

The Alpha's Contract

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Chapter 0231

He pries the keys out of my hand. "I will drive."

I give in and let him take them. While I slip my feet into some wedges, he asks me where I want to go.

"Just drive." I mutter and follow him out the front door.

He doesn't speak as he winds the car through some back roads. He lets my thoughts run wild. Waiting for me to take the lead.

I'm not even sure how far we have travelled when he pulls the car in under some trees, but I could see the sun appearing in the distance.

"Drive!"

"I've been driving for hours. We will need fuel if I keep it up." He mutters.

It was now or never.

"I have spent my life searching for my half sister. To right the wrong that happened to me and my mother. She was impossible to find until recently. All I had to go on was a name and when our kind are hidden from the world, do you know how hard that is?"

He keeps his mouth closed but watches me carefully.

"I developed the desire to kill when I was a teenager and I was damn fucking good at it. It comes naturally. People paid me to get rid of problems. A handy way of earning money while doing the thing I loved at the same time. Do you know how rare that is? Of course you don't, I'm sure big brother had enough money to get you anything you wanted."

It was a bad dig, and I knew it was because I was so angry.

"Did Damien ever mention being evil?"

He shakes his head "Honestly, I didn't spend that much time with him."

“Shifting and killing does something to Lycans.” I shake my head. “It turns us into even worse monsters than what we already are and sometimes, there is no stopping it.” I sigh. I had never told anyone that before and it was so mentally draining to even think about it.

“You came back from being a monster.” His dark eyes linger on mine

“And one day, I could lose that battle all over again.” He might as well hear the truth now he was learning my secrets.

“How long has it been?”

“Four years.”

“And you still think it's a possibility?”

I nod, watching the sun rise over the hills.

“Why?”

My eyes flash to his. “What do you mean ‘why’?”

“Why is there still a chance that you will go back to that life? Surely if you don't want it, then you just don't go back to it.”

“If only it was that simple. The only way I can think of explaining it is that it has a hold on you. Lycans were not designed to live like humans or even Wolves. We were designed to keep the

population under control.”

“Numbers of humans keep growing and are slowly destroying the world so we knock them back down. Though some Rogues go too far.” I add

“You are talking about that town that I told you where Salem was from.”

I nod. “They should have moved on. Their mistake.”

“You've never spoken about it have you? You've kept that all to yourself for years.”

“If you haven't noticed, it's not like I have friends, is it?”

He pulls the lever and slides the drivers seat back as far as it can go. He reaches over and unclips my belt. Grabbing hold of me, he pulls me onto his lap and grabs my face, pulling it close to his. “You have me.”

His lips hit mine with a new force. Rough and messy as his tongue forces my lips apart.

I had given him the worst news about me and yet he hadn't flinched or backed away. He let me get everything out without pushing too much for more information.

Twisting my body around until I'm straddling his thighs. I lock my arms around his neck, and kiss him back as ferociously as he kisses me.

He understood me far more than anyone else had. I had let him in deeper than anyone else.

I pull back from him. My chest rises and falls as I stare at him. Maybe he is my salvation.

"Okay." I whisper. I tip my head back, letting him have access to my neck. "Do it."

Chapter 0232

Neah

"It's good right, that he's dead?" Raven asks as she crawls into my bed next to me. The twins were asleep and I had been making the most of the quietness until Raven came charging in my room.

"I don't know."

She eyes me suspiciously, "Because Blair allegedly killed him?"

"Don't you think it was all a little too easy for her? Damien tracked him for a month and still couldn't kill him. When Salem was here, none of us could get a hand on him. Instead, he destroyed countless lives."

"Okay, so you have a point." She mutters. I still didn't understand it or what Blair wanted and everyone had a different opinion.

Raven opens a bar of chocolate and starts nibbling on it while trying to think of something to say. "I get that maybe she was helping Jenson get revenge, but you are right, it does seem too easy."

