

## Chapter 71

## Melissa's POV

Home sweet home.

We had crossed the borders a few minutes ago, and now we were almost at the Alpha house. I couldn't wait to have a warm shower and eat a full meal. Gosh, it had been too long.

Felicity and Louie seemed nervous. Anyone would. I felt the same way when I first came here, which was against my will. I could imagine that it was better for them who actually had a choice.

Still, I was excited that I'd get to live with them. It felt right, and the trip home just made it all the better. I was thoroughly caught up with what had happened since I was gone. I also filled them in on what happened on my end, especially after Louie found me.

There was still so much to say, but most of the trip was spent with the men shifted while they carried us to be quicker.

The second we were on the steps, Fiona and Leonardo dashed through the doors. Fiona's face was streaming with tears as the men went to the back to shift and change, which left Felicity and Louie in an evidently uncomfortable situation.

"Oh my gosh! You're back," my best friend sobbed in my shoulder despite the slight smell that I knew was there. Leo soon joined as he hugged me and kissed my temple, which surprised me.

"I'm so glad you're safe," he mumbled. I simply smile at him. I knew Maxim or Lukas told them we were home as soon as we were in the linking range. So, they were expecting us.

"Glad is an understatement," Fiona sobbed, rubbing slimy mucus and tears on my shoulder. I didn't flinch. After what I endured, nothing seemed gross to me anymore.

"I'm so sorry, Fi," I mumbled as my own tears pricked my eyes. "Maxim told me how bad you have been taking this. I'm so, so sorry."

"Ssh, it's okay." She finally pulled away and wiped her eyes, smiling down at me. From the swell of her stomach, I could tell she was ready to pop any minute now. "I'm just glad you're okay. I really couldn't have had this baby without her."

Her eyes drifted behind me to the other two women. Leonardo was regarding them oddly, but he didn't say anything since I suspected that someone might've mind linked him about the situation.

"You're a dragon?" Both Fiona and Leo asked at the same time. I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. Here we go again.

"Uh yes. . ." Louie mumbled as Felicity stood awkwardly to the side.

"Oh my gosh, where are my manners?" Fiona blushed as she wiped the excess tears from her eyes and stepped towards them. "I'm Fiona, by the way. The Beta female."

"I'm Felicity, and this is my friend, Louie. I just discovered three days ago that I was Lukas's mate."

"So I've heard." Fiona beamed, tears long forgotten now, knowing she had another victim. "Welcome to the pack. I'm not usually this sappy, but my best friend lost her memories and ran away . . . I mean, anyone with a heart would be sad."

"I understand." Felicity forced a smile. She wasn't really a people person. I noticed how she interacted with Logan and Maxim on our way back. But it would take some getting used to.

"Come, let's go inside. You guys must be hungry."

"Starving," I groaned. But it was then that I noticed something different. "When did you guys have time to repaint the house?"

Fiona and Leonardo shared an amused look before laughing. "Actually, Mel, you did that. Not us. I

thought they filled you in."

I squinted my eyes as I gazed at Leonardo. "And-"

"Yes, I have freckles."

"He always had freckles!" Fiona defended, but I shook my head.

"No, he didn't. His skin was spotless."

"But-"

"Hungry guests, remember?" Leonardo cut off his mate right on time.

For the most part, inside seemed just the same. I was exhausted, and all I wanted to do was shower, eat and sleep. Fiona sifted Felicity and Louie away, much like what she did with me when I just came here. Maxim entered just as I was about to go upstairs, but he pulled me back and wrapped his arms around my waist.

I beamed up at him.

"I want to take a shower," I whined.

He smirked. "More than you want to kiss your mate?"

"How could I say no to that?" I giggled as I reached up to kiss him. Over the past three days, we barely had any time to simply enjoy each other. And gosh, I missed him. I missed him so much.

The instant our lips touched, it was bliss. I didn't realise how much I missed him until now, and as our lips moved, the kiss only got more heated.

"Wanna go shower?" he mumbled against my lips, but I could hear a second question in this one. I nodded eagerly, and he wasted no time hoisting me in his arms and wrapped my legs around him as he brought me to his room.

And just like that, we were back.

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Being rested, fed, cleansed and pleased was exactly what I needed.

I slept all day, and I'm sure everyone else apart from Fiona and Leonardo slept all day too. I have learnt that whatever change that happened actually changed my sleeping arrangement, too, so I was now living in Maxim's room, and it was as if my old room didn't have any evidence of life. So, Louie stayed there.

I woke up at about six in the afternoon, and by then, everyone else was up. I had spoken to Toya and everyone else from home. They were happy that I was okay, and Logan was getting ready to leave soon.

