

Enslaved By The Alpha Chapter 1 - 50

Chapter 1

His hands are in her hair, his lips on her neck, as his body moves against hers. He's touching her, touching a woman that was not me. She's moaning his name and enjoying it a lot more than she should. He knows that I'm watching; he knows that I'm hurting. This is exactly what he wants; he wants to see me suffer. He wants to show me that he can do whatever it takes to break my heart, and that's precisely what he's been doing ever since the day he kidnapped me and brought me to this sick place. I feel the tear roll down my face; there is nothing that I can do. I'm tied to this chair; I cannot leave no matter how badly I want to. I don't want to see this; I don't want to see him with her. I push against the chair, and it makes a screeching noise on the wooden floor. He catches my gaze, and I feel my heart rate increase. My mate. He's looking at me with his deep ocean blue eyes, the eyes that I've dreamt about; I hate them. I hate him. I hate him for taking me away from my home; I hate him for torturing me, but most of all, I hate how much I still want him after everything he's done to me. *One week before present day* I wake with a start. My body is soaked with sweat, and my heart is racing as if I'd just run a marathon. This is the second time this week that I've had the same nightmare. I don't understand what's happening to me, but I keep feeling like someone is watching me. Could the nightmares be the cause of this? The man from those dreams, he's the only reason why I want to relive those nightmares over and over again. I have never seen his face in any of these dreams, but I always see his deep blue eyes, and that is all I need to know that it is him. Those eyes, they've somehow managed to haunt me even though I know that the man of my dreams does not even exist in real life. I could blame it on the fact that I've been extra stressed lately with the disappearance of Isabella, my brother's sister-in-law. My brothers and their mates, along with the packs, had left without me. This is what happens when you are blessed with a protective family; they never let you close to anything that screams danger. It's lonely here; I miss my brothers and their mates. I wish that they weren't so overprotective. I've listened to my sisters-in-law complain about their protective behavior over them but imagine what it was like to have all three of my brothers treat me like I was a child. Why couldn't they see that I was now a grown woman? I could take care of myself; I did not need their help to do that. But despite how many times I've spoken to them about this, they still hide me away in our palace, away from any harm, away from danger, away from all the fun. I throw some water over my face and tie my long hair up into a bun. I stare at the dark circles around my eyes and know that it's all because of that dream. The feelings that I feel for the blue eyed stranger are a bit alarming to me. I don't know him, I've never met him and like I said, he doesn't exist. So why do I feel like this over a dream? Why do I feel like he's

looking at me right now? I shake my head and exit my room. I had to stop letting these dreams affect me this badly. I spot my parents at the dining table and join them for breakfast. “Are you still having trouble to sleep Maya?” My mother asks me. “Your eyes are extremely dark. Should I ask the doctor for tablets to help you?” I immediately shake my head, “I’m fine, mother. I think I’m just concerned about Isabella. I hope that our family can help her before any harm comes to her.” My father nods, “you know that your brothers are more than capable of doing their jobs. She will be okay, rest assured.” I nod, “Will it be okay if I went for a run into the woods today?” I ask. “I’m tired of being home all day, Austin already made sure that I didn’t follow them. I have nothing to do. I wouldn’t be long; I’ll return within an hour or two.” I plead with them. My mother gives my father a concerned look, and eventually, they both nod their heads after concluding that a simple run would not kill me. I smile brightly, “thank you!” I don’t waste any time changing into a jeans and white crop top before grabbing my running shoes. The moment my feet hits the woods, I inhale a great deal of air. This is exactly what I need to keep the thoughts of the stranger out of my mind. I close my eyes for a few seconds before opening them again and racing through the woods. My wolf is ready to break free, even she wants a chance at the fun. But something about her seems a bit off today. Something is bothering her and I can’t wrap my fingers around it. And that’s when I feel it, the feeling that I’ve been getting every night, like someone is watching me. This time it feels like someone is following me. What is just in my mind? I stop running and take a look around me. I was already deep in the woods. But I still knew this area well, I’ve been here many times already with my brothers. Austin and James have been taking Lucas and I here since we were children. There was a river just a few minutes away and I could hear it already from all the way over here. I turn to the left when I hear a sound. There is definitely someone here; it’s not just in my mind anymore. “Who are you?” I whisper. I can feel like my life is in danger even though I cannot see anyone in front of me; I somehow know that the person is somewhere around and still watching me. He’s much closer today, so close that my senses are wide awake. “I know that you are here,” I say louder this time. “What do you want from me?” There is a shuffling noise and I know that the person is ready to reveal himself. Still, I am not prepared for the man that shows himself to me next. He is beautiful. The most beautiful man I’ve ever set my eyes on, and that’s big considering that I’ve been surrounded by gorgeous men all my life. And then I see the one thing that has been haunting me for a while now . . . Those ocean blue eyes. It’s the exact shade from my dream. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a prettier shade of blue than this. I couldn’t have possibly dreamt of him before meeting him, could I? That was absurd. Within seconds he’s in front of me. How did he move so quickly? I sensed that he was a werewolf, but his incredible speed said something else. A hybrid? He’s so close

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that I could smell him everywhere. He has this aura about him that makes me want to spread my legs and give him access to the most sensitive part of me. I'm embarrassed by my dirty thoughts, but I can't seem to stop myself from being around him. "You're beautiful," My cheeks turn red when I realize that I've spoken that out loud. He quirks a brow and tilts his head to the side. "Your name is Maya, correct?" he asks. Even his voice is beautiful. It makes my knees go weak, and I have to hold onto the tree behind me for support. Something isn't right here, though; I'm missing something huge, aren't I? I'm not paying attention to the main point. And suddenly, I know what it is. How does he know my name? I didn't mention my name to him before and I'm sure I've never met him before in my life . . . Except in my dreams, of course. "Do I know you from somewhere?" He ignores me and leans in closer; he's so close that I feel like I'm going to faint. "Is your brother Austin?" he growls. Somehow I feel like this isn't a surprise encounter. This feels like it's staged, planned. Is he one of my brother's enemies? Why do I still not feel any fear? My body is still writhing with need. I may want him but I'm not stupid, I take a step back just to be safe. "H-how do you know my brother?" I stutter. Almost everyone in the supernatural world knew who my brother was, but he didn't look like one of our allies. "You're coming with me, Maya," he announces suddenly. "What are you talking about?" I make an attempt to move away from him some more but I don't have time to prepare as he grabs my waist with one hand and uses his other to cover my nose with a cloth. My eyes widen and I try to fight him off but I know that it's already too late. My eyes are already closing and the last thing I see is the look of triumph on his eyes before everything goes completely black.

Chapter 2 ~ALPHA KANE~ Finding out that your father was brutally killed by people he once considered friends was the worst news I ever expected to receive. I still remember the day that it happened, that sickening feeling in my stomach coupled with the thrashing of my home. I'd completely lost my mind that day. Since then, all I could think about was making Austin and his family pay for what they did. They not only destroyed my father, but they did the same to my sister. I never found her body; I could never give either of them a proper send-off. I should have been there that day; I should have kept them both alive. Instead, I was too preoccupied with my own f*****g s**t to realize how much they needed me that day. I've been plotting each of their deaths ever since. I wanted to wipe the entire family out, but I knew that I couldn't make it that easy for them. I had to find a way to make them hurt just as much as I did. I needed to make them pay; I needed to find the best way to make that happen. And then I saw her. Maya Lance Vinci. Her protective brothers and parents heavily protected her. They kept their eyes on her at all times. No one could mess with the little princess because of them. I realized then that she

was their most prized possession; they loved her so much that they constantly kept her hidden and away from all danger. I considered kidnapping Lucy at one point, but I knew that she wasn't connected to each of them like Maya was; Austin would hurt the most from her disappearance. But with Maya, everyone would feel the burn directly. She was the key to my revenge; she was my main target. Hurting her would be the best way to hurt her entire family. I had to break her into as many pieces as possible until she wished that she had never lived. I would make her hate her life and hate me. I would make her regret everything she's ever done. I would teach those f*****g assholes a lesson. I was the last one that could save my family's reputation. I know that this is what my father would want. I understand that this is my chance to gain his forgiveness for not being there when I should have been. Things would have been a lot different if I'd only listened to him; if I'd brought my pack with me, the outcome would have changed. My family would not have been destroyed. Now I finally have her in my arms. The woman that would help me get my revenge was finally within my grasp. I must say that her brothers have made it easier for me by being further preoccupied with their mates. It was good that they found something else to focus their energies on. They gave me the perfect opportunity to snatch her from them. I thought it would have been much more complex than this. Their defenses were robust, and attacking them in their territory was too risky. I couldn't do that until I'd gotten enough resources. I understood how powerful they were; I would not deny that truth; that is why I needed to use my brain to get the justice I wanted. This wasn't just a fight; I had to use specific tactics to make their lives difficult. Because of this, I had to wait, and I'm happy that I did. I didn't have to lose any men to kidnap her. She'd come willingly to me without even knowing it. Kidnapping their sister was only my first step. I grip her waist tighter before throwing her over my shoulder and holding her in place. I was surprised to see that she'd sensed my presence so quickly; I was usually good at creeping up on my prey without them feeling me. How did she spot me so quickly? There was also this knowing look in her eyes that made me uncomfortable. Why did it seem like she knew me without actually knowing me? I ignore the strange pull I feel towards her. She couldn't be what my body wanted me to think that she was, and even if she were, I would never accept her. She would never be anything to me; all she would ever be was a means to hurt the people that she loved the most. I want them to watch as I rip their happiness to shreds, and only then will I rest peacefully.

. . ~MAYA~ I groan aloud at the pounding headache and try to touch my temples when I realize something very alarming. I couldn't move my hands; what the hell? I blink a couple of times, and to my horror, I'm not in my room. I don't even know where this place is. I've never seen it once in my life before. So what was I doing here? And then everything that happened bombards my mind all at once. The blue-eyed stranger, he'd

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drugged me and must have taken me to this place. Was this some abandoned house where he brought his victims too? What could he possibly want with someone like me? I need to get out of here before he gets back. I tried to move my hands some more, but I wasn't getting anywhere. There are giant chains around my hands; he must know that I would be strong enough to break free from the rope. This, on the other hand, didn't seem like any regular chain. It looked like the kind that held giant beasts captive. One thing was for sure, he didn't plan on letting me go anytime soon, and he wasn't taking any chances of me escaping either. It finally sinks in that I'm in some real deep s**t. My heart rate accelerates, and my movements become more desperate. "HELP!" I scream at the top of my lungs. "SOMEBODY HELP ME!" I had to pray that there were people around to help me escape this place. There wasn't any other choice. The door creaks open, and my gaze snaps up immediately, hoping that it could be a friendly face even though I knew that it wasn't very likely. My heart drops when I spot him. He leans against the wall and watches me with a new interest. Did he enjoy seeing me beg for help? Somehow I feel that my cry for help has excited him or at least improved his mood. "Where am I?" I demand from him. He ignores my question and leans down next to a few pieces of already chopped wood. He looks like the kind of man that never smiles. The kind that made the blood under your skin crawl. I blink once then twice; my eyes focused on his lean body still knelt on the floor. I felt this invisible yet nerve-wrenching pull towards him, one that had me confused. And then it hits me, harder than a f*****g car. This man is not just my kidnapper; this man is my mate! My mate? How was this possible? "You're my mate," I whisper in disbelief, more to myself than to him. That finally catches his attention; out of everything, this is what makes him finally look at me. Even now, when I'm tied to a chair, I still feel a need deep in my belly. He's still stooped down on the ground, lighting a fire. His perfectly shaped brow raises, and he finally lifts himself off the ground. "Are you not going to say anything?" I scream. "I'm your mate, you sick freak!" Instead of having me tied up, he should be protecting me! What the hell was wrong with this man? He walks over to me and grabs my face roughly in his hand. "Mate?" he spits disgustingly like the word mate is the worst possible one in the dictionary. He runs his finger across my bottom lip, and I feel it tremble from his touch. "Why are you doing this to me?" I ask. "I don't even know you." He remains quiet. "WHY?" I cry louder this time.

Chapter 3 My heart jumps out of my chest when he leans even closer me. He grabs my chin and brings my face closer to him, "do you know who's the kidnapper here? It surely isn't you. You're my prisoner; you do not get to ask any questions. You don't get to speak

unless I tell you to either.” “But. . .” He moves his hand to my neck, and I swear that I stop breathing. His intoxicating scent is affecting my senses; I feel like I’m losing my mind. I can feel everything clearly; his fingers are long and warm and feel like fire against my skin. I close my eyes, and my lips part. His touch is awakening so much desire in me, and I wouldn’t say I like it; I hate my body for betraying me at a time like this. This feeling isn’t something that I can easily control, but I have to fight it. This man may be my mate, but he wasn’t a good one; he wanted me to suffer. A low growl from the back of his throat prompts me to open my eyes again; once more, his beautiful face draws me entirely in. I feel a hatred for the moon Goddess at this exact moment; why make me feel this way for a man like him? I can see it in his gaze; he isn’t trying to hide the truth from me, the truth that he wants me to know that he can’t wait to bring me the most pain possible. “What did I just say to you?” he demands. “Did I not tell you that you are not in a position to be asking any questions?” I feel my bottom lip tremble with frustration, “please. . .” “Shhh,” he cuts me off. “Save whatever it is you have to say. I’m not going to let you go, not anytime soon. No one’s coming to save you either, so how about you keep quiet so that I won’t have to punish you?” he threatens. He lets go of me abruptly and walks back to starting the fire. Wouldn’t have to punish me? Is this not already punishment enough? I was locked away somewhere and had no idea what I did to receive such a horrible faith, and that wasn’t considered punishment? I watch him closely with fearful eyes. I wasn’t sure what I did in my past to be given a mate like him—a mate that didn’t care for me, a mate that wanted to see me suffer. I had so many questions, but I knew now that I wouldn’t get those answers anytime soon. This man was not about to give me any information that easily. He wanted me to beg for it; he wanted me to pray for freedom, for my life. It’s insane how I already know these things about him without knowing simple things like his name. Would he ever tell me what this was all about? Or would he harm me before I get a chance to know the truth? How was he so sure that my family would not come to rescue me? I knew that they were preoccupied with finding Isabella, but I also knew that the instant they found out I was missing, they would leave no stones unturned to find me. So what made him so sure that they wouldn’t come for me? Where exactly did he have me hidden, and why did I not know about him before? He knew Austin; this meant that I should know him as well. I search my brain for anything, anything at all that can link him to my family. However, there are no memories of him. The only memory I have is that of my nightmares. Why did he choose now to reveal himself to me? How long has he been our enemy? I can think of many missions my brothers have been involved in that could lead to several enemies. So which one involved my mate? ~KANE~ Mate? She’d just said the word I never wanted to hear from her mouth. I’m her f*****g worst nightmare. Mate? I would never be a mate to

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her; if I didn't want her to suffer first, I would reject her right away. But in order for her to feel the pain I was about to bring her, she needed to remain my mate. Until then, I was not about to let her go. Now that I think about it, her being my mate would work in my favor. Anything that I did would hurt her far more than anyone else doing those same things. I had a few ideas up my sleeve to make her hurt as one has never hurt before. Her body jumps when I walk past her. Good. I want her to fear me ultimately. I didn't want her to think that she was safe because of the mate pull. The mate pull was not stronger than my hunger for revenge. I would never bow before it; I was much stronger than that. I wasn't the kindest person out there, and after the death of the two people closest to me, I have only gotten worse. She has no idea what she's in for. This is only the beginning. Princess Maya, the sister of Austin, would beg me for her life, beg me to let her go; I wouldn't stop until I heard her cry. Breaking her would give me joy, which I already felt just by looking at her tied up in chains right now. I hear her sobs behind me, and rather than bring me the peace I was searching for, it irritates my f*****g soul. I don't let my body ponder on those feelings for long. I push it behind me and slam an ax into the clock on the wall. That f*****g thing was getting on my nerves for the longest while. Maya jumps from the loud sound, and her eyes are wide with fear. I want to laugh at the expression on her face. Finally, this is the joy I'm searching for, not that sickening feeling I felt just a few seconds ago. A maid enters next and drops a plate of food on the table; she makes sure not to glimpse at Maya; I already warned all of my maids about that. No one is to speak to her or look her way. Anyone that breaks that rule would suffer the consequences. They understood that I was a man who kept my word; they knew what would happen when they disobeyed me. I didn't need to make myself clear to them. I grabbed the plate and brought it closer to her. "Here," I tell her. "You can eat." She quirks a brow at me, "the last time I checked, one needs their hands to eat." she points out after shaking the chains that prevented her from escaping. Not that she would be able to run even without that heavy thing, my men were stationed all around this house; she wouldn't even be able to step out of this room without someone seeing her. I grab the meat from the plate and place it at her lips. "Open your mouth."

Chapter 4 ~KANE~ She narrows her eyes and clamps her lips tighter than before. Her blatant disrespect irritates me; she didn't have a choice in the matter; she had to do whatever I wanted her to do under my roof. "Open your f*****g mouth." I snap. She was no good to me if she died from starvation. Her eyes widen at my tone, and her bottom lip trembles as she finally obeys me. "Bite," I command. I can see the hatred in her eyes as she chews on the meat. Good, I'm not looking for love from her; I would gladly accept

her hostility towards me. My back stiffens when her lips accidentally touch my fingers; I know that she senses the connection too. Our gazes lock, and I see a flicker of desire in her eyes that goes straight to my crotch. f**k. I pulled away and set her food aside; I didn't care what my body felt for her; it would not distract me from what needed to be done. ~~~~~ ~MAYA~ I'm angry with my body for feeling anything for this monster. It's not fair; why can't I control this desire inside of me? I don't want to care for him, and I certainly don't want to be bombarded with an unnecessary need. I watch him as he takes a mysterious tour around the room. Is he looking for ways that I could escape from here? I knew that he didn't want there to be a chance for me to escape; he must have already thought of all the ways that I could try and leave. I'm sure that he's already blocked all those chances too. He turns to me without actually looking at me; I watch as he begins to walk out of the room. Was he planning on leaving me in here without at least giving me some sort of explanation? I was not about to let that happen; I've seen Austin do some interrogating before. If he wanted someone to talk, he tried to anger them to the point that they eventually spilled the truth. Maybe that's what I need to do. I need to anger him to the point that he wants to tell me the truth just to shut me up. He's by the door now, and I know that it's my chance. "You're a horrible person!" I scream. "Who kidnaps someone without an actual reason for it? What the hell is wrong with you! I've never done anything to you or anyone for that matter. So why the hell am I here, and why aren't you telling me anything?" It's working, he pauses by the door, but he doesn't attempt to turn around or at least acknowledge me. "How can you be my mate?" I demand. "You're a sick bastard. There is no way that the moon Goddess has given me a psychopath as a mate! You're the last person that I'll ever want to have as my other half. You're a disappointment to the definition of the word mate; you shouldn't even have one. You don't deserve me, and you never will." I know that I've touched a nerve when he turns back around and walks closer to me with the deadliest look I've ever seen in any man before. I try not to cower under it, and instead, I raise my chin and hit him with my own nasty glare. "Believe me, darling," he says. "You're not my first choice either. So let's agree that we're definitely not each other's mates, shall we? I'd be embarrassed if someone were to hear you." His statements manage to break through my barrier as well. Did he do that purposefully? Did he realize that I was trying to anger him? "You're making the biggest mistake of your life," I warn him. "You don't know how dangerous my family is; they will turn your entire world upside down. They're going to make you pay for doing this to me. It's not too late; if you let me go now, I'll forget what you've done; I won't tell a soul. That's my promise to you. I don't even know where I am. I won't be able to lead anyone back to you. Just let me go." He chuckles, and it sends a shiver down my spine, "I hate to break it to you, sunshine, but my world isn't going to

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turn upside down; rather, it's your entire family that's going to suffer the slow burn when I send you back to them completely alone and broken. So no, I must refuse your offer. I'm not scared of your family; I'm not even scared of death. Your threats will not work on me. From now on, don't try that cheap trick with me; you'll only end up being disappointed." I swallow my frustration and try to act like I don't know what he's referring to. I may have failed at this attempt, but I'll never give up. "Who the hell are you?" I demand. I've never seen him around my family before, and my brothers usually point out our enemies to me just so that I can be prepared if I ever came into contact with any of them. He was definitely not a known enemy unless he was a recent one that my brothers didn't have a chance to tell me about. He's about to respond when a knock on the door distracts us both. A woman enters suddenly; she has short red hair and cold blue eyes. She's dressed in a white mini skirt and a bright green top; if that can even be considered a top, it's small enough to be a bra. Without speaking a word to her, I already knew that I would not like this woman. "I see you've finally made it back, sweetheart." She greets him. Sweetheart? What was she to him? Were they a couple? Did he even treasure relationships? He didn't seem that way at all to me. He looked like the kind of man to use a woman and then dispose of her like she was nothing the next day. This woman, however, seems to think that he favors her. She wouldn't believe that unless he showed her some sort of affection already. Just the thought of it makes me sick to my stomach. He looks at me with a knowing look in his eyes when she approaches him. It's like he knows I'll be curious as to what their relationship is. Or maybe he wants to hurt me. It shouldn't even be a question anymore; I know that he wants to see me suffering. I watch them like a hawk when he sits on a chair and motions for her to follow him. I feel a sharp pain in my chest when the woman climbs onto his lap and nuzzles his neck. His eyes connect with mine, and I want to slap the smirk straight out of his face. I hate him. I hate him so much.

Chapter 5 ~KANE~ Anna continues to shower my neck with kisses; I grab her hips and pull her body tighter against mine. All the while, never taking my eyes off Maya. I need to see her reaction to everything I do, I need to see what hurts her the most. She can't hide the pain on her face, but there is also another emotion there. She wants to hate me; she wants to hurt me too. I want to chuckle at her courage despite what she's being faced with. Does she really think that she can hurt me? No matter what she tries, I will never succumb to pain brought unto me by her. "I've missed you," Anna whispers as she rubs her lower body against mine. "I want to feel you inside me, right now." I grab her hips and push her harder against my shaft while I continue to look directly at Maya. Her face is

pale, and she looks like she's about to faint or puke; I'm not sure which one. She closes her eyes suddenly, and it angers me. I lift Anna away from me and stroll towards her. "Open your eyes," I order. She shuts them tighter, ignoring my request. My jaw clenches, and I kneel down before her. "See, what did I tell you about not listening to me?" I demand. "Are you sure that you want to anger me? Do you want to be taught a lesson?" She finally listens to me, and I'm greeted once more with intense hatred. I don't know why her rage fills me with so much pride, but it does. I like a fighter, and she's definitely one. "Shouldn't you be getting back to f*****g that woman?" she snaps. "Why are you paying me any attention?" I grip her neck tightly, "your mouth is extremely hot. Maybe you need something to cool it down." Her eyes widen, and she tries to pull away from my firm grip on her. I chuckle, "are you scared that I'm going to kiss you?" I spit with disgust. "You're not appealing to me in the least; kissing you is definitely not on my agenda." I let my eyes travel down her body, "though it might not be the worst thing in the world." "You're a monster." She shouts. Anna walks up to her and, to my surprise, slaps her hard across the face. "Who the f**k are you calling monster? Call him master, b***h. Know your place." I grab Anna by her arm and pull her out of the room. "What the f**k was that, Anna?" I demand. "What?" she asks innocently. "Was I supposed to stand there and watch her disrespect you like that? No one is foolish enough to disrespect you in any way; why are you letting her do it to you?" "She's mine to deal with," I growl. "I've said that before. You do as I say; no one is to lay a finger on her unless I order you to. Was that not my f*****g rule?" Anna folds her arms but eventually nods her head, "I'm sorry. I will not do it again but tell that b***h that she better start to respect you more. She's lucky she isn't on the cold ground like other prisoners; why is she even being given food?" I grip my hair frustratingly; she's beginning to get on my nerves. "I don't answer to anyone; you know that, not even you. Leave now, and don't come back until I call for you." I order roughly. She bites her lips and throws her hair back in a fuss as she does as I command. I pinch the middle of my forehead and walk over to the fridge where I had an ice pack stored. Maya would heal on her own, but since this wasn't a pain brought onto her by me, I wanted it gone as fast as possible. Don't tell me one siap, ana sne s already lost that spark insIDE or ner. I pull a chair in front of her and take a seat. She finally turns to glare at me. "I guess you're happy now that your woman has put her hand on me. That must make you feel more like a man, doesn't it?" I quirk a brow at her failed attempt to anger me. For someone who was stuck with me, she wasn't trying at all to make me like her. Instead, she was trying to make me angry. Such a strange woman she was. "Let me take a look at your cheek," I tell her as I take the ice pack into my hand. "I don't need you to take care of me." She hissed. "I will heal on my own; I don't want your help. You enjoy seeing me in pain, so just let me be." I tilt her head to the side and

place the ice pack on her swollen cheek against her wishes. “I also enjoy doing the opposite of what makes you happy.” I remind her. “So let me do this.” I don’t know why I’m so angry at Anna right now. Is it because she’d directly disobeyed me, or was there another reason? I push that thought out of my head and focus on the ice pack against her cheek. Our gazes lock, and her lips part slightly. I continue to stare at her, testing her reaction to me. I suddenly find myself wanting to learn more about her, but it’s just to find ways to hurt her in return. The more I knew about her, the more I would learn about her weaknesses. “I feel sorry for you.” She says suddenly, surprising me. She felt sorry for me? If it’s anyone that she should feel sorry for, it should be herself. She was the one locked in a room with nowhere to go. “And why is that?” I ask her as I move the ice pack away from her face. “You’re lost, consumed with hatred and anger. I don’t know why and for what, but that anger is only going to cause you more pain unless you set it free.” She tells me. I quirk a brow before I begin to laugh. Maya narrows her eyes at me, annoyed that I’m not taking her seriously. “Let me worry about myself, alright?” I tell her. “In the meantime, you should worry about yourself and not others. And I’ll watch what I say around Anna from now on; she tends to get a little crazy at times.” Maya’s jaw clenches at the mention of Anna, “of course that woman would have the upper hand when I’m the one tied to a chair. She wouldn’t dare lay a hand on me otherwise. I can see why you’ll like her, though. A woman who takes advantage of the helpless, seems like your type.” Here she goes trying to upset me some more. I ignored her little tantrum and strode out of the room. I had business to get to. I needed to know what Austin and his crew were up to. Did they know that Maya was missing by now? Were they given any leads? To stay on top, I’ll have to watch their every move.

Chapter 6 MAYA When I awake the following day, something isn’t right. My hands do not feel heavy; I don’t think that they are even tied. This must be a dream; that monster wouldn’t have felt sorry for me and let me loose. I open my eyes hesitantly, and I’m disappointed when I’m greeted with the same room as before. I’m still in this dreadful place. That hasn’t changed. I look down at my hands, and to my surprise, the chains are definitely gone, and my hands are placed on my lap in front of me. I look around the room for any signs of my kidnapper to my relief, he isn’t anywhere around. I take a second look to confirm that he wasn’t hiding somewhere to mess with my mind. I couldn’t think of any reasons for him to leave me free to do as I wished. Was this possibly a dream? Was I thinking about this simply because I wanted it to be true? I pinch myself and wince from the pain. Okay, not a dream. What exactly is he trying to do today? Does he want to mess with my head now? Is this what this was? Or does he want to test me? Does he want

to see how far I'll be able to go before someone realizes that I'm trying to escape? I'm not sure what his plan is, but I can't just sit back and not do anything when my hands are free from those chains. I lift myself off the chair and take one more look around the room. I try to make as little noise as possible as I creep from one end of the room to the next. When I reach the door, I pull the handle down and wince when it makes a soft creaking noise. Thankfully, there is no one stationed outside the door. But shouldn't that be a cause for concern? Why would the chains be loose and no one stationed outside the victim's door? That doesn't make any sense. Even though I already know this must be a trap, I still can't stop my feet from moving forward. I had to hope that some kind soul wanted to help me without their boss knowing anything. Right now, I'll take any chances that can get me out. I hear some voices coming from one of the rooms from the furthest left, and I make sure to avoid it. I'm not sure which door will lead me outside, but I'll have to listen for any noises and hope that it will aid me in my quest to leave this place. This house was huge; there were so many rooms that I felt like I was about to go dizzy trying to figure out which ones to avoid. So far, each door that I turned to had numerous men speaking loudly. How many people did it have in this place exactly? Could this be someone hired by the council to get back at my brothers for everything they've been up to recently? This man wasn't any ordinary enemy, he was someone with many men on his side; I can see that already. I pause by one room that doesn't have any sound coming from it. I swallow. Could this be too good to be true? I hesitantly open the door and peek inside. To my horror, there are plenty of faces looking back at me. The men in the room begin to laugh at the petrified look on my face. They don't look surprised at all to see me; I'm the only one here who is shocked to see them. That means that it was all a trap set by that sick bastard. "It took you long enough," A familiar voice says. My kidnapper reveals himself to me and walks through the crowd of giant men wearing a torn white shirt and black jeans. If he wasn't a cold, heartless monster, I might have been attracted to his exposed chest and the power that radiated from him when he walked. "I'm guessing you're wondering why you didn't hear anything?" He teases me. "Well, sunshine, this room is soundproof. Caught you there, didn't I?" My lower lip trembles with frustration, and before he can react, I spin around and begin to run as fast as I possibly can. I don't bother to look back as I continue down the hall, not even sure if there will be a door at the end. I don't care, I want to get away from him. I don't think I've ever run in my entire life, but I know that my life depends on this. I can't stop. I can hear his heavy footsteps behind me, and an involuntary cry leaves my mouth when his hands grab my waist and pull me to a stop. I spin around in his arms and slap him hard across his face before he can see it coming. His eyes narrow, and I don't stop there; I dig into his skin and scrape his neck with my long nails. "Stop that." He growls. I don't listen to him; I grab onto his already

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torn shirt and rip it some more, looking for more skin to bruise. He shoves my hand behind my back and pushes my face up against the wall. He leans into me and presses his lower body against my ass. W-was he aroused? I try to wiggle my body to get away from him, but he's too strong for me. Still, i don't stop; I continue to move against him with any hope for him to release me. "Stop f*****g moving before I f**k you hard against this wall." He growls aggressively behind me. That gets me to stop my movements. Even though my body may want this man, my mind is against it. I can't forget what he's done to me; I don't think lever will be able to. My eyes widen when one of his hands comes down hard against my ass. "That's for trying to f*****g escape." D-did he just spank me?

Chapter 7 ~MAYA "Get your hands off me!" I shout. "You have no right to touch me." He picks me up and throws me over his shoulder like I weigh nothing at all. My butt is still hurting from his lash earlier, and I'm happy that his neck and chest area are at least bleeding from my last attack. It felt good to let some of my anger out. I wasn't only angry that he'd kidnapped me; I was mad that he held and kissed another woman in front of me. I was mad that he was supposed to be my mate but still acted cold towards me. There was so much resentment inside of me that I needed to get it out. "I can't wait for the day that you pay for this!" I hiss while he continues to carry me. He isn't responding to my anger, and it's only pissing me off more. Why can't he open his mouth and speak? Why can't he tell me who exactly he is? I still have no idea what his name was. If I had the slightest notion, then maybe I could talk him out of this. "Why are you doing this to me?" I ask again. "Who are you with? Are you from the council? Did they hire you to torture me?" He laughs at my question, and I can't understand what could be this funny. "Your idea of humor is troubling." I snap. "I don't work for anyone, sunshine. I only answer to myself, no one else. While the council may have something against your family, I'm not a part of it. I have my reasons for disliking you." He corrects me. So he wasn't from the council? Then who does that leave? Who have we crossed paths with recently that ended with bitterness? Could he be someone from Alpha Eric's pack? When my family retaliated against them for plotting against us, new enemies were formed from other packs that survived the battle. Eric died, and so did his daughter; I'm not sure who survived from their pack. But still, he couldn't be someone from that pack, I've never seen him before and he had his own men, can see that clearly. I already knew everyone from Eric's pack, at least I thought I did. We were all close before the battle had begun...before Eric had betrayed my family and his true intentions made known to us all. "You're sick, do you know that?" I ask when he places me down on the chair and ties my hands with the

chains once more. “You intentionally let me lose to give me false hope. Something is wrong with you; you need to get yourself checked out.” He quirks a brow and stoops down to tie my feet together as well, “you call it a sickness; I call it playing it safe. Now I know how your mind thinks and the steps you make while trying to escape. I know what to expect if anything like that ever happens; I mean, anything that I didn’t plan, that is.” I glare at him, and he seems to be amused by my anger. Of course, he will be; the man enjoys seeing me anything but happy. “I’m hosting an event tonight,” he informs me. “I may consider letting you see our guests if you behave yourself.” “Why would I want to see your guests?” I demand. “I’m sure they will be as sick as you are.” “Hmmm,” he murmurs. “I might consider selling you to this alpha. You may make me some extra cash.” I freeze from his threat. Sell me to an alpha? He wouldn’t; he had to be messing with me. Didn’t he want to use me to get back at my family for something I didn’t know about? Then why would he sell me before he could get whatever revenge he was looking for in the first place? I’m shaking from fear when he leaves the room, and I can’t help but cry. I don’t want to be sold; I want my family; I want my brothers; they have always protected me my entire life. I miss them so much. “Austin.” I cry as the tears flow down my cheek. “Where are you?” My brothers wouldn’t leave me to suffer for long; then, where were they? Why haven’t they found me as yet? -AUSTIN “I told you to keep Maya inside!” I shout at my parents. I know this isn’t a tone that I should take with them, but Maya was missing now, and it’s all because they let her go when I specifically asked that she stay inside. “She was frustrated at home, Austin,” my mother tells me. “She just wanted to go for a run. Your sister said that she would be back quickly. When she didn’t return, we assumed that she wanted to stay out later since she hadn’t been out much ever since things had become so heated in our kingdom. We didn’t think that something happened to her.” “And don’t try and pin this on us,” My father says in his assertive tone. “You should have taken your sister with you. She isn’t a child anymore; you should have instilled more trust in her. If she were with you, We would still have her. Now we don’t know where our precious Maya is, what are we to do? Where are we to look?” I’ve only ever wanted to protect my sister. I never wanted to confine her or make her feel clustered at home. As soon as things had eased up with the council and all the other enemies we’ve somehow managed to get over the past few weeks, I would have let her do as she pleased. We had so many enemies now; I didn’t know who to start looking at first. “We don’t need to be pointing any fingers here,” Lucy, my wife, tried to break the tension in the room. “We can’t fight amongst ourselves. No one is at fault; the real culprit is the person that has Maya. We need to find her quickly, and the only way to do that is to join forces with all our allies.” That to agree with her; we were losing time blaming each other. It was already too long since she’d gone missing I storm into the meeting room and punch the

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wall in frustration. I couldn't think of anything else but finding my sister, who had taken her? Who would be so stupid to mess with my family? "I'm sorry, Maya," I whisper. "I'm sorry that I couldn't protect you this time." But I will find you. I will leave no stones unturned until I found out who took you from us and when I did, they would f*****g pay.

