

Chapter 66

My entire body ached, yet it felt better than it had before.

I didn't know that there was supposed to be pain in the afterlife. I thought it was supposed to be painless and beautiful as if I was floating.

But I felt confined to a hard bed with my foot blazing and my entire body on fire.

Oh my gosh. I went to hell. Didn't I?

I refused to open my eyes. I refused to accept my eternal fate. The moon goddess had to take me to the moon. I don't belong here.

I shuffled in my bed of coals, and I heard light ruffling from behind me until a soft, warm hand rested on my head. I screamed and snapped my eyes open.

As my vision cleared, the first thing-or person-I saw was a woman, staring at me, stunned.

She held her hands in defence as she came closer and sat on the log in front of where I lay.

"It's okay. You're okay. I won't hurt you."

I opened my mouth to speak, but my throat felt parched. The woman, who I now noticed was here to help me, held a coconut shell to my lips, and I greedily gulped it down.

However, as soon as the water was down, my stomach rumbled, and all its contents came hurling up. Luckily, the woman had an old, rusty bucket that seemed like it had been through all the wars, but it did the trick by collecting what could have been a mess on her floor.

My stomach ached as everything I had eaten for the past five days left the right way. There was a nasty combination of berries, water, stomach juice and blood. She gave me another coconut to drink from, this one actually staying down.

"Thank you," I finally mumbled. Everywhere ached still, but I already felt better.

"You're welcome." She smiled. "Next time, stay away from purple berries."

"Huh?" I cocked my head to the side.

She pointed at my clothes, rolled in a ball on the floor. It was then that I noticed that I was wearing a clean dress, all cleansed from sweat, waste and dirt. I gasped.

"I found them in your pocket. They're bad for your stomach. Especially werewolves. They are from a plant that's far cousins with wolfsbane."

I gaped even more at her as she spoke as if it was natural for a complete stranger to know that I was a wolf.

But the more I focused my senses, the more I noticed. We were in a small shed. It only had two walls, and it was large enough for two. There was an area with a fireplace, where I assumed she did her cooking. The floor was made of small river stones, and there were two beds, one of which I was currently using. There were small bags everywhere as if they moved around a lot. But I could tell that they were here for quite some time. I could still hear the river, so I knew we were close by. Birds and creatures chirped all around, and the calm wind of the evening gave the place a homely feeling.

The more I focused, the more I noticed that my mind was back. I could think clearly, and I didn't feel the stupid urge to run away from home anymore. Only if I had known that earlier. I wouldn't have been here now, with no knowledge of how I could even get back home. My memories were still jumbled. But at least I was back in my right mind.

It made me wonder. What caused it? Why did I wake up crazy, then wake up sane again?

I shivered at the thought, and I instantly became fully awake, scared to close my eyes again.

The dress I wore was worn, but it was clean and smelt of wildflowers and sunshine. My foot was wrapped in a brown bandage, and it felt much better. But I had a fever.

My skin was burnt, but I could feel a thick layer of oil on my body and face.

Redirecting my gaze back to the woman, I had just fully become aware of the fact that the last thing I saw was a dragon-if I wasn't imagining things-and the place oddly smelt of smoke.

My eyes widened as I stared at her. Her amber eyes regarded me in keen concern, yet I couldn't speak.

"You were hurt really badly. Luckily, I found you when I did. I really hope you aren't allergic to Lavender or Aloe Vera. I made lavender oil a few days ago. It should help heal the burns, and the aloe will restore your skin. Since you're a wolf, you'll heal faster. They will only ensure that you heal properly and don't leave scars or too many."

Slowly I nodded. I should've gotten up and run for the hills. Yet, I didn't feel threatened around her.

"Your foot was the challenge. I had to cut it open, drain the pus, and treat the wound. Luckily, it wasn't like that for another week. You could've lost your foot for good," she added.

I nodded again, my heart welling in gratitude. "Thank... thank you. I don't know what to say."

"You can say you're hungry. You must be starving," she chuckled as she grabbed a few apples and strawberries. I greedily took them and devoured them all in a few seconds. She offered me more, but I couldn't eat all her food. I could tell she didn't have much.

And since she didn't live alone, I didn't want to be selfish.

