

Chapter 48

Elena

Impatiently, I watch the project manager receive a call, and Eli informs me that Axton is on the phone with the manager. The project manager throws some nervous glances in my direction and waves for his men to stop what they're doing. Fury burns through me as I look at the damage they have caused. The garage is reduced to rubble, and sheets of tin, brick, and tiles cover the entire paddock where it stood; trash is scattered everywhere.

"Elena?" Eli murmurs behind me, but I don't glance back at him, instead watching and ensuring the workers leave.

"Get off my property," is all I tell him. After everything we have gone through recently, this comes as a massive slap in the face. I didn't want to hear his excuses. Who goes out of their way to destroy someone's property like this? There is no excuse worthy of this kind of behavior.

"He didn't realize—" my growl cuts his words off, and I turn to face Eli. He backs up and scratches the back of his neck awkwardly. I have no issues with Eli, but I won't stand for him defending Axton. Not right now. Not while I am watching the devastation on Sondra's face.

"Don't... Don't feed me some bullshit that he didn't know! Even if he somehow forgot to call them off, he still originally planned for them to destroy the place. Destroy our home!" I snarl at him, and Eli bites down on his lip, glancing away, then shakes his head. "Look, I get you're--"

"You need to leave. Get your men and go!" I tell him, cutting him off. Furious, I stalk past him and back toward the house. Marco is trying to calm down Sondra, and he glances at me when I near the stairs.

"Please tell me you have spoken to Axton and have it sorted?" Marco asks, and I nod my head.

“See, they’re leaving,” Marco tells Sondra. Marco sighs, and Sondra exhales loudly, shooting a glare at him and nudging Sondra toward her rocking chair.

“I will make you some tea,” I tell her as she sits down.

“And grab my smokes.” She adds, and Marco gives her a disapproving look but says nothing about her smoking, so I nod. Walking inside, I turn the kettle on, grab a mug, and retrieve the tea bags.



* * *

Hours later.

After our early wake-up call this morning, we spent all morning and into the afternoon tidying up the destruction and sifting through what remained, trying to salvage anything we could. Most of everything is broken, and luckily Sondra had gotten rid of most of the cars that were stored there. However, the tools and farming equipment would cost a fair bit to replace or fix.

We dumped it into the huge skip bins, which I had the local garbage company drop off.

Yet as the day’s heat slowly dies, I notice Lexa has become awfully quiet. Throwing the last sheet of tin into the scrap metal pile, I glance over to see both skips overflowing, and we still had two piles of scrap metal, a pile of salvage items that we now have to figure out what to do with, and another skip-worthy pile of debris left.

“How about we call it a day?” Michelle yells out to me while tossing some trash into the overflowing skip bin. I nod, wiping my forehead on the back of my hand and peeling the gloves off.

She is right. We’ve been at this for hours, we have made some progress, but it is stifling hot out here still. Walking over to her, she sighs; Michelle is also covered in dirt.

“My back is killing!” she groans, placing her hands behind her and pushing on her lower back as she leans backward.

“Yeah,” I tell her breathlessly. This heat is really getting to me, and I feel on the verge of passing out.

“You’re a little red?” Michelle comments and I touch my face before fanning myself with my hands.

“Aren’t you cold?” she asks me while her eyes roam over me, and I glance down at my shorts and crop top.

“Ah no, we’ve been working our asses off.” I chuckle, turning to look at the packhouse, and Michelle moves to follow me back to the house.

“The girl that just came back from patrol said she saw Axton’s patrols lingering at our borders, she told them to leave, but they refused, stating they aren’t on our land, so we can’t make them,” Michelle tells me, and I roll my eyes. I am not dealing with Axton right now. I want to strangle him, and if he was right in front of me, I might actually try it.

“I’ll deal with it tomorrow. For now, I’m going to shower and feed the boys their afternoon snack.” Michelle nods, and we both head toward the house when I hear Marco call out, making me stop. Turning back around, I see him toss a broken car motor into the skip bin as if it was merely a piece of trash he had picked up off the ground. The pile in the skip bin drops lower under its heavy weight.

“Are you heading inside?” He calls out, and I nod. He gives me a thumbs up.

“I will finish this last section and head in myself then!” he tells us, and Michelle and I head back inside the house. The moment I step inside, I am blasted by the air conditioning, and I sigh.

“Are you alright, dear,” my mother asks from the kitchen, and I move toward her. She quickly fills a glass with ice-cold water and hands it to me. Within two large mouthfuls, I drained the glass and set it back in the sink.

