

Chapter 20

Nicola's POV

After the meeting, most went out into the dining hall to socialize and prepare for dinner. I gather up my things and begin to head back to my office when I feel a hand gently grab my arm. I glanced up to see deep blue eyes with light brown hair and a warm smile.

"Alpha Verduce" I smiled politely back.

"Please, Nicola, I've already said to call me Alex." He says with a sigh, but doesn't appear angry.

"Alex." I say and see the look of approval in his eyes.

"Are you not staying for dinner?" He questions.

"No, I need to put these things back in my office." I lift the bundle of gear in my arms.

"Let me help you." He proceeds to take some of the items out of my arms.

"I insist, plus it would be faster if I help and then we can both come back and still be in time for the dinner." He explains to me when I try to protest.

I start to look around, uncomfortable with his offer and trying to find a way to let him down without insulting him. Before I have a chance to think of an excuse, he turns and starts walking out the door with half of my things in his hands. I quickly run after him, trying to keep up with his long strides. Neither of us say a word as we walk back to my building but I can see him glance in my direction every few minutes, tension building in the air.

Once we reach my office, I set the pile in the corner and he does the same.

"It's fine to leave it here for now, I'll put everything up tomorrow." I say, praying we can leave quickly and get back to the pack house with other people are.

He looks around the room, not nearly in as much of a hurry as me, and starts to read some of my notes I have scattered across the wall and written on the white board. He seems deep in his concentration as he slowly scans each paper and drawing I have pinned up.

"Ehm..." I cough nervously hoping to break him out of his trance.

He turns to me with a serious face and cocks his head towards my work. "Did you do all this?"

I nod at him but his burning stare causes me to look away. "Brilliant and beautiful..." he whispers and when I look up, he's within inches of me.

"Ready to go eat?" I try to change the subject as I to take a step back.

His hand slides around my waist as he pulls me closer to him and I press my hands against his chest, trying to put some distance between us. He leans in until I can feel his breath against my neck and inhales deeply. His touch feels all wrong and there's curiosity in his gaze when he finally pulls back to look at me.

"Of course darling." He quickly spins us around and lead me out the door.

What the hell is going on.

He walks me all the way back to the pack house with his lower hand resting on my back and I urge to swat it away but don't want to make him mad. Normally I wouldn't have minded the gesture from a good looking male, but I can't help but cringe at his touch. Nothing will ever compare now that I know what it's like to be held by him.

We walk through the door and I freeze as a pair of startling green eyes fixates on me and then darts to the hand at my back. I can't seem to look away from the only man that has me mesmerized across the room and my heart begins to race just seeing him. As I step up to meet him, a hand tightens around my waist causing me to frown. I look down at his

fingers and the up to Alex as smiles down at me.

"I'll walk you to your seat."

I push his hand away quickly. "Sorry, I need to talk to someone first."

I look up to see a mixture between anger and betrayal across Zander's face as I try to make my way over to him. I hurriedly move across the room but he spins on his heels, quickly retreating down the hall as I do. I want to take off running so I don't lose sight of him, but I can't make a scene in front of all these people. Desperate, I try to follow him as he turns the corner to go down another wing of the castle I've never been before. My legs move faster and I begin to jog trying to reach him, but as I round the turn, he's already at the far end of the hall.

"Zander wait!" I yell and he freezes.

He slowly turns around and looks at me, his fist clenched tightly together.

"Please..." I'm practically begging him to let me explain.

He walks over to me. His huge strides seeming to get longer as he covers the ground quickly and stops inches away. His jaw ticks as he stares at me with intensity.

"Please, what?" He snarls down at me.

"It's not what it looks like, he insisted on following me and helping. I don't want him." My words end on a whisper as I watch his eyes flicker.

"You don't want him?" He whispers but his words are dripping with anger. "Then explain why you have his fucking scent all over you!"

I open my mouth to speak but nothing comes out.

"I can't right now Nicola. I'm trying with everything I have to keep my wolf from killing that alpha and claiming you right here. If I don't walk away now, there's not a doubt it will happen." He spins and marches away, leaving me standing in the middle of the hallway, wishing I could do something. I decide I no longer want food and sure as hell don't want to see Alex, so instead, I head back to my small apartment.

I close and lock my door as I begin to strip my clothes. Immediately, I head to the bathroom and turn on the water, ensuring it's scalding hot as I place my hand under the spray. Sliding into the water, I grab a bottle of soap from the shelf next to the tub and begin to lather my skin. I desperately try to scrub off any lingering scent Alex left on me as a tear rolls down my face. Not only is my wolf hurting over the fact that we caused our mate pain but I also get a sharp stab in my chest when I think about the betrayal that came across his face after seeing us together.

I continue to claw and scratch at my skin until it's red and burning before the sobs escape me. I rest my head against the back of the tub and continue to cry as my body shakes from the meltdown and the water turns cold. I've already pushed him away once and now it's clear he doesn't trust me.

Once I finally dry off, I fall onto my bed. I lay there for a while before I hear a knock on the front door and the handle rattles. I don't bother answering, hoping they'll get the hint and leave.

"Nicola? Hey, open the door." Kane's muffled voice calls out.

"Please just go." I yell back.

It takes a few seconds, but the footsteps finally retreat and I sigh in relief before I decide to pull on a robe and make some tea. When I hear another knock on the door, I walk over and crack it open slightly, trying not to give Kane a full view of me looking like a disaster.

I'm met by ice blue eyes and sandy blonde hair, a small amount of freckles peppering her face. As she smiles at me, a set of dimples show on her cheeks and I wonder where the hell she came from.

"Hi." She says in a sweet voice. "I'm Sarah, Kane's mate. Can I come in?"

I've never met the Beta Female before but her naturally kind aura makes me smile faintly and I open the door for her as I nod. She walks in and sits down on a chair as I make my way back to my bedroom to put some actual clothes on.

"Sorry, I'm a mess right now." I murmur as I walk back into the room.

"It's no problem girl, we've all been there. Kane was so damn hard headed when we first met, I didn't know if we'd ever make it, but now he's like a giant teddy bear." She grins.

"Yeah, I feel like our situation might be more complicated." I say looking down at my feet.

"Nonsense! That's the great thing about a mate. Even when you feel like all is lost, something happens that pulls you back together again. You are destined for each other and I'm going to help you be prepared for tomorrow so he realizes that as well." A sly grin crosses her face making me question whether or not this is going to be a good idea.

Kane sure has his hands full.

Chapter Comments



