

Chapter 81

"I... I... Helios, I never stopped loving you. I hated myself every day for what I did to you, and I was too coward to go back, so I became obsessed with the thought that I was doing humanity a favour. But I want to right my wrongs. I want to return what's due to you. Then, I'll search the galaxy for another being fit to be the moon goddess because I'm surely not."

Helios laughed, snaking his arm around her waist. "Oh, my dear Amaris. You betrayed your heart and me for the sake of mortals. What better ruler for the wolves could there ever be?"

"But-"

"Ssh..." I looked away as he leaned down to kiss her. I felt like I was impeding on a very, very private moment. I wanted to leave the shards on the sand and leave for a second, but that still left the one in my heart.

So, as much as I hated doing so, I cleared my throat.

"Um, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I think these belong to you?" I said as I stepped forward.

As Helios swerved around to face me, he seemed recognisable again. The same fiery man I saw in my dream was back, and it had nothing to do with the shards.

He smiled at me as Marais stood behind, watching me with nothing but pride in her eyes.

"Ah, yes," he said as he took the bag from me. As soon as he held them, the whole place shook, making me fall flat on my ass.

I rubbed it as I tried to stand, but I was left in awe as the shards immediately changed from blue to a beautiful, radiant orange. I gaped at how natural he was with them and how happy the shards seemed to be home.

Helios laughed as he held them against his chest, and I could only imagine how happy he must've felt at that moment.

"The last one is in my heart. You're the only one who can take it out," I said, seeing how lost he got in for a moment.

His eyes snapped to me, but they were sad. My heart slammed against my chest. That couldn't be good.

"What? Do I have to die or something?" I asked, terrified.

"No, Melissa," he laughed. I sighed in relief. "But it will hurt."

"Darn it." There's always a catch.

He rested the first four on the ground beside him and stepped towards me. I didn't get up from the ground when I fell, so I only inclined my head as he came closer.

I felt like prey being savoured by the prey as I gulped.

"Did you have dinner?" he asked, confusing me.

"Yes, but what does that have to do with-"

"Good, so you have strength." And just like that, he lifted his hand, and it felt like someone had suddenly jabbed an acid-dipped knife in my chest.

I screamed, holding onto my heart as Helios mumbled something in a language I didn't understand underneath his breath.

I writhed and wiggled against the sand, screaming until my throat felt like it would burst open. I had never felt anything close to this pain in my entire life. And that is saying a lot, considering all that I've been through over the past months.

Tears flowed from my eyes as I screamed and wriggled against the sand. I could feel the shard being pulled from my chest. But it felt like it had a million tiny needles pricking every inch of my chest.

It was unbearable, and slowly I was losing consciousness as my screams grew quieter.

"Helios!" the moon goddess screamed. "Helios, stop; you're killing her. Just wait a few years until she dies, and then you can retrieve that shard."

"No!" I managed to say through my grunts. There was no way I would live the rest of my life with this shard in my heart.

I looked at Helios through my teary eyes as I spit blood from my mouth.

"Finish it."

Helios didn't question me. Instead, he continued his chanting without hesitation, and the pain returned.

My screams became deaf to my ears for a few more minutes, and I could feel the sand in my hair and on my face from all the rolling I endured.

Finally, it suddenly stopped, and I collapsed against the sand as the hole in my chest closed up as if it wasn't just there.

Through blurry, teary eyes, I watched in relief as Helios held the final shard in his hand, turning it from its artificial blue to its true, bright colour.

He stretched his hand towards the sun and lifted all five shards. As I caught my breath and wiped the blood from my mouth, I watched in amazement as he put it all back together into the beautiful, perfect crystal it always was.

A bright, yellow light radiated around him, much like the light saw around Amaris when she visited me on earth, except hers was blue. And the entire island shook and glowed too.

No doubt everyone on earth saw it, and that meant they all knew that the shards were back to the sun dragon.

It was over.

It was finally over.

Amaris scurried over to me to hold me up, regret and pain evident in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry, Melissa. I didn't know it would be so painful."

Even through the pain that lingered, I managed to smile at her. "It's okay. I'm just glad it's over. And Helios looks happy."

She smiled as she glanced at him. "Indeed, he is. Isn't he?"

"You... you did the right thing." My words slurred as my head grew heavy, and my body felt almost dead. "What's happening?"

"The shard," Helios said as he stopped in front of me. "It's no longer inside of you to keep you here unless you're dead. You have to return home, or your soul will stay here while your body dies on earth."

Even then, I managed to smile. "Well, that's my cue."

"I'll miss you, Melissa," the moon goddess said, her eyes growing watery yet again. "Thank you so much for everything. I promise that anything you desire-anything at all, will be at your disclosure as long as I'm alive."

I chuckled. "Then I guess my odds are pretty high, Considering you're immortal and all."

She joined in on my laugh as she placed a motherly kiss on my forehead.

"Until we meet again, my dear Melissa. I'll be waiting."

"Thank you so much, Melissa," Helios added as he squeezed my hand.

I smiled through my dizziness, happy that at least they had each other. I drifted in peace, knowing that everything went as it was supposed to-or maybe even better. Helios forgave Amaris a long time ago, and the shards were back in their rightful place.

When I die-whenever that will be-I will return to her and see her again. But for now, I will live my earthly, mortal life, free of any dreams, shards and powers.

This is all I ever wanted.

"Melissa? Melissa, can you hear me?"

Maxim.

I was back on earth, and Maxim's voice was the first I heard.

I fluttered my eyes open as my vision returned. The metallic taste of blood and my mate's concerned expression greeted me first as I regained consciousness. As I glanced around, everyone stood in the room, either worried as hell or scared.

"What happened?" I asked as I sat up. I instantly saw my reflection in the mirror across from me, and I almost didn't recognise myself.

My eyes... were brown, and my hair was ... normal.

"You were having a seizure," Louie said. "Then you stopped moving and breathing. There was an eclipse outside. The entire place went dark. When the moonlight returned, you looked different."

My eyes shifted to my reflection again as I touched my hair.

"But you weren't moving or breathing," Maxim added, sounding like he could care less about the eclipse. "I was worried sick."

"I'm here, Maxim. I'm here." I squeezed his hand and kissed his palm, only because he still looked tense. Thankfully, his muscles relaxed after my kiss, and he wasted no time pulling me to his lap.

As I glanced around, I only smiled as Louie blew out the candles. Felicity and Lukas sat silently together, and Fiona and Leonardo stood peacefully with their hands on her belly.

It was all still surreal, but this was my life now. Just me and them until the day I die.

"So, is it done? Will I have to watch you go into another scary as hell sleep anytime soon?" Maxim asked as he caressed my cheek with his thumb.

I chuckled, shaking my head as I took a deep breath.

"No, my love. We're free. And now, we can live happily ever after."

Fiona snorted. "That's cliché as hell, but right now. I'll take it," she said and chuckles echoed around the room.

Lukas passed around some plastic cups from the drawer and poured some water into them.

"Well, we don't have wine or wine glasses now, but we can still make a toast to happily ever after," he said as he held up his cup.

I grinned as I held mine up, and everyone else followed.

"To happily ever after!" I laughed, and they hummed in agreement as we sipped on our make-shift wine.

Yep, free indeed.