"I mean, he is definitely dead, Neah. I watched the colour drain from Damien's face. He may have tried acting all macho but you could see it, he was in pain."

"Could they have faked it? Maybe Salem is working with them too."

She shakes her head. "Salem killed Jess. there is no way in hell that Jenson would work with him. And you can't fake the pain of losing a sibling."

“But no one expected him to work with a Lycan either, not after he blamed Dane for bringing Damien and Mallory here.”

“Hmm.” She frowns and offers me a piece of her chocolate, though I shake my head. “Damien has a theory.” She mutters, shoving the piece into her mouth. How she wasn’t the size of a house was beyond me. She is always eating.

“Spill.”

“He thinks it’s an attempt to get closer to you.”

I snort. “Me?”

“Like some weird fucked up plan. He doesn’t know what, but he definitely thinks it’s something.”

“I think we can all agree on that. I may have not been able to see through things when I was younger, but I have learned a lot. Everyone has a game plan.”

“And she is still with Jenson. Knowing my brother, he has probably told her everything about our pack and how it works I expect he has even told her everything he knows about us. He isn’t supposed to, but that was before he detached himself from us.” Her shoulders drop. She won’t admit it. But she missed him. Even if he seemed to be a problem.

“I wish he could see that he has lost his way.” She adds as she stares at her hands. “Dane will forgive him. He is family.”

I didn’t want to tell her what Dane had said about him. Forgiving him was the last thing on my mates mind. In fact he had mentioned several times how he would let the others tear him apart for putting his family and the pack at risk.

“I don’t think he cares about that, Raven. It’s been months.”

“She could have a hold over him.” It sounded more like she was trying to reason with herself. Or maybe Midnight.

I shrug my shoulders, keeping my thoughts to myself.

‘You should tell her.’ Nyx mutters

‘No, because deep down she already knows.’ I snap back

I watch Raven’s shoulders drop even lower. “We’ve lost him for good, haven’t we?”

"I don't know. What I do know is that it has been a long time since there has been any news from him. And the first bit we get is not even from him, but from the Alpha of Ashburn city. He didn't even acknowledge the death of his kids."

She drops back on my pillows, staring up at the ceiling and even letting the remainder of the chocolate bar fall to the floor. A tear creeps out of the corner of her eye, leaving tracks as it makes its way down to the pillow.

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Seconds later, a brisk knock raps the door and Damien doesn't even wait for me to tell him to come in.

His dark eyes settled on her as more tears seeped from the corner of her eyes.

Damien crosses the room, sliding his arms under her even when she protests about being touched. He pulls her against him until she gives in and lets him carry her from the room.

As they leave, Dane makes his way in, planting a kiss on my cheek. "What was that about?"

"She misses him."

He nods his head knowing exactly who I am talking about.

"Do you think there is a chan....."

"No." He cuts me off before I even finish the sentence. "Jenson made it more than clear that he doesn't want this. I'm not pandering to him!"

Every so often he would throw in a word or phrase that I didn't know. I think sometimes he forgot that I was a slave and the only words and phrases I knew were ones that were used around the house. Some I had learned in my time here, but still, there was always something.

He sees my face and corrects himself. "I'm not going to do what he wants just because he throws a fit. I need to do what's best for our family and the pack."

"I want to help her. But I don't know how to."

"You can't." He looks over to our napping twins. "It's more than just a sibling missing a sibling. They are connected in more ways than most. Twins that carry Alpha blood. They are twins that have also

been gifted twin Wolves. That bond they have shared since the day they were conceived can't just be broken because he left the pack."

"Can she still link him?"

"No."

"You just said the bond is stronger. What about her Wolf, Midnight, could she connect with his?"

"Aspen? I guess I haven't really thought about it. If you haven't noticed, she doesn't really talk about Jenson to me. Or Damien." He adds with a sigh. "She did this after our parents died. She partially shuts down. Though it's really hard to see because she carries on with life in general, she just won't talk about the things that are weighing her down."

