

Chapter 51

However, Kalen still asked, and I noticed Darius fall onto the bed. Could feel his eyes boring into the back of my skull. "Tell me something, you remember the night of the fire?" I blinked at Kalen wondering how that helps anything.

Yet the look on his face told me he was trying to prove something to Darius. Or maybe me, I wasn't sure. "I remember coming home sick from school; I think I got food poisoning," I tell him, and he nods.

I thought back to that day, but it was kind of hazy. My brows creased as I tried to think. My mum was angry, her and my father were arguing, and I threw up on the floor. Why couldn't I remember after that? I remember my father cleaning the mess up. I also remember my mother giving me a drink, but that was it until the actual fire.

"What else do you remember?" Kalen asked, leaning forward, and I noticed Darius hop off the bed and walk over to us. He drops into the armchair across from us and loads more wood into the fireplace, though I knew he had only come over to listen.

"I remember the smoke woke me, and I remember calling out to my father. He called back and told me to hold on, that he was trying to get to me," I answer.

"What else?" Kalen nods.

"Just trying to move, trying to get to the door, but I felt so heavy, and my lungs burned, I think I crawled to the door," I tell him.

"Anything else?" Kalen asks when the bathroom door opens. Tobias steps out, followed by a billow of steam.

"I remember burning, which must have been my side, then only waking up to see Darius standing in front of me, his hands out. My mother's screams when the roof fell in, and the forest behind the house caught fire, but that is it," I avert my eyes when Tobias drops his towel, catching a glimpse of his ass as he slid some gray tracksuit pants on.

Kalen chuckled as my face heated, and Darius raised an eyebrow at him but said nothing, nor did he add anything about that night. He simply sat back and watched Kalen and me.

Looking over at Tobias, I stared at the burns on his back, full-thickness burns, and the skin patchy in places. "Your burns. Why didn't you heal them, and why are they so bad?" I ask, and he looks at me over his shoulder before staring at Darius, who nods to him.

"Because it took all our power healing you," Tobias says simply, and I look at Darius, who had an indecipherable expression on his face.

"Your back would have looked ten times worse than his and your legs. When we got to the house, the roof over your

bedroom was partially collapsed. You were trapped on the floor with a beam on you. We dragged you out just before the entire room caved in after we broke the wards that trapped you in there," Darius said, finally speaking.

"Wards?" I asked a little confused.

"Yes, your room was sealed. You could get in but not back out; Tobias is burned because he used his body as a shield while I broke them," Darius answered.

"So why didn't you heal him?" I asked.

"As Tobias said, we drained our power healing you. What we had left, we used to cloak you." I pulled a face. He made no sense.

"That is also why we couldn't find you after your powers manifested. We cloaked you so well that we cloaked you from ourselves."

"Why cloak me at all?" I asked.

"To hide you from the person or persons that tried to kill you, what I want to know though is why they tried, because the only logical reason is that you were my mate,"

"And mine," Tobias adds.

"Why does it matter if I was your mate?" I deadpan nobody knew I was; I didn't even know I was.

"Exactly, Aleera, so ask yourself this: why would your parents

try to kill you just to stop me from having you?" Darius asked.

"My parents didn't try to kill me, Darius. I remember them trying to get to me."

"You remember hearing their voices? Tobias and I got to you pretty easily by opening a portal into your room. Getting you out? We couldn't open one, so again, Aleera, why would they try to kill you?"

"They wouldn't. My parents loved me, Darius. I heard my father trying to smash through the floor to get to me, then you got there whenever you did and killed them, you probably started it," I snap at him.

"I would try to kill my own keeper, hurt my mate?" he asks, nodding toward Tobias. I looked at him, and Tobias was watching me. "Maybe you were only after my parents, then? You said it yourself. Our fathers hated each other."

"For good reason, your parents aren't who you think they are, Aleera," Darius snarls. Tears burn my eyes at his words. How could he say that? My parents loved me; I know they loved me.

