

Chapter 12 A Fatal Twist

DENVER.

I couldn't believe she was the one standing in front of me.

At the start of the ball, I could swear I caught a glimpse of her and a whiff of her vanilla scent in the air. She captured my attention amidst the tens of thousands of people in the crowd.

But I shook my head confidently—it couldn't be her.

Perhaps she had been infused deep into my mind that I was now seeing her where she wasn't, scenting her when she had disappeared for six years now. I remember pushing a hard lump down my throat, forcing her out of my head like it was even possible.

For the past six years, Eliana was all I could about.

Some days, I was filled with worry about where she even was. Being a rogue was no easy feat, especially with an Omega like herself. She hadn't been out in the world and it scared me. On other days, I was filled with regret that the other night ended the way it did.

And there was a possibility that I would never see her again.

The thing was, I didn't realize how much Eliana did for me until she left. I didn't how deeply I felt for her until the thought of her alone and devastated in the forest drove me mad. For the past six years, I blamed myself that something had happened to her.

I never forgave myself and I was filled with this angst and rage all the time because I had let her go. But now, here she was.

The winds ran through her long chestnut hair. Her almond-shaped eyes, the color of the clearest sapphire which she locked into mine. A thick air of familiarity swept between us in a moment of silence.

She looked even more beautiful now, radiating an aura of confidence and elegance, especially in that ballroom gown. It clasped around her slender frame, revealing her curves and graceful features that caught my attention but it only lasted for so long.

"Denver," My name escaped her lips softly, like she couldn't believe her eyes too and a lump slipped down my throat yet again. "It's you." It dawned on me. I wasn't wrong earlier, that whiff of vanilla scent in the air at the start of the night, I could never mistake her for someone else.

"It's really you" I muttered but she blinked her eyes away, a light scoff suddenly escaping her lips. She grasped the ends of her dirt-smudged gown as she turned around. Immediately, I went after after.

"Eliana!" I called but she didn't stop stomping away. It wasn't until I grasped her wrist that she came to a halt. "I can't do this" She shook her head. She faced me and an arch came between my eyes.

They fell upon her porcelain skin although had mud across her cheeks were still ever radiant and flawless. Her lips were a delicate shade of rose, both inviting and enigmatic and I had to draw myself out of my carnal thoughts immediately.

Was she always this attractive and irresistible?

It was almost as if now she'd cast a spell on me and I was compelled to see her, to truly see Eliana Jacobs. And if I had never felt regret before, I did in that moment.

She withdrew her hands from me and I took a step back.

"What are you doing here?" I asked her softly and she scoffed. Like her cheeks didn't light up with fire inside of them, she turned away. "Eliana."

"Don't call my name" She gritted through her teeth.

"God, I never wanted to see you Denver" She ran her hands through her hair and I hummed. "I can understand that" I replied because if anything, how we left things off that night had stuck with me ever since.

I wished constantly that things went differently and I should tell her but I could feel the resentment in her eyes as she looked at me.

I can't blame her though.

But at the same time, I couldn't just sit back and watch her walk away. She turned her back and started walking in the opposite direction, leaving me to catch up to her pace.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"It's none of your business." She snapped. "Not after you nearly killed me" Her arms wrapped around each other and I stuttered. "I didn't...mean to, uhm I didn't think it was you." She darted a look at me.

"Yes you did." She said.

"You've been stalking me ever since I came back, you think I didn't see the other day in the forest?" She raised her voice, sending an echo through the trees and my eyes genuinely went blank.

"I have no idea what you're talking about" I replied but she blew raspberry in my face. "So typical" She murmured. "I'm serious" I trailed behind her. "I didn't even know you came back, I only just saw you tonight" I added.

"Well, can we act like that never happened?" She stopped in her tracks again and this time, there was a rumble in the skies above us. The winds hauled right past and a drizzle started to pour.

"Where are you going now?" I asked her. She crossed her arms.

"What do you want from me, Denver?" She asked. You. 'I wanted you' I could've said but I rather keep silent. "You were wandering the forest alone at midnight, you have no idea how unsafe it is that you're out here, especially on a night like this" It shouldn't be an argument but I raised my voice. Why was I so suddenly concerned about her safety?

"Why do you care?" Her question slapped me in the face and I gulped down a hard lump. "It's—" My arms fell beside me. "It's the Moonlight Ball, all the wolves are probably drunk and horny and willing to take on anything they set their sights on. It isn't safe here" I tried to reach for her hands but she threw me off.

"Leave me alone, Denver." She yelled.

"Now, you suddenly care about me. Where was that part of you six years ago, huh?" She asked. "Not wanting to get hauled by a Pack of Wolves is common human decency" I muttered and she scoffed yet again.

"There he is," She heaved. "The cocky and arrogant Alpha Denver."

