Chapter 45

I ran as fast as I could. I pushed my legs until they screamed, then I pushed even harder. I kept going at fun speed until I was certain that I was o his land, and then some. I splashed through freezing cold streams and stomped on thorns. I sprinted from those dense trees, into vast meadows, then raced across the pavement of a lonely highway. And I didn't dare look back once.

I couldn't hold my top speed for long, but when my pace seemed to lag I became angry with myself and exerted everything I had le in me. I had to get away. The more distance I put between Sebastian and myself the more likely he was to get away. And God, he had to get away from me because I was toxic, vile, when he was all things wonderful and kind. It seemed that the tables had turned on me in highest form of cruel irony.

The sun that had been high in the sky when I burst out of the home dove downward at an alarming rate. My lungs felt like they were going to burst and the human in me reasoned that I needed to slow down. I needed water and food. I couldn't push myself like this with nothing to fuel my body and I had already been running for hours. I wasn't sure if I would be able to hunt, it had been years since I tried and I hadn't been very successful back then either. It had been a long time since I trained as well. My body wasn't used to this kind of exertion.

But, it wouldn't have mattered either way. My wolf was driven to get as far away from her mate as possible. I wouldn't be able to stop to lick my bleeding paws, to take a drink of water, or to find something to eat. I would run until I couldn't anymore.

And that moment came rather quickly. My strides became shorter, choppier. My wolf let out a disgusted howl, like she was frustrated that she couldn't demand more of her body. But, a er the strained scream le the lungs, dizziness and a wobbly mind swept it. It seemed that no matter how much she slowed now, getting in a full lung of breath was impossible, or simply not enough.

As much as my wolf was driven to move forward the basic, primal instincts kicked in, overriding her. There was miles of distance between myself and my mate now. I had been running for hours and it would take even longer to get back. Sebastian was safe, at least for now. Which meant that I needed to focus on myself and my body's urgent demands.

And right now, I needed water. But, with all of the swamps and creeks and stream I had splashed through, the world suddenly seemed so parched around me. I was nearing the mountains. The so dirt had been replaced by sheer rocks and nothing to hold fluid. My tongue darted out, licking my lips as I strained my ears, hoping that i would hear water in the distance. I didn't.

Panting and weary, I had no choice but to push on. The sun would be rising soon and if I didn't have water by noon the spring time heat would be enough to sear me. I groaned and took shaky steps, hoping for any water, even a dirty puddle.

It never came.

And just as the sun was starting to rise my bruised and battered paws could take no more. My legs gave out. I only let out a whimper as I descended to the ground.

When I woke up again I felt like my organs were all tightening within my body. God, I needed water. With a low grunt I tried to push my legs beneath me. They only wobbled and gave out.

"Stay down, Char," Sebastian murmured. His voice was so soothing and melodic, like silk swiping my skin.

I let out a hu and crumpled willingly. My eyes stayed shut, even as I felt something trickle down my face. My tongue darted out, lapping up the moisture. Water. Thank God. It continued on for a few seconds, then stopped.

"Rest, we'll get you back home soon enough, once you're able to walk to the car."

When I woke up again I groaned and snuggled against the hard chest that was distinctly Sebastian's. My fingers curled into the so material of his shirt, pulling him closer to me as I tried to fade back into sleep. Just a few more minutes and I would be able to conquer the day.

But when his lips brushed against my ear lobe it all came rushing back. All of it.

With a startled shriek, I slammed my palms down on his chest. My bare feet skittered on the dirt as I tried to push myself away from him. I made it a couple feet, but the pain was so unbearable in my joints and muscles that I collapsed against a nearby tree, sinking back down to the dirt.

"Run," I gasped.

Sebastian, still seated on the dirt, only quirked an eyebrow at me.

"What are you doing?!" I screamed. "Get out of here!" Was that anxiety twisting my stomach or was it the power slowly taking control of me? I couldn't tell.

"I'm not going anywhere. At least, not until you come with me."

"You're fucking crazy," I spat, grabbing at my hair.

"I've been called much worse. If you want to hurt me, you're going to have to do better than that, Char," he mused. Then he dug around in a small backpack beside him. He tossed me a small packet of beef jerky. "Eat."

"Sebastian, my wolf-" The words died on my lips. My hands grabbed at my chest and I was both relieved and startled to find that I was wearing a baggy hoodie. And, were those boxers on my legs? "Did you put these clothes on me?"

"Well, it was either that or leave you out here naked a er you shi ed," he said. His voice could be as solid as he wanted it to be, there was no hiding the blush that coated his cheek. And, as upset as I was, the thought of his hands on my naked body, even if they were only pulling clothes on, made my exhausted heart pick up its rate.

But, this was no time for idle romance with longing looks and hot touches.

"Sebastian, you need to leave," I ordered, then so er, "Please."

"I'm not going anywhere," he repeated. "Eat."

"Sebastian I shi ed through the silver. My wolf is stronger than we thought. Those stupid pills aren't enough and I can feel her just beneath the surface all the time now. You aren't safe with me and your parents told me about me being your weakness and my wolf it out and, and..." I rambled on, feeling so close to tears. I threw the package of jerky, suddenly considering starving myself to death instead.