"I... I really don't know how to thank you," I mumbled. "I could've died. You..." I stared at her in confusion again, not sure if I could make sense of this. "But you're a dragon."

Her eyebrows shot up as she nodded. "Yes. I am."

"But dragons are bad." I winced at how judgemental I sounded towards the woman who evidently saved my life. "I mean-"

She chuckled. "We're not bad. Just... Misunderstood."

I shifted uncomfortably. "You know who I am, don't you?"

"I've heard the buzz about the woman who had the moon shard. I was drawn to you, and that's how I found you."

"Drawn to me?" I echoed, not understanding.

She nodded, her face suddenly serious. "I can only imagine what you've heard about us and the moon shard. But now, rest. You need to sleep."

"No!" I screamed. "I might wake up crazy again."

She looked confused, yet she didn't ask.

"Just stay with me. Let's talk."

She chewed on her lip as if second-guessing. I wanted to cry. I hadn't been awake for ten minutes, and I was already going to make her kick me out. I had nowhere to go. I could always go home if I knew where home was. But I had completely lost my sense of direction. Not even my wolf could help me now.

"Okay," she mumbled. "But I was just going to get some more food before my friend comes home. She gets... grumpy when the food goes away too fast."

I frowned, suddenly feeling guilty. "I can help."

"No," she instantly dismissed. "You should stay off that foot for at least two days and give the plant

some time to work. They have healing properties, not magic. Take it easy."

My lips quivered. With all that happened, losing my memories and now this-I felt like my life had completely fallen off the grid.

"Hey, don't cry," she said with a frown. "I promise I'll do anything to help you, okay?"

I nodded, smiling through my fallen tears. "But why? Aren't you going to bring me to the sun dragon to sacrifice me for the moon shard or something?"

She laughed. Like fully laughed. "You think that's what we want with you? No. Anyone with the moon shard is cherished and protected. We don't harm you."

"Is that why you helped me?" I asked. That had to be it. Yet, she shook her head.

"I left that life behind a long time ago. Moon shard-sun crystal, whatever they call it. I'm over it."

Wait, did she say sun crystal?

"I helped you because I am a healer. I couldn't have left you."

I shuffled a bit, so I sat a bit better. "You guys have gifts?"

"Yes. Well, most of us are healers. Others are protectors, and some are intercessors. I knew that we had been butchered in the image of werewolves for centuries, and we don't try to justify anything. But we were never the bad guys. If you don't remember anything from our time together, remember that."

My heart fell at the sincerity in her voice. Perhaps that's the reason why they didn't kill anyone when they attacked. We only saw them as big and scary because they were new to us. Maybe they were just trying to talk or bargain?

I gasped aloud as I realised that I had just remembered that memory clearly. It wasn't in fragments, and it wasn't broken.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled. "I'm Melissa, by the way."

She smiled. "Louisiana. And hey, you don't have to apologise. Remember, I left that life a long time ago."

I nodded in understanding but reached to hold her warm hand. "I would still like to hear everything from your point of view, though. A different perspective."

Maybe this is it. Perhaps this was the truth my parents knew. Maybe, just maybe, the dragons weren't as evil as we thought.

I knew I wouldn't have been so responsive to her if it was another situation. If I was in excellent health and Louisiana had approached me casually, I'd scream and kick, and my mate would probably kill her too. Now that she helped me and saved my life, I was more responsive to her and trusting.

Yet, even though that was horrible, I found myself like Cheshire Cat.

"What?" Louisiana asked. I shook my head.

"Nothing, I just... A couple days ago, I woke up with no memories, and now they seem to be coming back."

She had a knowing look on her face. "I thought there was something wrong." She smiled as she left her seat to grab a tiny bottle. "I felt some unbalanced energy when I found you. I thought it was something with your mind."

She handed me the tiny vial of liquid.

"It's a special mixture that I made. It should work wonders for your mind. Or stabilise it, at least, just enough so your memories can come back. One by one. I added some in the water."

"But how did you know?"

She leaned back in her chair and smiled at me. "Have you ever heard about the Law of Attraction?"

"The Law of what now?" I asked, and she chuckled.

