate. I never imagined that I'd feel so strongly for someone else, but Melissa somehow did it. I knew she was looking down on me now, disappointed in the man I've become. Her father told me that she'd want me to move on, and though I was depressed for a few months, I got up, and I tried to. However, I did it all wrong.

I fell for someone who wasn't mine, I hurt my family, and I hurt her. But I can't stand the thought that my mate-somewhere in the sky-is looking down at me in pure disappointment. It hurt like hell, and that was why I had to leave.

I had to forgive myself. I was lucky that Melissa forgave me. Leonardo and Maxim are still working on it, and I believe Fiona will be happy once Melissa is happy. My parents couldn't even look me in the eyes. My father was very disappointed, but strangely, they blamed themselves too. I told them that this was my mess and I was working on myself, and thankfully, they let me go.

I don't know what I expect to achieve from this time away from home. But I hope it gives me the will to look at myself in the mirror again and feel like a true Alpha. I have fallen short of my title, my morals and myself.

Hopefully, I can start afresh, get over Melissa, and who knows? Maybe someday, I'll find a woman who has lost her mate too, and we can be each other's second chances. The thought was nice, but at the moment, it was far-fetched.

The quiet rush of water alerted me as I neared the border of the state.

I slowed my strides and followed the sound, where I saw the beautiful clearing lined by a river. I didn't notice I was so parched until now, so I quickly manoeuvred around the trees to the water.

It was cool and refreshing. From the position of the moon in the sky and the angle reflected from the water, I could tell that it was well after midnight.

I was out of the state, tired and hungry. So, I decided that the clearing was a great place to rest. From what I could tell, there were no human civilisations nearby, so I wouldn't have to worry about being discovered. My biggest issue would be nothing more than a snake bite.

I circled my spot under a tree before laying down to take my rest. I allowed my mind to linger on thoughts of Felicity, Maxim and Melissa as I dozed off.

But as soon as I was about to fall into my slumber, I heard a twig snap close by. I instantly became alert, and my sleep went through the window as I jumped to my four legs. I growled, baring teeth as I scanned the area.

I couldn't tell what it was, as its scent wasn't distinct just yet. So, I waited. I stayed in my

crouched position, waiting for the intruder to appear.

When it did, I lowered myself back to the ground, seeing that it was only a deer. I watched him drink water from the river just like I did, and the more I watched him, the hungrier I became. So, even with my exhaustion, I crept up on him slowly like a lion would. I haven't done much hunting in my wolf form, so I was a bit out of my game.

And just to add to my luck, just as I was a few feet away from the creature, my paws crunched on some dry leaves, causing him to dart away at full speed.

I dashed after him, trailing behind him by a few centimetres each time. I was fast enough to catch him for sure, but every time I was ready to pounce, the damn thing swerved to the left or right, changing direction.

I trailed him through the trees, trying to anticipate his every move, but failed miserably. How was a deer outsmarting me?

I grew really frustrated, to the point where I focused on him and only him. I wasn't even interested in the meal anymore. I just wanted to catch the little fucker.

He darted to the left again, but this time I anticipated it and followed suit behind him. Before I knew it, my feet weren't on the grass or dirt anymore but on asphalt. I halted my running when I noticed this, and a bright, white light followed by the thunderous sound of a truck's horn snapped me back to consciousness as the deer escaped to the other side of the road.

I cursed in my brain when I saw that I was about to get run over by a trailer, and thus I attempted to dash to the other side of the road. But I was too late. The rugged, cold metal of the truck's bumper slammed against the lower half of my body, sending me plummeting to the side of the road. I bellowed out a painful howl as I felt the bones in my body being snapped out of place and the blood leaving my body rapidly. I rolled through the trees, where I finally landed against a pile of leaves.

I writhed in pain and agony as I simply laid there, motionless against the leaves. I was bleeding far too much to heal myself, and I had too many broken limbs to even start. I knew I wouldn't be able to heal myself. I knew this was it.

I moved my head a bit so I could see the moon. I understand now. She wasn't jeering or mocking me earlier. She was only welcoming me home.

With my last breath, I tried to reach out to Maxim in my mind. I knew he was too far away to hear me, but I wanted my last thought to be about him being happy with Melissa. I hope they will have my nieces and nephews, and I hope they will tell them good stories about me.

I hope Leonardo forgives me and grows his baby to be the man I never was. I hope my parents find peace with everything and hold me dear to their hearts. And I hope my pack remains strong, though I know they will be just fine under my brother's ruling.

My eyes drooped as the air left my body, and my heart slowed. I could feel myself drifting away-my soul already connecting with the moon. Finally, I hope my mate will have me once I'm with her. I knew that was what I wanted more than anything. That was all I ever really needed.

Even if I won't make amends in my current life, maybe my true happiness awaits in the other life. Wherever and whatever it is.

So, as I closed my eyes, I lifted my head to the moon, hoisted my upper body as best as I

could, and bellowed out a long, loud, final howl.

And then, peace.



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