

## Chapter 27

“So, after I learned Phaedra had died, I had him locate Petra and the pack she was in.” Sondra looks out at the women setting up the yard and cleaning up after the kids, her eyes turning glassy, and a tear slips down her cheek. She quickly wipes it and clears her throat.

“We knew if Floyd found out, he would have stopped us, so we kept it from him. These women were slaves to their mates, purely kept for their sick amusement. Unfortunately, Marco couldn’t do anything. Packs were handled by the alpha, and unless one woman came forward and complained, his hands were tied. Mary and I knew they never would. They were petrified and knew they would be caught. But not Petra. Petra wanted out, and so did a few others. We used to meet Petra in the woods and plan their escape. Despite that, she said the women were too scared.”

“So, how did they get out?” I ask her, and she holds up her bottle of rum and shakes it. She takes a sip and sets it back in the crook of her arm.

“I had Marco get me concentrated wolfsbane. I gave it to Petra when I visited her and told her to poison their liquor at the next pack meeting; if you could call it that, it was basically an orgy, the women shared between the pack.”

“So, she poisoned them?” Sondra nods her head and purses her lips.

“Yep, they thought the burn was from the liquor until they started dropping like flies. They were supposed to run and meet us on the bus. I had been waiting with Mary by the river. Yet when Petra turned up, she was covered in blood and by herself.” Sondra closes her eyes and rubs her temples before continuing.

“She was wailing, and we couldn’t understand her. She was frantic, so I called Marco, and he sent me home. Marco then went out there with Mary. They found the entire pack dead; the women had killed them. Mary hid them out at the commune, and that’s where they stayed. When I went home that night, Floyd accused me of trying to run from him. He stopped me from seeing Mary. He had his men wait with me at the bakery. They never let me out of their sight unless I was with him.”

“So, you never spoke to Mary again?” I ask her, but she shakes her head.

“No, I saw Mary, but I never saw Petra again after that until Mary went missing. One of his guards would sometimes sneak me out back to meet Mary. But once I aged, and he didn’t, he knew I could never outrun him. So, he left me be. I was just more careful. I would see Mary first thing in the morning when I opened the bakery, and she would tell me about the girls.”

“It wasn’t until she went missing a few years ago that I started snooping and then Jake told me she left, but each time his story made a little less sense. Petra told me the same thing when I questioned her when I spotted her in town. I knew she would never abandon Petra. And I honestly thought Floyd was behind it. I thought he killed her and sold her shop without me knowing, but when Floyd discovered Petra was here, I knew nothing good would come of it,” she says, reaching for another smoke.

She lights it and sits back. “So, I started poisoning him, bit by bit, until he was too weak to stop me. He started aging quickly, then slowly dying, until I eventually couldn’t make up excuses anymore. Marco kept asking questions. For a while, it worked because I knew most of Floyd’s contacts, and his men. But eventually, Marco insisted on talking to him. He came out here to check on me. I thought he would kill me when he found Floyd.”

“But he didn’t, obviously,” she chuckles.

“He said if only I did it sooner. Yet he was still my mate and I loved the bastard, but I wanted him to suffer for his crimes, so he did for years!”

“But once my crop died, I finished him and shot him while he slept. Marco helped me cover it up, and he is—” she points to the hill where a lone tombstone sits.

“Right there. Marco helped me bury him. Now you know what I feel guilty about. It was that I didn’t realize what a monster my husband was, what a monster Jake was until it was too late. I believed Jake blindly, thinking that it was Floyd.”

“Yeah, Jake even had me fooled, so you’re not alone there,” I tell her, chewing my lip.

“How does this link to my father?” I ask her, and she shakes her head. Just as my mother comes out to help the women with the cooking. Sondra looks at her, then drops her gaze to her hands.

“That’s a story for another day.” She says, and I look at my mother, who is carrying out some baked buns.

“Are you hungry, Sondra?” My mother asks.

“No, dear. I think I might take a nap,” Sondra tells her, and my brows furrow. Whatever she knew, she didn’t want to say it in front of my mother.

Sondra then gets up. She sways on her feet, and I stand to help her when she brushes me off.

“Go help the women,” she tells me, and I sigh.

“Do they know?” I ask Sondra, and she stops to look at me. I nod toward the women setting up for dinner.

“No, only Petra knew who I was and what I was to her father.” I nod my head, and she glances at them.

“This pack wasn’t just their fresh start, Elena. It was mine, too. My way of making it up to Petra, Mary, and Phaedra. They don’t need to know. It was also my way of making it up to you.” She tells me. I go to ask her what she means when I hear someone coming up behind me.