"The Law of Attraction. Basically, it's the phenomenon that our energies are interconnected with the universe. Whatever we do, say or think gets released in the universe through special vibrations. Many don't believe in it, but it is very much real. We were trained to pick up on energies as dragons, while wolves live from instincts. It's why you guys find your mates eventually, even if you are thousands of miles away. And it's why we can find the shards, no matter where they are."

"Wow," I mumbled. "So, all this time, the dragons knew where to find me?"

She shrugged. "Yes. But it's not always that simple. Sometimes our energy gets interrupted by something else-something like the 'magic' of an oracle."

"You felt that too?" I gasped.

"Pretty much. Oracles were made to connect with the moon to beat us dragons. Werewolves' instincts can do so much, but a few oracles who have the power to detect energies and use their werewolf instincts are what put them above us. So, the moon yet again beat us. At first, I thought it was the moon shard that pulled me to you at the river. But then I sensed the contraption of the oracle, so I knew it wasn't. It was made specifically to keep dragons away from you. But then I realised that there had been a great shift in your life as if you were slapped against the face of reality, and you were the pawn to fix it."

I wanted to ask so much. I wanted to know what she meant by the moon 'beat' them if she was so certain that this wasn't a war. But a woman entered just then, stealing away my attention and Louisiana's.

She wore a shawl over her head, so I couldn't see her face. But she stared at us, confused and defensive. But what shocked me the most was that she didn't smell like a dragon. She was indeed a werewolf, and by her scent, a high ranking one too.

I shuffled in my spot, suddenly scared as her eyes scanned me wearily.

"Louie?" she mumbled. "When will you stop bringing home strangers? I told you that not every hurt person needs your help. Some are dangerous." She snapped.

Ouch.

"She's different. She's special, and I really had to help her."

Angrily, her friend swept the shawl from her head and dropped a string of fish to the ground. My stomach instantly growled at the sight of food other than fruit.

But as my eyes darted back to the woman's face, a sense of familiarity struck me.

"That's what you say about every rogue you find-" Then she stopped, sniffed the air and met my eyes again. "Except, you're not a rogue, are you? You have a distinct scent."

I didn't even answer her. I only kept staring. But then she stared at me as if she knew me too, and I knew I wasn't losing my mind again.

"Wait a minute. . ." She mumbled as she crossed the room and pulled my hair from the bun Louisiana had put it in, and her face instantly lit. Suddenly, the coldness and resentment dropped from her eyes and was replaced with keen excitement.

"Oh my gosh. I can't believe this." She practically screamed. "I know those eyes and that hair anyways."

With her smile in place, the memory clicked. I knew where and when I had seen her before.

There was no way. No freaking way.

"Melissa? After all these years?" she asked, running her hand across my cheek.

I was only stunned as I stared at her. I always said Joshua was the first friend I ever met. But he wasn't. This woman here in front of me, over ten years ago, at the Alpha meeting hosted at my pack.

She was my first friend. The first person to show me kindness. And now, she was here in front of me yet again.

I couldn't believe it, yet, my smile was unmatched.

"Felicity."



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Chapter 67

It was her. It was really her.

I have never seen Felicity since the night of the Alpha Meeting at my old pack. Maxim humiliated me, and I ran away from her, even though she was trying to help me.

But now, all these years later, almost dying, she was here again.

"Oh my gosh!" I squealed as she hugged me.

"Hey, take it easy. She's hurt," Louisiana added cautiously. I chuckled as Felicity pulled away.

I was thrilled to see her. But I couldn't understand why she was here in the middle of nowhere, living with a dragon.

"Oh my gosh. It really is you." She stared at me in awe. "What the hell happened to you? Why are you out here burnt and hurt?" She analysed my body. Every burn and scar, down to the outline of my bones against my skin from all the weight I've lost. She frowned.

"What happened to you?" she whispered, sitting on the bed beside me.

I sighed. "I wish I remembered to tell you," I admitted. "I woke up a few days ago with no memories. I have a mate, Felicity. Apparently, I'm a Luna. But then I had some sort of panic attack, and I woke up losing my mind. Next thing I know, I was running away from home, sailing down the river and feeding on berries."

"Oh my gosh."

