

*Just because you don't believe  
in them, that doesn't mean that  
they don't exist...*



# *Noctis*

*M.E. Clayton*

Noctis





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## Author's Note



Just a couple of things before I let you go and get your read on. While I am doing my best to work with better editing and proofreading software, all my books are solo, independent works. I write my books, proofread my books, edit my books, create the covers, etc. I have one beta who gives me feedback on my stories, but other than that, all my books are independent projects.

That being said, I apologize, in advance, for the typos, grammar inconsistencies, or any other mistakes I may make. Since writing is strictly a hobby for me, I haven't looked into commitments in regard to publishers, editors, etc. My hope is that my stories are enjoyable enough that a few mistakes, here and there, can be overlooked. However, if you're a stickler for grammar, my books are probably not for you.

Also, I am an avid reader-I mean an *AVID* reader. I love to read above any other hobby. However, the only downside to my reading obsession is when I fall in love with a series, but I have to wait for the additional books to come out. So, because I feel that disappointment down to my soul, when I started publishing my works, I vowed to publish all books in my series all at once. No waiting here...LOL. Now, the exception to that will be if enough readers request additional stories based off the standalone, such as in *Facing the Enemy*. At that point, if I decide to move forward with a requested series, I will make sure all additional books are available all at once. As much as this is a hobby for me, I am writing these books for all of you, as well as myself.

Thank you, for everything!



## Contact Me



I really appreciate you reading my book and I would love to hear from you! Now, unfortunately, because I do have a full-time job and one part-time job, plus a family that I love spending time with, I'm not very active on social media. However, for the sites I do participate in, here are my social media coordinates:

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Pinterest](#)

[Email](#)

[Newsletter](#)

# Dedication



For Kamala –

This one *really* is for you...LOL!

# Playlist



Monster – Beth Crowley

Building a Mystery – Sarah McLachlan

Power Over Me – Dermot Kennedy

Iris – Goo Goo Dolls

Dark Horse – Katy Perry

Uprising – Muse

Watch Me Burn – Michele Morrone

Pray For Me – The Weeknd ft. Kendrick Lamar

Waiting For A Star To Fall – Boy Meets Girl

Magic – Olivia Newton-John

Decode – Paramore

## Prologue

I stood in front of the tribunal, eyeing each man, listening to them lay out my life's plan. While I wouldn't have chosen this path myself, I didn't have any real objections to anything that they were saying, either. I'd always known that these people expected more out of me, though I still never knew why. I didn't see anything rare when I looked in the mirror, and contrary to popular belief, I looked in the mirror quite often.

Nevertheless, Brander claimed that there was something in my character that made me stronger than the rest, but I didn't see it. Though I'd been called strong, arrogant, obnoxious, stubborn, and prideful many times in my life, those were traits that you could find in most of the world's population.

Ignoring everyone else in the room, I listened patiently as Brander kept explaining their expectations of me. I listened as they laid out all the reasons why this was in the best interest of everyone on this side of the region. While I didn't doubt Brander's sincerity, I wouldn't be me if I wasn't suspicious of Phaeron's reasons, and for that matter, Thorin's as well. Though they were all saying the right things, money and power made people do crazy things, something that I'd seen a million times over the years. There was a delicate balance to what we did, and none of us could afford to tip the scales. However, they were doing just that by laying out their plans for me.

"This will take place on her twenty-fifth birthday," Brander stated. "When she is at her strongest."

"You'll have exactly one month to make it happen," Thorin added. "Though we'll leave the how, when, and where up to you."

“Granted, we recommend that you do not take the entire month’s grace period to accomplish your task,” Phaeron advised. “The longer that you wait, the more opportunity for error.”

“I don’t make errors,” I informed him, proving why the people that called me arrogant weren’t wrong. “If I did, I wouldn’t be standing here before you now.”

“Nevertheless, this is nasty business, Kalon,” Phaeron said. “It’s better to be safe than sorry.”

“We’re very aware of what you bring to the table, Kalon,” Brander remarked. “However, we also recognize what this means for us all, and we just want to make sure that nothing...hinders what we’re trying to accomplish here.”

“I don’t make errors,” I repeated.

“For everyone’s sake, let’s hope that you don’t,” Thorin replied.

“Understand that it’s not enough to just claim her, Kalon,” Brander continued. “She will have to *want* to stand with you once it’s all said and done. If not, you’ll have one hell of a fight on your hands, son. Do not forget who she is.”

“I won’t,” I assured him.

“You’ll have plenty of time to study her, ensuring that you don’t forget who she is, so I suggest that you use that time wisely,” Thorin added, his tone making me suspicious all over again.

With all eyes on us, I knew now was not the time to bump dicks with these three, though it’d really be just Thorin and Phaeron because I trusted Brander. How could I not? The man that I was today was all accredited to Brander Thorne and his years of mentorship and loyalty.

“And what’s the plan if something tragic happens, preventing her from seeing the ripe old age of twenty-five?” I asked, having a question or two of my own.

“She will be assigned a shadow to make sure that doesn’t happen,” Brander answered. “She will be well-protected.”

“And what if she falls in love or marries before then?” I posed, asking my next question. “What if she falls pregnant?”

“The shadow will handle those issues as well,” Thorin answered. “There will be just enough interference in her life to make her readily available for when it’s time to make yourself known.”

I gave them a terse nod in acknowledgment. “Okay,” I replied. “However, I have a stipulation of my own, one that’s non-negotiable.”

“We make the rules-”

“Then find someone else,” I threatened, shrugging like I could take it or leave it, because I could.

“What’s your stipulation, Kalon,” Brander asked, shooting Phaeron a reprimanding glare.

“No matter what happens, you do not interfere in my methods,” I told them. “If she’s to be mine, then she will be mine *completely*.”

With little choice but to agree, Brander said, “You have our word.”

I knew that I had *his* word, but the other two would remain to be seen.

# Chapter 1

## *Kalon~*

Staring out into the city's skyline, the twinkling lights were like a beacon, calling on people to let their depravities loose. Though there was enough illumination to feel inviting, there were still plenty of dark spaces for the unspeakable to happen, and it did.

Over three-hundred-years-old, I'd seen some of the most incredible things come to life in this world, and no other creature on earth took things for granted the way that humans did. As someone who'd had to experience what it was like to live without something as basic as a septic system, I appreciated every new invention, every new advancement in technology, every new civil rights movement, every new anything. My assessment of the world around me was why Brander kept insisting that I was born to lead. He claimed that my ability to see and appreciate the bigger picture was a common trait in all good leaders, though I wasn't so sure about that.

Though I was mentally three-hundred-years-old, biologically, I was only twenty-five. Brander Thorne had changed me when I'd been teetering on the edge of old enough to know better, but still young enough not to care much. I'd been refusing to back down from a bunch of drunken thugs on the streets of London, and when they'd left me bleeding to death from multiple stab wounds, Brander had been lurking in the darkness, ready to finish me off, getting his fix of human blood.

Yeah, that's not how things had ended up turning out.

According to Brander, there'd been something in my warm blood that had made him decide to change me, rather than kill me. Brander claimed that the copper taste of my

blood had been laced with something stronger than life, and three-hundred years later, I still had no idea what the hell he meant when he talked about that shit.

Now, up until Brander Thorne had come into my life, like any sane person, I hadn't believed in vampires. While I had believed in monsters and spiritual possibilities, I hadn't believed in vampires or any of that nonsense. The monsters that I had believed in had been of the human variety. Human beings were the vilest creatures in existence, and the fact that they didn't think that they were was what made them all that much more dangerous. Ignorance gave them a license to ruin the world around them, and they didn't even know it.

Believe it or not, with my stubborn disposition, it had taken me a full two months before accepting my new fate. It had taken two months of Brander holding me prisoner and feeding me regularly before finally coming to terms with the fact that vampires truly did exist, and that I was now one of them. It'd been enough to send a person insane, and it happened more often than not.

There were also all the myths-some ridiculous, some not-about vampires and what we were all about. The whole mirror thing wasn't true. Though we might be missing a conventional heartbeat, we were still made up of solid mass; we still existed. There was no way that a mirror would not reflect us, considering that we weren't invisible.

Garlic was another one of the ridiculous myths out there. I mean, seriously? Garlic? Why not pepper or cilantro? We were reputed to be soulless killing machines, but garlic was one of the things that could bring us down? An herb? Really?

A stake to the heart was another stretch of the imagination. Since we didn't possess traditional hearts, stabbing us in the chest wasn't going to slow us down any. Unlike human beings, our hearts weren't our life's source. They didn't pump warm blood to all our necessary organs to keep us alive. Our hearts were just a basic biological makeup of our bodies like everything else. Our stomachs, intestines,



livers, lungs, etc. existed because they'd all been a part of us when we'd been turned. However, unlike humans, if someone were to carve out my liver, I'd still continue to exist. Decapitation was the key if someone really wanted to kill one of us in a fight to the finish.

Coffins were also nothing but a Halloween accessory. Though the windows to my bedroom were blacked out with the most expensive and impenetrable insulation ever, I still slept in a regular bedroom on a regular bed. Granted, I 'rested' more than slept, but I still didn't do it in a damn coffin. Maybe the vampires before me had felt it necessary, but it wasn't necessary anymore.

As for holy water, that one was true up to a point. If the water was blessed by a man that was actually holy, then, yeah, that could be a problem for us. However, it was very rare to encounter a truly holy man. Since all priest, ministers, pastors, and supposed men of faith were human, they were just as flawed as everyone else. A pure heart was as holy as you could get, and there was a very large shortage of pure hearts on this earth.

A blessed crucifix fell into the same category as the holy water. Now, even blessed, you couldn't ward us off by just aiming the damn thing at us. That was the ridiculous part of that myth. Blessed crosses didn't radiate superpowers. They were still just inanimate objects, blessed or not. However, if you were to lay them upon our skin, our cold flesh would sizzle a bit.

Now, as for the perils of sunlight, that myth was one-hundred percent true and the biggest threat that we faced as a species. I had no idea what we'd ever done to offend the sun, but those were the facts. At over one-thousand-years-old, even Brander couldn't tell me why the sun was our enemy. Artificial light was no problem, but the sun's natural rays could end us. I had even argued against a candle's flame not being a threat, so why was the sun a threat when it was reputed to be just one huge ball of fire, but Brander still hadn't been able to give me a reason.

*No one* had ever been able to explain it to me.

As for covens, that myth was also true, and we currently had three inhabiting the western region of the country. We didn't concern ourselves with the covens on the other side of the country or in foreign lands because, for the most part, we respected each other's claimed territories. As long as we were vulnerable to the sun, no one wanted to get caught. The last thing that any of us wanted was for the world to know that we existed. Just like humans would lose their minds to know that aliens from outer space actually existed, they'd come unhinged to discover that we were walking among them.

My coven was Noctis, and Brander Thorne was our... father, for lack of a better word. There were six of us 'kids' in total, and Brander had turned us all for his own personal reasons. My real parents had been Henry and Janet Dreven, but I could barely remember them anymore. Whenever I thought about them, they felt like a vague dream of sorts.

As for the other five members of our coven, there were three men and two women. Jaris Norrix was five-hundred-years-old, six-foot-three, Black with brown hair and dark brown eyes. Marcel Ruse was six-hundred-years-old, six-foot-one, Italian with brown hair and dark brown eyes. Leander Isaac was two-hundred-years-old, six-foot-two, Caucasian with dark blonde hair and blue eyes. Elissa Abby was one-hundred-years-old, five-foot-four, Caucasian with red hair and black eyes. Finally, Faine Rowena was three-hundred-years-old, five-foot-five, Caucasian with dark blonde hair and dark brown eyes. As for Brander Thorne, he was over one-thousand-years-old, six-foot-one, Caucasian with dark blonde hair and black eyes.

Now, while most vampires' eyes changed color when turned, Leander's eyes had been the only ones that hadn't changed. While everyone else's eyes ranged from dark brown to black, Leander's were still a bright blue, which made me think that he'd be the one with the powerful blood, not me.

Though my eyes had been a bright green at one time, they were now a dark grey. I also had black hair, was six-foot-two, and since Brander had turned me while in my prime, I was very well built, eight-pack abs and everything. The others ranged in biological age, but no one had been over the age of thirty-five when Brander had turned them, so we were all fairly strong.

We also control the entire west region of the country, though there were only seven of us in total. The Tenebris Coven inhabited Montana through Iowa, The Diluculum Coven inhabited Colorado through Texas, and we inhabited Washington through Arizona. We all stayed in our respective territories, and it'd been a while since bad blood had erupted. However, that could be due to Brander being so diplomatically inclined. He was a great politician, and he seemed to get along well with Thorin Moldark and Phaeron Aurel, the leaders of the other two covens. Both were eight-hundred-years-old, so maybe that was why they let Brander run the tribunal; Brander was the oldest vampire out of all three covens.

Letting out a deep breath, I knew that I couldn't put this...situation off any longer. Tonight was the night that my entire life was going to change-yet again-and twenty-five years later, I was still questioning why it had to be me. Nevertheless, I trusted Brander, and I had given my word to see this through, so there was no going back now. Besides, there was so much more at stake now.

In all honesty, I wasn't really looking for a way out. Mora Kamra had grown up to become extraordinarily beautiful, and she had a body on her that made a man's mouth water. The woman was sexy, curvy, soft, and she had a face that should be etched into existence for all eternity.

Now, while the myth of us not being able to procreate was true, our sexual appetites still existed, and they weren't anything that could be satisfied by the weak. We were voracious when we found ourselves in a breeding frenzy, and Mora Kamra had a body that was made for my sexual stamina.

In fact, everything about her had been designed specifically for me.

Luckily for me, she wasn't going to have a choice with her life after tonight.

## Chapter 2

### *Mora~*

It was finally going to happen, and I could hardly sleep for it. It had taken me over two years to accumulate this vacation time, and I was going to take full advantage of it. I had everything planned, right down to the most irrelevant details, but that's what happened when you were so excited about something. I had even debated what to pack for over two hours.

Though not very glamorous, I worked as a secretary for a very respectable law firm, and to say that the place was always busy was an understatement. Lawyers were a necessary evil, and they were always in high demand for something or another. While they did have their place in the world, it was just too easy to sue someone for anything these days, and the love of money being the root of all evil was the truest thing that I'd ever heard.

At any rate, working for Burleson, McCafferty, and Lancer wasn't all bad. I had a great schedule of Monday through Friday, from eight to five with an hour lunch break. They also paid way over minimum wage, even at the secretary level. Plus, my employment package included great health benefits and vacation time each year once the hours had been accumulated. While I wasn't changing the world by being a secretary, I was still proud of having a great job and proud of the life I led. I was also extremely grateful for everything that I had.

Luckily for me, I'd been fostered by a great couple that hadn't just wanted that government check. Kyle and Wendy Kamra had been great parents, eventually adopting me when I'd been around six. I'd been placed with them at birth, my birth mother having dropped me off at one of those safe haven

fire stations. She'd been decent enough to leave my medical records, but that'd been it. She had dropped me off, then had disappeared for whatever reason.

Still, it was hard to feel bitter about something that I hadn't even known I was missing. I'd always felt wanted and loved by my parents, and it hadn't been until they had legally adopted me that I'd found out that they weren't really my parents. They hadn't ever mentioned fostering me, so I hadn't known the difference.

The irony to my placement was in how my father was a fire chief, having been a fire fighter back when I'd been dropped off at his firehouse. He'd been one of the two fire fighters that had found me crying, and according to him, he'd fallen instantly in love with me, calling Mom to tell her that they were going to have a baby. Mom had been diagnosed with ovarian cysts at a very young age, so she hadn't been able to have children, though it'd been something that they'd both wanted.

Now, while my father was a fire chief, my mother was a local news producer, and she was good at what she did. She was also adamant about producing *real* news and not skewed opinion pieces; she wasn't big on those kinds of media outlets. Mom produced actual news, and she had a few award-winning trophies that proved just how good she was at her job.

I'd also been lucky enough to be raised by parents that had encouraged me to stretch my wings. While they'd been protective, they hadn't been *over-protective*, and they had encouraged whatever crazy ideas that I'd ever come up with, short of anything that had put me in actual danger. My parents had nurtured both my intellectual and creative sides, and I liked to believe that I was a good combination of both. I was smart while I still believed in fanciful possibilities.

As for friends, I had many acquaintances, but only one real friend. It wasn't that I was snobby or standoffish, so much as I was just careful about rushing relationships. The world was not a good place, and I was always very aware that danger could lurk around any corner that I came around. If I invited

someone into my life, it wasn't just *my* life that I was inviting them into. I'd be inviting them into my parents' lives, my friends' lives, even my coworkers' lives. Plus, it also wasn't easy to get rid of someone once you invited them into your life.

So, while I had lots of people that I could go out and have drinks with, Zaire Sullivan was my best friend, and the only person that I trusted with my life, apart from my parents. Zaire was a little bit of everything, and I absolutely adored the man.

I also wasn't biased in saying that Zaire Sullivan was a very hot piece of man meat. He was six-foot-one with dark blonde hair and incredible green eyes. Even though he was an advertising executive and sat at a desk most of the day, he worked out regularly, and at twenty-seven-years-old, the guy had the body of a honed athlete. Supposedly, a man's early twenties were when he was in his prime, but Zaire debunked that myth easily. He also wasn't one to bullshit you. Zaire was honest and straightforward, and no one ever had to wonder about where they stood with the guy.

Now, while I had the best friend department sewn up, my love life wasn't exactly anything to write home about. Though I'd had my fair share of boyfriends over the years, none of them had earned the title of 'The One'. Most of my relationships had been casual and fun, and that had been fine when I'd been younger, but I was looking for something more substantial now. While I was still pushing marriage off for a few more years, it'd be nice to have someone dependable to go home to every night.

As for Zaire, when we'd met four years ago, it'd been an instant best-friends-vibe for us. Even though the man was a good-looking bastard, there'd been no butterflies to speak of, sexual or otherwise. We'd met at a horror movie convention, and it'd been like hitting the lottery when I'd met him. We'd been eyeing the same Nightmare on Elm Street poster collection, and when the seller had tried to up the price to an incredibly ridiculous amount because of our interest, Zaire had

told him to go fuck himself, then he had invited me to have a drink with him.

Four years later, it was still a best-friend love.

Unfortunately, that was one of the reasons that Zaire was still single. Even though there was nothing remotely sexual or romantic about our friendship, a lot of women got sketched out when they found out that I was Zaire's best friend. All of a sudden, I was this imagined threat to them, and there'd been a few times that Zaire had been given an ultimatum where our friendship had been concerned. Luckily for me, pussy didn't turn Zaire stupid, and the guy had always stuck by me when his girlfriends had lost their insecure shit.

Now, that wasn't to say that I didn't understand. After all, Zaire really was gorgeous. He was that kind of Calvin-Klein-ad gorgeous. He was hot enough to have a million social media followers if he were that type of guy. Plus, we'd gone to the beach plenty of times during our friendship, and no pair of board shorts were loose enough to hide what the dude was packing. Sometimes, I thought it was such a shame that I wasn't attracted to him.

Missing Zaire was going to be the only downside to my two-week vacation. His firm had just landed a huge client, and he'd been handed the account. It'd been exciting as hell, but the news had also had me going on my vacation alone. There was no way that Zaire would have been able to ask for the time off, and I wouldn't have let him. I was Zaire's biggest life cheerleader, and he was mine. Granted, his brother and parents might argue that *they* were his biggest cheerleaders, but they were wrong; it was me.

My vacation was in celebration of my twenty-fifth birthday, which was today. Zaire and I were going to hit up the hottest club in town, get drunk off our asses, sober up by hitting up the greasiest diner in the city, then pass out at his place because Zaire was not one for the am hours during the weekend. The man liked to sleep in, no matter if he'd been partying the night before or not.



As for my vacation, it started Sunday morning, and once I flew out of Oakland International, I would be headed towards Reno, Nevada, and not to gamble. I had rented out a small cabin in the woods, and the plan was to unwind for two weeks straight. I had plenty of new books downloaded to my tablet, and the cabin had a real-life fireplace. While it was scheduled to snow, there was no indication of any severe storms heading that way. I would be able to enjoy the snow without it threatening to end my life or have me stranded for days in the middle of nowhere.

Now, because my parents were good parents, they had all my vacation information, and so did Zaire. Even my boss had my itinerary, though that'd been given to him along with my vacation date confirmation. It'd also been proof of when I'd be leaving and when I'd be expected back.

Eyeing myself in the mirror, this was about as good as it got. Zaire swore that I was hot chick material, but Zaire was also ridiculous at times. I was five-foot-three with enough curves to encourage some criticism. Though I wasn't big on what other people thought, no one liked to be called fat.

I also had dark brown hair and blue eyes that popped because of my dark lashes. At twenty-five-years-old, I was still in my prime, though my thick thighs suggested otherwise. Nevertheless, I knew that I wasn't fat, and I was pretty satisfied with the way that I looked, but hot chick material? Not quite.

Tonight, I had decided to wear my hair down, letting it fall to the middle of my back, and I'd gone easy with the makeup. Nothing hurt my complexion like passing out with makeup on after a drunken night, so I tried to keep it to a minimum.

As for my attire, even though it was cold out, inside the club would be warm. So, throwing on every woman's favorite little black dress, I had paired it with some matching four-inch heels, my winter overcoat keeping me warm until we got to the club.

Another good thing about having Zaire Sullivan as a best friend?

He didn't judge me if I wanted to get lucky on my birthday.

## Chapter 3

### *Kalon~*

The place was packed, but that wasn't anything new. I owned three clubs and one restaurant throughout this fine city, and they were always packed. The benefit to having experienced three-hundred years of life was noting all the failures throughout history and learning from them.

Though we were a coven, we had our own interests and our own money. Brander's money came from the stock market and some very lucky investments over the years. The man had millions, and no matter how much money he threw around, he kept making more. He was also in charge of all of our financial portfolios, so we all had a few million in the bank as well.

As for the rest of the family, Jaris was in real estate, Marcel worked in pharmaceuticals, Leander was deep into technological advancements, Elissa was a stockbroker, and Faine ran a fashion empire. Like me, they were very successful because they also knew what not to do when it came to business. Most of them also worked behind the scenes like I did. The reason that only seven of us covered Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona was because we had to move around a lot. Since we didn't age, once the neighbors began to notice our extraordinary youthful appearances, it was usually time to leave. Alaska and Hawaii were also ours, but none of us liked Hawaii. However, Alaska felt like a treat whenever they were experiencing their short days of sunlight.

Faine was the only one of us that had her face in the spotlight, but beauty and fashion allowed for her to change her appearance whenever she needed to. It was nothing for Faine to materialize as a completely different person in looks and

demeanor. She was like an ever-evolving butterfly. She also belonged to Marcel when she wanted to. Though they didn't live in the same area, whenever they met up, you couldn't tear them apart for days. Elissa and Jaris were also an item with the same arrangement.

As for Leander and Brander, they were happily single, no desire to commit to anyone. I suspected it was because Brander was too busy keeping the peace all over the western region, but I wasn't sure about Leander. Now, while I wouldn't say that there was something off about Leander, he'd been able to keep his blue eyes, something that'd been unheard of before him.

Staring down at the club from my office on the second floor, I saw the packed bodies, and I could feel that familiar thrum in my veins. Another myth debunked? We didn't have superpowers. We couldn't read people's minds, see the future, nor did we transform into bats when we felt threatened. However, our senses were heightened to the point of absolute accuracy. Our vision, our hearing, and our sense of smell, taste, and touch were incredibly acute. For instance, even though I was upstairs in my office, looking through a bulletproof two-way mirrored window, I could still hear random conversations below, the scent of fifty different colognes and perfumes, and see what brand of liquor my bartenders were pouring for our guests.

