

Chapter 21: You're Mine!

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"Answer me, Elira..." Darius said, still holding my chin.

My lips parted, but no words came out.

He was still so close to me... and I was feeling it again.

A slow burn began building in my chest... and it spread down to my stomach... and lower.

My knees felt weak, but I knew this wasn't just from fear.

It was something else.

Something I had never felt before.

Was this what Miss Helga meant?

The heat cycle?

Triggered by proximity. Emotion.

Bond.

No. No, no. He can't be—

I'm not—

But Darius leaned in closer, just enough for his breath to brush my cheek.

"So, tell me, Elira," he whispered. "Is that what your lesson taught you today? That omegas like you crave that alpha boy's attention so badly... you're willing to risk punishment for it?"

My throat tightened. I was shaking, trying to control something I didn't understand.

"I-I don't understand what you're talking about, Darius—"

"I know what you've been doing with that alpha boy."

Darius's breath was warm against my cheek, but his words were sharp and cold.

My eyes widened. "W-What?"

"Cassiel, right?" he spat the name like poison. "Don't play dumb with me, Elira."

My heart pounded louder. "He's a friend," I whispered, my voice shaking. "He only tried to protect me when—when that boy mocked me. He was just—"

"A friend?" Darius snapped, cutting me off with a bitter laugh, the sound echoing like thunder in the quiet night. His eyes darkened, his jaw clenched. "Do you really think a friend would do that? Risk suspension? Snap like a rabid wolf just because someone insulted you?"

I opened my mouth, but the words caught in my throat.

"You're naïve," he continued, sneering. "It's obvious he has a thing for you. And maybe... you like that. Maybe you like the attention."

I shook my head violently, panic rising in my throat. "No! It's not like that. He—he's just kind to me. That's all."

But he wasn't listening.

"And yet," Darius growled, his voice lower now, dangerously quiet, "you didn't even blink when you missed your training. You ignored my rules, Elira. You didn't care what punishment I might give you."

My lips parted, but I didn't know what to say. The ground beneath me felt like it was slipping.

I didn't miss the flicker in his eyes then—the way his gaze dropped briefly to my mouth, the small tremble in his fingers still holding my chin. He was too close, too tense like he was holding something back.

But I didn't understand it.

It's impossible for us to feel the same way.

"I'm sorry," I said, barely a whisper. "I didn't mean to disrespect you. I just... I couldn't leave without knowing Cassiel was okay."

Darius went still.

Dangerously still.

The hand holding my chin tightened. His other hand slammed against the wall beside my head, the sound cracking like a whip.

"You couldn't leave without knowing he was okay?" he repeated, his voice cold and disbelieving.

His head tilted slightly, eyes narrowing. "You defied me. You ignored your orders, your place... because of him?"

"I—I didn't mean it like that—"

"You don't get to mean anything, Elira!" he thundered.

I flinched.

His voice echoed across the empty grounds.

Sharp and wild, full of something I couldn't name. Something beyond anger.

Something possessive. Wounded.

He was breathing hard now, his chest rising and falling like he'd been running. Or fighting. Or trying not to.

"Don't ever put anyone before me again."

Him?

"You're mine," he growled, each syllable clipped and raw. "Do you understand that? You belong to me, Elira. You are my omega. My slave. Never forget that."

I froze.

My heart was beating so fast I thought it might shatter inside me.

"...so if you're trying to build a bond with that alpha boy, then you better be prepared for his death. But you... you're not going to have that. What you'll have—is suffering."

His hand moved from my chin to the side of my face, his thumb brushing under my eye—soft, almost careful—before he seemed to realize what he was doing and jerked away like he'd been burned.

But the damage was done.

My breath trembled in my lungs.

His gaze flickered between fury and something else—something more dangerous.

"It seems," he said slowly, his voice dropping into a dangerous calm, "the one assigned to watch you isn't doing her job well."

I blinked up at him.

"She lets you roam freely, skip training, lie to me..."

His lip curled slightly, eyes gleaming.

