

Chapter 59

I waited and waited and waited, and he never came back.

I stared and stared and stared at the box in the ground, and no one yelled 'April fools!' even if we're in the middle of November.

He was really gone. It didn't become real until Leonardo shovelled the first layer of dirt onto the brown box. It never became real until Camille squeezed my hand and dabbed away the tears from my eyes with her handkerchief. I had no more crying to do. I cried enough. Maxim had cried enough. But tears were all we could offer.

Wails and howls could be heard everywhere. Fiona, Natoya, other pack members and kids. Some wolves attended the funeral in their shifted form while others, like myself, decided to be here as a human. It was a beautiful ceremony, though my mind was far from clear throughout it all. I have been to many werewolf funerals in my life, given that people at my old pack are always dying. But none was like this.

Yes, the traditional flower down the river was done, except here, since there's not a large enough river, Maxim floated the yellow daffodil through the misty clouds of the cliff.

Everyone came to show their support. Everyone from home that is. Toya, Camille, even Logan and Lance.

I was grateful that they showed, especially since Lukas did a huge favour by providing the pack with better protection and sent wolves to train the warriors back home. Of course, at first, I hated the idea because I was the pawn in the entire thing, but it ended up working together for the best.

Soon, there was no longer sight of the casket, and I didn't even notice that most of the wolves were gone home. The only sound was our breathing and the patter of birds and insects around. Only Maxim, Natoya and I were left at the graveside. Fiona and Leonardo left, along with Logan and Lance. Toya and Camille stayed by my side as I gripped Maxim's hand.

After he 'returned' Lukas's soul back to the moon, he hadn't said a single thing again, and that was when we were at the cliff. I didn't even blame him because I hadn't said anything all day.

For the past three days of arranging this, I had been there for him. I held him through the nights and ensured he ate his meals. He was grieving for sure, and I feared he'd fall into depression if he hadn't already.

I hadn't had too much experience with grieving, so I didn't know the first thing to say to him. But I knew that being here made a difference, and I was willing to do that forever if that's what it takes.

"I can't do it," he mumbled for the first time in hours. His voice broke, but he didn't look away from the dark dirt spot.

"What do you mean?" I asked gently, shuffling closer to hear him better.

He shook his head. "I . . . I can't do this without Lukas, Mel. I . . . I just can't." He met my eyes, and my heart broke even more at the turmoil behind his. He really believed that he couldn't do this.

"Maxim, it will get easier." I tried to sound reassuring, but not even I believed it. I didn't know Lukas for long, and I felt like I would never get over his death, especially how he died.

Now, here trying to convince Maxim for the mere sake of his sanity-it didn't sound all too convincing.

"It won't, Melissa." He shifted his gaze to the headstone again. It read:

Lukas Dalton. Beloved Alpha, Brother and Friend. Dalla luna siamo venuti, e così torniamo.

That's Italian for 'From the moon, we came, and thus we return.' It was engraved on every gravestone in werewolf history.

"Maxim . . ."

"Melissa," he said when I couldn't find anything to say. "I love you so much. And . . . and I hope that you'll still love me after all of this. But when Luke died, a part of me died too. I was an Alpha because he was the Alpha. I . . . I don't think I can do this without him."

"Of course you can, honey," Natoya said, having overheard our conversation. Toya and Camille excused themselves when he started talking to give us privacy. "You have your Luna. She is your strength."

He nodded. "And the only reason why I'm still alive," he said with a thoughtful expression on his face. Then he said, "I need to go for a run."

My heart raced. "Now? Maxim, your mind is not—"

"I need this, Melissa. I'll be home before dark, okay?" he quickly pecked my cheek, giving me no time to protest as the ripping sound of clothes being shattered to pieces filled the space, and his grey wolf took control. I reached out to run my hands over his nuzzle. He closed his eyes at my touch, but I saw that he was lost when he reopened them.

As I watched my mate dash into the trees, I knew right there and then what I had to do. A sob rose from my chest as my tears came spilling once again. He was too broken—too lost. And I think it was less of that fact that Lukas died and more of how he died and how they last parted.

I couldn't bear seeing my mate go through that pain every day for the rest of his life. I couldn't handle feeling what he felt and hoping it would go away someday. I knew what I had to do, not for myself. But for him.

I mumbled a quick goodbye to Natoya as I furiously wiped my eyes, turning around and ready to go to bed.

Lukas once told me I should only do this if it's completely necessary, and in my book, it was.

As I reached the exit of the pack cemetery, Toya blocked my way with caution in her eyes.

"Melissa, don't do this. You know what will happen to that poor man if he loses you too."

Of course, she would've known what I was about to do. She somehow always did. But unlike every other time she told me not to do something, I shook my head.

"Toya, what would you have done if that was your mate? If you saw him broken in two and hurting so much? You don't know how it ended, Toya. I can't bear seeing him hurting like this, and I'll do anything to improve it. Anything."

"You'll hurt yourself and hurt him too."

"I won't!" I screamed. I didn't mean to, but my heart was beating fifty miles per hour. Logan,

Lance and Camille jumped from the car at my outburst, wondering what was wrong.

They didn't know anything about my power, and I'd like to keep it that way.

Toya sighed as she lowered her voice. "You have a gift, Melissa, and it's your responsibility to use it right. Not abuse it," she whispered.

I wiped my tears angrily as I met her pleading eyes. "If you want to stop me, you'll have to kill me."

She stared at me, flabbergasted. "Melissa . . ."

"That's what I thought." And with that, I jumped into Maxim's car and sped all the way home. I wasted no time as I dashed up to Maxim's room and dove into bed.

Fiona tried to reach out to me in our link, asking if I was okay, but I blocked her out. I blocked everything out and focused on Maxim, Lukas and dreaming.

I'm a dreamer, according to the oracle, and Toya's reaction somehow confirmed that to be true.

I didn't even notice that I was still crying until my chest started to hurt. I squeezed my eyes shut, trying to focus. I had no clue how this even worked, but I was determined that it would.

"Come on . . ." I mumbled in frustration, squeezing my eyes together even more. "Come on!"

I cried even harder. It wasn't working, and I think I knew why. I was far too upset to be doing this. Maxim's long, sorrowful howl from somewhere in the woods evoked even more tears. I had never heard him so hurt before. It killed me.

So, I pulled on a song that had been in my head for years, yet I could never tell how I learnt it. Somehow, I always knew that it was a song my mother sang to me as a baby, and I could never understand how I still remembered it. But it was what I used to calm my racing heart and focus my mind.

Until . . . I was there. Lost in myself as I formed my dream.



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