



Chapter 45

One beat. Two beats. Three beats.

I heard my heart beating in my ears, quieting all other sounds- not that there were many. Like a horse race I saw on TV once, the humans loved those, I remember them in the stalls before the doors opened, the signal broke out and the horses took off running like their lives depended on it.

That eruption of speed and sound and the way that the people in the stands stood up and cheered on their favorites. It was a deafening sound, it made your heart pound against your chest and then when I saw the faces of the people who won, they were euphoric.

My heart was the steps of a horse running on the track, Darian was the observer in the stands, having betted money and waiting to see his favorite horse run over the finish line.

My fingers clutched and my legs started to tremble like Bambi on ice while I pulled with all my might to get out of the velcro wristbands and the chains around my feet.

I may not be a Lycan but I was strong for a werewolf and there was no way that a little velcro could keep me tied down...at least so I thought. He must've done something to them because no matter how hard I pulled it felt like my arms were coming off and the bands were cutting into my skin burning as they twisted deeper into my flesh.

Darian's previous order telling me to relax now seemed like a gift that he ripped from my hands and panic filled every crevasse of my body.

My toes curled and my ankles flexed when I pulled my legs in. All it did was rock the chain and the scrambling sound pierced my ears. Trixy



stepped up to the front and took over control, we pulled, whipped, kicked, and jabbed; She even tried to lift my body from the bed and use the weight to break free from the velcro straps or maybe just break the crown on the bed altogether.

"I can't, there's something wrong with these confinements," Trixy panted.

"We can't get out?"

Trixy waited for a beat and extended her claws. She attempted to claw at the ropes and cut through the wristband but not a single thread was cut loose.

"No," she said. Our claws retracted, our eyes turned back and Trixy stepped down from the front with a deflated sense of strength and power.

"It's not your fault," I comforted. I felt every ounce of angst that she did and it broke my heart to know that she didn't think she was enough.

"I can't protect us against him. It's my job to protect us,"

"He's strong - stronger than us both,"

She didn't answer me after that. Trixy stepped back into a corner of my mind but her emotions pulsed through me as a constant reminder of the devastation she felt.

"What have you done?" I asked and looked at Darian still leaning on the bed.

"I didn't want you to miss the show, puppet," he said and pushed off.

Someone unlocked the door and turned the handle. I held my breath



waiting for the person to come in.

If I looked closely at my chest I could see the layers of the dress moving from my heart beating roughly against my ribcage.

My eyes turned dry from not blinking when I watched the door slide open and the guard lead Abby into the room.

She wore a fluffy red robe and her hair fell in soft curls - held back from her face with two black pins.

"Lock the door when you leave," Darian ordered the guard.

He bowed his head and backed out of the room with his hands behind his back until he reached the door. The guard gently closed the door, our eyes locked in the crack before it shut and the lock was turned into place. Darian waited in the center of the room and Abby put one leather stiletto in front of the other as she made her way over to him.

I couldn't look away. It was like a dance - a seductive one where he waited for her to come closer and she made him wait even longer. Every step she took was calculated and I could tell by that shadow of a grin on her lips that she enjoyed being in charge and having that control over someone's desire.



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