

## Chapter 23 Doctor's visit

Liana POV

Nothing registers as I lay in the back of Carol's car. I cannot close my eyes. Every time I do, I see Brad's face. My body is shivering so hard that my teeth are clattering. And my head is throbbing with the beat of a thousand drums.

"Hold on, honey," Carol's voice is gentle and comforting as she parks the car.

"We're home," she says softly. "Let's get you inside."

I will my body to move but nothing happens. I cannot even bring myself to speak. I am trapped in a trembling body.

"Liana," Carol says urgently as she opens the back door and reaches for me. "You need to work with me, please. You need to get inside."

"Ca ... can't mo ... move," I stutter through clattering teeth.

"Oh, dear goddess," Carol sighs and I listen to her making a call.

I do not mean to be difficult or attention-seeking. I honestly cannot move. No matter how much I want to.

"Then leave him there," Carol says urgently. "I cannot do this on my own."

"Drew, please," Carol sniffs. "We need a doctor. She's not looking good."

"Okay," she sighs. "Just hurry."

"Liana," Carol peeks into the car. "Help is on the way, okay? I'm going to run inside and get you a blanket."

I listen to her run off as I fight my body to obey. Why am I such a weakling? I take a deep breath, hold it, and release it. I repeat the process over and over until my teeth stop clattering.

I try to lift my arm. It feels heavy and numb, but it is moving. Tediously slow, I manage to sit up.

"Oh, thank heavens," Carol sighs as she joins me again. "You gave me the fright of my life."

She throws the blanket over my shoulders, and it is with great difficulty that she helps me out of the car. My knees give in when I try to stand, and Carol catches me just in time. Together we sit on the ground as she holds tightly onto me.

"Oh, sweet child, what has he done to you?" She starts crying as she cradles me against her chest.

"It's just shock," I mumble. "It will wear off."

Carol starts crying harder as she holds onto me. But before I can respond, a car's headlights blind me, and I close my eyes.

"Carol, I thought you said she's okay," Drew says worriedly as he rushes to our side.

"I am," I croak. "But my body is being uncooperative."

"The doctor will be the judge of that," Drew grunts as he picks me up and carries me inside.

"Get her strong, sweet tea," Drew orders Carol as he lays me down on the couch. "I'll be back in ten minutes."

Carol wraps a blanket tightly around me and I close my eyes. Brad's face pops up again and I pinch my eyes closer.

Go away! Go away! I say to myself. Think happy thoughts. The first image to surface is Axel's smiling face and I relax a little. I concentrate on his face as if I would be drawing it and I drift off to sleep before Carol can bring the tea.

Axel POV

I frown when I walk outside and do not see Drew. I was just about to mind-link him when he stops in front of me with screeching tires.

"What the hell, man?" I ask as I yank open the door and get in.

"Emergency," Drew grunts as he speeds off. "I had to help Carol get Liana into the house. You should brace yourself, Axel, she doesn't look good."

"Have you called the doctor?" I ask as fear grips my heart.

"She's on her way," Drew replies. "But I think we should get her to the hospital. She's not a wolf that can heal herself."

"Noted," I grunt as I clench my fists. I have an intense need to kill. Once was not enough. I should have kept Brad alive and tortured him until I felt better.

"Axel," Drew looks at me sympathetically. "Liana is your mate, isn't she?"

"Do I need to remind you of your place, Drew?" I grunt.

"I know, I know," Drew sighs. "I'm an Omega and it's none of my business. But if someone did to Carol what that guy did to Liana ... well, I will lose it."

"Are you implying that I cannot keep myself together?" I ask furiously.

"Not at all," Drew shrugs. "I'm very impressed with how composed you are considering the state your mate is in."

"Stop calling her my mate!" I bellow and this time Drew stops talking.

I take a deep breath to regain my composure. Drew might be an Omega and my driver, but he is also loyal and trustworthy. I should have known he would gure it out sooner or later.

"I'm sorry," I say after a moment. "Just ... keep it to yourself, okay? Not even Liana knows that she's my mate."

"Why don't you tell her?" Drew frowns.

"Because she's human and still in love with Wyatt," I sigh heavily. "She needs to get over him before I stand a chance."

"The secret will remain between you and me," Drew says as he parks in front of Liana's cottage. Carol is standing at the door waiting for us with a pale face.

"Take Carol home," I say brusquely as we walk to the door. "I'll wait for the doctor."

"Yes, sir," Drew responds.

"She's sleeping," Carol says as we approach.

"Thanks for your help tonight," I smile at her. "I'll take it from here."