That was another reason that sex felt like the second coming of Christ. With all five senses firing at their peaks, it was enough to drive us mad. While sex with humans wasn't encouraged, it was still doable if the woman or man liked it violently rough. That was the main reason that vampires stuck to their own when satisfying their sexual urges. Of course, if you planned on killing your mark, then the rough sex was irrelevant. Sad to say, rape often accompanied a blood slaying.

Now, even though the blood in my veins was thrumming with all the life happening around me, I was only interested in one thing at the moment. Mora Kamra had arrived about a half hour ago, and she'd had her friend with

her, Zaire Sullivan. Today was her birthday, and thanks to Leander's talent when it came to technology, we'd all known that she had planned to celebrate her birthday here tonight.

When Brander had summoned me before the tribunal twenty-five years ago, he had laid out his plans for me, and every member of each coven had backed the decision to give Mora Kamra to me. No one had voiced any objections, though they should have. There'd been a few older coven members that should have been afforded the opportunity to possess Mora, but they hadn't been. She'd been given to me, and a part of me wondered if they all knew something that I didn't. It was written in an ancient prophecy that Mora Kamra was going to become one of the most powerful leaders among our people, so why had they just handed her over to me?

It was rumored that her birth mother, Emmaline Chapman, had been psychic. It was also rumored that her biological father, Hugo Draka, had dabbled in the dark arts. Supposedly, their dark gifts had been genuine, and Mora had a bit of magic in her blood, though she didn't know it. So, with Emmaline being psychic, she had seen us coming in her prophetic vision, resulting in her death and Mora being delivered to a safe haven fire station. However, Hugo was still alive, locked away in an insane asylum.

On top of knowing that she'd be here tonight, thanks to her recklessness on social media, I also knew that she was heading to Reno on Sunday to start her two-week vacation. Like most fools on the internet, she had announced her vacation plans to anyone that cared, and now random people would know that her home was going to be empty for the next two weeks. If that wasn't an invitation for thieves, then I didn't know what was. Granted, Zaire was probably going to check in on her place while she was gone, but still. People were so quick to put their business on social media that they didn't give one thought to safety.

Staring down at Mora, she was sitting next to Zaire at the bar, and she was smiling up at whatever he was telling her. True to his word, Brander had made sure her shadow had done

his job throughout the years. While she'd been allowed to date, the shadow had interfered just enough to keep her single for this day. Zaire had been allowed because nothing had ever turned romantic between them. If it'd had, the shadow would have stepped in.

Now, shadows were human people that knew that we existed, either intentionally or by chance. They were the few people that were so submerged in the dark side of faith that they'd never turn on us. You had quite a few humans that liked to play the part or dabble playfully, but that's all it was for them; an attempt to scoff at convention. Shadows were...for lack of a better word, brainwashed. Meeting us and finding out the truth was akin to a teenage girl meeting her favorite teen heartthrob, then falling in love and getting married. When shadows met us, their lives automatically belonged to us. Surprisingly, they were trusted with a lot of tasks that we couldn't manage on our own, considering the whole sunlight thing.

So, with Mora planning on being gone for two weeks, she had unwittingly handed me everything that I needed to make this thing between us happen. No one would be missing her for two weeks, and since everyone chose texting as their main source of communication these days, a few texts to her parents and Zaire would suffice while she was gone. All I had to do was get her away from Zaire tonight, and that could easily be done with a spiked drink. It'd be just enough to have him sleeping until tomorrow afternoon, not interested in doing anything other than texting Mora that he was fine but needed rest.

Now, because Zaire Sullivan was Mora's best friend, we knew just as much about him as we did her, and though protective of her, he wasn't clingy. They had a very healthy friendship, no co-dependency in sight. If Zaire wanted to leave with a hot piece of ass tonight, Mora wouldn't stop him. She wouldn't get her feelings hurt or guilt trip him. He was the same way with her. If Mora saw something that she liked, Zaire wouldn't bat an eyelash at her having a one-night stand

with a stranger. He'd do his due diligence and make sure that she was safe, but that's it.

Not bothering to check my appearance in the mirror, I grabbed my phone and keys, then locked up my office before heading downstairs. I didn't spend a lot of time on the floor because of all the sights, sounds, and smells, but I had no choice tonight. I needed to get close to Mora, and this was the only way to do it. While I wasn't above kidnapping her, it'd be a lot better if I could get her to go home with me voluntarily. From there, I planned on giving her a mild sedative, ensuring that she didn't wake up until we got to the cabin that she'd rented for her vacation. A cabin in the middle of the woods was the perfect place for what I had planned for her. Plus, once we got there, I planned on snapping a picture of the cabin, then posting it to her social media as proof that she had arrived safely.

When I began my decent down the stairs, the hairs on the back of my neck vibrated with a quick alertness that another vampire was in the area. With Brander living in Nevada, Jaris living in Oregon, Marcel living in Utah, Elissa living in Arizona, Faine living in Washington, and Leander living in Idaho, I was the only vampire that should be in California.

Turning my head, automatically knowing where the sensation was coming from, I saw Phaeron sitting at a booth with some blonde, his glass already raised in my direction in salute.

Pulling out my phone, I dialed Brander. "Why is Phaeron in California?" I asked, not bothering with pleasantries.

"I didn't know that he was," Brander replied carefully.

"If you don't want me ripping his head from his neck, then you better get him the fuck out of my club and my state, Brander," I ordered. "I don't need anyone interfering tonight. So, he has ten minutes to fuck that whore he's with, then get back home." Phaeron lived in Kansas, so ten minutes was

plenty of time for him to go back to where the fuck he came from.

“I’ll take care of it,” Brander assured me before I hung up on him.

Okay, so maybe I’d been a bit rash in claiming that we didn’t have any superpowers, because that whole moving at the speed of light thing? Yeah, that was real.



## Chapter 4

### *Mora~*

I was having a great time, but this club was one of the hottest nightclubs in the city, making it a little too upscale for my simple tastes. Spherical was one of those clubs that you saw in swanky movies where only the rich and beautiful were allowed in. Though Spherical was opened to everyone, it screamed class, and you were immediately asked to leave if you looked like you were up to no good. That was one of the reasons that I loved coming here, despite that upscale vibe. Yeah, it was a club with a bunch of drunkards roaming around, but it still felt safe. Security was even willing to walk you to your car if you asked.

Zaire and I had gotten here about an hour ago, and the immediate birthday shots had gone down smoothly. Zaire had a thing for shots of tequila, and I had a thing for shots of Hypnotic. I liked the candied flavor of the drink. The only downside was that it hit you hard when you weren't looking. Hypnotic snuck up on you like a thief eyeing your purse.

At any rate, we both had a nice buzz going and it wouldn't be long before we were out on the floor, dancing ourselves into a sweaty mess. For a guy, Zaire not only liked to dance, but he also knew how to. It was a safe bet that if Zaire got a woman to dance with him, then he was taking her home. Women loved men that were willing to dance with them.

Leaning into me, Zaire asked, "Do you think you'll be okay if I go break the seal?"

"What do I do if someone hits on me?" I teased, grinning like a loon.

"Tell him that it's your birthday and sex would be the best kind of way to wrap up the night," he teased back, though

I knew a part of him was very serious.

I laughed. “Sounds like a plan.”

Zaire winked at me before turning, then heading towards the restrooms. I knew that I was going to have to guard his seat with my life, so I grabbed the stool, then drew it towards me, my ass practically sitting on both stools. I also eyed his beer like I was guarding the Hope Diamond.

It wasn't long before a large body slid in between the opened space that I had created by scooting the stool closer to me, and holy fucking shit.

Well over six-feet tall, he had black hair, dark grey eyes, a face that reminded me of that model, Lucas Medeiros, but that wasn't all. Even though he was wearing a suit that looked expensive as hell, you could still tell that a beer belly didn't exist underneath that thing. He had to be sporting some serious muscle to be as filled out as he was. The man looked like he could pick me up with ease.

He looked to be about my age, but he didn't come off as young. He stood with the confidence of a thousand men, and I'd be willing to bet Zaire's left nut that this man knew what to do in the bedroom. Hell, even if he didn't, it would be worth it just to be able to stare at him for one night.

*I almost started fanning myself.*

When those dark grey eyes of his latched onto my blue ones, he asked, “Are you having a good time?” Even though the place was noisy with the music and people, I could still hear him clearly, which was odd as hell.

I nodded. “I am,” I replied, making sure that my voice could be heard over the noise.

“What's your name?” he asked, and his voice sounded like he had just asked me to take off my panties. It was deep, raspy, and had a hint of an English accent, and how was that not sexy as hell?

*Christ, was it getting hot in here?*

“Mora,” I answered. “Mora Kamra. What’s yours?”

Something glittered in his eyes when he said, “Kalon Dreven.”

My eyes widened.

I knew that name.

Kalon Dreven was the elusive owner of Spherical and two other clubs, not including a restaurant that was always booked out months in advance. Though he was very rarely seen in public, his financial success was always being spoken about on the news. I always watched the news because of my mom, and Kalon’s name had come up a few times over the years.

“You’re...you’re the owner...you own this place,” I stammered like a fool.

He gave me a slight nod, a teasing grin on his lips, a dimple popping out because of it. “I do.”

I could feel my palms begin to sweat. “It’s...it’s a great pl...place.”

“Have you been to Celestial’s or Orion’s?” I shook my head. “How about The Rose?”

I kept shaking my head. “Spherical is closest to my apartment, and The Rose is always booked out months in advance.”

I almost face-palmed myself.

It was his freakin’ restaurant.

Of course, he knew that it was always booked full in advance.

“They always hold back a couple of tables for special guests,” he said. “I can put your name down if you’d like to try the place.”

I could feel my face turning red. While I made a good living, I also couldn't afford to spend thousands on one flippin' meal. It was reputed that the food and dining experience were worth the money, but I couldn't imagine *any* meal worth thousands of dollars.

"It's a little out of my budget," I confessed like a rookie.

That smirk was back on his full lips. "It would be on the house, Mora," he said. "What kind of man do you take me for? I'd never invite a woman to dine in my restaurant, then be so gaunt as expect her to pay."

Before I could comment on that, Zaire was back from the restrooms, his green eyes immediately taking in the situation. I knew that Zaire wasn't going to care that I was talking to another guy, but Kalon didn't know that, and I was really hoping that this wasn't going to become awkward.

"Excuse me," Zaire said, pointing towards his stool. "That's my seat."

"Of course." Kalon graciously stepped back, giving Zaire plenty of space to take his seat and get comfortable again.

As soon as Zaire grabbed his beer, he turned towards me. "Am I interrupting?"

I quickly shook my head. "Uh, no...Mr. Dreven was just introducing himself."

Zaire's green eyes flared with recognition before turning towards Kalon. "Kalon Dreven?"

Kalon nodded before stretching his hand out to shake Zaire's hand. "Yes."

Zaire shook his hand as his eyes bounced back and forth between us. "It's nice to meet you. I'm Zaire Sullivan."

"Mr. Dreven was just-

“Kalon,” Kalon said, interrupting me. “You may call me Kalon, Mora.”

*Pretty sure that I was about to faint.*

“Kalon was just talking to me about helping me with reservations at The Rose,” I said, wishing that I could fangirl all over the place right now.

Zaire grinned Kalon’s way. “Oh, she told you it was her birthday?”

Kalon looked over at me. “No, she didn’t.” Those grey eyes of his smoldered darkly. “Happy Birthday, Mora.”

“Thanks,” I squeaked out, causing Zaire to shoot me a look.

*Busted.*

Always the best wingman in history, Zaire looked over at Kalon. “Would you mind keeping her company for a bit? I saw a representative from Villain Races, and I’ve been trying to nail a meeting with them for a while now. I’ll only be a minute.”

“Of course,” Kalon graciously agreed. “In fact, take your time. I think I’ll enjoy getting to know Mora better.”

“What’s not to enjoy?” Zaire quipped. “She’s awesome.”

Zaire grabbed his beer, shot me that knowing look, then scurried away in search of a person that I knew wasn’t here. Zaire had secured Villain Races’ account two months ago. The man was trying to help me start my vacation off with a bang, and I loved him for it. While I wasn’t in the habit of having one-night stands on the regular, I wasn’t against one every now and again.

As soon as Zaire disappeared, I said, “You know, you really don’t have to keep me company. You’re probably super busy with the club as packed as it is.”

Kalon took Zaire's vacated seat. "Nonsense," he replied. "I employ the best, so that I'm not too busy for some downtime." He spoke like he was forty-years-old, but I knew that he was my age, what with watching the news and all.

"Oh," I whispered to myself.

Kalon eyed me seriously. "Is Zaire your boyfriend?"

I quickly shook my head. "No, he's not. He is, however, my best friend. Has been for ages."

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

I shook my head again. "No."

That smirk was back. "Perfect."

## Chapter 5

### *Kalon~*

Mora just looked at me with those bright blue eyes of hers, and it was going to be a shame when they lost their color. Though dark eyes looked mysterious and exotic on some people, I knew that I was going to miss the kaleidoscope of blue hues that were looking back at me now.

“Why is that perfect?” she asked, and I liked that she wasn’t trying to act coy or shy.

“Because I find you incredibly attractive, and if I’m lucky enough that you return the same sentiment, then I was hoping that we could spend the rest of the night getting to know each other,” I answered, mixing in some truth with the lie.

“Look, I’m not trying to sound like one of those women that are constantly fishing for compliments, but why me?” Her eyes scanned the room. “There are tons of women here that are rocking twelves on a scale from one to ten.”

“That would be relevant if I were the type of man that only cared about outward appearances, but I’m not,” I answered, and that part was true. “I’ve been watching you since you got here, Mora.” Her eyes widened in surprise. “And do you know what I saw?”

“What?” she mouthed, shocked.

“I saw a woman that was here to have a good time only,” I told her. “I saw a woman that protected her friend’s seat and drink when he got up to leave, instead of batting her eyelashes as some random guy for a free drink.” I gave her a pointed look. “I saw a woman with some dignity.”

“I...I’m not sure what to say to that,” she replied.

“You don’t have to say anything,” I assured her. “You asked a question, and I simply answered it.”

“So...you really just want to get to know me better?” she asked, her brows furrowed a bit.

“Baby, I’m not going to lie to you and tell you that I wouldn’t like to see that dress lying on my bedroom floor, but that doesn’t mean that it has to happen tonight,” I told her. While I did want to fuck this woman, I could wait until I turned her. I could wait until I didn’t have to hold back.

“That’s very...honest of you,” she muttered, grappling with what to do next.

“What does it benefit me to lie to you?” I lied.

Mora cocked her head to the side a bit. “Aren’t lies usually told because there *is* a benefit to them?”

“Fair point, Ms. Kamra,” I chuckled, knowing that it was true.

“And what happens in the morning, Kalon?” she asked.

“You’ll wake up chained to the bed because it’ll be impossible for me to let you leave after spending the night with you,” I answered honestly.

The woman blushed like a schoolgirl.

“Now, if we’re not waking up together come sunrise, then nothing happens in the morning, Mora,” I went on. “We’ll exchange phone numbers, then I’ll leave, letting you continue celebrating your birthday with Zaire.”

“How do I know that you’re not secretly married or have a girlfriend?” she asked, eyes narrowed.

I pulled out my phone, holding it out towards her. “You can call every female name in my phone and ask them who they are to me.”

Mora’s head jerked back in surprise. “What?”



“You can go through my phone,” I repeated. “You can call everyone on my contact list and even go through my text messages.”

“Are you insane?” she squawked. “That has got to be the biggest invasion of privacy ever.”

“A small price to pay if I get you out of the deal,” I replied, and she fucking blushed again.

*I was going to miss that blush.*

Now, while we technically had blood coursing through our veins, it was just another thing that was functional because it had already existed when we’d been turned. So, while we weren’t *cold* to the touch, we were...coolish. Our body temperature was a few degrees lower than a human being’s body temperature, and it was noticeable enough if someone touched us. It was only when we were feeding or fucking that our body temperature rose to a fevered pitch.

“I am *not* going to go through your phone, Kalon,” she stated primly.

“Then how else are you going to know that I’m telling the truth about not having a secret wife or girlfriend?” I challenged.

“I’ll take your word for it,” she mumbled, clearly embarrassed at having brought up the subject.

I straightened my back as I regarded her. “So, what’s it going to be, Mora Kamra? Do we sit here all night and get to know each other better? Do we go someplace quieter to talk and get personal? Or are we going back to my place to *really* get to know each other?”

“Straight to the point again,” she replied, biting her lower lip.

“I try to be,” I semi-lied.

“What if I said none of the above?” she asked. “What if I said that I just wanted to get back to hanging out with

Zaire?”

I stood up from the stool, then stepped back a bit. “Then I’d wish you a good night, though I’d make sure that all your drinks were on the house before I left. After all, it is your birthday.”

Her blue eyes narrowed again. “You’d really leave?”

“No matter how attracted I am to you, I prefer *willing* women in my bed, Mora,” I told her, even though that was going to be tested during these next few days together. “If a woman has *any* doubts about going home with me, then I prefer that she didn’t.” I reached out, then twirled a lock of her chocolate hair around my finger. “I have no desire to be a woman’s morning regret.”

That must have done it because something in her eyes changed. She was no longer looking at me like I could be the biggest mistake in her life. Instead, she was looking at me like I might be worth experiencing for one night, though she had no idea that she was going to be experiencing me forever.

“I’m...I’m going to Reno on Sunday,” she said. “I’m on vacation for two weeks, and so...I’ll be out of town-”

“If you’d like to meet up when you get back, I’m open to that,” I lied.

“Well...” She started biting her lower lip again. “I mean....if...”

I lifted my chin as understanding dawned on me. “You don’t want me thinking that you’re ghosting me if you go home with me tonight, is that it?”

Mora looked embarrassed. “I’m not opposed to getting to know each other better,” she said sheepishly.

“Here or-”

“I wouldn’t mind getting to know each other better at your place,” she clarified, and it was hard not to appreciate a

woman that wasn't afraid to go after what she wanted once she made up her mind.

I grinned, feeling my dimples make an appearance. "Do you want to go find Zaire yourself, or would you like me to go with you?"

"Well, I can-"

"Personally, I'd like to speak to him before we leave," I told her, still trying to gain her trust. "If he has any questions about me, I'd like to answer them."

Mora's smile lit up her entire face, and I knew that I'd just hit the jackpot with her. She was feeling safer and safer with each manipulation that flew out of my mouth, and I knew that getting her back to my place was going to be a breeze.

Once I got her there, one drink was going to have her passed out. After that, I was going to take her keys, let myself into her apartment, then make sure that everything looked exactly as it would with her taking a two-week vacation.

Mora stood up from her seat. "Okay, let's go find him," she said, her trusting eyes looking up at me with thrilling excitement of what was to come, little did she know.

After speaking with Zaire and assuring him that she was safe with me, Mora and I left Spherical, then headed back to my place. I always drove myself around, even though I had a car service on speed dial whenever I needed one.

Two hours later, I was on the road to Reno with a drugged Mora sprawled out in the back seat of my Lexus SUV. I didn't need any street cameras picking up any feed of her with me, so while she should be wearing a seatbelt for safety reasons, it just wasn't possible. I also had both of her packed suitcases and carryon bag in the trunk, and I had stored her car in my garage.

With Zaire knowing that she went home with me, I knew that he wouldn't be expecting an early morning text from her, so I had nixed the idea of drugging him, too. He was

going to get a text that we were spending some time together before she left on her vacation, and there was no reason for him not to buy it. I could see him happy for her, even.

Finally approaching the cabin, it looked just like the pictures that she had posted on her social media, and it was just as perfect as I'd hope it would be.

All that was left now was for Mora to wake up.

## Chapter 6

### *Mora~*

My head felt like it was going to explode as I worked to open my eyes. Moving as slowly as possible, I couldn't believe that I had a hangover this bad. No way did I drink that much last night.

As I sat up in bed, my eyes taking some time to focus, I immediately knew something was wrong. I wasn't in my bed, though this wouldn't be the first time that I'd woken up in a bed that wasn't my own after a night of partying.

Once my eyes could focus, that's when dread began settling in my chest. Glancing around the room, I had no idea where I was. Even though the memories were a bit fuzzy, wherever I was, it wasn't my apartment or Kalon's penthouse. I was in a rustic cabin of some sort, and if I didn't know better, I'd think that I was at the cabin that I had scheduled for my vacation, but I couldn't be.

*How would I have gotten here?*

Bringing my hands up to my temples, I began to rub them, hoping to ease the throbbing pain lacing my brain. However, panic really began to set in when I noticed the ropes wrapped around my wrists.

*Holy shit.*

Despite the spiking pain, I started whipping my head all over the place, and I could feel my heart racing as I realized that I'd been tied to the bed. Yeah, the rope had enough slack for me to move around, but I was still tied to a damn bed. Luckily, I still had my dress on from last night, so I was taking that as a good sign. Plus, apart from my head, I didn't feel any soreness or pain anywhere else on my body.

Closing my eyes, I tried to remember what happened last night after I'd left Spherical's with Kalon. He'd driven up to a gorgeous high-rise, and I could remember him using a key in the elevator to take us up to the top floor. Though my mind couldn't conjure up the small details, I could vaguely remember that the place had been large and spacious...I think. I could also remember another drink in my hand, but no conversations between us.

Then it hit me.

I'd been drugged.

*Sweet Jesus.*

Opening my eyes, I looked around, and when I spotted my two suitcases, carryon, and purse stacked near the wall, I knew that I had to be at the cabin. Whoever had done this, they were making it appear as if I'd gone on my vacation like planned. However, being tied to a bed-with *no* memory of what happened-hadn't been a part of my vacation plans.

I also didn't bother trying to pull my arms free from their restraints. Not only did I not have the strength right now, but I was positive that whoever had done this had made sure to tie the ropes securely enough, or else what would be the point?

Closing my eyes again, I let out a deep breath, inhaling and exhaling like nothing mattered more in the world than my steady breathing. I was doing my best not to panic, but it was hard not to. I'd been kidnapped, and I had no idea by who or why, though it was probably a safe guess to assume that this was Kalon's handiwork. I mean, who else would have had the opportunity?

"You're awake, I see."

My eyes snapped open, and I could see Kalon standing in the doorway, looking just as gorgeous as he'd had last night. He stood tall with his black hair, grey eyes, and impressive physique. Dressed in only a t-shirt and pair of grey sweats, he looked like every woman's fantasy. He also looked like he

didn't have a care in the world. Granted, he wasn't the one tied down to a bed, so there was that.

“What the fuck is this?”

“Calm down,” he instructed smoothly as he walked further into the bedroom, and I wanted to stab him in the face. “I'm not going to hurt you.”

“You're lying,” I snapped. “Especially, when I consider kidnapping me the very definition of hurting me.” The corner of his lip twitched, and I could feel my anger and panic spike to dangerous levels.

“Well, in all fairness, I did tell you that you'd be waking up chained to the bed come morning,” he replied, and I didn't find him funny at all.

“What the fuck is this, Kalon?” I practically yelled. “Where are we? Why am I tied to the bed?”

“We're at the cabin that you rented out for your vacation,” he answered, confirming my suspicions. “You've also sent Zaire a text, letting him know that you'd been able to get a jumpstart on your vacation early and that you're fine.”

