

Chapter 14

All those sleepless nights finally weighed down on me; my muscles ached with a dull soreness, and a heavy fog of lethargy clouded my mind despite the brief rest.

I sighed deeply as I opened my eyes to unfamiliar surroundings. Panic slammed into me like a tidal wave as I realized I was lying on a bare chest.

Before I could thrash or scream, I looked at my captor's face.

Oh, my lord.

"Ca—" I forgot whatever was about to come out of my mouth when I saw his face. His peaceful features. I would die rather than admit it, but he was unfairly handsome. He looked nothing like the monster he was supposed to be.

He looked nothing like what Laurel told me.

I palmed his broad shoulders gently, my cheek warm against his skin, my breath catching as I felt the slow thud of his heart beneath me. My brow furrowed while listening to his heartbeat. It was beating once every few minutes.

Our position was way too intimate for our relationship. I lay on top of him with my legs resting between his legs. I was very much aware of my nakedness under his shirt and his one hand resting on my hip. I didn't want to think about how I might have gotten into his shirt and into this situation.

This would have been uncomfortable with any normal man. But Cain was not a normal man, which, honestly, was driving me insane.

Time to lay the cards on the table and get this charade over with.

"I know what you are," I said. I was surprisingly calm. Even though I knew he was dangerous, I didn't feel like he would do anything to me right now.

"Morning to you, too," he replied. My head snapped up at his gruff response. "So Laurel told you, did she?"

Cain let go of me and I scrambled back to give him some room to sit.

"Then you know better than to anger me. To disobey my orders." This burned my cheeks and I looked away from him.

"Your clothes must be dry enough by now. Change," Cain said as he stood up and flexed his arms a little. "Don't take too long."

He left me alone.

That was it? No big confrontation?

Then again, Cain hadn't sounded surprised. How much did he know, though? Did he know I could only give it to him willingly? Was that why he was acting so kind all of a sudden? Well, kind for his standards, at least.

I had so many questions.

I didn't waste a minute to change back into my clothes. Cain walked back in right when I was done putting on my shoes.

"Here." He handed me my phone and jacket.

"Thank you," I said as I took it from him timidly.

My pendant—no point looking for it.

Cain extended his hand and I passed him his shirt. He put it on it and walked past me to grab his jacket and tie.

He walked out of there without a word.

My phone was dead and I was not in any position to stay back alone. Before anything, I needed to tell Laurel about yesterday.

I wore my jacket and went after him.

"Than—"

"If you are done idling—"

"Can you let me finish?" I snapped at his interruption. Demon or no demon, he was still incredibly rude.

"Thank you for saving my life." I matched his cold glare with my heated one.

"Now, if you'd excuse me, I'll find my way back to the hotel myself. I have enough trouble hanging around my neck, courtesy of you."

Cain grabbed my arm when I tried to walk past him.

"You think you should move around freely after last night?" He leveled his face to mine so my eyes were locked with his.

"You knew what was coming my way." As I said it, I knew it was true. He knew about the pendant, that is why he had Sharon take it from me. He knew Anima would come for me.

Anger rose in my chest. Here I was, trying to thank him for saving me from a situation he had put me in himself.

I tried to break free but he held tight.

"Let go. You're hurting me."

"Ah yes, your wrist, is it?" Cain said darkly as he grabbed my left wrist and raised it between us. "Don't worry, I'm working on it."

So he did know about the exact the mark had on me.

Cain caught me when I swayed on my feet.

"I'll be generous only this one time." He carried me to his car.

"Don't be generous," I groaned.

"Being stubborn will only worsen your situation." Cain dumped me in the passenger's seat and locked the door before walking around and getting behind the wheel.

Back at the hotel, I made a beeline for Hannah's room.

"Ana!" Hannah rushed toward me when I entered her room. "What are you—where were you?" She looked at me, taking in everything.

"I'm out, Hannah." I interjected calmly. "My month is almost done. I am sure you can manage the last few days without me. Audrey is desperate for some approval—she can have it."

"Ana!" Hannah called after me. I could sense a faint concern in her voice. "You don't know what you are doing."

She looked pale and scared for some reason.

I didn't think losing an employee was that big of a deal for her to be acting like this.

"Pass my wishes on to your boss. Tell him I won't just receive. I will give back as well." I stomped out of her room and went to mine to grab my luggage.

I plugged in my phone and texted Laurel about the situation. I asked her to meet me in Seattle. Hopefully, she would be there by the time my flight landed.

"I will deal with it," I assured myself. "As long as Laurel is with me."

The silence of the empty apartment pressed against my ears like a heavy, suffocating blanket, filling me with a sickening sense of isolation.

I dropped my bag on the floor and slumped on the couch.

I took out my phone from my pocket and called Laurel.

She should have been here.

An ominous feeling crept into my heart the longer she took to answer.

"She is just busy somewhere," I said, cupping my neck to ease the lump.

The call connected at last and I released a breath of relief. "I left you messages. Why didn't you call back?"

"Ana!" She didn't sound like herself. "Come to Rose Raven."

That place—that revealed Cain's identity.

"Just do as I say for once. I'm waiting."

I jumped out of the taxi when it stopped outside the hotel and ran inside. Wind slapped my face when I stepped out on the rooftop. It was the same as that night before—dark and empty.

Except for one thing.

"Lau—LAUREL!" I screamed, rushing toward her.

Her assailant stepped back when I fell by her side.

"No, please. What—" There was so much blood. "Laurel!" I cried loudly. "Please, no."

"Ana." She reached for me with her bloody hand. "I tried." I grabbed her hand. "I couldn't—There is something you need—to know." She tried to push herself up.

"I didn't—The truth—"

"Don't talk." I pressed on her wound to stop the bleeding. "You can tell me about it once you are all better. I'm going—I'm going to call for help. You will be alright. You will have to be alright. Please, Laurel!"

"It's okay. Every-thing will be ok-ay." I leaned down so she could palm my cheek. "My bra-ve girl." Her smile was remorseful.

"Make the right choice, Ana."

"Don't do this to me. Please," I sobbed loudly. "I'm sorry, Laurel. For shunning you. I'm sorry. Please, don't leave me too."

"The curse—Lies. Don't trust—" Laurel looked behind me at the person who was responsible for her condition. "Protect—Don't ever give—Blue—"

"Laurel?" Her eyes stilled and her hand fell from my cheek.

"Wake up," I sobbed, shaking her. "YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! Wake up. Please!" I hugged her tightly. "Please!"

My pain morphed into loathing toward the one who took her life and brought ruin to whatever happiness was left in my life. I glared at the gold-hilted blade in his hand.

He stabbed Laurel with it. He took her life so brutally.

He was going to pay for her blood.

"I hate you," I said, my body shaking with tremors. "I hate you so much. I HATE YOU, CAIN!"

I staggered to my feet and pushed him back with all my might.

"You want this?" I raised my left hand. "I dare you to come and take it," I spat venomously.

I was going to fight.

"I swear on Laurel's blood that I will choose death over returning your wing."