

Chapter Nine - Lovesick

Siobhan

I was sick. With love. One night, that's all it took. Perhaps it was lust, that desire for things we couldn't have. Harrod disappeared the day after our night together. I was aching to see him again. I wanted to feel him feel me up again. I dreamed about him, about our night together. I didn't regret waiting this long to have sex, because losing my virginity to him was worth it. I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that I'll never regret it.

All that dribble aside, the love had actually made me sick. It had been two weeks since he left, and I was a mess already. I was sitting on the bed in my jammies, my hair messed up, a trash bin at my side. I had some bug and I was puking like hell as I waited for his call. I couldn't wait anymore. I was going to tell him exactly how I feel.

Then the phone rang.

"Hey, sweetpea."

"Hello," I replied hoarsely.

"I missed you."

"I missed you too, Harry."

"Are you okay? You don't sound so—" Another wave of nausea hit me and I puked ruthlessly.

"Sorry, I'm sick. Anyway, when are you coming back?"

"I think it will be another week before I can come back," he said.

"Why did you have to go all of a sudden? We should have followed up with the second date. This is torture, Harry. I need you."

"Listen," he said tentatively. "There's something you need to know."

"I'm listening," I said.

"I can't tell you over the phone. I...I need to show you something. I just don't know...it's complicated."

"Well, tell me where you are and I'll come over."

"No, you're unwell. Go see a doctor, get well, and then we'll talk about it."

"Harry," I began. I needed to tell him how I felt. I couldn't bottle these feelings inside for long. "Don't freak out, okay?"

"Okay, what is it?"

"I think I am in love with you."

"That's a relief," he said with *phew*. "I thought you were gonna say, 'I'm pregnant'."

"Is it too soon to say it?"

"Siobhan, I think about you all the time. I believe in taking things slowly, but the way I feel for you, if it isn't love already, I don't know what is."

"I just...we had such good time. And now I feel like I'm losing you already."

"You aren't losing me, darling. Things are just complicated. I'll figure something out. I'll talk to my dad. We'll see if we can get you here."

"Update me as soon as you can," I told him. "By the way, they asked me today if I wanted to have another lab partner because you were on leave. I said no, but now I'm working for two. When you come back, I'll make you work thrice as hard."

"Baby, I'll work on you very hard once we're together again."

"I love you," I said, before the next wave of nausea hit. "I think I should sleep now."

"No, just keep talking to me. I look forward to talking to you all day. It's the only thing that's keeping me sane."

"You know, I almost feel like punishing you by not talking to you right now, just like you abandoned me."

"I didn't abandon you, babe. Things came up, and when you know why, you'll understand."

“I won’t pester you by asking you to tell me now, but it better be soon.”

“It will be, I promise.”

“I love you, Siobhan.” He finally said the magical words and butterflies fluttered in my stomach.

“I love you, too,” I said, hanging up.

The butterflies in my stomach were too strong, and their fluttering didn’t go away the next morning. I finally booked an appointment with my GP. After all the preliminaries and everything, I ended up in the GP’s room.

“So,” she said, “you on a pill or something?”

“What pill?” I asked.

“Birth control?”

“No,” I said.

“When was the last time you had sex?”

“Almost three weeks ago, but—”

“Did you use protection?”

“No, but it was just that one time. I’m not pregnant.”

“I didn’t say you are, but you could be. Here,” she said, handing me a cup and a water bottle. “Drink the water, and then urinate in the cup.”

I did as she said, and then she told me I was pregnant. I didn’t say much. I asked her if she was sure, and she told me that sometimes the tests show as negative during early stages of pregnancy, “But positive is positive. We can do a blood test or an ultrasound if you want, but you are definitely pregnant.”

“No, that’s fine, thank you.”

I had to tell Harrod. I had to tell him before my own mother found out. I knew how my pregnancy could be used negatively in the media to tarnish her image. There were journalists who fed on such stuff and made stories out of it, but I wouldn’t let that happen.

I tried to call him all day but I couldn't get through to him, so I went to his house instead. The officers refused to clear me because Harrod wasn't home.

"Fine, don't clear me. I'll wait here until his father comes. I want to speak to him."

"Ma'am, we can't tell you when he'll be back. He comes home late. Why don't you—"

"Save it," I said decisively. "I am not going anywhere."

The officer sent some sort of message on his walkie-talkie. Then another guy came from the security cabin and cleared me to go.

"Mr. Ford is already on his way here. Please go on. The butler will receive you."

When I reached the gates, I got out of the car and skipped off the road. I wanted to walk in those gardens again, but the second I stepped onto the grass, a loud voice shrieked from hidden speakers, "Get off the grass! Get off the grass!"

"Okay, okay," I said, and got back on the path. It was a fifteen-minute walk to the house. When I got there, Gabe took me to the drawing room.