"She talks to me. Not much, but she does."

"And I am more than grateful for that." He kisses my cheek again, inching down to my lips.

The electricity of his touch ignites my body as his kiss deepens. His tongue is quick to explore my mouth as his hand locks into my hair, holding me close.

"The boys." I murmur, pulling away.

He growls when I don't let him go any further. "They will be sleeping in their own room tonight."

"But..." I start to protest. I have had them close to me every night since they were born. They were my responsibility. It was up to me to keep them safe from the chaos of the world.

"They are nearly seven months old. Their nursery has been ready for months. And they will be in the room right next door with a guard if that makes you feel better. I need my mate to myself, even if it's only for a few hours."

He nuzzles the mark on my neck, knowing that it is my weak spot. His hot breath brings my skin to life.

"Two guards." I murmur back

"If it means I don't have to share you, you can have as many as you want."

He kisses me again just as Evrin starts to cry and mutters something about that's why he wanted me alone as he climbs off the bed.

Seconds later Logan wakes too. It was definitely a twin thing.

Chapter 0234

Neah

When the cribs were being moved, Dane received a link, telling him someone looking like me was at the gates to the pack.

Immediately, my body tenses, why the hell was she here? I also find myself questioning it because she hadn't tried to sneak in this time

"Stay here with Raven and the boys." Dane kisses me. "Damien, you're with me."

"No." I snap

Both men freeze.

"She's obviously here to see me. That was why she came the first time, to tell me about my father."

"Neah...."

"I can handle it." I mutter. I knew the real meaning behind him keeping me away. He wanted me to stay calm. To keep the ever growing darkness from enveloping my heart. But Damien had been right about one thing. My sons helped keep the darkness at bay.

"I don't...."

"I will go with her." Damien interrupts him. "The boys should be with one of their parents. I swear, I won't let anything happen to her."

Dane had a love-hate relationship with Damien. While he appreciated that Damien would do anything for me. He hated how Damien didn't always respect that he was the leader even now after he had accepted the Beta position.

"If anything...." Dane starts

"Nothing will happen to her. I will let her kill me if it means keeping Neah alive."

My eyes widened. "Don't let Raven hear you say that!" She would be mortified that he was putting another woman first over his own life.

The men stare at each other. They couldn't link each other but it was clear they were having some sort of silent argument.

One of the things I had come to learn from being in this pack; men are worse than women when it comes to arguing. Forever trying to assert their dominance. No one really did it to Dane apart from Damien.

“Damien!” I snap, “Are you coming?”

I quickly turn away before Dane’s crimson eyes lock with mine. I didn’t need to be reminded of the risk. My body had its own reminder every single second of the day.

‘What’s the plan?’ Nyx whispers as I make my way down the stairs. Damien’s huge frame is close behind me.

‘I don’t know.’ I mutter back to my Lycan. ‘But I need you to be quiet. I can’t have you interrupting me or letting me miss half the conversation because I’m distracted and talking to you!’

She falls into silence. We were finally turning a corner.

‘And no shifting.’ I add. I didn’t need or want to add more fuel to the fire. Not just yet.

‘It wasn’t me last time.’ She scowls. ‘I told you it was all your doing.’

Damien stays quiet as he walks behind me. I don’t know why, but he felt more reassuring than Dane. Whether it was because he didn’t question me, or because he wants me to be the Alpha that I’m supposed to be, I don’t know. What I do know is I don’t feel as tense.

Blair is standing at the open gates. The guards watching her every move. She looks completely different to the last time I saw her. Instead of baggy clothes, she is in skin tight leather. A cropped leather jacket shows off her torso, while on her feet are the tallest heels I have ever seen. Painted red nails peeping out at the end.

“Like to take your time, don’t you?” She eyes the plain black leggings and sweatshirt that I’m wearing but doesn’t make a comment. Her brown eyes shift over to Damien. “You must be the other Lycan.”