"You're wrong. My life was fine before you came in and turned it upside down. My parents would never hurt me," I answered firmly.

"And if you're wrong?" Tobias asks.

"I'm not," I tell him, and he shrugs.

"If that is what you want to believe," Darius said.

"And if I was under a cloaking spell, then how did the authorities find me when my grandmother died?" I asked.

"Because you lived on one of my family's properties, that's why. I rang the school after she passed," Tobias answered.

"Pardon?" what was he talking about now.

"The house you were taken to belonged to my family, the private school you went to, we paid for," Tobias answers.

"What are you talking about? The Fae Authorities picked me up?"

"They said they were Fae authorities, they weren't, they were wardens of the school, that school you went to, Darius and I paid for, your grandmother was broke, your parents took her for everything just before the fire, cleaned her out not long after we left. So we took her in when she agreed to care for you," Tobias said.

"Bullshit," I tell them, and Darius growls before walking off into the closet and returning with a box. Darius dumps it at my feet and nods toward it. I rolled my eyes before removing the lid and finding papers. I pull them out.

All of them had my school letterhead, my school photos were even there, and most of them were bills for the school fees, thousands and thousands of dollars they had spent on putting me through school. All addressed to Darius and Tobias Wraith, my next of kin.

"Still think we are lying? We have no reason to lie to you, Aleera, so maybe stop lying to yourself," Darius said before walking off.

I dig through the box, pulling out my school files, everything from when I started, even some of my schoolwork.

Rummaging through the bottom, I found my grandmother's locket, the only item I could bring with me when I was taken from her house, beside a photo album I had lost when I called on them. It was in the bag I dropped. They wouldn't even let me take my clothes, said everything would be provided. I rub my fingers over the locket. It had a picture of her with my grandfather in it and a lock of his hair she cut off.

"You got this from my room," I tell them.

"Yes, when we came looking for you," Kalen says. I nod.

"I never knew," I told Tobias, and he nodded when Darius spoke behind me.

"How could you, when you ran before we got there?"

Chapter 52

My entire body ached when I woke up the following day. Every part of me hurt, and I felt like I'd been run over by a truck. It took all my strength to roll off the couch and onto the floor. It took some serious willpower to get to my feet and stagger into the bathroom. My legs couldn't even hold me upright in the shower; the best I could do was sit on the floor. Though the warmth helped loosen up my aching muscles.

When I was finished, I forced myself up and grabbed a towel, only to groan when I recognized my mistake and forgot to bring clothes in with me. I looked at my now damp walked-on pajamas on the bathroom floor, picked them up, tossed them in the hamper, and moved to the bedroom door.

Poking my head out the door, Tobias was nowhere to be seen and probably setting up for the early morning class he had since today was only a half-day. Lycus was not in the room, and I figured he went for a run. However, Darius was still in bed next to Kalen.

Tiptoeing out, I tried not to wake them as I rummaged through the drawers for some clothes. Usually, my clothes were waiting on the end of the couch, so I had no idea where they kept them. No such luck this morning. Whoever usually got them out, hadn't this morning but looking at the clock, it was pretty early still. Movement on the bed made me look over my shoulder to find Darius spooning Kalen.

They looked kind of cute snuggled together. My stomach twisted painfully, and I turned my gaze away when Kalen rolled into Darius, both of them moving and rearranging in the bed, and Darius groaned lewdly when Kalen kissed him in his sleep. Moving to the closet, I was about to give up and ask where they kept my clothes since they miraculously disappeared and reappeared when I felt warmth rush across my back and heat the small walk-in closet up.

Without even turning, I knew someone was behind me. I swallowed when Lycus's arm reached past me to the shelf overhead. He pulled some tights and tank top down before handing them to me. "You're up early," he whispered, and I nodded, feeling very caged in with him standing so close while also in the confines of the closet. I clutched them before turning around. I take a step back, bumping into the clothes hung up in here when I notice he is entirely naked. Stark naked, not a scrap of cloth-covered him. Lycus stood there watching me, and I tried to squeeze past him, but he stepped into my path.

