

Chapter 54

The next day was no better. Only now I knew it was approaching, I had to think of away to sneak into the forest. Darius seemed hellbent on torturing me, which wasn't helping. Once again, I woke to them fucking. I had grabbed a sandwich for lunch today and walked outside needing some air. Lycus threat seemed to be working as long as I had food in my hand, no one came near me, and I was free to roam.

Sitting on the bench outside in the warm sun, I stared at the forest before peeking around. Everyone was distracted eating lunch, and no doubt my mates would all be eating together. They always did in the room while I was stuck in the mess hall. Getting up, I was about to head inside when I realized this was my chance. I had an hour before lunch finished, and I could be in and back before they noticed, glancing at the roof I wished I could get Ryze to get it for me but it was also poisonous to him. Poisonous to everyone more so, Demons it was lethal. The root is what I needed and I hoped I had time to dry it out.

I beeline for the forest by giving a quick glance at the castle doors and seeing no one. Continuing on until the trees covered me. Catching my breath, I hunted for this damn plant. Searching beneath all the trees and brushing back ferns. Scouring the ground for any sign of this purple and pink budded plant. Climbing the small hill I moved further through the forest. I had no idea how long I had been out here scouring, becoming obsessed with the damn task. Just on the crest of a slight incline among the trees, I saw it.

Excitement bubbled up in me, and I clambered, slipping as I climbed the steep incline. I went to wrap my hands around the stalk when someone grabbed the back of my shirt, sending me flying.

My back arched as I smashed into the dirt next to the tree I was just tossed against. I groaned, back arched as I rubbed the spot. The air knocked from my lungs when I heard a thunderous growl, and my eyes opened. In a daze, I saw Darius reaching for me, and I lurched to my feet out of pure adrenaline.

"I fucking warned you about trying to escape," he bellowed as I clambered up the incline, trying to get to the plant. Fuck it, he looked livid; I would have to show him. His wrath couldn't be worse than it is now, I thought trying to grab the damn plant.

"No, the plant," I blurted when he grabbed my ankles, ripping me back down, my head bounced off the ground and the rock I smashed it on making me see black for a few seconds. I clawed at the earth, screaming as I tried to get to the devil's bane.

"No, listen, I need the devil's bane, just the root," I screamed, as he dragged me back toward him. Only realizing how bad that sounded after I said it. Admitting to needing something so poisonous to demons, it could kill them.

"Darius!" I screamed as he flipped me by my hips onto my back. My hand whipped out and slapped him hard across the face. He seemed shocked; I kicked away from him, scrambling up

the incline. I felt his hand in my hair only seconds later. "The shre-"

"Enough, shut up. I am done with your lies," he snarled, jerking me back by my hair. I clutched his hands and tried to explain, but my lips wouldn't open. Spelled shut the moment he told me to shut up. Tears trekked down my face as he dragged me kicking and screaming from the forest before I felt his magic erupt as he opened a portal.

I felt the feel of the suction before I found myself in my old room. Darius tossed me on the bed by my hair, and I felt the strands rip free painfully from my scalp. My scream was mute, I felt it vibrate out of me, but no sound left my lips. I nearly rolled off the bed, and the door burst open as Tobias and Kalen stepped in.

"Get out, you don't go near her, you don't fucking look at her, you don't speak to her," Darius roared as he turned, glaring at Kalen, who stared in horror at what he was witnessing. Blood trickled down the side of my head, and I touched my fingers to it, wondering what I had hit it on.

"What happened? What did she do?" Tobias asked while Kalen was forced out of the room by Darius' command.

"She tried to escape," Darius sneered, and I shook my head and tried to explain; the words never left me. Darius had taken my ability to talk.

"She wouldn't," Tobias defended me.

"She was nearly on the fucking road," Darius snarled. Road? I was near the road. I was sure I hadn't wandered that far in, but I wasn't paying much attention.

"Aleera?" I shook my head and tried to tell Tobias I wasn't, trying to explain, knowing he could tell I was speaking the truth.

"Let her speak," Tobias snapped at him.

"She was by the fucking road, Tobias. What else would she be doing so far out? You can tell if I am lying, and I don't fucking lie," Darius snarls at him, and Tobias watches him before his eyes fall on me.

"Why? Everything was going fine, Aleera," Tobias snapped and stormed out, leaving me with Darius.