Chapter 8 -MAYAN My fear is going to sell me to another alpha. At least with him, I knew that I disgusted him so much that he didn't even want to touch me, but I'm not so sure that I'll be lucky with the other alpha if he decides to purchase me from him. But what if there is a chance that he's easier to convince to release me so that I can return to my family? Would he let me go if I told him that my family would gladly reward him for my safe return? There are so many endless possibilities, but all I want is to go home to my family. Three maids walk in then, and it's the first time any of them have ever looked at me directly, "we have come to wash you." To wash me? "I don't need you to do that," I disagree. "I can bathe myself." They shook their heads at me, "it's our order to wash you, so we must do it, with or without your consent." My jaw clenches, and I let them untie me and take me to the bathtub. It's filled with roses and bubbles; it looked nicer than what I expected to be given a bath in from someone as heartless as my mate. When the bath is over, they dress me has doubled since a few hours ago after learning that there is a chance that my mate in a long sheer white dress that reveals too much of my body. My bra covers my breasts, but the white thong barely covers anything. How can I be seen in something like this? When we exit the room, he's waiting right in front of the door for me. His eyes trail down my body, and I'm filled with a strong desire to slap him once more. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" I ask him. "Is this how you want your mate to dress in front of other men? Are you so happy to let men see me like this?" For the first time since I've met him, I see a flash of possessiveness enter his gaze, but he quickly disposes of it and takes my hand in his. "I've thought that we've made it clear to each other that other people should not know we are mates? It isn't very comfortable for me. I thought that it was embarrassing to you as well? You have a funny way of reminding me about our relationship for someone that hates me so much." I swallow my hatred for him and follow him out into another room that's packed with people. Did he make me wear this humiliating dress so that he could sell me for a reasonable price? Was he trying to make me look appealing to my buyers? The thought of that makes me sick to my stomach. Could he do anything else to make me hate him more than I already did? All eyes are on me, and I'm frustrated to see that so far, I know absolutely no one inside of here. I thought that I would at least see one person that could come to my aid, but I was out of any luck. These people were complete strangers, every single one of them. They

are all talking in hushed whispers; the women, that is. The men were loud and filling the room with laughter. A group of ten men enters then, and I know immediately that they are his guests. These men are big but none as large as my kidnapper. They walk with confidence and I know that this isn't their first time meeting each other. "Alpha Kane." One of the men greets my mate. Alpha Kane? Was that my mate's name? Should I know that name from somewhere? Was there anyone by the name of Kane that my brothers have ever warned me about? I didn't think so. I should remember but I can't. I want to kick myself for having such a bad memory. Kane looks my way, and I can see that he's testing my reaction to inauy learning nis name. He wants to KNOW Ii nis name nas given nis identity away to me. I'm sure he will be happy to know that it hasn't, not even in the least. "Thanks for joining us tonight, Alpha Ben." He tells him. So this was the alpha he was planning on selling me to. My earlier fears have turned out to be accurate; this alpha may even be worse to me than the current one that has held me captive. The creepy Alpha's eyes reluctantly go towards me, and I want to puke from the unmistakable lust in his eyes. "Who is this lovely lady by your side?" Kane rubs his hand down my back, and I shoot him a glare, "she's a gem that I found recently, and the good news is that she's up for sale. .. If you're interested." "Really?" Alpha Ben asks with new interest. "I thought that someone with this face and body would have captured your soul Kane, but yet again, you're gifting me another beauty. She's the best I've seen yet, and I'm willing to pay any amount for her. Just name the price." Anna joins his side while Ben continues to stare at me. I want to beg Kane to let me stay with him, but I don't want to give him that satisfaction. Maybe that's exactly what he wants, for me to beg him to let me stay. He's just that sick in his head. He will do anything that he can to bring me to my knees. I'm not happy when he wraps his arms around Anna and pulls her in for a long kiss, "now this woman isn't for sale; she's too precious to me." Anna beams at him and gives me a smirk. She's happy to know that the monster favors her over me. How can he be this cruel? Not only was he planning on selling me, but he had to make it clear that he cared for that woman in front of me? Why does he hate me so much? He knows exactly what that would do to my heart, to the wolf inside of me that's still waiting for him to acknowledge her. Ben doesn't even spare Anna a look; he's too busy gazing at my half-naked body. Back at home, a man would lose his hands for even looking at me this way. I've always been unhappy with how protective my family has been of me, but now I know just how much they've kept me safe by being overprotective. If I had listened to my brothers and stayed at home, I might have still been safe today. One of Kane's men says something to Alpha Ben, and he smiles almost immediately. "I'll take her even for that price." He tells Kane. My heart drops, and I can't help but look at him in disbelief. Is

he really going to let me go like this? I close my eyes in disgust when Ben grabs me by my waist and pulls me to his side. This can't be happening... It can't.

Chapter 9 Kane takes a sip of his drink, and even though he acts unbothered, his eyes are on Ben's fingers digging into my waist. I can't tell if he's annoyed or happy that another man is touching me. The mate bond is supposed to affect him just like it affects me, but so far, all I can see is a cold, heartless man staring back at me. I don't understand my luck; almost everyone finds a mate that shows some sort of emotion but not mine; he's the worst of them all. "Drink some more." He tells Ben, "we will finalize the payment in a few minutes, and then you can leave with her." I'm so disgusted by both men. I can't believe that people like them are just walking around freely; they should be locked away in cells. I knew that trying to escape now would not be an intelligent choice; I was surrounded by men who had orders to keep me locked up at all times. Part of me already knows that Ben would not release me, not with those dirty looks he's been sending my way ever since he first saw me. However, I want to stay positive; I want to believe that he will change his mind when he finds out wholam. Judging by how he acted when he first saw me, he definitely didn't know that I was a princess and the sister of some of the most powerful men in the supernatural world. Even if he did try anything, I would fight to my death before I let him touch me. Ben does as my mate says and takes a big gulp of his drink without moving his arms around me. I hate his touch. I wish to burn his hands. How many women have this man taken without their permission? The way they spoke, he often bought women from Kane; this wasn't something new. It was a recurring transaction, and I was just another woman about to be sold. Anna watches me with envy in her eyes; what could she possibly be jealous about? I wouldn't want to see my worst enemy in the position that I was in right now. She rubs her ass against Kane, and it angers me so much. My blood boils and I just want to make every single person inside of here pay for what they're doing to me. She turns around and kisses his neck while he conducts business with his guests. Do they have zero respect for themselves? How can they be that way in front of everyone here? I don't know why I'm even asking these questions; they weren't people that cared about their reputations. Kane knows what she's doing, and he knows that it's affecting me. He watches me now, calculating my reaction. I know just how much he enjoys seeing me in pain, and I want to hide my natural response, but it's hard. Every time I see them together, I feel this stabbing pain in my chest. I swallow the pain and try not to elbow Ben in his stomach. And that's when it hits me; Kane loves to see me upset; what if I acted like I was enjoying Ben's attention? Would that get him to keep me here? Not that I wanted to stay here, I just preferred it over getting sold for my body. I turn around so that I'm now facing Ben. He ignores everyone else and focuses on

me. I ran my hands down in his chest, which was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do in my life. He looks pleasantly surprised by my actions. "Keep that up, and we will have to leave this party early," he whispers to me. "You might turn out to be my favorite." I swallow my disgust at hearing him say that. Suddenly, I'm pulled out of Ben's arms and straight into Kane's. There is absolute outrage in his eyes, and I want to smile at my first win. I stare at him innocently, and his arms tighten around me. "Remember," Kane growls. "You haven't paid for her yet. Nothing happens until you pay your fees." I gape at him. Was that what this was about? Was he truly just angry that Ben hadn't paid as yet? My body tenses when Ben drops some gold onto the table and grins at my mate. "See? Now give her to me, and I'll be on my way. I may have overstayed my welcome, judging from your hostile behavior towards me. That's not something that I want to do." Kane let go of me abruptly, "take her. She's all yours." My lips part, and I stare at him in horror. I can't help but feel betrayed. Where has a man ever sold out his mate for gold? How low can he stoop? I want to shout and scream at him, I want to call him so many names, but I do none of those things. I fight back the tears when I feel Ben grab my arm and pull me out the door with him. I walk with him down the hallway, the same one I'd run from Kane recently. It turns out that I was going in the right direction; it's why Kane had come after me; I'd almost made it out of here that day. I was finally getting my wish, but I was anything but happy. We walk through the last door after getting clearance from some of Kane's men, and then we're out of the house, into the woods. "You men can stay back here for a while," he tells his pack. "We're going to have a little adventure, and then we will meet you back where we parked the vehicles." My back stiffens from the hidden meaning behind his words. He grabs my arm roughly and pulls me with him deeper into the woods. "Please," I beg. "Please let me go." He quirks a brow, "were you not eager to be with me just a few minutes ago? Or were you playing with my emotions? I have to tell you; I don't particularly appreciate when people play with my feelings. It never ends well for them." "If you just hear me out and listen to what I have to say, I can assure you that you'll gladly help me get home to my family," I assure him. He crosses his arms, "And please tell me, why would I do something like that after paying so much gold for you?"

Chapter 10 He tries to grab me, and I bite down hard on his wrist until I taste blood. Ben shouts in pain and tries to free his hand from my strong grip. I reluctantly let go but not before punching him hard on his face. "You'll pay for that b***h!" He shouts as blood trails down his lips. He grabs both of my hands and forces me down on the ground. I scream in anger when he tries to kiss my neck. I knee him hard in his shaft before he can try anything more, and he howls in pain. Good. Feel the pain. This was just the beginning of his misery; I wouldn't let this sick man touch me. His body is suddenly lifted off mine,

and I blink up at the last person I was expecting to see right now. Alpha Kane. Did he come for me? That doesn't make any sense. Why would he sell me only to come right back for me a few minutes later? Unless, could this be another one of his sick, twisted games? He had it in him to do something this insane. "Getting your ass beaten by a woman Ben?" he asks him. "How weak are you?" "Didn't you teach this w***e how to please a man?" he demands. "I paid good money for her. How can she not know to be submissive? And is there something wrong with her? She somehow thinks that she's the sister of Prince Austin; she's delusional if she believes something like that. You're not crazy enough to mess with their sister." Kane laughs, "I've always thought that a woman with a lot of fire inside of her gave the best experience in bed. You don't know how to handle her well, that is all." he tells him. "And I'm sorry to tell you, but she's telling the truth. She is, in fact, Princess Maya, and I'm crazy enough to mess with that family. You do not know me that well." Ben's face turns ghostly white by Kane's confession, "are you f*****g insane? You can't mess with the My eyes are wide when Kane snaps the man's neck like it were a piece of stick, preventing him from finishing his sentence. He lights the body on fire and turns to me. How can he kill so quickly without any emotion at all? I was not expecting that; I don't think Ben saw that coming either. One minute they were having a normal conversation, and then Ben was dead. Kane turns to look at me, and there is a knowing look on his face right before I begin to run from him.. . Just like before, I don't get far; his incredible speed throws me off-guard, and he grabs me from behind and pulls me to a stop. Tangrily shove his body away from mine. "You sold me to that psychopath! Do you have any decency at all?" He tilts his head to the side and studies me, "you have said countless times that I am a monster. Then why are you asking me questions that you already know the answer to?" I cross my arms and face him with so much hatred that I'm sure he can see it from my facial expression alone. "I thought that being away from me would make you happy. Wasn't that what you wanted? I was only giving you everything you wished for from the beginning, but somehow, I'm the bad guy? I think sunshine that you do not know what you want. Maybe I need to show it to you." he continues speaking nonsense. Kane suddenly backs me up against the tree behind of me, and I'm trapped with nowhere to run to, "he doesn't know how to pleasure you, does he?" he whispers, "He doesn't know how to make your p***y wet; he doesn't know how to turn on your precious little body." I'm surprised by his questions, and it only angers me more by how much it affects my body. "And you somehow know these things?" I snap. He doesn't need to know that his words are, in fact, making my body writhe with need. This is expected, however. The mate bond must be causing this reaction in my body, nothing else. He chuckles, "I think you know the answer to that." "I'm sure that any man other than you can give me pleasure." I hiss. Kane growls, and it's the first

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time that my words seem to affect him this strongly. He grabs my waist, and I gasp when I feel his very aroused d**k pressed up against my lower half. He squeezes my cheeks together and leans into me, “it’s about time we test that theory.” I don’t have time to prepare when he crashes his lips to my own. My breath hitches at the first time our lips have ever touched. And I have one word for it; electric; kissing Kane is like having electricity rush through my veins. I want to beg him to kiss me more, to touch my body, to give me everything I’ve ever wanted from a man. I’m angry, oh so mad at myself for feeling this way, but I can’t seem to help myself. And then I lose all control. I’m grabbing onto his hair, pulling it, tearing his shirt, scraping his back. I feel so wild and like my body has awakened for the first time in my life. I can’t seem to stop myself, and Kane isn’t stopping either. We’re both wild and hungry for something, and I’m not sure what it is yet. This is wrong, so so wrong... Then why does it feel so right?

Chapter 11 Kane runs his hands up my legs, and I shiver when he nears the one place that I should never give him access to. I gasp when he rips the thin material with his nail and grips my cheeks with one hand, squeezing it tighter than before. “Let’s see if you were speaking the truth before.” I cry out when his warm finger grazes my opening; I see his satisfied smirk when he finds me wet between the legs. He doesn’t do anything more than that. Instead, that’s when he pulls away from me. My lips part when he places his finger in his mouth and tastes it. A look of hunger flashes in his eyes, and he looks away from me, almost as though he doesn’t want me to see that I’m not the only one affected by what just happened. “For someone that claims not to be bothered by my touch, your body says otherwise.” He mutters as if proud of himself for finding out that my body still reacted to him despite what he’s done to me so far. Tangrily shove him further away from me, and my blood crawls when I hear him chuckle. “It’s time to get back home, these woods; there is danger lurking in every direction. Nighttime is worse than the day.” He says in a serious tone, a sudden change in mood. “The only danger here is you-no one else. The moment that I get away from you, everything in my life will be fine.” He’s suddenly next to me again with his lips close to my ear, “your words may tell lies, but your body does not. Do we need to have another experiment?” I grab his shirt and glare at him. He quirks a brow, threatening me to try and hurt him. Before he has a chance to react, I push him onto the ground and climb onto his lap. For once, I’ve managed to shock him to the very core, and for some reason, it makes me feel powerful. “the way I see it, I’m not the only one affected. Your body also wants something that only I can give to you.” I say as I rub my body against his. I can feel him grow harder beneath me, and even though it makes me want something that makes me hate myself as much as I hate him, I’m happy to know that he’s just as bothered as I am. Kane growls and lifts me off

his body. I've managed to strike a nerve, and I'm overjoyed that I did. He's been torturing me this entire time, its the first time that I've gotten the chance to do the same, and it feels good. The same way that he gets joy in knowing that I can't help but want him, the exact way I feel a sense of accomplishment when I make him feel things for me that must also make him hate a part of himself. Now I know how to get into his head. He doesn't want to want me; he doesn't want to feel anything for me. But from what I've learned from my brothers and their mates, the more you fought the mate bond, the harder you fell. It's not something that we can control; fighting it causes more harm than good. If I tried and pushed hard enough, I could make him feel things for me that he doesn't want to feel. This would be the best form of revenge that I can think of. It's the only way that I can stand a chance against him. He's physically stronger than me, so fighting him wasn't an option, not when all of his men were so close. I had to break him down emotionally; it was worth a try, at least. He needed to know that I wasn't going down without a fight. All of a sudden, he picks me up and throws me over his shoulder. "I can walk on my own!" I snap. "I don't need you to carry me." "You're too slow." He growls. inough; I m not sure wnat a pissed-on Kane would be like. He picks up his speed, and again, I'm reminded that he isn't just a werewolf. One of his parents had to be a vampire. The wind gushes against my face, and I close my eyes as my hair whips at me. Within seconds we're already back at his home. The last place I want to be. However, I'm still thankful that I won't be with that Alpha Ben; no matter how bad things are here, I still prefer it over being with someone like that man. All of Kane's men are watching us as we walk through the hallway, each of them with a look of amusement on their faces. Again, I'm not sure what had them so amused. They were just as crazy as Kane was, no doubt. He opens the door to the room I'd grown to hate and puts me back on the chair. I stay still as he bounds my hands with the chains once more. Without saying anything to me, he storms out of the room. He was no doubt still pissed at what I had done earlier. That was great for me. Why did she have to taste so f*****g sweet? One taste, and my body was desperate for more. Even now, I want to storm into that room and spread her legs to give me more access to her candy. I wanted to suck and lick until I'd taken everything she had to offer me. I'd never tasted anything like that in my life before, and damn it, I wanted so much more. I knew that the mate bond must be playing tricks with my mind, making me think that it was that good when it simply couldn't be. My d**k is still hard; it's been hard ever since my tongue got a taste of her. Even harder when she straddled me on the ground. I didn't think she had it in her. It was the last thing I expected from her, and f**k me; it felt so good that I almost f*****d her right there in the middle of the shady woods, under the bright moonlight. Even her scent had left a mark inside of me. And the bloody girl knew it; she knew that I wanted her; she taunted me just like I did to her. What the f**k was

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she thinking trying to awaken the hungry beast inside of me? I couldn't figure out if she were that stupid or just that smart. I stroked the beast inside of my pants, promising him that he'd get a chance to have some fun... Just not with her. I would not let her get the best of me again, no matter how badly I wanted it. She felt like she had power over me now, I showed her a small weakness inside of me, and I was now regretting it. Not only did I give her an idea on how to send me up a damn wall, but I also made her feel powerful. That's the last thing I wanted to do; she needed to be weak, at least around me. She needed to feel powerless, like she had nothing and no one to help her, not even herself. I needed to regain control, and I knew how to break her. She hated seeing me with other women; she also hated that it affected her so badly. Thad to put on a show for her. Let her see that she was not in control; I was the alpha, the powerful one. I made her suffer and ache, not the other way around. I couldn't wait to let her feel the burn. Let her hurt. See her face when she realizes that I'd beat her at her own f*****g game.

Chapter 12 My body is craving the beast, the last person that it should ever want. I keep remembering what it felt like to be kissed by him, to have his hands on the most intimate parts of my body. I don't want to want him, but it hurts so much to try and fight it. I don't want to feel anything for someone like him. If I had a chance to turn off my emotions, I would do it just so that I wouldn't feel the way I do. I want things from him that he would never be able to give to me. I want him to like me and not just for my body; I want him to care for and love me. I want what my brothers have with their respective mates. I want a love so pure and beautiful that others can't help but wish that they had it too. And I want all of these things to be with him. I'm angry with myself for wanting these things, but I couldn't stop thinking about it, not after yesterday. I didn't think that a day would come where I would have feelings for someone as heartless and demonic as him. I'm in so much emotional pain that I want to hug myself, but I can't even do that because my hands are still tied because of that asshole. As if on cue, he walks in just then. I study him from head to toe which doesn't go unnoticed by him. Can he tell how much I still want him after last night? Does he want me also? I knew that he did but only in a s*****I way. I knew that he would never want me any other way, not when he hated me so much. Hell, he wasn't even happy about sexually wanting me; why would he ever want me in any other way? He has a plate of food in his hand, and I know that he's about to force me to eat again. Even though I didn't want to eat, I knew that my family was tearing villages apart while searching for me. I had to stay strong and healthy, at least for them. They would find me soon; I knew they would; I just needed to hold on a little longer. I couldn't let kane break my spirit any more than he'd already done. He takes the meat in his hand and puts it against my lips, "open your mouth." I'm annoyed, and I want to be as

stubborn as possible, but I know I'm not prepared for his retaliation. So, I decide to be good, at least for now. He places it into my mouth, and that's when I get an idea that may cost me my life, but I still go through with it. My lips close around his finger, and I suck on it longer than I should. Kane's breath hitches, and I want to smile in triumph. I've managed to get another reaction from him, and by his expression, I can tell that he hates himself as much as I do now. His gaze lifts to mine, and our eyes lock in a hungry and intense stare. He knows what I'm doing, and he isn't happy about it. He doesn't comment on it; however, he's trying to prove to me that I'm not bothering him in the least. Too bad for him; I can already see through his stupid charade. He picks another piece of meat and puts it into my mouth; I do the same thing again. This time, I swirl my tongue around the tip of his finger. Kane's eyes flash with a powerful desire that makes me wet between the legs. The low growl that leaves his mouth tells me that he knows exactly what's happening. He knows that my body is responding to him; he knows that I'm affected by this just as much as he is. Still, neither one of us choose to point this out. We're both losing the battle, but I'm just happy to get a reaction out of him. I'm hell-bent on making him suffer in whatever way that I can. He will always have to hate his own body for betraying him. Does he think that he's stronger than the mate bond? He was in for a rude awakening if he actually believed that rubbish. Whether he liked it or not, anything that happens to me will affect him as well. By him destroying me, it would eventually catch up to him, but by the time he realizes the mistake that he's made, it will be too late.

..... KANE~ The scent of Maya's arousal hits my nose, and almost immediately, my d**k gets hard. f**k! The woman knows exactly what she's doing to me. She's willing to turn on her own body just so that she can get a reaction out of me. It was a dangerous game she was playing with me. Did she think that I would take this teasing easily? She was my prisoner, not the other way around. I would not let her be on top of the game. But damn it, I still can't get her f*****g taste out of my mouth. Her legs are right in front of me, and I'm tempted to make her spread them for me right now. My jaw clenches as I try to control the need to take her right here. I try my best to hide my reaction to her; it's the only reason why I haven't placed the food down as yet. I don't want her to think that she's won. I take another piece of meat in my hand and put it in her mouth. She sucks even harder on my finger than before, and I feel it straight in my d**k. Her lust-filled eyes are shining with joy. MOTHERFUCKER! I pull away from her and shove the plate on the table next to us. She doesn't say anything to me as I walk out of the room. It was time for payback. I was planning on saving this for a later date, but the more I think about it, this was the perfect time to do this. I was f*****g hard and needed release more than ever now. I wasn't willing for her to be the one for me to do that with, but I could think of someone that would fit the job perfectly. Someone that would gladly

join me in bed. Someone that would send Maya to the point of insanity. I find Anna with some of my men and motion for her to come with me. She smiles and runs to my side, “what can I do to please you today?” she whispers as she runs her hand down my back. I ignore the feeling of disappointment in my chest. She wasn’t the one that my body wanted, but she was the one that would prove to be most beneficial to me right now. “There is something that I need your help with,” I tell her. She links her arms through mine, “anything, just name it.” I gaze into her eyes, “sleep with me. In front of my prisoner.”

Chapter 13 –MAYA I’m beaming with happiness after I watch Kane storm out of the room. I’d just won this round. He couldn’t keep up with me, and to say that I was overjoyed would be an understatement. I didn’t think that I would ever stand a chance against him while being his prisoner. But now there was hope; now I knew that my body was my weapon. I was not proud of it, but it was the only way I could think of. I can’t help but wonder what he’d use against me next, however. Kane didn’t like to lose, and he definitely didn’t like when he was the one being tortured. He wouldn’t sit back and let me do this to him; he would try to hurt me somehow; I just needed to be prepared for whatever he was planning on throwing my way. There was one thing I was sure of; however, whatever he had planned for me next, it wouldn’t be something easy. As if on cue, he walks into the room, but he isn’t alone this time. No, he’s brought that pathetic excuse for a woman with him. The woman that enjoyed taking advantage of an innocent woman. I didn’t like her one bit. Would I go so far as to say I hated her more than Kane? I didn’t think so. I didn’t think that it was possible for me to hate anyone more than I hated him. There is something about the way the both of them are looking at me that tells me that they’re up to no good. I narrow my eyes when Anna begins to remove her already see-through blouse. What kind of sick game were they thinking of playing now? Kane approaches me and, with a look of hatred, kneels in front of me. “I don’t want you to look away for even one second.” He tells me. “If you do, there will be serious consequences, and this time, I may consider selling you to a worthless man for real.” Look away from what? I want to scream for him to explain himself, but I don’t have to, not when I see him removing his shirt. His muscular, sweaty chest is revealed, but I don’t have time to stare when he turns away. He unbuttons his jeans and drops them to the floor. His backside is the first thing I see before noticing the wolf tattoo on the center of his back. My blood runs cold when I realize what’s about to happen. Anna practically throws herself onto Kane, and he catches her before she can fall. For my part, he should have let her hit the floor. She’s kissing his chest, something that I wished to do. Her nails are scraping his

back and not in the way I've done in the past. I scraped him to harm him for hurting me; she's scraping him out of pleasure. I swallow the pain when she kneels before him and takes his d**k into her mouth. I feel a sharp pain in my chest, and I know that nothing could possibly hurt more than this. She continues to suck on him, and I have to fight to breathe. I don't want to look at this, I don't want to see him with someone else, but I can't seem to look away. A part of me wants to feel the devastation; I want to feel everything to remember how much I hate this man. I want to be reminded of this every time I think of having a life with him. I want to remember everything he's done to me; I don't want to forget any of this, ever. I need the constant reminder that he's a monster every time that my body wants him. His hands are in her hair now as they move to the bed, his lips on her neck, and his body moves against hers. He's touching her, touching a woman that was not me. She's moaning his name and enjoying it a lot more than she should. He knows that I'm watching; he knows that I'm hurting. This is exactly what he wants; he wants to see me suffer. He wants to show me that he can do whatever it takes to break my heart, and that's precisely what he's been doing ever since the day he kidnapped me and brought me to this sick place. maller now padly i want to. I don't want to see this; I don't want to see him with her. I push against the chair, and it makes a screeching noise on the wooden floor. He catches my gaze, and I feel my heart rate increase. My mate. He's looking at me with his deep ocean blue eyes, the eyes that I've dreamt about; I hate them. I hate him. I hate him for taking me away from my home; I hate him for torturing me, but most of all, i hate how much I still want him after everything he's done to me. He spreads her legs wider, and she moans when he pulls out and slams into her, never taking his eyes off me. The tears continue to fall, but I don't try and hide them from him. I'll show him that I can be strong despite him breaking my heart into tiny pieces. I'll show him that I can still stand after seeing something as disgusting as this. Anna is screaming his name as he slams into her faster than before, picking up his pace. He's still watching me, still making sure that I'm never taking my eyes off them. My thoughts are all over the place now, and I wish that my hands were free so that I could kill them both. It's the first time that I've ever wanted to harm someone as much as I did right now. He comes to me when they're finished f*****g each other with his clothes back on, and I'm trying hard to fight the broken pieces inside of me. He's managed to break me completely; I thought it was terrible before, but this is the worst I've ever felt. I'm hurting so badly, and I want to make him pay for doing this to me. Anna puts on her clothes and walks out of the room but not before smirking at me. What was she so proud of? That her man, my mate, forced me to watch them while they had s*x? Kane unties my hands, and I slap him hard across the face the moment that I'm set free. He quirks a brow, and I punch his jaw as hard as I can. "You bastard!" I scream. It occurs to me that I'm giving him exactly what he wanted,

but I can't stop the pain that I feel inside. It's hurting so damn much, and I don't know how to stop the pain. The only way I can think of is by physically harming him for doing this to me. I grab his shirt and rip the flimsy cloth in half, revealing his disgustingly sexy chest to me once more. It's too clean, too beautiful to belong to a psychopathic monster like him. My claws are out, and I begin to rip apart his skin, digging into it until I see blood everywhere. Kane is just standing there and taking every lash that I'm sending his way. I don't know why he's doing it, but in some sick twisted way, I think that he's enjoying this. "You're the worst man I've ever come across in my entire life, and I've seen so many bad men in my lifetime. None compares to you. No one wants to hurt their mate as much as you want to do to me." | whisper. "Why? Why are you doing this to me? I would have cared for you; I would have treated you like a king. I would have loved you like no other woman has loved you in your life. We would have had beautiful children, children who would love and appreciate us. We could have had a family; my brothers and parents would have accepted you. Yet you threw that all away. You keep hurting me, keep destroying the bond that's supposed to keep us tied together." He picks me up in his arms and gently lays me down on his bed, the same bed he just slept with her in. I feel sick to my stomach. "I don't want to be in these tainted sheets!" I scream. "I hate it. I hate it here, and if*****g hate you!" I did; I hated him so much. I would make him suffer. I promise to make him fall in love with me and then leave him dry. I would never let him get away with what he did to me today. I would make Alpha Kane fall in love with me, and then I would leave him; forever!

Chapter 14 --KANE I've gotten what I wanted all along; Maya is completely broken in front of me. She's screaming, and tears are rolling down her cheeks. Her eyes are blood red and swollen, her lips dry and trembling. Her body is curled up in a ball, and her fingers are digging into the sheets. I know that images of this exact moment may haunt me for the rest of my life. I've made people suffer in the past, people that double-crossed me, people that I didn't like, but none have affected me the way this has. From the start, since the day I found out that she was my mate, I knew that I was going to do this to her. Nothing and no one was going to stop that, not even me. Sleeping with Anna in front of Maya brought me just as much pain as it brought her. It couldn't be helped; her pain was mine. That being said, I knew exactly how much she was hurting right now. I could feel it in my bones. My body was fighting to go to her, to soothe her, to make it all better. But was there any going back from this? I knew the moment I felt jealousy after seeing her with another man that I had to act quickly to ensure that I ruined any chances of us ever happening. I had to do it to ruin my options because I didn't trust anyone, not even

myself. I wanted Maya to hate me just as much as I hated her. If she showed me any sympathy, any kindness at all, the ice around my heart may melt. If she continued to throw mean words my way, it would make it easier for me to go through with everything. I felt conflicted inside. This was what I wanted all along, but yet it f*****g hurt. I knew what I was doing. It wasn't time to wonder if it was a mistake; it had already taken place. I needed to remind myself of the day I found out about my father's death to keep going. It was the day I lost everything that had meaning in my life. My shoulders tense when her scream gets louder; her face is pale now, and I don't know how long she will keep this up for. Seeing her like this has awakened something in me that I've never felt before. Excruciating pain. I didn't feel this way when I was tortured at a young age, not when I found out my mother left me and never loved me, not even when I found out that my father and sister had been murdered. All those things had hurt like a motherfucker, but to compare them to what I felt now, those things just weren't as bad. But this is something that I should embrace. 'Pain is good! Those were words my father has taught me my entire life. He's preached it over and over to me. Whenever I felt pain, I always remembered what I was taught and kept going. 'Your body will heal. The pain will only be temporary.' These were more words spoken to me by him. He taught me from the beginning that you didn't stop because you felt pain; you kept going; he promised that it would always get better. I'd spent my entire childhood training to be the best fighter one can be. The fact that my mother was a vampire has always aided me. I was meant to be stronger than the average vampire or the average werewolf. It's why my father pushed me so hard; he knew what I was capable of. I never knew my mother; I was just told about her. My father said to me that she left us both, didn't want anything to do with us. That she didn't love me. He was all I've ever had my entire life, and Maya's family took him away from me. She was also in on it; they were all in on it. Know that I want to take care of her; I want to make her stop crying and tell her that it will be okay. I've never wanted to be gentle with a woman before today. I wanted her to tell me how to make this better for her. But I knew that I would never let that happen. I would never allow her tears to make me into something I'm not. She deserved this; her family deserved this. I heard how much pain my father was in before he died... My sister suffered the same faith. Every time I think of them, I'm reminded of how much I hate this family, how much I hate them for destroying what I had. Did they stop and think about what they did? No, they moved on happily with each other. Austin left my sister in the ditch while he started a family with that woman who took her place. They weren't sorry for what they did; none of them were. I watched them for days, studied their movements, searching for some grief. After all, they killed a dear friend. Austin and Ariana were supposed to marry. Instead, his new bride killed her? Ariana wasn't perfect, but she didn't deserve the

betrayal Austin gave. If they didn't feel any remorse, why should I feel any? I gaze down at Maya on the bed, and she's looking up at me, but her eyes seem to be in a daze. She appears to be buried in her pain. Her clothes are soaked with blood, my blood. My chest burns from her earlier scratches, and I don't think that she's done enough. She should have hurt me some more for what I'd done today. I don't know why I'm sulking like this; I didn't think that it was possible for me ever to feel this way, but this mate bond was some serious s**t. She looks innocent on that bed, like a sweet, lost girl. I knew how protected Maya had been her entire life. She's never been put in a situation like this before; I don't think she ever knew real pain before today. I researched her entire family; everyone treated Maya like the princess she was. She was their pride and joy; they worshipped her. This girl on my bed didn't look like the princess I remembered looking at a few weeks back. I've watched her on countless days, unable to take my eyes off her. She was bright, innocent, a bundle of joy. Her cheeks were always glowing with happiness, and her laughter filled the room. She loved bickering with her brothers, and she adored their mates. . She had a close bond with everyone in her life. She was the kind of woman that people couldn't help but be drawn towards. It was easy to see why people would give their lives for her, and I knew that it wouldn't be long before her brothers caught up to me. They were getting desperate now, and spies were everywhere waiting for a lead to feed Austin and his pack. There were great rewards for anyone that brought forward any information on the missing princess. News had traveled far already, and they were closing in. I couldn't kill everyone that I thought was a threat to me; that would serve to be my own death trap. Eventually, I'll have to let them find me, but I think that I've done most of my job already. My original plan was always to kill Maya, a kill for a kill. They killed the people close to my heart, and I would have killed the person close to theirs. Of course, that changed when I found out that she was my mate. I had found a new way to mess with her. I didn't see the point in killing her again; I just wanted to break her spirit to the point that her family would never get to see her beautiful smile again. To me, that would have been more painful, knowing that they couldn't protect her from me. They'd failed her, just like! had failed my family. I lean down and pick her up into my arms once more. I strode with her out of the room, and she wasn't fighting me anymore. No, her eyes are closed, and I think she may have fainted. Her scent mixed with my blood reaches my nose, and my nostrils flare in return. My jaw clenches, and I storm into the room with all of the maids. "I want you to remove the bed from my room and burn it. I don't want anything left of it." I shout. "And replace it with a new one. Scrub the floors and change the entire interior. Nothing should look the same." If*****g hate myself for doing this for her. I close my eyes and remember the woman she was before I did this to her. Even back then, I hated how much I enjoyed looking at her. I didn't realize why until

it was too late. Thold Maya's body tighter against me, and without realizing it, holding her like this helps calm my nerves. I keep her close to me despite the weird looks from my men. They've never seen me like this with a woman before, and I was okay with this as long as she didn't find out about it. She couldn't know that my actions had backfired on me. She couldn't see that her pain caused me great pain as well. She had to keep thinking that nothing affected me. I wouldn't let her see my true feelings... Ever.

