

## Chapter 12

Tabitha's POV

The guy's kiss on the back of my hand gave me goosebumps.

Then I realized, even though I had given up on Derek, I still couldn't stand other guys getting close to me.

Having no vibes to chill at the club, I left with Gloria.

We came on foot, so we decided to walk back, too.

The cool night breeze was like a balm for all the drama.

Suddenly, my phone rang. It was Alvin.

"Good evening, Luna Tabitha. Alpha Derek asked me to inform you that the reject ceremony's set for tomorrow morning at the Council of Elders," came Alvin's apologetic voice.

The news took me by surprise. But soon, I figured out why.

Since I felt pain due to Derek's intimacy with Daphne, he must've felt the same when that guy kissed my hand just now.

As someone with a big ego, he surely couldn't stand it.

With a wry smile, I paused my tracks a sec before answering, "Got it. Thanks."

"What's wrong?" Gloria asked with concern when she saw me hang up the phone.

I shook my head and smiled, saying, "Tomorrow I'll be free."

Gloria didn't tease me this time. She just gave me a hug and offered, "Come stay at my place tonight."

I nodded, planting a kiss on her cheek. Then, we returned home and freshened up.

Lying on the bed in the guest room, I curled up in the blanket.

The wound on my abdomen started hurting again, making me unable to fall asleep. The only thing I could do was stare at the ceiling, waiting for dawn.

The next morning, Gloria offered to go with me, but I turned her down.

There were things that I had to face on my own.

Today, the weather was no longer terrible. First rays of sunlight hit my face as I cabbed it straight to the entrance of the Council of Elders.

As soon as I got out of the car, I saw Derek standing by the tree.

The distance between us was close, yet we felt like worlds apart at some point before I could realize it.

"Take one more walk with me, will ya?" I whispered.

"Tabitha, stop wasting my time."

I held back my tears, asking, "We'll soon part ways. Can't you even grant my last wish?"

He stared at me in silence.

"Derek, you hate me, right?" I locked eyes with him.

"Yeah."

"So, you'd be happy if I was gone for good, huh?" I murmured.

A hint of pain flashed in his eyes, and I immediately caught it.

Then he put on his poker face again. "Enough. It's just a rejection ceremony. Don't make it sound like it's the end of the world. I'll walk with you. Where are we going?"

After saying that, he walked toward the woods.

I watched his departing figure, the corner of my lip curling up.

'Derek, turns out you still care about me?' I thought.

We walked side by side along the edge of the woods, breathing in the fresh and cool air.

I had not experienced such tranquility for a long time. Well, I should consider it as a commemoration.

After a while, I stopped in my tracks. Feeling weird, Derek turned around, asking, "Why aren't you walking?"

"It's getting late. Let's go back and get the ceremony done," I replied.

He paused for a moment and then passed by me expressionlessly, saying, "Let's go then."

I knew that we were never ever getting back together.

My efforts in the past year were nothing but a joke.

Snapping back to reality, I turned around and quickly caught up with Derek.

Soon, we arrived at the entrance of the Council of Elders. When I was about to step up the stairs, Alvin ran over in a panic.

"Alpha Derek, bad news. Kyrian's been snatched by a rogue!"

"What?!" Derek immediately turned his head and glared at Alvin.

"Just now I got a call from Daphne. She said that she was out shopping this morning. When she got home, Kyrian was gone. And there was a rogue stench in the house," Alvin quickly reported.

"How could she leave Kyrian alone?" Derek roared.

Alvin scowled. Clearly, Daphne's carelessness annoyed him, too.

"Let's go to 32 Seaside Avenue," Derek ordered after a moment of contemplation.

When he walked past me, I grabbed his arm.

"We're right at the doorstep. You gotta square this off before you go."

"Didn't you hear what Alvin said? Kyrian's missing. I gotta go find him!" Derek shook off my hand.

"The ceremony only takes a few minutes," I insisted.

"Not now. Finding Kyrian's my priority," he snapped, an impatient look on his face.

I angrily exclaimed, "Didn't you tell me not to rush when I was leaving for my dad's sake? Now what? Kyrian's life counts but not John's?"

Derek's face darkened as soon as I mentioned Dad. "John's nothing next to Kyrian!"

Pissed, I tried to pounce on him and slap him like I did the last time.

Before I could do anything, however, Derek roared, releasing his powerful Alpha aura. "Tabitha, you'd better stop messing with me, or I'll kick your dad outta the hospital!"

I grabbed his collar with both hands, my tears soaking his shirt.

He once said that he'd keep me from crying, but now, he was always the reason that I wept.

After trying my best to calm myself down, I said, "You can go, but remember, I'll still be Luna of the Black Thorn Pack as long as we haven't rejected each other. And I got my claims on pack property and folks."

Derek frowned upon hearing it.

Ignoring his reaction, I went on, "I'm starting to feel like you're doing this on purpose cuz you're still hung up on me."

"Stop bullshitting!" he hissed.

"Then make sure we get it done for real the next time we meet!" I spat out before leaving.