"Your wolf saved me," Sebastian whispered. He looked like he was about to touch me then thought better of it, melting backwards.

"What?"

"She ran away from me, Charlotte. She has always run away from me. Your wolf doesn't want to hurt me. And the one time you did want to hurt me it took almost nothing to make you submit. Whatever is happening to you isn't coming from your wolf."

"That doesn't change anything," I denied. But it did. It changed everything. Now I had no idea what to be afraid of and no idea how to control it anymore. "You aren't safe with me."

"I'm not afraid of you, Char."

"Well you should be!"

"The only thing I'm scared of is not having you in my life."

"Oh how cliche," I spat.

"I'm serious, Charlotte," he stated firmly. He met my gaze evenly, unafraid and unyielding. "Do you know what it's like to be hated by almost every werewolf in the world? Do you know what it's like to home to an empty house with blood on your hands? Do you know what it's like to live a lonely life just to keep the people you love safe, people who have nothing to do with the carnage you've caused? Do you know what it's like to have to kill innocent people because they are defending someone who has an awful twisted secret?"

"I'm dangerous, I could kill you," I whimpered.

"I don't care. It's worth the risk. I need you. I need to see your smile when I come home. I have to have you sitting next to me and watching movies and to catch you concentrating so hard on your art. I need the smell of your shampoo le on the tee shirts you stole from my closet and those so kisses at the end of the day."

"You don't need me so badly that you would risk your life for it," I protested.

"It's not much of a life without you, Charlotte. And you need me too. You can run all you like, but you'll never find out the truth on the run. I can help you. We can figure this out together."

"What if we can't?"

"We will. We've already gotten more clues. We just need a little time."

"I could hurt you in the mean time. I could just grab a knife and stab you in the middle of the night or strangle you with a pillow."

"I have Keiko and Ethel working on it right now," he assured. "As problems arise we will handle them, I promise. And, I'm not too arrogant to admit defeat. If it gets to be too much or it's harming either of us we'll call it a forfeit, but we have to try," he pleaded.

I said nothing for a long time, thinking. I wanted to tell him he was wrong, that we couldn't be together because I knew it would be safer for him. But he sounded so desperate. And he was right. I would never be able to find the answers if I kept running. If I knew anything about the mate bond it was that it brought people together. If I ran we would cross paths again and with no precautions in place that could be deadly.

"We keep a guard at the house," I said. "And if things go south I'm leaving and not coming back until we figure it out again, do you understand?"

"Of course," Sebastian agreed, fighting the smile pulling at his mouth.

And just like that all the fighting, all of the worrying, all of the self hate le , leaving me completely drained. "God, I'm so sorry, I've ruined everything. All I wanted was for you to have a nice birthday party," I groaned, rubbing my face with the heels of my hands.

"Come here," Sebastian murmured, opening his arms.

I wanted to hesitate, but I needed comfort so badly that I went to him without much thought. I sat in between his legs, loving the way his arms felt around me as I nuzzled my head into the crook of his neck.

"I didn't even get to give you your present," I complained against his skin.

When he spoke his voice was rough and low. "I can think of a way for you to make it up to me."

"Oh?"

He swallowed hard and I felt his fingers curl into the borrowed sweater I was wearing. He took a shaky breath. "I want you to mark me, Charlotte."

"Are you sure?" I asked, peering up at him through my eyelashes. "If I mark you it's going to be even harder to be separate."

"Yes. God, yes," he said, almost panting already. "I'm already yours, but I want it so badly, since the moment I brought you home."

I didn't need any more encouragement. I slipped one arm around his waist, keeping him tight to me. The other hand knotted itself in his hair as I adjusted my body was I was sitting on his lap. I could feel my teeth elongating already, my wolf so ready to make this perfect man mine, to show the world that he was taken. And Sebastian was more than ready for it, letting out breathy moans at just my breath on his neck and my hand tugging at his hair.

But I teased him with so , slow kisses. I started at his jaw and kept my mouth feather-light, barely touching him. But each kiss became firmer. By the time I reached his collarbone I was leaving, wet, open mouthed kisses on the skin. He was already trembling beneath me and I could feel his cock stirring under me. I dragged the tip of my tongue upwards, stopping halfway.

Then, I finally gave him what I wanted.

My eye teeth were at full length as I sank then into the so skin there. Sebastian pulled me tighter to him, letting out a loud moan as I bit down. The pleasure that struck me was so intense that I felt like I couldn't handle it. My entire body felt like a livewire and I almost jerked back, but felt Sebastian buck his hips beneath me. I tightened my grip on his hair, keeping him still as I felt our already intertwined souls lace together more tightly.

A er what felt like a year and only a second all at once I pulled away.

Sebastian stayed still, his eyes shut as he tried to control his breathing.

~~~Distraction Section~~~

Hello and welcome to your second weekly scheduled update! I hope all of you are well and sated with three chapters this week though I doubt it. I could post the who book and you'd all ask for more, not that I'm complaining.

Question of the Day: Which Disney princess or prince do you associate with the most?

For me, it's Belle. Reading books and eating fine food made my willing sta just seems like the dream. But the beautiful dancing scene in the film would not be a reality because I am the least graceful person I know.
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