

Chapter 25 The price for assaulting the Alpha

Jane

"Jane!" Ethan's deep bass echoes in my ears, sending shivers down my spine and making my knees shake. At first I tell myself I only imagined it, but then the palpable silence hanging between us becomes too heavy to deny.

I stop in my tracks, trying to act nonchalant. "Who is Jane?" I ask, not bothering to turn around.

"You're really going to keep playing this game?" He demands, sounding as angry as I've ever heard him.

"I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about." I insist, digging in my heels.

"Like you don't know what happened last night?" Ethan drawls, his footsteps drawing nearer.

"I've already told you, you fell." I remind him, determined to stick to my story at all costs. The last thing I need is for him to remember I attacked him. I hadn't even thought about what I was doing in the moment. It was only after, when I saw his blood, that I truly processed what I'd done: I attacked the Alpha. Yes he kissed me without asking, but I let him. I was kissing him

back every bit as passionately as he was kissing me and then I turned on him out of nowhere.

I can only imagine what the punishment would be. He certainly wouldn't turn me over to law enforcement. I'm sure he'd devise some creative and completely twisted revenge to which he could subject me.

"Bull." He snaps, refusing my assertion point blank.

"You had a lot to drink." I argue, hating how hyperaware I am of the man. I know exactly where he stands without looking, and I feel his nearness like a drug. "Not even Alpha's are immune to drunken accidents."

"The strange thing is how I happened to fall here, outside your door." Ethan replies, his hot breath fluttering over my ear.

"Maybe you were stalking me." I suggest, shifting restlessly from foot to foot.

"No, I seem to remember you being there." He announces, sending my heart plummeting into my stomach.

No, oh no, he remembers. He knows what I did!

"That doesn't mean you weren't stalking me." I reason, trying to keep my voice steady.

Ethan's huge, calloused hands land on my waist, pinning me to the spot and terrifying me to the core. "What happened last night, Jane?"

"Stop calling me that." I beg.

"Why?" He growls, "What bothers you about it so much?"

"It isn't my name." I lie, "Why wouldn't it bother me?" I breathe, "And all I know about last night, is what Linda told me. She found you unconscious in her hallway, and called me to fill me in before I got home, that's all."

The Alpha's hands tighten, sending pulses of heat straight to my core. "Then why can I still taste you?" He rumbles.

"Excuse me?!" I exclaim, passing off my shock as indignation.

"You heard me." Ethan prompts, purring when my shoulder blades brush his muscular chest.

"I did." I confirm, "But I'm giving you the chance to rethink your words."

"Silly little wolf," He taunts, "I don't say anything I don't mean, haven't you learned that by now?"

"I've asked you once before not to speak to me that way." I hiss.

"How?" Ethan clarifies, "Affectionately? If my memory is correct then it's more than appropriate."

"But it isn't, correct." I insist, "I don't know what you imagined happened last night, but I assure you that you have no right to speak to me that way."

"You don't really think I could forget, do you?" He asks huskily, "I held you in my arms less than a day ago, Elise. I'm not going to forget that anytime soon. And I'm not going to rest until you're back there where you belong."

"Where I come from, this is called harassment." I inform him icily.

"Oh?" Ethan replies, "I call it, 'making things right.'"

"I think you hit your head even harder than I realized." I gulp, feeling myself slowly melting in his arms and desperately needing an escape.

"You haven't seen anything yet." Ethan promises.

"I've seen everything I want to see." I snap, trying to squirm free of his grip.

Ethan pulls my body flush against his, clamping his hands down and holding me still against him. "Why did you do it?" He asks, his delicious scent enveloping me.

"You're confused." I claim, "you've mistaken me for someone else. This is your concussion talking."

"It's my wolf talking." Ethan contends, his heated words sending butterflies fluttering through my stomach.

At first I think he's simply touching me for the hell of it, the same way he half-drowned me in the tub trying to cuddled me. Then I realize he's not merely pressing me close, he's very subtly rubbing his body against mine,

intentionally covering me with his scent.

"Stop that!" I demand, pushing against him. The nerve! I think in outrage, Sneak scent marking me.

"Stop what?" He smirks.

"You know what you're doing!" I accuse fiercely, heaving in a few panting breaths. "You need to leave, Ethan." I finally announce.

"No thank you." He replies, sidling closer still.

"I wasn't asking." I combat. I've got to get him out of here. Every second he stays, the closer I get to having a complete mental breakdown. As strong as I feel when we're apart, as firm as my resolve may be, when we're together the entire world seems to turn on its head. I'm no longer powerful and confident and immune to him, I'm weak and vulnerable and at his mercy.

"You're really going to kick me out after midnight?" He asks, adopting a beleaguered expression.

I don't give an inch, "You're a big boy, you'll manage."

"But I'm injured." He attests, making every attempt to appear pitiful and failing abysmally.

Right on cue, Linda walks in from the hall. I wonder how long she's been up, I wonder how much she overheard.

"Linda!" I cry gratefully, "I'm sorry we woke you, but I was just showing Ethan out." I look to her for support,

but I can tell from the frown on her face that I'm fighting a lost cause.

"Unfortunately, the doctor wanted to see him when he woke." She tells me regretfully, "The Alpha can't go anywhere until he gives the okay."

"But..." I stammer helplessly. "The pups - his pup. We can't keep the alpha from his family and his work."

For once I'm almost certain Ethan will back me up. Not for once, he proves me wrong. "I'm afraid I have to comply with the doctor's wishes." He looks to Linda. "I'm sorry for the imposition, but I greatly appreciate your hospitality."

"Of course, Alpha." My friend smiles, taking me by surprise. What the hell! He can't stay here. We can't all be here together.

"But Linda-" I object, shooting her a pleading glance.

"I'm sorry Elise." She sighs, "The doctor was very clear."

"But he's fine!" I exclaim, gesturing to Ethan.

Before I know what's happening, Ethan has seized my hand and is now holding it in his own, tracing patterns over my knuckles and pressing his lips to my palm.

"Elise," My friend croons, "as soon as the doctor clears him, he can go. We'll call him first thing in the morning." She promises, leaning close and whispering, "You and

the pups can get up early and go to the park, he'll be gone before you return."

"I heard that." Ethan announces smugly, still toying with my hand.

Swatting the infuriating man so he'll release me, I'm taken aback when he drags me closer, "Behave." He orders ominously, "don't you think assaulting the Alpha once is enough?"

I don't even care that he seems to remember what happened, I'm so infuriated by his behavior that I simply respond out of instinct. "Not if you didn't learn your lesson."

Fire sparks in Ethan's eyes, and my excitement spikes in kind. "Are you admitting that I didn't fall after all, Elise?"