"I'd be dead if it wasn't for Louisiana. She saved me." I smiled at the dragoness, and she beamed right back at me.

"That's Louie," Felicity mumbled with a smile. "Always saving others." From the look on Felicity's face, I could tell that she was one of the people Louie helped.

"What about you? The last time I saw you, you were an Alpha's daughter." I really couldn't wrap my mind around it.

She sighed. "Let's just say. . . Being a rogue was much better than being a slave to my duties back home." Her words were so simple, yet they held so much meaning.

I held her hand softly, giving it a reassuring squeeze. Even after all these years and being a rogue, she still looked gorgeous. Her dirty-blonde hair was cut to her shoulders unevenly, yet it suited her quite well. Her green eyes were vibrant and alert, and her skin-gosh, her skin was flawless.

"But not you. You have a mate and a pack. You can't be a rogue. We'll help you get back home."

My eyes watered. "Really? Because I have no idea where I am."

"Of course," Louie replied. "You left on foot, no? So it can't be that far away."

"It's um. . . Primal Pack. That's my mate's pack."

They stared at each other in shock. "How long have you said you've been on the water?" Louie asked. I grew nervous.

"Around five days. What? Are we far away?"

Felicity nodded. "We're like two hundred miles away from Primal Pack. If I know the woods well enough, it should be another five-day hike."

"But we can't leave until you're healed and fed," Louie added worriedly. "You don't have the energy to make that trip."

I frowned but nodded in understanding. I knew I couldn't last if we left now, especially so weak. It

would take at least four more days to heal enough and get enough energy to make the trip. But now that my thoughts were back in order, I couldn't help thinking about my mate.

I shouldn't have left him, even if I could barely remember him. Being my mate and all, he must be going crazy.

I knew he was going crazy.

Maxim's POV

"I'm going FUCKING crazy!" I pulled at the roots of my hair as I paced in the living room.

Ten days. It had been eight fucking days, and we still haven't found Melissa. I was going out of my mind.

How far could she have gotten on foot? Were we searching the right places?

It killed me not knowing where she was, but I knew she was alive. If she had died, I'd feel the bond break, no matter how far away she is. But now, not knowing, worrying and anticipating drove me mad.

I feared that any minute now, I'd feel our bond break. Every sound I heard, I thought it was her coming back. I couldn't even sleep! Gosh, I was losing it.

"Maxim, we'll find her, okay?" Leo said as he slowly approached me. Lukas was at the border with the patrol. I haven't spoken to them in days. I couldn't. I'd tear their heads off for the mere reason that no one saw, sensed or fucking smelled her when she left. I had the strongest border patrol in the country, who kept rogues out of our territory for years to the point where we've become the most feared pack. And somehow... somehow Melissa got passed?

But I knew I only blamed the border patrol for my own failure. NO matter how strong of a patrol they were with the best senses and protection skills, Melissa is MY mate. And I should have been the first to know or sense that she left our room. It was my fault. And if she died out there, it will be on me, not the border patrol, not Lukas, but me.

Of course, my brother blamed himself. He believed that if Melissa left him dead, she wouldn't have dreamt whatever she dreamt of getting him back, she wouldn't have lost her memories, and thus, she wouldn't have run away. But I know Melissa. If it was possible and somehow reversed Lukas's death, she didn't do it carelessly. She had reasons, and she knew the consequences. That's just how she is. Her heart is so pure, and her intentions are always for the happiness of others and never her own.

I only wished I had seen it coming. Maybe then, I'd be better equipped to deal with it.

Yet, the only thing that puzzled me the most was how could I have not known that she had left? Even when I tried to reach out to her in our link, it felt so jumbled, as if her mind wasn't here on earth, and so I couldn't track her. And now, she was too far away. By right, no matter how far away she is, I should still be able to feel her. But I think her memories being gone was influencing our bond more than it should be.

My instincts should still drive me, but every time I followed my instincts, it led me to a river, and everything stopped right there. I even caught her sent against some trees a few days ago, and it always led me to the same place. Where it was as if she fell from the face of the earth.

Logan suggested that she went into the human town. Where else could she go? But I personally searched the entire damn place and left some wolves there too. She wasn't there. She hadn't even been there.