"You always ruin everything," Darius snarls walking toward me and I flinched away from his burning rage but he grabbed the front of my shirt and jerked me forward before fishing my tablet from the back of my pants held by my belt. I reached for it but he pulled it away. ²

Tears trailed down my cheeks as he stripped me of everything, only leaving me with a sheet and my bra and undies, he took my tablet, my freedom and my voice. He took everything.

Chapter 55

Kalen POV

I wanted to go to her, but Tobias glared at me from where I sat on the bed. Lycus also stood before me, arms folded over his chest as we waited for Darius to return. When the door opened, my eyes darted over to it, and Darius stepped into the room. His aura was burning hot, threatening to set the room alight.

My mouth opened, and I wanted to ask if he hurt her, but I quickly stopped myself with one glare from Lycus. Darius removes his shirt before undoing his pants and chucking them in the laundry basket by the door.

"Kalen, I can feel your burning curiosity. I didn't hurt her," Darius says, not that he sounded happy about it. I knew he had reason to hate her, but I wanted to understand. She seemed so excited for years when I spoke to her about finding her mates. Then once she manifested, she ran, and I don't believe it was only because Darius apparently killed her parents.

If only she knew the army that Darius was building was not to take over the rest of the world but to protect her, maybe she wouldn't have run. I wanted to know why she ran. There had to be another reason. She had to have another reason, but instead of letting her explain, they wanted revenge for things she was unaware she had done.

Darius placed her tablet down on the bed, and I glared at him. "What the fuck, Darius?" I snarled at him before snatching it off the bed.

"She can earn it back, along with the rest of her possessions," he said.

"The rest of her stuff?" I demanded to know, but he clucked his tongue at my outrage, and I saw his eyes flicker. He could be such a possessive asshole, and I knew half his issue was because he was jealous. I could fucking feel his and Lycus's jealousy.

However, looking over at Tobias, he was livid. He and Aleera had been getting on well, and with one incident, he was back to being a prick.

"What, that's it? You won't say anything at all?" I asked Tobias, and he sat back in his chair and folded his arms, looking directly at me. "Darius told the truth; I would know if he lied."

"His version of the truth. Did you ask her?" Tobias chewed his lip and looked at Darius, who growled, and I felt the pang of hurt flit through the bond that we wouldn't believe him. Tobias, also feeling it, looked at me and said. "I trust our mate," Tobias said, his faith in Darius was beginning to annoy me.

"Aleera is our mate," I tell him, and he glares at the burning fire in the fireplace.

"And she tried to run, Kalen," Lycus said, coming over to me and wrapping his arms around my waist. I shoved him off, and he whimpered. "No, let go. I am sick of you all using the bond against me. I am not just some fuck toy, and Aleera is also mine," I argued when I was

suddenly airborne. Darius grabbed me, slammed me down on the bed, and I struggled under his grip; I knew he wouldn't hurt me, he never did, but he didn't like being spoken back to either.

"She isn't our mate; we are all mates. We don't need her," Darius snarled. I glared at him, and he pressed his weight down on me. His erection dug into my stomach. He always liked it when we fought him, always enjoyed forcing us to submit to him. But not when it came to Aleera. I would fight for her as much as possible anyway; the stupid bond and Darius having complete control, making us solely dependent on him, made that challenging because none of us were strong enough to fight off his orders.

"You will stay away; you remain with one of us at all times," Darius murmured, nipping at my ear, and I groaned and growled, trying to shove him off.

"Stop, I don't want to fuck," I snapped at him, but he ignored me. Instead, he tugs at my belt before wrapping his hand around my cock and squeezing.

"You don't want me?" Darius questioned as he flooded the bond with arousal, making my dick harden in his hand. His power rushed out addictively, forcing me to submit to get a taste of it.

One thing I hated about the bond, the one who handled the power, had all control and half the reason we have the issues we do with Aleera; I knew that. Darius probably even knew that. Yet as the fog settled, we all became slaves to the bond, to our keeper, to Darius. Like pigeons flocking, they were drawn to him and the bed, and, despite hating him at this moment, I rolled over at his demand.

"You won't disobey me, will you, Kalen? You will stay away from her until I say otherwise?" Darius purred while stroking my length. I gritted my teeth, trying to fight against his will and the hold he had on me. Yet I would not win against him, and as the pain of denying the bond grew, I gave in.

"Good boy," Darius purred before sucking on my neck and making me moan and push back against him.