Chapter 15 —MAYA “Maya!” Austin shouts my name. “I’m here. Your brother is here to save you.” “Wake up, sport,” Lucas says. “Stop playing with us. Let’s see that smile!” “Let her sleep, guys,” James whispers. “She needs her rest.” “No,” Austin disagrees. “I need to make sure that she’s okay.” Tawake from my dream with a start, hoping to see my brothers in front of me. To my disappointment, I’m still not home, and my brothers are nowhere in sight. The dream felt so real that I couldn’t wait to see them. I missed them so much. I missed my entire family. I couldn’t wait for the day to see them again. I’m surprised, however, to see that I’m in a bed and not tied to a chair like I usually am. My body is wrapped in a warm blanket, and even though this seems to be the room I was locked in earlier, everything seems so different about it now. It makes me wonder if I’m still dreaming. The events that inflicted pain on me earlier suddenly resurfaced in my mind, and I gasped in horror. I grab the sheets and look down at the bed; I didn’t want to be in the same bed that Kane slept with that other woman in. Just thinking about it makes me sick to my stomach. However, the bed beneath me is a different one. The sheets have been changed, and even the shape of the bed is different. But this was the same room, so why was the bed changed? From what I saw, the bed was in good condition when Kane placed me in it earlier. So what the hell happened? He was so sick in the head that I expected him to leave me in the bed he slept with her in to make me feel worse about myself. I can’t think of a single reason why he would change it. Well, there could be one reason, and that’s him finally having a conscience, but that was impossible; Kane did not have a heart; he was too busy being an asshole to feel any remorse. So then why did he do it? And why am I not in chains? What did he have planned again? The last time he had me this free, he wanted me to try and escape, only to bring me down some more when I realized that it was just another stupid trap. Kane was too evil to let me rest in here peacefully. My body felt like I had just been in a huge fight, one where I’d been severely beaten. My eyes burned like they were on fire, and I could barely open them with how much I’d cried earlier. I can’t remember the last time I had ever cried like this before. My body stiffens when I hear the door open, but it’s not him. Instead, there are some maids with clothing for me. Great, they were here to give me another bath. They guide me to the bathtub and slowly wash my body. I didn’t bother turning them away like last time; I

knew that Kane would make their lives miserable if I disobeyed them. I quietly let them bathe and then dress me into a long white satin dress. This is probably the most fully clothed I've been since I was forcibly brought to this place. Did he not have men to show my body off to? I did not trust him one bit. When they leave the room, I breathe a sigh of relief. It doesn't last long; however, the door opens, and once again, it isn't him. But it's someone that I loathe just as much. Anna. She walks into the room like she owns the place. However, something seems to be wrong the moment that she takes a look at her surroundings. Is she also confused that the entire interior of the room had changed? Does she realize that the bed was also removed and exchanged? Or was she concerned that I was no longer in chains? I couldn't tell what bothered her, but something definitely did. more; why else would she come in here looking like that! "How does it feel to be so unwanted by your own mate?" she asks me. "How does it feel to know that he cares for me more than he does for you?" I cross my arms over my chest and try not to give in to her blatant attempt to hurt me more than Kane had already done. "I pity you both," I answer her. "You find happiness in others' sorrow. I must admit, you deserve each other. While I don't want any part in your love affair, you should know that no matter what he tells you and no matter what you believe, I am his mate. He will always have a soft spot for me, even though he will try to convince you otherwise. If a day comes where you are no longer by his side, he will be able to go on. But can you say the same if something were to happen to me? Every time he hurts me, he hurts himself. I have brothers, and they have mates. That's the truth, and no one can tell me otherwise. So if you enjoy being with a man that can't survive without another woman while he can live without you, I truly do pity you. You think that you've won by torturing me, but really, you are the only loser in this room." She walks up to me, and I narrow my eyes. I'm not chained right now, and I'm hungry to attack her. The door slams open, and I know without looking up that Kane is here. The tension in the room always intensifies whenever he's around. I don't look away from Anna; I'm making it known to her that I want this fight even more than she does. "Anna," Kane growls. There is a warning to his voice that I haven't heard before. Did he warn her about something? She angrily leaves the room; there are only the two of us left now. It's hard for me to act like I'm okay when I'm anything but that. I'm hungry for revenge; I've never wanted to hurt someone as much as I want to hurt him today. He played with my feelings, made me suffer, made me see things that will haunt me for the rest of my life. He deserved to pay for it all, and I didn't want anyone else to hurt him but me. I wanted to be the one to make him suffer for everything he's done. I could think of one way to bring him closer to me. An offer that he won't be able to say no to; after all, he was a half-vampire. Blood from your mate is supposed to be a lot sweeter and irresistible than any other in the world. He takes a tray in his hand and walks towards me,

he seems hesitant about something, and I'm not sure what. "Will you eat for yourself?" he asks me. Even the tone in his voice has changed, making me feel uncomfortable. "You're constantly feeding me," I point out. "I think it's about time that I do the same for you." I can see the shock in his face, "feed me how?" "You need blood," I whisper. His eyes snap to mine. "Why do you point that out?" "I know that you are a hybrid," I answer him. "I want you to feed from me." His forehead creases and I can see the tension in his body simply because of my offer. Can he sense that I'm trying to trap him? "T'll have to pass on that offer." He finally responds calmly. "Your body is too weak, and I don't plan on giving you such an easy way out." I press my lips together in annoyance. He wouldn't be able to resist my offer for long. I use my nail to dig into the skin on my neck, right below my earlobe. I do this before he gets a chance to stop me. I lean back against the pillow on the bed and expose my bleeding neck to him. Let's see how he passes this offer up. His eyes are darkening with a hunger I haven't seen before. I have to wonder if I'm doing the right thing. He looks like he's on the verge of losing control. I've never seen Kane lose control before, and I'm not sure I'm ready for that. I shiver when a dangerous low growl rocks the room. Oh God, what have I done?

Chapter 16 My body goes rigid as the scent of Maya's blood hits my nose. It's unlike anything I've ever had the pleasure of smelling before. The right and safest thing to do would be to run as far away from here as possible. A place where her scent wouldn't fill my head with visions of bending her over and drinking her blood while doing other pleasurable things. However, the girl taunts me by lying on the bed with her neck fully exposed to me. She doesn't try to hide it like an average person. No, she does the exact opposite of that. She's inviting me to taste her, and I have no f*****g idea why. Does she not realize what she's offering? Does she not understand what it means to tease a blood-sucking monster? I can't take my eye away from the vibrant red leaking down her neck, begging me to taste. It's like her blood is speaking to me, telling me that it's waiting for me. f**k, this is going to drive me completely nuts. "What are you waiting for?" she asks in a soft angelic whisper. Even her voice is mocking me, she's never taken that tone with me before, and it scares me. It scares me because it shifts something in my heart, something that needs to stay hidden for the rest of my sad, pathetic life. "I want you to taste me." She continues to taunt me. Taste her? I'd already gotten one taste from her and haven't been able to get it out of my head since then. It's a f*****g trap, and I know it. Yet, I can't take my eyes away no matter how hard I'm trying to. It shouldn't be this f*****g hard; I should have more control than this. Since when did I become so weak? The blood has trickled down to her pure, white dress, a dress that matches her personality

oh so well. It stains the pretty thing, giving me a reason to rip it off her because it's no longer clean and pure like her. It shouldn't be on her body anymore; she needs something that matches her purity, not something stained with her sweet blood. I can't do this. It's not only dangerous for her but dangerous for me as well. For my heart, that's suddenly decided to beat for a woman for the first time in my life. The same woman whose life I was hell-bent on ruining. I storm out of the room and lock the door from the outside. I lean my forehead against the wall and try to compose myself. Her scent is following me everywhere. It hasn't helped now that I'm away from her; if anything, it's made it much worse. Now I'm stuck with the memory, and my body is angry with me. Mad that I'm not giving it what it wants. First, I slept with a woman I didn't want to while the woman I truly wanted watched. Then I ignored her while she was offering her irresistible blood to me. What more would I do to torment myself? 'I want you to taste me.' Her words are provoking me. I can't handle it anymore. The torture is too much. My head snaps up, and I know before my body does that I'm going to do this. I'm going to taste her, I'm going to drink her blood, and I'm going to f*****g love every second of it. I don't bother unlocking the door; no, I break the entire thing down through my desperation. Anything to get to her faster than this, I've already wasted too much damn time. I wouldn't waste another second. Maya's eyes are wide when she spots me standing in front of her. I take slow, deliberate steps in her direction. I can see the excitement and fear in her eyes as she waits for me. I don't know why she offered herself to me, but I was not giving her the chance to change her mind. It was too late for that. I climb onto the bed and position myself above her body. I place a finger under her chin and gently turn her head to the side; my eyes strained on her neck. I don't give her a chance to say anything when I pounce on her. "You don't know what you just did," I growl hungrily. I run my tongue over the bloodstains and f**k me; I nearly lost my damn mind. My hand cups the side of her neck, preparing her for what's to come. My teeth pierced into her neck, and the first taste that hits my mouth sent me over the moon. I was right; I've never had something this divine before. Forget everything I've ever tasted in my life before today, nothing and I mean nothing, should ever be this good. It was easy to become addicted to such a taste, and I wasn't sure that my body would want anything but this after today. I clung to every damn drop like my life depended on it. I dig my nails into her waist and cling some more to her. I grab Maya and lift her off the bed, slamming her back against the wall; I can't stop tasting her. I have never tasted blood as rich as hers. It's the purest, sweetest taste I've ever had in my lifetime. I was hungry for more, and I could barely control myself. A whimper leaves her mouth, and I'm not sure if she wants this as much as I do or if I'm hurting her. I ease my hold on her, but she surprises me by burying her hands in my hair and pulling me tighter against her. A low growl leaves my mouth, and I tighten my hands

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against her waist as her blood continues to fill my mouth. Suddenly, this is just not enough; it's not all that I want. I want my d**k buried inside of her while I taste her. I want to make her c*m on my fingers; I want to hear her moans of pleasure. I want it all. Maya gasps when she feels how aroused I am, and it's the f*****g sweetest sound I've ever heard in my life. It makes me want to tear her dress apart and have my way with her. I'm losing control. I can feel it slipping away, and I need to stop before it's too late. If I don't stop now, it will definitely be too late for either of us. If I keep this up, I'm going to suck her f*****g dry. Enough Kane. That's f*****genough. I move my hands from her waist and slam them against the wall in an attempt to stop myself. I try to think of things, anything else but her taste and the feel of her soft body against mine. Trip my body away from hers and let out a roar of frustration. I hated losing control; it was the f*****g worst. Maya's eyes are drowsy and half-closed when she looks at me. f**k. I took way too much blood from her. She peers at me for a few seconds before she throws her arms around me. My body turns to stone from the contact. My eyes widen when she clamps her legs around my waist and wraps her hand around me while leaning her head on my chest. I've never cradled a woman like Even though I want to keep her in my arms, I know that I've let too much slide today already. Don't let her get in your f*****g head! I would not. I would not give her that satisfaction.

Chapter 17 –MAYA The next day when I awake, the first thing that I notice is that I'm still in bed. Has he gotten rid of the chains completely? Does he have more guards stationed outside? Why else would he feel it okay to leave me free inside of this room? Is he not worried that I would try and make a run for it again? Now I knew exactly where to go to leave this place. I knew much more than I did the first time I was brought here. I would expect him to be extra careful from now on, but his actions are truly puzzling. He's taken plenty of blood from me yesterday, and I expected to feel weak today, but surprisingly my body felt more alive than ever. Could it be because he was my mate? Was it different when your mate drank from you? Letting Kane drink blood from me was only the beginning; i'll have to do much more to capture his heart. I wasn't even sure what yesterday did in my favor. Were there any changes in his actions towards me at all? I know that having him take blood from me yesterday affected me. It was unlike anything I'd ever experienced before. I realized that I wanted to do it; I wanted him to have that part of me; I wanted to be that close to him. While I did hate Kane for everything he did to me after he drugged me and took me from my family, those feelings of wanting him were still there. But maybe it wasn't such a bad thing. It made it easier to offer myself to him. I knew in the end I'd have to leave; in the end, I would never be able to forgive him.

Leaving him now may not affect him, but it will when I made him fall for me. I wouldn't give up until I did. He had to pay for hurting me. He had to pay for letting me watch him sleep with another woman amongst so many other things. I can still see them together in my head. I hated it, and I just wanted to get it out of my mind. If there's ever a chance to wipe my memory, I will choose to forget about that one day. The door opens just then, and a maid walks in with food in her hands. "Alpha Kane asked me to bring this for you. He will not be here until later tonight. He's asked me to look after you and make sure that you're okay while he's gone." She informs me. To look after me? To make sure I'm okay? That sounds nothing like him. "Does he treat you good?" I ask her. The woman looks taken aback by my question. I just needed to get one person to be on my side, just one person to go back and let my family know where to find me. She looked kinder than the previous maids, and I had to wonder if Kane purposefully chose her to tend to me today. Her face turns pale, "I'm not supposed to have a conversation with you unless he tells me to." She says in an apologetic tone. "If he's holding you against your will, my family can help you. They can give you a better life. One where you won't have to be around people like him." I try to reason with her. She shakes her head at me, "you're mistaken. He doesn't mistreat me. Quite the opposite actually, he protected me from my abusive stepfather. I'm alive today because of Alpha Kane. I chose to serve him as a token of my appreciation for what he did for me. He didn't ask me to do this for him; I chose to do it." Her response surprises me. For Kane to do something like that would require him to have a heart, and I refused to believe that he did. Surely he had her hypnotized or something of the sort. She shakes her head, "I'm afraid I've already said too much to you. I don't want to anger or disappoint him. Please eat your food. I will return later with fruits and a change of clothing for you." I spent the rest of the day thinking of ways to get on Kane's good side. Of course, there weren't many ideas. There wasn't much I could do while being locked in a room with zero chance of leaving. Just like the girl from earlier had said, Kane doesn't show up for the entire day. Where did he go? Could he be out with Anna? Like on a date? Were they sleeping together again? That's myself for asking these questions. I do not want to care about those things. I do not want to let it bother me either. My body turns to stone when I hear footsteps followed by the door opening. Kane steps in, and I try not to gape at what I see next. "What are you doing?" I demand as he walks towards the bed in nothing but boxers. Where were his clothes? I didn't see him for an entire day, and then he shows up in nothing but underwear? I tried my best not to stare at him, but it was hard not to. His muscles flexed while he moved, and his body was the kind that you couldn't help but stop and stare at. The type that women dreamt and sighed over. Why did he look so good, and why did I want to see even more of him? "You're no longer in chains, for this, I must sleep in the

same bed with you just in case you try to do anything stupid.” He answers me, reminding me of the current situation. I gape at him as he climbs onto the bed and leans back against the pillow with one hand placed behind his head. “I do not want to sleep in the same bed with you.” I hiss. I bite my tongue in frustration when I realize what I have just done. I shouldn’t have said that. I should have happily welcomed him. Not wanting to share a bed with him would not aid in my quest to make him fall in love with me. Instead, I should be thinking of ways to use this to my advantage. Should I seduce him? Was I ready for such a big step? I didn’t think so. I didn’t want to give my body to someone like him, no matter how much my heart said otherwise. Should I act vulnerable? Would he care for me more if I showed a soft side that was absolutely terrified of the things he was doing to me? “If you have a problem with this, I’m happy to place you back in those chains. That way, we can both be satisfied.” He points out to me. I wanted to ask why he no longer had me tied, but I didn’t want my question to give him a reason to place the chains back on my body. His threat was enough for me to shut my mouth. I stare at him from the corner of my eye, he’s not moving, and his eyes are already closed. Did he fall asleep so quickly? I turn slightly to the side and study his features. He looked calm with his eyes closed, not at all like the monster I now knew he was. His freshly trimmed black hair fell over his forehead, and it looked slightly wet, like he had just showered. The low stubble on his jaw catches my attention next, and I find myself wanting to reach over and touch it. His lips are redder than usual today, and I wonder if it has anything to do with the blood he took from me. He seemed a lot more lively and maybe a bit calmer today. nopea, il aiso tells me inat ne s just as aware oi my presence asi am oi NIS. Excepi, ne isn í eyeing me down like I’m doing to him. What can I do to bring him closer to me? I wasn’t sure if I’d always have this opportunity. I wanted to use it the best I could. Now that I knew he was awake, I knew there wasn’t a better chance than this. I slowly moved my body closer to his, checking each time to see if he would open his eyes and acknowledge me. When he doesn’t, I continue to inch closer until I’m close enough to touch him. Come on, Maya. You have to do this. You need to get your revenge. I forcefully remind myself of what he and that woman did to me. It’s all the motivation I need to move forward. I climb onto his body and wrap my arms around his neck, burying my face against his chest. His entire body goes still beneath me, and it’s my confirmation that he was indeed awake all this time. I was sure that this was the last thing he expected me to do. I wait for a reaction from him. Would he push me away? Would he ask me if I was insane? What was he going to do? I feel his hands on my waist, and before he even decides to push me off him, I let out a small whimper and pretended to sob against his chest. His body stiffens, and his hand on my waist loosens. I’ve managed to shock the beast. He doesn’t know what to do. Is it a good sign that he doesn’t try to push me away?

“Please don’t ever sleep with another woman again,” I cry. I would never beg him to do this for me, but I want him to think that he’s broken me completely. I want him to believe that I’ve given up, that I’m ready to beg him to treat me better. “It hurts me so much to see you with someone else. Please stop doing it. Please stop hurting me.” While this was the truth, I would have never admitted it to him if there was another way to get him to fall for me. I wasn’t sure what was the right moves to make, but I was o make, but I was going to try everything to win this fight and his heart. I would get kane to feel something for me. I would, and I won’t stop trying untill do.

Chapter 18 Time seems to have slowed down as I wait for a reaction from Kane. His breathing has gotten louder, and his hot body beneath mine has turned to stone. Part of me wants to rub my hand down his body to touch him the way I’ve always wanted to. I push those sick thoughts out of my head. Why do I want someone that hates me so much? Why do I want someone that tortures me any chance that he gets? The answer was clear. As long as I was his mate, it would always be this way. I knew why he hadn’t rejected me as yet; it was so that everything he did to me would impact me so much more. It was the exact reason that I wouldn’t reject him either, even though I knew it would hurt so much to do it. When I left him, I wanted him to feel the same pain; no, I wanted to hurt him more than he did to me. I wanted to prove to him that no matter what he did to me in the past or present or even future, nothing would make me fall. I’ll always fight back. I’ll always be the one on the winning side. I may have been sheltered all my life, but I never liked losing; people always let me win. Now, I would fight on my own to get everything that I wanted. He takes another deep breath, and his hands tighten once more on my waist. He picks me up and places me back onto my side of the bed without saying a word to me. It’s the first time that he’s ever been this silent, and I have no idea what he’s thinking in that head of his. To my surprise, he reaches across and pulls the blanket over me. I gasp when his warm hand accidentally touches my leg while doing so. There are sparks everywhere, and I rub my legs together to try and stop the pleasure. How long will I have these feelings for? When will be able to push it all behind me and make him pay for everything he’s done to me without feeling any pain in return? “Go to sleep.” His words surprised me even more. What was with this sudden change? I didn’t try to get on his good side again throughout the night, but I couldn’t fall asleep easily like him. My eyes were wide open for hours, and I was sure that it was already late. That’s when I hear him tossing and turning on the bed. “No!” he shouts. “Stop! Stop it!” I turn towards him and am surprised by what I see. Was he having a nightmare? His body was stiff, and there was sweat on his forehead. Kane continues to shout in his dream, and I have to wonder

what he's dreaming about. I'm tempted to leave him there just so that he can also feel some pain, but I'm not as evil as he is. I can't see someone in pain and leave them like that. I scooch closer to him and hesitantly touch his shoulder. It doesn't work and I try again harder. Still, he doesn't wake and continues to toss as though he was in pain.

"Kane!" I whisper and shake him some more. His eyes flash open suddenly, and he looks like he's lost. I don't think I've ever seen someone look this lonely and confused before. It touches my heart more than it should. What exactly has Kane been through all his life? Was he always a monster like he was now? Or did someone or something cause him to be like this? He grabs my waist suddenly, my body halts from his touch, and I try to keep my feelings in check when he snuggles his face against my belly. My heart pounds against my chest as he tightens his hold on me. I'm not sure what to do in this situation. I'm also not sure whether he's awake or still living in his dream. I'm sure now that he hasn't realized that he isn't in his dream any longer, but again, I place my hand on his back and tap it gently to comfort him. Why do I feel an ache in my chest from seeing like this? I should be happy to see him in pain; it's what I've wanted all along. Eventually, his hands loosen around me, and he goes back into a deep sleep. Was this just a dream, or was it something more than that? Was Kane abused in the past? Was I reading too much into this? I ignored all of those questions and let go of him gently. It shouldn't be vital for me to find out the truth; it had nothing to do with me. My job was to get him to fall for me and then leave him. That was all. No matter how much it hurt. I will have to let go of him and forget about this part of my life. It was the only way for me to move on.

KANE I open my eyes and rub a hand down my face. I've had that nightmare once again—a memory from when I was a child. I had multiple memories like it. It was something I'd tried to forget but never was able to. I sigh and turn to my side; it's right then that my eyes fall on the woman beside me. Her eyes are closed, and she seems to be in a deep sleep. Her long messy dark brown hair was all over the pillow as it framed her beautiful face. I can't stop staring at her. It was so f*****g hard to fall asleep last night when she was so close to me; her scent was constantly torturing me. How did she taunt me so much without even trying? Even now, her scent surrounds me and makes it difficult to think. I want her. God, I want her so much. Even though I know that I can never have her, I still want her. Even though I know that I'll only continue to hurt her to get revenge for my father and sister. .. I still want her. A memory from last night bolts straight through me, and my jaw goes stiff from the reminder. I showed a weak side of myself to Maya last night. I expected her to laugh in my face, but instead, she did the exact opposite. She tried to comfort me, and it was only because of her that I could fall asleep peacefully after such a horrifying dream of it? Why did she try and help me after everything I've already put her through? I place a hand over my chest and squeeze my

eyes shut. The f*****g thing wouldn't stop beating for her. I've never wanted to feel this way for a woman, and definitely, not one whose family was responsible for killing my father. She stirs in her sleep and f**k me; even that did something to me. I couldn't do this. I couldn't stay here with her while I felt this way. I needed to take some time off, spend some time by myself-a place where I could remind myself of why I was doing this in the first place. Images of her on top of my body flashes across my mind, and my hands tighten on the sheets below me. She begged me not to be with another woman, to not hurt her like that again. Did I break her spirit? Was she finally giving up? I wasn't sure what she was up to; all I knew was that it was f*****g working, and I needed to stop ighs, "it has to do with the princess, doesn't it?" he asks me. I run a hand through my hair in frustration. "I told you that it was a bad idea to take her in the first place. You're many things, but you aren't this cruel. It was bound to catch up with you eventually." He tries to reason with me just like he always does. "You took that innocent girl from her home, and you tortured her. Now, look at you. She's your bloody mate for crying out loud. Did you think that it was not going to affect you in any way? By harming her, you're ruining yourself. How long, Kane? How long before you realize that you're destroying your life?" "Innocent?" I shout. "Are you forgetting that they killed my sister and father? What was I supposed to do? Just move on with my life and forget what they did? They took the closest people in my life away from me! I'm not going to stand back and reward them for it!" He narrows his eyes, "you talk as if your family was innocent in all of this. I can never understand why you loved them so much. They abused you, just like you're doing to that poor girl. You're doing to her what the people closest to you did to you. How can you live with yourself?"

Chapter 20 I sit by the tree and look over the cliff. I had a lot on my mind. For some reason, ever si entered my life, I can't stop thinking about things I've gone through in the past. I couldn't get Dane's words out of my head either. Was I okay with doing the same things to Maya that my father had done to me? Was I alright with torturing her the way that I was doing now? I was so caught up in getting my revenge that I didn't think about the consequences of my actions. But how was to forget that they killed my family? How was I supposed to move on and let Maya go? Just the thought of letting her go sends me into a full-blown rage. I would not let her go. I will never let her go. She was mine and always will be. I don't care what anyone has to say about that. Even if her brothers come for her, I still won't let her go. They would have to kill me first. Maybe that's what I'm waiting for. Maybe I did all of this so that her family would finish me off and end the misery. I've been miserable my entire life since a child. I was never happy. No one made

me happy. No one cared enough for me, not even my own family. They were always too busy trying to find ways to build an empire, gain strength, and be something that we weren't. Even though they were like this, I still loved them because they were the only family I had. I was still unhappy, but something had changed recently. I looked forward to waking up, to seeing Maya every day. It was hard to explain, and I hated to admit it, but it was the truth; I couldn't keep denying it any longer. Even though I'm far away, I can still smell her. The girl's scent and taste have stuck with me and won't leave me in f*****g peace. No matter how much I tried to get it out of my head, it only got worse the more was away from her. My knuckles tightened at my sides, and the reminder of my face between her legs hit me so hard that I nearly threw myself off the cliff to end the torture. It makes me want to go to her now and f*****g bite into her neck. I've never wanted anyone as much as I wanted her, and it was something that I can never admit to anyone. I thought that this would have made things better for me, given me a chance to clear my mind, but I was wrong. Being away from her happened to be more dangerous than staying by her side. This was sending me faster into insanity. I couldn't let that happen. I knew now that I couldn't be away. I needed to be by her side before I did something crazy. I told myself that I was only returning because I didn't trust her, but deep down, I knew that it was complete bullshit. There was also this weird feeling in the pit of my stomach that wouldn't go away. I couldn't explain it, but I was worried about her. Something told me that she was in danger. I tried to push the feelings away, but the damn thing kept coming back. That feeling of fear. I hated it so much. I felt weak whenever I thought about her, and weakness was something I've been taught never to have. I didn't like to be weak, especially not for the enemy. And she was the enemy, Maya and her entire family were my enemies, and I don't see that ever-changing. As long as I live, I'll never forget what they did. And that's when I hear it. Something that sends my body into a state of shock. I'm frozen on the spot. Maya. Her wolf. She's howling. It wasn't a regular howl; it was a cry for help. accelerates on its own. Before I know it, I'm racing in her direction. How could she be in danger? I left her with my men. No one was supposed to enter that room unless it happened to be one of the maids. And didn't think she could escape on her own; someone would have spotted her. What the f**k was happening back there? I wasn't sure, but I had to get there in time. I had to. No one would touch her. Absolutely no one. -MAYA My wolf rocks her head back and howls for help. I'm praying that anyone that knows me will be near and hear my cry. I wouldn't stand back and let these men hurt me. I will fight back with everything that I have. My wolf goes straight into action. I haven't shifted in a while, and it felt slightly off. My wolf has been weak ever since Kane's poor treatment of me. She's also been feeling the pain just as much as I have been. We're being tortured together. She attacks the one to the front

first; he roars as I sink my teeth into his neck. I pull his body back with mine, something my brothers have taught me while training a few times with them. I've never had to use their training until now. It's the first time that they're not here to save me. Now, I'm all that I have. No one is coming to my aid. I focus on the man to the far right. As the other two try to grab me, I jump for him, taking him down with me. I don't let go of his body even when the other men hold onto my fur. I cry out when one of them sinks their teeth into me while the other punches my belly. I howl some more and spin around to tackle another one of them. There's too much of them. I'm not sure that I can take them all down simultaneously. One of them grabs a knife from his pocket and holds it to my throat. I stay still, not wanting him to go further. "Shift back." He growls. I do as he says, and the knife is closer to my neck than before. "You think you're smart." He toys with me. "I'll show you smart in a few minutes." The door slams open suddenly, and I spot a glimpse of Kane before he tackles each of them to the ground, one after the next. He's so fast that no one has a chance to react. He grabs both men by their hair and rips them off my body. Kane sinks his teeth in one of them until blood splatters all around us. I watch in horror as he rips his neck out with his teeth. He kills them all like they are nothing. Kane works like a bloody assassin; I don't think I've ever seen anyone kill so brutally before. He doesn't stop until the entire room is covered in blood and immovable bodies. When it's all over, we're both breathing heavily. Our gazes lock, and I'm surprised that I spot fear in the depths of his eyes. There is no way that he could have been worried about my safety. No way. But then again, I've seen minor changes in him recently. Was it possible that my plan was already working? Was Kane growing a soft spot for me? I didn't want to get my hopes up. My breath gets stuck in my throat when he walks over to me. There is blood all over his hands and chest, blood from those men that just tried to murder me. He bends down so that we are face to face; I stare at him as his eyes scan my body for any injuries. His jaw clenches when he smells my blood and sees the marks from their attacks on me. He picks me up from the ground and holds me close to his chest, "are you okay?" he whispers. This time, I'm sure that I can hear the concern in his voice; I'm not sure that he even tries to hide it. It's the first time that I've ever seen him this concerned about my well-being; it surprises me. Since when does he care about my feelings? This entire time, I thought that he was the one who sent them to me. I felt that this was another scheme of his to hurt me. But his actions are saying otherwise. It seems like he had no idea about this entire thing. That only leaves one person that I can think about. Would she really go this far to get rid of me? She did threaten me multiple times, and I knew she wanted Kane to herself. She was a bloody psychopath. He picks up the blanket from the bed and wraps it around my body. He mumbles a few curse words to himself before storming out of the room with a vengeance on his face. He walks with me

cradled against his chest. My arms are wrapped around his neck for support, and I use this opportunity to continue with my plan. I bury my face against his bare chest, and immediately I feel his body tense. He doesn't stop walking; however, he keeps moving at a fast pace. He pushes doors open, one after the next, slamming them shut when he doesn't see who he is looking for. He finally stops by the room I'd stormed into before while trying to escape. All of his men were there, or at least most of them. I'm still not sure who all his men were. "How the hell did this happen?" he demands, showing them my bruised body held close to his chest. Not that they can see much with the blanket still wrapped around me. "How could those assholes enter the premises and get access to her room when I've told everyone to guard her? Who the f**k let this happen?" Everyone stares at each other with a puzzled look. They knew something or thought the same thing as me, that he sent these men. Clearly, we were all wrong. Kane had nothing to do with this incident. "START TALKING!" He roars. A few men jump upwards at his tone, terrified. "We were told that you sent these men." Aman with reddish hair answers him. "What?" Kane shouts. "Who told you this, and how could you be so stupid to believe it?" "We believed it because we were given this information from a reliable source, someone close to you," he explains. "WHO?" He is hesitant at first, but when he realizes how pissed Kane is, he begins to speak. "Anna," he answers. "Anna was the one who told this to us."