I nod at Drew before I enter the cottage and walk straight to the living room. The second I see her, my legs go weak, and I collapse to my knees next to her.

My hand is slightly trembling as I reach out to her, but I am too afraid to touch her. From her nose down, she is covered in blood. Pain and anger grow inside me as I slowly pull the blanket away. I cannot control the sob that bursts over my lips as I stare in horror at the teeth mark on her breast and the three claw marks over her chest.

I shamelessly cry as I pull back the blanket and pick up her bloody hand. Carefully, I inspect it, but I cannot see any cuts. I lean forward, kiss her on her forehead, and gently stroke her hair.

She moans softly and stirs in her sleep. Abruptly I pull away and wipe my tears.

"Liana," my voice is soft and urgent, but she does not respond.

"Please wake up," I rest my forehead on hers.

There is a soft knock on the door, and I quickly pull myself together. Nobody can know how much this affects me.

With long strides, I walk to the door to answer it.

"Thanks for coming," I clear my throat as I open the door wider for the doctor, Michelle. "Follow me."

"How long has she been sleeping?" She asks as she picks up Liana's wrist to take her pulse.

"Not long," I reply. "Maybe fifteen minutes."

"Head injuries?" She looks at me.

"How should I know?" I snap irritated. "You're the doctor, examine her."

Michelle raises her eyebrows at me but does not say a word. She would have told me to get out if I were not the future alpha.

"I can't examine her here," Michelle sighs. "I need more space."

"Fine," I grunt and step forward. Gently I pick up Liana and carry her to the room. I lay her down softly and stand aside so that Michelle can do her job.

"Not another one," she sighs as she pulls down the blanket.

"What do you mean?" I frown.

"The bite mark on her chest," she frowns. "I've seen it before on another r\*\*e victim."

"Let me guess," I sneer. "She was blond."

"Yeah," Michelle looks at me in surprise.

"Serial r\*\*\*\*t," I grunt. "But I took care of him."

"Was she ..."

"No," I cut her off brusquely before she could say that word. I never ever want the words 'r\*\*e' and 'Liana' in the same sentence.

"That's a relief," Michelle exhales as she continues her examination.

I cross my arms in front of my chest and lift a fist to my mouth. I bite hard into my hand to keep my composure when Michelle cleans the wounds. It takes everything I have not to break down.

It feels like an eternity until Michelle is done with the examination.

"There's a bump on her head and her nose is broken, but that's minor in comparison with the other injuries," she says as she takes out a syringe. "I'll have to give her a tetanus shot for the puncture marks on her back and lacerations on her chest. As well as the bite mark."

"Will she be scarred?" I ask nervously. Not that I give a s\*\*t, but she will. She will be reminded of this ordeal every time she sees the marks.

"It shouldn't," Michelle replies as she injects the needle into Liana's arm, and I look away. "But apply tissue oil as a precaution. The wounds on her back are the deepest. It needs to be cleaned regularly and keep an eye out for infection."

"If you want to lay charges, you need to bring her to the hospital so that we can photograph and document her injuries," Michelle continues and looks at me. "Before she cleans up."

"That wouldn't be necessary," I grunt. "He's dead."

"Good," Michelle smiles and takes out a bottle of pills.

"Pain medication," she places it on Liana's bedside table. "Make sure she eats before she takes it. If she develops a fever or shows any signs of infection, get her to the hospital immediately. I also strongly advise that you both receive trauma therapy."

"Why me?" I look at her as if she lost her mind. "I wasn't attacked."

"I advise it to all couples ..."

"We're not a couple," I grunt frustrated.

"Mother, sister, friend, it doesn't matter," Michelle sighs. "Whether you like it or not, when a man has a relationship with a woman in my capacity, an incident like this affects him. Anger, blame, guilt, hopelessness. Get the therapy. Be patient and supportive. Physical recovery is nothing in comparison with emotional recovery."

"Thank you," I nod. "I appreciate your help."

"Don't mention it," she gathers her things. "I'm just grateful you got the guy. I'll be back tomorrow at ten to check up on her."

I see Michelle out and lock the door behind her. Like a zombie, I walk to the living room and sit down. I take deep breaths and knead my fist in my palm as I rock back and forth. But it does not help. The wall inside me crumbles and I break down crying. I cry because I could not keep her safe. I cry because I was not there in time. But mostly I cry because I cannot carry this burden for her.

When I cried myself empty, I go to the bathroom and wash my face. I take off my shoes and softly lay down next to Liana. As gently as I can, I pull her close to my chest and close my eyes.