"Excuse me," I whispered, not liking how he was backing me into a corner, a literal corner, and a coat hanger dug into my shoulder. I gasped; what the heck did he want? It was too early in the morning for their little games.

"You might want to get changed in here," Lycus smirked, and I raised an eyebrow at him. Like hell was I getting changed in here with him while he was naked. With a roll of my eyes shoved past him, I heard him chuckle. Walking out, I stopped

dead in my tracks Darius and Kalen were in bed, Kalen had his mouth wrapped around Darius. A shriek nearly left my lips out of shock. I had been in here for weeks, and I had never witnessed them doing anything. A hand clamped over my lips, and Lycus pulled me back against his naked body.

"Next time, you might listen," Lycus whispered with a soft laugh, and my heartbeat was like a drum when I felt him dip his face into my neck, skimming his nose from the back of my ear and down neck and shoulder, his erection pressing against my lower back. His grip was tight, yet I couldn't tear my eyes from Darius and Kalen on the bed. Like I was stuck in some trance.

"You feel his power," Lycus murmured against my skin. Goosebumps rose all over, and he was right. Darius's power oozed out, and Kalen was taking it. Darius groaned, his hand in Kalen's hair while he took Darius in his mouth.

"Darius may let you join him, but he would something in return," Lycus purred, and it was like someone chucked ice water over me. I bumped backward into Lycus as I tried to get away stomping on his foot, and Darius' eyes opened and settled on me. One arm tucked behind his head, and he quirked an eyebrow at me before smiling. Lycus's hand moved from across my mouth, and I turned in Lycus's hold, wanting to dart back into the closet, only I smacked into his chest instead because the wall of a man refused to move and was blocking the door.

"What's wrong, Aleera?" Lycus chuckled, and I barged past

him, and he laughed while I became all hot and flustered. That stupid song, it's raining men suddenly came to mind, naked men, raining naked men, with penises, everywhere. ²

"I take it she doesn't want to join," Lycus chuckled, and I glared at his back as he walked away.

Darius laughed at my embarrassment. I dressed quickly, even managed to put my shirt on inside out, and I was sure Lycus handed it to me in the right way. Flustered and wanting to escape the room, I yanked it off and pulled it back, then rushed out. My eyes automatically went to the bed, like how couldn't they? The bed was in the middle of the room, and I had to rush past it and there they were in all naked sex god glory.

I gripped the door handle and twisted. The power in the room was making it harder to breathe, yet the door would not open. I knew who was behind it, who was preventing me from leaving "Darius, please open it," I whined, not wanting to turn back to face the bed. Lycus growled behind me, and I knew he was in bed with them now too.

Chapter 53

The bond flared, wanting to go to them. I wouldn't have the slightest idea what the heck my part would be in their orgy or what to do with them. I needed escape before I embarrassed myself or Darius toyed with my bond and made me do something that would probably destroy any sense of hope I had left.

"Come here," Darius said, and I shook my head.

"Leave her be, Darius," Kalen whispered.

"Just shut up and suck my cock," Darius snapped at him, and Kalen whimpered. Almost agonized, though, the sound was more like a moan.

"Aleera," Darius purred, and I fisted my hands and gritted my teeth. Why does he have to fuck with my stupid bond? He would know this causes me pain. With a glare plastered on my face, I turned, and the noise that left me when I spotted them was embarrassing. Lycus kneeled behind Kalen before gripping his hips and pulling them air while Kalen wrapped his lips around Darius' cock. Darius smirked like he knew exactly the effect this was having on the bond. My feet moved, and I only just grabbed the dresser by the door to stop myself from climbing on the bed and begging Darius for his power.

"Everything alright, Aleera?" Darius asked, and my nails ached from clutching the dresser.