“You know exactly who I am.” Damien keeps his voice level, not a hint of anger present and waves to the guards to move away. “I’m sure Jenson told you. How is he by the way?”

“You don’t need to concern yourself with him.”

A snort escapes Damien and it made me wonder what he really thought of Jenson. did he not say anything because he knows it will hurt Raven?

“Why are you here?” I ask, bringing her focus back to me

She unzips her jacket and pulls out a large tan envelope and flings it on the ground in front of me.

Damien steps around me to pick it up. "What's this?"

"That is for my half sister."

He sniffs it first, making Blair cackle. "It's not poison. I just thought it would clarify a few things."

Damien hands it to me. Inside is a picture of my father with a woman that isn't my mother. Briefly, images of my parents and their blood coated bodies flicker before my eyes. Their screams of pain fills my ears. Like a burst of energy, I feel the darkness flood through me.

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I force images of Logan and Evrin to take their place.

"That is our father, with my mother. If you look closer, you will see she is pregnant. Pregnant with me." Blair continues. "I don't blame you for not believing me. But how else do you explain how similar we look?"

"Is that why Jenson went to you?" Damien pushes. "Because you were the next best thing?"

She snarls at him. "Jenson has claimed me as his." She pulls her jacket to one side and shows me the mark just above her collarbone.

Damien erupts into laughter. "So he marked you because he couldn't have Neah?!"

Blair glares at him as his laughter quietens. I didn't need to look to know he was still smirking.

Her brown eyes refocus on me. "When I came here last, I didn't handle it very well. I made you feel like I was a threat."

'Lies.' Nyx mutters

"I just wanted you to know the truth about our father. I figured you deserved that."

"Well, you've told me and now you can leave."

"I thought maybe we could have a conversation. Sister to sister." She presses. "Just us, alone."

“Do you really think she is that stupid?” I hear Mallory’s high pitched voice as she drops out of a nearby tree. I had been so busy trying to keep the darkness from taking over that I hadn’t even noticed she was here. Had Damien? He didn’t let anything get past him.

“Mallory?” Blair forces Mallory’s name off of her tongue like it’s poison.

“You must be the bitch that’s riddled with lies.”

What the fuck was going on? They almost sounded like they knew each other, but at the same time, they didn’t.

“Jenson has told me all about you. How you almost killed my half sister?” Blair’s brown eyes return to me. “Why did you let her live?”

“I don’t have to explain myself to you.” I snap

She takes a step toward me and so does Damien. “I’m telling you now, little sister. It’s not good to be surrounded by those that were once Rogue.”

“It takes one to know one.” Mallory growls from the other side of me

This time Blair steps back. She seemed to be surprised by Mallory’s words. Like someone had revealed a deep dark secret that she had never wanted shared with the world, or more particularly, me.

She rocks on her heels, sucking her cheeks in as she thinks of something to say. Instead, she turns, ready to walk away, only to flick her head over her shoulder. “Protection doesn’t work if the wrong people are protecting you. Neah.”

She struts away down the lane and gets into a fancy car. As the car makes a U turn, I catch sight of Jenson and he looks angrier than ever.

“Mallory, what the fuck were you doing in a tree?” I snap

“I saw her, okay. I was up there watching, like I have been doing since the last time she came. I didn’t believe Damien when he said she looked like you and I wanted to see for myself.”

“What did you mean, ‘takes one to know one.’?”

Her eyes shift to Damien. “Damien had his suspicions.”

I spin to look at him. “Why?”

“That day I saw them drive off together. She was the only Lycan around.”

“Okay? And?”

“The only Lycans that prefer to be on their own are ones that have gone Rogue.”

“I wasn’t going to accuse her directly.” Mallory adds, “But the way that she reacted confirmed it and it’s not something she wants people to know.”

“So she has felt this?.” I mutter, pressing a hand over my heart. “She felt this darkness.”

They both sigh.

“I’m not saying I feel bad for her.” I snap. She clearly wants something from me.”