My lip curled. “You bastard.”

“You don't know the half of it, baby,” he huffed, acting like this wasn't serious.

I let out a shaky breath, realizing that I was getting nowhere with Kalon. I was going to have to forget about getting answers from him and concentrate on getting the hell out of here. If he really did text Zaire to make it seem like everything was okay, then my phone had to be here, right? If my phone was here, then that was something positive.

“I can see your brain working, Mora,” Kalon said as he took a seat on the wooden rocker in the corner of the room. “You're not getting out of those restraints until we have ourselves a little talk.”

“Then fucking talk,” I spat, even though my head hurt like a sonofabitch.

Kalon leaned back in the rocker, then placed one ankle over the opposite knee. He looked commanding, and he also looked royal. He looked like a king, and that had the hairs on the back of my neck standing up more so than before.

“Do you believe in vampires, Mora?”

I just stared at him.

*Surely....*

“What?” I asked, my stomach dipping with trepidation. If he was part of some nutjob cult that believed in vampires, then I was screwed way more than I’d originally thought.

“I asked you if you believed in vampires,” he repeated.

“No,” I answered honestly. “Nor do I believe in werewolves, aliens, Big Foot, the Chupacabra, or unicorns.”

“Well, while I can’t speak for aliens, Big Foot, the Chupacabra, or unicorns, I can attest to the fact that vampires do exist,” he replied calmly, and I could feel my hands wanting to shake with fear.

“Bullshit,” I rushed out. “Vampires don’t exist. They’re just...folklore. They’re scary...myths. A story created by someone that hadn’t understood what they were seeing. A...a cannibal mistaken for something else.”

“While that’s a very logical explanation for the existence of vampires, you’re wrong,” he stated evenly. “Vampires are real, Mora.”

I shook my head nervously. “Okay...so...so what if they do? What does that have to do with me?” While I knew that vampires didn’t exist, if Kalon was part of some crazy cult, I wasn’t about to argue with him over it. I never understood why characters in scary movies always insisted on arguing with the crazy person. They were flippin’ *crazy*, for fuck’s sakes.



“You’re about to become one,” he replied, causing me to choke out a bubble of hysteria.

“What?” I shook my head again. “That’s...what are you talking about?”

Kalon cocked his head. “Do you know anything about your birth parents, Mora?”

“What?” *My birth parents?* “What about them? What... how do you know that I’m adopted?” I could feel my chest tighten with a cyclone of dread, fear, confusion, and incredulousness. “How could you possibly know that? *Why* would you know that?”

Ignoring my questions, he said, “Your mother’s name was Emmaline Chapman, and she was psychic, and I’m not talking about phone hotlines or strong intuition. She was a very gifted clairvoyant.”

I squeezed my eyes shut at that. While I’d never had visions or anything like that, there’d been times when my dreams had felt more than just dreams. There’d been times when something had made me turn left when I had originally wanted to turn right. Still, everyone had personal intuition, right? Everyone had a gut instinct that guided them sometimes.

*Right?*

When I opened my eyes, Kalon’s steely gaze was watching me too intently for my liking. Plus, even if what he was saying about my mother was true, what did that have to do with vampires? What did that have to do with me being here?

After a few more seconds, Kalon said, “Your father’s name is Hugo Draka. He’s into...some darker arts, and it is said that he can see visions, though not naturally like your mother. Hugo has to chant them or spell them into existence.” His eyes narrowed a bit. “Unlike your mother, he’s still alive and lives in an insane asylum.”

“Oh, Christ,” I choked out, feeling nauseous.

“You’re magic, Mora,” Kalon went on, and his statement was so ridiculous that I could only stare at him. “Your blood is full of magic, Mora. It’s also the most powerful thing that I will ever taste.”

Kalon’s incisors grew right before my eyes, and I let out a blood-curling scream.

## Chapter 7

### *Kalon~*

Her screams were piercing my eardrums, but they also sounded beautiful. Fear and lust sounded the same, and when your victim was feeling both of them at the same time...well, there was nothing better.

Still screaming, Mora was trying to break out of her restraints, but it was no use. When I had secured her to the bed, I'd done it using all my strength in those knots, and vampires were considerably stronger than your average human being, though picking up buses and throwing them across the street was a bit of a stretch.

"Mora, calm down," I said, my incisors still very visible.

Squeezing her eyes shut, Mora kept screaming and struggling against the ropes. It wouldn't be long before her wrists and ankles started bleeding. She was thrashing about like her life depended on it, and I supposed that it did.

Retracting my fangs, I said, "Mora, stop it." Making sure that my voice held no room for argument, I added, "If you don't, I'll have no choice but to shut you up myself."

That did the job.

Though she was on the verge of hyperventilating, she was no longer screaming, my eardrums extremely grateful for the peace. However, she was choking out these tiny little whimpers, and I could feel myself getting hard with the sounds.

"I'll answer any questions that you have," I offered. "Just no more screaming."

She was so paled that I actually felt sorry for her. “This...this can’t be tr...true,” she stammered in fear, quiet tears still staining her face. “Vampires don’t exist.”

“Oh, but we do,” I countered. “However, if you need more proof, I’d be more than happy to provide it for you.”

Mora started shaking her head, squeezing her eyes again. “No,” she whispered brokenly. “This isn’t real. This isn’t real.” Her eyes snapped opened. “That’s...that’s like a... party trick or something. Some...some kind of Halloween costume accessory or something.”

“Ask me anything, Mora.”

Honestly, I thought that she was going to ask me all the basic questions that most people asked whenever faced with our existence. Granted, our victims never really had a chance to ask anything, but the shadows usually had a few questions. The newly-turned also always had questions, but that was to be expected. However, I should have known that Mora was going to be different.

“What am I doing here?” Mora asked, and I could see why Brander had insisted on this.

“Though there are vampires scattered all throughout the world, there are only three covens that control the western United States: Noctis, Tenebris, and Diluculum,” I told her. “I belong to Noctis, and we claim the Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Arizona territories. Tenebris claim Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Iowa. Diluculum claim Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.”

“What am I doing here?” she bit out, her voice still carrying a hint of fear.

“I’m getting to that,” I said, censuring her. “Obviously, we all share a common goal in not wanting to be discovered, so we have a...House of Lords, so to speak. Brander Thorne is the father of Noctis, Thorin Moldark is Tenebris’ father, and

Phaeron Aurel is Diluculum's father. The three men meet on a regular basis and are part of the covens' tribunal panel."

"By...by father, you mean...you mean...they ma...made you guys, right?" Mora was still breathing hard, but she was listening, and that was something.

I nodded. "Yes. Brander is responsible for turning everyone in our coven."

"This can't be real," she repeated, her blue eyes glistening with unshed tears.

Ignoring her denials, I continued with my explanation. "For whatever reason, Phaeron and Thorin allow Brander to lead the tribunal panel without much fight. Everyone gets along well enough, and we've never had issues with any other vampires that inhabit the east side of the country. Independent vampires, the ones that don't belong to a coven, tend to make their home in Louisiana. It's the perfect place to blend in while still sustaining themselves."

"You're still not telling me what I'm doing here," she cried out angrily.

"Brander, Phaeron, and Thorin all know your father," I told her, and her blue eyes widened. "Your father was...well, Thorin had believed that your father would have made a good shadow with how much he'd been into the dark arts. He'd been impressed with all that your father had known."

"This is insane," she whispered to herself.

"However, Thorin hadn't known about your mother," I went on. "So, when your father started making noise about vampires existing and your mother seeing...a prophecy coming true, it hadn't taken much to have your father committed, nor had it been all that hard to find your mother."

"What prophecy?" she asked carefully.

"When Brander had heard about your father's ramblings and the existence of your mother, he had admitted to having heard of a very ancient prophecy that he hadn't quite

believed in at the time,” I told her. “It’d been said that a child was going to be born to the visionary of darkness, and that the child was to walk the land for all of eternity. It’d been said that the child was going to take the lost and lift them to the height of power, abolishing all doubt. It’d been said that the child was going to be the first to see what no one else could, and they were going to be the first to see the light and the dark in their truest forms. It’d also been said that the child would walk the land without fear.”

Her tears started to fall. “What does that mean?”

“Your mother was a seer, which gives us the visionary part of the tale,” I explained. “Your father dabbled in the dark arts, which gives us a child born to the visionary of *darkness*.” Mora started shaking her head again. “To walk the land for all eternity, you’d have to be immortal, Mora. Vampires are the only immortal creatures walking the lands.” Fresh tears started coursing down her face. “With no real home, we move around a lot, leaving us lost in a sense, creating the need for a better life. As someone with the gift to see the light and the dark, those gifts are going to stay with you when you’re turned, making you the first of our kind to have psychic powers, Mora.”

“No,” she whimpered, still shaking her head.

“However, the most important piece of the prophecy is where it’s said that this child will walk the land without fear,” I continued. “There’s only one thing that we fear, Mora.” I held her eyes to mine. “While most of the myths you’ve heard about vampires are bullshit, the sun having the power to destroy us is not. Do you have any idea what that would mean for one of us to be able to exist during daylight hours? Do you have any idea what that could do for us as a species?”

“No,” she repeated. “This can’t be happening.”

“Oh, but it is,” I assured her. “Before the sun comes up tomorrow, you’ll be one of us.”

Mora started struggling again. “No, no, no,” she panted frighteningly. “No. It’s not true.”

“It’s all *very* true, Mora,” I told her.

Taking in a deep breath, she asked, “Why you? If...if all this is true...why...why isn’t Brander turning me?”

“I’m not sure,” I admitted. “Nevertheless, I’d been the one chosen to turn you.”

“So....so, you turn me into a...a vampire, and then what?” she bit out, anger making an appearance again. “What happens after that?”

“You will belong to me, and I’ll do whatever I need in order to help you navigate through your new world,” I answered, watching her blue eyes flare with hate.

“Belong to you?” she echoed.

“If it’ll make more sense to call yourself my wife, then you can,” I told her.

Mora’s head reared back. “Are you insane? I’m not... you can’t just...make me your *wife*.”

“Would you like to place a wager on that?” I challenged

“You mean, would I like to bet?” she gawked.

“Sometimes, my age comes out when I’m speaking,” I smirked, and she looked like she wanted to kill me. “Apologies.”

Shaking her head, pulling on the restraints again, she said, “I’d like you to let me go. That’s what I want.”

“That’s not going to happen, Mora,” I informed her. “We’ve spent twenty-five years making sure that your existence was kept a secret from the other covens. We simply discovered you by happenstance. Brander, Thorin, and Phaeron had come upon your father one night simply by chance. If I don’t turn and claim you, there’s nothing stopping someone else from doing so.”

“I don’t want this,” she whispered. “What...what about my job, my parents, Zaire? What...what happens with them?”

“Since you’ll be able to walk among the sunlight, nothing,” I answered.

“I don’t want this,” she repeated desperately. “I don’t want this.”

“Baby, you don’t have a choice,” I replied, watching her heart break right in front of me.



## Chapter 8

### *Mora~*

This was insane.

This couldn't be real.

This couldn't be happening.

Still, as I stared at Kalon sitting calmly in the rocker, he wasn't laughing. His grey eyes weren't filled with mirth, evidence to some kind of inside joke. He was just sitting there, eyeing me like he couldn't wait to pounce.

*Those teeth.*

No matter how much I wanted to convince myself that they'd been a prop, a...some stupid party trick, I knew that they were real. My gut was screaming at me that they were real, even though my mind was still trying to deny the truth.

*Vampires.*

Then there was the whole wife thing. Not only was Kalon going to turn me into a blood-sucking monster, but he was also going to be my...my mate? I shook my head. I had no idea what I was supposed to do. I had no idea what was even expected of me once it was all said and done.

Looking at Kalon, I said, "I still don't understand what...so what? You turn me, then I just spend the rest of my life...killing people?" I pressed my fingers to my temples. "Oh, God...I'm going to be...this can't be happening."

"We don't go around just slaughtering people, Mora," he said. "We eat when we need to and nothing more."

My eyes shot his way. "Wait," I rushed out. "When I told you that I didn't believe in vampires, werewolves, aliens,

Big Foot, the Chupacabra, or unicorns, you said that you couldn't speak for aliens, Big Foot, the Chupacabra, or unicorns, but you didn't say anything about werewolves." I could feel my heart starting to pound inside my chest again. "Are you going to tell me that werewolves *also* exist?"

The corner of his lip lifted like he was laughing at me, and I was going to kill him once I got loose. "Not like you think," he replied.

"And what the fuck does that mean?" I snapped.

"Watch how you speak to me, Mora," he said seriously. "I will not tolerate disrespect."

My head reared back. "Are you kidding me? My *language* is the issue here?"

Ignoring my very valid point, Kalon said, "Werewolves exist, though that whole full moon thing is not true. Though they are at their strongest when the moon is full, they don't turn just because a full moon is out." I could only stare at him. "Plus, there's only a handful of werewolves in existence anymore. Unlike us, they are part animal and need to feed more than we do, and their appetites are more voracious than ours are. While one human feeding can sustain us for about three months, werewolves need a decent filling at least once a month. So, in order for them to remain hidden from the world, they've been slowly starving themselves over the years, and there are a very few of them left."

When it hit me how sad that sounded, that's when I knew that I'd officially lost my goddamn mind. I mean, who in their right mind felt sorry for werewolves?

Getting back to the matter at hand, I asked, "Why can't you just let me go, Kalon?"

"I've already explained that," he replied, sounding a bit put out. "Sooner or later, another vampire will come up on-"

"Then why not just kill me?" I asked, cutting him off. "Why turn me?"

“Because you hold the key to lift us to the top of the food chain, Mora,” he said. “With you, we’ll be able to do anything.”

“You’re immortal,” I practically yelled. “You’re already at the top of the food chain.”

“Not as long as we can be killed,” he quickly retorted. “And we *can* be killed, Mora.”

“Don’t do this, Kalon,” I begged. I wasn’t above begging, even though I knew that it wasn’t going to do me any good.

“There’s another problem with your begging, Mora,” he stated, taking me aback.

“What? What do you mean?”

“You’re ignoring the simple fact that I want you,” he said, and my heart started thrashing about inside my chest again. “While I’d been instructed to make you mine, it was all too easy to *want* to make you mine after seeing the woman that you’ve become.” His dark grey eyes flared. “No matter the decree that’d been laid out by the tribunal, I want you, Mora. I want you more than I want to walk in the sun.”

I squeezed my eyes shut because his words shouldn’t sound romantic. His words shouldn’t sound sexy, possessive, or inviting. Then my mind quickly raced over all the stories that I’d heard about vampires, and if I remembered correctly, seductiveness was one of their stronger qualities. Vampires were supposedly seductive, inviting, and hypnotizing; it was how they lured in their prey.

Looking at Kalon, it was easy to see him fitting that mold. He was gorgeous, commanding, and intriguing. Everything about him sucked you in, and I’d been no different from every other woman last night. I’d left with him, ready to spread my legs for him, and look at where that got me.

“What...what happens if the prophecy doesn’t come true?” I asked. “What if you change me, and I turn out to be

just like the rest of you? What happens if I can't see the future or walk in the sun?"

Kalon stood up, then walked over towards the bed. I could feel myself begin to tremble, and if I fainted, I wouldn't be surprised. When he sat down on the bed next to me, my body really started shivering then, and the blood rushing through my ears was loud and painful.

I felt lightheaded when Kalon's hand reached up, then wrapped around the side of my neck, and while it wasn't freezing cold, it still felt cool. Supposedly, vampires were supposed to be cold to the touch. Their blood wasn't warm like ours, so their body temperatures were off.

"Even if you don't possess the powers that we believe you do, you'll still be mine, Mora," Kalon said, and my stomach flipped with how sensual his words sounded. Not only was this not supposed to be happening, but it was also very, very, very wrong. "You were promised to me, and I don't care if the prophecy turns out to be a fool's tale. I'm keeping you with me, no matter what."

With my heart caught in my throat, I asked, "Aren't you afraid that I'll leave once you change me? If I'm going to be as powerful as you say I am, what's stopping me from leaving you?"

Like a snake charmer playing the flute so hauntingly beautiful, Kalon leaned forward, and when his lips touched mine, I felt drugged. I felt like I'd been transported into an opium den, visions and scents clouding all rational thought. Whatever was in Kalon's kiss, it was enough to weaken me in a way that I hadn't known possible.

When Kalon's other hand slid up the opposite side of my neck, he deepened the kiss, and my hands reached up to latch onto his wrists. I needed something to anchor myself to. I needed something to ground me while my head floated in a sea of dark dreams and violent visions. They were vaguely familiar, but at the same time, untouchable. They felt like a whisper almost heard, but not quite.

My eyes snapped open when I felt Kalon's hips press against mine, his hardness confusing me further. The only thing that I knew about vampires was the same nonsense that everyone else did, so I had no idea where his sexual appetites came from, or if they were even real. What was real and what wasn't when it came to these creatures? I wasn't looking up at a man; I was looking up at a monster.

I also had no idea how we'd gone from kissing to Kalon sprawled out over me, but he was. He was propped up on his elbows, looking down at me, his eyes practically black. Weren't they supposed to be glowing? Weren't they supposed to be red or gold? Weren't they supposed to embody evil? Weren't they supposed to be frightening?

"What...what did you do to me?" I whispered, still feeling lethargic.

Kalon's brows furrowed. "What are you talking about?"

"Your kiss...it's...what's in it? What did you do to me?" Heat was beginning to build between my hips, and shouldn't I be cold? Kalon's body was covering mine, so shouldn't I feel cold?

"Baby, I didn't do anything to you," he answered. "We were just kissing."

Panic started to set in again. "Kalon, no--"

"Tell me what's happening, Mora," he demanded. "What do you feel?"

I said the first word that popped into my head. "Lost."

Before I could say anything more, one of Kalon's hands had my jaw captured between his fingers, and I screamed when his incisors appeared, knowing that nothing was going to save me from what was about to happen. The God that I believed in obviously didn't believe in me if he could let this happen to me, and it was happening. Kalon's teeth pierced my

skin, sinking straight through the thick wall of my artery, the pain a searing wave of agony.

I fought so hard, though the effort was futile. I cried out, I screamed, I sobbed, I used every ounce of strength that I had to fight what was happening, but I was no match for Kalon Dreven. I was no match against his strength, and the more that he drank from me, the weaker I could feel myself become. He was draining me, and the last thing that I saw was a vision of Kalon kneeling before me, worshipping me.

That was the last thing that I saw before dying.

## Chapter 9

### *Kalon~*

Because there was something more going on between me and Mora than I'd realized, as soon as she 'died', I anchored her to the bed with more ropes. I made sure that she couldn't break free once she came to, and I also knew that I only had a few minutes before she did.

Staring at the beautiful woman tied to the bed, I pulled out my phone, dialing Brander immediately. When he answered, I didn't bother with pleasantries. "Whatever it is that you know, you'd better tell me now, Brander."

"Kalon, just...just relax," he replied carefully over the phone, and I could feel my back straighten with anger.

"What the fuck is going on, Brander?" I snapped. "I want the truth, and I want *all* of it."

"What happened?" he asked, instead of answering me. "Did something go wrong?"

"I wanted to prove to her that I'd still want her, no matter if the prophecy came true or not," I told him. "So, I kissed her, and when she immediately melted in my arms, she accused me of doing something to her. She claimed there was something in my kiss making her compliant." I ran a hand through my dark hair. "I've kissed lots of women in my lifetime, and that's the first time that it wasn't just a kiss."

"Mora Kamra is also an empath, Kalon," he said. "She felt you're need for her when you kissed her. It's something that...that's going to be a struggle for you, son."

I could feel my hand grip the phone violently. "What does that mean?"

Brander let out a deep sigh. “When I changed you...” Another sigh. “I never intended to change you, Kalon,” he admitted, and I could feel myself taken aback by such a confession. “I’d been feasting that night. My intent had been to kill you.”

“Why didn’t you?” I asked, shocked and angry.

“I did,” he answered pointedly. “I drained you completely, Kalon. You should have died from your mortal wounds that night.”

When we changed someone, a measurable amount of blood had to still be left in the body. There had to be enough blood to carry our venom throughout a person’s blood stream. Our venom had to permeate every living cell that made up the human form or else they’d just die. If you drank a victim dry, then they died because there was nothing left to distribute our poison.

“When you came to, I’d been...shocked,” Brander continued. “I’d also been terrified for the first time in centuries. Human and vampire, I’ve always believed in everything happening for a reason, so you not dying meant that you were destined for something greater than any of us could ever be.” He sighed again over the phone. “I’d known it with my first taste, but there’d been something in your blood that wouldn’t let me stop, even if I’d wanted to. You tasted different, and I should have known.”

“Do Phaeron and Thorin know about this?”

“Yes, they do,” he answered honestly, and no wonder they let Brander rule uncontested. If Brander was scared of me, then it stood to reason that Phaeron and Thorin were, too. “When we found out about Mora, everything started clicking in place. You were meant for Mora, Kalon.”

“That still doesn’t explain why she felt so affected by my kiss,” I snapped, feeling betrayed by his silence. For years, I’d had to listen to how I was different, but whenever I’d asked Brander how, he’d lie and say that he didn’t know; he just *felt* it.



“Everything about the prophecy is true, Kalon,” he said. “But...we left one part out.”

*Oh, for fuck’s sakes.*

“I’m losing my patience, Brander,” I warned.

“It was also said that only the immortal of the immortals would be able to capture the visionary of darkness,” he explained, and I felt like I was about to set the world on fire with my rage. “It was prophesied that once the immortal of the immortals captured the visionary of darkness, their gifts would become two halves of a whole, separation causing the world to end in destruction.”

“And that’s why you didn’t tell me,” I seethed. “You didn’t tell me because you knew that I would never bond myself to her if I knew that I wouldn’t be able to live without her. That’s why Phaeron had advised me to turn her immediately. That’s why he’d been in California, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” he answered. “He’s been paranoid ever since Hugo told us about Emmaline’s pregnancy. He feared that you wouldn’t go through with it.”

“I wouldn’t have,” I snapped.

“Kalon, calm down-”

“Don’t tell me to fucking calm down!” I roared. “You used me!”

“I did *not* use you,” he lied. “You’re still my son, and I still love you.”

“Bullshit!”

Just then, Mora’s screams pierced through the room.

“She’s waking?”

“I’ll talk to you later-”

“Kalon?”

“What?” I snapped.

“No matter what you decide next, keep in mind that you *cannot* live without her now,” he said, and my stomach tightened with what he was saying. “Just the same way that she cannot live without you.” I could hear him sigh again. “Whatever happens, you and Mora are in this together. Do you understand what I’m telling you, son?”

I closed my eyes as Mora’s screams kept rattling my eardrums. “They’re going to come after us,” I said without any infliction in my voice. “They’re going to hear about us, and whoever feels threatened by what we are, they’re going to come after us.”

“And we’ll be waiting for them, Kalon,” he said firmly. “No matter how pissed off you are at me right now, you’re still my son, I’m still your father, and we’re still your family.”

“I need to see to Mora-”

“Kalon?”

“What?!” I yelled into the phone. “What now?!”

“They can’t kill her, Kalon,” he said, hitting me with more bullshit that I didn’t have time to process. “While they can kill you, they can’t kill her. And if they kill you, then that’s where the world’s destruction comes in. Mora will become the embodiment of physical rage, and she will destroy us all.”

“Oh, that’s just fucking perfect,” I spat before hanging up.

