

Chapter 5

“And why would you help? You hate me, remember? I’m the whore that ran off with your sons?”

“You’re not a whore. I say shit out of anger. That doesn’t mean I always mean what I say.”

“No, but your actions say otherwise,” I remind him. “You had no issues calling me a whore, thinking I ran off with Jake!” I spit at him bitterly.

“Because you ran off with another man!”

“A man who was a vampire, one who used his compulsion on me and killed my best friend! You act like I asked for that to happen.”

“Don’t act like you did nothing wrong. You chose to leave.” Axton argues. He still doesn’t get it.

“Wait, so I am a whore when you say it, but my father says it, you get offended on my behalf?” I scoff, shaking my head.

“You’re still my mate and the mother of our children.” I shake my head, personality number twenty-something slipping out. Should we call this one doubt, regret, or is this one simply a facade to gain pity or to make me feel guilty of what Jake did? “And I don’t hate you. You’re just stubborn and had me sanctioned not to leave the damn city for two weeks.”

“You threatened to take our sons and kill my pack! What did you expect?”

“Not for you to fucking sanction me and put me on damn house arrest!”

“And when those two weeks are up, Axton, then what?” he shrugs and doesn’t answer, instead changing the subject.

“Next meeting is on Friday; can you bring the boys? Eli will watch them, or I can organize Tieriny to watch them while the meeting is on. I want to see my sons.” Axton tells me.

“You don’t want them for the weekend?” I ask him.

“Of course I do. But clearly you don’t intend to give them to me because you didn’t bring them with you.”

“Yeah, because it is a meeting. I was bringing them to you this afternoon before you went on a warpath over the photos and threatened my pack again!” I snap at him. Axton’s eyes flicker to Khan before he shoves him back and steps closer to me. His lips tug into a sneer and I take a step back from him, my ass hitting my car door as I fist my keys, ready to stab him with them if he tries anything.

“Don’t bullshit me, Elena, not when it comes to them. I know you’re just saying that, so I’ll let you leave,” he growls, and I roll my eyes at him.

“Either you want to see them or you don’t, but either way, I have to get back to them.”

He tilts his head to the side, watching me. “You know I want them.”

“Then fine, but I need to get them and drive back.” I tell him while unlocking my car with the key fob. When I go to open the door, his hand grabs it.

“You’re not fucking with me?”

“I’ll see you at 5PM.” I tell him. Climbing in the car, I toss my stuff onto the back seat and reach out to close the door, but he still has a hold of it.

“You’ll come back with them?” Axton asks. Man, do I need to send him to get his ears checked? Is he deaf? I just told him I would.

“Yes, I’ll see you at five.” Axton glances toward his car and I pull on my door, he presses his lips in a line, but he lets go, stepping back. I shut the door and start the car, Axton stands there for a minute before I wind the window down, the heat of the day making the car extra stuffy.

“Ah, I feel sick knowing we are just leaving them with him for the weekend!” Lexa mumbles and I am not looking forward to it either, but what choice do I have, either I let him see them or fight him in the courts which will be added stress. Not only that, I

know he would demand to get fifty-fifty custody. I would rather give the boys to him every weekend than go a full week without them.

“I’ll see you at 5, Axton. Do you have formula and diapers, or should I bring everything?” I ask him.

“I have a formula, but what is their diaper size? I will have to grab some,” he tells me, still looking quite hesitant to let me leave.

“I’ll grab an extra box on the way home. But you have everything else?” he nods and I sigh.

“I’ll see you soon,” I tell him, putting the car in reverse.

Lexa stirs, her mood instantly shifting as it sinks in fully that we would be without the boys for an entire weekend. However, as we leave the city, my phone rings through the Bluetooth speaker. Sondra’s name pops up on the screen. Moving my finger over the button on the steering wheel, I hit the answer button.

“I’m on my way back.” I tell her.

“Have you passed town yet?” she asks me.

“No, but about to reach the town limits. Why, what do you need?”

“Can you stop by the pharmacist for me and pick up my scripts?” she asks me. Lexa whines in my head, knowing that means she is in pain. Sondra refuses to tell anyone she is dying besides me and Marco. She doesn’t want the women to worry, but holding this secret is growing heavier with each day. And every day I notice the subtle signs: she is nearing her end, her lack of appetite, her tiredness, weight loss, and the sometimes-weird moods she gets in. Sondra is tough as nails, but every so often when we talk, it is like she is saying goodbye, as if she is worried it will be the last words to pass between us.

“I’ll grab them. Do you need anything else?”

“Mmm, maybe one of those lemon meringue pies?” she says, and I chuckle. Sondra asks for the same thing every time I go into town, and it seems to be the only thing she can stomach a couple of bites of besides drinking her tea.

“Okay, see you soon.” I tell her, hanging up and driving past the turnoff for the ranch. Crossing the town borders into the sleepy little town, I drive to the pharmacist, passing Taylor’s general store that has its windows boarded up.

“I can’t believe she is dead.” Lexa mumbles, without her store here, everyone is forced to go to the city or neighboring towns for food supplies.

“Yeah, and now we must be extra vigilant.” I tell her.