

Chapter 40

"I am freaking out here!" I screamed in the phone's speaker as Fiona simply laughed at me again.

"Melissa, calm down. You are hurting yourself," she said smoothly, but it wasn't that easy.

I woke up in Maxim's arms with a smile on my face when I remembered the beautiful moment we had last night. I didn't know why, but when I remembered the words he said to me just before we went to bed, my head started pounding all over again.

So, I grabbed my phone at five in the morning while the entire pack was still asleep and rushed to the balcony, where I called Fiona and woke her up too. At first, she was a bit upset about the entire thing, claiming that, and I quote, 'even miles away, I still manage to wake her up'.

That is, however, until I told her why I had called, and she somehow found it all funny.

"Why am I feeling like this?" I groaned as I leaned against the cold balcony. The sky was still dark since there was no sign of the sun just yet, but the moon was nowhere to be found.

Fiona yawned before replying. "So let me get this straight; you found a way to get rid of Lucina's mark, right?" she asked, and I nodded before I noticed that she couldn't see me.

"Yes," I replied.

"I wish I wasn't so sleepy, or I would be jumping and screaming right now. I am so happy for you, Melissa. I can't wait to tell Leo."

"Tell me what?" I heard a sleepy Leonardo ask with some shuffling on the line.

"Ssh. Sleep darling. I'll tell you in the morning," Fiona mumbled.

"It is morning," he pointed out, and I tried to stifle a laugh.

"I know, but in the morning when the sun is up. Go back to sleep." I could hear that she moved from the bed, probably to somewhere she wouldn't interrupt Leonardo again.

I decided to continue the conversation. "Thank you, Fiona. I really couldn't have done it without your caring for the past weeks."

"Don't mention it," she chuckled, though I knew she was blushing. "But tell me, why does it freak you out so much that he loves you. He is your mate, is he not? Whoa. Please don't tell me that this all was a sick joke, and Lukas is actually your mate, and you only found out last night when Maxim marked you."

I actually laughed this time, but I had to cover my mouth so I didn't cause any disruptions.

"No, that's not it. Maxim is definitely my mate. But he told me that he loved me, Fiona..."

There was silence for a while before Fiona spoke again. "And this is bad, why?"

"It's not bad," I huffed. "It's great! So damn great!"

I could literally see her pinching the bridge of her nose. "Okay, you are giving me serious whiplash here, hon. You have to give me more information."

"It's just that... I didn't say it back. In fact, we didn't even talk about it!"

"That's okay, Mel," she said with a short sigh. "Saying 'I love you' isn't something mates talk about. It's inevitable and quite natural. Maybe that's why Maxim didn't push it because he knew you would tell him on your own time. You don't have to love him back just yet."

I pulled on my hair and squeezed my eyes shut at the frustration I felt when she said this.

"But that's just it. I do feel the same way. I mean, how could I not? He spent every passing second with me for the past two weeks, caring for me and loving me, all this while still making me feel adored and beautiful. And this one is new, but he has a way with his tongue-"

"Okay, I didn't need that last bit," she shrieked hilariously. "But what I see here is that you don't know how to tell him back? Mel, when the time is just right, you'll say it back. Don't worry. And when you do, it'll be great, trust me."

I sighed. "But what if he thinks I don't love him back? What if my delay causes him to pull back or-"

"Melissa?" She cut me off swiftly. "You two share a bond now, and even before the bond, I'm sure he knew that you felt the same way. Tell me, did he seem offended or sad last night when you didn't say it back?"

"No," I sighed, only just realising how crazy I have been about this all. I completely overreacted.

"See," Fiona pointed out. "There's nothing to worry about. Well, except for your heat. That will be awful and great at the same time."

I groaned as I remembered the heat. Once I had Maxim's mark, I would go into heat on the night of the next full moon. From what I've heard, it was awful, painful and felt like a fever of a thousand degrees.

It would change my scent temporarily and attract any unmated wolves and send them in some sort of frenzy. A female wolf in heat is next to irresistible to an unmated wolf. There is something that happens with our scents, not to mention the pool of arousal left in our underwear too.

We were taught that the female wolf would be extremely horny all night long to the point where it becomes painful. The only thing that helps is her mate's touch and, of course, hours on end of lovemaking until she passes out from exhaustion.

It was the wolf's way of ensuring that she was fully mated to her partner by the time of the next full moon after she had been marked. I both dreaded and looked forward to it. Fiona once told me of her heat, and it sounded awful. Leonardo was out of town and trying to get back before the moon rose in the sky, but he was slowed down by a car accident.

But even with the few injuries, he shifted to wolf form and ran all the way home to Fiona, inevitably relieving her of the torture.

I only hoped that Maxim would be there all day when it was my time. In fact, I'm going to insist.

Even if we end up doing it before the day of the full moon, I'll still have my heat, so he

had to be there. And, of course, Lukas will have to be far, far away.

"Are you still there?" Fiona's voice snapped me back to reality.

"Uh... Yeah, sorry. I was just, um, thinking."

"Go back to bed, Mel. You'll be fine. You both will be fine. Trust me," she assured. "You love each other, and you're almost fully mated. Maybe by the time you guys come home, you will be. So don't overthink it, okay? You'll be fine."

I sighed in contentment when I realised that she was right. She always was. "Thanks, Fiona. And I'm sorry for waking you."

"It's okay. I'm glad I could help," she said, dismissing the conversation, yet no one hung up. "He's okay, by the way. He's coping," she whispered sadly, and I knew instantly who she was referring to.

Lukas.

"I didn't ask-"

"I know you didn't, but you were thinking about it," she interrupted, and I was ashamed to say it was the truth.

Since I called her, my mind occasionally wandered to thoughts about Lukas. I hated myself for caring, but I did. And now that his mark is gone, I only hoped that we all could move past this. He told me that he'd leave me alone with Maxim when this was over. I only hoped he meant that.

"Thank you. And um... will Leonardo tell him about Maxim and me?"

"Probably. But Leo is still upset with him, so I will Luke."

I smiled softly as my heart soared in gratitude. "Thanks, Fi. Honestly."

I didn't know why I was so nervous for Lukas to find out, but I was. The last thing I wanted was to take him by surprise when we return to Primal Pack, and I no longer have his forced mark but the mark of my mate.

It's not like we were on speaking terms where I could simply call him up and tell him.

"Don't mention it. I'll see you the day after tomorrow?"

"I'll be home by then. Bye."

"Bye, Love," she said as the call ended.

I sighed for what might've been the umpteenth time as I leaned against the balcony. I knew I had to get back to bed before Maxim rolled over and realised that I was not there. But I simply wanted a minute to clear my mind for a bit.

I watched the stars as they lit the sky with the absence of the moon. The morning was drawing close, as I could see the light splash of yellow over the horizon as the sun took its rise.

The peace calmed me, and before I knew it, I felt like I was falling asleep right there on the balcony. However, it wasn't by my own will, and it frightened me.

Feeling a bit panicked, I tried to resist it but found it useless as I was plunged into the

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realm of unconsciousness.



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