

Chapter 101

~MAYA~

There is a stunned silence as everyone looks at Kane and Maya.

This was the last thing that I was expecting him to do the moment he found out the truth. I blink away the tears as she gently hugs him to her. I think she's happy that he's hurting me. I can tell by the sly look she sends my way when she feels no one is paying attention to her.

Gabriella looks at me, and she knows what this is doing to my heart. She gives me an apologetic smile, but she has nothing to apologize for; she didn't purposefully let this happen. Kane was the one doing this. Not her, not anyone else. He broke my heart, but I don't think I'm even on his mind now. The woman in front of him is all that he cares about at this point. Telling him about Eric and Ariana has managed to push him back closer to her. If he had doubts before, he doesn't have them again. I can see that he wants to make things right between them. Then what does that mean for me? Did I read him right earlier? Was it finally the end?

Austin and James are looking at each other, and I think that maybe for once, they do not hate Kane. They're happy to see him give a heartfelt apology to their sister even though I know there is no way that she is Maya. Not after the things I've seen her done. These people may love her, but she doesn't love them back.

I bite my lip to keep myself from shouting at her again. The last time I did that, I pushed Kane further away from me. There was nothing else that I could do today. I thought I was doing the right thing when we decided to tell him the truth; not once did I think it would push him closer to her and further away from me.

It's not like I regret him finally learning the truth. He had to find out eventually. I was hoping that Gabriella and Kane would be able to bond and catch up on all the moments they'd missed out in life. I didn't have a brother, at least not right now when I had no memory of my past, but I wanted Gabriella to experience the love that Austin and James had for their sister. Somehow, none of that happened. Kane doesn't look ready to accept her yet. He doesn't even look prepared to accept his parents. The only person he seems like he wants to be near right now is Maya.

I exhaled and tried to keep calm even though my emotions threatened to explode.

Maya runs her hand through his hair, pretending to care about his feelings, "I love you, Kane. You don't need to apologize. I know that we will be together always. I know that no one in this world or even in this room will ever be able to separate us."

I know that she said that last line to challenge me. I knew that she did because of the way she looked at me. Did no one else see what I saw? I felt like I could see straight through her act.

Her 'I love you' did not sound sincere. There was no emotion in those words. If I were to say those same words to Kane, it would come straight from the heart; I would shout it, whisper it, and you would still be able to hear the intense emotion in my voice. No one would ever have to question if I loved him. They would know it by just the way I said the words. It was not the same for her. It was not the same because she didn't truly love him.

I excused myself to the bathroom. I couldn't watch Kane bowing down to Maya anymore. Gabriella was the one that gave me the directions. I opened the door and dropped myself to the ground as I brought my knees to my chest. What kind of hurt was this? The look on Kane's face told me he was done with me. He was done with us. He was ready to be the man he wanted to be for Maya. And for all we knew, it wasn't even the Maya he knew and truly loved. Shouldn't he be able to tell it wasn't her by now? What was taking him so long? Why was he ignoring all of the signs? Why was everyone who once knew Maya ignoring every single sign that this fake woman was showing to them?

I don't know how long I could stand back and not say something.

I knew that the moment Kane found out the truth about his family, everything would change. But not once did I think it would take him further away from me. I knew this day would come one day, a day where he decided that it was time to let me go for good; I didn't think that day would be today. Earlier, I felt the distance he was putting between us. Now I knew that the distance was very much real. He may have decided this even before Gabriella told him who he was. He was already trying to push me out of his life before he showed up here today.

Why? What caused the change?

My heart aches. Actually aches. The horrible part was that I didn't blame him at all for anything. I blamed myself. This was all my fault. But was it really? According to Atticus and his brothers, it's possible that I am also his mate. If that's true, I can't put the entire blame on myself. Being his mate meant that it would hurt to see him with another woman. But she was his before I even met him. That's why she is the one that has the hold on him, and he is rightfully hers. My only problem is that I don't think that's his Maya. And I'm not the only person that thinks this. It tells me that I'm not being paranoid. I'm not just hoping that she's a fake so that there would be a chance for Kane and me.

I wipe the tears. I couldn't spend the rest of my day locked inside this bathroom. It's already been a few minutes since I'd stepped inside here.

I had to pick myself up before Gabriella came looking for me. She tends to worry about me, and I know that she understands how painful it is to see Kane with Maya. She knows that there is a high possibility that I'm also his mate. She knows more than anyone else the kind of torture this is for me.

I don't know what fate brought Gabriella into my life. But isn't it crazy that the closest friend in my life right now is Kane's sister?

I force myself up and take a look in the mirror. I could try to make myself look less broken-hearted, but I don't think anything could help this right now.

When I open the door, I'm surprised to see the man responsible for my pain in front of me.

"We need to talk," he says to me.

"Did you follow me here?" I ask, unable to hide the hope from my voice. I want to kick myself for being this way. Why is this the first thing that I ask? There are so many other questions that I needed to ask him, yet those are the first words that come out of my mouth.