‘She’s lying to you.’ Nyx murmurs. ‘Last time and this time, she has acted like a different person each time. Don’t fall for it.’

I glance down at the photo that was half scrunched in my hand. My father had loved another, but had given it all up for his true mate and Blair hated me for it.

Chapter 0236

Mallory

“What an absolute bitch!” I snap to myself in annoyance. How could they come from the same father but be so different.

Damien swings the front door open. He had made sure Neah had returned to Dane before joining me.

“What the fuck was that shit you were playing at?” He demands. “I had to tell Neah that it was my idea for you to be hiding in the fucking trees.”

“Why did you do that?”

“Because everything you do, she finds suspicious. You are just lucky she believe it. Are you trying to get yourself killed now?”

“No, I just... I thought I could help by keeping watch. No one will let me join in on guard duty so I figured I would do it myself and we all know Rogues and Lycans like trees.”

“Why didn’t you just tell me what you were doing?”

“Because you probably would have said no. You seem to have forgotten that I used to watch over the Rogues before you. That I would keep an eye out for anyone driving through the town. And it was a good job I was in the trees. Neither of you saw the gun that was stuck down the back of her stupid leather leggings!”

“A gun?” He meets me with the same surprise as when I saw it.

“Yes! Not the first thing that comes to mind for a weapon used by a Lycan, right, but I know what I saw!”

I hold the pot of coffee up to him and gesture if he wants one. He nods, slowly sitting at the table as he absorbs my words.

“You think she was going to kill Neah?”

“I don’t know. All I know is that the moment she asked to speak to Neah alone, I had to do something. Neah may still hate me, but if I can prevent her death, I will.” I shrug my shoulders. I was tired of trying to prove myself but I will continue to do it as long as I am here and alive.

“I appreciate what you did.”

“But she doesn’t, does she?” I sigh. “I don’t know what else I can do, Damien. If I just sit around, I feel like I’m just waiting for the day that Neah decides enough is enough and she is going to have me killed. If I do something, it’s wrong. If I don’t do anything, it’s wrong. I’ve said it to you many times, but maybe now, now is the time I leave, for good.”

“No.” His answer is blunt. No reasoning to why he said no. Just the one singular word.

“Damien, you know as well as I do that everyone who has hurt her is dead. She lets very few people into her inner circle because of it. You, Raven, Klaus, Eric and Dane. That’s it. I’m literally waiting for the day for her to say ‘enough’ and have me hung in front of everyone.”

“She won’t hang you.”

“Well you won’t be able to stop her, will you. She will just order you to stand down.”

“No, I mean she won’t hang you. She will have you ripped apart or will pry your heart from your chest.”

“Thanks for the vote!” I snap sarcastically

He groans. “Forgiveness isn’t easy for some people.”

My shoulders drop. “I know, but you are the only one here who likes me. All anyone else can see is what I did years ago. No one here lets me train with them. No one here wants to be my friend except you.”

“I’ve seen you talking to Raven and Klaus.”

“Okay maybe Raven, but I think Klaus only talks to me because he is an oddball.”

“It’s not like you to sound so whiny.” Damien cocks a brow at me.

“This is not whining. This is being at the end of my patience. Because unlike other situations, it’s not like I can just take her forgiveness from her. It’s not a physical object! I have to earn it and I really don’t know how.” I place his mug in front of him a little harder than I intended and spill coffee on the table.

I angrily wipe up the spill. Feeling his dark eyes burn into the side of my face.

“Have you ever considered that it might not actually be about you?” There isn’t an ounce of frustration in his tone, unlike mine.

“What are you talking about?”

“The whole time we have been here, what have we learned?”

“That I’m the bitch?!”

He snorts and shakes his head. “She comes from trauma. Not once has she had it easy, ever. And I still believe that we don’t know everything. The darkness clings to every ounce of her being, feeding

on that trauma, playing with her thoughts and feelings in ways that she probably doesn’t even know. You know that.”

