

Chapter 47

AELIANA

I was thinking the garden was my space, because only the gardener and I, along with Lexie, are often there, but today a children's birthday party is being hosted there. Curtsey of Audrey, she is playing nicely with the whole pack but not with me.

The noise in the garden is too much, and so I had Lexie find me a tent, which I set up outside but when Danielle saw me this morning, she had some of the staff bring out an umbrella, and a few garden chairs. She sat with me for a while, before she got bored with my company and went on a spa day.

I feel oddly refreshed today, and I didn't sleep much. Maybe it is because the last thing I saw was how upset Kingston was when he left my room. I knew saying he stinks would piss him off, and I went that route anyway. He can consider it my payback for slapping me, I could have slapped him right back, I wanted to, but he seemed sorry. He went through the trouble of bringing me my comfort meal.

I've been smiling at that since I woke up today. My stupid brain seems to have forgotten everything in between and registered the bare minimum gesture. Yes, bare minimum, because this very man once drove three towns over when my favourite ice cream place shut down to get me a tub. The ice cream was packed above and below ice, so it was still ice cream and not some sugary liquid foam when it got to me. Still, the very bare minimum gesture last night has me drawing smiley faces today, and I can only hope no one has caught me smiling while pencilling them.

I'm about to get started on a more serious drawing when my Mom appears from somewhere behind me. "Mom, what are you doing here?" I



frown.

"Is that any way to greet your mother? Being Luna has changed you, I see. And to think you almost ran away."

"It's not like that," I swallow, rising to greet her with a hug that she never used to want from me unless eyes were on us. "I was just surprised to see you."

She pulls out a chair and sits, looking down at my smiley faces. "Those are nice," she says, staring like she doesn't understand what it is that she is looking at. They're not just smiley faces. They are random flowers, and objects with smiles on them.

I quickly flip the page, "It's nothing."

Her gaze lifts, "I came to check on you, I would have come earlier but your father said it was too early." She says with an eyeroll. No one likes his rules, but we have had to obey his word for years. In a way, I'm glad I got married, because now I don't have to answer to him. Instead, I get to answer Kingston, who doesn't mind if my tone is off.

"Did something happen?"

She shrugs, "That's what I want to know, Liana baby. Last year, just as we were locking up, Chef Tanya received an order from Alpha Kingston asking her to make food of your liking." She tells me, "What's wrong, are you sick?"

"No," I shake my head. I didn't know he went or put Chef Tanya through all that trouble, I had assumed she made the food when she visited the house like she often does to teach Lexie, Seven, and the other maids how to make certain meals.

Mom leans in close, her perfume wrapping around me tighter than the hand she puts on my shoulder. "Are you pregnant?" She whispers.

"No!" I jot away, "Why would you think that?"

"Okay, touchy question," she says, smiling.

"I just didn't feel like eating lunch or dinner. He must have done that to me."

"That could be a symptom," she says with a soft smile. "I had that when I was carrying Seraphine."

Oh, goddess.

I slowly shake my head, she is convinced I'm pregnant. I can see it in her smile, and if she lets this slip to anyone else, Kingston will misunderstand. "I'm not pregnant, Mom."

"Are you sure?" She frowns, her head tilting slightly. She doesn't believe me.

"Yes," I confidently nod. I have to set the record straight before her gossip networks catch wind of this. "I promise you, I am not pregnant or anywhere near pregnant. I'm just about as untouched as a nun." I confess, not a conversation I should be having with her, but it's much needed. "The nun might be touched by the holy ghost but not—I. There is no possibility of me being pregnant Mom, even if my name were Mary."

I almost laugh at my own joke, but then Mom winces, "Still?" she stares, "Aeliana honey, what do you think you're doing?" She asks, her tone flat, low. Like she is disappointed that I am not knocked up by a man who hates my guts.