There is an awkward yet painful silence between us. I'm not even sure what he's doing here right now. Wasn't he by Maya's side just a few minutes ago? Wasn't he telling her that he would never hurt her again? So then why did he follow me here? What could he possibly have left to say to me? Just earlier, he wouldn't even look at me.

He places his two hands on the wall behind me and leans in. "I'm sorry," he whispers. "I'm so sorry. For everything. For leading you on when I knew Maya would always come first. For making you think there would ever be something between us. For what I'm about to do and for everything else. You don't deserve it. Maya doesn't deserve what I did. Neither of you does. I'm the problem, and I'm trying to fix it. I know I shouldn't admit this, but letting you go will f****g rip me apart, but I have to do it. I can't hurt Maya, not after everything. I'm finally thinking straight, and I beg you not to say anything. If you open your mouth, if I hear your voice, you will make me weak, and I can't let that happen. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever."

My lips part when he leans in closer and exhales, "Please help me do this. I can't do it without your cooperation. I love Maya. I will never love anyone else as much as I love Maya. So please, help me be good to her. Please. She's been through too much, and I'm the reason her life is such a mess. I will never be able to live with myself if I hurt her again."

Hearing Kane says these things to me made it hard for me to stand. How could I say no to him when he asked me this nicely? I could see how much he loved her. How much he wanted to make things right between them. I've always wanted Kane to be happy. His happiness was always the most important thing for me. And if it meant being with the fake Maya, I wouldn't stop them from being together. She may be an imposter, but in Kane's eyes, she was the same woman he loved in the past.

If I were to tell him that she was a fake, he would never believe me. He would think that I'm making up a lie so that we can be together, he would think that I was being selfish. And I wouldn't let that happen. I wouldn't mess things up because I wasn't thinking straight.

"If this is what you want," I whisper, trying to fight back the tears. "I will stay out of your way. I will step back and never interfere in your life again. There are plenty of things I wish to say to you for one last time, but I know that it will only make things harder for the both of us. I'm sorry, Kane, for turning your life upside down. I'm sorry that I made your life more complicated than it already was. I should have kept my distance from the first time I learned about Maya. You are doing the right thing. I wish you all the happiness in the world."

Kane's eyes are closed, and I can see the misery in his expression. I can't stay beside him, not when he is like this. It will make me cave and regret everything I just said. I slowly remove his hands from the sides of me. He doesn't open his eyes as I begin to walk away from him. But I can't stop the tears this time. They're flowing like a river.

I can't believe it's all over. He will never be mine.

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~KANE~

I watch her walking away from me, and I don't do anything to stop it even though I know she is walking away with my heart. There is nothing that I can do for her, not when Maya is around. The guilt I felt inside for hurting Maya would never let me be with another woman. And that's how it's always supposed to be. It was always supposed to be her and no one else.

I was wrong for ever engaging in physical contact with anyone else but her. I should have stopped it before it ever came to this point. To the point where I felt like the girl was stealing my breath as she walked out of my life. I unbuttoned the top of my shirt; suddenly, it felt too hot. I was fighting everything inside of me not to run after her.

I had betrayed not one but two women. They both deserved much better than me.

Maybe the right thing was to let them both go, but I knew what happened the last time I tried letting Maya go. She disappeared from my life and ended up being in danger. And I was still spending every day trying to make up for that. I couldn't make the same mistake again. I wasn't walking out on her. I wasn't leaving her alone when she needed me the most.

This was the only proper way to move forward. I could never give my heart to another woman but her. I would stop myself before that ever happened. And that's exactly what I'm doing here today. I'm stopping myself before another woman takes the place of Maya in my heart.

She was by my side since the start, and she was the one I treated the worst. Maya stuck by my side even when I destroyed her life. She loved me even when I didn't deserve her love. She saved me from her brothers when I'd almost killed her from emotional pain.

After everything, I knew that it would always be the right decision. Always.

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~ONE WEEK LATER~

~MAYA~

"Please talk to me," Gabriella begs. "I hate seeing you like this."

"I'm sorry, Gabriella," I whisper. "I'm not in the mood to talk to anyone. I want to be alone. Please try and understand. It's hard for me to talk right now."

I miss him. I miss Kane so much. I refused to step out of the house since the last time we spoke. Lucy invited us over the past few days, but I turned down the offer each time. Gabriella and Arthur went to those events while I stayed home with Emma.

"It's been one week, and you still haven't recovered from what happened with Kane. I knew I should have fought more to protect you from getting heartbreak. I should have known that a man never leaves his mate for anyone else. I didn't think telling Kane he was my brother would mean he would fall more for this fake Maya. I thought he would have realized by now that she wasn't who she said she was."

"Maybe we were wrong about her," I whisper. "Kane seems sure that she is his mate. He wants to make her happy. If he had any doubts in his mind, he wouldn't have chosen her over me. He chose her because he still thinks that she is his Maya. He thinks that she deserves to be happy now after all of the pain she's been through."