"Fuck!" Darius groaned, and my eyes moved to the bed to find Darius' hand fisting Kalen's hair while he bobbed away.

"Darius, please," I begged, my speech more like a damn pants arousal flooded me; I needed to get out of here. He growled but flicked his hand toward the door, and I heard it unlock. Darius wasn't even looking in my direction, too busy, lost in the euphoria of what Kalen was doing to him.

Turning, I ripped open the door and dashed into the hall, slamming the door shut behind me. The strange fog from his magic lifted, and I clutched my knees to catch my breath. "Are you okay?" Tobias asked, touching my shoulder.

I hadn't even heard him come into the hall, but when I looked up, he stood in front of me. Tobias' eyes flickered, and I knew I was flushed, the stupid bond overriding my brain again.

Tobias took a step toward me before shaking himself, and his eyes went to the door I had just come out of.

"I need to go to breakfast," I tell him, rushing past him even though the bond was trying to pull me back to the room.

My bond played havoc all day; the cramping in my stomach worsened, their energy regenerated only made it worse in their presence during class, and I felt sick. Darius was smug in every class I had with him. He knew it was torture for me. I would not give him the satisfaction of me begging him, and I know that's what Darius wanted. No doubt he would be one of

those that enjoyed another's discomfort; hell, he enjoyed mine. Though as the day dragged on, something was amiss, my entire body was yearning, and since seeing them morning, it had only gotten worse.

Going to the bathroom to change into my gym clothes, I rushed into a stall and locked the door. We had the obstacle course again this afternoon. Taking my clothes off, I removed my pants and gasped.

Fuck! The shredding, I had forgotten entirely about the shredding as I looked down at my panties. I was spotting which wasn't a good sign. Being the only girl here, I had completely forgotten about it and the fact I had never actually gone through it in the 6 years, careful to always make sure I had my herbs that prevented it.

Horror washed over me. Keeper woman went through a faze, shredding every 6 months, where we shredded all our power in a day. It was like what humans would call a period only vastly different, seeing as Fae don't menstruate, though we have our own version of shredding, and it only happened to keeper women. We would bleed for a day and then the next three days we power-shred.

There was just one issue, I had no power to shred, and I knew it wasn't obtainable, nor could I afford for myself to go through it. Shredding is when most bond power is shared, during a shredding, you could power your mates with enough power to last until the next one, only making them more powerful, while I would be at my most vulnerable.

Yanking my pants up, I knew I had roughly a week to find some devil's bane. I needed the damn root. It would stop it, yet if I asked for that around here, it would get me some curious questions seeing as it was poisonous to demons, And Darius finding out could be lethal.

Debating whether to ask Tobias or Kalen for it before shoving that idea away, they would want to know why I tried to stop it. There was no way Darius would give me power or allow the others to provide me with energy. While shredding, keepers are at their most potent, our magic at its strongest though also at our weakest because we would literally be throwing off power to our mates. I could not even imagine that horror had I had power.

That explained the agony I had been in this morning, though shredding itself lasted a day. I knew that because I had been holding mine off for 6 years, I could not afford to lose my power without anything to replenish it. So I knew this would be hell. One, because I had no power to shred, two, because they may find out what I am if I did. I had never gone through it to know if I could even mask my white Fae side.

The sun beat down on my skin as I stepped outside. The sun was blistering, and I looked around the acreage of this place surrounded by forest, and I knew there would be devil-bane in that forest. It was just a matter of finding it. Chewing my lip, I walked out going to the obstacle course; I internally groaned when I saw Darius was taking over Tobias's class today. He made me run track. As the sun started going down, the whistle

blew, and he called everyone inside as a storm was fast approaching. I sighed, excited to rest as I watched everyone head in.

Zac walked over to Darius, talking as they walked back toward the castle like good friends and I glared in their direction.

Giving the forest a longing look, I turned to head in when I noticed Darius was gone, along with Zac. What I would give to be able to move so quickly, mist where I wanted. But no, I had to walk.