It broke my heart to learn that because of what I did, Toya wasn't pregnant anymore, and Camille was the one who was pregnant. I knew Logan and Camille could have a hundred babies, but it was hard for Toya and Lance to even have one. But she tried to assure me that it was okay, though, to me, it wasn't.

I only prayed that she would get what was stolen from her soon. She deserved better.

I tried to convince Logan to wait until morning before he left, but he insisted that he had to go. I understood, though. He had his mate at home, and he'd been away from her for so long.

I stood at the door as I handed him his last bag. He stared at me with his bright brown eyes, much like mine before they changed to blue. Since they found me, this had been the first time we'd been alone, and it was a bit weird. Our past still lingered around us, but I could feel the potential to move forward.

"So, you'll come to visit?" he asked, and I nodded as I stepped forward.



"Sure you don't want to say goodbye to the others?" I asked.

"Nah. I already told them I was leaving. There's no reason for a personal goodbye."

I nodded but stayed silent.

"Look, Mel. . . I know I haven't been the best brother, and with everything that has happened, I know you aren't the reason why mom and dad died. I think I always knew. But I was a stubborn, selfish ass.

"Hey, it's okay," I said. "I already forgave you for everything."

He scratched the back of his head. "It's not like I deserve it. Melissa, I ruined your life. I know I did. I caused you so much pain, and I have no idea why my pain would drive me to torture you for twenty-one years."

Wow, it had been that long?

He sighed. "Look, I'm still trying to understand this moon shard thing, and I had no idea you were so strongly connected to it. Hell, a month ago, I didn't even know dragons existed. But it doesn't matter. I just. . . I want us to start over. I want a chance to be a brother this time. I'll make up for all the years I made you miserable. I can't promise that I will, but I will try."

I stared at him in silence for a while.

"No, I don't want to start over," I said, and I watched as his face fell. "I want to build on what he already has. It makes no sense trying to erase what happened. Let's just. . . Let's just improve our relationship. Yeah?"

He beamed-a genuine smile that I had never seen in my twenty-something years of living. "I can do that."

"Good, 'because I think I can too."

He surprised me by stepping forward and pulling me in a hug before kissing my cheek.

Oh.

"I've always loved you, Melissa. I hope you know that."

I shook my head. "I didn't. But it's good to know now. And as much as you were an inconceivable ass, I've always loved you too."

He chuckled as he pulled away. "Good to know. I guess I should get going then. You'll visit, right?"

This was the second time he'd asked. "Yes, I will. Oh, and please be safe on your way. I have no energy to bring back another dead person." I joked, and luckily, he picked up on the humour.

"I'll see you soon, baby sister." And then, he was gone. There was something in the way he said 'baby sister'. It was almost as if it had been a nickname he had for me when I was only a baby. And even as a grown adult, I liked it.

I entered the house with a smile as I found the others in the dining room. I instantly sat on Maxim's lap before seeing the seriousness on everyone's faces, which alerted me.

I instantly made a headcount. I was even more paranoid now, afraid that I would lose someone again. Luckily, everyone was here. I did a quick double-take as I glanced at Felicity and Louie again.

They looked so . . . different.

Their hair was clean, full and vibrant, and I could tell that Fiona had her way with them. It was now that their skin glowed. Louie's oils plus Fiona's skincare and grooming-they were so much more beautiful.

But what shocked me the most, though, was the mark on the base of Felicity's neck.

Oh. That was fast.

Well, it actually wasn't, considering that mates usually complete the mate bond within a day or two of finding each other. It only made her glow even more, and I liked that she already seemed comfortable with everyone, especially Fiona.

The seriousness in the air caused me to stiffen even more, and it was as if they were all waiting on me. I shuffled from Maxim's lap to the chair, where I glanced at each of them in horror.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "What did I do now? God, is someone dead?"

"No one is dead, babe," Maxim whispered in my ear. "Felicity wanted to talk to us-all of us."

Oh, thank goodness. I wanted to relax, but the look on her face, as if she was in pain, made it impossible for me to do such a thing.

"Thank you all for taking my friend and me into your home. I know it might've been strange accepting her," she started, and we all stared at her in anticipation. "So, I think it's only fair that I am honest with you all. Especially Melissa. We haven't kept in touch, but we've been friends for years."

My heart slammed against my chest.

"Maxim, I'm still not so fond of you," she said with a chuckle and Maxim, and I chuckled too, knowing what she meant. "But you are Melissa's mate and Lukas's brother. And Fiona, I've known you for countable hours, and you have already been so sweet to Louie and me. I have to be honest with you all."

"Hey." I reached over the table and held her hand. "No pressure, just say what you need to."

She smiled at me but seemed much more relaxed. "I know that Lukas had searched for me but found my grave instead." She paused as she glanced at Louie. "That's because I faked my death."



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