Chapter 21 I feel Kane stiffen at his words. Even I'm taken aback by them. I was right all along. Anna was responsible for this. She made sure that her threat came true. At least she tried to make it come true. Her plan may just have backfired on her. I can feel the tension oozing from Kane's body, and I think everyone inside of here could feel it as well. Judging by the looks on his men's faces, they were all terrified of what was to come. Would he also punish them? He seemed to be pissed at everyone right now. I wasn't sure if Kane would let this slide or punish her for her actions. I've never seen him punish her before, and I'm not getting my hopes up. "Get Anna in here." He says in the most dangerous tone I've ever heard from him since the day I met him. Even I shiver from his voice. This wasn't going to be easy to watch. He wasn't in a good mood, and if I didn't hate Anna so much, I would have felt sorry for her. His men do as he says, and a few minutes later, Anna is being forced into the room. She takes one look at me and then at Kane, and her face screws up in the ugliest way possible. "Is it true what they are saying?" He says in that same dangerous tone again. The look on his face is chilling; I'm glad I'm not the one he's looking at right now. She looks at the men and then back at him, "depends on what they said. I'm not sure what this is about. Why don't you try telling me so that I can have

an idea and not be so lost right now." She was brave for speaking that way after knowing what she did. What she didn't know or failed to realize was that Kane wasn't in the best of moods right now. Playing him like this was not playing it safe at all. She should know that after knowing him for longer than I did. Maybe she didn't care. Perhaps she knew that he wouldn't harm her. Kane chuckles, and it sends a shiver down my spine. Even that tiny chuckle is hard to listen to. He looks like he wants to murder someone, and I wouldn't be surprised after the way he got rid of those men that tried to hurt me. "If you want to play dumb. I'll play along." He tells her. "There were men in my home. Men who came purposefully to get rid of Maya. I've been told that you are the one who ordered this. You are the one to tell everyone that I gave permission for this to happen when I wasn't even near you today to give you such orders. Does that ring a bell for you, Anna? Or do I need to use violence to jog your memory?" Her lips part, and she crosses her arms. She tries to look unbothered, but her legs are denitely shaking now. Maybe now she understands the trouble she's just made for herself. "I thought that's what you wanted," she whispers. "I thought that you wanted to hurt her. I was doing this for you. I didn't mean to disobey you or make you angry. I swear, I did it all for you, Kane. And I'll do it all again because I care about you. I will always do whatever it takes to make you happy. We all know you wanted this. Everyone here knows it. Even if you don't say it, I know that you want to get rid of her." She attempts to walk towards him, but he pulls back, and his glare makes her stop walking. "Please," she begs. "Don't be angry with me. I'll try to make it up to you, I swear. I was just angry with what you had to go through because of her and her family. What they did—," "SHUT UP!" Kane roars. What was she speaking about? What did I do to Kane? What did my family do to him? It's the rst clue I've gotten as to why Kane had kidnapped me. However, I'm more confused now than ever. "I've had enough of your tantrums and lies." He snaps at her. "I've been too kind to you in the past. I've let you get off easily whenever you went against my words. It's my fault that this happened today. It's a mistake that I will never make again; believe me when I say that. Your day has nally come, Anna; it's time that you understand that there are always consequences for your actions. You must be severely punished for your actions today." She drops to the ground in horror, "no, please. I won't do it again. I swear to you. Just give me one more chance, Kane, please." "It's Alpha Kane to you." He roars. "I want her to experience exactly what she did to Maya. Trap her in a room and do what you must for her to realize the trauma she just caused. When you're nished, she is to never step into our territory again. You will no longer be a part of our group." He shouts. "Do you understand me?" Anna is trembling from head to toe, and she looks like she wants to run for help. "Why are you doing this?" She cries. "I've been loyal to you all along. I've done everything for you. You're going to hurt me over a girl that you hate? A girl that

destroyed your family? It would be fantastic if you were happy that I did what I did when it was all for you. Instead, you're punishing me and pushing me away when you should be doing that to her? She doesn't care about you as I do. She hates you just as much as I know you hate her. Don't let her get to you, Kane. Don't let her trick you. You'll live to regret it, I swear to you. She will only hurt you. I was protecting you from her. That was all. Protecting you! I still can't believe that you're doing this for her! After everything she did to you, how could you be so stupid?" How did I destroy Kane's family? I would never destroy someone's family! There were so many trying to hurt my family that I would never even dream about doing the same to someone else. Two men drag Anna out of the room while she screams for him to change his mind. Kane's eyes are cold and heartless; he doesn't seem bothered by her words at all. I can sense the tension in the room as he glares at his men. They know that their turn is coming as well. "How could you believe her so easily?" he questions with venom in his voice. "Anyone can say to you that I gave an order, and you'll follow through it without conrming with me rst?" "I'm sorry, alpha." They apologize to him. "What do you think your punishments should be?" he asks. "You don't have to punish them for something they didn't do." I stop him. "I'm ne now; nothing happened to me. It's not their fault that Anna lied to them. It would help if you did not let them pay for something she did. It's not right." Kane's jaw tightens, and there are many surprised looks around the room. No one expected me to say that. After how they treated me, I'm sure that they never expected me to protect them. "If anything like this happens again, I'll make sure to punish you severely." He nally says, letting them off on a warning. I'm surprised that he actually listened to me, but then again, Kane has surprised me a lot lately. They all nod in understanding, but their eyes are glued to me, and I can see the look of relief on their faces. They're thanking me even though the words aren't coming out of their mouths. He barks a few orders to them, and I hate that my kind heart is worried about Anna. She deserved her punishment, but I would hate for someone to go through what I did. Kane walks with me to a room I haven't been to before. He places me on the bed and checks my body one more time. I know that he's pissed when he sees the bruises that were still there. "How much does it hurt?" He asks me. I don't answer him; there are too many things bothering me. He senses that and stops staring at my body so that he can now look at my face, "what's wrong?" "What did Anna mean when she said I destroyed your family?" I ask him. I had to know. Maybe there was a misunderstanding somewhere. Maybe Kane thought I did something when the truth was that I didn't. Perhaps he was lied to. It was the only explanation for all of this.

Chapter 22 He grabs a kit with medical supplies and takes a piece of cotton in his hand. He's purposefully ignoring my question. I know that I'm naked before him, but I don't feel even the slightest bit shy. I'm too consumed by wanting to know the truth that it's impossible for me to feel any other emotion. "This may hurt," he says as he presses the wet cotton against my stomach, "but it will help with the pain until your body heals itself." My fists tighten against the sheet beneath my body, "the physical pain is no match for the emotional pain that you've brought upon me." I know I'm not supposed to admit it, but I felt like it was the right time to tell him that. His hand stops just above another cut, and a muscle ticks in his jaw; it tells me that my words have struck a nerve. Still, he doesn't say anything; instead, he continues to tend to every wound on my body gently. I'm surprised at his gentleness, but it will not distract me from finding out the truth. It would also not distract me from all he has done to me. My heart may want to move from this sudden change in his behavior, but it is not enough for me to forgive him for what he's done. This is far from over. I still want to see him suffer. "Stop avoiding my question," I tell him. "I want to know what Anna was speaking about, and I want to know the truth right now." He takes a deep breath, "I'm not avoiding your question; I'm refusing to answer it. That's all." I grab his wrist; it stops him from tending to another wound. He lifts his gaze lazily, and I don't think his eyes have ever looked this blue before. They seem to be staring into my soul, and I hate how my heart skips a beat because of it. I'm angry with myself again. And I'm mad at him. Why won't he tell me? And why did he have to spoil everything for us? He destroyed any chance of us happening before anything could even begin between us. "WHY?" I scream. "Why did you have to do this to me? What did I ever do to you? Why did you destroy the chances for us to officially be mates? Why did you have to end something that's supposed to be beautiful and precious? WHY?" He seems taken aback by my outburst, but it doesn't take long for him to recover from his shock. He drops the medical supplies kit onto the ground, and it shatters everywhere. His rage matches mine, and we're both equally pissed. "Do you want to know?" He roars, and I swear that I spot tears in his eyes, but that's impossible. Someone as horrible as him isn't capable of crying. "Yes!" I shout. "I want to understand you. I want to understand why you would hurt me so much without giving me a proper reason. I want to know what would cause you to hurt your mate. I want to know if you're truly so heartless!" Because deep down in my heart, I can't accept that you're a monster. I want to believe that you aren't. I want to believe that my mate isn't such a horrible person. I don't say those things to him, but it's the truth of how I feel. He grabs my shoulders roughly and stares into my eyes, "are you sure that you want to know the answer to your question?" His hands are warm, and his warmth seeps into my naked skin, but I ignore how it makes me feel; I also ignore how much I wish those hands could touch me

elsewhere but with love, not hatred. I narrow my eyes, "yes!" His body is shaking, consumed with anger and hatred, "your family took the two most important people in my life away from me. They took them away in the most brutal way possible and then went on with their lives like they hadn't done so. They were happy, you were happy, all of you went ahead to enjoy your lives after what you did, and I was left alone to mourn the loss of my father and sister." What was that supposed to mean? How did we take his father and sister away from him? He needed to explain himself more. "What are you saying?" I demand. "Do you not get it?" He asks with venom dripping from his voice. "YOUR FAMILY KILLED MY FATHER AND SISTER!" He shouts. His words pierce through my heart. It was the last thing I was expecting him to say to me. I was prepared to hear anything but not that. My family killed his father and sister? That's impossible. They have killed people before, but they were always people that threatened our family first. They wouldn't kill anyone unless there was an excellent reason for it. I knew my brothers well enough to know this. They were dangerous when it came to their family; they would never spare anyone that tried to hurt one of us. We've always been like that, but we were not the type of people to interfere with the innocent. We would never hurt someone without a good reason, and even hurting our enemies was sometimes hard for us. So everything he's saying doesn't make any sense to me. I still believe that he's mistaken; I still believe that we weren't the ones to do this. "You're lying!" I shout. "My family would not harm anyone unless they tried to harm us first. There must be a reason, or you must be mistaken. Tell me who it is. Tell me who they were, tell me their names so that I can confirm this myself." I insist. He takes a deep breath and pushes away from me. "It doesn't matter what you think. What matters is that they did kill the two most important people in my life; the only two that I had left of my family was taken away from me. I don't have a family anymore because of you and the people closest to you. Hurting you was the best way to get revenge for what they did to me. They took the closest thing to my heart, and I returned the favor to them. You mean just as much to them as my father and sister meant to me. You were the best way for me to hurt your family." I feel the tears form in my eyes as everything he's done begins to make more sense than it did before. I still think he's been misinformed; I still believe that he doesn't know the whole truth, and I can't give him that unless he tells me who they were. "Tell me who they are, Kane." I insist. "I need to know the truth. I need to know if there is truth to your words. I need to know what they did and why. I'm telling you that my family would not hurt someone without a reason. I still believe that you are mistaken. Please tell me more. I need you to do more explaining." He doesn't wait for me to ask any more questions; he gets out of the room and slams the door behind him. Two minutes later, he walks back in with a dress in his hand. He drops it onto my lap without saying anything and storms back out. I clutch

Chapter 1

the blue dress in my hand and close my eyes. I can't get his words out of my head. I try to think of anyone that looked like him, someone that could be linked to him, but no one comes to mind. I've never seen anyone like him before. Then it must be a mistake. I would not stop until he told me the truth. I would not stop asking and pestering him.
. ~KANE~ I was never supposed to tell Maya this so soon. I hated the person she was turning me into. I was even forgetting why I was doing this in the first place. Anna's words kept replaying in my head. I was protecting the one woman I swore that I would bring only pain. I was going against my own words for her. I've never done that before. I've never gone against my words for someone—especially not someone I'm supposed to hate. I tried to think about my father; I hoped that it would help me remember why I needed to fight the feelings, but it wasn't helping anymore. Every time I entered a room and saw her, I felt like taking care of her and keeping her safe. I didn't feel like hurting her anymore, and I hated myself for it. I knew that I would regret this one day, but I couldn't help it; I can't help the way that she makes me feel. I open the cabinet and grab a drink. I had to find some way to forget about these feelings. I had to do anything to make myself not remember. Today, when I saw her on the ground, bleeding and beaten, all I wanted to do was keep her safe and kill everyone that had bruised her beautiful skin. I've never felt such a strong protective instinct before. I've never wanted to protect someone so much before. Wasn't it ironic that she was the same woman I wanted to hurt more than anything else? But was that even true? I felt like I was fooling myself from the beginning. I was never being true to my real feelings. Then I held her naked body next to me, and I didn't feel to have my way with her; all I wanted to do then was make the marks go away. All I wanted to do was make sure that she was safe and healed. I squeezed the cup in my hand before taking a big gulp; help me forget her, help me forget what it feels like to hold her close and protect her, help me forget how much I want her.

Chapter 23 ~MAYA~ The door slams open just as I've fallen asleep, and it wakes me up instantly. I blink once, then twice, and a figure to the front of me catches my attention. I know without having to look twice that it's Kane. His body is swaying, and it's only then that I realize he has a cup in his hand and reeks of alcohol. I raise from the bed and ran to his side before he could fall to the ground. I wince when the glass drops to the ground, and it makes a complete mess around us. Kane's hands grip my waist tightly and pull my body closer to his. I gasp as he buries his face in the crook of my neck. I know that I shouldn't be doing this. I know that I shouldn't care at all for him. Still, I lift my hands to rub his back gently. "Maya," he says my name in a painful whisper. "Maya," he says again. I don't say anything; just continue to hold him in silence. I hate how much hearing

my name from his lips affects me. One of his hands goes to my hair, and he gently strokes it. He touches me like he's scared that I'm going to break, and it stirs my heart. I pushed the feeling away, fighting it as much as I could. "I'm sorry," he whispers. "I'm so sorry." My body goes entirely still at his confession. He's sorry? I know that he's intoxicated, and this may not be how he really feels, but it still hurts my heart to hear him say this to me. Fight it, Maya. Don't you dare let him get to you. He doesn't deserve your kindness, do not let him hurt you again. ~The Palace Of The Reid's~ ~Alpha Jacks~

"Have you heard of what's been happening with Alpha Kane?" My advisor asks. The mention of Kane grips my attention almost immediately. I drop what I'm doing and turn to him, waiting for him to tell me more. "He's done something idiotic; it can cost him everything that he has." Alpha Kane. My biggest enemy of all. The remaining heir of Alpha Eric. At least I believe he's what's left of that pathetic man. I have no idea how many women he's slept with or forced to sleep with him; I can't see why any woman would ever lay in bed with him, to begin with. "What could that boy possibly be up to now that his father is dead?" I ask. "He should be in hiding right now. There isn't much left of his father's pack; what can he be left with? He must have nothing now and pose no threat to us." "Kane has been up to no good. He kidnapped the sister of Alpha prince Austin, Princess Maya. He's been hiding her deep in the woods. Possibly torturing her." His words sparked my interest, "I suppose he did this as a form of revenge since Austin's family is responsible for the death of his father and sister. I don't know why he's so upset; he should be thanking them. They did us all a huge favor by getting rid of that pest. Not that I'm that fond of Austin or his family either." He nods, "you are right." "How have they not found him yet?" I ask. "They are good at these things. How is he outsmarting them? But more importantly, how have you gotten such juicy information? Where did you find this out from, and is it a reliable source?" He nods, "when have I ever given you wrong information?" It's true; he has never failed me before; I don't expect him to start now. Still, this is a bit difficult to stomach. Austin is usually smarter than this; he should have found them by now. This is the only thing that makes me doubt the credibility of this information. "While Kane has done an excellent job at keeping her hidden and sending the prince in the wrong direction searching for his sister, he has made a recent mistake. One that he must have not been thinking clearly about. Something that's surely going to cost him in the long run." I'm definitely more intrigued. What mistake did he make? And what caused him to do it? "He kicked out one of the girls that worshipped him from his pack," he tells me. "Her name is Anna. She was in bad shape when I found her; she could barely walk. I asked her what had happened and she told me everything. Maya isn't just Kane's hostage; she is also his mate. This has affected his judgment, and he's been slipping up recently. He's forgetting why he initially kidnapped her, to begin

with. Anna tried to harm the girl for his sake, but it backfired on her, and she was severely punished by his men. She's currently recovering, but when she does, I know that she's going straight to Austin. She will also lead them back to Kane and where he has Maya hidden. Everything is about to blow up, and it's going to happen very soon. We don't have a long while to wait before the remaining heir of Alpha Eric drops to the ground and suffers just like his father did." Interesting. Very interesting. So not only did Kane kidnap Austin's sister, he kidnapped his mate. What did the stupid boy think? That he could easily ignore the mate pull? I inwardly laugh at the fool. He's drawn out his own death. It would be interesting to see what Austin does to him the moment that he finds out the truth. I didn't want to be the one to spill the secrets. I wanted to sit back and enjoy the show. The girl would surely tell them everything that she knows. A war would definitely start the moment that she does. But would princess Maya just stand back and watch her brothers kill her mate in front of her? Even if she hated Kane for kidnapping her and mistreating her, she also would not be able to ignore that mate pull. I don't think she has the guts to watch him die in front of her; if he dies, a part of her will also die. "I was having a dull day, but I must admit that you have brightened my day with this wonderful news Han," I tell him. "You have done well today. I'm sure that no one but us knows about this. We now know who has kidnapped the princess. This is wonderful news. Even Austin, with all of his many supporters and friends, still has not found his sister, but yet look at us; we have everything that he wants to know." "I think we should be present to see the war take place," he tells me. "Imagine the look on Kane's face when they finally find him. What would be his last words before he breathes his last breath? Do you think he will beg for his life?" I laugh, "the boy has too much pride, just like his father. Even on his dying breath, he will not beg anyone. He will let them do what they must. Maybe he already knows that his death is near. I won't be surprised if that's exactly what he wants. If I were him, I wouldn't want to live either, knowing who my father was. They are an embarrassment." "Father," Giselle, my daughter, calls out to me. I stiffen; I pray that she didn't hear our entire conversation. "What is this I hear about Kane dying?" She demands. So much for my wish of her not knowing. "You can't be serious. You know what he means to me. You know how much I want to marry him. You can't let that happen. You can't let anyone hurt him." I inwardly groan. Oh f**k. She was not supposed to hear this. My daughter has been smitten with the boy since a young age. I've tried to cut it out, but she never listens to me; she's crazy about the boy. She has the worst taste in men, and it clearly shows. "We have been through this already," I warn her. "Kane is our enemy, not a friend. I will not let you marry him. Ever." She crosses her arms and pokes her nose at me stubbornly, "I want him, and I don't care what you have to say. He will be mine. I swear to you, daddy if anything happens to him. I will never forgive you. I will not marry

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anyone unless it's him, and you know I'm serious when I say this." I rise up from the chair and face her with a glare, "what is wrong with you? Have I not given you everything? Why do you want to ruin your life and mine? Do you know what type of man he is? The type that kidnaps innocent girls and tortures them!" Her lower lip trembles, "that's not true. He's nothing like that. He has every right to treat that woman that way after what she did to his family. She and her family killed the people close to him. She deserves to suffer. He will never do something like that without reason. So you can stop trying to make him look bad in front of me when I already know the type of man that he is." I rub my temples in frustration, "do you hear yourself, my child? How can you defend such horrible behavior? Even if I agreed to let, you would marry him. Do you think that he will want to marry you? He has never once shown interest in you. What makes you think that he will suddenly marry you?" She smiles, "if what your advisor says is true, you will have the perfect opportunity to get him to agree to marry me. You won't even have to force him. He will bring himself to you without you asking. Trust me, father, I know Kane. I know how to make him yield, and I know how to make him want to marry me. All you have to do is listen to me." The perfect opportunity? What was she speaking about? Why would he ever agree when his mate was alive?

Chapter 24 ~AUSTIN~ "That asshole lied to us," I growl. "He f*****g lied to us, and we believed him like a fool! I've been searching for days now, and none of us have had any good leads to find my sister. What the f**k are we doing wrong? Who the hell has her?" Lucy rubs my shoulder, "we had no choice but to believe him. Please don't beat yourself up over it. He was the best lead that we had; no one could have known for sure that he was lying. We don't have time to sit down and worry over our mistakes; let's get up and look for her again." James walks in with Lucas, and they are both just as tense as I am. We're failing my sister; every time we make a wrong turn, she has to suffer. I can feel it in my bones that she's unhappy; wherever she is, she's not doing well. Our bond is strong; I can feel it so clear that she might as well have been standing right here telling me what she's been going through. Lucas walks up to me, and I can see that he's going through it just as much as I am. Lucas and Maya have always had a special bond; they've always teased each other. They're siblings but also the closest of friends. I was more of a father figure in her life; even though our father is still alive, I've always protected her. I sigh and pull Lucas in for a hug. My brother needed this right now; I needed to see that I wasn't the only one hurting; I had to be strong for everyone, not just for myself but for everyone that was affected. Lucas returns my hug, he's always been the joker of the group, but even he can't hold back the pain this time. No one could lighten the mood now, not until we

found her, not until we found our precious Maya and brought her home to safety. Even Lucy has tears in her eyes, but she has been more emotional recently. It was hard to keep up with her emotions at times; they were all over the place ever since she became pregnant with my baby. James squeezes our shoulders and tries to comfort us both in his own way, "we will find her." He promises. "We will find Maya, and she will be okay. She will be. She's a fighter." "You guys are going to want to see this," Hunter tells us, cutting into our little grieve session. The look on his face tells us that it is important. Did they finally get a proper lead? One where someone isn't lying to us? I didn't want to keep my hopes up, but I couldn't help myself. I wanted to wish for the best; I was holding onto the last bit of hope I had in finding my sister. We follow him out of the room and straight into the hallway; a young girl waits there for us. Someone that I can't remember ever seeing before. "Who are you?" I ask her. I looked between Hunter and her, wondering who would start explaining what was going on. "My name is Anna," she introduces herself. "I have some information on your sister, Maya." There is a dead silence throughout the hall as her words cut through our exposure. Can I trust her? Can we believe her after we were recently fooled by someone else? I don't care; I'm willing to try again because there is a fifty-fifty chance that she's speaking the truth. "Tell me what you know." I urge her to go on. "What do you know?" James demands, "and you better tell us the truth. We don't want any lies. Tell us every single detail." She crosses her arms over her chest, and something about this girl gives me bad vibes, "I know where you can find her. I know where she's being hidden." I walk closer to her, "tell us. Tell us where we can find my sister. Who's the asshole that has her?" Her eyes are cold and distant. Something about this entire thing feels off. It feels like she's doing this for a reason of her own, something that can benefit her. There is plenty about this girl that I should find out about. "His name is Alpha Kane." She answers. "I was a part of his pack, but he kicked me out when I tried to protect your sister from him." My jaw clenches, and I'm trying hard not to slam my fist against the wall, "keep going. I want to know everything." "He took her from the Forest when she was out for a run. He has been planning on taking her weeks before it ever happened. He's always had an eye on her. First, he was going to take your wife, Lucy, but he figured that Maya would be the better option to get revenge from you." Revenge? What revenge? I don't know any Alpha Kane, so what the f**k was she speaking about? Why would he want to get revenge on my family when we don't know anything about him? "What have my family done to him?" I ask her. She sighs, "you've killed his father and sister. Ever since their deaths, he's been trying every way possible to make your lives hell. His main one was taking Maya from you." I'm trembling with rage now. "Who is his father? I wouldn't have killed a young, innocent girl. He needs to get his facts checked." "His father was Alpha Eric and his sister Ariana. I think you knew his sister well. Were

you not in love with her?" Lucy gasps at the mention of Ariana, and I glare at the girl. "I was never in love with her. She had me under a f*****g spell. Did she tell her brother that little detail? Does he know that it was his father that betrayed my family first? Everything that we did was because of what his family did to us first. We didn't just randomly decide to destroy his family. They tried to destroy ours first, and now he's called danger upon himself by taking what's ours." I'm unhappy that Lucy has to hear about this now. She should be resting; she shouldn't have to be reminded about these horror stories and people that tried to end her life. I vowed to protect her, and I was not doing a good job at it. "And is she—," Lucas starts but takes a moment to regain the strength to ask. "Is she okay? Did he hurt her? Did he hurt my sister?" She looks hesitant to respond but finally does, "she's alive if that's what you're asking. Is she hurt? Yes, she is. Both emotionally and physically. She is not doing well. He's completely draining her, and I'm afraid that you don't have much time left. If you want to save your sister, you're going to have to follow me. I'll take you to where he has her hidden. But beware, you must come prepared, Kane has a lot of tricks, and if you're not careful, you can walk straight into his trap." She doesn't need to tell us anything else. We are already on our way, getting everything in order, barking orders at everyone. James stops me with a concerned look, "do you think we can trust her?" He asks. "Something seems to be off about her, don't you think?" I took a deep breath, "she does, but at the same time, she could be telling the truth. I'm not going to sit back and watch if there is even the tiniest possibility that she's telling us the truth." Hunter stops us halfway with a concerned look, "I'm not sure that we should trust her." He says. "Did any of you know that Eric had a son named Kane? Weren't you close to his family before they betrayed you? When did he ever introduce you to Kane? I know I've never in my life before known about his son." It's true. I've never heard about this Kane, but I was desperate to find Maya. I was willing to fall straight into a trap as long as there was the slightest possibility that I would find my sister along the way. I didn't care about anything else. "I'm willing to take the chance for my sister," I tell him. "It's unfair of me to ask you to put your men in danger for the sake of my sister; the decision is yours from here but know that I'm grateful for everything you've done for my family so far. We are all grateful and will return the favor in any way that we can if we ever need to." Hunter sighs, "I pledged to help you find your sister, and I keep my promises. I will also join you." Now it was just to gather everyone. There would be a war soon. It was coming. Maya. If this girl is telling the truth. I'm coming for you.

Chapter 25 ~KANE~ I wake up next to Maya; my head hurts, and I know I've had too much to drink. She's asleep, and I can remember only parts of last night. I'm not sure what I said to her or what happened between us. I remember walking into the room and calling for her; I remember that she was trying to console me. I'm not sure how to feel about it. Why would she do that? Why would she try and make me feel better when I already hurt her so much? What kind of heart did this woman have? She stirs next to me, and I can't help but stare at her beautiful face. She's so beautiful that it hurts to look at her. It hurts because I can't believe how much I've done to her, how much pain I've brought upon her. Every time I think about what I've done, I feel this stabbing pain in my chest. I let out a groan and pulled myself out of bed. I kept losing the inner battle, and it was becoming too much. The more I came closer to losing the fight, the more I realized the damage I'd done to us. The more I realize the mess I've made of everything. I did things in a way that it will be impossible for Maya ever to forget the things I did to her; I destroyed it all, and I hate it, I hate everything. I pull at my hair and shove myself out the door. I can't look at her, not when I already feel like so much s**t. I walk into the kitchen and grab a drink from the bottom shelf. "Is that such a good idea?" Dane asks me. I was so lost in my own sorrow that I didn't realize that he was already in here. "Why don't you try and work things out instead of relying on the liquor?" He asks me when I don't answer him. "Maya is a nice girl; she doesn't deserve what you are doing to her. I think you know this now, and I also believe that you care for her; you care for her more than you're willing to accept." Work things out? There was no way that I could. That's the problem. Nothing I do now could make any of this better. I'm about to respond when I'm hit with such a strong force that the bottle drops to the ground; I wince when the glass shatters everywhere. I grip the sides of the counter so hard that my hand is sure to bruise. "What the f**k?" Dane shouts. "What's happening?" "Maya," I growl as I try to catch my breath. "Maya?" He demands with a knowing look. I know that the look of horror on his face must match my own. "f**k!" I shout. "She's in f*****g heat." I pick up another bottle from the lower shelf, and even that falls from my hands when the strength of the force increases. "What the hell are you still doing here?" Dane demands from me. He looks at me as though I've completely lost my mind. "What the hell am I supposed to do?" I ask through gritted teeth. I can barely talk, let alone walk. "I don't f*****g know but don't just stand here. Get the f**k out of here, be in there with her." I don't move for another few seconds, but it's only because I can't seem to find the strength to move. I've never felt this vulnerable and weak in my entire life. As soon as I can, I grip the sides of the wall and sway on my way to get to her. The moment I enter the room, I want to bolt straight back out. I've never felt anything this strong before. My d**k gets hard the moment that her scent hits me. I'm f*****g writhing with the need to take her. But I don't care. I'm not

about to give in to this. I'm not going to let this get to me. I'll have to find another way to satisfy Maya and lessen her pain. Her hair is all over the bed, some even pressed against her sweaty, flushed cheeks. Her hands tighten on the sheets, and she raises her ass off the bed in the most erotic way I've ever seen before. It stirs my d**k in my pants. I shift uncomfortably as I try to fight off the need to f**k her hard against those sheets. Her gaze meets mine, and I can see the need for me in the depths of her gorgeous f*****g eyes, "please," she cries out. "Please stop the pain." I bite my lip so hard that I taste blood. I can't ignore her when she's begging for my help. f**k, I won't be able to ignore her even if she wasn't asking. I take long leaps with shaking legs towards her; I climb onto the bed and cradle her head against my chest. Maya clamps her legs around my waist and wraps her arms around my neck. I can hear how loud I'm breathing; it's hard, f*****g hard to ignore how much I want her right now. I hesitantly grip her waist with both hands and slowly lean into her. Maya meets me halfway, and our lips join in a heated, passionate kiss. My body goes still when she begins to grind her ass against the part that's aching for her. I force my lips away from hers as I fight the urge again. "We need to find another way. We can't risk you getting pregnant." I say the words, but my wolf growls at just the thought of impregnating Maya. I tried to pull away from her, but she gripped my shirt and shoved me back down on the bed. I don't have time to respond as she straddles my lap, holding me in place. My lips part when she begins to rub her p***y against my hardness. Fuck! Why the f**k does this feel so motherfucking good? Maya rips the dress off her body; all she's left with is a black thong. I swallow at the swell of her breasts. I've been dying to have them in my mouth, to get a taste of her sweet juices again. She's left me wanting so much more of her—more than I would ever deserve. "You don't know what you are doing," I growl. "You need to fight it. Fight it before you regret your actions today." Fight it before you make me fall anymore for you. Before I can't fight what I have to do. Before I forget about everything I wanted to do from the moment I knew I wanted to make you suffer. I wasn't sure if I was begging myself or her to find some strength in all of this. Maya ignores me; instead, she sticks her ass in the air and seductively pulls her underwear off her body. "FUCCKKK—," I roar as my restraint is destroyed after seeing her pretty wet soaking p***y. She doesn't stop there; she climbs back onto my lap. She unbuttons my pants and struggles to pull them off. I let her because, damn it, I want this too. She gets rid of my shirt next so that we are both naked in front of each other. I can feel her softness against my d**k and f**k me; I want to sink myself deep inside her, so deep that I won't ever be able to f*****g get out of her beautiful body. I push her hands over her head and turn us over so that I'm on top of her. Maya cries out when I pull her n****e into my mouth and suck hard. I don't stop there; I press my finger into her wet fold, then two fingers, filling her as much as she would let me. I pull my fingers out and

suck on them in front of her; I close my eyes and inhale her sweet scent. This is not enough for me. I want to spread her legs and eat her raw. "Kane!" She cries as her nails scrape my chest. "I need you." I grab her cheeks and press my forehead against hers. "Say it." I roar. "f*****g repeat it. Say you need me, Maya." "I need you; I need you so much." I spread her legs and covered her p***y with my mouth. I lick and suck at her beautiful opening, enjoying every swipe of my tongue and everything it brought with it. I've wanted this for so long. I can't help but growl in satisfaction at finally having a taste of this heaven once more. Maya isn't having any of it; however, she wants something else, and I'm dying to give it to her. I let her climb onto my body once more; I'm left with no words when she grabs my d**k in her hand and positions it against her wetness. I can't do anything but let her have her way; I'll give her anything she asks for right now with how I felt. "Maya," I hiss when she slowly slides down on me. There is a satisfied smile as she rocks her head backward and takes all of me into her body; we fit perfectly together like we were made for each other. But we were, weren't we? I just screwed everything the f**k up, just like I always do. I let her take all that she needs while all I do is watch as she bounces up and down on my d**k. At first, I couldn't believe that it was actually happening; it's hard to wrap my mind over the fact that I'm inside of Maya right now, and it wasn't one of the many dreams I've had of burying my d**k in her. She grabbed my hand and placed them on her breasts. I gently squeeze before sitting up and sucking on them, Maya cries out, and there is no holding me back now. I pick her up while still inside her and slam my d**k into her while she's leaned up against the wall. Her nails dig into my back while I continue to pull out and slam back into her sweetness. I've never felt this way for anyone else before. I've never fit so perfectly with another woman either. She's everything. Nothing has ever felt this f*****g good, and it terrifies me of one day losing this. Maya's lips find mine, and she kisses me with so much passion that I completely lose my mind. I'm slamming into her faster now, and she's crying out from pleasure and need. I bite her bottom lip as I feel myself near climax. "f**k, f**k, f**k!" I roar as I bury my seed deep into her. Maya holds onto me as I empty all that I have, giving her every damn drop of me. We're both sweating from head to toe after we're finished, and I don't try to move out of her. I know how this goes; I know it's only a matter of time before she needs me again. And I don't plan on leaving here until I give her every damn f*****g thing I need to satisfy her and take the pain away. Maya falls against me, and I hold onto her as I guide her back to the bed. She stirs once more, and the cry that leaves her sends me into a panic mood. My d**k immediately hardens, ready to serve her. I begin to move inside her; this time, I'm rougher than before. I need this; she needs this, we both do. Maya holds onto me as I pound into her on the bed. Our body moves in synch with one another. I feel her lips on my neck, and I move my head to the

side to give her access. My eyes widen when she sinks her teeth into my skin; I freeze when I realize that she's f*****g marking me. My blood runs cold, and the sudden realization hits me. Did she f*****g play me? Did she pretend to need me so that she would have the opportunity to mark me? I don't have time to ponder on those questions when I'm hit with the need to mark her too. Motherfucker. "Mark me," she whispers. "Please mark me. Make me yours. Make me yours so that no other man can ever lay claim to me. I will always be yours." Her words throw me over the edge; just the thought of another man having her sends me into a state of anger. A loud growl tore from my throat, and before she could change her mind, I sank my teeth into her. Maya cries out as the bond begins to seal us both together, mind, body, and soul; we were tied for good. I can't believe that I'm doing this and what bothers me more is the fact that I'm enjoying it; I'm happy that I'm making her completely mine. I begin to move against her once more, f*****g her while claiming her. Maya cries out and holds my head tighter against her, pushing my teeth deeper into her body; it's still not enough for both of us. I know what she needs, and I definitely know what I do as well. "Mine!" I roar as my seed flows out of me and into her once more, over and over again, until there is nothing left of me. Maya grips my hair and pulls my head so that I'm now gazing straight at her. "We are mated now." She whispers with determination in her eyes. "The pain you will feel after I leave you will be more than either one of us can bear. But I don't care about my pain; I'm only determined to pay you back for everything you've done to me. I hope that you are prepared for what is to come."

