

Chapter 39

Axton

As I leave the packhouse, I immediately notice Eli. He is waiting on the front porch, his hands hidden in his pockets. As soon as he hears me step out of the building, his eyes snap to me, and an odd look crosses his face.

“Woo-woo, Alpha,” he pulls his hands out of his pockets, raises them, and takes a step back. There’s a mischievous glint in his eyes, which I’m sure is proof of what’s coming out of his mouth next. “I love purple. It really makes your eyes pop. And those cheekbones, man, you sure you’re not a model?” Eli snickers, staring at Elena’s unicorn pajamas I’m wearing. Yeah, I should’ve seen this coming.

I sigh and pinch the bridge of my nose. My jaw is so tight that if I don’t relax soon, I’ll sport the worst headache known in history.

I don’t want to leave. My entire being is screaming at me to turn around and go back inside the packhouse. All I really want to do is close that massive door behind me and hide away, if only for a bit longer with Elena and the boys. But alas, Marco is already covering for me, and I don’t think he would appreciate me demanding more of him when his job is hard enough.

Eli nudges my side, so I look up at him. I expect another snide remark or a shit-eating grin, but I meet a serious facial expression. “They’ll be fine. I will be here, and Marco is coming back. Derrick is in the cells. No one is getting near them,” he assures me.

A loud breath leaves my lips as I glance at Marco. At that very moment, he nods toward his car. “I’ll be heading back here once I drop you off,” he assures me, and I press my lips in a line, looking back at the door.

The storm outside is already raging, but I’m sure it’s not nearly close to the full power of destruction it holds above our heads. My eyes scan the area, and soon, I notice that most of my men are stationed under the porches of the woman’s houses. They’re standing just inside the open barn doors, out of the rain.

The rain is pouring so violently that it looks like the skies have opened up to release a monsoon. My mind is overtaken by nothing and everything at the same time until I'm snapped back to reality by Marco, who hits the button on his key fob, making the lights blink on his maroon Mustang.

"Ready?" Marco asks me, and I give him a stern nod.

We both duck out into the rain to run to the car. However, the speed and attempts to avoid the rain don't help much in our case. In weather like this, no one could be fast enough to get untouched from one location to the other.

Both of us are drenched the moment we step out from under the porch roof.

Reluctantly, I follow Marco back to his car and hop in. Marco instantly reaches over into the backseat and retrieves a tank top. He tosses it at me, then removes his jacket and throws it onto the back seat.

"Put that on so I can at least try to take you seriously with those damn pants on," Marco grumbles.

I laugh at his statement and put on the navy-blue tank while Marco starts the car.

As Marco drives down the long driveway toward the highway, my stomach twists, and my heart sinks at the thought of leaving Elena and the boys behind. The wind howls outside the car, and the rain pelts the window as Marco tries to navigate the windy road back to the city, although visibility is a bitch.

"Are you cold?" Marco asks me, reaching for the air conditioning button. I raise an eyebrow at him. "Sorry, forgot you're not human." He chuckles, leaving it off.

We still feel the cold, just not nearly as much as a human would. However, Marco has no sense of what is hot or cold. He can't tell the difference between temperatures, as everything feels neutral to vampires.

Although, this very fact makes me wonder who he has had in this car before me. Who was important enough to sit in this seat and, most importantly, to make Marco question if they were cold?

"So, which human have you been driving around with?" I ask, pointing to the AC.

Marco shrugs as if he sees no importance in the question or the answer. "Just Sondra." He shrugs.

I raise an eyebrow at him, remembering what Elena told me about Sondra and Marco being together before Floyd found her.

“I took her to her appointments last Friday after Elena left to go to your place. Sondra didn’t want to ask her, knowing she would stress about leaving the boys, and now Floyd is gone. I no longer have to keep my distance, so I spent most of last weekend there.”

“You stayed at the packhouse with Sondra?” I ask, a little shocked.

“Yes,” he says, staring out the window, and my brows pinch.

I’ve never known Marco just to hang out with anyone. He is a serious workaholic and never takes a day off. Yet, he takes it upon himself to take a weekend off for Sondra. That explains why he could get to the city so quickly after the last attack.

“You’re still in love with her,” I tell him, and he glances at me.

“She was mine before she was Floyd’s. I never needed the mate bond to love her, and I never stopped loving her. I was going to tell her what I was and ask her to marry me.” He shrugs, “But then Floyd ruined that, and I knew nothing would impede the mate bond. Sometimes I think I should have killed him back before...” he trails off, not finishing the rest of what he wants to say.