

## Chapter 7

“We’ll see you on Monday.” my mother tells me.

“I’m not staying in the city.” I remind her.

“Yes, you are, sweetie. You just refuse to admit it,” she says, wondering off before I can answer. Glaring at her retreating figure, I start the car.

The drive to the city takes twice as long because I am trying to delay the inevitable. By the time I reach Axton’s packhouse, he is standing out front, his arms folded across his bare chest. I roll my eyes, why does he have to be half-naked? I growl in annoyance when Lexa answers me.

“He came back from a run. He didn’t think you were coming, and it set Khan off,” she tells me.

“You can’t know that!” I state.

“I can because the stupid bond gets stronger by the day now, he has marked us. I have been catching glimmers of it through this one-sided bond,” she snaps at me. This was the first time she has openly admitted to her struggle with the bond. I constantly suffer when within his proximity, but Lexa had clearly been hiding her struggle from me.

Axton stomps over, grabbing my door when I shove it open. “You said 5 PM.” he snaps at me. I growl, not in the mood for his tantrum.

“I am forty minutes late, Axton. Calm down. This is hard enough.” I tell him, opening the back door. He says nothing as I reach in and start unclipping Kyan first. Instead, he walks around to the other side to retrieve Bane. The moment he reaches in, a vicious growl tears out of me, one I didn’t mean to make, some bizarre possessive growl leaving me.

Axton looks at me, and I shake the feeling off while reminding myself he is their father.

“Elena?” Axton questions, and I swallow, closing the door and grabbing the diaper bag from the front passenger seat just as Axton closes his door. He smiles down at Bane, quickly kissing his head before looking at me expectantly. I stare at him for a few seconds when Lexa snarls at me.

“He wants the bag and Kyan!” she reminds me as my brain decides to stop functioning, leaving me standing here staring like an idiot. My voice is robotic as I tell him the boy’s formula dosage and rattle off useless information, I am sure he won’t need about their sleep schedule and explain every little thing in the baby bag, half of which he probably won’t use. Axton takes the bag, chucking it over his shoulder.

“So, are you going to give me Kyan?” he asks, staring at my son I am clutching, knowing once I hand him over, I have no reason to stay any longer. My mother was right. I am staying in this damn city. Driving away was going to be hard enough, let alone actually leaving here altogether.

“Elena, I am perfectly capable of watching them for the weekend,” Axton states, holding out his free arm for him. Gritting my teeth, I hand him over, and Axton clutches them close just as the first drop of rain falls, hitting me.

“I should get them inside.” Axton states, and I nod. My actions feel pre-programmed and automatic as he sidesteps me. Before I can make an even bigger fool of myself, I rush to get in my car before reversing out and turning onto the street, knowing if I don’t leave. I will camp in his driveway.

Without looking back, I head for the city borders, determined to leave, except as soon as I see the border patrols manning the exit, I pull over because I suddenly can’t breathe. My chest feels tight, and my hands are clammy as I clutch the steering wheel in a death grip.

“Pull yourself together, Elena.” I scold myself. Yet no matter how much I want to prove everyone wrong, I end up turning the car around and heading back toward the packhouse.

I flick the lights off as I pull up and park in front of the hedges where the car is hidden from view. The rain is pouring down, obscuring my view completely, as I shut the car off and admit defeat.

My entire body prickles with goosebumps, and my senses are extremely heightened from the adrenaline pumping through my veins, thanks to my panic attack.

Lost in the confines of my mind as I conjure up any excuse possible to knock on his door, so I can check on them. I don't notice anyone approaching the car until Axton is tapping on the window. "You know I can feel when you're close, right?" he asks, and I blink at him. His shirt is drenched from the rain that is beating down fiercely as the storm continues to brew, darkening the skies as the thick clouds close in on the city.

I stare out at him, wondering how he noticed me lurking like some creep when he opens the door.

"Are you going to sleep in the car or come in? Can you decide quickly because it is freezing out here, and I am now drenched!" he asks.

"I can stay?" I ask him in shock.

"You're my mate, Elena. Of course, you can stay, although I am shocked you actually managed to leave the driveway. Your damn anxiety has been giving me anxiety," he chuckles.

"I need to head back," I answer, while also trying to remind myself.

"Get inside, Elena, you're not going anywhere, and I don't feel like spending all night worrying about you sleeping down the end of my driveway," Axton says.

"Now, Elena, or are the boys and me sleeping in the damn car with you?" I press my lips in a line, not liking to admit defeat when it comes to this man.

"Fuck!" I whisper under my breath.

"We can if you like," Axton chuckles. I glare at him, and he shakes his head with a laugh.

"You said it, not me. I was merely taking you up on the offer."