Chapter 26 ~Maya~ It's the following day, and I'm completely drained. Kane and I have been at it since yesterday; I can't count the number of times he's buried his seed inside of me. I blame the mating heat, but I'm grateful for it; I was able to get Kane to mark me in his vulnerable state. It was the best decision I've ever made. I know now that I can hurt him easily, and it's exactly what I plan on doing. I freeze when I feel him lay a soft kiss on my forehead. He's never done this before. I open my eyes, and the look on his face tells me that something is wrong. "Put on your clothes." He orders me, whatever it was that was bothering him wasn't something that could be taken lightly. What was happening? Was it because of yesterday? Was he still angry that I got him to mark me? Somehow I knew that it was something else, something more serious. "What's going on?" I demand. It's time that he told me the truth. "You might be getting your wish today," he tells me, without answering me. Getting my wish today? What was he speaking about? I wait for him to explain more, but he just stands there, waiting for me to dress. I throw the dress over my body, and it's then that I hear a loud howl outside. My body goes

completely still. I know that wolf; he's one of the fighters from our pack. Could this mean what I thought it meant? I've been feeling my brothers' connection stronger today than ever; not once did I think it was because they'd finally found me. I couldn't believe it. Another howl ripples through the atmosphere. This one is angrier than the last. They were signaling that I had been found. They must smell me just like I can sense them. My brothers. My family. They were here? They were finally here for me? "You don't have to look so happy about it," Kane mumbles more to himself than me. He takes my hand in his after my dress is adjusted, and my heart is thumping loudly in my chest as we make our way out of the room and into the hall. My steps are faster than his; I'm racing to see my family again. I can't wait to see their faces. "WHERE IS MY SISTER?" I hear Austin shout as I near the exit. It felt so good to hear his voice again. I thought I would never be able to see or listen to him again. "Bring her out, or we will burn this f*****g place to the ground." James roars. Kane's hands are on my arms as he guides me outside. I think he wants to show my brothers that he's hurting me, but I don't feel any pain; it may look like that to them, but to me, he isn't hurting me. I know how important it is to Kane to make my family believe that he's tortured me. While it was true that he did, many times, things were finally changing between us. Even though that was the truth, it would not change the fact that I still wanted to teach him a lesson for everything he's done. But would I be able to do that with my brothers around? From the look on their faces, they were ready to kill him. As much as I hated what Kane did to me, I didn't want anyone to seriously hurt him. We were now officially mated; his death would destroy me. I look between Kane and my brothers. Both sides were glaring at each other intensely; my body shook with fear from what was to come. No matter what I did, there was no way I could stop the fight. My brothers were too angry to stop anything, and Kane, he hated my family; he hated them with a passion for supposedly killing his family. He may have hated me initially, but I know that things are different now; I can feel it through the joining. He doesn't hate me, he feels a strong emotion for me, and it definitely isn't hate. "Let me go," I whisper to him. He breaks his intense glare with my family and gives me his full attention. My heart breaks while looking at him. I know that we will be separated from today. Maybe he knows the same thing, too; I can feel how conflicted he feels right now. "And why the f**k would I do that?" He asks me. "The longer you hold onto me, the angrier my brothers will become. You need to let me go now." I insist. "Let me go, Kane; let me go before you get seriously hurt." He grabs the back of my hair and pulls my body in front of him, wrapping his arms around my waist, "I'm never letting you go. Your brothers will have to kill me to take you away from me." My eyes widen, "AND THEY WILL DO JUST THAT IF YOU DON'T STOP THIS! Stop it now!" Was this his last blow to my face? Did he want to get himself killed so that I would suffer for the rest of

my life with a broken mate bond? I wouldn't put it past him. Kane was capable of doing the worst things to get his way. He cups my cheek in his hand, "I wish things could have been different for us. I wish your family didn't kill my father and sister. Today was bound to happen; there is no stopping it now. I'm sorry, Maya." Was this his last goodbye to me? He couldn't be serious! "You have one second to let go of my sister before we destroy your entire pack and skin your wolf alive." Austin threatens him. My breath gets stuck in my throat when I feel his hands loosen around me. I can't stop looking at him as he pushes me towards them. I feel Austin's arms pull me into a warm embrace. He holds me for a few seconds before a few members of our pack take me from him and form a circle around me to protect me from the battle that couldn't be prevented. "It took you long enough to find me," Kane shouts, fueling the fire. "You have no idea how much I was able to do to your sister while you went around in circles searching for her. She's no longer the girl you remember; I've taught her how cruel life can be. I've made her suffer, just like you made my sister suffer when you chose another woman over her. Just like you made my dad suffer when you killed him." My body goes still at his words. Did he mean what I thought he meant? There was only one woman my brother Austin left to be with Lucy. And that was Ariana. "She cried herself to sleep, begged me to let her go, begged me to see her family again. She told me that her brothers would never let me get away with it, but none of you came to save her, and I was able to hurt her in the worst ways possible." Kane continues to taunt them. He's definitely trying to get himself killed; there is no question about it anymore. I watch in horror as Austin shifts into his wolf and lunges for Kane's neck. Kane's speed saves him just in time, but that doesn't stop Austin from going after him again. Lucas and James are next, and the three of them corner my mate. Kane's fangs are out as he hissed while my brothers growled at him. Kane's men make an attempt to join the fight but are stopped by Hunter and his men. I'm surprised to see him here, but plenty must have changed while I've been gone. Most of our pack is still protecting me, something I've always been used to. They don't dare try and leave my side, even when the battle gets dangerous. It must be orders from my brothers; they must have told them to protect me at all cost. No one can come near me; anyone that tries is immediately thrown to the ground and dealt with. Even if Kane and his men are powerful, they are no match for the combination of Hunter's men and my brothers' packs combined. One by one, they go down, some killed, some seriously injured. My heart jumps in my chest when Austin's wolf clamps down on Kane's hand. There is blood everywhere as James attacks him from behind. I close my eyes; it's too much for me to see. I can't stand to see this happen to him. I realize now that I love Kane. I love him. I know what he did was terribly wrong, and it's something that he has to pay for; still, I do not want him to die. Marking him and letting him mark me was meant to punish him, but

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I feel like I'm also being punished. I cover my ears as the sound of wolves crying out and men begging for their lives fills the atmosphere. Nothing can stop what happens to my heart when Kane shouts in pain. It's a loud sound that pierces straight through my composure. My eyes snap open, and I see him on the ground with three of my brothers on top of him, all of them attacking at once. They're going to kill him. My brothers are going to kill my mate. Every moment between us flashes before my mind in those last few seconds. I can't let this happen. I can't let them kill him. "AUSTIN!" I shout. He doesn't even acknowledge my cry. "LUCAS!" I scream louder. "Stop it. Please! James!" I try to push through the pack, but they aren't letting me go anywhere. "It's too dangerous, princess." Xander says. "Stay back. We can't let you get through." Kane's hand tightens on the ground, and he gazes up at me. He knows that these are his last moments. I can see the regret in his face as he stares at me. Our gazes lock, and I continue to beg for them to let him go. "Please," I beg. "Let me through. He's my mate. Kane is my mate. If they kill him, I will also die inside. They can't do it. You have to let me through." Xander looks startled by my words; in fact, Everyone in the pack seems completely shocked that I was his mate. "You can smell him on me if you don't believe me!" I shout. "His mark is on my body. I'm his. I'm his mate, and the bond has been completed." Xander let go of me then, and they moved aside to let me pass. I don't waste any time as I rush to my brothers' sides and drop to the ground to cover Kane with my body. I look up at my brothers with tears in my eyes, "please, don't kill him. He is my mate. We are mates." I beg. "I'm joined to him. If you kill him, you will also hurt me." I can see the look of horror that crosses each of their faces, even in wolf form. Austin's wolf sniffs my neck and frowns, confirming what I just said to him. They immediately shift back into human form, and I'm scared of what is to come next. Will they listen to me? Will they not kill Kane?

Chapter 27 ~MAYA~ Austin's face is entirely red with rage; he can't stop looking at the mark on my neck. James and Lucas don't look any different than he does. It's safe to say that I've angered my brothers more than before. I've done the opposite of what I was trying to do, but I couldn't think of anything else to say to make them stop hurting him. Even though they are angrier now, I'm relieved they are no longer trying to kill him. Kane can barely move, and it pains me to see him like this. "This monster is your mate?" Austin asks me. My bottom lip is trembling, but I still manage to nod my head, confirming it once more. I know that he already knows I'm speaking the truth; he's just refusing to believe it. His hands tighten to fists at his sides, and the look he gives Kane frightens me. I'm fearful of what he will do next. I can't stand to see him or any of my brothers continue with what they were doing; I won't let them. "How the f**k can you watch your mate and hurt her so much? Do you have no heart?" He demands from him. "I

can ask you the same thing." Kane spits. I close my eyes; he isn't helping the matter. Why can't he stay quiet? It's like he wants my brother to kill him. Maybe he thought that this was what he deserved. I will not let him get the easy way out. He will hurt just like I did and even more. "There is no way Maya," Lucas says. "He can't be your mate. You're too nice for someone like him. Life can't be that unfair to you." My lips are trembling even more now as I stare at my most understanding brother, "please, Lucas. Look at me. Why would I be this way if he wasn't my mate? He is; every time you hurt him, you hurt me. My heart feels like it's bleeding, just like the blood on his body." "I refuse to f*****g believe that this ass could be your mate!" James adds angrily. "He's a f*****g embarrassment to all males. How can you look yourself in the face after everything you've done to my sister? And you're so brave to sing it out to us like you're so proud of what you've done. You should feel ashamed!" Kane can barely open his eyes; his body is already changing color with the number of bruises he has now. It's hard to look at him like this. I did want to see him suffer, but I never wanted it to be physically; I wanted to hurt him emotionally just like he'd done to me. If only my brothers could understand that emotional pain is a lot more effective than this. Austin grabs the back of his head and picks him up from the ground. "Apologize to my sister." "Austin." I try to stop him, but he doesn't listen to me. "Apologize." He insists once more. Kane ignores him, and I gasp when Austin punches him in the back. "I said to f*****g apologize. She didn't deserve what you did to her! Give her the proper apology that she deserves. My sister has done nothing to you, she's an angel, and you ruined her. You must pay." He grips his neck and I watch in horror as his hands tighten around it, making it hard for Kane to breathe. "Austin!" I scream as I try to pull his hand away from him. "Stop it. I don't want a forced apology; it will mean absolutely nothing. If you want to keep your relationship with me, as your sister, I'm begging you, please, please just let him go. You have me, that's all that matters, I'll be back home, and I'm okay. Please, I'm begging you, do this for me, don't hurt him. You've done enough already." Austin doesn't look happy with my tone, and we both give each other an intense stare-down. He's accustomed to giving me everything that I want, except when it jeopardizes my safety. To him, Kane does precisely that. I know that my brothers are only doing what they think is right; I don't give them wrong. They have a lot of feelings bottled up, and they're finally getting the chance to let everything out. But now I understand how Kane feels; he feels exactly like they do. His sister is now dead, and this was his way of getting revenge. Even though his family was evil and power-hungry, even though they did horrible things and got what they deserved, they were still his family, and he loved them. To him, we are his enemies; we are responsible for what happened to them. He was only acting how my family would if someone messed with one of us. They would also want revenge just like they do now. I'm still a bit

shocked to know now that Ariana and Eric were the sister and father he was referring to. Kane looks absolutely nothing like Alpha Eric and nothing like Ariana. I've never known that Eric had a son named Kane; he's never spoken about him once, nor did he ever introduce us to him; it's almost like he had him hidden all this time. But why would he? Hunter and his men have Kane's surviving men on the ground with chains tied around their hands, the same kind of chains Kane had used on me once before. "Tell me what you want me to do with them," Hunter tells Austin. At the mention of his men, Kane finally shows some emotion. I can tell that he doesn't want to see them die. "They did nothing to me." I plead with my brother. "Do not kill them." A muscle ticks in his jaw; I know my brother; he's trying hard to keep control of his emotions. The only person that could have helped right now would be Lucy, but she's not here. It's up to me to convince him to stop this right now. "Burn this f*****g place to the ground." Austin orders everyone. "And let's get the hell out of here before I lose my mind and get rid of them all." He drops to the ground next to Kane, the same area he had dropped him from earlier, "If you know what's good for you, never show your face in front of my sister again." I'm fighting the need to run to Kane and tend to his wounds. I desperately want to make it all disappear. However, I know that by doing this, I would anger my brothers even more than they already were. I've managed to convince them to leave them all alive and not kill anymore; I don't want to change their minds by showing just how much Kane means to me. They're only leaving now because I'm going with them. My eyes are on him; I can't hide the pain in my eyes; I can't pretend that it isn't breaking my heart. Kane's nails dug into the dirt beneath him, and he never once took his eyes off me. Even when I turn my back to him and begin to walk off with fire blazing all around us, I can still feel his gaze digging a hole into my back. I don't know if my family will ever allow me to see him again after today, but for now, Kane and I will be separated. This was what I wanted all along. To leave him pining for me, to make him miss me and regret everything he's done to me. I've been planning this since the day he broke my heart into a million pieces. I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but it's hurting even more to leave him like this. To leave him with nothing but his life. To leave him while my heart belonged to him. I can't stop the tears this time. Why did this have to happen to us?

Chapter 28 ~One Week Later~ ~KANE~ "You're looking much better," Dane points out to me as he hands me a beer. "They beat you up pretty badly." "Can't say I didn't deserve it," I say to him as I take a sip. After Maya and her family left, everything I owned was burnt to the ground; nothing was left from the fire. It took me days to heal from the deep wounds they'd left on my body. Nothing compared to the wound Maya left in my heart,

however. She knew what she was doing when she marked me and when she let me mark her. She knew that it would f*****g tear me apart to watch her leave. And that's precisely what I did that day; I watched her walk away from me and it f*****g burned. She doesn't know this, but I tried to follow her, I tried to reach her. I forced myself off the ground that day and took one step only to fall straight back down again. I kept doing it over and over again, hurting myself more with the hope of getting to her, of being able to pull her into my arms at least one more time. I kept going until I realized that it was f*****g useless, that she was long gone. She was gone and surrounded by men that would rather die than ever let me get to her again. I knew that her brothers would lock her up even more than they did in the past. She wouldn't be able to walk into the woods unattended again, and she will be given zero freedom. No one else was the cause of this but me. I did this to her; I did this to myself. I made a mess of everything, and it was too late to fix it. "I need to see her again," I tell Dane; I couldn't believe the words even after they left my mouth. I know it would be difficult, almost impossible, for that to happen. "Are you hearing yourself?" Dane asks me. "You want to see her again? And how are you planning on doing that? Every single one of us almost died that day. We are only alive because Maya begged for her brothers to save our lives. Quite frankly, I don't know why she did it; anyone else would have let those men burn us to the ground with everything else. You trying to meet her again will put all of our lives in danger again. If you know what's best for you and everyone else, you will stay away from her." I grab Dane by his collar, "how do you expect me to stay away from her when she's the reason why I'm f*****g breathing right now. She's my f*****g mate. I need to be by her side; without her, I'm going to f*****g lose my mind, and I already am. I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't stop thinking about her. Every night when I close my eyes, she is all that I see. I can still smell her even though she's gone, her scent has not left me, and it's not enough. I need to touch and feel her next to me. I'm dying to hold her in my arms again. She's haunting me, Dane. Haunting me! I need her to fix me, to fix this broken piece of me that she's left behind." Dane quirks a brow at me, "wow, I guess we can see who's the winner here. She did manage to break you, maybe even more than you did to her. But I'm on Maya's side on this one; you did get what you deserve. Now you have to find the courage and live with it. Don't make that girl's life any more miserable than you already did. Let her live peacefully now; the moment you choose to step into her life again, her world will turn upside down. She will have to make a choice between you and her family. It's not an easy choice to make. Let's be honest; her family will never accept you after what you did to her. You didn't make it better when you spelled it out for them. I warned you about your actions; we both know it's too late now." I hate how much he's right, but I will never accept it. I will never accept that I cannot see her again or that I messed things up so

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badly that I've lost the chance to make it better. I miss her. I miss her so f*****g much. I see her everywhere; I do. Every single tear I caused to roll down her beautiful face is locked in my mind. I keep remembering it. It's almost like she's right in front of me, reminding me of why she's no longer next to me—reminding me that I'm a selfish bastard without a brain. Someone that did things without thinking about the consequences of his actions. I hold my head in pain. I've never felt so emotionally scarred in my life; if this is what I put Maya through all this time, I deserve this and so much more. "I will find a way to get to her. Without putting any of us in danger." I assure Dane. At least without putting any pack members in danger, I couldn't ask them to make any more sacrifices for me. Many of my men were dead because of the selfish choices I made; I wouldn't make a mistake like that again. However, I don't mind putting my life at risk to see her again. I meant it when I said I would find a way to see Maya again. This couldn't be the end for us. She must know that I'm never going to give her up. I will keep fighting until she decides to give me a chance again. I know I don't deserve it, but I can't go on like this without her. These past few days were excruciatingly painful. The physical pain was nothing compared to the emotional pain. "Please don't do anything stupid again, Kane." Dane pleads with me. "You barely survived the last attack. Maya's family hates you. You heard Austin when he said to stay away from his sister. I can't force you to do the right thing, but I can at least try and point you in the right direction. It's up to you to choose what you want to do in the end. Just know, I'm always here." I nod my head before taking another sip of the beer. Lord knows this is the only thing that has helped me get through these countless hours without her. I was drowning myself in alcohol, trying to forget the pain. Even now, all I can do is think about her despite having alcohol in my system. I keep wondering if she's okay and doing any better than I am. I keep wondering if she will attempt to meet me. I know that I'm hoping for something that simply isn't possible. She hates me. The only reason she chose to save me was that it would kill her too. I groan and bury my head against the table. Will this pain ever stop?

Chapter 29 ~MAYA~ I miss him. I miss Kane more than I want to admit to my brothers or my parents, or even myself. They've constantly been checking on me these past few days; I've been locked up inside my room, I don't want to see or talk to anyone. I'm worried about him. I'm angry that I didn't try to stay back with him on that day and nurse him back to his healthy self. I'm angry that I didn't stop my brothers earlier. Why did I

wait for them to beat him up so badly? Why didn't I open my mouth before things escalated? There are so many things that I regret doing. I always knew that things would not end happily for Kane and me. I knew that it would be difficult to forgive him for treating me the way he did. However, I know why he did what he did now. I know how hard it must have been for him. I'm stuck between feeling sorry for him and hating him for choosing to hurt me the way that he did. I understood him a lot more now, but I still can't accept what he did to me. There were other ways he could have done things, he didn't have to hurt me to the extent that he did. I know that my family will never let me see him again. They don't talk about him; they don't try and ask about him or the things he did to me. I think they're trying hard to make me forget him though I think they understand that I can never forget him, not when we are bonded together as strongly as we are now. Missing Kane is not the only thing that has been bothering me. I've been sick ever since that day I returned home, at first, I thought that it could be because of everything I saw happen to him; I felt that my body was reacting to knowing that Kane was seriously injured and needed my help. I thought that everything would go away in a few days, but I was wrong; it just got worst. The more I tried to ignore the way I felt; the more my body reminded me that something was wrong with me. It got so bad that I brought it up to Lucy. When she heard my symptoms, she asked me to take a pregnancy test. She has the results, she probably has had it for hours, but she never returned to tell me if it were positive or not. I'm not sure that I want to find out. I didn't want to be pregnant. I didn't want to have a baby born into this world when I wasn't emotionally prepared for it. I always wanted to have a baby the right way, get happily married, and then welcome a child into a happy family. All I had left was a broken one, Kane and I were separated, and I saw no chances of us ever reuniting. We were broken. Incomplete. I felt so alone without him. And being with him would mean that I accepted everything he'd done to me, and I can't do that. I hear a knock on the door and it brings me out of my thoughts. Lucy walks in, but she isn't alone; two of my brothers are with her. It's expected that Lucas wouldn't be here, he must already be back to his new home, something I'm not used to, but then again, there are plenty of things that I'm not used to since I've been gone. Things have changed around here, and I'm not sure how I feel about it. Hunter is here as well with Isabella. Everyone looks concerned, and I think I know why. The results must not be something that any of us wants, not under the current circumstances. "I want you to remain calm," Lucy whispers to me as she rubs my hand. "I didn't want to tell anyone else until you knew as well. That's why I asked everyone to come in here with me." So no one else knew but her? "I had Maya take a pregnancy test after she told me about how sick she's been feeling." She explains to everyone. "Her symptoms matched my own when I first found out that I was pregnant." If I thought everyone looked worried

before, I was terribly wrong. They seemed terrified now. "I think you may already know by me calling you in here that the results are, in fact, positive. Maya is indeed pregnant." She continues. "This may come as a shock to all of you, but please bear in mind that no one is as affected by this as Maya; she needs nothing but all of our love and affection during these hard times." I can see Austin's hands tightening into fists, he's angry, and I'm sure that he wants to go and beat Kane all over again. I would not allow it; I will not allow him to hurt the father of my child. As far as I know, they've kept their distance from Kane and the remainder of his pack. I would see if they were going back there, they would move in large groups. "What did that monster do to you?" Austin asks. I narrow my eyes, "he never forced me to do anything I didn't want to." I assure him. "As I told you, he is my mate. I went into heat; he had to do what he did in order to stop the pain. It's the only reason why this happened." I don't regret it. "She's still very vulnerable; I think we should give her some time to think on her own without us interfering," Isabella says. I definitely need time alone, without anyone trying to comfort me or tell me what to do. I'm not sure how to accept this news. A baby is a blessing; it doesn't matter how they came into this world; a baby will always be a blessing. Austin doesn't listen, however. He's the first to speak up again. "I think we all know what needs to be done. This baby wasn't born out of love. He hurt you, did things to you, made you suffer, mistreated you. Having his baby is not a good idea, Maya. This man does not deserve you, and you shouldn't go through any more pain because of him. You can start your life over again; we will be here with you every step of the way, supporting your every move. Don't let him continue to hold you down. This baby, I don't think that you should have it, and if you do decide to have it, I think that you should give it up for adoption. You're not ready to be a mother." I move away from the window and stare at my brother in disbelief, "what did you just say to me?" I whisper. I'm hurting. I can't believe that my brother would suggest something so horrible to me. Did he think it was easy to give up a baby? He doesn't answer me, but he's looking directly at me. I take slow, controlled steps towards him. I don't stop until I'm a foot away from his body. I want to be near him when I say what I have to next. "You're so quick to tell me to give my baby up. To never see my baby's face, never see my baby grow up into a beautiful angel because of the circumstances under which they were conceived. How would you feel if I told the same thing to Lucy?" I demand. His eyes widen at my question. "Maya—," "How would you feel, Austin? How would you feel if I told Lucy that she deserved better than you after what you did to her? She also had a hard time because of you. Do you think she should have gotten rid of your baby because of it? Would you like to see your baby put up for adoption?" Austin looks speechless as my words hit him one after the next. I know that I'm hurting my brother, but I can't seem to stop myself. I'm so angry that he suggested

something like that to me. "TELL ME, AUSTIN!" I scream. "Tell me if you would like it if I did the same thing to you?"

Chapter 30 ~MAYA~ It's been a few days since my last outburst. Everyone has been avoiding me since then. They check on me, but their visits have definitely lessened since then. I keep feeling like I'm a burden to them; I think they aren't happy because of me. I didn't want to make life difficult for my family. I still missed Kane like crazy. He's all that I can think about. He and our baby, the baby we created together. It wouldn't be fair to keep this information to myself; he had to know that I was pregnant with his baby. I didn't want to be the type of woman that kept my child away from her father. It wouldn't be right of me to do something like that. Kane was passionate about his family; I knew that he would be passionate about his child as well. But there was no way that I would be able to get my brothers to agree for me to meet Kane one last time. They knew just as much as I did that if Kane knew I was pregnant, he would want to be involved in my life. He will want to be there for his child. I knew that much after the way he acted for his father and sister. His family was important to him, just like family is important to my brothers. They were similar in that way. Suddenly, I hear a loud commotion outside, which puts me on high alert. Someone seemed to be shouting, and I'm sure I heard a scream. What was happening out there? I rush out of the room to find the source of the noise. I had to know what was going on and if they needed my help. I see one of the maids with a bowl of water in her hands, and she's rushing to somewhere, "what's going on?" I ask her, stopping her on the way. "Is someone hurt?" "Lucy is having her baby princess Maya." She informs me. Lucy was in labor? I had to be by her side; I wouldn't want to miss this. I may be angry with my brother, but that doesn't mean I'm mad at her; I liked Lucy a lot; she also went through many things that my brother put her through. She may understand what I was going through, though the things Kane did to me were a lot worse. I followed the maid and the first thing I saw was that everyone was inside the room with her; the baby had already been born. They were all laughing, and no one could miss the happiness on both Lucy's and Austin's faces. Seeing them like this makes me grieve for the same thing. I also want to be this happy with my mate as we welcome our baby. Knowing that I may never have something like this breaks my heart. I'm happy for Lucy and my brother; they deserve this joy. I'm still angry Austin suggested what he did to me. I know he may have just said it because he was trying to protect me, but he doesn't understand how much

that hurt me. Why would he ask me to do something like that? I can't help but continue to stare at everyone; they are too busy being happy even to notice me by the doorway. I couldn't do this anymore. I couldn't stay here while everyone lived their happy lives and I had to suffer. I didn't want to make their lives any more difficult. They had their problems in the past, and each of them got over it; it was hard, but they fought their way through. It was my turn to fight and make a better life for myself and my baby. I take one long last look at the family I loved so dearly. I wasn't sure when I would see them again, but I hoped that they would one day forgive me for leaving. I walk back to my room and pull out a pen and paper from the draw. I say one last goodbye to the people I love more than anything else in the world. I told them that I would be okay and I was doing what was best for me; I also asked them not to worry and wished nothing but happiness for each of them. After finishing the letter, I make my way down the stairs. Everyone is still in the room with Lucy, making it easier to leave without being spotted. It's two hours later when I've finally settled into the woods. I know where I'm heading, and it's back to Kane's. I want to see if he's okay; I want to see him one last time. I want him to know about our baby before I tell him goodbye. I didn't see us fixing things right now. I couldn't forgive him just yet, and that's why this was only to tell him that I was pregnant with our baby. I'm almost there, and my heartbeat keeps going faster and faster; I'm not sure what he will do when he sees me again. It's then that I notice someone is following me. I spun around, and there were two women in front of me. They didn't even try to pretend that they weren't following me; it means that they were indeed here for me. They weren't vampires, and neither were they werewolves. I know what they were. Witches. Why were two witches following me into the woods? And how long were they following me for? "Who are you?" I demand. "We are your worst nightmares." The woman announces. As soon as she said those words to me, I felt excruciating pain in my head. It's so painful that I drop to the ground, while screaming in pain. It's the last thing I remember before becoming unconscious. "What do you plan on doing to her?" A woman asks. I keep my eyes closed, pretending to still be unconscious. "Her family killed my sister in that stupid attack I told her not to get involved with. I don't know why she listened to that asshole Eric." The other woman says. Kane wasn't the only one who was out to get us for what we did in that battle against Eric. How many more were coming for us? "I'll wipe her memories and put a spell on her. Anyone that sees her will not notice her as Maya; they will see another face. Then I'll cut off her hair and send it to her family; I'll make them think that she's dead so that they don't even try and save her. I'll make sure that she becomes someone's servant, where she will be forced to work hard for the rest of her life. Her family will never know she's alive, and they will mourn her loss while she will never remember who she is. It will be the best revenge I could ever get for losing my sister.

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They didn't have to kill her, but they did. It's time that they pay for their actions. I was hoping that i***t hybrid would do the job for me, but he grew soft and lost the battle. Now it's up to me to finish what he started." My eyes snap open, and I begin to scream for help. I can't let this happen; I can't let them do this to me. I don't want to forget the people I love; I want to remember everything. My hands are strapped to a table that I'm currently lying on top of, and no matter how hard I try, I can't move. "Hold her head down." The witch tells the other. "I'm happy you're awake to see me do this to you; it makes it all the more special. I can't wait to see your family mourn your loss; their lives will never be the same again. They took someone dear to me; they killed many innocent men and women that day. Did any of you genuinely think that it wouldn't eventually catch up to you? All of your days are numbered; none of you will ever get to live a happy life." "You can't do that!" I scream. "They will never believe you! They will know that something is wrong. My family will keep searching for me, and Kane will know that I'm alive. He will feel it deep in his heart." She laughs, dismissing my words. "Say goodbye to your memories, Princess Maya."

Chapter 31 ~AUSTIN~ "How could Maya do this?" I ask Lucy. "I know I shouldn't have said what I did, but she should have known that I was only concerned about her. She's my sister; I was only trying to protect her. She's been through so much, Lucy, so much, and I haven't been able to be there for her. She must have seen how happy we were with our sweet baby boy; it must have made her think that she was alone. I regret the way I handled everything. Again, I let my anger get in the way of my actions. Again, my stupidity has cost me to push someone I love dearly away from me. Why do I always do this?" Lucy rubs my back, "we will find Maya back. She couldn't have gotten far. You saw how much she's been through, and still, she has proven how strong she is. She's your sister, after all. You may have sheltered her for her entire life, but I see a grown woman now; she knows how to take care of herself. She knows how to stand up for what she truly wants. Give her some time; she may return on her own. We can start searching for her, but I don't think we will find her unless she wants to be found." "I don't know what I will do with myself if something happens to her again, Lucy. I wanted to protect her, but I only made everything worse. I feel horrible. I feel like I'm the worst brother out there. I know this is all my fault; I'm the one that upset her. I'm the one that made her think leaving is the better option than staying in the company of her family. I'm so stupid. She

needed me to be gentle, to understand what she was going through, and instead, I was a dick." Lucy pulls me in for a hug and places her cheek against my chest, "I hate to see you beat yourself up over this. Maya doesn't hate you; she loves you. I'm sure she knows that you were only trying to protect her. You may not have said the right thing, but she knows, just like everyone else, that you were only concerned about her. She knows her brother gets overprotective at times and that he will not intentionally harm her. Trust me, Austin, everything will be okay." James walks in then, and Lucy lets me talk to him. He hasn't been in a good state either since we read the letter Maya left behind for us. We were worried about her. The last time she left, she was taken, hostage. We have enemies lurking everywhere, waiting for the opportunity when we are alone to pounce on us. I have no idea who else has been watching my family. We had many more enemies now than we had a few years back. Our enemies were growing and getting stronger. If we weren't careful, we could lose the fight. I turn towards James, and it's only then that I notice there are tears in his eyes. I've never seen my brother look this distraught before. Something terrible must have happened. Something tells me that it has to do with Maya. Did he find out where she went? Was it somewhere we should be concerned about? Did she go back to that asshole? Would I have to kill him this time for keeping her from us? James wasn't saying anything, and it was making me a lot more anxious. "What's going on?" I demand. "Maya," he gasps like he's fighting for air. The mention of our sister's name turns my body into a panic mood. I'm scared, actually scared of what he's about to say to me. He drops to the ground before me, and it's only then that I realize what's in his hand. There were pieces of clothing on the ground; I knew that it was from the dress she had on her body the day that she left home; it was cut up into tiny pieces. There were also strands of her hair all over, telling me that whoever left these things for us to see had also chopped her hair off. The more I study these items, the more my mood darkens. I grab the note in his hand and read through it thoroughly. The handwriting was not one that I recognized; I had no idea who sent this to us or what they wanted. ' I regret to inform you that your sister is no more. I have repaid you for killing my sister. Have a great life Austin and family! I've left these items that we took from her body so that you can keep them as souvenirs. We aren't as heartless as you people to leave you with nothing like you left us with nothing. If you try to find her body, it's burnt to the ground; I wouldn't recommend you try to search for it because you will find nothing, and you will only be wasting your precious time. Who knows who we will come for next, so be prepared.' The letter drops from my hand; my body feels like it's just been electrocuted. I drop to the ground before James, my eyes wide in shock. My body is shaking, and I can't wrap my mind around this. I can't wrap my mind around the fact that my sister is dead. How could that bastard do this? Why the f**k did I let him live? My entire body shakes, and Lucy

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falls to the ground beside me. She pulls me into her arms and holds me against her. I feel the tears pour out of me in great waves. "He took my sister." I cry. "He took my sister from me, Lucy." I'm bawling her name, begging for her not to be gone. I'm regretting my actions even more now. If I hadn't suggested that she put her baby up for adoption, none of this would have happened. She wouldn't have run away from home and got herself into this mess. This is all my fault. Everything is my fault. My sister is gone because of me. "I'm going to kill him." I roar. "I'm going to kill f*****g Kane!" "How could he do this?" James asks. "How could he kill his mate? How could he kill his own child? We should have never let him go that day. We made the wrong decision by letting him live. Why the f**k did we let him live, Austin? Why?" I close my eyes and see my sister's innocent face. "I'm not going to make the same mistake twice. We will get him this time. I promise you. We will get justice for our sister."