“The boys went down for a nap ten minutes ago,” she tells me, and I nod, yet she sniffs the air subtly, and I smell myself wondering if I stink. I can’t smell anything, yet she watches me for a few seconds. Worry is etched into her features when she cups my cheek with her hand.

“Gosh, you feel like you’re burning up?” she murmurs, her brows furrowing.

“Yeah, it’s stifling hot outside.” I groan.

“I just need to stand in front of the air conditioning for a bit,” I tell her.

“Air conditioning? Elena, I have the heater on. It is not hot. That breeze is damn near icy!” she tells me, and I blink at her. Only then do I notice what she is wearing. She has a long sleeve top on and track pants, her fluffy white robe over the top, and she has stolen a pair of my slippers. It makes me remember Michelle and her comments outside.

My gaze moves to the air conditioning, and I see the temperature is on heat, my brows furrowed in confusion. I could have sworn it felt cold when I came in. Surely, I am not so hot that the heat feels cold.

“Maybe you should lie down and drink some more water.” My mother worries, her eyes assessing me, and I roll mine at her. “I’m fine,” I tell her, heading for the stairs so I can go shower. However, as I start to climb them, my legs go funny, almost like they are on the verge of giving out from under me. My vision darkens and warps as vertigo washes over me. I grab the banister, waiting for the dizziness to settle, but it gets worse.

“Elena?” my mother calls out, and I turn to where she stands at the bottom of the stairs just as Marco walks inside.

“All done, I will organize for some—” Marco stops dead in his tracks, a peculiar expression sweeping over his face. I blink as he blurs, my vision tunneling, and I can no longer feel my fingertips holding the banister or my arms. Marco sniffs the air, and a feral growl tears out of him just as I feel my eyes roll into the back of my head. The next thing I see is black.

I don’t feel the ground when I hit it, I feel nothing, but I can hear Marco’s voice.

“Call Axton. She’s in heat!” Marco snaps at my mother, his voice sounding close.

“I thought... I just wasn’t sure.... I knew something was wrong... but she-wolves can’t smell heat!” my mother panics.

“Louise ring—” Panic courses through me at his words and with the last of my energy.

“No!” I order, the words sounding hollow to my ears when I lose all sense of everything, falling deaf and numb to everyone and everything around me, blinded by the blistering heat surging through me.

My skin hurts and burns when I groggily wake up. I nearly scream when I find myself in a bathtub naked, Marco holding my head above the water while speaking to someone over his shoulder.

My hands grip the tub’s sides, and I try to sit up. The room spins, and my vision blurs at the motion as I reach for a towel, only for him to shove me back under. “You need Axton!” he snaps at me.

“You need to get out!” I tell him, horrified that I am naked in front of him, yet his eyes don’t leave mine, even when he reaches over to switch the cold water tap on and my mother rips the plug out of the bathtub.

She lets the water drain while cold water pours in. My mother chews her lip, staring at Marco. “Now she is awake; I can give her the pills?” my mother tells him, and he presses his lips in a line.

“She needs her damn mate. She can’t live on those pills. They will only hold it off, not stop her heat. She’s an Alpha. They’ll have barely any effect on her!” Marco snaps angrily.

“Listen to him, Louise. He’s right.” Comes Sondra’s voice. Yet the more they speak, the more distant their voices become and the harder it is to breathe.

“I can’t. She ordered me not to!” my mother argues, and I exhale, relieved to know they haven’t told him.

“It’s been three days, Marco can’t hold her in the water much longer, and we have nearly drained the tanks!” Sondra says.

“He knows something is wrong; he messaged me asking why she won’t reply to his text messages. Or let him video call the boys.”

“I won’t let you keep injecting her with that damn poison to numb their bond. It’s been too long. Any longer, Axton will start getting sick himself.” Marco growls.

“She’s my daughter--“Marco cuts her off.

“And he’s, my friend! I won’t risk her life any more than I would risk his, and leaving her like this, they’re both at risk!” Marco snarls, the points of his fangs jut out from beneath his top lip.

“I am doing what she wants; I can’t call Axton even if I wanted to!” my mother argues.

“Please, mom?” I hear Luke whimper distantly. Jeez, what is this! Is the entire damn pack in here!?

My mind races as I try to take in what they’re saying.

Three days? I must have misheard. There is no way I have been unconscious for three days.

“No, just leave me!” I murmur, feeling the sickly feeling sweep back over me.

“Pass me that ice bucket! Sondra, and call Axton!” Marco snaps when I pass out once again before I can argue.