Tossing my phone on the dresser, I raced towards the bed, Mora screaming and thrashing around, one restraint already snapped free.

“Mora!” I shouted in her face. “Mora!”

When her eyes opened, dread splintered throughout my body. Her eyes were the exact same shade of grey as mine. It was like looking into a mirror, one step closer to proving that we might really be two halves of a whole.

“Kalon,” she whispered, and I heard the fucking word slam into the back of my head.

“Baby, I need you to listen to me-”

“Kalon,” she repeated, only this time, my name wasn’t said on a whisper. Mora was identifying me. I could fucking *feel* what she was doing.

When another restraint snapped, I knew that I needed to subdue her. Without knowing all the facts, I had no idea what she was capable of, so I had to think of something until I could talk with Brander, Thorin, and Phaeron some more.

Then I remembered how she had responded to my kiss.

*Fuck let this work.*

Grabbing her face in my hands, my lips landed on hers again, and my need cut through me like the sharpest razor to ever slice a vein. I could hear the rest of Mora’s restraints snap like they were nothing, and when her arms wound around my neck, I settled myself over her body, the beautiful creature withering beneath me.

When I felt Mora’s incisors cut through the tendons in my neck, I closed my eyes, knowing now what a heroin hit must feel like. It wasn’t until I realized that she wasn’t drinking from me that my entire body hardened for her. Mora was sharing her transformation with me, but I needed more than that. I needed her to drink from me. I needed her to need what was inside me until she was able to feed on her own; until she knew how to control her new thirsts.

“Drink,” I commanded. “Drink it all, baby.”

I could feel the flow in my veins reverse with an abrupt start, and with every passing second, I knew that Brander hadn’t been lying about the prophecy. I wasn’t going to be able to be without Mora, and she wasn’t going to be able to be without me.

“Drink,” I repeated. “Keep drinking, baby.”

When her legs wrapped around my waist, her thighs spread wide for me, there was nothing left to do but take what belonged to me now.

## Chapter 10

### *Mora~*

I felt like my skin was too tight to hold in everything that I was feeling. The sounds of Kalon's harsh breaths were all I could hear. The feeling of his body on mine felt like nothing else in the world existed. The taste of his blood on my tongue had me craving every last drop. The scent of his masculinity had me soaked, needing more. Even with my eyes closed, the sight of his grey eyes on mine still felt blinding.

Everything was Kalon Dreven right now.

*Everything.*

Pulling my teeth from his skin, I felt the effortless glide of their retraction like it was the most natural thing in the world. I felt both crazed and calm, but it was easy to see that I felt crazed for Kalon, calm about everything else.

"I need you," I panted, still trying to understand it all. Visions of Kalon worshipping me still clouded my mind. "I need you, Kalon."

"I know, baby," he said, looking down at me, my blood coating his lips. "I know."

"Why can I only see *you*?" I asked, other visions trying to push past my images of Kalon.

"Fuck, Mora," he hissed. "Fuck, baby."

Without answering me, I felt Kalon's hand reach underneath my dress, grab the fabric of my panties, then rip them clean off my body. The tearing fabric sounded loud in the room, but I knew that it was just me. Whatever was happening, every sensation felt heightened, and there was no way that this wasn't just a nightmare anymore.

*Kalon had changed me.*

Before I could give it any more thought, my entire body arched painfully when Kalon slammed his cock inside me, the overwhelming invasion stealing my breath. I'd never felt so full, but it was more than that. I felt him *everywhere*. Even his breath on my skin felt like it was touching on every nerve ending that I had. How could I be dead but still feel all these incredible sensations? How could I be dead and still feel desire on this kind of level?

*I needed Kalon.*

I didn't just want him; I needed him with me, inside me, around me.

"Fuck, you feel so good," he grunted above me, and when my body fell back down on the mattress, Kalon started plowing into me with enough force to cause the headboard to beat against the wall.

I felt like I wanted to cry with how incredible he felt inside of me. My legs tightened around his waist, and terrified that I might rip him apart, I fisted my hands in the sheets beneath me, holding on like I'd lose myself if I let go.

With each crash of Kalon's hips against mine, I could feel his heartbeat inside my chest, matching the beat of my own. Though it was a lot slower than it'd been when I'd been human, my heart still had a pulsing beat, and it was beating at the exact same tempo as Kalon's.

"Mine," he growled in my ear. "You're mine, Mora. You're mine."

"Yes," I agreed, knowing it was true. While I had no idea what was going on, I felt Kalon's possessiveness as deeply as I felt my own. While Kalon was claiming that I belonged to him now, he also belonged to me.

"You have all of me," he said as if he'd been reading my mind. "You have all of me, Mora." My eyes snapped open when I heard the sound of my dress ripping, and Kalon was

leaning over me, my dress ripped down the middle, my breasts on display for him. “And I have all of you, baby.”

When Kalon’s lips found my nipple, I thought that he was going to bite into my flesh, but he didn’t. Instead, he sucked, laved, and teased, and I could feel a flood of pleasure coat his cock with each thrust of his hips. This didn’t feel like sex. This felt like a frenzy of lust. It felt like I never wanted him to stop taking me. Each thrust had me ready to splinter into a thousand pieces, and that only made me want more.

“Kalon, please...” I begged, closing my eyes again, letting the pleasure take over.

“Fuck, yeah,” he grunted. “Beg me to let you cum, baby. Beg for my cock like a good girl.”

I didn’t care that he was demanding my surrender. I didn’t feel threatened by it. I felt turned on and desperate. I felt incomplete each time that he pulled away from me, so I didn’t care about begging. I didn’t care that he was trying to dominate me.

I only cared about Kalon.

I only cared about what he was making my body feel.

“Make me cum,” I kept begging. “Please, make me cum...Kalon...oh, God...”

Kalon hooked one of my legs around his elbow, and as soon as he started railing me again, I felt that familiar sensation begin to build, only it bordered on pain. It felt like I was working my way towards an explosion that my body wasn’t going to be able to handle.

“You might be more powerful than me, but it’s *my* cock that you’ll be craving, Mora,” Kalon hissed, and I could feel my body clench around him. “It’s *my* cock that you’ll be begging for. It’s going to be *my* cock that you won’t be able to get enough of.”

“Kalon...please...oh, God, please...” I felt like I was about to go insane with the painful pleasure pushing me

towards the edge.

“I’ll kill anyone that touches you,” he said, and I could feel my incisors slide free. “I’ll kill anyone that tries to take you from me.”

I wanted to accuse him of talking nonsense, but I couldn’t. I felt the same way. I felt...feral at the thought of losing this man, and I had no idea how that could be. Was it because he had turned me? Was it because I had tasted his blood? Because he had tasted mine? I had no idea what made me think that I couldn’t be without him, but I felt it to my bone.

“Open your eyes, Mora,” he demanded. “Open them, baby.”

When my eyes snapped open, I saw that his incisors were also visible, and my arousal flooded him even more, my climax near enough to drive me crazy.

“Kalon...” I panted, ready to lose my mind with need.

“I know, baby,” he said softly.

“It hurts,” I admitted. “It fucking hurts.”

Kalon’s eyes flared with lust, and before I knew it, his teeth were sinking into my neck again, my orgasm rocketing every inch of my body, making me scream into the night, making me question my sanity with the incredible pleasure consuming everything about me, my body, mind, and soul.

“Fuck, Mora,” Kalon grunted against my neck. “Fuck, fuck, fuck...”

Unable to do anything but ride the wave of sensations, I hadn’t been prepared for when Kalon’s lips touched mine, the taste of my own blood hitting my tongue. The flavor slammed into me like a freight train, and when a second orgasm hit me, I found myself straddling Kalon, his neck in my teeth, the vision of him kneeling before me slamming inside my head again.



*“Fuck,”* he roared as his hips thrust upward, finally cumming inside me.

When I tore my teeth away from his neck, we looked like a bloody mess, and the bloodlust swirling in my veins had me digging my fingernails into his chest, my hips riding him until I came for a third time. Kalon’s fingers dug into my hips as he let me enjoy the wave, his harsh breaths matching my own.

As soon as I started coming down from my high, Kalon turned us back over, so that he was hovering over me again. The first thing that I noticed was how dark our blood was. It was almost black, and I knew that there was so much that I was going to have to learn about my new life.

However, none of that seemed important right now.

Right now, all that mattered was the man still embedded deep inside me.

“Is it supposed to be like that?” I asked quietly, my senses trying to calm themselves.

“It’s always frantic because of our strength and heightened senses, but...” Kalon was breathing deeply, seeming winded, and that didn’t feel right. Weren’t vampires supposed to be too strong to feel fatigue or whatever?

“But, what?”

“It’s you, Mora,” he said. “This is because it’s you.”

“I...I don’t understand,” I whispered.

“No, you don’t,” he replied softly. “But you will soon.”

Then my body jerked, a vision racing across my mind. “Someone’s here.”

Kalon’s entire body stilled. “What?”

“Someone’s here,” I repeated. “About ten miles out.”

Kalon's grey eyes bounced around my face. "You can *feel* them from ten miles out?"

I nodded. "They're also in my head," I told him. "I can see them coming."

"Motherfucker," he hissed before pulling out of me, and my arms automatically reached for him.

"You can't leave me," were the first words that flew out of my mouth with his absence.

Sliding his softening dick back inside me, he said, "Baby, I will never leave you. I can't."

*Why did he sound so sad about that?*

## Chapter 11

### *Kalon~*

We can move at the speed of light, yet Mora could feel someone coming ten miles away.

*What in the fuck was she?*

“Get dress, baby,” I told her, already feeling someone in the cabin.

“He has blue eyes,” she said, looking up at me, and that made me feel better. It wasn’t like anyone else could know where we were and why.

No longer worried about shocking Mora, I moved as fast as I could to make myself presentable enough to meet Leander, and once I did, I shot Mora one last glance before walking out of the bedroom. Her expression hadn’t changed while I’d gotten ready, and I could only hope that was a good thing.

Walking out into the cabin’s living room, I saw Leander standing in the middle of the room, a smirk playing on his lips. Even without our heightened senses, I knew that I smelled like sex. Plus, while my neck had already healed, there was still blood everywhere. Using the hem of my t-shirt, I wiped my mouth and neck, though not really caring what I looked like. Leander was the one intruding, not me.

“What’s up?”

“Brander called me,” he answered. “He wanted me to come and check on you.”

While I didn’t have a best friend or close ‘sibling’, if I were to get stuck hanging out with anyone, I’d prefer it to be Leander. His quiet disposition was welcoming. Leander could

hang out comfortably without saying a word. He was an observer. He was a listener. So, if Brander was going to send anyone to check on me, it'd be Leander. He knew that anyone else would just irritate the fuck out of me, and I was already irritated enough.

“Did he tell you why?”

Leander shook his head. “No. He just said that you were upset and that he was worried.”

“And you didn't wonder why he didn't come to check on me himself?”

Leander smirked again. “I figured that he was the one you must be upset with.”

Figuring that they were all going to know soon enough, I said, “There was more to the prophecy than he'd originally told me.”

Leander nodded solemnly. “Figures.” He gave me a quick grin. “There's a reason that men in power always have secrets, Kalon. If they didn't, then they'd all be just like the rest of us.”

Just then, the bedroom door opened, and Mora came walking out, looking like she'd just been fucked, but clean. The cabin's only bathroom was attached to the bedroom, so she must have cleaned herself up before dressing in a pair of black yoga pants and an over-sized sweater.

*She looked beautiful.*

“You must be Mora,” Leander said, inclining his head politely.

“And you're Leander,” she replied softly as she came to stand next to me, her slow pulse drumming in the back of my ears.

Leander's brows furrowed a bit. “I am,” he confirmed. “I see Kalon's been telling you about us.”

Mora shook her head. “No, he hasn’t,” she said, correcting him. “I saw you. I mean...I see you. I mean, I know who you are.”

Leander looked my way, and I could only be honest with him. “Brander, Phaeron, and Thorin have a lot of explaining to do.”

“None of them know,” Mora said, causing us to both look at her. “Is it a secret?”

“Baby, what are you talking about-”

“Is it?” she asked, but she wasn’t looking at me. Mora was looking at Leander, and if a vampire could lose color in his face, Leander was losing his.

“What’s going on?” I asked, looking between them both.

Mora looked up at me. “His blue eyes,” she stated simply.

My eyes shot back towards Leander. “Do you know what she’s talking about?”

Ignoring me, he asked her, “You know why my eyes are blue?”

Mora nodded. “But do *you*?”

Leander shook his head. “No,” he answered. “I’ve always thought that Brander just...hadn’t taken enough blood when he turned me or something like that.”

“Do you want to know?” Mora asked, and I could feel my anger threatening to make an appearance again. Brander had put me in charge of something that I had no understanding of; *none*. It was easy to see that being responsible for Mora wasn’t going to be easy.

“Yes, I do,” Leander replied, completely entranced by this woman.

“You were blind when Brander turned you,” she said. “He hadn’t known that you were blind because you’d been sleeping when he had come upon you. Your eyes didn’t change color because your eyes hadn’t been working during the change.”

Leander started shaking his head. “That’s impossible,” he argued. “I remember my life before Brander turned me. I could see.”

Mora shook her head. “No. What you remember are the images that your brain had captured but that your eyes hadn’t been able to process. Once you’d been changed, your brain and eyes were finally able to work together to see everything that had always been there. If you think back to before Brander had changed you, you’ll see that your cane hadn’t been a walking stick, but a guiding stick for the blind.”

Watching Leander pale even more, I knew that I needed to call an emergency meeting with everyone. Those three fucks had no idea what Mora was, though they thought that they did. Now that this prophecy was coming to fruition, now that this was no longer a drill, I needed to know as much as I could about what the woman standing next to me was capable of.

“How do you know that?” I asked her, looking down at her.

Mora looked up at me, looking confused. “I’m...I’m not sure. His life is just...there. It’s just in front of me.”

“Jesus, fuck,” Leander muttered, and he wasn’t wrong.

“And...can you see mine?” I asked, hoping that she couldn’t. If Mora could see a person’s life flash before her eyes, then she was never going to be safe from anyone.

She nodded slowly, almost as if she could read my thoughts. “It’s just...right there.”

“No one can know about this, Kalon,” Leander said, straightening. “Christ, she was supposed to be a visionary

only. She was only supposed to be able to see glimpses of the future, not...not *this*.”

Still looking at Mora, I asked, “Can you turn it off?”

“There’s nothing to turn off,” she said. “Once I know, it’s over.”

“Did you see our lives before and after we’d been changed or just before?” I asked carefully.

“Just before,” she answered. “Only while you’d been human.”

I let out a deep sigh of relief as Leander suggested, “Maybe because her gifts are human? Maybe that’s why she can only see our human lives?”

Mora looked between us both. “That would make sense if I wasn’t able to see your futures, too,” she countered, nearly driving me to my knees.

“You can see our futures?” Leander choked out.

Mora’s grey eyes shot my way. “I can see glimpses of Kalon’s future.”

“That’s because you’re tied to me,” I said, feeling a little bit better.

“Maybe, maybe not,” she muttered quietly.

“We need to meet with the tribunal,” Leander announced. “Now, Kalon. This can’t wait.”

“Call Brander, tell him it’s an emergency,” I instructed. “Mora and I will meet you guys after we clean up.” Leander nodded. “Only us, Leander. Phaeron and Thorin are to leave their covens back home. Make sure that Brander knows that Mora and I will leave if the others are present.”

“Of course,” he replied before flashing out of the cabin.

“What’s wrong?” Mora asked. “What’s going on?”

I turned and eyed her. “How are you feeling?”

I could see Mora searching for an adequate word to describe what she was feeling, but that was probably impossible. She was still transforming, and it stood to reason that she'd be feeling out of sorts until the process was completed.

"I feel like...I feel like I want to crawl out of my skin," she answered. "I feel like I want to rip my head from my body because flashes of unfamiliar visions are invading my mind like a strobe light. I feel...I feel like I'm seeing and feeling too much."

My hands came up to rest on her shoulders. "Mora-"

"Except when you're next to me," she finished, and it was incredible how screwed we were. "I feel okay when you're near, and I feel centered when you're touching me. Is that normal?"

"It will be for us," I told her, hating that I didn't have all the answers for her. "How's your thirst?"

"It's there," she admitted. "I can...I can feel the light pangs of hunger, but it's nothing major yet."

"Then we still have some time," I said, hoping I was right. "We're going to go see Brander first."

Mora nodded. "Yeah, that's probably for the best."



## Chapter 12

### *Mora~*

I didn't want to appear needy, but there was something comforting about having Kalon near, and I was still doing my best to maneuver through the changes. I also knew that once I was comfortable in my skin again, I was going to be pissed the hell off at Kalon again for what he'd done to me. Prophecy or no prophecy, he'd had a choice when it came to changing me or not, and he had chosen to be selfish. He had chosen to change me, no matter how much I had begged him, and that wasn't okay.

After Leander had left, Kalon and I had taken a shower, going at it a second time, but I was pretty sure that he'd done it to satisfy my hunger. I wasn't ready to kill someone for my feasting, and Kalon had to know that. So, he had taken me again in the shower, letting me drink from him, giving me what I needed to get through these next few hours.

Clean and dressed, he had warned me that our choice of travel was going to feel disorientating at first, but he had promised that I'd get used to it. Of course, what choice did I have? I was going to live forever, so I supposed that was plenty of time to get used to anything.

So, now we were at Brander's house, a large, elegant, dated mansion that belonged in the south but was located in the deserted mountains of Nevada. He was far enough away from civilization that I couldn't see anyone ever discovering him here. However, that was probably perfect for him, considering.

Two other men were with him, and just like I'd known who Leander had been, I knew them to be Thorin Moldark and Phaeron Aurel. There were also four other people here, apart from Leander. Jaris Norrix, Elissa Abby, Faine Rowena, and

Marcel Ruse were all a part of Kalon's coven, and I knew them like I knew Leander, Brander, Thorin, and Phaeron. Like Kalon had insisted, no one else was in attendance, and I honestly didn't know if that was good or bad.

Once everyone got settled, Kalon was the first to speak. "Tell her everything," he demanded. "And I mean every-fucking-thing, Brander."

"Now, Kalon-"

"Shut the fuck up, Phaeron," Kalon snapped. "Or I swear to God, I will take Mora and you'll never see either of us again."

"Son, calm down-"

"Tell her!" Kalon roared.

I could feel Kalon's anger like it was my own, and I wanted to reach out to him, but I knew that if I did, it'd make us both look weak and that was unacceptable. While there was a lot that I didn't know, I knew that much.

Brander let out a heavy sigh before addressing me. "I'm going to skip what Kalon has already explained to you and tell you the things that you might not know. Your biological father, Hugo Draka, had been chosen for a shadow. A shadow is a human being that believes in our existence to the point of loyalty to our species. He was extremely heavy into black magic and could even conjure up visions and spells if he had a mind to." It still felt weird to hear this about my birth parents. "Your mother, Emmaline Chapman, was psychic, clairvoyant, and an empath."

"Aren't psychic and clairvoyant the same thing?" I asked.

Brander shook his head. "No. You can be psychic without being clairvoyant. Being psychic just means that your intuition is sharper than most human's. Clairvoyant means that you can actually see visions and/or the future."

“Oh...okay,” I muttered for lack of anything more intelligent to say.

“Phaeron had come across your father one night and had felt Hugo’s energy enough to consider him a candidate for becoming a shadow. After tailing him for a few months, Phaeron finally approached him and it hadn’t gone as planned.” Brander continued. “Hugo started ranting and raving about knowing that we were coming for him. He’d been so terrified that he’d started confessing about Emmaline’s visions. The more he ranted, the more Phaeron recognized the prophecy in his words.”

“I immediately contacted Brander and Thorin to let them know what I’d found,” Phaeron said, finally saying something while Thorin still kept silent. “Thorin kept an eye on your father as Brander and I located your mother.”

“Did you guys kill her?” I asked, not sure how I felt about that. Even though my brain recognized that this person had been my birth mother, I still felt detached from the story; I hadn’t known the woman. My mother was Wendy Kamra, and my father was Kyle Kamra. The facts of my birth didn’t change that. I cared about the parents who had *raised* me, not two people that I’d never met.

“Not exactly,” Phaeron hedged.

“What he means is that we *had* to kill her, Mora,” Brander said, taking over again. “When we found her, she’d been about to kill herself. We literally found her in the nick of time. She’d already secured the noose around her neck.” Brander stared at me with his black eyes. “We had to kill her in order to save you.”

“However, not before she revealed the rest of the prophecy,” Phaeron added. “A part that none of us had known about. Either it’d gotten lost in the years of its telling, or no one had ever known the full truth. Either way, we had no reason to believe that your mother had been lying when she revealed the second part of the prophecy.”

“Which is?”

“She’d said that...” Brander let out another heavy breath. “That...only the immortal of the immortals would be able to capture the visionary of darkness. Once he did that, their gifts would become two halves of a whole, separation not an option. Their separation could end in world destruction.”

“What does that mean?” I asked suspiciously.

“When we feast, we have to drain our victims of all their blood,” he explained. “If we leave enough for our poison to travel throughout their body, they’ll turn. So, just for future reference, when you finally do begin feasting, make sure you drain your victims dry, Mora.” I nodded, letting him know that I understood. “Anyway, I’d never meant to turn Kalon.” My eyes shot Kalon’s way, and I knew that he already knew this. “I’d been feasting that night, and I’d made sure to drain him. However, instead of dying, Kalon had been turned, and from all the research that I’d done, and have still been doing, he’s the only vampire to have ever survived a feasting.”

“Making him the immortal of the immortals,” I surmised.

Brander nodded. “And you’re the visionary of darkness.”

“So, what does that mean? What does that mean for us?” I asked, already knowing the answer because I could *feel* the goddamn answer.

“That pull you feel? That need to be near him?” Brander’s face softened as he spoke. “That’s the prophecy, Mora. You and Kalon are bound in a way that the rest of us will never understand. You cannot exist without each other. If you’re ever faced with having to, it will be a painful, miserable, dark existence. Your thirst and need for him will even supersede your thirst and need for blood.”

“What else?” I asked because I knew that there was more to this than just needing Kalon on an unhealthy level; I *felt* it.

“You’re the first and only of our kind to possess the kinds of gifts that you possess,” Thorin answered, finally speaking. “While vampires generally get along for fear of discovery, once word of your existence gets out, some might feel threatened enough to come after you.”

“I’ll never let anything happen to you, Mora,” Kalon said, causing me to look his way again. His grey eyes looked like liquid mercury, and I believed him. I believed that he meant every single word. “They’ll have to get through me to get to you.”

“But that’s the problem,” Brander said, making me look back his way.

“Why is that a problem?” I asked.

“While you can’t be killed, Kalon can be, Mora,” Brander explained as kindly as he could, but I could feel my incisors peeking out at the mere suggestion of Kalon dying on me. The anger felt swift and thunderous, and Brander must have sensed it. “Relax,” he ordered. “Just...relax, Mora.”

As soon as I felt Kalon standing behind me, his hands on my shoulders, my teeth retracted, and I could feel myself calm down. While my mind was still trying to process everything, whatever had me tethered to Kalon was working naturally.

After a few seconds, I asked, “Why can’t I be killed?”

“We don’t know for sure that you can’t be, but the prophecy suggests that you can’t be,” Brander answered. “It is said that you will walk the land for *all* eternity. The rest of us aren’t guaranteed that, Mora. I’m over a one-thousand years old, and I’ve seen lots of vampires expire. Could be by the hands of another vampire or simply bad luck, but I’ve seen it happen.”