Chapter 32 ~KANE~ "I'm going to see Maya today," I tell Dane. "I can't do this anymore. I need to see her. I miss her so much. I can't stop thinking about her. I thought I would give her a few days to recover and maybe consider forgiving me, but I can't do it anymore. I will see her today. I don't care what her brothers do to me; I want to see her." He sighs, "I know I can't stop you. You will do whatever it is you want to do. Just be careful and don't go looking for a fight. Maybe watch her from afar as you did in the past." I knew that would never work. The moment I saw Maya from a distance, I will need to be near her, to touch her, feel her, kiss her. I needed those things like I needed air to breathe. I felt like I was about to lose my mind for good this time. "They're here again!" Jesse shouts. The fear in his voice puts me on high alert. "What is he speaking about?" Dane demands. "Who's here again?" I rush outside to see what all the commotion was about and I'm shocked to see that Maya's brothers are here again, along with a few other faces that I didn't see the last time they were here. Did they come to finish what they started? It seemed so to me. I searched all of their faces hoping to see Maya amongst them, but to my disappointment, she wasn't there. It must only mean one thing; she doesn't know that they are here; they must have come to kill me in hopes that she wouldn't find out that it's them that did it. I'm surprised that they have that much guts to do that to their own sister. I understood why they would do it, though; I would probably do the same thing if I were in their position. I wouldn't want someone like me to live either. I knew that I didn't deserve to live. The only reason I want to live now is because of Maya. I know that she deserves better, but I also know that it will kill her inside if I die. I wouldn't let that happen to her. I would fight to live for her, to make sure that she's happy. I will do everything in my power to see that happen. "YOU f*****g

MURDERER!" Austin roars and launches himself on me. I threw him off me and stared at him as though he had lost his damn mind. What the f**k was he talking about? Unless something happened to Maya while we were apart, that thought sends my heart racing in my chest. My blood is boiling at the thought of my mate being hurt. Nothing could have happened to her. If something did, I would have felt it! "Did something happen to Maya?" I demand. Someone needed to start explaining before my chest exploded with fear. I was already losing my mind before they came into my camp while calling me a murderer, and now things were becoming worse. Judging by the way they all wanted to kill me with their intense stares alone was enough to let me know that something terrible had happened to her. I was wrong before; Maya wasn't here because she didn't know what her brothers were up to, she was absent because she was in some danger. For some reason, her brothers thought that I was the one responsible. "Why do you act so f*****g lost?" Austin roars. "You f*****g murdered her! You murdered my sister!" His words hit me like a knife pierced straight through my heart. "What the f**k are you talking about?" I demand. "Where the f**k is Maya? Where is my mate?" I roar. My voice rocks the quiet forest as I wait for an answer to my question. "You want to know where she is?" James asks in a sarcastic tone. He walks over to me and throws random things at me, and it takes me a while to figure out what they are. I would know those long strands of hair anywhere; it belongs to Maya. There are pieces of thorn clothing that I can only assume belonged to her as well. I kneel on the ground and pick up each of her belongings; my hands stop by a note. "Did you not write that note?" Austin demands from me. I hesitantly pick the letter up from the ground; I'm terrified of what's written in it. The moment that I read through it, my blood runs cold. I can't believe what's written; I can't believe that it's true. Everything around me disappears; the only things that I can see in front of me are what's left of Maya. Nothing else matters but her. My mind feels blank, and I forget how to breathe. This can't be true. I'm in a state of shock, and I don't know how to bring myself out of it. My heart refuses to believe that she's gone. This has to be a lie. I would have felt it if she had left this world. She couldn't have left me. The last time I saw Maya, she was with her family. How could anyone have hurt her when they were keeping her safe? Were they playing some kind of trick on me? Were they trying to hurt me emotionally? If that were the case, it was f*****g working. Austin grabs me by the shirt, and my body feels numb even when he punches my face. I don't feel any physical pain as he and James begin to beat me just like they did the last time. I don't care about that; I don't care if they f*****g kill me right now. All I want to see is Maya. I need to know if this letter was telling the truth. They didn't seem like they were faking their pain. They were hurting, which meant that they believed this. They thought that she was gone. "Stop it!" A girl I've never seen before screams. She throws her body in front of me while

trying to stop Maya's brothers from hurting me any more than they had already done. I can feel the blood trickling down my face, but that still doesn't bother me. I'm in too much emotional pain to care about being hurt. "Move, Gabriella," Austin tells her. "I have to kill him. I have to get revenge for what he did to my sister. He took my sister from me. Do you understand the kind of pain I'm feeling right now? My sister is gone, and he must f*****g pay!" She doesn't move an inch; she seems serious about protecting me. I don't know why and I don't care right now. "You will have to go through me first; I won't let you kill him." "Will you talk to your mate Arthur?" James asks someone behind us. He walks over to her and stands by her side, "I don't know why she doesn't want him dead, but she has to have a good reason. I will stand by her decision. You will not harm Kane. If this is the wishes of my mate, I will follow them and make sure that it happens." "How can you still support him?" Austin demands. "He killed my sister even though she was pregnant with his baby. He's a f*****g monster, and he deserves to die today. Don't let me hurt you to get to him. He has to die, and I don't care what I must do to make sure that it happens. He did horrible things to my sister, and she still dropped to the ground and begged that we spare his life. Still, he turned around and threw hers away!" Pregnant? This is the second blow to my face. Maya was pregnant with my baby?

Chapter 33 I grab Austin by his shirt and pull him towards me, "she's pregnant?" I ask. "Maya's pregnant with my baby?" "Are you not f*****g hearing me?" he demands. "She's gone. You took her from us. You bloody asshole!" I let go of him and dropped to the ground in defeat. All of the signs point to her being dead, but the mate bond begs me to believe otherwise. It begs me to think that she's still alive but is in some sort of danger. I want to believe it, I really do, but all of the evidence says otherwise. Her brothers' reactions and trust in this letter make me doubt myself. Austin shouts some more hateful comments, and I do not blame him. I can't let them hurt me anymore; however, I need to get to the bottom of this letter. I need to find out what the f**k happened to my mate. I don't believe that she's dead. I can't think that she's dead. If I do, I will not make it out alive. And now they're telling me that she was pregnant with our baby. Our baby! Just the thought of anything happening to both my mate and baby is enough to take all the air out of my lungs. I will murder anyone that caused them pain. Anyone. I cannot let this letter turn me away from finding the truth. There is a high possibility that Maya is still alive and pregnant with my child. I had to find them; I had to find my mate and our baby. I wouldn't believe that I'd lost them both before I could tell them how much they meant to me. How much I love them. Because f**k; I do, I don't think I've ever loved anyone this much before. And I won't sit back and let anything stop me from finding her, from

finding out what happened to her. I pick her hair up from the ground, and I stagger back as I feel the real pain of possibly losing her finally hit me. I've been trying hard to deny that she's gone, but there is a possibility that this isn't a lie. That she has really left me. I fall to the ground and grip the dirt in agony. I want to believe that she is alive, but just the thought of her leaving me and taking our unborn child with her leaves me in so much f*****g pain. "Maya!" I roar. Everyone gets quiet when they hear my cry of agony. "MAYA!" I roar louder than before. Where are you? Who has you? What did they do to you? I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for not protecting you, for not loving you the way that you deserved. I'm sorry that I'm the worst mate in the entire universe. I'm sorry that I was chosen for you when I never deserved you. I'm so f*****g sorry. I can't stop shouting her name in regret and deep sadness. She couldn't have left me. I didn't get a chance to apologize to her, to tell her how sorry I was for hurting her. To tell her how much I regret the choices I made. "Are you seeing his state?" The girl who has been protecting me asks Maya's brothers. "It's obvious that he wasn't the one that killed her. Whoever wrote that note was not him. Is there someone else that you killed for trying to harm your family? Someone's sister? Someone else seems to be out for revenge, not just Maya's mate. It doesn't make sense for him to kill her. You're looking in the wrong place for your sister's killer; believe me, when I tell you it's not here, it's not him; he did not kill her. The longer you stay here trying to destroy the person that's going to feel her loss the most, the more time you're taking away from finding the true culprit." I need to stand up; I need to be strong for Maya. She needs me now. If she's still alive, she needs me more than ever. I pick myself off the ground and look Austin in his eyes, "I swear to you, I would never hurt Maya in that way. I know the terrible things I did to her, and I f*****g regret it; I wish I could turn back time and change what I did. But I promise you, I did not hurt her; I would never hurt her again and especially not in that way. And you may not believe me when I tell you this, but I don't believe that she's dead; I will never believe that she's dead. I feel her connection still. How can you trust a letter and pieces of her hair? I'm going to find out who sent this letter and when I do, they will take me to my mate." And she better f*****g be alive. She has to be. I know I'm in constant denial, going back and forth, but I'm sticking to believing that she's still with me. Austin doesn't look like he wants to believe me, but something must have changed his mind because he orders everyone to back up and leave. When they're all gone, I'm left alone in my sorrow and regret. Dane hugs me and taps my shoulders, "if you believe that she's still alive. She has to be. She's a fighter. Even if they may think they killed her, she will be out there somewhere. I believe it. I believe in her, and you should also. If she were pregnant, Maya wouldn't let anyone harm her baby. She's out there still, Kane. You have to find her. Don't let these people fool you into thinking that she's dead. It's exactly what they want." I'm so

devastated that I didn't realize we have more company. There are multiple men in front of us. Men that I know and dislike intensely. "Look at what we have here." Alpha Jacks. Fuck. Is everyone coming for me today? Is this my payback for what I did to Maya? I'm not getting a chance to recover from the shock of everything that happened since the day she left me; everything is hitting me one after the next, and damn it, I'm tired of it all. "Now is not a good time," I growl. I notice that he isn't alone; he's brought about many men, enough to take us down since there isn't much of us left anymore. The fight between Maya's family and my pack made sure of that. "I don't care if it isn't a good time for you. What's important is that it's a good time for me." He says. "Now!" He shouts. Within seconds, we are all surrounded. My men all have swords pointed at their throats; even the women that we once protected have blades by their throats. I stiffen. I felt helpless seeing my pack in danger and not doing anything to help them. "What do you want?" I demand. "Finally, you're speaking my language." He says. "There are many things that I want from you, but the first one is a bit personal. Do you remember my daughter Giselle? She's quite fond of you even though I disapprove of it. She's a stubborn one and insists that she wants you for herself. My first thought was to kill you, but she stopped me. She begged for your life, you see, and in turn, I will give her what she wants. If you want to see your pack alive after today, you must agree to marry my daughter; if you don't agree, I will kill everyone here without a second thought." There are gasps all around us. "Don't do it, Kane." My people beg me. "Let him kill us. Do not sacrifice your life to give us ours." I swallow, faced with a very difficult situation. I still had to find Maya and protect her. Even if I chose to let him kill all of us, it would mean that I could never find out what happened to my mate. I couldn't let that happen. The man holding a sword to Dane's neck pressed down harder, and the moment that I saw the blood, I knew what I had to do. I close my eyes and accept defeat. I'll have to give in. At least for now until I found a way to get out of this mess. I'll have to let him think that he's won today. I'll have to agree to marry his daughter.

Chapter 34 ~MAYA~ "Why the hell isn't the maid getting up, father?" I hear a girl scream. "Am I supposed to do everything around here by myself?" I slowly open my eyes and blink once, then twice; my mind feels lost. I'm lying on a couch, and the first thing I notice are red curtains shielding the room from sunlight. My eyes continue to scan the area. A young girl with short copper hair is glaring at me; she must be the arrogant girl that woke me up from my sleep. She isn't the only person in here; there is a man with grey hair and an ugly scar above his lip; he's looking at the girl who's still glaring at me. I can't remember anything. I don't know what I'm doing here or who these people are.

"Girl," an elder woman says to me, another person whom I do not know. "We need you to do your work. There are clothes to wash and beds that need new sheets. You can't sleep for the entire day. Get up." "Who are you?" I ask her. "Where am I?" "Seriously?" The girl screeches behind us. "She doesn't even know where she is? Who recommended this girl to you, father? Don't you think I deserve a better maid than her?" "Relax," he answers her. "I'm doing this as a favor for one of my friends. The girl had no place to go, and she had lost her memories. She will need to be trained. Give her some time to learn, and she may be the best maid you've ever had. Besides, it's not like anyone wants to come and work for you. We are running out of willing maids to tend to you; your attitude is driving them away, Giselle; when will you learn? I hope you can learn to have a better relationship with this girl so that she doesn't leave like the others. I'm tired of searching for a new maid every month for you." She is displeased by what he said to her, but she doesn't try and complain again. "Do you not even remember your name?" She asks me. I look at her. Her copper hair is wavy; she has a chubby face with brown eyes; for a girl, she's also very tall. "Hello?" She says, becoming impatient. Oh right, she asked for my name. I don't remember. I try my best to search for it, but nothing happens. I'm not sure what I'm called or where I'm from. I don't even know what I'm doing here. "I don't remember," I say to her. "Whatever, we will just refer to you as 'girl' from now on." She informs everyone as well as me. "So, girl," she says with a wicked sparkle in her eyes. "Today, my future husband will be joining us. I haven't seen him in months, maybe even more. He needs to see how beautiful I've gotten since he'd last seen me. I want you to tend to my nails, hair, and make-up. I know you don't remember much, but you should know that if I don't like the way I look, I will have you whipped. Do you understand?" Whipped? That sounds painful. I didn't want something like that to happen. "Well," she says. "What are you waiting for? Get my bath ready. My dress is already on the bed, along with my jewelry. As soon as my bath is over, you will help me into my dress. Martha will show you where to find everything you may need to fulfill all of my tasks. Now I hate when someone takes long, so please, move quickly and don't make me repeat myself. That will not end well for you." She doesn't have to tell me twice. I'm already moving around, following her orders. However, I pause when I realize that I don't know where to find my way around the house. Martha is suddenly behind me, shouting out orders and giving me directions, just like she said she would be. After her bath, I help her into a short light blue dress. It's a beautiful dress, but I don't think it suits someone like her. I don't know what I'm doing with her make-up but Martha is with me guiding me along the way. I'm not sure why she doesn't just have Martha do these things for her, she clearly knows what Giselle wants to get done. "He's here!" She squeals with excitement. It's clear that she's crazy over her future husband; she can't stop talking about him. "Hurry

up, girl!" She screams angrily. "You need to finish everything before he gets inside. I don't want him to see me when I'm not finished with my hair. It all needs to be perfect for him. Don't you realize how important this is to me?" "I'm trying my best," I tell her, trying my best not to snap. It's hard to be kind with someone like her. She grabs the brush from me and pushes me away. "You're useless." I watch as she hurries out of the room. I try not to roll my eyes and walk over to the window. I'm curious to know what he looks like, her future husband that she can't seem to stop speaking about. There is a black vehicle in the parking area, and I can only assume that he's one of the men seated inside. I wait impatiently for the door to open but for some reason it seems like he doesn't want to get out. I hold my breath for some unknown reason when the door opens slightly. He gets out of the car and the first thing I see is his black shoes, I slowly drag my gaze up his body but I'm not prepared for the man I see. He's no doubt handsome but there is something about him that feels like a punch to my stomach. My heart aches at the look of sadness on his face. He looks like someone that doesn't want to be here. Were they forcing him to marry her? He checks his surroundings, maybe looking for ways to escape from this place. I feel sorry for the poor man. The woman he was about to marry wasn't a nice person. She would make anyone's life miserable. I still don't understand how I ended up in this place. I have no memory, none at all. "What are you doing standing there?" The head maid asks me. "You need to follow miss and make sure that she has everything she needs. There are some fruits on the table in the kitchen. I want you to take it to miss Giselle and her future husband." "There is just one problem," I tell her. "I don't know where anything is." She sighs and prompts me to follow her. It takes us a while to reach the kitchen since it is far, the house isn't a small one. These were wealthy people, no doubt. "Here," she says, pointing to the table she mentioned earlier. "Carry it, and please do not do anything that will anger miss." I think that's almost impossible; the girl seemed to get angry for the simplest things. I couldn't see her not getting mad at me. She would be upset with me for simply walking on the ground. After following her directions, I'm taken to the Giselle and her to-be husband. They are both seated in leather chairs and are deep in conversation. Well Giselle is talking but it doesn't seem like the man is listening to her. He seems to be in his own world. I'm as quiet as I can be while walking towards them; I know that if I'm loud, she would undoubtedly have the worst things to say to me. "What the hell are you doing here?" She asks me when she spots me. "Can't you see I want some alone time with my husband?" His hands tightened against the cup; he must not like it when she calls him 'husband.' Who can blame him? I wouldn't like it either. "We are not officially married." He reminds her gently, though I can tell it's taking all of his self-control not to snap at her. I felt his pain, it was hard not to snap at the girl. I'm positive now that they have something against him. He wouldn't be here otherwise. "I

was asked to bring fruits for the both of you," I inform her, pointing at the fruit bowl in my hand. "Would either of you like some?" The man doesn't even look up at me once; he isn't looking at anyone. His eyes are stuck on the floor like he hates being here and can't wait to get out. I already figured that much, I'm curious to know what they're holding against him to keep him here. It must be something big for him to even consider marrying her. "Can't you see that you're making him uncomfortable?" She asks, even though we both know that her presence is the one that's bothering him, not me. "I'm sorry." I apologize. "I'm sorry that she's so slow. She's lost her memory and maybe half of her brain. She doesn't know anything, and it is probably the worst decision my father ever made. I don't understand how he expects me to have such a low-class maid working for me. I can tell she has zero experience. . ." She continued to ramble on, and quite frankly, I stopped listening, for the man had finally lifted his gaze from the ground to stare at me. My breath gets stuck in my throat. Oh. He's even more handsome up close. And those eyes. Why does it feel like I should remember those eyes?

Chapter 35 I can't remember anything about myself, yet my heart tells me I should know this man. The grief in his eyes grabs my heart; I want to comfort him. I want to fix whatever it is that has him this way. I can't explain why I feel this way, but maybe he can. "Do I know you from somewhere?" I ask him. "Do you, by chance, know my name or where I'm from?" His eyes became perplexed the moment I asked those questions. Did I make him uncomfortable? Should I have not said anything to him? He gets up from the chair and takes a step closer to me; his scent wraps around my body and makes it so damn hard for me to breathe. No one should smell this good to me. I'm drawn to him in a way that isn't right under these circumstances. I feel connected to him, almost as though my heart and body are joined to his. I want to keep staring at him; I want to feel his hands on my body. I feel like I'll die if he doesn't touch me soon. I'm terrified of my thoughts. Why am I so desperate for his attention? I'm happy that he's looking my way, actually overjoyed by this. What the hell is wrong with me? "Speak." He says suddenly. Speak? Wasn't I speaking all along? "What do you want me to say?" I ask him, confused. His strange behavior isn't a turn-off from his handsome features. Instead, it makes him even more attractive. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath; I notice that his hands tighten into fists, and his massive chest expands. I can't help but continue to stare. He's a very beautiful man, it's not a word one may use to describe a man, but it fits him; he is beautiful. "Why the hell are you talking to him?" Giselle screams; I wince at her

high-pitched voice. Again I'm reminded that he is set to marry the witch. He deserves someone better than her. I don't think anyone should be with a woman like her. "He's going to be my husband. Do you not realize that it's not your place to speak to him? Just because my father is doing his friend a favor, doesn't mean that I have to be nice to you. When the hell are you going to learn that you're not one of us and you're below? I think it's time I punish you for your stupid actions. It's the only way that you are going to learn." She shouts at me. Punish me? I step back from the beautiful man, not wanting to anger her any further than she already was. She screamed for one of the servants to come forward. "Yes, miss," he greets her, his body is trembling, and I have to wonder if this is how she treats all of the people that worked for her. This would explain everything her father said to her; she kept pushing the maids away until they quit. "What can I do for you?" "Bring the whip we use for punishments." She orders him. My eyes widen at her awful words. Was she serious about whipping me? The palm of my hands begin to sweat, and I try not to show how terrified I am. When the servant returns, she grabs the whip from his hand. Her lips are pressed tightly together in a thin line, and I can see how pissed she is at me. Her hands tighten on the whip as she positions herself to beat me with it. I close my eyes, waiting for the impact, but nothing happens. When I open my eyes, I'm shocked by what I see. The handsome man's hands are holding the whip in midair. Did he truly stop it from hitting me? Why would he do such a thing? He doesn't seem like he knows me even though my body tells me he should. So then why would he try and help me from the woman he's going to marry? If I thought Giselle was angry before, I was terribly wrong; the vein in her forehead looks like it's ready to pop. "Why do you want to hurt this girl for only speaking to me?" he asks her. "Did you not say that she's lost her memory? Then how can she tell what's right and wrong? You can do better than this." She pouts at him, "but Kane." she complains. "She needs to learn. I can't let her get away with everything. That's the way I teach all of my maids, and it's always worked in the past." The tray drops from my hand at the mention of his name. "Seriously?" Giselle shouts. "Is there nothing that you can do?" "I'm sorry." I apologize. "I'll leave before I spoil your evening any more than I've already done." Giselle rolls her eyes, "finally, you're using your brain for once. Don't return unless I come looking for you. Do you understand me?" I nod my head but not before taking a last look at Kane. He isn't looking at me anymore; he's returned to staring at the ground, lost in his world. It's so hard to turn away from him; for some reason, I want to hug him and tell him that everything will be okay. I can't stop wanting to do that for him. I finally find the strength to turn away from the handsome man that would soon marry Giselle. This was not right. I should not be feeling this way for a man about to marry the woman I'm working for. I should be focused on trying to remember who I am. The longer I stay without remembering who I

am, the longer I will be forced to be here with that awful woman. Lord knows that I can't wait to leave. I didn't like it here, and I've only been here for a day. Or maybe more, depending on how long I was unconscious. Who was the person Giselle's father was doing a favor for? Where did he find me, and how did he know I can't remember anything? There were so many questions, and I wish someone would find me and explain what happened to me before I lost my memory. I wish someone could explain why I felt this strange connection to Mister Kane. I wasn't even sure how to explain what I felt while being near him; my emotions were conflicted about something; I would think that if I had known him before, we must have had a love-hate relationship. It's the only explanation that I can think of. I open the door to Giselle's room. There were still things for me to get done in here. I don't get to start. I jump when the door slams behind me. "Look here, you little b***h," Giselle whispers. "I saw the way you were looking at Kane. He's mine. I've wanted him for a long time, and I finally have my hands on him. If you think that I will let you come anywhere near him or try to steal him from me, you're very wrong. I will never let another woman take him from me for the second time; it's the first time that he's showing me any attention, and I'll kill anyone that tries to get in the way of that. Do you understand me?"

Chapter 36 ~KANE~ I f*****g hate myself right now. I hate the person I am. I hate the person my father raised me to be. I'm the biggest asshole out there, and I'm ashamed of the things I've done. I hate the things I did to Maya; I hate that I made her cry and forced her to hate me. I hate that I broke an innocent, sweet girl, a girl that was mine, a girl that would have made me happy. I hate that I lost her before I got a chance to tell her how much I loved her. But more than any of that, I hate what I just did. I'm pissed at myself. I had no idea where my mate was, yet here I am, agreeing to marry a woman that made me want to f*****g kill myself. What was worse is that I felt something for her f*****g maid. The moment I lifted my gaze and looked into the girl's beautiful green eyes, I felt lost. She caught my attention, even more when she opened her mouth to speak. Her voice was very similar to Maya's; it was like music to my ear. It captivated me; I wanted to hear her repeatedly talk just so that I could listen to her. I was supposed to be searching for my mate, but instead, I'm caught up in this s**t. I'm begging a girl to speak to me while agreeing to marry the enemy's daughter. When the f**k did my life turn into such a mess? I knew that this was part of my payment for what I've done, especially to Maya. She never deserved the things that I did to her. What kills me inside is knowing that she risked everything to save me; she went against her family, the people that loved her, to protect me. She kept me safe even after I hurt her. She was always too f*****g good for me.

Even now, I'm letting her down. I should be out there looking for her, not feeling a connection for Giselle's maid. Still, I didn't understand what made me feel that way for her. The moment Giselle tried to whip the girl, I lost my damn mind. I didn't want to see her get hurt, which makes no sense. I knew that Giselle was overreacting, but I didn't have to get involved, yet I did. I did because it hurt to see the girl be punished just for talking to me. At least, I believe that's why it bothered me so much. Maybe that's what I'm telling myself to feel okay about what I just did. I saw Giselle run after the girl; I wanted to run after her to stop her from doing anything to the poor maid but figured I'd already done too much. I didn't want to get on her wrong side. She was a daddy's girl and would go running to her father; he would undoubtedly make things worse for me. I didn't want to risk anything happening to my men because of my actions here today. I needed to move sharply to protect the people I cared about. I had to be good to Giselle no matter how much it killed me inside. The girl made my blood crawl, and that was saying a lot. If she told her father I was sticking up for a maid, he would threaten to kill my pack members, and I may even put the girl's life in more danger than it already was in. I couldn't let that happen. I didn't make these sacrifices to watch my men get hurt any more than they already were. Alpha Jacks had them all imprisoned in his dungeon. I couldn't see them, even if I wanted to. He wouldn't let me. Not until I proved to him that I was indeed serious about marrying his daughter. This was all just a huge pretense, of course. I wouldn't marry her, I promised him I would, but I would do everything to ensure it didn't happen. I could never marry another woman while my pregnant mate was in danger. I couldn't marry someone when my heart belonged to Maya and only her. I would push anyone away that tried to get in the way of what I felt for her. Even if Maya weren't alive, even if what the letter stated was true, my heart would always belong to her; I would never let myself feel for another woman but her. She was the only woman for me, and I meant that. I meant it with my entire being. No woman will ever take her place. After everything I put her through, the least I could do for her was make sure that she was the only woman in my heart. I had to find a way to postpone the wedding, to give me as much time as I needed to find out what happened to Maya. I didn't know how to get Giselle to provide me with time; I needed to make her think that waiting was the best thing for us. But what could I say to her? Why would she postpone the wedding? She was desperate to marry me; I knew that much. She wouldn't want anything to get in the way of the marriage. I had already heard her plans, and I wasn't happy about it. She wanted the wedding to happen in one week. How the f**k would I be able to find Maya if the wedding was in one week? That would be impossible, especially when I had no idea who had taken her and for what reason. That wasn't exactly true now that I thought about it. The person in the letter claimed that it was payback for killing their sister. It meant that I

had to find out who were all the women Austin and his family killed. It will narrow down my search. Why didn't I think about this before? But how do I know that the person didn't write that letter to throw Austin off in the wrong direction? To make Austin think that I was the one that killed Mays since almost everyone knew by now that Austin and his pack killed my family. My body goes stiff when I see Giselle making her way back to me. Her eyes light up the moment she spots me, and it makes me sick. I don't know how much more of this I can f*****g take. "I'm sorry if I took too long. I just had some things to discuss with Martha." She apologizes. I bite down on my tongue when she sits too close to me, so close that her legs rub against mine. Just the thought of another woman this close to me makes me want to throw myself into a f*****g river and let the water swallow me whole. Giselle doesn't realize just how much I hate this. She's too busy enjoying being near me that she doesn't care how I feel about it. I had to think of something quickly, anything to help me postpone this damn thing. "Where were we?" she asks me. "There are so many things I want to discuss about the wedding. We need to decide who we are inviting and who we are not. My father has plenty of friends; I doubt we want all of them there. Though, I do want everyone to see how handsome my husband is. None of the women that know me will ever believe that you agreed to marry me. They will see for themselves that fairytales do exist. All of my friends know how much I've always wanted this. I told them all that I would not marry unless it were you. And now my wishes are finally coming true." "I want to talk to you about the wedding," I tell her. I don't know where I'm going with this, but I've brought it up; now I have to go ahead with the plan. "What's wrong?" she asks me, already on the defense. "If you think that you can change your mind about this wedding so quickly, Kane, think again, I will not let you do this to me after trying so hard and planning every damn. . ." "Shh," I shush her. "I never said that I'm calling the wedding off. I want to discuss a few things with you. That's all." "Oh," she whispers as her eyes light up some more. "You should have been more clear about it. You almost gave me a heart attack. You have to know just how much I care for you and want you. I've been in love with you since the first time I saw you, Kane. This is a dream come true for me. I want to be the woman that will make you the happiest man alive. I will do anything to see you happy." My jaw clenches. I don't want to listen to her say things like that to me. It only reminds me of Maya. "I want this to be special. I don't want to rush this marriage with you." I say to her. She bites her lips and gives me an annoyed look, "it's not rushing, Kane. Did you not hear how much I've wanted you? I've wanted you for years, so how could this be rushing? I've known I've wanted you all along. Not once did I ever look the other way or want anyone else. It's always been you. I've been waiting for this day since the first time I met you. I want this, and I don't want to wait." I force myself to take her hand in mine; it helps to distract her. She looks thrilled

that I'm touching her with my own will. I try to hide how much I hate this. I need to pretend that I want her; she has to believe that I'm not thinking about anyone else but her. "Please, Giselle, this isn't about me. I'm doing this for you. I'm thinking about you. It's unfair of me to rush this marriage; we should take our time to get to know each other more. What would people say when they see how quickly you marry me? Give me time to date you properly. I'm not saying no to the marriage; I'm just asking for more time than just one week. It's not enough time for us. I want to take you on fancy dates give you the chance to get to know me more. I'll tell you everything that you want to know. I will answer you truthfully. I'm just asking for that extra time. Will you please give that to me? Can you find it in yourself to do that?" She looks conflicted about what to do. I can see that she considered it however. I can already tell that I've succeeded. She wants to go on dates with me; she wants it all. I'm happy that something is finally working in my favor. I hated speaking to her in kindness when I disliked the girl so much. Both she and her father knew that I wouldn't be here today if they weren't holding my men captive. I knew that this was my instant payback for what I did to Maya. I would gladly welcome my punishment if I weren't so desperate to find Maya and protect her. I feel myself relax a little when she nods her head slightly, "I am willing to go on a couple of dates with you before our wedding. I want to get as close to you as possible; I want to know everything about you. Nothing will make me happier." I try not to show my obvious disgust with just the thought of being closer to her. "Thank you for giving us a chance at dating and getting to know each other better," I tell her. She smiles and throws her arms around me. I stiffen as her scent hits me. It's nothing like Maya's; in fact, it makes me sick to my stomach. I never thought there would be a day that I would be forced to marry a woman I couldn't stand. I never thought that I would ever be brought to the ground like this. I knew when Maya's family found me, they would do everything in their power to hurt me, but I was hoping for death; I never once thought that Maya would protect me from them. Now I'm left with the pain and memory of all the s**t I've done. I had to find a way to free my men quickly; I don't know how much longer I could stand being by this woman's side while I knew nothing about the whereabouts of the woman I loved

Chapter 37 ~MAYA~ I couldn't believe that Giselle had just threatened me over the handsome man she was supposed to marry. What was I supposed to do whenever I was around them? Was it even possible for me to ignore Kane? He didn't seem like the type of man you could easily overlook. The moment he walked into a room, it didn't matter what room it was; he would catch anyone's attention. He had this dominant aura about him, which seemed to suck me in. Everything about the man screamed masculinity and s*x; it

was hard to stop thinking about him; how hard would it be to avoid him? Even now, when I wasn't in front of him, I couldn't stop dreaming about him. He was on my mind constantly—this beautiful man did not deserve to marry a woman like Giselle. I know that I knew nothing about him but one look at him, and I knew this much. No one should be forced to marry someone they didn't want to be with, and he didn't want to be with her. There was one thing that still confused me. Why did he ask me to speak earlier? It's almost as though he wanted to hear my voice. Did he like the sound of my voice, or did it upset him? Somehow I believe that it was the latter; he didn't seem happy when I spoke the second time. Instead, he seemed to return to his state of depression or whatever state he was in. The man always seemed to be in another world, like he was thinking about something or maybe someone. I wanted to ask him what was wrong. I desperately wanted to know why he looked so sad all the time. No one should look that depressed—especially not someone that looked like him. With a face and body like that, he should be smiling, not frowning and acting like he didn't want to live anymore. I can only imagine the number of women that threw themselves his way to catch his attention. Judging by the way he treated Giselle, he probably wouldn't give his attention to just anyone. He was perhaps the kind of man who focused on what he wanted. . . on the woman he wanted. What would it feel like to have his full attention? To know that he wanted you? To see him gazing at you with his gaze full of desire? I shiver at the thought, something about Kane staring at me like I was the only woman in the world had my heart doing little flip-flops. I try to force my mind back into reality. I shouldn't be thinking this way about him. I was already threatened for just speaking to him; what would Giselle do if she knew what went on in my mind whenever I thought about him? I jump a little when she walks back into the room. "You're coming to a picnic with Kane and me. I need someone to wash our hands and prepare the food and drinks." She informs me. Wash their hands? Didn't they have hands of their own to wash their own hands? I knew that Giselle just wanted to make my life miserable. After all, she saw me practically drooling over her to be husband. I'm confused why I'm the one she asked to do this. If she didn't want me around Kane or saw me as a threat to her relationship with him, why would she choose me to attend the picnic with her? Couldn't she take Martha? I knew she couldn't take any other maids because there weren't any more maids willing to work for her. According to her father, she'd driven them all away. That would explain why there weren't many maids around here; the few in the house tended to Giselle's father, not her. "Should I get dressed for the picnic?" I ask her. I wasn't sure what was this old thing that I was wearing; it was messed up badly with dirt and other things I didn't want to ask about. "What's wrong with what you're wearing?" she asks me. "I don't want to spoil your date looking this dirty. Kane may feel uncomfortable and may not eat properly because of me.