“And then there is also the possibility that she doesn’t know how to deal with someone saying sorry to her. Or maybe she has never heard it from someone who genuinely means it. We both know that sometimes, it’s easier to be angry at the world than it is to forgive. And it’s ten times harder for her because she is fighting something only she can fight.”

Chapter 0237

“Are you sure you weren’t a shrink when you were human?” I muse over my coffee. He always did have this way of seeing things that others couldn’t.

“I’m sure. What I am saying is don’t give up. Not just yet.”

“When you went after Salem, I shared a room with Raven. I thought it might open a path for me, but it just seemed to make her hate me more.”

“Ravens her friend.”

“I know that.”

“It’s possible that she thought she was losing her friend to you.”

I roll my eyes. “What kind of high school crap is that?”

He laughs. “That’s exactly where you are missing the point.”

I frown at his words and blow out my cheeks. Sometimes, it was really frustrating just how right he was. “Can you get her to meet with me? You could be there too.”

“I can ask her, but I’m not making any promises.”

I give him a small smile, grateful that he was at least trying

Once he has finished his coffee, he leaves to check on Dorothy. Once again leaving me alone. How was it possible to feel lonelier in a pack full of Wolves than what it was when we were living in the derelict town?

Refilling my mug with coffee, I take it out to the front door and sit on the cool stones that formed my tiny porch.

People walk past and even when I put my hand up, they don’t acknowledge me, acting like I don’t exist. I did the same thing most days and each day, I lost a little more of the hope that I had found somewhere I could belong.

Klaus leans into my line of sight, waving a hand at me. “You okay?”

“I will be.” I mutter

He walks up to me anyway. His frame shadowing mine as he blocks out what’s left of the evening sun.

“Fancy a walk?” He asks, his deep green eyes wide and expectant.

“You don’t need to feel sorry for me.”

He seems surprised by my response and almost a little offended . “I don’t. Now that I’m not really needed, I’ve got some freetime.” I roll my eyes as he fixes his man bun. “If you don’t want to walk, I can keep you company.”

He doesn’t even wait for an answer, plonking himself down onto the stone next to me. “I heard you were watching in the trees.”

“News travels fast.” I mutter, swigging the last of my coffee

“It’s a pack. It’s generally what happens.”

“Is that why you keep yourself to yourself?” I ask, not really interested in his choice of conversation.

“Yes.”

“If I kept myself to myself, they would probably be at my door with pitchforks.”

He nods his head in agreement.

“You are not supposed to agree.” I snap

“I can’t disagree when I agree.” He smirks at me which seems to brighten his deep green eyes. “I know what they are like.”

“Did you want to be Beta?” I ask curiously. He had stepped into the role because Eric was drowning himself in alcohol every day. But now Damien had accepted, Klaus seemed to mooch around the grounds more.

“Yes and No. Damien is perfect for the role. He has Neah’s best interests at heart.” He smiles to himself. “He challenges Dane when no one else will. His human past makes him a good asset. If I had been a permanent Beta, I would never be able to research as much as I do.”

“What are you researching?”

He screws his face up, “Lycans.”

“You know you have two right here who you can ask.”

“No offence, but I’m looking for information on Lycans by blood.” He adds. “And Neah can’t answer my questions. After all, it was me who discovered that she is a Lycan.”

“You?”

“No need to sound so surprised.”

“Sorry.” I mumble. “It’s just, even back then, before I was bitten, I knew what Cassandra and the others were. How did she not?”

“She believed she was a Wolf. It’s only when she started sharing information Dane realised things didn’t add up.”

I sigh, feeling the weight of the guilt in my heart.

They were cruel to her and I had just stood back and let them carry on, right up until I attacked her. Betrayed by the very family who were supposed to protect her. It really should not have been a surprise that she wouldn't forgive me.

"She didn't trust me to start with." He adds like he had read my mind.

"She didn't?"