I glanced around at everyone, not sure what was expected of me, so I asked, “And what is it that you guys want from me? Because if the prophecy is true, and I can walk in the sunlight, then I plan on going back to work and living my

life like I'd been doing before. I'm not disappearing on my family and friends. I'm not...I...I *don't* just belong to you guys now."

"No," Brander replied carefully. "But you *do* belong to Kalon."

## Chapter 13

### *Kalon~*

As soon as I felt Mora ready to go for Brander's throat, I had ushered us out of there. I'd wanted answers, and I'd gotten them, so there'd been no need to subject Mora to any more of their bullshit. She was still trying to process everything that was happening to her, so I didn't need her going off halfcocked over possible threats to her new life.

So, after Brander had reminded Mora that she belonged to me, I stopped the meeting, promising Brander that we'd talk more later. For the first time ever, something mattered more to me than my own life and it was my job to take care of it-of *her*. Knowing that he was still walking a fine line with me, Brander had conceded to talking later, and Thorin and Phaeron had been wise enough to go along with it.

Mora was staring at the window, unable to see through the black insulation that I'd placed on all the windows earlier, and I could feel how unsettled she was, which was unsettling me. She wasn't the only one that had to adjust to our new codependency, and considering that vampires were generally solitary creatures, yeah, I was feeling a bit unsettled also.

"I don't even know you," she said, breaking the silence. "Apart from the visions of your earlier life, I know nothing about you. I know nothing about you, yet I'm bound to you in a way that will tear me apart if you're ever taken from me. What the hell is that?"

I walked over to stand behind her. "I know it feels sudden for you, but I've been watching you since your birth," I reminded her. "It's not sudden for me."

"That doesn't help me," she replied, but not cruelly. Mora was just stating the facts as she saw them. "That doesn't

make this any easier. I...I have no idea what I'm supposed to do now, no matter what I told Brander earlier. Even without the visions, adjustments, and you, I still don't know what I'm supposed to do. I know nothing about being a vampire. When do I sleep? *Do* I sleep? Can I still eat real food? How do I feast and not get caught? Do I still need to condition my hair or use deodorant." She shook her head. "I'm supposedly this...this powerful prophecy in a world that I know nothing about."

I couldn't help myself.

I slid my arms around her waist, pulling her back to hold her in my arms. "Baby, I know you're confused, angry, and worried," I said. "I know that it's a lot. Don't forget, I've been there. I've woken up to something that I didn't understand. I've been where you are."

"Oh, really?" she scoffed. "I seriously doubt it." I knew that she was pissed, but as long as she was letting me hold her, she could be pissed off all she wanted. "When the sun comes up in a couple of hours, you're going to slip back into your usual routine, and I'm not going to know what to do with myself."

"The sun can't hurt you, Mora," I reminded her. "You can do whatever you want. You can even call your parents or Zaire. You can also slip back into your usual routine."

"Except that there's nothing usual about me anymore," she retorted. "I've gone from having mildly strange dreams every now and again to visions of things that I don't need to know. My brain feels like a movie reel that's out of control." I had no idea what to say to that since I had no idea what she was seeing. "And then there's you."

My arms tightened around her. "What about me?"

"I feel...bereft whenever you're not near me, but I don't even know your favorite color," she said. "Your life has become the most important thing to me, even over my parents and Zaire, and I don't even know what your favorite book is."



“My favorite color is all of you,” I told her honestly. “My favorite book to read is the story of your body. My favorite flavor is the taste of your skin. My favorite movie is watching you cumming on my dick. My favorite food is your blood. My favorite song is the sound of you crying out my name when I’m deep inside you. My favorite way to relax is looking at you. My favorite hobby is existing only for you.” My arms tightened around her waist some more. “What else do you want to know about me?”

Mora turned around, then stepped out of my arms. “That’d all be nice if it weren’t for the fact that you only feel that way because of the prophecy,” she said, again, not unkindly. She was still stating the facts as she saw them. “None of that is real, Kalon. None of *us* is real.”

I slid my hands inside the pockets of my sweats. “I hate to break it to you, Mora, but we’re about as real as it gets. In fact, it doesn’t get any more real than not being able to live without each other.”

She just nodded before changing the subject. “Do you know why I feel tired, but I’m not?”

“Physically, your body will never tire,” I explained. “However, your mind can feel...overwhelmed.”

“So, it’s my brain that’s feeling tired, not the rest of me?”

I nodded. “Yes.”

“It’s not because I haven’t...uhm, really eaten?”

“But you did,” I reminded her. “You fed from me, and you can keep feeding from me until you’re ready, Mora.”

“Why was the blood so dark?” she asked, ignoring my offer.

“I’m not sure,” I answered honestly. “I think it’s just another thing that’s different because of you and what you are.”

“So, there’s no real point in asking you anything,” she snapped. “Since no one knows what I am, what’s the point, right?”

I stepped forward, grabbing her by the arm. “Hey,” I snapped back. “You’re not in this alone, Mora. I’m here with you.”

“Because you have no choice!” she yelled, yanking herself out of my grip, and she’d done it so effortlessly that there was no doubt which one of us was the strongest.

“I’m not going to spend the rest of our lives arguing about the damn prophecy, Mora,” I told her, taking a calming breath. “I’m sorry if you grew up wanting Prince Charming, because that’s not what you have and it’s not what you’re going to ever have. No matter what, this is your life now. This is you.”

Then she asked something that nearly drove me to my knees. “Even if the sun can’t kill me, it stands to reason that a decapitation still can, right?”

*Suicide.*

“You’d do that to me?” I asked, my voice harsh with a possibility that none of us had ever considered. “Knowing what your death would do to me, you’d still do it?”

Her silver eyes didn’t flinch when she said, “I don’t owe you anything, Kalon. I don’t owe any of you anything. The only people in this world that I owe are my parents and Zaire.”

Calling her bluff, I said, “If that’s what you want, I’ll do it as soon as the sun comes up.”

“Why wait until the sun comes up?”

“So that I can walk out into it as soon as you’re dead,” I told her. “If you think that I’m going to spend even one second experiencing the agonizing loss of your life, you’re wrong. I’d rather let the sun kill me. That agony will only last a few minutes, not the rest of my fucking life.”

Her chin came up, and in this moment, staring into her silver eyes, I felt sorry for anyone that came for her. Whatever Mora was before she'd been turned, her newfound power was growing more and more with each breath that she took. Phaeron was right when he'd said that it wasn't going to be enough just to claim her. He'd said that Mora was going to have to *want* to be with me, or else I'd have one hell of a fight on my hands, and I could see that now.

“And what about earlier?” I asked.

“What about earlier?”

“Are you seriously going to stand there and tell me that you felt nothing when I was deep inside you?” I challenged. “Are you going to tell me that you didn't feel everything just as intensely as I did?”

“Again, that's just the prophecy at work,” she replied, and I couldn't believe how much I hated hearing her attribute everything between us to that goddamn prophecy, even if it were true.

“Even if it is, are you telling me that death is preferable to what we shared?”

“I'm telling you that I don't like having no control over my life,” she practically hissed. “I'm telling you that I don't like not knowing what's expected of me. I'm telling you that I don't like how you took away my chance at happiness.” Mora straightened her back. “Even though I'm confused and still trying to process all that's happened, that doesn't mean that I've forgotten who's to blame for this, Kalon.”

I had my hand wrapped around her neck, my eyes glaring down at her, before she knew it. “And don't forget that I've been watching you since the day you were born,” I reminded her. “For *you*, what you're feeling might be all about the prophecy. For *you*, this might all be about what I did to you. However, *for me*, this is all about knowing you better than you know yourself and being in love with everything that I know about you. I've loved you for fucking *years*, Mora. Centuries, even.”

Mora started shaking her head. “You can’t...you can’t love me.”

“Why? Because I’m a vampire? Because I don’t have a traditional heart? Because my soul was sold to Satan centuries ago?” I tightened my hand around her neck. “Why can’t I love you, Mora? Why can’t vampires love? Why can’t I want you like that? Feel for you like that?”

“I...I don’t know,” she stammered. “I just...because-”

“Because your mind still thinks that we’re not real,” I said, cutting her off. “But, oh, baby, we are.”

## Chapter 14

### *Mora~*

Despite everything that was going on around me, despite what I'd been going through since Kalon had kidnapped me, my mind was still in denial because the alternative was still... inconceivable.

I also knew that vampires could love because I still felt love for my parents and Zaire. I still felt something whenever I thought about them. I still felt concerned for them. I still felt love for them. I still felt *attached* to them, and I didn't understand it. Vampires were supposed to be dead and without feeling. All the original tales of vampires painted them as soulless creatures, unable to feel emotion. They were the undead, immortals that no longer possessed human understanding.

However, that wasn't true.

None of it had *ever* been true.

Plus, there was also the way that Kalon's hand felt against my neck. I felt the heat from his hand all the way to my toes. His nearness felt...igniting. My need for him felt unlike anything that I'd ever felt for any man before him, and even though I knew it was because of that damn prophecy, the need was still there. I could still feel the pounding in my chest when Brander had mentioned that Kalon could still be killed and how my fangs had been quick to come out.

I closed my eyes when I thought about what killing myself would do to Kalon. If I felt that volatile at the simple mention of someone killing him, he was right to want to follow me in death if I really ever did kill myself. I thought about how he was just as much of a victim of the prophecy as I was.

When I opened my eyes, he was looking down at me, his grey eyes trying to see inside my mind. “Talk to me, baby,” he said, and I could feel my body clench from the way that I was craving him. “Tell me what’s going on in that beautiful head of yours.”

“I want to talk to my parents,” I told him. “I want to talk to Zaire.”

“Mora-”

“If you want me to believe that vampires can love, then I need to talk to the only three people in the world that I do love,” I said, and I could see his eyes flare in irritation at knowing that I didn’t love him. Still, how could he expect me to love him when I didn’t even know him?

His hand dropped from my neck before stepping back. “Since there’s only a couple of hours before the sun comes up, I think I’ll go eat,” he stated simply. “When I get back, I’ll go lay down, and you can call your family.”

“What do you mean?” I asked, panicked at him leaving. “You already fed, didn’t you? Earlier, with me?”

“I didn’t feed, Mora,” he replied evenly. “It was bloodlust. It wasn’t nearly enough to sustain me.”

*He was making up excuses to leave.*

“So...you’re just going to go out and kill someone? Snatch them off the street because you’re not up to dealing with me?”

“Call me a coward again and see what happens,” he fired back, and I could feel his anger like it was my own. “And no, we don’t just snatch people off the street. Though their blood isn’t as tasteful as most, we strategically choose humans that live criminally.”

That surprised me. “What?”

“Cops don’t investigate the murders of drug addicts, gang members, or criminals as diligently as they do

upstanding citizens,” Kalon explained. “Though drug addicts taste the worst, no one looks twice at a couple of puncture wounds. As for gang members or criminals, we slash their necks before drinking from them, so that the wound that the coroner concentrates on is the slashed throat, which is technically the cause of death. We camouflage our kills just like we camouflage our lifestyles, Mora.”

While his explanation made sense, it still didn't make me feel any better about killing someone for the purpose of nourishment. I didn't feel good about killing *anyone*, even if they were a criminal.

“That still doesn't explain why you're leaving when you don't have to,” I replied, doing everything in my power not to cross my arms over my chest like a fishwife.

Kalon's eyes narrowed. “How do you know that I don't?” he asked. “You know nothing about my feasting habits.”

“If you're hungry, then you can feed off me,” I told him, not wanting to tell him the truth. I felt his appetites like I felt everything else about him, only I was pretty sure that he didn't want to hear that right now. “If I can feed off you, then you can feed off me.”

“You can feel me,” he said, and he said it like a statement of fact, no emotion whatsoever.

“Does it matter?”

Kalon let out a heavy breath. “All the same, I'd rather not,” he said, and I felt his rejection like a slug to the chest. It felt powerful and painful, and that got me thinking about other things.

Jealousy bloomed hot and heavy in my chest, and I knew that I needed to get away from him, no matter how uncomfortable that might feel. Not even realizing what I was about, I found myself outside, not even remembering getting there. However, before I could process how I'd come to be

here, Kalon was standing in front of me, his hands gripping my shoulders painfully.

“Let me go,” I spat, my blood rushing violently through my ears, the sound loud and distracting.

“I don’t know what your blood is made of, Mora,” he said. “So, I’d rather not drink from you before I know more. Earlier was just...instinct.”

I jerked out of his grasp, but he matched me with each move that I made. “I didn’t ask,” I said, my incisors peeking out.

“Baby, I need you to listen to me,” he instructed carefully. “I need you to calm the fuck down and listen to me.”

“I will as soon as you get your hands off me,” I told him, and I watched him lift his chin, not liking that particular demand.

Still, he let go.

“Feel better?” he bit out.

I could feel my teeth retracting. “Yes, I do,”

We stared at each other in silence, neither of us willing to give an inch. While I might be some great prophetic with incredible powers, I was still new to this. Kalon was actually the one with the advantage because he knew the rules. He knew this way of life, and I knew nothing.

Finally, he said, “I’m going to go inside and get some rest. You’ll have all the privacy you need to call your family.”

“Why don’t you just go home?” I asked, still feeling jealous over all the things that I didn’t know. While I knew that we were bonded, I had no idea if that meant we weren’t allowed to have relationships with other people. An eternity was a long time to be monogamous. A million people were going to come and go in our lifetimes, so who was to say that there wasn’t someone else out there for us?



“I *am* home,” he snapped, his temper coming out. “*You’re* my home now.”

Not being able to help myself, I asked, “And how many people are allowed to live in your home?”

Kalon had his hand wrapped around my neck, his gorgeous face looming over me. “Any other man touches you, human or vampire, I will fucking kill him,” he snarled down at me. “If you let any other man come even within a hair’s breadth of you, you’ll get that fucking decapitation you were so eager for earlier.” His hand tightened around my neck, and it was insane how much I wanted him physically when all of this craziness was happening around me. “You’re mine, Mora. You’ve been mine since the day you were fucking born. Hell, you were mine centuries way before that. From the moment that I changed you until you take your last breath, no one else will ever touch you.”

“And what about you?” I asked. “Does the same go for you?”

Kalon let go of my neck before taking a couple of steps back. “Even if I wanted to fuck another woman, something tells me that I wouldn’t be able to,” he answered, and I could actually feel whatever we’d done earlier dissolve into nothing. “However, I don’t.”

He was lying, and I told him so. “You’re lying.”

“And you’re still in denial,” he accused. “You’re still hoping that none of this is real. Well, it’s real, Mora. All of it, it’s real. What’s also real is the fact that I haven’t fucked another woman in over seven years. Immediately after you turned eighteen.” My breath hitched at that. “I will only ever want you, Mora. Even without that goddamn prophecy, there’d still be no one else but you.”

“Kalon-”

“I need to go inside,” he said, cutting me off. “The sun’s going to be up, and you need to call your family.” He

turned to leave, but then stopped, turning back to face me again. “Another thing.”

“What?”

“Don’t ever question my love or fidelity ever again,” he said, and his voice left no room for argument. “Both are yours, and they’ll both be yours forever.” Kalon walked back into the cabin before I could say anything, but what was there to say?

As soon as the sun came up, I called my parents, silently crying inside the entire time. After that, I called Zaire and cried some more.

## Chapter 15

### *Kalon~*

I was laying down, staring up at the ceiling, mad as fuck. Though I was doing my best to give Mora some space for mistakes and assumptions because this was all new to her, I still found myself angry as hell that she'd even suggest that I'd want another woman over her. Never mind how I felt when she'd hinted at her being with another man.

*I'd seen red.*

I had no idea how she could feel what we felt for each other and still believe that other people were a possibility for us. She had to be out of her mind to think that this wasn't it for the both of us. That goddamn prophecy wasn't fucking around when it'd been created, thought of, or whatever.

Even before Mora opened the door to the bedroom, I felt her. I'd felt her coming to me, and that was just more proof of how fucked she and I were. It didn't matter how much time passed or what more we learned along the way; we were tied to each other for all of fucking eternity.

I sat up from the bed, not rushing to cover myself. After our fight, I'd taken a shower, thrown on some pajama pants, then had gone to lay down. Even though she'd already seen a lot more than just the sight of my bare chest earlier, we weren't exactly a normal couple.

"What happens when my vacation is over?" she asked. "Do I go back to my apartment, and then you go back-"

"You'll live with me," I said, interrupting her. "My penthouse is already designed to combat the sun. Plus, I also have a house outside of the city that's also designed for my protection."

“Are you certain that we have to live together?” she asked. “It’s going to be hard to sell to my parents and Zaire-”

I left, made sure to stay in my house for exactly one minute, the most excruciating minute of my entire existence. When that minute was up, I returned to the cabin, and Mora was on her knees in the bedroom, her breaths coming hard and laborious.

Reaching for her, I picked her up, setting her on my lap as I sat on the bed. Her head was burrowed in my neck and her fingers were digging into my skin, so I said, “It’s okay, baby. I’m here. I’m back. It’s okay.” My hands were running up and down her back. “I just wanted to show you why we have to live together.”

Mora’s head came up, and when I saw that her eyes were a fiery red instead of grey, my entire body froze. While our eyes darkened or glowed a bit while we feasted, they didn’t burn bright like hers were right now. They didn’t turn into fire from a mere feeding.

“Mora-”

She had her teeth sunk into my neck before I could even form my next word. I squeezed my eyes tight as Mora drank my blood, then reversed the flow to give it back to me, much like she’d had when she’d been changed. Even after explaining how I didn’t want to drink from her until I knew more about her, Mora was giving me no choice.

When she pulled back, she jumped off my lap, her chest heaving, her lips dripping of blood.

*Christ, she looked beautiful.*

As her eyes started returning to their original grey, that’s when I felt it. I could feel her calming down, and whatever she was made of, she was slowly infecting me with it, and that’s not what I wanted. I didn’t want her powers. I didn’t want her otherworldly gifts. I just wanted *her*. I didn’t care if she was more powerful than me; my male ego wasn’t that fragile.

*All I wanted was her.*

I stood up carefully. “Baby-”

“I need to feast,” she said, and I knew for a fact that she was lying. I knew it like I’d felt her calming down.

“Mora, I don’t think-”

“We’re in the middle of a forest,” she stated, cutting me off. “I can try an animal first.” I watched her lick the blood from her lips. “I can practice on an animal until I’m ready to drink from a human.”

I eyed her. “You don’t want to talk about what just happened?”

She shook her head. “We don’t need to talk about it. You made your point.”

I sighed. “Baby-”

“And I’ll never drink from you again,” she promised, and that had my back straightening.

“What?”

“You said that you didn’t want to drink from me, and... and I have no right to drink from you,” she said, and her voice had me ready to split my veins open for her. “Not when I can’t do it the right way. Not when we both need different things from each other.”

“I just need *you*,” I told her, hating that she was erecting this wall between us, and all because I’d been honest about wanting to learn more about her first.

“I also want to test the...the distance thing,” she said, ignoring my claim. “I can understand being hundreds of miles apart, but a couple of miles shouldn’t hurt us like this.” I had to bite my tongue, and I hated how she sounded calmer and calmer with each word. “I also...I want to see my father, Hugo.”

That had my back snapping straight.

“What? Why?”

“If anyone can help me control these...these visions and feelings, it’s him,” she said, and that logic was hard to argue with. “Maybe my mother told him how she managed it. Maybe Emmaline told him something that none of you know.” I was about to agree before she added, “But I really want to eat first. Maybe...maybe if I start drinking from animals or other people, it’ll...lessen my need for you. Maybe if I start tasting other people, it’ll loosen this stupid bond between us.”

Jealousy hit me like a ton of bricks.

“If that starts to happen, then we’ll only drink from each other-”

“I don’t want to drink from you,” she said, and I wished to God that she had screamed it, instead of sounding so sure and absolute.

I stood there, contemplating my next move. I fucked up when I told her that I didn’t want to drink from her. I hadn’t been rejecting her, but I could understand why she’d felt as if I’d had. This was all new to her, and I should always be mindful of that when I was speaking to her. I’d had twenty-five years to prepare for her, but she’d had no time at all. I introduced myself, took her home, then turned her all in less than a day. I never should have fucking said that I didn’t want to drink from her until I knew more about her first. I never should have treated her like an experiment gone wrong.

“Okay,” I said softly. “We can go out and grab the first animal we see, then...we’ll see how you do with feeding off one.”

Mora nodded. “Afterwards, we can test the distance thing.”

“Okay,” I replied because I didn’t know what else to say. I needed to tread softly here. “Now that the sun is coming up, as soon as the sun goes back down, we can-”

“I want to go now,” she said, and she was fucking killing me. “I don’t want to wait until the sun goes down, and I also don’t need you for this.”

“So, is that your plan?” I snapped. “You felt rejected when I said that I didn’t want to drink from you, so you’re going to start rejecting me?”

Mora’s chin came up. “I’m not rejecting you,” she lied. “I’m just trying to figure out my new life.”

“Without me?”

“This will also help to test the capable distance between us,” she said reasonably, and I could feel myself getting angrier with each word that came out of her mouth. “I can search for something until I can’t go any further.”

“I wasn’t rejecting you, Mora,” I told her, knowing that it didn’t matter. Like she’d stated earlier, she didn’t know me, so why would she believe me? Where in the prophecy did it say that she was obligated to trust me? Plus, it’d been me that had kidnapped her, brought her here, then changed her against her will, so why in the fuck would she trust me?

“I’ll be back as soon as I’m done,” she said, ignoring my claims again.

Before I could say anything more, Mora was gone, and if the sun weren’t out, I would have gone after her. I would not have allowed her to experience her first feeding alone, even if it was only on an animal. Her first time should have been with me. I should be at her side for all her firsts. Mora should not be out there by herself, vulnerable to all the things that we still didn’t know about her.

Suddenly, I doubled over, already feeling the sharp pangs of distance. It wasn’t painful enough to drop me to my knees, but the discomfort was significant enough to make me have to catch my breath. I had no idea where Mora was, what she was doing, or how further out she planned to go, and the helplessness that I felt was un-fucking-manning.

I wasn't sure how long I suffered through the discomfort, but when Mora was back inside the room, she looked slightly sick, though safe.

“About twenty-five miles,” she said, and then she was gone again.



## Chapter 16

### *Mora~*

I honestly didn't know if I was punishing Kalon or not for what he'd said about not wanting to drink from me, but I still wasn't necessarily wrong. Even though Kalon had been the one to turn me, and even though he was a big part of the prophecy, I still needed to be able to maneuver through this life on my own. Our codependency didn't have to be a strike against us. I didn't see why we couldn't do things on our own. In fact, if I found an apartment within twenty miles of Kalon's home, then we didn't even have to live together once this jacked-up vacation was over.

Twenty miles had been the marker of tolerance, and twenty-five miles had been the maximum before the separation had become too painful to function. It still felt unreal that I was connected to Kalon in this way, but there was no denying the proof. While I'd done my best to live in denial ever since I'd woken up tied to that damn bed, I could only stick my head in the sand for so long.

As for killing that first squirrel, it hadn't been as bad as I'd thought it'd be. My mind had been reluctant as hell, but as soon as my incisors had come out, feeding had felt like a necessity rather than a choice. My new instincts had taken over, my mind no longer in control. My new instincts had taken over, and all my sense of right and wrong had been turned on its head. I knew that it was going to be different when I made my first human kill, but I knew that I was still going to be able to do it. It was a necessity now, and like anyone faced with life or death, killing was easy to do when it was necessary.