"Are you hearing yourself?" Gabriella demands. "How can you let Kane destroy his life? She's not the real Maya. Are you not trying to prove it like we proved that he is my brother? You've fought so much for Kane already since the first day that you met him. Why are you willing to step now? Why are you willing to let the fake Maya hurt him?"

My fingers tighten around the blanket. Her words are getting to me, and I think that she knows it.

"I didn't want to say this, but Kane doesn't look any better than you." She whispers. "I can see the disappointment in his face every time we show up without you there. He's looking for you even though he asked you to let him go. I don't think he meant that those words. I think it was the shock of finding out about our family that made him act irrationally. He misses you. I know that he does. And you're not doing anything wrong by loving him; that woman is not Maya. You're not betraying anyone. At first, I thought you had to stay away from him, but I realize now that I was wrong. What you feel for him is not normal; this love reminds me of the love I feel for Arthur. You're his mate, and you have to fight for him. Make him realize that you're the one he has to be with. No one else."

I slowly lift my gaze towards Gabriella. Was this true? Was I indeed not betraying anyone by fighting for Kane? Nothing would make me happier than knowing there was a chance for us; that I was the right option for him. I miss Kane so much. These past few days were awful without him.

"Do you want to get Kane to finally admit that you are his?" Gabriella asks me. "We both know that Maya is not who she pretends to be. I don't want my brother to be with a woman like her. I want him to be with someone that actually loves him, and you are that person. We need to push him towards you, or he isn't going to realize the s**t he's doing. We need him to see that he needs you just as much as you need him."

I hug Gabriella to me. "Thank you, thank you so much."

She doesn't realize how much it means to me that she is on my side. That she wants me to end up with her brother.

"How do you plan on making him see that I'm the right choice?" I ask her.

"What are you two up to again?" Arthur barges into the room. "I get a bit worried whenever Gabriella has an idea. It usually involves a lot of trouble."

"Trouble is good," She responds. "It's how we got together. Isn't it?"

He shakes his head and leaves the room without answering her.

"Back to what I was saying before we were rudely interrupted," Gabriella continues. "I think that we should start by ignoring him. It would be best if you ignored him as much as possible. Don't give him any attention. Make him believe that you're really over him. Since he's been looking for you everytime we visited, I'm positive that the moment he sees you again, he will be craving your attention. He will become frustrated when he realizes that you're finally listening to him. I know that he will be."

I nod; I've never ignored Kane before. I've tried a few times, but it always failed. This was the first time that I'm willing to do it because I know that there is a chance that it will bring us closer together. I was willing to listen to him, to let him forget me so he could be with Maya. But Gabriella's words have successfully changed my mind. She's not Maya. And she can't be his mate. I'm his mate. I'm the one that he needs to be with unless the real Maya shows up. It was the only time that I would be willing to step down.

"Has he warmed up to you as yet?" I ask her. I was too depressed before to ask her anything about Kane. Just his name would have been enough to make my heart hurt. Now that I knew that she was going to help me get him back, I wanted to find out everything that I had missed in a week, from locking myself inside the room and avoiding everyone.

She sighs, "I've tried having normal conversations with him, but I don't think he's willing to accept that he's a part of my family. At least not right now. I think Kane has a lot going on in his heart and mind right now to welcome the thought of having a family that loved him. He has always been so skeptical about everything it will take him time to trust us. And I think we have the rest of our lives to make that happen. I don't want to force him into anything. I want him to come to us on his own. I feel like forcing him would only make things harder on all of us."

I had to agree with her. Forcing Kane would never work. He had to see that his real family did love him and wanted what was best for him.

"Now that I've finally managed to get you into a better mood, I can finally tell you that we have a wedding to attend at the end of this week." She informs me.

"A wedding?" I ask her.

"Yes, Atticus Fawn is getting married, and we're all invited. This is your chance to see Kane and ignore him. This is also your chance to act interested in other men. If I know my brother or any man with a mate, I know he will go insane when he sees you with another man. Atticus has many brothers; maybe we can pretend to hook up with one of them."

"Is he marrying his mate or Autumn?" I ask her. I remembered the article that spoke of her agreeing to act like my date?"

Gabriella's eyes are sad, and I know the answer before she says anything. "He's marrying Autumn. I don't know how his family got him to agree, but they are to wed. And I wasn't referring to Dante or Damon. He has other brothers. As far as I know, none of them have found their mates, and Arthur knows them well. He can ask them for a favor."

I narrow my eyes, "it seems like you have an answer for everything. How long have you been planning this?"

She laughs, "since I found out about the wedding from Lucy. She was the one to announce that we should all attend together when she received the invitations."

I can tell that Gabriella knew how to be sneaky when she really wanted to. But I loved that about her.

I hugged her one more time to me.

Things were about to be crazy at this wedding.

I could feel it.