He smiles again. "Dane brought her to my house for her first tutoring session. She panicked because I stood behind her, helping her with her words. Fear of being hit, fear of the unknown. It put her on edge."

"What did you do?"

"I gave her a little space. I talked to her. Told her how I ended up in the pack. We have something in common. I was bound when I was a kid too."

"You were?"

"A long story, but yes. I think knowing that I had something in common with her was what helped her relax."

"I don't have anything in common with her."

"Are you sure about that?"

Chapter 0238

Hi everyone, I hope you are all well and good.

You have all just reads Mallory's chapter and I hope you have enjoyed it. Originally, Mallory wasn't going to have a POV and I have done this as a bit of a one off due to so many requests but if you would like to see more from her, please let me know.

Thank you to all those who are leaving reviews, gems, comments and predictions. I enjoy reading them as much as writing the story.

There will be no update tomorrow, 6th May. It is a bank holiday in the UK and I will be taking the day to spend with family, but I will be back on the 7th.

Taylor West

Chapter 0239

Neah

Standing over the empty cribs in the nursery, I still wasn't happy that the twins would be sleeping in here tonight. Though I knew it was in their best interests, it still hurt.

"I thought I would find you here." Damiens deep voice echoes around me, making the room feel emptier than what it is. "You know I'm on duty tonight."

I spin around to look at him with wide eyes. "You are?"

"Dane thought you would feel more comfortable if it were me. You know I won't let anyone hurt them."

"Thanks." I mumble.

"Plus I can keep an eye on Dottie."

"The nightmares are getting worse again, aren't they?" I had heard her last night. Whimpers of desperation that she couldn't explain.

He nods his head and sighs.

"She's young. She has a loving father." He rolls his eyes at my words. Almost seven months on and he still wasn't used to his new role. "She has the chance to grow up surrounded by people who adore her. It will become a distant memory."

He leans against the door frame and folds his arms. "She's got a chance that you never had."

I smile sadly. She really was lucky that Damien had found her and not another asshole. Though he never did get a chance to find out if Salem had known she was in the bar.

"Were you looking for me?" I ask, remembering what he first said.

"I was."

"Why?"

He furrows his brow, choosing his next words carefully. "Blair had a gun."

"I didn't see a gun."

"Mallory said it was shoved down the back of her leather leggings. That's why she jumped down from the tree when she did. She thought you were going to get shot."

"She told you that?"

He dips his chin and waits for me to say something else. When I don't say anything, he tells me that Mallory was just trying to help.

"Like the time she tried to help Cassandra?" The spite rolls off my tongue.

"She's never forgiven herself for that. She has killed others, but she has never forgiven herself for what she did to you."

"Good."

"She can't change the past, Neah. None of us can."

His words stab my heart. Dane had said the exact same thing. Telling me could only make a better future. "You think I should forgive her?"

"I think you should at least listen to her. Then if you still don't like her. She will leave." I could see it in his face that he hated the idea of her leaving. "I can be there if it makes you feel comfortable."

"No."

"Neah she's trying....."

"No, I mean, I will go but I don't want you there."

He raises an eyebrow at me, "Are you sure?"

"I will talk with her tomorrow."

'And then she can leave.' Nyx murmurs. I don't repeat her words as Damien walks away with a smile.

It felt impossible to relax. Like I shouldn't be allowed to. The boys hadn't stirred so far, sleeping heavily as Damien and another guard hovers outside their door.

"They are fine." Dane mutters, pulling me toward the bathtub. His lips catch my jawline, inching along my chin towards the mark on my neck. "You need to relax." He murmurs, sending his breath fanning across my skin and igniting every nerve ending. He steps back, watching me. "Now take off your clothes."

Pulling the sweatshirt up over my head, a smile spreads across his face. His crimson eyes alight with hunger and desire.

I keep my eyes locked with his as I slowly push down my leggings and panties and step out of them.

“Get in.” He orders.

Stepping into the hot water, I let out a gasp. The heat was always a comfort, draining the worries from me.