With Kalon sleeping/not sleeping in the room, I was in the living room with the television on because that felt normal.

I wasn't really watching it, but I didn't know what else to do. Kalon had described 'sleeping' as more of a type of meditation, so I knew that he wasn't really asleep, but I didn't feel like bothering him. The past twenty-four hours hadn't been fun, so if he needed to decompress, I didn't blame him. It was the same reason that I wanted to meet my biological father. I needed to learn how to quiet my mind, and I could use all the help that I could get, including anything that Hugo might be able to tell me.

Suddenly, everything went dark. Flashes of threats began to bombard my mind's eye, and though I could see the images clearly enough, I couldn't gauge a timeline. I also saw images of Thorin Moldark lying in bed with a beautiful blonde. However, I had no idea if I was viewing something from the past or the future.

"Baby?" I opened my eyes and saw Kalon kneeling beside me. "What's wrong? What's going on?"

"Wh...what?" I asked, trying to focus.

"I was lying in bed when I felt you...bothered," he said, doing his best to explain this bullshit between us. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," I lied. "I'm fine."

Kalon stood up, glaring down at me. "You're fucking lying," he snarled. "I can *feel* that something is wrong with you. I can *feel* that something is coming, Mora."

I stood up because I was feeling defensive, confused, and combative. I stood up because I wasn't going to let Kalon intimidate me. I wasn't going to let him think that he could get away with demanding things from me when he'd made it painfully clear that he needed time to adjust to what I was and what that meant for him. Now, did I blame him? No. Hell, *I* was going to need a hell of a lot of time to come to terms with everything that was happening to me, so I understood.

*I swear to God, I did.*

However, the knife cut both ways, and if Kalon wanted time to learn more about our situation, so that his choices were more informed...well, then I deserved the same thing.

“Whatever it is, I’ll handle it,” I said, staring him in the eye, refusing to flinch, even though we both knew that I had no idea what I was doing. “There’s nothing like learning from trial by fire, right?”

“Are you fucking kidding me?” he hissed down at me, looming over me like an avenging god. “Are you seriously telling me that you’re going to go off on your own when you have no idea what it means to live like we do?”

“I don’t need a babysitter, Kalon.”

“I’m not your fucking babysitter!” he thundered. “I’m your fucking partner! I’m your fucking *life!*”

“I’ll handle it,” I repeated, and the next thing that I knew, Kalon had me up against the wall, his hand wrapped around my neck, something that he loved doing, apparently.

“I need you to listen to me, and I need you to listen very carefully, Mora,” he growled in my face. “You are *mine*. You *belong* to me. I fucking *own* you. Are you listening?”

“Not when you don’t belong to me in return, Kalon,” I told him. “You don’t get to pick and choose which part of my life you want to be involved in. If you won’t feed off me, then I won’t feed off you. If you aren’t going to trust me, then I’m not going to trust you. If you want to figure this disaster out on your own, then I’ll be doing the same.” I leaned up in his face. “We might be bound together by that stupid prophecy, but we’re hardly attached at the hip.”

His fingers began to dig into my neck. “*All* of me belongs to you,” he replied. “The rest of your bullshit is just details.”

I closed my eyes, laughing to myself at how he hadn’t denied any of what I’d said. He was dismissing it as bullshit, but he wasn’t denying that he didn’t want to feed off me. He

wasn't denying that he didn't trust me. He wasn't denying that he wanted to figure this mess out on his own.

When I opened my eyes, I immediately pushed him off me when more visions started to assault me. With my fingertips pushing at my temples, I squeezed my eyes shut as the images began to flash with clearer details. I could see three vampires standing in the clearing leading up to the cabin, and they weren't friendly. Pushing my fingertips harder against my head, I wondered how they could know about me already. If the visions included the cabin, then this was...these images took place in the near future.

"Goddamn it, Mora," Kalon growled. "Tell me what the fuck is going on?"

Just as quickly, the visions vanished, and it only took me a second or two to straighten and collect myself. These visions weren't like the other ones, the ones that had given me glimpses into the others' lives. I felt these deeper, but that was probably because they felt malevolent.

I looked up at Kalon, and I knew that I was going to have to tell him. This wasn't about us or our issues. The visions showed the cabin, so it stood to reason that Kalon was going to be here whenever these vampires showed up, right? If he was going to be here, then he had the right to be able to defend himself against whatever was coming.

"Three vampires are going to be showing up here," I finally told him. "And they don't feel friendly."

His entire frame stilled. "What?"

"I saw them earlier," I admitted. "They have something to do with Thorin. He...he was in bed with a blonde, and that's somehow connected to the three vampires coming here."

I watched Kalon pull his phone out and dial Brander. "Thorin told that stupid bitch about Mora," he said into the phone, bypassing any pleasantries. "Thorin talked, and now we're going to have some visitors." I couldn't hear what Brander was saying, but it didn't matter because I could hear

Kalon perfectly fine. “I don’t give a fuck!” Kalon roared. “If anything happens to Mora, I’m going to fucking kill him, and I *will* go through you if I have to, Brander. Oh, and you can tell Thorin that I’m coming for him.”

As soon as Kalon hung up on him, I asked, “What was that all about?”

“Thorin has a thing going with a woman named, Olympia Hamlin,” he answered. “She’s an independent vampire and holds no loyalty to anyone. He must have opened his mouth when he was done fucking her, and she must have... she must have gone back home and talked.”

“How can you be so sure that it’s her?”

“Because a coven would come after you with all its members,” he explained. “For better or for worse, we’re a family. Despite Brander not being completely honest about the prophecy, we’ve always decided things together. At the very least, the tribunal always meets with all its members, keeping us all informed of any decisions that could affect us.” Kalon let out a deep breath. “For three random vampires to show up out of the blue, they’d have to be independents.”

“They’re here to kill me,” I told him, feeling the ill-intent, though not necessarily knowing it for a fact. “You should probably be prepared for that, considering.”

If it were possible, Kalon looked even more pissed. “Because you think that I’d let them kill you?”

I shrugged. “Since I’m new to this, I’d say that the odds are in their favor.”

Kalon stepped towards me until I could feel his body’s coolness enveloping everything around me. “I know that I’m fucking this up, Mora,” he said. “Nevertheless, I wasn’t lying when I told you that I loved you. I wasn’t lying when I said that I wanted you more than I’ve ever wanted anything else in my life. That damn prophecy doesn’t change a goddamn thing.” His right hand came up to cradle my face. “I love you, and I’ll be dead before I let anyone hurt you. I don’t give a

fuck that you're more powerful than I am. I also don't give a fuck if you don't need me to fight your battles for you. You're mine, and they're more than welcomed to come after you, but they're going to have to go through me first."

"And if they do?"

His grey eyes softened. "According to the prophecy, you'll end up setting the world on fire."

## Chapter 17

### *Kalon~*

I was going to kill Thorin, and if his coven came after me, so be it. While I understood that incredibleness of the prophecy being more than what anyone had thought, the sonofabitch had been sworn to secrecy, and he had given his word to keep his fucking mouth shut until we knew more.

When my phone rang, Mora just looked at me, and the distrust in her eyes was killing me, even if it was my fault that she didn't trust me. Hoping to fix it, I showed her the screen, so that she could see that it was Brander calling me back. I also put it on speaker when I answered.

"I've called the others," Brander announced over the phone. "We can be there-"

"I'd rather you didn't," Mora said, surprising us both.

"Pardon me?" Brander asked, his voice full of incredulousness.

"If I don't trust Kalon, what makes you think that I'd trust the rest of you?" Mora asked, and I could feel her words like a sword through my black heart. "How do I know that your arrival won't be a way to set me up? How do I know that you're on *my* side?"

"Mora, you can't believe-"

"You lied to your own son about his future," she said, cutting Brander off. "Why on earth would I believe that you care about what happens to me? In fact, how do I know that you're not the one that set this entire thing up? After all, getting rid of me and Kalon ensures your high seat on the tribunal, right? You, Thorin, and Phaeron remain untouchable if I don't exist." My gut kept tightening with each doubt

spilling from her lips. “I mean, what with Thorin being the one to break his word and all, how do I know that you’re not the real enemy here?”

“I’d think that you’d be able to see and feel that, Mora,” Brander answered carefully.

“The future is subjective, Brander,” she shot back. “It’s affected every time that someone changes their mind. I don’t see what *might* happen, I see what is *going* to happen.”

“Kalon, you need to listen to me, son-”

“Because you think that I have the power to influence her?” I scoffed. “You heard her, Brander. She doesn’t trust me any more than she trusts you. So, what the fuck do you want me to do?”

Mora’s grey gaze didn’t flinch or stray from my face. She was looking me dead in the eye, daring me to take sides. She was daring me to challenge her truth. Mora was more than prepared to fight this battle on her own, and I’d never felt so fucking irrelevant in all my life. I was over three-hundred-years old, and I’d never mattered less than I did in this moment with this woman.

“If anything happens to either one of you, then the other will not be able to exist,” Brander practically yelled in frustration. “What don’t you get about that?”

“That’s where you’re confused,” Mora told him. “You seem to think that I care what happens to Kalon if I die. You seem to think that I care about what happens to *any* of you if I die. The prophecy matters so much to you because it benefits *you*, because it’s a win for *you*. Well, Brander, it doesn’t mean shit to me. I didn’t choose this life. You guys chose it for me because it was a decision that was what was best for *your* people. I’m happy dying in a freak accident, so that I don’t have to outlive my parents, my friends, or anyone else that I care about.”

Brander was silent for a long while before finally saying, “You’re right. I was under the impression that you’d



automatically become loyal to us once you were turned because that's what usually happens." We could both hear him sigh over the phone. "I'd forgotten that you're different."

Knowing that there was nothing more to say, I said, "You know what to do if anything happens to me."

"I know," Brander replied, resigned. "Just...be careful, son."

I hung up without any promises that I would be. We both knew that I was going to do whatever it took to make sure that Mora was safe, so there was no point in making false promises about being careful. If I died, I died. I accepted that.

"What happens if you die?" Mora asked, and I knew that she was just asking out of curiosity.

"Everything I own is willed to Brander," I answered. "My death will be treated like any other, and he'll hold a funeral, get my affairs in order...all the normal stuff that people do when someone passes."

With those grey eyes still locked onto mine, she said, "I would have trusted you with my life." I could feel that sword again. "I would have loved you my whole existence."

"Baby-"

"Now you're nothing but a constant doubt," she went on, and I had to keep from jumping her.

"I'm not," I argued. "There's no doubt in my mind and heart about what you mean to me, Mora."

"I hear everything that you're saying, but all I can process is everything that you've done to me since you first spoke to me at the bar," she replied. "Words means shit, Kalon. Right now, when I'm so fucking confused that I don't even know what to do with myself, words mean shit." She let out a humorless laugh when she added, "To imagine, the only person that I can trust is locked up in an insane asylum because he's *not* insane."

“Mora-”

“I don’t have time for this, Kalon,” she said, interrupting me. “They’re going to show up at night, and there’s no reason not to think that it won’t be tonight. I need to rest up. I need to...call my parents and Zaire again, remind myself why I need to do this, and just...get my head together.”

“No,” I told her.

Her head jerked back a bit. “No?”

“If we’re going to die tonight, then we’re spending these next few hours with me buried deep inside you.” I was in her face before she could stop me, my hand wrapped around her neck again. “We’re going to spend the next few hours proving that fucking prophecy right, that we really *can’t* exist without the other.”

“Kalon, we can’t-”

My lips silenced her protests, and I’d never been so grateful in my life when her hands twisted in my shirt, keeping me close, not pushing me away. Whatever we were, we were one, and everything in Mora knew it, even if she was doing her best to fight it.

Reaching down, I lifted Mora by her thighs, and her legs wrapped around my waist, the need for each other quickly becoming frenzied. I got us to the bedroom just in time to rip off her clothes, her hands doing the same to me.

Once I had her naked on the bed, I dropped to my knees, yanked her ass to the edge of the bed, then swiped my tongue through her wet folds. Her hands pulled at my hair, but she wasn’t pushing me away. In fact, her moans were nothing but encouragement. So, with my fingers digging into her thighs, forcing her legs wide open for me, I ate her pussy like a starved man. I feasted on her sweet secrets like I might never have this opportunity again.

“Kalon...oh, God...” she whimpered, giving me hope. All wasn’t lost as long as Mora allowed this between us. I

didn't give a fuck if it was just lust for her right now, I'd take it.

"Cum on my face, baby," I rasped against her soaked cunt. "Give me something to drink, Mora."

"Don't stop," she panted. "So good..."

I could feel the pulse of her need sounding in my ear, and there was no way that I was going to be able to stop myself when she came on my face. No matter what I'd told her earlier, I was learning rather quickly that Mora and I were both full of shit. Our confusion, our hesitancy, our reasoning...none of it made a damn bit of difference when it came to the prophecy.

"Kalon...oh, God...please...don't stop..." she begged, the words spurning me on. "Please..."

"Yeah, baby...cum for me," I demanded, and as soon as she did, I felt my incisors free themselves, and I sunk them into her left thigh as Mora came for me. I drank from her as she experienced the greatest pleasure of her life, and I could actually feel the bloodlust taking over her sanity. I could feel her need for me.

The second that I pulled off her, Mora had me on my back, her incisors out, her face looking like the only thing that I wanted to look at for the rest of my life.

"Ride me, baby," I told her, my dick harder than I'd ever thought possible. "Ride my cock and don't stop until you're cumming for me again."

Mora reached between us as my hands grabbed onto her hips, and as soon as she slid her hot, wet, pulsing cunt down over my cock, it was over. She started riding my dick like she couldn't get enough, and I was fucking her back like I never wanted to leave her tight warmth.

"I love you," I told her, not caring that she didn't believe me. "I've always fucking loved you."

“Kalon...” she cried out, her nails digging into my chest, my body loving every second of the pain.

“Do what you feel, Mora,” I instructed. “Love me back, baby.”

Mora threw her head back, her body tightening around me again, my name falling from her lips, my need for her only growing more.

Ten hours later, the sun was getting ready to set, and I was still buried deep inside Mora’s body. I was so deep inside her that there was no longer any doubt on whether I would die for this woman or not.

## Chapter 18

### *Mora~*

It was a strange thing to find yourself in control of nothing. Though I supposedly had these great powers and could do anything, I'd never felt more out of control than I did with Kalon's lips feathering over my left hip. The past few hours should have exhausted us both, but the last thing that I felt was exhausted. In fact, I felt rather exhilarated, and I knew it was because of him.

I could also admit to being so confused that I didn't know which way was up anymore. I had so many emotions coursing through my body that I didn't know what was real and what wasn't anymore. I was still so angry for Kalon turning me, but what was the point of staying angry at something that I could do nothing about? I was scared of what this meant for my parents and Zaire, and I felt heartbroken for how I was going to remain twenty-five forever and have to watch them age and leave me. I was never going to meet them in the afterlife and that knowledge killed me. There'd be no homecoming for me and my family once this life was over because my life was never going to be over.

My life was no longer my own, and no matter how hard I wanted to fight it, no matter how hard I *was* fighting it, Kalon's lips on mine was all that it took to make me cave. Whenever he touched me, I truly felt as if we really were two halves of a whole, and it was only a matter of time before I fell in love with him. It was going to be only a matter of time before we became what the prophecy had warned.

I closed my eyes, praying that Hugo Draka had the answers to help me navigate through this new world, and if he didn't, I had no idea what I was going to do. Nevertheless, I was going to do everything that I could to get him out of that

insane asylum. The man wasn't crazy, and I couldn't imagine anything crueler than locking a person up for something they weren't or hadn't done.

"I can feel you thinking, baby," Kalon murmured against my skin. "The more that we drink from each other, the more I can feel you."

We were a bloody mess, neither of us eager to clean up. I wasn't sure if it was always going to be like this, but each time that we'd had sex, it'd been violent and bloody, always drinking from each other, even though Kalon was still leery about it. He swore it was because he wasn't sure how he felt about absorbing my powers, but it was also clear that he couldn't control himself when he was inside me. It was like nothing else mattered whenever he was inside me.

"We're supposed to be two halves of a whole," I reminded him as one of his fingers slid inside me, his lips already trailing a path to the inside of my thighs. "Maybe you're supposed to have the same powers as me."

Kalon's head popped up, his finger still inside me. "What?"

I opened my eyes and looked down at the gorgeous man's face between my legs. "The prophecy claims that we're supposed to be two halves of a whole," I repeated. "It stands to reason that your need to feed from me when we're together like this is because you're *supposed* to feed from me."

His lip twitched, another finger joining the first. "I feed from you because I'm addicted to your taste," he huffed. "I feed from you because I'm addicted to your body and can't help myself."

Closing my eyes, I relaxed, letting Kalon finger fuck me slowly. "Because of the prophecy," I insisted.

"No," he bit out. "Because you're hot as fuck and have a body made for fucking." A third finger began to stretch me out. "You've got a vicious body, and, baby, believe me when I tell you that you were built to be one lucky man's perfect little

slut.” I moaned as my legs opened wider for him. “Thank God that I get to be that lucky man.” His tongue slid through my folds, and it was so goddamn wicked how Kalon didn’t care that I was a mess down there. Though he’d done nothing but cum deep inside me, there was no guarantee that he wasn’t tasting himself, and I couldn’t believe how turned on that made me.

“So good...” I whimpered as Kalon began preparing me for another round.

“Nothing feels as good as having my dick buried inside you, baby,” he rasped, a fourth finger finding its way into my second opening. “These little fuckholes are all mine, Mora.” My hands tightened in his hair. “All of you belongs to me, and an eternity still isn’t going to be long enough for me to love you. I’m still going to need you like this a thousand years from now.”

“Please, Kalon...” I knew that he was going to make sure I came for him, but I wasn’t even sure if that’s what I was begging for. In these moments, with him saying all the right things, I wanted to believe him. I wanted to believe that the prophecy existed because he’d been meant for me by God, not the other way around. I didn’t want to believe that it was the prophecy making him feel this way. I wanted Kalon to really love me, and I wanted to love him back in the same way.

“Fuck, I love the way you say my name,” he said huskily, his deep voice washing over me, that English accent driving me wild. “I love every-fucking-thing about you.”

With his fingers doing their magic, Kalon’s tongue worked to bring me to ecstasy, and when I exploded for the millionth time, I felt no shame, and I could feel my reservations about him fall away one by one. I just wished that I could stop being mad at the injustice of it all. My happily ever after was supposed to have come with a loving husband, happy kids, my parents, an Uncle Zaire, and even a couple of pets. My happily ever after wasn’t ever supposed to have been *this*.

I felt Kalon's body climbing over mine, and when I opened my eyes, he was peering down at me, worry etched on his face. "Quit looking for ways to ruin this, Mora," he said. "Baby, *please*." I never thought hearing a man beg would turn me on, but as Kalon slid his entire length inside me, that plea shook my mind, blocking everything else out.

As soon as he started to move, my incisors came out, and I latched onto his chest, his masculine grunts playing all around us. Taking my fill, I immediately started circulating our blood, and I had no idea how I even did it. When Kalon drank from me, he drank and swallowed what he took from me. There was no reversal; there was no sharing.

"Fuck, baby," he hissed. "You feel so fucking good wrapped around my cock."

I pulled my teeth off his chest, then reached up and brought his lips down on mine. We only had a few more minutes before the sun went down. While I could see them showing up, I couldn't see anything after that. I hadn't been lying when I'd told Kalon that my visions were subjective, and everything hinged on the conversation that was going to happen between us and these three strangers.

Kalon started crashing into me, and I knew that he could feel my desperation because he started fucking me like it might be our last time. He was hitting me deep inside, and every time that he bottomed out, it felt painful, yet glorious. Kalon Dreven was fast becoming my drug, and I already knew that I was his. Two halves of a whole, that's what we were.

"Cum for me, baby," he demanded as we both felt my body begin to clench around him. Only two days into this, and Kalon knew my body as well as he knew his own. "Show me how good you can cum for me, Mora. Show me how good we are together."

When I came again, Kalon's release came seconds afterwards. I was holding onto him for dear life, and he was still slamming into me, refusing to let this end. We were a chaotic mess of need, want, desire, and desperation. We had no



idea what awaited us in a few minutes, and our uncertainty showed. It showed in the way that he refused to pull out of me, and it showed in the way that I refused to let go of him. However, it was time, and we both knew it.

“They’ll be on their way soon,” I whispered against his lips.

“I know,” he replied just as quietly.

“Kalon-”

“I love you, Mora,” he said, his eyes peering into my soul. “I know that you don’t believe me, and I know that you think it’s because of the prophecy, but what you believe doesn’t change how I feel about you.” I could feel my chest bloom with emotion. “No matter what happens tonight, I want you to know that. I want you to know that standing between you and *any* threat isn’t about the prophecy. I give two fucks if you set the world on fire over my death. I’ll be dead, so it’s not like I’ll be around to burn with it. Everything that I do tonight, and everything that I will ever do in my life, it will always be because I love you. And it’s because I love you that I can’t live without you, not that damn prophecy.”

“I’ll never let anything happen to you,” I told him, pretty close to professing my love, though I knew that it was too soon for me. I still had a lot of things to sort out inside my head, and it was going to take some time to do that. “Two halves of a whole, right?”

Kalon nodded. “Right.”

When Kalon lowered his head to kiss me, I let him. I let him kiss me like a thousand words would never be enough. I let him kiss me like this was real. I let him kiss me like we were in love. It was everything, but when I felt him getting hard inside me again, I knew that I had to stop him. We didn’t have time for more.

“We need to shower and get ready, Kalon,” I said, breaking off the kiss.

His forehead dropped to mine. “I know,” he replied. “I know.”

Fifteen minutes later, we were showered, dressed, and ready.

Five minutes after that, the sun was officially set for the day, inviting the unknown.

One minute after that, there were three strangers standing in front of the cabin.

## Chapter 19

### *Kalon~*

Though three-hundred years had passed, I'd still been raised during a time when men knew their place. I'd been raised in an era where men were the protectors, no matter what women had been capable of back then. I'd been raised when a man's word was his worth, and if he couldn't do something as simple as protect what was his, then he hadn't been much of a man.

So, regardless of the fact that Mora was more powerful than I was, that held little weight as I walked out of the cabin in front of her. While the move might make Mora look weak, we both knew that she wasn't and that's all that mattered.

Stepping out into the clearing, there were three vampires, all males. They all looked to be about six-foot and in shape. One had bright blonde hair, and the other two had dark brown hair. Their eyes were all dark brown, nearly black, but that could be bloodlust darkening their eyes. In all honesty, they didn't look any more menacing than every other vampire that I'd ever come across. Nevertheless, it was always a mistake to underestimate an enemy.

"Can I help you?" I asked, my voice sounding surprisingly even, though I was feeling feral as fuck.

The blonde stepped forward. "I'm pretty sure that you can't," he replied. "We're here for the girl."

I grinned.

I couldn't help it.

"And which girl is that?" I asked mockingly. "Because if you're talking about the one standing behind me, then you wasted a trip, my friend."

“She’s a threat to all of us,” Blondie claimed.

“How do you figure?” I asked as I slid my hands in my pockets.

“No one should have that much power,” he stated, and he wasn’t necessarily wrong.

“And what is it that you think you know about her?” I asked, looking at each man. “What is it that Olympia ran back and told you?”

“She told us enough to recognize a threat when we see one,” Blondie answered, apparently the leader of this little trio.