"I was wondering when the facade would wear off, it was quite boring thinking you'd changed" She muttered. My hands fell to my hips. "I'm not the man I used to be six years ago" I answered her.

And although the rain picked up, it wasn't so much to get either of us drenched but we should be probably have been on our way to the car or something. Eliana was just being as stubborn as usual.

"Wow" She clapped.

"Well that's good for you and—what's her name, Claire?" Her voice went high-pitched and there was a crack in it. I heaved a deep breath as soon as I realized. "Is that what this about? Claire?" I asked.

"No, Denver."

"Did it ever occur to you for once how much you broke me six years ago, and I'm not just talking about my heart because falling for you was a mistake and it was my mistake but you absolutely shattered me and I can say that now but for all those years, it was difficult for me."

"And you have no fucking idea, so you can't just walk up to me and make conversation like we're friends or like we owe each other something. Okay, Denver? But you are right about one thing though—" She paused.

"I'm not the same person I used to be six years ago too."

"So none of that is going to work this time" She turned her around and almost immediately, the rain picked up its momentum, a bolt of lightning striking the earth and an ear-splitting thunder right after.

She halted, and we both got drenched in the middle of the forest.

"You don't have to back!" I yelled. She turned back at me, furious at her lack of options. "I have a car nearby, I can drive you home." I offered. I could almost the cuss words yelp out of her lips as she grudgingly brushed past my shoulders. "I'll be...quiet. Yeah" I picked up after her.

Barely a five-minute walk, we reached my car and she sat in the passenger's seat with her arms across her chest. She was shivering.

"Here" I wound up the windows, handing her a leather coat I had in the backseat but she didn't utter a word, neither did she look in my direction.

The rain continued to beat down upon my windshield and I started the engine, at least to get out of the forest. I kept the coat right beside her, if ever she changed her mind but she didn't.

As I reversed out of there, I stole quick glances at her emotionless face and her voice kept echoing in my ears. The car was dreadfully silent until I spoke up. "Eliana." My voice filled the vehicle.

It was harder for her to act like she didn't care.

"I wish that night ended differently..." She slowly turned her face to me.

"All the time," I added. Her lips were harshly poured before she turned to face the windows again. A smirk crippled the corner of my lips for a sec.

"I heard about your father..." Desperate to break the silence, I said. "We're not friends, Denver" She finally replied, pulling out her phone and it was like she was dialing someone.

Her face couldn't hide the panic when the person didn't pick up. And she slouched back into the chair.

"I lost mine you know." I blurted out and the thought of my dead father left a sour taste in the back of my throat. At least, Eliana knew him and he knew her. For so long after she left, he never gave me a break.

Not that I deserved it.

"I'm...I'm so sorry" Her empathy won her over as she whispered and I shrugged my shoulders. "It's been a while now you know. Just wanted you to know because—" My voice died into a whisper and she fell quiet.

"Is that why you're here...Your father?" I asked and Eliana heaved a deep breath. The answer was crystal clear in her eyes. "Oh." I whispered.

"Well, if you ever need anything—" She picked up her phone again, desperately trying to get a hold of the other person. The first thing that passed through my mind was that it was her boyfriend. Or perhaps, Eliana was married now.

My heart sank at the possibility, but it had been six years. Surely, she'd been with someone other than me, and a hard knot formed in my stomach as I looked down at her fingers. Luckily, there was no ring.

No husband.

It was as though she caught my eye and Eliana immediately looked at me. She lifted her gaze in a way that fixed into mine and a tender feeling swept through the air between us. I took her hands in mine and there was a spark of electricity where our skins touched.

"If you ever need anything, I'm right here." Panic flashed in her eyes as she quickly pulled away from me and she screamed. "Watch out!" I turned my eyes back to the road and it was nearly too late. My tires came to a screeching halt against the wet road.

And my mouth gaped at what was before me.

"Oh my God!" Eliana gasped, immediately throwing herself out of the car.

"It's Adam!" She yelled and there was a crack in her voice. I alighted too, letting my eyes fall on the brutally injured young man who immediately fell to the ground before us.

He could only carry himself much further and by the looks of viciously mauled wounds, the odds were already against him. He gasped for air until he breathed his last in Eliana's hands. She held him up.

"No!" She screamed.

"No! No! Call for help!" She was terribly shaken up, holding steadfastly around his dismembered limbs and arms. I'd never seen an attack like this, this cruel but then again, it was the Moonlight Ball.

"Call for help, Denver!"

"He's gone." I whispered beneath my breath although she didn't want to accept it. I had to tear her body away from his and hold onto her. Eliana was in tears as she looked down at him.

It wasn't so unusual for the Ball night to end in tragedy. Neither would it be the first time. But deep down, I knew this was different. I threw a look back at the forest—because whoever did this, was still out there.