You won't either. I'm just asking for clean clothes. That's all." She rolls her eyes and walks out of the room. A few minutes later, she walks in with a dress in her hands. I didn't think there existed a dress this ugly. It was more hideous than the dirty thing I was wearing now. Did she search for the most awful dress for me to wear? I can see in her eyes that she's satisfied with my reaction. She deliberately brought a dress like that for me. It's a yellow and white striped one that would cover my entire body; it looks like a curtain, not a dress. I'm convinced that she had that dress stocked away for a moment like this. I took it from her and got changed as quickly as I could. I didn't want her to complain to her father; she already hated me, I could tell. I don't even bother looking at myself in the mirror; I knew how awful I would look to anyone that saw me. "Took you long enough," she complains when she sees me. "Come help me zip this dress." She's chosen something absolutely stunning for her to wear. Of course, she would; she wants to look the best for Kane as she enjoys his eyes on her alone. It's a gorgeous short white dress that complimented her figure. After helping her get dressed, we both make our way outside, where Kane is waiting for us. His body stiffens the moment that he spots us. However, I don't think Giselle is the reason for his strange behavior; something tells me that it's because of me. It seems like he doesn't want me to be here. I'm hurt at his apparent rejection of my presence. I have no idea why it bothers me this much, but it does. Could I have misread him all this time? Could he be interested in Giselle and was looking forward to having some alone time with her? Or was it this hideous dress that made him uncomfortable around me? I'm not sure what's the reason, but I can't get rid of the unsettling feeling in my chest at his reaction. I want to walk over to him and demand why he's looking at me that way. Why does he look like I'm the worst person ever to walk the planet? He almost looks like I make him sick. I shake my head; maybe I'm reading too much into this. "Aren't you going to open the door for me, Kane?" Giselle asks him. A muscle ticks in his jaw, but he quietly obeys her and opens the door, "thank you, sweetheart." She tells him with a bright smile. I get into the back of the vehicle; I'm not sure how I'm even allowed in the same car as the two of them; I would think Giselle would want me to travel in a separate vehicle since I'm not 'good enough' to be in here. "I know the perfect spot for the two of us to go," she tells him. "We will have the most romantic getaway; you'll wonder why you weren't with me from the start. I have always been the perfect woman for you, no one else; I'm happy that your eyes are finally opening." I can't believe that I have to sit here and listen to her. She keeps mentioning weird things like that. Does this mean that Kane belonged to another woman before her? And if that was the case, what happened to the woman he was with first? Giselle seemed like the kind of person to get rid of anything that prevented her from getting what she wanted. I wouldn't be surprised if she'd done something to the girl Kane was with before

her. Kane doesn't say anything, but I can sense his anger from all the way in the back here. Giselle seems oblivious to his reaction, or maybe she also feels his anger but chooses to ignore his feelings. She doesn't seem like she cares for Kane; she more looks like she's obsessed with getting whoever or whatever she wants. And she no doubt wants him. After driving for almost an hour, we finally reached our destination. It's a beautiful privately owned garden, according to Giselle. There were dozens of roses and a few other flowers I don't know the names of; they were laid out everywhere in many different colors, and whoever was in charge of upkeeping this place did a beautiful job at it. "Don't you just love it?" She beams up at him. Kane doesn't even look at her; he isn't even staring at the garden. He's looking at the ground again like he usually does ever since I first met him. Again I'm tempted to find out what has him this way. I want to try and make it all better, but I know it's not my place. I also know that Giselle may kill me for being too nice to him. I should mind my business and focus on other things that needed my attention. It was hard to do that when my body begged me to look his way and make him see me, though. I had no idea why I felt like this. "What are you waiting for?" Giselle asks. "The blanket is not going to spread itself. And the fruits need to be laid out neatly on top of it. Can't you think to do these things on your own without me asking you to do it?" I quietly do as she says. Within a few minutes, I've set everything up nicely for them both. "I don't know why my father got someone who works this slow." She complains as she sits down on the blanket. Kane doesn't look like he wants to sit, but after Giselle insists, he does. "I want you to wash our hands." She orders me. "And don't take forever to get the water as you do for other things." I try not to roll my eyes as I grab the mug of water and walk towards her. I absolutely hate this woman. If I had a choice, I would leave this job just like the other maids before me. "Hurry up!" She screams. Kane looks irritated; I'm not sure if he's irritated with her or me. It could be the both of us. An idea crosses my mind just then; I can get my little revenge in sneaky ways. I pretend to slip on a rock, and the water goes crashing into Giselle. Her scream echoes throughout the quiet forest, and I try my best to hide my smirk. I have to pretend like it was a mistake and not my intention to ruin her date. "I'm so sorry," I apologize. "I slipped on a rock because I was trying to get back to you quickly. I hope you can forgive me!" She stops rubbing the cloth on her dress and lifts her gaze towards me. She narrows her eyes as she picks herself off the blanket and walks with slow steps towards me. I walked backward, not sure what she was planning on doing. I'm at the edge with nowhere to run to, the lake is right behind me, and if I move one more time, I'll surely slip right in. "You did that on purpose, didn't you?" she demands. I shake my head in denial, "I told you that I slipped. It was an honest mistake, and it won't happen again." She laughs, "do you really think that I'll fall for that? Let's see how you like it when your dress gets soaked!" Giselle

pushes me into the stream, and my eyes widen; it's deeper than I expected it to be. I try to swim, but I'm not sure that I can; I don't know if it's that I can't remember or if I didn't know how to swim in the past. Either way, I can feel myself drowning. I gasp and shout for help. Kane jumps in front of me and pulls me into his arms, preventing me from drowning. His warmth helps calm my nerves. I can't stop coughing; I've already swallowed some water even though Kane acted quickly to save me. I wrap my arms around his neck and hold on for my life. "You're safe now," he whispers as he pulls me closer to him. I can feel his heart pounding against his chest, and it makes me wonder if he was scared that something would have happened to me. His hair is soaking wet, and so are his clothes. I didn't think he could look any sexier than before, but he does; the water dripping from his hair onto my chest is something straight out of my fantasy. I can feel our wet bodies pressed up against each other, and I know that my cheeks must be red right now. I wonder if he can also feel how quickly my heart beats for him. He may think it's because I'm terrified that I almost drowned, but it has nothing to do with that. He walks out of the water with me in his arms, and I can't help but feel the strong connection between us; his hands on my body feel electric. There are sparks everywhere, and I know that I want much more than this. Curse my body. It doesn't know when to stop. Not when it comes to the man in front of me. He finally looks down at my face, and I think I forgot how to breathe. "Are you okay?" He asks me as he searches my face. "KANE!" Giselle shouts, reminding the both of us that we aren't alone. Oh crap.

Chapter 38 ~GABRIELLA~ I can't get the image of Kane out of my head. It's not because I like him; no, I already have a mate. From the moment I saw him, I felt something for him. I couldn't stand to watch anyone hurt him; seeing him break brought pain to my heart. It's the reason why I stopped Maya's brothers from hurting him. It was true that I knew Maya would hurt more after knowing her brothers killed her mate, but that wasn't my only reason for stepping in. I couldn't stand seeing anyone harm that man. He was already in a lot of pain from learning that his mate was dead. Austin and James were too blinded by the pain of losing their sister that they couldn't see what I saw. He was devastated; he looked like his life had been taken away from him. I've seen that look before, and it's from a man who was in love, and his heart had been ripped out of his chest. There is no doubt in my mind that Kane loved Maya. They were mates; after all, no one could fight the mate bond; I would know after everything I've gone through since the first time I met my mate, the love of my life, Arthur. He is looking at me right now, trying to read me, trying to understand me. I'm happy that he took my side today, but I expected no less from him. After our troubles of fighting to be together and finally making it

happen with the help of our friends, life had been good to us. I've never been this in love. "Why did you stop Austin from killing Kane?" Arthur asks me. I know that he's been waiting a while to ask me this question; it's been on his mind a bit now; I was waiting for it. I also know that this has been bothering everyone else around me. They were frustrated by the fact that I chose to protect the man they thought killed Maya. I couldn't control my actions even if I wanted to. The moment I saw him, I felt an instant bond with him. Not the kind one would think for a lover but the kind one would think for their family. He felt like family to me. Everything about him screamed to me that I should know him. Seeing him in pain with no one by his side to comfort him was torture. So many things about him stood out to me, so many things that felt familiar. There was also the apparent fact that he was a hybrid like me, half-vampire, half-wolf. He also shared a close resemblance to me; even though no one seemed to recognize this, I did the moment I saw him. I knew that he's supposedly Alpha Eric's son, but I don't think so. I think there is a good chance that Eric lied to Kane about him being his son. I believe, and I'm almost one hundred percent sure, that Kane is my long-lost brother. The brother that was separated from me, my twin. When we were taken from our parents, we were separated, and while my parents found me, my brother was never found. . . Until now. Everyone seems to think that he killed Maya, but I saw the look on his face when it was mentioned that Maya could be dead. There is no way that he faked that reaction. His life fell out of his body the moment he learned that. He looked like he didn't have a reason to live anymore. Austin and his family were too blinded by rage and emotional pain to see this. They hated Kane with a passion for everything he's done to Maya. But he was already paying for all the wrongs he'd done. I could see that clearly. He was just as heartbroken as they were with the news of what happened to Maya, maybe even more. She was his mate, after all. He did hurt her in the past, I know this from everything I've learned of the matter so far, but if he wanted to kill her, I believe he would have done it a long time ago. He tortured her, but the truth remained that Kane did not once try to kill Maya the first time he kidnapped her. If he was planning to do it all along, why did he choose to do it now when his pack was almost wiped out? I knew that I was right. Kane did not kill Maya; he did not kill the woman he loved. "Gabriella?" Arthur calls out to me once more, reminding me that he'd asked me a question that I was yet to answer. "You're acting strangely. Do you know Kane from somewhere? Were you two friends? Did he help you take care of orphans? I can't think of any reason why you'll protect someone like him. It's unlike you. You don't protect murderers; you've never done anything like this before." I take a deep breath and face my mate, "I think that Kane may be my long-lost brother." Arthur's face turns to shock at my words; he is silent for a long time before he finally gets the strength to speak. "Your long-lost brother?" he asks. I nod and take a few steps

towards him, "I didn't want to say anything before to anyone because I have no proof. The only explanation I can think of is that he's a hybrid and shares similar physical qualities to me. That's all the proof I have to offer anyone right now. Until I find out more about him, I'm afraid that I can't tell this to anyone else. I don't want to make such a strong claim, and it turns out that I'm wrong in the end. All I know is that my heart tells me it's him, he's my brother, and I must protect him. I won't let anyone hurt him, not Austin, James, or Hunter; no one will hurt my brother. I will tell my other siblings about this, but I do not plan on telling my parents until I find all the proof I can get. When I do, everyone will know the truth. Everyone will know that Kane is my brother." Arthur sighs and leans over to kiss my forehead, "if you believe that he is your brother, I will help you protect him. But I'm afraid that will be difficult. I've gotten word from Austin that Kane was ambushed. We don't know from who, but there is nothing left of him or his people back where he lived. It's believed that whoever ambushed them has taken them for enslaved people; that's all we know for now. As you know, Austin and his family couldn't care less what happened to Kane. We may be the only ones willing to free him unless we can convince the others to help us." I was not angry with Austin or his family; what Kane did to Maya initially was wrong. Even though he did it to avenge Eric's death, it didn't make what he did any better. The important thing is that he realized his mistake and was willing to make up for the wrong he did. Whoever took him when he was at his lowest, they were nothing but cowards. I will find them; I will find out who took my brother and when I do; I will make them pay.

Chapter 39 ~KANE~ Fucking hell. Of course, I had to do something like this to mess everything up. I told myself that I would keep my distance from Giselle's maid, but yet here I was jumping into the water to save her like some knight in shining armor. And I chose to do it while the girl watched. I was genuinely asking for trouble. The look on Giselle's face tells me that I'm f*****g screwed. I was not only making things difficult for myself and my men but the innocent girl still in my arms. I couldn't seem to find the strength to let the girl go; even now, I'm tightening my hold on her. Like I'm afraid I will lose her if I let go. I'm even terrified of what Giselle would do to the girl; she just shoved her into a f*****g lake a few minutes ago! Fuck this s**t. I'm finally losing my mind. I didn't think I could get any angrier with myself, but I've managed to outdo myself this time. I stare at the maid, taking a long good look at her. From her short red hair to her startled green eyes, she is undoubtedly beautiful but nothing compared to my Maya. So then why does my heartbeat increase whenever she's around? Why can't I stop myself

from trying to get closer to her any chance that I get? What is it about this girl? Why does she make me react so much to her presence? Why can't I ignore her like I would any other woman that wasn't Maya? And whenever she speaks. It's almost like heaven has opened its gates and given me a taste of paradise. It doesn't matter what comes out of her pretty mouth; it's like I'm hanging onto every word, as long as she's the one who's speaking. Even now, with her tiny arms around my neck, I can feel a powerful attraction to her. The kind of attraction that begs me to spread her legs and bury myself deep within her. To get lost in her sweet honey and never come out again. I'm sick and worthless; I know that. Only a sick person will think dirty thoughts when their mate is missing and presumed dead. I keep doing things that remind me of why I'd lost Maya in the first place, and for some reason, I can't seem to stop myself. "Why on earth are you still holding onto him?" Giselle screams at the girl in my arms. I don't even know her name, and it shouldn't bother me this much that I don't know what to call her. Her eyes widen, and she removes her arms from around my neck. I gently place her feet back onto the ground, and she steps away from me, putting as much space between us as possible. I hate to admit it, but I feel the loss of having her body wrapped around mine. My heart pounds against my chest as I try to figure out what the hell is wrong with me. I have no explanation of why I feel this way for a woman that isn't my mate. Even my wolf is happy around her. It's driving me insane that I don't have the answers I'm searching for. Giselle walks up to her angrily, "are you trying to mess everything up before my wedding?" I clench my jaw angrily; I don't like anyone speaking like that to her, another emotion that makes zero sense to me. She then turns to me, and her anger fades within seconds. She walks over to me and wraps her arms around my body. I stiffen at the contact. How do I respond like this to her touch, but when it's her maid, I totally bask in it? I knew that Giselle's unruly behavior made me dislike her while her maid was somewhat of an innocent young girl. . . but that couldn't be the only reason. There was so much more that I couldn't seem to understand about this entire situation. I felt like there were so many missing puzzles. Why am I so attracted to the girl? What was it about her? Why couldn't I get her out of my f*****g mind? An image of Maya's beautiful face crashed into my mind; my chest expanded as I tried to fight the emotions that rushed to my heart. It hurts; it f*****g hurts so much. I've lost her, I don't know where she is and the pain she had to go through without me, I've failed her, I've failed her over and over again. I was the one to hurt her in the beginning, and I couldn't protect her in the end. And now, I have a woman I despise wrapping her arms around me, making my already miserable life more worthless than before. I hate that she's this close to me; I hate that I loved the way it felt when I held her maid close to my chest. I hate everything about this. I pull Giselle's hands off me and make my way back to the vehicle. I didn't want to be

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here anymore. I didn't want to be in a place where my mate wasn't present. I didn't want to have feelings for anyone other than her. Whatever it was that I felt for that other woman, I would fight it till the day I died. I won't let anyone take the place of Maya. I loved her too much to do this to her. "Kane!" I hear Giselle shouting my name. I wish I could ignore her; I wish I could push her out of my life. I wish it were that easy; I wish my life was the only one in danger because of her and her father. If my life alone were at risk, things would have been much different. This was why my father always taught me never to grow soft, never to love someone or something so much that I would risk everything to protect them. Now, it was too late, there were people that I cared about, and I had to do everything in my power to protect them.

Chapter 40 ~MAYA~ The ride back home is one of torture. Kane looks tenser now than before. I can tell that he isn't happy with himself about something. Maybe he's angry that he tried to protect me and made things more complicated between Giselle and him. I didn't want to cause more trouble for him. It was my fault for intentionally throwing the water on her dress. I didn't think she would retaliate and push me into the lake. It was very unexpected, and I should have prepared more for it. Still, I couldn't believe that he'd rush in to save me. Everything about him seemed perfect to me; he was a wonderful man. I didn't think it was possible for there to be anyone greater than him. His caring side was such a beautiful sight to see. I don't think there is a single man in the world that would risk his life to save a maid; Kane truly was unique. He made my heart feel warm and happy. I tried to hide my feelings from Giselle, who kept throwing daggers my way every few minutes. I wasn't sure what other punishments she would have waiting for me home. She was still angry, and it didn't help that Kane's mood had further dampened from earlier. They were supposed to have a romantic date, and I ruined it. What makes this entire situation worse is that I haven't been feeling well ever since I was pushed into the lake. I keep feeling like I'm going to throw up, and it's taking all of my self-control to make sure that doesn't happen inside the vehicle. I can imagine the look on Giselle's face if I were to do that. She might throw me out and make me walk home. I shake that thought out of my head and try to think about anything else. When we are back home, I rush past Kane and Giselle; I don't stop running until I reach the bathroom and puke all over the sink. I don't know why I feel so sick. It's not like Giselle would give me anything to help with my illness; she might make matters worse if I tell her how sick I feel. My hand clutches my stomach when I feel a slight movement. That was weird and a little alarming. I walk over to the mirror and rub my hands over the slight bump in my stomach. That couldn't be what I thought it was, could it? I knew nothing about my past

life or anything before I lost my memories. But was it possible that I was pregnant? And for how long? Why hadn't I noticed this before? It couldn't be that long, considering the size of my stomach. I wasn't sure that I could tell this to anyone, but how long would I hide it? They would eventually begin to see the way my belly swelled in the coming weeks and months. Ultimately, they would all know that I was pregnant and didn't know who the father of my baby was. Maybe I'm wrong; perhaps I'm panicking for no reason. Still, I couldn't just sit back and wait for my belly to get bigger to prove to myself that I was with child. But even if I was willing to find the truth, where am I going to find a pregnancy test without anyone becoming suspicious? Everyone here hated my guts and wouldn't try to help me, and I can think of a few ways they can use this against me; what if they forced me to get rid of my baby? Giselle wouldn't want a pregnant maid because she will know that I won't be able to do anything for her the moment I'm in the last stages of pregnancy. It's not like I had the option of running away either; there were too many guards stationed at every corner around here to even think about trying to escape. I lean back against the wall and try to think of other ways to find out whether or not I'm truly pregnant. It's then that a risky idea comes into my mind. Out of all the people around me, one person didn't seem to have a heart of ice. He was someone that I knew would try and help me. At least I didn't think he was anything like the rest of them. That person was Kane. Giselle's future husband. He was the only person to who I could turn to. But he was the last person I should be trying to get close to. Giselle would have my head if she found out. I didn't have a choice; however, he was the only person my heart seemed to trust in these times. I had to find some way to speak to him alone, where no one could hear us. I wasn't sure how to let that happen when Giselle followed him around like a hawk. She seems to think that he would disappear if she let him out of her sight for even a second. I couldn't blame her; who would want to spend the rest of their life with someone like her? I kept wondering how desperate Kane had to be to marry that woman. Whatever she's holding against him, it's got to be huge. No one would willingly marry this woman like no one wants to work for her. "Get out here!" I hear Giselle shouting outside the bathroom. I sigh; it's not like I wasn't expecting her to barge in here. After cleaning up the sink, I walk outside and spot her right in front of my face. Her cheeks are red with rage, and I patiently wait for her punishment. "How dare you embarrass me like that today?" she demands. "Do you not realize that my family is all that you have? You have no memory of who you are, and no one is looking for you; that's how unloved you are. If I decide to fire you, you will have nowhere to go and no one to turn to. Do you understand what that's like? Being out in the woods all alone with no food and shelter? If you ever try to pull a stunt like that again, that's exactly where you're going to end up. Do you understand me?" "I told you that it was a mistake." I point out. "It will not happen again,

however." She narrows her eyes, "you're lucky my Kane is a good man.. If it were up to me, I would have left you there to drown." she snaps. "And if you think that he did it because he has any kind of feelings for you, you're delusional." I nod, "I know he doesn't. He's in love with you, isn't he? You're the woman that he's marrying. You don't have anything to worry about." Giselle pauses at my words, "you're right. I'm the one he loves. I'm the woman he agreed to marry. No one else." I'm happy that I chose the right words to distract her from my punishment. Was it that easy to divert her attention? "I have to meet with the wedding planner today." She informs me. "When she reaches, guide her to my office and do not let anyone disturb us. Stand outside the door to ensure that no one enters." An idea pops into my head at her words, "how long do you think the meeting will take?" I ask her. She narrows her eyes, "why do you ask?" "If anyone came to see you, I want to be able to tell them how long you'll be in the meeting for. So that they can come back and see you when you're available." I'm surprised that I came up with that lie so quickly. "Finally, you're using your brain." She says. "An hour should be enough time." "Will Kane not be in the meeting with you?" I ask her. "What if he comes to see you? Should I let him in?" "I prefer to keep Kane out of these plans," she tells me. "But if he does show up at the door, you can let him in. He's the only one that can enter." I nod. "I'll go prepare your bath." She smiles, "I should push you into a lake more often. I've never seen you work this well before." I ignore her words and walk into her bathroom. The truth was that I needed to puke again, but I couldn't tell her that. If Giselle was going to be in a meeting today with her wedding planner, I could try and speak to Kane without worrying about her showing up. All I had to do was hang a sign on the door telling everyone to keep out; that way, I wouldn't have to stand by the door and prevent anyone from entering. They would understand from the sign alone. Besides, no one liked to cross Giselle; they were terrified of her. This is my time—the only chance I may ever have to get Kane alone.

Chapter 41 ~MAYA~ Giselle was in the meeting with the wedding planner, and I'd hung the sign up on her door. There were clocks all over the house, so I didn't have to worry about running late. I would reach back before an hour is finished. Hopefully, she doesn't try to leave the room within that hour, and if she does, I'll say that I desperately needed to use the washroom. Now the biggest problem was finding Kane. I knew that he hadn't left; Giselle wouldn't let him go so easily. He had to be around the palace somewhere. I get to work, searching the kitchen, the living room, a few other rooms that I pretended to be cleaning. Where was he? I continue my search, not giving up. I still had plenty of time left. Maybe he wasn't inside? Maybe he was somewhere in the garden. Either that or he was already preoccupied with Giselle's father; perhaps he had called Kane into his office.

I walk out into the open, straight into the garden. Luckily, there isn't anyone else here, so I don't have to worry about anyone questioning why I was there. I continue to search from one area to the next; Giselle must be very fond of flowers to have a private garden near a lake and an even bigger one in her backyard. That was probably the only good thing about that woman, her love for flowers. I'm about to give up and return to the palace when I hear some movements. I follow the sound, and to my pleasant surprise, he is there, in front of me. He's leaned up against a tree, with his head held high, staring at the sky. It was indeed a beautiful sight to see. I felt like standing here and looking at him for the rest of my evening, ignoring everything else that I had to do. I push out of my trance, reminding myself that I barely have time left. I had already spent most of the time searching for him. Now, I had to convince him to help me. I'm not sure why he would, but I also wasn't sure why he'd helped me so much already. When I walk towards him, his body goes rigid, like he already sensed my presence. He lazily drags his eyes away from the sky and turns them towards me. I'm standing a few feet away from him, but I'm dying to be much closer than this. "Can we talk?" I ask him; my voice comes out squeaky, and I wince with embarrassment. Why did I have to choke up like that when speaking to him? Just like always, the moment he hears my voice, something happens to him. "Why are you here?" He asks me, looking around us. "You can put yourself in danger by speaking to me. . . Alone." My eyes widen. Is it possible that he's worried about me? I don't think so; he's probably just concerned about his own life. Giselle would make both of our lives hell if she saw us alone like this. "I need your help," I whisper. "I can't think of anyone else in here that would willingly help me." "And why do you think that I will help you?" He asks me. I swallow; I don't know how to say this without making myself sound crazy, "I don't know why but you seem like a good person to me. For some unknown reason, even though I can't remember anything from my past, my heart chooses to trust you. You're the only person I trust right now. It's why I've come to you for help." I say truthfully. There was no use lying to him about this. His jaw clenches, and his body stiffens, "I'm not someone that anyone should trust. You don't know me, and you don't ever want to know me. The people close to me always get hurt, I'm a f*****g curse, and your life will be better if you didn't trust someone like me." I shook my head at him, "please, you're the only one that can help me. I don't know who else to turn to, and I'm not sure when I'll ever get an opportunity like this again. One where I can speak to you with just the two of us." He rubs a hand down his face, "what is it that you need help with?" My lip trembles; I'm unsure why I'm hesitant to tell him I'm possibly pregnant. Is it that I don't want him to know I was with a man before? It's not like we can ever be together; it's also not like someone like him will ever want someone like me. "Well?" He asks again, prompting me to continue. "I think I may be pregnant." The silence that

follows doesn't help with my nerves. What was he thinking? I notice that his hands tighten into fists at his sides, and it's enough to tell me that I'm right; he isn't happy about it. But why would my pregnancy bother him so much? What did I say that was so wrong? Our eyes connect, and I'm not sure what's this spark that I feel the instant that it does. "You're pregnant?" He repeats. "Who's the man that you let touch you?" I'm startled by his question. The tone of his voice is also very alarming. He seems pissed that I let a man touch me. He's not the only one, I'm also angry about it, but it's not like I can do anything about it when I don't have my memory. "Do you not remember that I've lost all of my memories?" I ask him. "Everything is gone. I don't know my name; I don't know who I was in the past; I can't remember anything. I'm not even sure that I'm pregnant; I think that I am since my stomach keeps getting bigger, and I swear I may have felt something move inside of me. So to answer your question, I don't know what man touched me; I don't know anything." All I know is that I keep losing my breath whenever he's around me. I don't think it's normal to feel such a strong connection for someone like this. It's the reason why I asked if he knew me the first time I set my eyes on him. He takes a step towards me, and I let him get closer to me until our bodies are inches apart, "why the f**k would a man get you pregnant and not take care of you after? How disgusting could he be?"

Chapter 42 My body is shaking, actually shaking from being this near to him, from hearing him ask me about the man who got me pregnant. I don't know what it is about Kane; I don't understand why he makes me feel this way. "Stop asking me questions when I don't have the answers to give you," I whisper. "I wish I knew, but I don't; I'm sorry that it's all I can say to you for now. I know it's a lot to ask of someone who I barely know, but can you help me find out if I'm pregnant or not? There is no one else for me to ask." It's weird asking a man to do this for me, but at the same time, it feels only natural to ask him over any other man in this universe. I can't imagine asking another person to help me, not when he's here, not when this man exists. "And what if you are?" He asks me as he takes yet another step towards me. I try to hide how I really feel the nearer he gets to me. I don't want him to know how much I want this when I shouldn't want it at all. "What are you planning on doing if it turns out that you are truly pregnant? Are you going to ignore it and let Giselle and her father find out? Are you ready for what they're going to do to you when they find out their maid is pregnant? Look at the way they already treat you. Can you imagine how bad things will become?" "No," I snap, "I'm still trying to figure everything out. It's why I'm taking it one step at a time. The first step is to confirm my pregnancy. I don't want to alarm anyone or myself without knowing for sure that I am pregnant. The signs are there, but I can be mistaken; maybe I'm sick with something else. So are you going to help me or not? If you haven't realized, we are

running out of time, and I can't be seen speaking to you, not when we are alone. I took this risk to see you because I knew that out of everyone in this palace, you're the only one that would help me. I took a massive chance so that we could be alone." Kane looks me up and down. For some reason, it makes me feel naked under his scrutinizing gaze. "We are alone, aren't we?" He whispers as he gestures around us to emphasize his words. I'm surprised by his question. Is he delighted that it's just the two of us in the garden? I'm suddenly reminded of how close we are. I look around us one last time, and we really are still the only ones here. No one was here to see us or stop us from being this close. To prevent us if I decided to lean forward and kiss him. I mentally scold myself for such a thought. There was a possibility that I was pregnant, and I had no idea who the father was, but yet here I am, dreaming of kissing a man I can never be with. I think something is wrong with me; I can't be thinking right if this is what's on my mind at a difficult time like this. Kane closes the distance between us, much to my body's delight. His hand cups my cheeks, and I freeze. It's the last thing I expected him to do; I don't think I've ever felt an emotion this powerful before, but who am I to know when I can't remember anything? My eyes close, and I lean into his touch. I can't stop myself when I grab his shirt and lean even further into him; before this moment disappears, before he decides that we are too close, I inhale as much of him as my body would let me, something I've always wanted to do. I'm hit with so many different emotions the moment that I do that; my body begins to tremble. I always knew that Kane smelt amazing but being this close and getting the opportunity to test that theory out was enough to make me pass out in bliss. Kane shudders under my grip, and it's the sexiest thing I've ever seen in a man before. Suddenly, his hand pulls away from me. I wince when a string of curses leaves his mouth. I should have known this was too good to be true. I don't know why he even chose to close the distance between us, but I wasn't complaining. I was happy that I got the chance to be so close to him. When I open my eyes, he's no doubt furious with himself. I don't think I've ever seen a man this angry before. He seems to be having an inner battle, and I'm not sure that he's going to be okay. I try to touch him, but he pulls away from me roughly. It's like he doesn't want me to touch him again. His blatant rejection hurts me, but there is nothing that I can do about it. "I'll help you." He announces. "There is someone that I know who can confirm if you're pregnant. I don't trust the tests; I think the best way to find out is by seeing a doctor. He's a friend of mine." His ability to act like nothing happened just a few seconds ago amazes me. How can he do that? It's hard for me to go back to where we were, but I'm forced to do it. "How are we supposed to get me out of here without Giselle knowing?" I ask him. "It's not like you can get the doctor to sneak into here either." He sighs and squeezes his temples, "I can think of a certain way, but I'll need your help for it." "My help?" I ask him. "What can I do?" "We can slip

something into her drink." He tells me. My eyes widen, "I don't like her, but it doesn't mean that I'm going to poison her!" I snap. There is no way that I'm doing something like that. It's true that Giselle drove me up a wall and is probably one of the worst women I've ever met in my life, but I can't imagine killing her because of it. Not to mention what her father would do to the both of us when he found out that we were responsible for his daughter's death. I shiver at the thought. "We are not going to poison her," he explains to me, "it's a sleeping potion. Tell everyone that she isn't feeling well and needs to rest so that none of the other maids check on her. By the time we return, she will now be waking up and won't know anything." "Won't she suspect that she was under a sleeping potion?" I ask him. "And wouldn't others still try to check on her?" "No," he tells me. "She will feel sick the moment that she takes a sip of the drink. She would blame her sleepiness on the sickness. She wouldn't think anything else of it, and no one will bother trying to wake her up when they know that she isn't well. Trust me." I do trust him. "Wouldn't the other maids realize that I've been gone?" I ask him. "No," he says, "they would think you're in the room with her." I nod; this didn't seem like a bad idea at all. It may even work without either of us getting in trouble. "I know the perfect day; her father will not be home as he will be in an important meeting; he will not be around to tell that either of us was gone for the day." He says. "It's the perfect opportunity." He had everything planned out. It makes me believe that he was planning on doing this a while now. "Were you planning on doing this before I even asked for your help?" I ask him. "You seem so prepared for it." ~KANE~ The girl's question throws me off guard. Reminding me that I was putting off finding Maya to help her. She was correct; I had been planning on doing this since the first day I came to this place and learned that I didn't have much time before the wedding. The potion, waiting for Giselle's father to leave, all of this was my plan to get out of here for at least a day. My first thought was to free my men, but I soon realized that one man couldn't do something so dangerous with the amount of security in the dungeons. In the end, I finally decided to use it to find out more about what happened to my mate. Now, plans were changing because Giselle's maid was begging me to help her. Fuck me. I kept making a mess of everything. When will I stop? I'm not even angry that I'm helping her. I'm mad that some loser got her knocked up and didn't have the balls to keep her safe. The girl didn't even know her name; how sad was that? If I ever found the man that got her pregnant, I would make him regret what he did to her. I don't know why I'm so angry when I'm not even sure if she's pregnant. We will only know after the tests are done on her. I'm still not sure what happens if she is pregnant; how will she hide the truth from Giselle? "Well," she says, bringing me out of my thoughts. "Are you going to answer me?" "Is that important?" I ask her. "All you need to know is that I'm willing to help you. I don't need to answer any of your other questions, and you're also running out

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of time. You need to get back before Giselle realizes that you're gone." Her eyes widen at my words, and she quickly pushes past me towards the palace. I watch her go with an ache in my heart. What was wrong with me? Why did I put off everything to help a woman I barely knew?

Chapter 43 ~MAYA~ It's finally time. It's the day Kane will take me to the doctor, the day I will find out if I'm really pregnant. I'm not sure that I'm ready for this. I'd already slipped the potion into Giselle's drink; now, I had to wait for her to drink it. I pretend to be tidying up around her room while I wait for her to take her first sip. She's lying on her bed, staring at her nails. Why is she taking so long? It's frustrating; I feel like forcing the drink down her throat. I try to remain calm when her hand closes around the cup. I breathe a sigh of relief when she drinks from it, she doesn't seem to realize anything, but that was expected; Kane did say that she wouldn't know anything was in there when he passed the potion to me earlier today while she wasn't looking. She leans back against the bed and places a hand over her head, "I don't feel good." I walk over to her and place a hand on her forehead, "it looks like you have a fever. Should I call a doctor to see you?" I ask. She shakes her head, "no, get me something to drink. I should be fine after getting some sleep." I nod and pour some water into a glass for her. She doesn't even have a chance to drink it before she knocks out on the bed. I take a deep breath and walk over to the window. Kane and I needed to time ourselves properly throughout the day. He was the one that already told everyone that I would be tending to Giselle for the rest of the day because she wasn't feeling well. No one would bother to check on her knowing that I was already in the room with her. I made sure to lock the door to make sure. I gaze down and see that Kane is already waiting for me. His eyes tell me to hurry up. I still couldn't believe that he expected me to jump from this damn window. The first time he mentioned doing this, I stared at him like he'd lost his mind. I took one last look at Giselle to ensure she was still knocked out. I wanted to make sure that the potion worked like Kane said it would. I take a deep breath and hesitantly climb onto the edge of the window, holding onto the sides for support. I throw myself from it and brace for the worse. My eyes are closed as I feel myself begin to descend. I can't believe that I put so much trust in this man that I willingly jumped from a window for him. Kane's arms wrapped around me tightly before my body could hit the ground. We are both silent for a few seconds, and I finally open my eyes to see him staring at me. What was he thinking? I wish I could read his mind to find out what he honestly thought about me. "Wrap your legs around my waist," he says in a hoarse whisper. I hesitantly do as he says. I wrap my arms around his neck and place my head against his chest, preparing myself for this. Earlier today, he'd explained to me that he was a hybrid and could get us to the doctor's office without a

vehicle. I was shocked at first but quickly realized that this was good news. "Close your eyes," he orders. I do as he says once more, and before I know it, we're moving with incredible speed. I can feel the wind pounding against my ear, blowing my short hair all over my face. I should hate this, but I'm absolutely loving it; I love being this close to him while we move with so much pace. We finally stop in front of what looks like a doctor's office. "Are you ready?" He asks me. Our gazes lock, and I feel lost in his eyes, just like I always do. I don't know what it is about Kane that does this to me. He makes me feel like we are the only two people on this earth. "I'm not," I whisper, "but I need to find out before it's too late." He nods and guides me into the office with him. He doesn't even need to say anything to any of the receptionists; it seems like they are used to seeing him here. They do look confused to see me, however. Has he never brought a woman with him here before? Or is it that he came here with someone else? I don't have time to ponder on that thought since we are already walking into the doctor's office before I can ask Kane any questions. "Kane!" The doctor greets him with a smile. "It's been a while, my friend. What brings you here? Did you get into another fight?" "Am I ever not in a fight?" Kane answers his question with one of his own. The doctor laughs, "And who's this lovely lady with you?" Kane clears his throat, "she's the reason I'm here today. I think that she might be pregnant. We want you to confirm this for us." "Pregnant?" He asks as he looks at my stomach where my hands are clutching, "I see. I never thought I'd see the day where you willingly get a woman pregnant; you must finally be changing your player ways and deciding to settle down. Good for you!" My cheeks turn red at his words. Why would he think I was pregnant for Kane? It's not like the two of us looked like lovers. Kane wasn't even holding my hands. Kane's body turns to stone next to mine, "she's not pregnant with my child," he growls. The doctor's eyes widen at his tone, the tension in the room is unmistakable. "Ah—" the doctor says. "I see. I'm sorry for assuming. I just thought she was since you brought her in." "I'm just helping her out," Kane explains. "Nothing else." Was he truly that angry because the doctor mistakenly thought he was the father of my child?