Fiona, on the other hand, had officially fallen into depression. From Melissa forgetting her and now this, she hadn't left her room in days. That couldn't be good for her and the baby, and so Leonardo had been spending most of his time with her. I understood completely. He had his mate to look after, and I had mine. I only hated to see her like this, though. Melissa meant a lot to her.

Toya and Logan had been here a while too. I could see the toll this had taken on Logan. As her older brother, he spent almost just as enough time looking for her as I have. I could tell that he was scared out of his mind, though. The way he treated her all his life, only to be met with this, must be hard. I could tell that he wanted to make things better with her. If he left his pregnant mate at home to help us search for her, there must be a lot going on in his mind.

"Maxim, did you hear me?" Leo asked, shaking me from my thoughts.

"Sorry, what?"

"I said I'm going to bring some food up for Fiona now, but I'll be on the search later."

I nodded in understanding. "I was going to head out now before everyone else. I can't stay here. I'm losing my mind." Another thing is that being inside where the scent lingered only made it worse. I spent most of my days and nights in the woods, searching.

"I think we're missing something," Logan added as Leo left. "We've searched every inch of the forest up to that river, Maxim. Day and night. Her scent has left the trees, and there is no sign of her anywhere. Could it be that she's gone much farther than we thought?"

I shook my head. "But how? She left on foot. Even if she was in wolf form, she shouldn't have gotten that far."

"But that was ten days ago," he pointed out. "How much farther could she have gotten by then?"

"Really far," I mumbled.

"Exactly. I think we should go beyond the river. If Toya's right and Melissa's mind is not stable when she left, she could be in another state for all we know, living on bugs or living with a pack of rogues."

The thought alone worried me.

"Let's go."

"I'll pack a bag with food and catch up with you."

I headed for the door, deciding to go beyond the river. All this time, I told myself that she couldn't have gotten far because I didn't want to believe it. I told myself that she wouldn't have strayed that far away from home-away from me. But what Toya said made sense. I felt it, too, when I couldn't connect with her. Her mind was unstable, and I hate myself even more for not considering that she could've gone that far.

As I swung the door open, I almost collided with Lukas and a young member of my border patrol. Lukas's dark eyes told me that there was something wrong. My stomach fell.

"He has something he'd like to tell you," Lukas snapped as he shoved the lad forward.

He bowed his head respectfully and his fear as she approached me. "A-alpha Maxim. I have a confession to make. I kept it to myself and ordered the others not to say anything, but the guilt is eating away at my mind, and it has been ten days since the Luna has been gone and-"

"Just spit it out," Lukas growled. I crossed my arms over my chest as my Adams Apple bobbed.

"I... we saw Luna Melissa the day after she ran away," he said, and I could feel my eyes popping from my head.

"What? Where?"

"Far south by the river."

"Near the human town?" I asked urgently. That was the same river where the trail of her scent ended.

The young wolf nodded. "Why didn't you say anything!" This came from Logan as he appeared behind me, almost as angry as I was.

"You should've seen her face!" he bellowed. "Her eyes... she was gone, Alpha Maxim. There was no

coming back for her. It would have crushed you-"

"That wasn't your decision to make!" I grabbed on his shirt and hoisted him into the air, my teeth bearing and claws ripping through his shirt.

His eyes widened even more in fear as he babbled nonsense.

"You saw her, and you didn't say anything because she looked crazy? Huh? You had an order to search for her. I was only a few minutes behind you! You should have told me, and I could have saved her!"

I threw him on the floor, watching him roll down the front steps. Yet again, I wasn't even angry at him as I was at myself. To know that Melissa was only a few minutes away that day. . . to know that if I had been faster, I would've seen her. To know that if I had gone ahead of the border patrol, I'd have her in my hands now.

It killed me.

I watched as the young wolf held his bleeding head. I didn't mean to give him a concussion, but I didn't spare him a glance as I grabbed my knapsack with clothes and headed for the forest. Lukas and Logan were right behind me.

"Where are you going?" Lukas asked.

I held the bag in my mouth so it didn't get shredded like my clothes when I shifted.

"To find my mate." That was the last thing I said before my fur and paws replaced my human body. And I was gone like the wind, deciding never to turn back until I found her.



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