"Mr. Ford will be landing any minute now. He'll join you shortly."

The butler left and I waited for Harry's dad to finally arrive. Once I had calmed down, I realized how stupid of me it was to come here. I didn't know what I would say to him. I mean, what could I say? I love your son, bring him back?

Mr. Ford cleared his throat loudly to let me know he's there, and was followed by the butler. He waved Gabe off, shook my hand, grabbed two glasses and a bottle of scotch and sat down on the opposite sofa.

"Young lady," he said. "You have been quite a nuisance to my security personnel."

"I am sorry, Mr. Ford. I just—"

"It's fine," he said. "Tell me, what brings you here? It must have been important."

"I just wanted to see Harrod. I have to talk to him about something. It's really important."

"Ah, you two are dating." He said that more like a statement than a question.

“I’m not really sure you can call it that, but your son and I like each other very much.”

“‘Like’ wouldn’t have made you come all the way here, all the while knowing he wasn’t here.”

“No, we do love each other. It just seems strange to say it so soon, but we are probably headed in that direction.”

“You are cautious, just like your mother.”

“You know my mother?”

“Everybody knows your mother. Senator Daphna has been one of the finest.”

“But I never told Harrod about my mother. How do you know all this?”

“Your mother and I have crossed paths quite often, mostly on the wrong foot. She gives us a hard time in Congress. Nevertheless, like yourself, she is a brilliant woman. Dedicated, hardworking and passionate. We are acquainted.”

“Right, and I can guess what you do.”

“Best not to speak of it. Now, back to why you are here.”

“I’d much rather talk to him.”

“Except you know you can’t. So I’m all you have for the time being. Now you can tell me what it is and I’ll help you as I see fit, or you can wait till later tonight to talk to him. Take your pick and decide fast, because I don’t have all day.”

“I’m pregnant,” I blurted out. To say that Harrod’s father was intimidating would be an understatement. He sweetly pressurized me and then threw the time bomb. Or maybe I was hormonal. I was normally better at staying calm.

“What? What has that got to do with...” He paused, then poured himself another drink and shook his head.

“Harrod?” he asked, looking at me.

I nodded. “It was just the one time.”

“Harrod is the father of your baby?” He laughed. “I don’t believe this.”

“I’m telling the truth,” I said, indignant.

“Sorry, no, I don’t mean I doubt you. I’m just surprised. Harrod has always been careful, followed the rules, all those things. You know how it is for families like ours. And now this.” He laughed again.

“Are you implying that I—”

“I am not implying anything,” he chided. “When did you find out?”

“About two hours ago. I didn’t know what to do or where to go.”

“I’m glad you came here. How far along are you?”

“Three weeks.”

“Do you want to visit Harrod?” he asked. “I have a private jet. I can send you off now. But you can’t come back until Harrod completes his training, which is going to be another week.”

“He never told me he was...what is he training for?”

“I think it’s best if you go there and find out for yourself.”

“So where will I be going?”

“I can’t tell you that, but the place is safe.”

“My mother will want to know.”

“I’ll handle your mother. Besides, you’re grown woman. Tell her to stop being a helicopter parent.”

“I’m sure you know how it is,” I said. “Security issues and all that.”

He nodded, finishing his drink.

“Are you going to keep the baby?”

“I’ll decide when I talk to Harrod. I think we’ll make a decision together.”

“Well, whatever you decide, I hope you do keep the baby. This life is lonely. Harrod and I have always been alone. It wouldn’t hurt to have a pup in the den.”

“A pup?”

“You know, a baby wolf.”

“I doubt such ferocious beings exist among our kind.”

“You’d be surprised,” he said.

He stayed for another half an hour and chatted. In spite of his cockiness and impassiveness, I saw a lonely man. He told me about his wife, her mental illness and how he never married again because he was still in love with her. He also talked a lot about the baby, what I’d do and where I’d stay, if we decided to keep the baby. His eyes sparkled whenever he mentioned the baby, icy cold and blue like Harrod’s.

An hour later, I found myself on a private jet, circling a forest on a mountain. Down below, the only sign of civilization was a short strip of tar and asphalt — a runway.

Chapter Ten - In The Middle of Nowhere

Siobhan

As the plane landed, I spotted two heads in the trees. One of them was Harrod, of course, although I couldn't tell which one. From the distance, they both looked the same. The plane halted and I waited inside until those guys were here. The forest was beautiful, but also terrifying.

When Harrod walked in, I'm surprised at how different he looked.

"Harrod," I said, getting up. "You look so different. What have..." Then the actual Harrod stepped in.

"Siobhan," he said, surprised. He pushed the other guy aside, locked me in an embrace and kissed me. "What are you doing here?"

"I went to your place and raised hell, so your father sent me here."

"Did he? You must have been pretty convincing."