“So, what exactly do you think she’s going to do? Expose us? Ruin us? Kill us all?” I cocked my head a bit. “What, *exactly*, are you afraid of?”

“We have order-”

“No,” I snapped, my anger finally coming out. “The covens have order. The covens act with ramifications for their actions. The coven vampires are the ones that give thought to consequences when pertaining to our kind. You three have no order or rules in which you need to live your lives by, so don’t talk to me about order.”

“She’s an abomination,” the guy on the left said. “Olympia said that she can see the future and walk in the sun.”

“You’re a *vampire*,” I pointed out sternly. “You are the walking dead, yet you feel righteous in calling someone else an abomination.” I looked between all three men. “Aren’t we all abominations? Aren’t we all mistakes of nature?”

“She can’t exist,” Blondie spat. “She just...cannot.”

I could feel Mora’s ire rising with each word from these men. I could feel her animal instincts to protect herself begin to take over. I could feel her practically foaming at the mouth with each insult. Mora was dying to rip these fuckers apart, and I feared that she was going to get her wish. They didn’t seem like they were up to listening to reason.

“Look, I’m not sure what Olympia told you guys, but Mora isn’t a threat to anyone,” I told them.

“No,” Blondie shot back. “She’s not a threat to *you*.” His eyes narrowed at me. “Oh, we know all about you, Kalon Dreven. We know what you are and what you are to her. Olympia told us everything.”

There was no stopping Mora from stepping out from behind me. It was one thing to threaten her, but it was quite another to threaten me. For better or worse, she and I were finally getting onboard with this thing between us, and I could feel Mora’s incisors itching to be free as if they were my own.

“Then you know that I will destroy anyone and anything that threatens what we have,” she said, her voice sounding like I wanted to fuck the hell out of her all over again. She sounded like she was mine, but she also sounded like I was hers, and that was what was doing me in. The past forty-eight hours had been brutal, but if Mora was finally accepting what we were to each other, then it’d been worth it. Anything to have her by my side was worth it.

“You don’t look like anything special,” Blondie said, and I could feel my blood begin to hum with his insult. At this rate, Mora and I weren’t going to be able to be around anyone dumb enough to speak to either of us.

“No, you’re right,” Mora agreed. “I look like your average brunette that you probably wouldn’t think twice about if you passed her on the street.” God, the woman couldn’t be more wrong. Even if her face wasn’t perfection, her body definitely made a person think twice about her. “However, *David*, I’m not your average brunette anymore.” The man’s eyes widened at the mention of his name. “While I’m a lot of things now, average is no longer on that list.”

“How...how’d you know my...my name?” he stammered.

“Oh, c’mon,” Mora chided. “Surely, you’re not surprised. After all, you, Thomas, and Christopher came all this way because I’m different.”

“Olympia was right,” the guy on the left rushed out.

Mora looked his way. “Yet, you still came here, Christopher. You still came here, even knowing what I’m capable of.”

“Well, it’s not like you have superpowers,” the only one that could be Thomas said. “You might be able to outmatch a human, but we’re not human.”

Even though I wasn’t afraid of these three, I still didn’t want to see Mora in a fight with them. I didn’t want to see her in a fight with *anyone*. I wanted to take her back in the cabin and continue making love to her. I wanted to drown out the entire world and just live for worshipping that intoxicating body of hers. I wanted to spend all my days and nights inside her. I didn’t want to waste time with these three scared assholes.

“Do you notice anything missing?” I asked, and all three men looked my way.

“What?” David asked.

“I asked if you noticed anything missing from this scenario,” I repeated.

His eyes began to dart around. “Not sure what you mean.”

“You haven’t wondered why it’s just the two of us here when I belong to a coven?” I posed, causing all three men to look at each other. “We’re outnumbered, yet no one from my coven is here to even out the odds. You don’t find that particularly curious?”

“What are you talking about?” Thomas asked, doubt lacing his every word.

“My coven isn’t here to even the odds because they don’t need to be evened,” I told them all. “The odds are already in our favor with what Mora can do.” Eyeing each man, I gave them one last chance. “So, I strongly suggest that

you take that into consideration before making your next move. Olympia's paranoid gossip is not worth dying for."

"And if I were you, I wouldn't underestimate us," David said, doing his best to still look brave in front of his buddies.

"We're not," Mora told him. "We know exactly what you're capable of." She took a step closer to them and it took everything in me not to drag her back. "Just like I know exactly how this is going to end."

"Even if you do kill us, there's plenty more from where we came from," Thomas said, but something told me that Mora was going to make a statement here tonight, and I felt sorry for anyone that came after these three fools.

Mora's chin came up. "Which one of you is first?" You could hear the taunting tone in her voice when she added, "Or do you guys need to outnumber me? I mean, I can see you needing to outnumber Kalon and all, but three on one for little, ol' me?"

"We don't need to outnumber anyone," Christopher lied.

That was my cue to step in front of Mora. "Then I'm ready," I told him. "Because if you want her, then you're going to have to go through me to get her."

"You don't scare us," David spat. "We can take you."

"Then what's stopping you?" I mocked. "I'm right fucking here."

David stepped forward, and even though I couldn't see what Mora saw, I could feel how they weren't going to play fair. David was going to try to distract me while the other two went after Mora, and if we were going to survive this, then we were going to have to trust each other completely. I was going to have to trust that Mora could take care of herself, regardless of how I'd been raised.

“You ready, baby?” I asked, stepping to stand next to her.

“I’m more than ready,” she replied, and something told me that she was.

*Let the games begin.*



## Chapter 20

### *Mora~*

As soon as David attacked Kalon, I was at Kalon's back, making sure that the other two couldn't take him by surprise. Even though we were all moving faster than the human eye could track, it didn't feel that way. It felt like time had slowed down for this, and I could see each move that Thomas and Christopher were making clearly.

With all my concentration on Thomas and Christopher, I had to trust that Kalon could and would take care of David. The only problem was that I could see David's moves at the same time that I could see Thomas and Christopher's, and it was hard not to intervene or call out to Kalon. However, I knew in my heart of hearts that I needed to let Kalon do his thing if we were going to survive this.

With our backs to each other, Kalon and I fought blow for blow. I was able to dodge every strike that came my way because I could see it coming, but that wasn't the case for Kalon. While I was fighting on the defensive, Kalon was fighting on the offensive, and I knew that we needed to make a huge move and soon. I could only dodge and weave for so long, and with none of us having the ability to tire, this could go on forever if we didn't hurry up and kill them.

Just as I was about to put all my efforts into Thomas because he was bigger than Christopher, pain slashed through my chest like I was being torn in half. A fierce roar felt like it was being torn from my soul, and I didn't need proof to know that Kalon had been hurt. The pain was excruciating enough to nearly cripple me, but everything changed when the pain fanned out to every nerve ending in my body.

"Oh, fuck," Thomas cried out, but I was blind to everything around me.

The world around me stopped as I stared at my hands, every finger on fire. Fascinating orbs of live fire were dancing on my fingertips, but I couldn't feel any heat. I didn't feel any heat or burning sensation. My fingers were alit with blue and red flames, but I felt nothing. The only thing that I could feel was the pain in my chest from whatever had happened to Kalon.

*The prophecy.*

The prophecy claimed that I would set the world ablaze if anything ever happened to Kalon, and now I could see how. All along, the joke had been on me, but I'd been too stubborn to see it. Kalon had told me that I was magic, but I'd been too mad to give credit to anything that he'd said. Nevertheless, I'd still been under the impression that my 'magic' had been of the mental kind, not...not *this*.

Christ on The Cross, I also knew that I'd never burn, and this was why I was safe from the sun.

Looking up, I saw all four men staring at me, the fight forgotten. Shock had them staring at me like I really was an abomination. Shock had them all staring at me, not knowing what to do with this newfound knowledge.

However, *I* still knew what to do.

David had hurt Kalon, and until I made it right, the pain in my chest was going to keep wrecking me. It wasn't going to subside until I took revenge, no matter that Kalon was quickly healing already.

Staring at David, I worked off instinct, and like an honest-to-God animated cartoon, I threw my hands out towards David, and he was immediately engulfed in a ball of fire. Before anyone could say or do anything, I was on his back, my hands twisting his head right off his body.

Before his lifeless torso even hit the ground, Thomas and Christopher were both going up in flames, and I had Thomas' head in my hands, ripping it from his neck, while Kalon had torn Christopher to pieces.

As soon as all three vampires were discarded pieces on the ground, the flames vanished, and my fingers were back to looking like a normal human being's simple fingers. Everything went back to looking normal, but things were far from normal.

"Baby?" Kalon's voice sounded soft and worrisome, but I didn't care about that. All I cared about was that he was okay.

"You were hurt," I stated evenly, excusing what I'd done. "You were hurt."

Kalon placed his hands on my shoulders. "It was just a scratch, Mora," he lied. "It's already healed, baby."

I started shaking my head. "It was more than that," I argued. "It *had* to be, Kalon. I felt it."

He immediately pulled up his shirt, so that I could see the slash across his ribs, the wound already healing. "David had a knife on him, though I have no idea why," he said. "It might have been blessed with the way it burned, but I can't be sure." His grey eyes searched mine. "But it's healing, baby. I'm okay. It's okay, Mora. Everything's okay."

"Nothing's okay," I shot back. "Kalon...I...what I can...can do...it's..."

"Baby, breathe," he instructed as he put his hands back on my shoulders. "I need you to just breathe and take a moment."

I looked back at the bodies. "Why are they charred like that?" I asked with a touch of hysteria in my voice. "I...I thought vampires couldn't die by fire. I thought...the books say that-"

"Fire can hurt us, but only the sun can kill us," Kalon said, interrupting my trip towards hysteria. "I'm going to have to assume that whatever power you have, it's driven from the sun. That's why you can walk in the daylight, and that's why the fire didn't hurt you."

I shook my head. “This is...it’s all too much, Kalon. I can’t...vampires don’t have superpowers, for God’s sakes.”

“Apparently, they do,” he drawled out.

“I...I don’t know what to do,” I confessed. “I feel...I don’t know what to do, Kalon.”

“Mora,” he whispered, and my entire body felt like an explosion of light when I saw Kalon begin to kneel before me.

*The vision.*

I stared at the top of his head, not knowing what was going on. “What are you doing?”

“Begging you to take fucking mercy on me,” he smirked. “Jesus Christ, baby.”

“Meaning?”

Kalon looked up at me, and I could see my entire future in his eyes. “Even though it’s not anything that we need in our world, for the rest of the world’s sake, I need you to marry me, Mora,” he said, and I had no idea why his proposal mattered so damn much. We were bound to each other, for Christ’s sakes. A piece of paper was nothing compared to the prophecy. “I need you to marry me and be with me in every way conceivable. Every cent that I have, every piece of property that I own, everything that exists in my life needs to have your name on it, too. You’re mine physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, but I need you tied to me legally, too. I need it all, Mora.”

“Kalon, that’s not nec-”

“Mora, I’m over three-hundred years old,” he said, cutting me off. “I wasn’t raised during a time when men weren’t needed. For the same reason that I walked out of the cabin first, I need you to marry me. I need to own the fuck out of you, baby. I need to know that...I need you to have my last name. I need it all because you don’t need me one goddamn bit.”

It was easy to forget that Kalon was so old. Sometimes, his age peeked out when he spoke, but looking at him, he appeared the modern man. Kalon fit into this world perfectly, but I supposed three-hundred years of adapting made it seem easy. Plus, there was no way that I could ignore how he was putting his insecurities out there for me to see. There was something extremely special about a man that wasn't afraid to speak his truth, no matter how it might make him look.

I knelt down next to him, and when I did, Kalon gave me a lazy grin, knowing what I was doing. If we were two halves of a whole, then we were equally important to this stupid prophecy, and we were going to have to find a way to balance what we knew with what we still had to learn about what we were to each other. No matter what I was capable of, none of it was possible without Kalon, so that made him just as powerful as I was. At least, that was how I saw things.

“Even though it’s completely unnecessary, I’ll marry you,” I told him. “I’ll marry you as soon as we get back home.” I glanced over at the three dead bodies in the yard. “However, right now, I think we have more pressing matters, don’t you think?”

Kalon stood up, reached his hand out to me, then helped me stand with him. “I love you,” he said. “I know you don’t love me, and I know that you might never. This isn’t about getting you to say it back to me. Even though I *feel* that you do, this isn’t about forcing you to admit something that you might not be ready to admit. I just want you to know that I’ll be saying it to you regularly, but I’ll also be saying it with no strings attached, Mora.”

I didn’t know what to say to that. I knew what I felt for Kalon was real, but it also felt manufactured. I needed a better understanding of the prophecy before I said those three words back to him. Even though I knew all of this was very real, I *wanted* to love him; I didn’t want to *have* to.

Kalon eyed me knowingly as he pulled out his phone. I knew that he was calling Brander, and when Brander picked up, Kalon said, “I need you to call an emergency meeting with

*everyone*. Every member of Noctis, Diluculum, and Tenebris.  
We'll be there in an hour.”

However, it had ended up taking us two hours because  
Kalon and I were addicted to each other.

## Chapter 21

### *Kalon~*

If Brander was pissed off that Mora and I had shown up an hour late, I didn't give a fuck. After we'd gone back into the cabin to shower and change after the fight, things had gotten out of control. It had started with Mora kissing my now-healed wound in the shower, and from there, we'd ended up a bloody mess again. I hadn't been lying when I'd said that forever wasn't going to be enough with the woman.

When we arrived at Brander's, everyone had been waiting in his guest house, which was just a huge structure that'd been built for meetings such as this one. There was a restroom and small kitchen, but that was it. The rest of the walls had been torn down to create an open space, large enough for the three tribunal seats and the total of twenty coven members. Noctis had seven members, Tenebris had seven members, and Diluculum had six, so including Mora, there were twenty-one of us here.

Once everyone was positioned and seated, Brander asked, "So, we're here, Kalon. What's this all about?"

I tossed the bag that I'd been carrying over my shoulder on the ground, three heads rolling out onto the floor in front of everyone. You could hear gasps, but that was because you could see the charred pieces of their faces still, something that shouldn't still be visible. Again, normal fire could hurt us, but not damage us the way the sun could.

"What is this?" Thorin asked, and I could hear the fear in his voice. Brander must have delivered my message to him, and good.

"That's what's left of the three independents that came after Mora," I answered, and since she was standing right next

to me, I saw every eye in the place fly in her direction. “And your fuck buddy is next.”

“Now, wait one second-”

“Stop,” Brander instructed, looking over at Thorin. “Everyone just...let’s all just calm down a bit.” Brander looked back at me and Mora. “What happened?”

“They showed up, claiming that Mora needed to be destroyed because she was an abomination to our species and a threat to us all,” I stated honestly. “They were frightened. They’d been fed some paranoid delusions of what Mora is and what she was capable of, and they really had believed that they were in danger somehow.”

“Now, to be fair, people often are afraid of the unknown, Kalon,” Phaeron said. “It’s no different for vampires.”

“Except for the fact that Mora’s abilities were supposed to have remained a secret until we knew more about her,” I snapped. “The three of you had given your fucking word, but Thorin couldn’t wait to run back and tell his whore all about Mora and the prophecy.”

“Watch your tongue, son,” Thorin bit out. “I’m hundreds of years older than you, respect that.”

“Respect that?” Mora chuckled darkly, finally speaking. “Are you serious?” She took a step forward. “You put my life in danger, and you have the audacity to demand respect from us? Knowing that I was still struggling with being turned and finding out about that damn prophecy, you broke your word to do what was best for us all, putting my life in danger, and you want me to respect you?” Mora’s back straightened. “Come down here, and I’ll be more than happy to show you just how much I respect you.”

I reached out, grabbed Mora’s hand, then pulled her back to stand next to me again. “Baby, calm down.” I could feel her incisors coming out, and we weren’t here to start a



war. Plus, it still felt weird as fuck to be able to feel what she was going through.

“Yes,” Brander said loudly. “Let’s all calm down.”

“Why are they burnt?” Phaeron asked. “That’s what I’d like to know. I understand why they’d been decapitated, but... how did they suffer such harsh burns?”

Every member of each coven remained deathly quiet, wondering the same thing. While only my coven had known that Mora was real, the others had all still heard of the prophecy, so they already had a good idea of what Mora was capable of. Nevertheless, I knew that this new development was going to freak everyone the fuck out because I was still kind of spinning from the knowledge myself.

“The reason that Mora can walk in the daylight is because she’s...” I looked over her way, and when she gave me a tight nod to continue, I could feel myself wanting to fuck her again. Strength on a woman was fucking beautiful. “Are you sure?”

Mora nodded again. “I’m sure.”

“What is it, Kalon?” Brander prompted.

“Mora isn’t just psychic, clairvoyant, and empathic,” I told them. “The prophecy claimed that the visionary of darkness was going to be able to see the light and the dark in their truest forms. It claimed that the visionary of darkness was going to be able to walk the land without fear, which we concluded that she was going to be able to walk in the sun since that’s the only thing that we fear.”

“We know all this, Kalon,” Phaeron snapped, frustrated and a bit afraid himself.

“Well, she’s able to see the light in its truest form and walk in the sun because that’s what she’s made of,” I finally told them. “Those heads are burnt because Mora burned them.”

The gasps in the room were loud enough to be comical. I could feel everyone's fear as Brander's eyes widened, Phaeron paled, and Thorin's mouth dropped open. In a room full of people that I had once considered my family, I felt only Mora. I trusted no one in the room, except her. Maybe Leander and Brander, but barely.

"What does that mean?" Brander finally asked. "How did she...how did she burn them?"

I squeezed her hand in mine. "Do you think that you can show them?" I asked as I looked down at her.

She shrugged like she wasn't changing everyone's lives. "I can try, but...I don't think it'll work unless someone is threatening you."

I looked back at Brander. "Someone needs to hurt me."

"What?" Phaeron practically screeched.

"We'd been fighting them off when David had sliced me with a blessed knife," I explained. "That's when...that's when Mora did what she did."

"That's...that's preposter-"

"I'll do it," Brander volunteered. "I'll...I'll do it."

While I wanted it to be Thorin, I knew that Brander wouldn't let that happen. I wanted to kill him, and if Mora sensed that, she'd do it for me. This was an experiment, so I had to treat it as such. However, I still had every intention of killing Olympia to prove a point.

Brander left his seat, then walked over to stand in front of me. He looked troubled enough that I almost felt sorry for him, but that didn't last long. Along with Phaeron and Thorin, Brander was also to blame for this clusterfuck. He could have told me the truth at any time, but he'd chosen not to.

"Just cut me," I told him. "However, it has to be deep enough to hurt."

He gave me a tight nod before his nails extended to razer-sharp blades. While we could do it on command, like our incisors, our nails usually came out on instinct. Fighting or feasting were usually the cause, but it could be done without the need to survive.

As soon as Brander's fingernails punctured my skin deep enough to push me back a bit, Mora was losing her shit, and I could feel her pain over my own. However, much like when David had injured me, her pain was nothing compared to her rage.

"Sweet Jesus," Thorin gasped as Brander stepped back, staring at Mora like he was seeing his death in her eyes.

I quickly rushed over to her, my arm slipping around her waist, as her fingertips came alive with fire capable of killing everyone in the room. It was insane how someone so beautiful could be so fucking deadly, but she was.

*She was, and she was mine.*

"Baby, I'm okay," I said soothingly. "It's already healing. Calm down."

"I don't think that I can," she admitted.

"Then aim at the heads on the floor," I instructed. "Focus your anger on them and finish on them."

Mora took in a deep breath, then did as I'd instructed. Fire shot out of her hands, and by the grace of God, she'd managed to control it enough to hit her targets. Everyone watched as she set the three decapitated heads on fire, and it was enough to scare the hell out of them all.

When Mora was done, there was absolute silence as the fires died down, leaving nothing but unrecognizable lumps on the floor. It also wasn't lost on me how she had managed to do it without setting the floor on fire, and maybe speaking with her father was a good idea after all.

"Jesus Christ," Phaeron whispered, and Mora immediately stepped back until I had no choice but to wrap my

arms around her.

I looked between Brander, Thorin, and Phaeron, and said, “When the prophecy claimed that Mora would set the world on fire if anything ever happened to me, that’d been meant literally.” I glanced around the room. “This is as real as it gets, people.”

## Chapter 22

### *Mora~*

I wanted to be alone with Kalon, but I knew that I couldn't do that until we cleared a few things up with these people and his coven. While I didn't feel like I'd ever be a part of Kalon's coven, they were still his family, and I knew that we were going to have to find a way to balance that. Plus, they had this entire tribunal code thing that they were involved in to keep the peace, so I was going to have to make some allowances, but not without letting them know a thing or two first.

There were about twenty people in the room, and I needed each and every one of them to understand what I was about. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life killing other vampires in self-defense. I didn't want to have to be looking over my shoulder all the time. I didn't want to have to worry about Kalon whenever he wasn't near, though our twenty-mile tether was going to ensure that we weren't apart often, but still.

I also didn't need anyone going after my parents or Zaire. I needed these people to know that Kalon wasn't the only person in my life that I'd burn the world down for. I'd had a life before Kalon had changed me, and that life still existed. It existed in how I'd spoken to both my parents and Zaire since this all happened. It existed in how they still sent me text messages with memes and asking me how my vacation was going. It existed in how I still had a job, coworkers, an apartment, etc.

After getting a hold on my bearings, I stepped away from Kalon, then faced Brander. "I have no agenda here," I told him loud enough for everyone in the room to hear me. "My plan is to go back to work after my vacation and keep living my life in peace. If every aspect of the prophecy is

correct, since I *can* walk in the sunlight, then I see no reason why I can't just go back to living my life like before."

"Mora, you can't honestly believe that a normal human life is still possible for you," Brander said, but not unkindly.

"Why not?" I challenged. "Why can't it be?" I looked around the room. "You all seem to be doing a fine job of infiltrating the real world without discovery, so why can't I?" No one had an answer for that. "I see no issue with leaving all you guys alone as long as you leave me the hell alone in return," I continued. "I have no desire to rule anything, take over anything, or parade myself as some sort of cult leader."

"The prophecy claims that the visionary of darkness is supposed to take the lost and lift them to the height of power," Phaeron reminded me. "That sounds like the makings of a leader to me."

I looked over at the older vampire. "I've already done that," I informed him.

You could feel everyone's confusion, though Thorin was the one to speak. "What are you talking about?"

"Since Kalon is a vampire, he'd be considered one of the lost, right?" No one said anything as their eyes shifted around the room. "Well, he's already stronger than he was before he met me, so I'd say that I have already taken the lost and have made him more powerful. Where in the prophecy does it say that I was going to lift more than one person to the height of power?"

There was a moment of silence before Brander said, "While that's a valid argument, Kalon is still part of our coven, Mora. He is our family. No matter how much you might want to ignore our existence, Kalon is one of us."

I looked over at Brander. "And he can continue to be one of you," I told him. "I'm not trying to take him away from his life. I'm not trying to change it or control it." I looked around the room again. "I just want to be left the hell alone to live my life. I want my parents and friends safe, I want to be

able to work and live normally, and I don't want to have to look over my shoulder every goddamn second of the day because you guys are paranoid, jealous, or whatever."

"Mora, you're a *vampire*," Thorin said. "Normal isn't a possibility anymore."

Kalon spoke before I could respond to Thorin's comment. "If I were you, I'd shut the fuck up right about now. The only reason that you're not dead for running your mouth is because I think killing Olympia will be punishment enough."

