

Chapter 4

AELIANA

I should have never come back to Mooncrest.

I was having a full-blown panic attack when I stormed out of the hall, and the next thing I knew, a strange woman was looking over me.

I fainted. I couldn't self-regulate so my body shut down, it's been a while since this has happened to me. I've learned and studied methods that keep me sane, safe, and steady but one trip back here and I'm cracking again.

Thankfully, the lady who helped me out promised she wouldn't tell anyone, and I immediately left. Even the parking lot was empty when I started driving out.

Tonight was more eventful than I anticipated, not quick or easy. Kingston's cold stare burns in the back of my mind. I try to think of any sign, any moment at which the bond flickered, and I can't think of one. Several memories I've shared with him hit me.

I'm back in my bedroom during the last summer we spent together. King is sitting at the foot of my bed. "Siren?" He softly coos.

"Hmm?"

"Are you sure about this?"

"Yeah," I nod. I psyched myself up, he is the one who needed convincing. I like King, no one is as nice to me, and I may or may not have a crush on him. "Let me practice with you, I really want this. I want it to be just ours, something we don't do or share with anyone else."

King laughs, "I can buy us rare trinkets, this.."

"It's okay if you don't want to. It's not a big deal," I shrug. "I know I'm not your type."

"Who is?"

"The older girls," I roll my eyes. Kingston always has women running after him. "Like my cousin Lexie."

King smirks, "She's only fun when her mouth is full of cock."

"You can't say that," I frown. "Lexie is smart, she just gets a little dumb around you because you're cute."

"And you?" he asks, looking a little too serious now. This was supposed to be fun. "Do you get a little dumb around me?"

"Stop it, I'm smart."

"Yes you are." he nods.

"Promise to write when you leave?"

"Siren, I don't leave for another few months."

"Just promise."

I'm pulled away from the memory by my wolf's humming. "He rejected us, Aeliana," Lumi says. "I think it's time to let him go. He's hurt us enough, nothing could ever cut this deep."

I slam my head against the steering wheel, this feels like an awful joke by fate. Why would I be mated to the boy who made me so many promises and broke them without giving me a second glance? Kingston promised

to always write to me when he left for the training academy and at first, he kept his promise until he didn't.

I poured my heart out countless times hoping for a reply, but it never came and when it returned? He pretended I didn't exist. And he's doing it again, only this time I want this too.

I grab my phone from the passenger seat and drag myself into the house. I'm only halfway through the door when my Father groans in disapproval. "Where were you?"

"I was getting some air."

"Sit with us." Mom smiles, nodding at the sofa.

It sounds like a request, but the cold stare from Dad tells me it isn't. "You've always known have you not?"

"No, father." I swallow, settling into the seat I've been scolded so many times in. "We were too young before, I didn't know we had a bond."

"Congratulations," he says. "You've finally done something right. This is your first public non-shameful act. Kingston Vale," he nods to himself. "Nice."

"I'm surprised, I thought Audrey was a shoo-in for Luna but now?" Mom pauses, pure amusement on her face. "This is great. Anna will be so humbled. I don't have to kiss up to her in the future, my daughter is going to be the Luna not hers."

Luna.

The word unsettles me. Almost as much as the thought of being mated to Kingston does. "I'm not going to be Luna."



"What's that?"

"He rejected my father, in front of everyone," I say. "It's merely a matter of time before he comes to reclaim it." 1

"You will not accept it," he snaps, "You have to be Luna. It's not like anyone else is lining up for you, no one this great at least."

"Kingston has a girlfriend," I swallow. No woman wants a mate that's obsessed with another woman, much less the woman who made her life hell. "He doesn't want me."

"If you could charm your way into bed with that boy years ago, you can do it with Kingston now."

"Bryan," Mom hisses. "You're scaring her."

"I'm setting her straight," he argues. "Marrying Kingston is the only way to erase the stain she put on our family name. No one will dare speak ill of their Luna or her father. This will be good for our family."

"Liana baby," Mom sweetly smiles. "You understand your father do you not?"

I nod, "Yes. But I can't accept him. I don't belong here anymore, if I never come back to the pack again, everyone will forget I existed. They'll forget everything that happened."

He rises, "You little—"

"Let me handle it," Mom grabs his arm. "We don't want him finding her bruised when he comes to get her."

"He won't be coming for me, Mom. Did that look like a man interested in me?"

"Make him," She sighs. "You always were so good at dog walking him until you chose to be a slut and publicise it. Then Audrey took over, but you can reclaim him."

My jaw drops. I've never heard her speak like this before, and calling me a slut? She didn't say it once when the video was released. "Mom?"

"He has a soft spot for you."

Had. That was years ago.

"Alpha Dante will talk to him, he has been set on King marrying his mate, and no one else. His rejection doesn't matter."

"But dad," I swallow, my voice low. "I don't want to be Luna. I want to continue with my master's and—"

"You won't need that. It's useless," he tsks. "Your job is to sit down, listen, and give this pack an heir. That's the only thing you should be thinking of. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Dad." I swallow. I don't understand him, I do understand that if I stay here then I'm trapped. I've learned easily that the only way to appease my father is by agreeing with his demands.

"Good," he smiles. "I'm proud of you. I mean it this time."

"My little Luna, how wonderful." Mom giggles to herself. "Do you think you can rename a hall after me? Or a street?" she gasps, "Anna wanted that and I want to rub it in her face."

"Yes," I nod. "But what do I do about school and work?"

"You're rich now, you can have it all without working so hard," she winks, "It's time to put your smarts on vacation, and enjoy the blessing

the moon goddess has given you. See honey, she's not cursed. A delayed blessing, is still a blessing."

"Can I make one request?"

"What?" Dad snaps.

"I have to pack up in Clinshore," I say. And by pack up I mean escape. I'll leave Clinshore too.

"I'll send your brother."

"No, let her." Mom smiles, "You know she doesn't like people touching her stuff. How long will it take?"

Relief floods me. "I have a flight tomorrow afternoon, so if I leave then I will be back within a week. I won't take everything."

"Sell the rest, and get me a purse."

"Alright, the sooner the better." Dad sighs, "Kingston's inauguration is in two weeks, and you have to be here for that."

Over my dead body. "I will."

"I'm so excited," Mom swoons. "Your wedding should be bigger than Seraphine's, the Vale family have more money."

"You can get started on the planning," I say with a wide smile.

"You want me to plan?" she gasps, "Sera didn't let me anywhere near her planner."

"I trust your work," I smile. She's an event planner for a living, out of work and tacky. But it'll keep her busy and give me time to escape freely.

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

Commented [Ma3R1]:



With a feigned yawn, I rise from my seat. "I'll go to bed."

"Yes, yes. You must be exhausted from travelling. Go on."

Goodnight."

"Goodnight Luna," she laughs. "Honey, doesn't that sound so lovely? We raised a Luna."

No.

I'm nobody's Luna, and by the time she awakens from that deluded dream, I'll be far away from here.