Hugging my knees to my chest, I close my eyes, letting everything fall away when he steps in behind me. His legs slide down either side of mine as he pulls me back against his solid chest. His hardened length is already pressing against my lower back.

His teeth catch my earlobe, sucking it into his mouth as his hands cup my breasts. Thumbs brush over my hardened nipples followed by a quick pinch as his lips move from my ear to my neck, drawing a quiet moan from my throat as he sucks on the mark he gave me.

Tipping my head back on his shoulder, his lips roughly find mine. He sucks in my bottom lip, dragging his teeth along it before releasing me.

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Grabbing my jaw with one of his hands, he keeps my face tipped towards his as his other hand slips beneath the surface of the water, diving to that sweet spot between my thighs.

“Dane.” I whisper as he drags a finger across my folds, igniting the dull ache in my core.

The corners of his lips curl up as his hand firmly cups my pussy. “What do you want?”

“I want you.” I murmur back.

He makes a singular stroke that sends my nerves wild and automatically my hips are pushing up against his hand, desperate for more than just a stroke. My movements send water crashing over the side of the tub and his grip on my pussy tightens to still me.

Staring into his crimson eyes, “I want more.”.

His finger slides in a little further but nothing more. It was so agonisingly slow and something told me he knew exactly what he was doing.

“Please.” I whisper.

His crimson eyes stay locked on mine. He doesn't say anything, but flicks his finger a little.

My patience growing thin, I slide my own hand down into the water, forcing it under his and start circling my own clit.

His eyes narrow as he gazes at me. He loved it when I played with myself. But he loved it more when he could see every inch of me.

My mouth drops as a low groan rumbles through me and he pushes a second finger inside.

“Oh Dane.” My hips buck against our hands but he keeps his fingers slow and steady as I throbbed around them.

Suddenly, he drives a third finger into me. My core clenches as I try to hold back the orgasm building inside of me. It doesn't work and I'm shattering around him, rocking my hips as the orgasm runs its course.

He pulls me around, ignoring the water as more sloshes over the side. His cock is pressed against my pussy as he pulls me in closer for a kiss. Locking his hands in my dark hair, his tongue dips between my lips, exploring my mouth.

Lifting my hips, I slide my wetness up and down the length of his throbbing cock, letting my juices coat him before positioning him against my entrance.

Gripping my hips, he slams me down on his length, not even giving me a chance to adjust, forcing a squeal of pain and pleasure from me as he fills me.

“You are so fucking sexy.” He growls as his fingers dig into my hips and he thrusts upwards, smiling as my jaw drops.

Holding onto his shoulders, I slowly guide myself up and down his length, feeling his cock jerk everytime I slammed down against his base. He had been agonisingly slow at fingering me, it was only fair I repeat the process as I ride him.

He tries to speed it up by thrusting into me, but I keep myself steady, staying seated on him for longer each time he tries.

“Do I need to bend you over?” He mutters in a dark tone.

“You had your fun, now let me have mine.” I muse

A dark grin spreads across his face. He pulls my hands from his shoulders, pinning my wrists behind my back and holding them there with just one large hand. His other hand finds my clit, his thumb makes small circles against my swollen bud as I begin to bounce on his cock.

My eyes roll back as the desperate ache inside me grows. Both of us seem to be holding on, waiting for the other to climax.

"Fuck Neah." He growls as I slam down on him over and over. Biting on my bottom lip, I try to hold on as I teeter on the edge.

Releasing my wrists, his hands settle on my hips as he slams me down harder and harder.

"Dane, fuck!" My head tips back

"Let me see those pretty blue eyes!" he demands. Turning my face to him, I couldn't focus, everything falls away as I hit euphoria.

He rocks his hips, filling me with his cum as he pulls me flush against him.

Our heavy breathing is matched as I relax into him and he runs his fingers through my wet hair.

I had a smile plastered to my face and not just because of the sex. He had this ability to make me feel that everything was okay.