Chapter 44 The silence that follows after is almost deafening. The doctor, Kane's friend, doesn't know what to say to lessen the tension in the room. It's not his fault for assuming that I was carrying Kane's baby. After all, Kane did bring me here without a proper introduction. But how could he even introduce me when I didn't know my name? No one was to blame for this misunderstanding. I had to say something I lighten the mood. "I

don't know who the father is," I tell the doctor. "But it's not Kane." His eyes widen, "you don't know who the father is?" His question makes me even more uncomfortable. It sounds more horrible when someone else says it. I didn't know who the father was; I didn't know anything about my past lover. If there really was one. I stiffen at the judgmental look on his face; he must think that I've slept with multiple men. It's not like that isn't possible when I can't remember anything. I'm not sure about anything from my past; I could have many lovers for all that I know. Though my heart tells me that there has always been one man for me, I'm not sure what this feeling is, but it might be the first time I felt connected to my past life. I knew that there was a man I loved dearly; I'm just not sure who he was. Maybe he's the father of my baby. I'll never know until I regain my memories. "She lost her memory," Kane steps in. He also didn't seem happy with the judgmental look his friend was still sending me. "She doesn't remember who she is or where she came from. Not even her name. I've brought her here to find out if she is pregnant. She thinks that she is and has some pregnancy symptoms; we hope you can tell us for sure. I don't trust anyone else; it's why I've come to you." Kane's friend looks pleased that he chose him. I can tell that they have a good friendship. "I can do an ultrasound," he informs us. "We will know for sure after it's completed. Are you ready?" Judging by the way the doctor is looking at me, I feel that he can already tell but wants to confirm it for me. He doesn't want to alarm me until he knows for sure. Kane nods, "I can leave the room to give you privacy." He says to me with an unknown expression on his face. My throat feels tight, and the words that I want to say get stuck there. I watch as he turns, and I'm not sure what came over me next. I grab his hand before he can leave; Kane turns around to face me the moment I do. His eyes search my own as he waits for me to say something, and I finally do, "please stay." I whisper. I don't know why I'm like this. I don't understand why it's so important to me that he stays to find out what the doctor has to say. His eyes glance at my hand on his, and I quickly pull it away, embarrassed by my actions. It wasn't my place to ask him to stay with me. He already did plenty by bringing me here with him. He didn't have to help me, but yet he did; I should at least be grateful for this. I expected him to ignore my request, but to my surprise, he did the exact opposite. He closes the door and leans against it while waiting for the doctor to examine me. I feel a sense of comfort knowing that he's in here watching me; he's by my side; I don't need anyone else here as long as he's there. I glance at him often, and his eyes are still always on me. I'm both nervous and happy knowing this. It's crazy that he has the power to confuse my emotions this much. The doctor informs me of each step to take, and the fact that I'm getting closer to knowing the truth sends my heart pounding against my chest. I'm fumbling with my hands on the side of the bed; I'm not ready for this. My eyes are on the screen when he starts the procedure; I'm scared of what he's

about to find out, but I know that no matter what he tells me, I will be strong. I have to be. Kane is still looking at me; our gazes lock, and his jaw clenches. I don't know how long we stay staring at each other, but I know that I don't ever want to look away. I don't care that my heartbeat has increased more than before or that it's hard to breathe like this; I want to keep looking at him. "Congratulations," the doctor's voice makes me jump and return my attention to the screen, "you are pregnant. . . With twins." My body goes still at his words. Pregnant? With twins? I thought I had mentally prepared myself for his response, but he's managed to throw me off-guard. I wasn't sure how to take care of one baby, but now I had to care for two? The thought of having two babies was beautiful but terrifying at the same time. I'm not sure what to do with this news. I was so stunned, I didn't realize that Kane had gone completely motionless at this announcement. His hands are to his sides, and his eyes are wide with grief. What could have caused this reaction from him? Or was it that he expected me not to be pregnant, but now he's in shock that I'm not only pregnant but having twins? The doctor helps clean me up and walks over to Kane; I think he realizes that something is wrong with him. Anyone that saw Kane right now would be concerned about him. I've never seen him look this way before; it's another look that I can add to his other depressed and lost expression. "Are you okay?" he asks him. Kane drags his gaze away from the screen to look at him, "thank you for your help. I will not forget it." I watch as he turns around and storms out of the room. It took me a while to realize that he had left me behind without saying anything. I quickly thank the doctor for helping us. He nods and tells me to watch after Kane, and I happily agree, even though I know that it isn't my place to do so. I rush behind him, trying to catch up. After all, if he left me here, I had no idea how to get back to the palace. Not that it was a bad thing, I hated that place. "Hey!" I shout. "What's wrong? Are you okay?" He walks over to a bench outside of the office, and my eyes widen when he punches it hard. Seeing Kane like this breaks my heart; what triggered this reaction from him? I attempt to touch him, but he flinches when my hand comes close to his body. I pause midway, not wanting to do anything to make things worse right now. "You're worrying me," I whisper. "How can I help? What's troubling you?" "There is nothing you can do!" He growls. "I don't understand, Kane!" I shout. "Don't," he snaps at me. "Don't say my f*****g name. I don't want to hear my name in your mouth!" My lips part and I try not to take his words to heart, but it hurts. Why does it bother him so much when I say his name? What does that have to do with his behavior right now? "What am I supposed to call you then?" I demand. "It's what everyone calls you. Why is it a problem when I call you by your name?"

Chapter 45 ~KANE~ I snapped. I know I f*****g did. The moment I learned that the girl was pregnant with twins, it was over. It reminded me that Maya was also pregnant when she was taken away from me. I let her go, and I couldn't protect her or our baby. I failed her. I let down my mate. I should have been here with her; she was the one I should be taking to doctor visits, not the maid of some woman I'm being forced to marry. She deserved better than I gave to her. From the beginning to the end of our relationship, I only brought her pain. But it wasn't the end of our relationship; I would not let it be. I would fight anything and everything to be with her again. I look at the woman next to me; my words also hurt her. I'm good at that. I'm good at hurting people that I should be protecting. There were so many things wrong with this situation right now. The girl was pregnant, and she didn't know who the father of her children was, and for some insane reason, my body felt like I should be the one to take care of her and her unborn children. I don't know if it's the guilt of not caring for my own mate, but something is making me react like this. I can't tell if I care for the girl when I barely know anything about her. It's hard for me to come to terms with any of this. Seeing her hurting because of something I said, even that was killing me inside. What the f**k was my connection with her? Why did it bother me so much that another man got her pregnant? I want to hurt myself. I want to hurt myself for having forbidden feelings and thoughts. Maya wouldn't be happy with me right now, or maybe she would be. She wasn't a selfish person, she would want me to protect a pregnant woman, but at the same time, she wouldn't want me to act like a lovesick puppy around her. I'm trying hard to ignore the girl next to me. A girl that I still had no idea what her name was. When she called me by my name, it reminded me so much of when Maya did. It sounded like the same person to me. How can she sound just like Maya? How is that even possible? At this point, the universe was messing with my heart. It wanted to see me suffer for all the wrongs I did. And how does it do it? By taking away my mate and unborn child and forcing someone else into my life with a maid who sounds like my mate. I wanted to laugh at my pathetic fate; I know I deserved it, but damn, was it painful. First, I lost my father and sister, only discovering that my mate's family was responsible for their deaths. Then, I expectedly fall for the same woman I promised myself to hate, only to have her taken away from me the moment that I did. Now I keep letting myself protect this girl that I didn't even know the name of. I had no idea who she was or where she came from, but still, I was risking everything to protect her. Why? What connection did I have with her to let her burdens fall on me? I couldn't allow myself to do this anymore. I couldn't let myself fall into this trap. I should learn from my past; I've always done things that made my life harder. It was time that I stopped doing this to myself. It was time that I tried to make my life better, not worse. In this case, I had to stop myself from protecting a woman that I had no connections with.

Giselle was not a woman that would sit back and watch me do it; the girl was insane. She would no doubt harm her maid, and that's the last thing I will ever want to see happen. I'll have to keep my distance to ensure her safety. Again, without realizing it, I'm somehow trying to protect her. What was wrong with me? When would I stop with this foolishness? "Kane?" Her voice calling out my name snaps me out of my thoughts. It makes me even more pissed than before. Didn't I just tell her to stop calling me that? Did she not realize how much it killed me inside when she did that? Could she not see what it did to me? How could she not? I never tried to hide it. I couldn't hide it. I was in f*****g pain anytime she said my name. "I told you not to f*****g call me that," I shout. I feel bad for going off on her when she just found out that she was pregnant with twins, but every time she said my name, it made matters worse. It would help if she listened to me. Was that something Maya and she had in common? Never listening to me? Why was I even comparing the two? They weren't the same person; they will never be. Her lips part, and I spot the sadness in her eyes almost instantly. It wrecks at my composure, and I swallow the apology that threatens to escape me. "I'm sorry," she apologizes, surprising me. She has nothing to apologize for; I'm the one that's being an ass towards her. She doesn't deserve my anger, but if I'm not angry, I feel other emotions that I do not wish to feel right now. Furious with her is the only way I can be. It's the only emotion I will allow myself to feel whenever I'm near her. "I'm taking you home," I tell her. She blinks a few times at me, but she doesn't try and say no. It's not like she has a choice; this was what I promised her, I would take her to a doctor and then return her home. And I had to do it before Giselle woke up and caught us. Slipping away from the palace was one thing, but leaving with her maid would send the girl up in flames; I was sure about it. I won't be staying, though; I will have to take another risk. I need to find Maya's abductors, the people responsible for the pain I'm in right now. I'm not sure how long I will be gone, but I can only hope that the potion lasts long enough. If I'm not back before Giselle wakes up, I'll have to deal with the consequences of my actions. Nothing and no one will stop me from searching for my mate today. I've been away from her for too long. I couldn't stand being away from her like this. It was time that I started my search. She needed to know that no matter where she was, I would always find my way back to her. I would not let anyone separate us. I lift my gaze when the girl walks forward. She doesn't stop until she's inches away from me. What was she doing? She has my full attention now. I can't look away when she's this close to me. I feel myself turn to stone when she closes the distance between us and throws her arms around my neck. It takes me a few seconds to recover from the initial shock of her actions. "What are you doing?" I demand; I can barely move when she's practically on me. I try not to inhale her scent; it seems familiar to me, and it's a smell I rather not have near me right now. Why does everything about

her bother me so much? Why can't I ignore her? Why do I always have to find myself in situations like this with this woman? And why on earth am I not pushing her away? She lifts her chin, and the moment her pretty eyes look at me, I find my arms closing around her, pulling her closer to me without realizing it. "Isn't this how you brought me?" She asks. "Don't I have to hold onto you for you to carry me back home?" I can't believe that I forgot that this was the only way for me to return with her. f**k. This was driving me insane. Being this close to her and trying to hate her for no reason. How the f**k would I survive?

Chapter 46 ~MAYA~ I want to scream in frustration when Kane closes his arms around me. I'm not allowed to feel this way for him. The man doesn't even like it when I say his name. I felt his reaction when I held onto him earlier; he was unhappy about it. I think he hates it when I'm near him. He hates it when I touch him and he hates it when I speak. What was wrong with my body? Why do I act like this isn't the first time we've been this close? Why does my heart tell me that I should remember him? Why do I want to hold onto him and stay this way forever? There is no way that I knew Kane. My stupid heart was crazy for thinking otherwise; that's the only explanation I can think of. If Kane knew who I was, he would have recognized me by now. Instead, he acts like I'm a stranger, someone he doesn't want to ever be around. I'm glad that he's treating me this way; if he'd continued to be kind for no reason, my heart would have continued to waver. It's something that couldn't happen. I couldn't allow my heart to sway for someone that could never be mine. Still, after knowing all of this, I held onto him as tightly as possible while he carried me. It has nothing to do with being scared to fall but everything to do with wanting to take advantage of the situation for as long as I could. This may be the last time in my entire life that I would ever get to be this close to Kane. I didn't want to waste a single opportunity. I take a deep breath and bring my face closer to his neck. I don't think he realizes what I'm doing while he's carrying me at full speed. And that's what I'm hoping for as I lean even closer until my nose can almost touch the base of his neck. I close my eyes and inhale deeply, taking as much of his scent as my body would let me. Even his scent reminds me of someone, someone that I should know. His hands tighten around me for a quick second, but it doesn't last long. Within a few minutes, we're already back at the palace, and he's pulling me off his body to put me back on the ground. I try to hide my disappointment from not being near him again. I'm quickly distracted by the fact that he isn't walking back with me, however. "What are you doing?" I ask him. "Aren't you coming in with me?" We need to get back before Giselle wakes up; he knows this. So why is he hesitating so much? "I'm not going in." He answers. "I have important

things to get back to." I stare at him in shock, "what can be more important than returning before Giselle finds out that you're gone?" His jaw clenches, and I wonder how my question could have possibly offended him. He seems angry like I shouldn't have asked him that. I still don't see why that should be an issue. It was a simple question. "Get inside," he growls. "Don't worry about what I do." "But," I whisper. "If Giselle finds you gone when she wakes up, she might throw a fit, and I feel like that's the last thing you're trying to do. I also don't want to feel bad over this since it will be my fault for asking for your help in the first place." He steps towards me and pins me with his gaze, "get inside now. I can take care of myself. I don't need anyone to worry over me. You don't owe me anything, and you're not to blame for anything that happens to me. I'm the only one responsible for my actions." I bite my lip to prevent myself from saying something else. He was already not happy with me. It was time that I listened and got inside. The least I could do was listen to him after everything he did for me today. I turned and walked away before I had a chance to speak again. I am curious, however, what could Kane be up to? Why was he so tensed when I asked him what could be more important? To him, it must be. Whatever he was leaving to do, it meant a lot to him. But what could it be? What was he desperate to find? I'm still shocked by his reaction after finding out that I was pregnant with twins. I couldn't get the two things out of my head. I was pregnant with two babies, not one. And I didn't know who the father of my children was. How pathetic could my life get? I know that I shouldn't be this hard on myself, especially since I knew that none of this was my fault. It's not like I would intentionally wipe my memories unless my life were so pathetic before that I needed to forget about it. But that didn't seem like something I would do, I barely knew anything, but I still felt like I knew that much. My mind goes back to Kane; I'm worried about him. I could easily sneak back into the palace without any problems, especially since I had the key. But I'm not so sure that Kane would be as lucky as me. If he'd chosen to stay back as I'd asked him to, this mission would have been successful. We would have gotten back home without any problems. I was terrified of what would happen if Giselle woke up while he was still out. I'm still not sure what happened back there. Why did he zone out when he found out that I was pregnant? It's not like he didn't know there was a possibility that it would happen; it's why we were there in the first place. Also, what was so wrong with me saying his name? His actions both puzzled and worried me. It's not like he was willing to tell me his problem either. So I'm stuck worrying without knowing what happened to him back there. I'm so upset with myself. I shouldn't be worried about him. I should be concerned about myself. I did feel sad whenever I saw how depressed Kane looked, but how could I help when he wouldn't let me? I offered for him to tell me what was wrong, but he declined repeatedly; how can

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I help when he doesn't want my help? And how can I help someone else when I can't seem to help myself?

Chapter 47 ~KANE~ I felt the girl smell me earlier. I'm sure of it. Her actions both puzzled and did things to my body that I would rather not think about. Why did she trust me as much as she did? What was it about her that continued to draw me in? She was a puzzle to me, a puzzle that I had to keep away from. She kept doing things that surprised me; I was never sure what she was about to say or do. It was easy to say that I would never have a dull moment with her. I've had people hate me from the moment they met me, who judged me. She was probably one of the first women who thought of me as someone they could trust blindly. Thinking about her while she wasn't even near me was off-limits. From now on, I had to be harsher on myself. I had to do it because I couldn't disappoint the one person that mattered to me. I look up from where I'm standing. I don't know why I'm in front of Maya's home; I wouldn't be here if I had another option to find my mate. I knew that the only way I would be able to find Maya's abductors was by finding out the list of her family's enemies. I didn't know how to do that when half of my pack was locked up in a cell while the others were dead. This was the only way; her brothers would have to hand over the names to me. No one else but them would know the answers to this critical question. I knew that her family would freak out when they saw me, but I didn't care. I had to do everything to find out who took Maya from me. She was all that mattered to me; finding who took her was the first stage. I knew how much her family hated me, and I know that they still think I killed her. They have no reason to trust me; I've been horrible to their sister since the start. I take a step forward and then another. I was walking towards people that absolutely hated my guts and I had to keep my guard up. I didn't blame them for hating me at all. I hated myself as well. The list of people that despised me kept growing. I never thought that I would also join the list. I take a look at my surroundings, taking in the environment. What I didn't expect to see was the massive tents stationed outside the palace. I feel my blood begin to boil at the sight. Did they move on as if nothing happened? How could they be hosting any events when Maya was missing? They should be searching for her; how could they disrespect their sister like that? They tried to kill me, thinking that I was the one that harmed her, but yet they're hosting events while she needed their help? Didn't they see how much of a hypocrite they were being? Did they think Maya would be happy to know that her family wasn't searching for her? I storm into the court, knocking a guard to the ground. No one would stop me today. Maya's family will be the ones explaining this time. They needed to explain what the f**k was wrong with each of them. She deserved better than this. The

people closest to her shouldn't continuously let her down like this. Maya needed us, damn it. Couldn't they see that? Couldn't they see that she was in trouble? Was I the only one that saw this? I turn a corner, and it's only then that I notice pictures of Maya stuck to poles and chairs. There was an even bigger one to the front of me. Seeing her picture sends a sharp pain throughout my body. It's hard for me to see anything that looks like her. I desperately wish that she was in front of me; I wish I could hold her close to me and beg her never to leave me again. She doesn't know how much her disappearance is killing me. She told me that she would make me suffer, and she kept her promise; unlike me, Maya kept her promises. I take a deep breath and fight the tears that threaten to fall. I can't lose it again; I had to be stronger than this. She needed me. She needed me to be strong for her. She deserved a mate that would fight for her. She needed a mate that wouldn't believe that she was dead no matter what anyone else said. I kept on walking while trying my best to avoid the pictures. If I continued to stare at them, I wouldn't be able to keep going. I would fall to the ground clutching the picture to my chest and begging her to return. I spot her family crying in a corner, and it's only then that it dawns on me what this entire event was about. I take a moment to process everything. It couldn't be. Her family would not be this stupid. They just couldn't. I knew they weren't crazy enough to host a funeral for their sister. Why the f**k would they do such a thing? Did they not realize that my mate was alive? Are they f*****g delusional? I told them that she was alive, and I told them that she didn't die. What else did I need to do to prove to them that she was waiting for us to save her? I'm fuming inside; it will take a lot to keep my emotions in check. I storm over to Austin and grab him by his shirt, he looks surprised to see me, but I don't wait for him to say anything. Instead, I'm the first to speak, "what the f**k is this?" I demand. I can hear shouting all around me, I can't tell who's yelling at me, but I don't care. This was not the family Maya always boasted about. According to her, her brothers always find her and protect her. So why weren't they doing that for her now? James grabs me and tries to shove me off Austin, but I don't loosen my grip. Someone has to explain to me what the hell is happening here. Someone needs to tell me why her family members are the first to accept that she's dead. How can I be the only one unwilling to take that she's left us? How am I the only one to know that Maya wouldn't let someone quickly kill her like that? Did they have no faith in their sister? "I'm saying my final goodbye to the sister you took from me," Austin growls. "She's not dead!" I roar. "Maya's alive! My mate is f*****g alive! Do you hear me? She's alive!" "How can you lie so good?" Austin demands. "You took her from me. She's gone because of you! You killed her!" I can't stop myself as I punch him hard across the face. There are gasps all around us, and we are now the center of attention. How can he so easily say that I killed her? "Maya talked highly of you," I shout. "She spoke highly of her brothers

constantly. She always said that you protected her. You were always there for her. She was proud of you. Yet you're the first one to accept that she's dead. If she were here today, she would be disappointed in all of you. Instead of searching for her killers, you're here planning her funeral. Instead of finding her, of bringing her home, this is what the family she loved more than anything is doing. I feel sorry that she ever loved people like you. You never deserved her love just like I never did." Austin's face looks completely torn by my words. Good. I intended to hurt him. He had to realize the s**t he was doing. "Lucas!" I hear someone whisper. "Lucas is here!" I turn around, and they're right. Lucas is here. Maya's youngest brother. He rushes into the tent shouting her name. Why does it seem like he's only just found out about her death? "Where is she?" he shouts. "Where is my sister?" Austin pushes past me to go to his younger brother. "I'm sorry," Austin tells him as he holds him close. "No!" Lucas shouts. "She's not gone! Maya is not gone!" Lucas breaks down in front of everyone while his brothers try to comfort him. I walk up to him, and he raises his tear-streaked face to look at me "She's not dead," I tell him. "It's what I've been trying to tell your brother. Maya is alive. I can feel it." "How can you be so sure?" he asks me. It's the first time any of her brothers genuinely tries to have a conversation with me. He's also the first to consider that there is a possibility that she isn't dead. "Do you have little faith in your sister?" I ask him. "Do you think she will die so easily? Do you think she will leave without saying goodbye to the people she loved? Do you think that she will let anyone harm her unborn baby? She's stronger than that. My mate is stronger than that. She's a fighter. I know in my heart that she's still alive and waiting. She's waiting for the people that love her." Lucas nods and picks himself off the ground, "you are right. Maya is still alive. We have to find her. We can't let those people take her away from us." Finally. Someone that I can get along with. "Why are you here?" Austin asks me. "I want the list of all your enemies," I tell him. "I want to find the people that took Maya. They have all the answers that we are all looking for. I wasn't the one to kidnap her this time; whoever did it claimed that you also killed their sister. I need to find out a list of all the women you killed and the list of every single enemy related to them." Maya's brothers look between each other before Lucas nods his head. "We will give the list to you."

Chapter 48 I had the list of their enemies. I needed to remove the ones that didn't have sisters; that would be rare to find, but it was all I had to work with. My plan will only work if the person who wrote the letter about Maya was telling the truth. I hold the paper tightly in my hands; this is the first lead. I'm not going to stop here. The next chance that I get, I'm searching for her. I don't care where you are, Maya. I will find you, and I will

make things right between us. "Kane!" I heard someone shout my name. I turn towards the sound, and I recognize the person immediately. It's the same girl from before who protected me from Maya's brothers. I didn't want to stay and speak to anyone, but I think I had to at least listen to her after she saved my life. She's why I can live to find out what happened to my mate. "What is your name?" I ask her. She looked startled when I asked her, but she quickly answered, "Gabriella." I nod, "not that I'm not grateful that you saved my life before and believed me when I said I wasn't the one to hurt Maya. But it's a little weird that you tried so hard to protect me. You are friends with Maya's family; why would you go against them? Why would you help a stranger like me? Especially when that stranger is an asshole." She smiled at my last comment, and I don't blame her. I was an asshole for the things that I did in the past. I was trying to make up for it now, but I wasn't sure that anything I did from now on could outshine the wrongs that I've done. She looks away from my piercing gaze; it's like she doesn't know if she should tell me, which makes me even more curious than before. Why did she help me? Did she know my father? Or my sister? "I could tell by how hurt you were on that day that you are deeply in love with Maya. I've been through my fair share of heartbreak; I know when a man is in love. I know how he looks when his heart is broken. You were in a lot of pain when you found out about Maya. Austin and his brother were too lost in their pain to see that you were hurting. I didn't want them to make the mistake of killing you; I know that it's the last thing that Maya would ever want; for her brothers to kill the man she loved. I also want to believe that Maya is alive, and if there's a chance she is, I want her to find you. I want to see you two happy together again." Hearing that Maya loved me was another sharp pull at my heart. We never got a chance to explore our feelings for one another. She never fully opened up about them to me but her actions and how she fought to protect me were enough to tell me the truth. My hands close around the paper, and it makes an annoying sound in return. Time was running out; I had to keep looking. But if I kept looking, Giselle would wake up and find me gone. Giselle's father, that bastard chose to attack me when I was at my weakest. He knew that he wouldn't have been a match for me otherwise. He was a pathetic fool, and I couldn't wait for the chance to bring him to the ground. He may have won for now, but I would see that I got the last laugh in the end. "I didn't get a chance to tell you before but thank you. I can find out what happened to Maya, and it's only because of you." "Don't mention it." She tells me with a sparkle in her eyes. "Just think of me like family." Like family? Why would she want a stranger like me to think of her like family? "Can I ask you something?" She asks with a nervous tone. "What is it?" I had to end this conversation soon; it was time for me to get back to the palace. And I had to keep this list hidden from Giselle. If she found out what I was trying to do, which wouldn't be that hard judging by the names on this list, she would go crazy

on me, which she's already done a few times before. "Is there anything from your childhood that may have seemed strange to you?" She asks. "Did you have an amulet on you or anything similar to what's on my neck?" I study the amulet that she's pointing at, it is a unique piece, but I don't understand why she would expect me to have one like that. "I'm sorry," I answer her. "While it is beautiful, I've never seen anything like it before. I would remember seeing something like that. It's hard to miss." Her face turned sad the moment that I told her. "I'm guessing that was the wrong answer?" I ask her. For some reason, I don't like seeing her sad. She shook her head, "I'm sorry. I don't know why I was expecting you to say yes. This amulet means a lot to me; it helped me find my parents." If what she's saying is true, why would she expect me to have anything like that? "While I'll love to stay and chat. I have a few pressing matters to get back to. If I don't get back in time, I'm afraid I'll be in some serious trouble." "Trouble?" She asks, alarmed. "What kind of trouble are you in? Do you need any help from my husband and me?" My eyes snap to her husband at the mention of him. I assume that's her husband because he's staring at us. He doesn't seem to trust me the way that his wife does. He seems suspicious of me. I couldn't blame him after everything I'd done. I can only assume the trouble I've gotten her into when she tried to help me. She went against her friends to do so. I didn't want to add to her troubles. "I'll be fine. I think I can help myself. You've done enough already." I tell her as I turn to leave. "I'll always remember what you did for me; if you ever need me, don't be afraid to reach out to me. I'll help you in whatever way I can."

Chapter 49 ~MAYA~ I'm biting on my nails while my legs shake with fear. Kane still hadn't returned, and I was close to biting my hands off. I thought he would at least try to make it back before Giselle woke up, but from the looks of it, I was wrong. Time was running out, and he was nowhere in sight. How could he do this? Does he not realize what she would do to him when she realized he'd left without telling her anything? I can see the horror in my mind. I cover my face with my hands and try to remain calm. If Giselle woke up and saw me panicking like this, she would read straight through me. That would only make things worse for Kane. I didn't want that. I didn't want to see him in trouble especially knowing that he had helped me earlier today. I walk over to the window and look out of it. It was a few hours ago that I jumped out of here and straight into Kane's arms. I still remember how wonderful it felt to be held by him. He was warm and big; I felt safe in his arms. I want to scream at how stupid I was being right now. Why can't I stop thinking or worrying about him? He didn't want my help. He made it very clear to me already. If he didn't want me to worry about him, then why couldn't I stop? My body goes stiff when Giselle opens her eyes. I've been checking out the window

constantly; Kane had not returned yet. I'm terrified of what would happen when Giselle realizes that he's been gone for the entire day. I walk over to her and try to act as unbothered as I could possibly be. I didn't want her to pick up on my fear; if she did, she would know that something was wrong. Oh, why did Kane have to leave at a time like this? Why hasn't he returned yet? Was he possibly hurt while out? There were so many questions racing through my mind, and it was hard to act like I wasn't worried about his whereabouts when my heart was racing whenever I thought about him. "What time is it?" She asks as she stares out her window at the darkness. "How long have I been sleeping for?" "It's been a few hours," I inform her. "Do you need me to get anything for you to eat or drink? I had a doctor check on you earlier. Actually, Kane was the one to get the doctor to look after you." Her eyes widen at my words, "Kane got a doctor to look after me?" She asks in disbelief. "I should get sick more often if it means that he will be so thoughtful and caring." I force a smile on my face, "it's true. He cares for you deeply. You're fortunate, miss Giselle; he was very concerned about your health when he saw that you weren't waking up." "But where is he now?" She asks as she looks around the room with hopes of finding him. I'm not sure if I'm doing the right thing. I'm just trying to protect Kane after everything he did for me today. I wanted to repay him in whatever ways that I could find. I knew that I had to mention Kane since she would go looking for him. I knew I had to come up with a good reason why he wasn't here looking after her with me. This was the best excuse I could think about. "He was the one that brought the doctor, so he's the one that followed the doctor back to the office. He wanted to thank him for coming to your aid on such short notice." I lie. "Oh." She whispers. "I can't believe that he will do something like that for me. No one has ever willingly done something so sweet for me. Kane continues to prove why I've always had a soft spot for him all these years. If only my father could see how good a person he was." I don't think I've ever seen her this happy before. What would she do if she learned that it was all a lie? How long will it take before Kane shows up? If he's away from us any longer, Giselle will figure out that I was lying to her. Even worse, what if he returns and she mentions what I said? Will he play along with the lie or not? She attempts to get up, and I help her even though it's the last thing I want to do. "What else happened while I was asleep?" she asks me. "Did Kane really look worried about me?" I sigh, "you can ask him for yourself when you see him. I'm sure he will explain how he felt about the entire thing better than I would." We both stopped talking when we heard footsteps. I held my breath when I saw Kane walking through the door. Why does he always look so damn good? How can anyone not fall for him when he looks like that? "You're finally awake," he says to Giselle without looking at me. I'm disappointed that he didn't even look my way, not even once. His eyes are glued on Giselle, and I can tell she enjoys the attention he gives her.

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I'm sure that the attention is intentional; he wants to stop her from asking unnecessary questions. "My maid tells me something interesting." She finally says to him. His body goes still at her words, and he finally looks my way. He's curious or maybe even worried about what I told her. Did he think that I would sell him out? Is that why he thinks of me? "And what did she tell you?" he asks hesitantly. "She told me that you brought a doctor to look after me earlier today." She answers him. "Is that true?"

Chapter 50 "Yes," Kane finally answers. "You weren't waking up, and I knew you had plenty of things planned for us today. I had my friend, a doctor, make sure that everything was okay. He told me that it's important that you rest for a few days." Giselle shakes her head, "I can't rest when we've already lost an entire day together, Kane; we need to make up for the lost time. I have some friends coming over tonight; I didn't realize I'd been sleeping for so long. I want to introduce you to them. They will be happy to know that I've finally gotten the man of my dreams." "Do you think that's a good idea?" he asks her. "I don't want to see anything happen to your health; it was hard being by your side today and seeing you so sick. Please reconsider." Giselle smiles, and it's weird to see her look this happy all at once, "thank you for showing me your caring side. If I had any doubts about our upcoming marriage, they're gone now. You're going to make a wonderful husband and father to our future children." My body runs cold at her words. I can't imagine Kane having children with her. I don't want to imagine something like that. Hearing her say this reminds me of his earlier reaction to finding out that I was pregnant with twins. I know it's crazy to even wish for, but my crazy heart and body wish that he could be my babies' father. I know it's impossible when he doesn't even know who I am, but it's what my heart wants. I notice that Kane once again goes into a shock at the mention of Giselle possibly having his babies in the future. I know now that he's traumatized about something concerning pregnancy. Maybe this has something to do with the woman he was with before entering Giselle's life. Or should I say before Giselle forced herself into his life? There were many things that I still didn't know about Kane's past life. Just like I had no idea about my past. I don't want to think about my history right now; I don't want to be reminded of that sadness. It's hard not knowing who you were in the past. It's hard not knowing if there are people out there looking for you or even missing you. Again I want to ask Kane about his past life, but I'm not sure it's my place to ask anything. He doesn't seem like someone who wants to open up about his life or the troubles that he's faced. He looks like someone who keeps everything to himself. I'm not sure that there's even anyone to listen to him, however. He's never mentioned his family; I don't know if his parents are alive or not. I've never seen them around here, which is alarming since Giselle and Kane were planning on getting married. If they were

getting married, wouldn't both of their families be involved? Not just Giselle's family. However, I could understand why Kane's family would want nothing to do with this family. "You have to get dressed," she tells him suddenly. "I can't have you looking like that amongst my friends. I've already gathered a few shirts for you; I'm sure that everything will suit you so well. Go to your room, and you'll find it, and don't take too long, or I'll come into your room to help you try on your clothes." She teases him. I cringe at the look she gives him; I'm sure that Kane does as well. I try my best not to look his way again; I'm afraid I will give away too much. I don't trust my reaction to him. We were lucky to get away today. I was sure that Giselle would find out that he'd left today, I didn't think my lie would convince her, but I guess she wanted to believe that he cared for her, and that's the reason why she chose to believe me. She probably thought I didn't have the guts to lie to her either. Little did she know that I hadn't only just lied to her; I was also the reason why she was asleep for the entire day. "Who are these friends you've invited over?" Kane asks suspiciously. His question helps bring me out of my thoughts. I also wanted to know her answer to his question. Who were these friends that she spoke about? I found it hard to believe that anyone would willingly want to be this woman's friend. Maybe she treated her friends better than she did the people that worked for her; I can't imagine her being nice to anyone. "You'll see them soon enough; you don't have to be so impatient, darling." She answers him. "I know that you're just as excited as I am to announce our relationship to the world." Every time Giselle said something like this, I felt like puking; I hated having to stand here and listen to this. "Now go get dressed," she tells him again. "And you're coming with me to help me get dressed," she says as she focuses her attention on me. I nod and turn to follow her as she walks off. I gasp when Kane grabs my hand, stopping me from walking. I look at Giselle walking away and then back to him. What was he doing? She could turn around and see him holding onto my hand any second now. Does he not realize that she would lose her mind for something like this? It didn't help that my hand couldn't stop tingling from his touch. I resisted the urge to close my fingers around his hand; I had to have more control than this. "What are you doing?" I ask after finding my voice again. "Giselle is right there, and she can't see us talking. You know that." My eyes fall on the small movements of his chest; what was he thinking? "Thank you." He whispers. My heart skips a beat. Don't do this, I say to my heart. Don't flutter just because he told you 'thank you.' Thank you didn't mean anything special; people said thank you for almost anything. Then why does it sound so beautiful when he says it? It's not like I did anything special. He was the one that helped me first; he even pushed his plans aside to help me. All I did was make up a lie to stop Giselle from finding out what he'd done. It wasn't anything unique, and it didn't deserve his thank

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you. Still, I was happy to hear those words from his mouth. I was glad to know that I was somehow able to help Kane.