"Should I discard her?"

My heart dropped.

The word discard rang in my ears like a blade scraping across the stone.

Discard her?

No. No—he doesn't mean that.

Or maybe he does.

Just like what he said about Cassiel—death.

Panic seized my chest.

Dianne.

He meant Dianne.

The chill of the ground beneath me didn't register anymore as I collapsed to my knees, the cold biting into my skin through my skirt. My hands gripped his booted feet, trembling as I looked up at him.

"Please," I whispered, voice barely holding together. "Don't... don't hurt her."

His face didn't change.

"She doesn't deserve it," I continued quickly. "She—she's only doing her job. I'm the one who lied. I didn't listen. It was all my fault."

I was shaking, desperate to make him understand. I could feel the tears pressing behind my eyes, but I held them back with everything I had.

Darius hated tears.

He didn't need to say it—I saw it in his eyes whenever I cried. That cold flicker of disdain.

So I bit the inside of my cheek and swallowed the lump in my throat.

"If you want to punish someone," I said, voice cracking, "then punish me. Hurt me. Just... please don't touch her."

He stared down at me, unmoving.

For a moment, I thought he might actually do it—turn and walk toward the house and make that call that would end everything.

Then his voice cut through the air, low and sharp.

"Stand up."

But I couldn't move.

I stayed kneeling, hands still around his boots.

"Stand. Up."

My muscles wouldn't respond. I couldn't stop begging.

"Please... please, I'm sorry. Just me, not her. I'll take it. Whatever it is. Just don't hurt her..."

The silence was thick between us, but Darius didn't move.

And for the first time, I thought I saw a flicker of hesitation in his eyes.

A crack.

But it was gone as quickly as it appeared.

"Enough," he said, his voice quieter now but no less cutting. "Get up. Now."

But I didn't listen. I was scared—not for my life, but for Dianne's.

Until his strong hands suddenly grabbed my arms.

I gasped as Darius pulled me up with one swift motion—effortless, commanding.

But my knees buckled. My body, too exhausted, too shaken, gave way the moment my weight shifted.

I stumbled forward—

And he caught me.

His hands were on my waist now, firm and steady. My breath hitched.

We were too close... again.

I could feel his breath on my cheek, the heat radiating off his body. My hands instinctively clutched at his sleeves to keep from falling again.

Then I felt it...again.

The warmth had already started crawling beneath my skin again.

That strange, unbearable heat. It pulsed through me like wildfire, starting from the center of my chest and blooming outward—hot, needy, wrong. Or was it?

My head spun.

I looked up at him, eyes wide.

And then I heard it.

A low, guttural growl from deep in his throat—rough, pained.

Darius's jaw clenched, his eyes darkening like a storm had broken behind them. His grip on my waist tightened for a split second before he jerked away as if burned.

He took a sharp step back, breathing harshly like he was fighting something inside him.

I stood there, stunned, my heart thudding violently in my chest.

He looked away, dragging a hand through his hair, clearly rattled.

Then he clutched his chest...as if in pain.

And I could see it now—his hands were shaking.

"Go," Darius said—his voice low, strained, and dangerous.

I blinked. "W-What?"

"I said go," he growled louder this time, still not meeting my gaze. "Now, Elira."

I took a step back.

He wasn't yelling like before. But there was something far more terrifying in the way he stood—trembling, jaw clenched, chest rising and falling in ragged breaths.

"B-But Dianne—"

"I said, f*cking go! Now!"

I turned slowly, my legs barely obeying me. The heat still simmered beneath my skin—confused, crawling—but the fear in my chest had taken over.

I walked.

One step. Then another.

And then, behind me, I heard it.

A sharp intake of breath—

A sound between pain and surrender.

I stopped and looked back.

Just in time to see it.

Darius shifting.

In seconds, where the man had stood, a massive wolf remained.

Enormous. Midnight black. Eyes glowing with gold and fury.

And before I could breathe—

He was gone.

Vanished into the trees like a shadow swallowed by the night.



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