"You never told me you had a twin. Who is this?"

"This is my brother," he said.

"Hi, I'm Harrison," the other guy said.

"Wow, the resemblance is uncanny," I said, shaking his hand. "Harrod never told me he had a brother."

"Yeah, he didn't know," he said.

"How are you now?" Harrod asks.

"I'm fine. I still have the stomach bug."

"I was worried about you," he said. "I'm glad you're here."

As we stepped out of the plane, I asked, "So, where are we? Your father's secret science facility?"

"Something like that," he said.

It was a 15-minute walk into a fenced community, a village of sorts. Harrod introduced me to his Grandpa and a woman called Mishayev. ‘Misha is my teacher here,’ he told me.

“What does she teach you? What are you here for, secret service training?”

“No. I’ll tell you later.”

“No, you said you’ll tell me when we are together, I can’t wait anymore. Tell me what took you away from me.”

I perched on an ottoman in what appeared to be a common room, and Harrod got on behind me, legs and arms around me. It felt safe inside his arms.

“I need to warn you first and prepare you. This shit is crazy.”

“Whatever it is, tell me. Go ahead, I can take it. Can’t be crazier than everything else that has happened, with me coming out to the middle of nowhere to be with a guy I only had one date with.”

“But—”

“No buts,” I said, cutting him off. “Tell me now.”

“Harrison, do the honors, will you?”

What happened next was, simply put, crazy. I should have freaked out, I should have, but I didn’t. I was inside his arms, I was safe. I knew that no harm would come to me. But it took my breath away anyway.

“So, your brother is a shape-shifter,” I said, letting out a long breath.

“Not a shape-shifter,” he said, rubbing my arm, turning me on. “A werewolf.”

“And you?”

“Me too. Everyone here is.”

“And your dad knows about this?”

“He’s one too. Like I said, Siobhan, we all are. Except my mother.”

“Oh.”

“I think that’s probably why my dad sent you here, so you could find out before things get serious.”

“Before things get serious, Harrod, seriously? We still have a before?”

“I mean, you know, so you can get out while you can.”

“So if I want to get out, you won’t stop me?”

“If this is too much for you, why would I?”

“So you’d let me go just like that,” I said, slightly angry.

“I’d try like hell to stop you, but I won’t force you.”

“I’m cool with it,” I said. “Growing up in a political family, I’ve seen stuff way more messed up than this. Nothing like this, but still. I think I can get used to this. But I sure as hell won’t be living here forever.”

“Neither will I,” he said. “But we’ll have to come here every full moon. I’ll have to.”

Then I asked him something really stupid, something a child would ask. “Can you turn me into a werewolf?”

“With a bite, yes.”

“Cool,” she said. “Do it. Bite me.”

“It doesn’t work like that,” he told me. “Only an Alpha’s bite can do that, and I am not an Alpha yet.”

“Get the Alpha to bite me then.”

“Six days from now, I have to face my brother in The Pit. If I can beat him there, I’ll become the Alpha. We’ll think about it then. But I can’t wait to bite you in other circumstances.” His hand found its way into my shirt and around my stomach. He turned me around, rubbed my back and kissed me again.

“God, you’re beautiful,” he said.

“I missed you, too,” I said.

I closed my eyes and drew in a long breath, taking in his masculine smell, his intoxicating juniper cologne. He pushed me down on the ottoman and tried to get on top.

“Not here,” I whispered.

“They don’t mind.”

“I’m shy.”

“Okay,” he said, kissing me again. “You should go rest, anyway. You must be tired. Mishayev will show you to our room.”

“Okay.” I gave him a quick kiss and left with Mishayev.

She took me to Harrod’s room, which was a mess, as could be expected.

“You will get cold. Let me bring you some fur.”

“Thank you.”

She came back ten minutes later, carrying three different colored fur coats.

“Wow, these are real,” I said, feeling the soft fur, trying one out. “These are so warm and light.”

“Yeah, these are real.”

“Thank you,” I repeated.

She smiled, then looked at me strangely.

“What is it,” I asked.

“You love him?”

“I guess...yeah.”

She smiled. “He’s a good guy. Training here is hard, coming to terms with everything, but he’s patient. He’s doing it all very well. He’s a keeper. Don’t break his heart.”

“I won’t,” I promised, hand over my heart.

“If you need anything or have any questions, you can come to me,” she said, and turned to leave.

“Misha,” I said, “I can call you that, right?”

“Call me whatever you want,” she said.

“I wanted to ask you something,”

“What is it?”

“Is there a doctor here?”

“We have an infirmary. It has all the modern equipment and our doctors are great. But don’t go there alone.”

“Okay,” I said.

“Are you okay?” she asked, concerned.

“I’m fine. I was just curious.”

“Right. You should rest now, and I’ll wake you up for dinner.”