"Now, wait a minute--"

"Also, in light of you breaking your word and the trust of this tribunal, Tenebris might want to rethink their position on you as their coven leader," Kalon continued. "Not sure about everyone else, but no matter my age, I still believe in a time when a man's word is his bond. I still believe that a man's integrity is directly tied to his word, and you proved yourself as less than when you decided to spill our secrets to your little bedmate."

"Olympia is--"

"Not your wife!" Kalon roared. "She's an easy piece of ass that you fuck when you're in need, Thorin! She's a convenient fuck, and you trusted her with this tribunal's secrets!"

"Because of you, these three on the floor are dead," I pointed out, Kalon's anger warming my blood. "Because of you, Kalon got hurt. If you want to take her place, then let me know, and I'll gladly take my revenge out on you. However, someone is going to pay for what happened to Kalon because someone has to."

"And you don't consider the three vampires that you killed as payment enough?" Phaeron asked.

"No," I answered honestly. "If there's anything significant to come out of this meeting, then it's for *all* of you

to understand what will happen to you if anyone else comes after us again. I meant what I said earlier; if you leave me alone, I'll leave you alone. However, nothing is more important to me than the man standing next to me, and if anyone ever goes after him again, what you see on the floor will be the least of your worries." I glanced around the room. "And if you think that's a choice for me, it isn't. It's now instinct, and I will destroy anyone that touches him, my parents, or my friend, Zaire."

"Baby-"

"I am also getting Hugo Draka out of that asylum," I announced, cutting Kalon off, but still grabbing a hold of his hand. "He's not insane, and I am not going to allow him to live his life out in that place anymore."

"Mora, I'm not sure that safe-"

"I don't give a fuck what you think is safe or not, Brander," I snapped. "I am not a part of your coven. I am not a part of this tribunal counsel. I am not one of you. I'm not one of *any* of you."

"Your father's been incarcerated a long time, Mora-"

"I'll handle my father," I told him. "I suggest you spend your time making sure that your kind leave me the hell alone. I suggest you all spread the word that I'm the real deal, and if anyone wants to fuck around and find out for themselves, then I'm game." I looked back at Thorin. "And you can warn your girlfriend all you want, but by the time that I'm done with her, I'll make a believer out of everyone."

Kalon let go of my hand, and then I felt him come up behind me, his hands on my shoulders, his lips at my ear. "Calm down," he said soothingly. "Relax, Mora. No one here can hurt you."

"I don't care about them trying to hurt me," I replied honestly and loud enough for them to know it.



I felt Kalon rest his chin on the top of my head, then say, “I think we’re done here. A lot has happened today, and I think now is a great time for everyone to take some time to process what they’ve learned here today.”

“Kalon, if you kill Olympia, you’re going to send the wrong message,” Brander said, still trying to keep the peace. It was easy to see why the others let him lead. He seemed to be the most diplomatic out of the three tribunal members.

“Then what do you suggest we do about what she did, Brander?” Kalon asked him.

“Mora told us to spread the word, so that’s what we’ll do,” he offered. “We’ll make it known what Mora is capable of, and by sparing Olympia, then maybe that will convince others that she really isn’t out to harm any of us. It will give credit to her claims of just wanting to be left alone.”

“The three heads on the floor are enough to make an impression, Kalon,” Phaeron added. “There’s not a vampire in this room that doesn’t understand the significance of what Mora can do.”

Kalon’s lips were back near my ear. “What do you think, baby?”

This was the first time that I could understand Kalon’s comments about how vampires didn’t physically get tired, but that they could feel mentally exhausted. I felt like I needed to go back to the cabin with Kalon and just tune out the world again.

“I think that I’ve had my fill of vampires for now,” I answered, not caring how insulting I might sound. I looked back over at Brander. “I can feel you guys coming ten miles away, Brander. I can see you days beforehand, and I can feel you coming. That’s probably the most important thing that you need to let everyone know. If anyone thinks to sneak up on me, it won’t end well for them.”

“C’mon, baby,” Kalon said softly. “They get the picture.”

Before I could say anything more, Kalon and I were back at the cabin, standing in the middle of the living room. It felt peaceful and normal, but I knew that normal wasn't in the cards for me anymore. Even if I was able to go about my life like before, the simple fact that I had to feast from humans now was enough to end the illusion of normalcy. Plus, there was also Kalon to take into consideration.

“What are you thinking?” Kalon asked quietly.

I looked up at him. “That I have no choice but to love you.”

## Chapter 23

### *Kalon~*

That was not the declaration of love that I'd been hoping for, and now I understood why Mora resented the prophecy so damn much. We were never going to know if our words of love were given freely, or if they were given because we'd been forced into this situation. Even though I felt like I loved her out of choice, we weren't ever going to know if that was really the case or not.

"Not sure how I feel about that," I replied honestly. "Hearing you say it, I understand better what you meant when addressing my feelings about you." Her face softened with understanding, and if a vampire could ever look tired, Mora looked it. "Even though I feel that my love for you has nothing to do with the prophecy, there's no way to ever convince you of that. I know that now."

Mora's brows furrowed in thought. "Maybe, maybe not."

"What do you mean?"

"If I can feel your pain, and you can feel mine, then why can't we feel our love as we fall deeper into this thing between us?" she posed. "I can feel everything about you when we're having sex, so maybe I'll be able to see into your heart one day. Maybe this...this prophecy won't be all bad."

I tried hard not to smirk. "Is this you trying to be positive?"

"This is me deciding not to make this..." Mora let out a deep sigh. "This situation is already difficult enough as it is, so...it...it doesn't need me making things harder."

I let out a dark laugh. “Jesus, baby.” I let out a sigh of my own. “You sound like you’re headed to the goddamn gallows.”

Her lips twitched, and I could feel my chest relax a bit. We were a disaster, and this thing between us was a mess, but I was really beginning to believe that we were going to be okay. As long as we were left the hell alone, we could figure this out. If people kept coming after us, there was no telling when Mora would finally get fed up and kill everyone.

“I’m just confused, Kalon,” she confessed. “I’m confused about everything that I don’t know, unsure about my future, and so damn mad at you for doing this to me.” Another deep sigh. “Have you any idea how...discombobulating it is to want someone that you’re mad at so badly? My brain can’t make up its mind to accept this or fight it. I feel like...I feel like I keep turning left, then changing my mind and turning right. I’m so goddamn confused, Kalon. I’m so goddamn confused, but at the same time, everything feels *right* when you’re with me. When you’re with me, I forget that I’m a vampire and that I don’t want to be one. When you’re near me, I want what we have to work out, but then...but then, who in their right mind wants to be a vampire?”

I could appreciate how confused she felt. “Maybe we just need to focus on the reality of our situation,” I suggested. “You can’t change back, Mora. You can’t change back, so unless you plan on being mad at me for the rest of our existence, that’s an anger that you’re going to have to let go, baby.” I regarded her carefully. “You’re mad at facts, and that’s not going to help anything. I understand wanting to hold onto your pride and anger, but an eternity is a long time, Mora.”

“I feel like I’m supposed to be tired,” she whispered, and my heart ached for her. “I just feel so damn...I just want my brain to shut off for a while, Kalon.”

“Because I had insisted on knowing everything about you, I know where your father is, Mora,” I told her, and her grey eyes widened. “I can go with you to speak with him, and

if he does have some advice on how to control your visions, that will help with the overwhelming feeling of being what you are.”

“And if he doesn’t know anything?”

I walked towards her, placed my hands on her shoulders, then said, “Then we’ll figure it out. Whether people believe in psychic ability or not, there’s so much that can be researched online, Mora. We’ll try it all, baby.”

“And if they keep coming for us?”

“Then we’ll be waiting,” I assured her. “However, I seriously doubt that anyone’s going to be coming after us again, Mora. That little demonstration earlier got the point across, I’m sure.”

“The worst is going to be losing my parents,” she said, and I knew that there was nothing that I could say to make her feel any better about that fact. “Losing my parents and losing Zaire are going to be hard.” Her brows furrowed when she asked, “And what am I supposed to tell them when we never have kids? I have no problem going through the motions with you for their sake, but what am I supposed to say when the time comes for them to expect grandchildren? I can sell a whirlwind romance, but I’ve never said anything about never wanting kids.”

I cradled her face with my right hand. “We pretend to try for a few years, and then we tell them that I can’t have kids,” I told her. “We’ll blame it on me, and when they mention adoption, we can also blame that on me. We’ll tell them that it would be too much like feeling like a failure in my own home, so we decided to not have any.”

“This sucks,” she muttered, and she wasn’t wrong.

“I know,” I agreed. “Still, no matter how...trying it feels right now, there’s no going back, Mora. There is no unringing the bell. There’s no going back in time, so we need to deal with what’s in front of us. We need to focus on what’s important right now.”

“You’re the only thing that feels important right now,” she replied softly. “You’re the only thing that makes sense when I’m trying hard to wrap my mind around everything else.”

“I hate that you don’t sound happy about that,” I replied truthfully.

“It’s nothing personal,” she lied. “I’m not happy about *anything*, Kalon. I’m not...my emotions still haven’t sorted themselves out, and I have no idea when they will.”

I had no idea what to say to that. It’d be different if she were ranting and raving, acting unhinged. If she were an angry mess, then I could focus on calming her down. However, she wasn’t an angry mess. Instead, Mora sounded calm and resolute. She sounded perfectly fucking sane.

“How about I help you forget for a few hours,” I suggested, not knowing what else to offer her.

Mora surprised me when she said, “How about for a whole day? Can we just...forget everything for just one full day?”

My dick immediately began to harden. “Baby, I can make you forget everything every day for the rest of our lives,” I offered. “You can quit your job, I can work from home, then we’ll never need to leave our bed again. I can work while you rest.”

Her lips twitched again, and I loved that I could make her want to smile, even though she was miserable, confused, and still angry. I was responsible for this woman’s feelings just like I was responsible for the rest of her, and I hated that I was going to have to step back and let her figure out her feelings on her own. Three-hundred years later, I was still a man that believed that men should take care of their women, no matter what.

“As tempting as that sounds, I just need today, Kalon,” she replied. “I just need you and today, and the rest of it can wait until I’m ready to tackle it again.”

I slid my hand up the side of her neck, and she closed her eyes, reveling in the touch of my hand. “Baby, you’ve got me,” I told her as I leaned down to kiss the side of her face. “You’ve got me like my life isn’t my own. I would fucking die for you, Mora.”

“Touch me,” she whimpered, and she didn’t have to tell me twice.

As my lips moved to kiss hers, my other hand slid up underneath her shirt, her soft skin feeling perfect against my palm. When I cupped one of her breasts in my hand, Mora’s head fell back, giving me access to all of her. With no choice but to break our kiss, my lips began trailing a path down her neck, our height difference making it hard to devour her like she deserved.

Frustrated, I picked her up by her thighs, then had her pressed against the wall before she knew it. When my lips found her neck again, Mora’s hands fought their way between us, her fingers working my pants with the skill of an expert tailor.

“Take my cock and sit on it, baby,” I instructed, her heavy breaths playing in my ears. “Show me how badly you want me.”

“I need you, Kalon.”

Those four little words had me racing us to the bedroom, her clothes a shredded mess before she was even able to get comfortable on the bed. Never having cared before, shredding Mora’s clothes to pieces was the best thing about my strength nowadays. It was like I’d been given this extra strength just to be able to get this woman naked.

As soon as we were both completely unclothed, I flipped Mora over, her enticing body on its hands and knees before me, and I couldn’t wait to dirty her up. Her pussy was already glistening for me, and when I used my thumbs to spread her folds apart, that intoxicating pinkness called to me.

“Fuck, that pussy of yours is so fucking pretty, baby.”

“Kalon, please...” she begged. “I need you.”

I slammed my entire length into her waiting cunt, and I had to close my eyes at how glorious she felt. She always felt fucking phenomenal, and I knew that she always would.

After all, she'd been created just for me.



## Chapter 24

### *Mora~*

Whatever could be said about Pharaoh Psychiatric Hospital, it couldn't be said that the benefactors of this hospital weren't extremely generous. Though it had all the hallmarks of a typical hospital, everything was clean, neat, modern, and I couldn't see any cracked paint or broken tiles anywhere. Walking through the doors, you'd never guess that the monstrous structure housed nothing but the insane. You'd think that you were walking into a teaching hospital or a research facility.

Approaching the front desk, I did my best to sound polite and kind. "Good evening," I greeted. "I'm Mora Kamra, and I'm here to see Hugo Draka."

The receptionist smiled. "Oh, yes," she replied. "You know, you're the first person to visit him in years." My chest panged at that. "We could hardly credit it when word got around that he had a daughter."

As soon as I had called to make an appointment to see Hugo, his case worker, Dr. Paul Simms, had practically tripped over himself at learning that Hugo had a long-lost daughter that'd been adopted at birth. I'd had to patiently listen to him tell me all about Hugo's twenty-five-year confinement, and how he was very concerned how the news of my existence was going to affect Hugo.

Nevertheless, Dr. Simms had been excited enough about my existence to agree to an after-hours visit with Hugo. In fact, he felt that meeting Hugo during after-hours might go better than visiting him during all the hustle and bustle of the day. Meeting Hugo in the evening would ensure that I wouldn't interrupt his daily routine, and if he took the meeting

hard, then they could sedate him for the night with a minimal fight.

“Is Dr. Simms in?” I asked, not wanting to share my life with a perfect stranger.

“Of course,” she replied, taking the hint.

When I turned, Kalon was staring at me, worried about my state of mind. I was dealing with a lot, and he felt like throwing my father into the mix so soon might not be such a good idea. He’d suggested waiting a few more days, but what for? I only had a week and a half left before I was to go back to work, so I needed to make the most out of these remaining days. Going back to work and seeing my parents and Zaire was going to be daunting enough, I didn’t need to add meeting my father to an already stressful time. If I met him now, then I had a few days to process the meeting and decide what to do from there.

“I’m fine,” I lied, and the look in Kalon’s eyes told me that he knew that I was lying. “I *want* to do this, Kalon.”

“I just don’t want it to be too much,” he repeated, his hand landing on my hip. “I just...he might flip out when he sees us, and I don’t want you...I don’t want you blaming yourself if he doesn’t take this well.”

I raised a brow. “Do you honestly think that meeting my father is what’s too much about all this?” He knew that I had a point. “Trust me when I tell you that meeting my father is the only manageable thing about any of this. I haven’t been in control of anything since the night I met you, Kalon. But this? This is something that I can most definitely handle.”

“Ms. Kamra?” I turned at the sound of my name to see a very nice-looking gentleman walking my way. “I’m Dr. Simms,” he said when he stopped in front of me.

I reached out to shake his hand. “Hello, Doctor,” I greeted as he took my hand in his, causing Kalon to growl under his breath. “I’m Mora Kamra.” In an attempt to soothe

Kalon's uneasiness, I gestured towards the irate vampire. "This is Kalon Dreven, my fiancé."

Dr. Simms' brows shot upward. "Oh, you own The Rose, do you not?"

Kalon nodded politely as he reached for the doctor's hand to shake. "I do," he replied. "The Spherical, Celestial, and the Orion are also mine."

Dr. Simms grinned. "I've been to the Celestial, and it's a fabulous place to have a good time." Kalon and I both knew what was coming next, and neither of us had to be psychic to know it. "However, I've never been to The Rose. It takes an act of God to get reservations for that place."

I felt Kalon's hand give my hip a quick squeeze. "If your schedule allows it, I can have you on the guest list this Friday," Kalon offered, and it was hard not to smile at the obvious. You'd think that Kalon had offered him a million dollars with that invitation.

"Oh...uh, wow," he stammered. "You'd do that?"

Kalon nodded. "It's the least I can do for taking such good care of my future-father-in-law."

Dr. Simms blinked. "Oh...uhm, yeah, we should probably get going," he replied. "Hugo's been waiting, and I'm sure he's eager to meet you both." He smiled again. "And thank you for the reservations. My wife is going to be thrilled."

Kalon gave him a terse nod. "Well, if it's a date for your wife, then I'll sign you up as my guests, everything on the house."

*Men and their penises.*

Dr. Simms went all fangirl on Kalon. "Oh, wow...oh... that's so...so incredibly generous," he rushed out, a bumbling mess. "Oh, I can't wait to call Geena and tell her." Gesturing towards the hallway behind him, he added, "Please, follow me."

Turning, Kalon grabbed my hand as we followed the doctor, and I smiled to myself at what a human thing that was for him to do. Granted, the man had over three-hundred years of practice to perfect the façade of being the perfect human being, but still. I hadn't expected him to grab my hand, but I was glad that he'd had.

When we reached a door with a sight glass in it, I could easily see through it, and an older man was sitting at a round table, staring at his hands that were clasped in front of him. He didn't appear nervous or jittery. He didn't appear sedated to incompetence, either. However, he did remind me of a prison inmate that was waiting for his visitor, and it seemed kind of sad.

*Especially, since Hugo wasn't insane.*

There was also a book next to his hands, and it looked to be very worn and used.

"Now, I know we spoke about-"

"Dr. Simms, I just want to meet my father," I told him, cutting him off. When we'd spoken on the phone, he'd gone into great detail about Hugo's condition and the importance of baby steps, but he hadn't needed to. If you asked me, it was common sense when dealing with someone that was unwell. However, only Kalon, Hugo, and I knew that Hugo really wasn't unwell.

"Of course, Ms. Kamra," he replied quickly, probably not wanting to ruin his chances of getting into The Rose. "Hugo is expecting you, so you can go right in."

I nodded, took a deep breath, then pushed the door open. As soon as I did, Hugo's head came up, and his eyes widened when he saw me, Kalon, and Dr. Simms walking his way. When he paled, I knew why, and I could only pray that he wouldn't begin ranting and raving about vampires. Dr. Simms would shut this meeting down immediately if Hugo began showing signs of a meltdown.

When we got near the table, Dr. Simms said, “Hugo, this is Mora and her fiancé, Kalon Dreven.”

“Hello, Hugo,” I greeted.

Emotion flooded his face in a way that I’d never seen on a person before. “You look just like her,” he replied, his voice soft but firm. “It’s like looking into her face so many years ago.”

“I’ll let you guys get acquainted,” Dr. Simms said right before leaving the room to do just that.

“May we sit?” Kalon asked when it was obvious that Hugo was too absorbed in his memories of my mother to exercise good manners.

“Uh...no, of course,” he stammered, snapping out of his musings. “Please...yeah, yes.”

Kalon pulled my chair out for me, then waited for me to get comfortable before taking a seat himself. He also made sure that his chair was as close to mine as possible. I was going to have to get used to Kalon’s real age. Though chivalry still existed in this day and age, you had to go through a lot of assholes to find it.

“I see the prophecy has finally found you,” Hugo said, finally addressing the truth of our meeting. “Emmaline feared that this day would come. She did all that she could to prevent it.”

“What can you tell me about her?” I asked, and he had no shame when it came to my mother. The love that he had for her shown in his eyes, his face both sad and happy to be talking about her.

“You could sit in that chair for weeks, and that still wouldn’t be enough time for me to tell you everything that was your mother,” he replied fondly. “Emmaline was so many things. She was...I remember every single moment that I spent with her. Even the mundane moments hadn’t been mundane between us, and I remember them all.”

“Well, luckily for us, I have the time,” I told him.

Just then, Hugo pushed the book my way. “That is Emmaline’s diary,” he said. “When I was admitted into this place, I’d been able to keep the book.” Hugo’s eyes darted Kalon’s way briefly before looking back at me. “Your mother knew they were coming to kill her, you see. She’d known that she was going to fail in the attempt to take her own life. So, she gave me her diary, and when Dr. Simms noticed that the book was the only thing that kept me calm, he had allowed me to keep it.”

I stared at the book, almost afraid to touch it. It could be the answer to my prayers or tell me nothing, and I wasn’t sure if I was strong enough to find out right now.

## Chapter 25

### *Kalon~*

I could feel Mora's unease, and it was clear that this bond between us was going to only get stronger over the years. I had a feeling that we were really going to become one by the time this was all said and done. However, right now, we had bigger issues to address.

"Have you read it?" I asked.

Hugo looked over my way. "Yes, I have," he answered. "I've read every word, a million times over, throughout my years here. In fact, I could probably recite the entire contents by memory if I tried."

Mora didn't open the book like most people would, which told me exactly how anxious she was feeling. Instead, she went back to her conversation with Hugo, doing her best not to appear weak or unsure. The woman had an abundance of pride, that's for sure.

"And how do you feel about the prophecy being fulfilled?" she asked him.

"You're my child," he replied evenly. "How do you think I'd feel about it?"

"I honestly don't know," Mora answered. "This isn't exactly anything that I'd been prepared for."

"You're my child," he repeated. "No matter what you've become, I love you. No matter what is to come, I love you. You are my child, and you are your mother. Though you've never had a relationship with me, I've had one with you through your mother's diary since the day you were born. I understand what you are, Mora. However, I also know *who* you are, and you're my daughter; your Emmaline's daughter."

I could feel Mora's emotions threatening to get the better of her, so I jumped in. "We are getting you out of here, Hugo," I informed him. "You will come to live with us, so that you and Mora will have the time that you need to get to know one another."

Hugo looked at Mora. "Is that your decision or theirs?"

Mora leaned back in her chair. "They don't control me," she told him. "I understand why you might think that, but that's not the case at all."

"If anything, she controls us," I added, doing what I could to help ease Mora's tension. "Mora isn't in any danger, Hugo. There might be some of our kind that are...wary of her, but she's not in any danger. She's...let's just say that the prophecy is a lot more than any of us had envisioned it to be."

"Are you safe?" he asked her. "Do you *feel* safe?"

"I'm no less safe than the average person walking to their car at night," she answered, not really answering him. "Mortal or not, threats are everywhere, Hugo."

"That's not what I asked you, Mora," he replied, not letting her evade his question. "Do you feel that you are safe in your new world?"

Mora looked over at me, and it was every-fucking-thing when she said, "As long as Kalon is with me, then, yes, I feel safe." I grabbed her hand, then squeezed the fuck out of it between my fingers. "I feel safe as long as he's safe. I feel safe as long as he's with me."

"My Emmaline told me that you were going to find someone that was going to take you away from us one day," he remarked. "She said that he was going to take you away from the world."

Mora looked back at Hugo. "Kalon's a good man," she said. "Even if he isn't a man."

"And why do you want a complete stranger living with you, Mora?" he asked.



“Because I’m lost,” she answered honestly. “I have no idea how to navigate through this new world of mine, and because I’m...because no one was prepared for the prophecy to actually come true, you’re the only person on the planet that can help me get through this without motive.” Mora let out a deep sigh. “Plus, you’re not crazy, Hugo. You’re not crazy, and you don’t belong in this place. You never belonged in this place, and if it were up to me, I’d make everyone pay. However, in light of the greater good, revenge isn’t what’s best for everyone involved in this mess. Especially, me.”

Hugo looked between the two of us before saying, “I don’t want to be turned.” He looked and sounded so serious that I was taken aback a bit. “I don’t want to be turned, and there’s no need for me to be turned. I would never put you in danger by revealing what I know.” He waved an arm about, indicating our surroundings. “When I started...voicing what I knew, I’d done it with the hopes of trying to protect Emmaline and you. I’d been willing to let everyone believe that I was crazy if it got someone to listen and look out for you.” Hugo smirked sadly. “Because my male ego wouldn’t allow me to believe that I couldn’t protect you and your mother, all I’d done was get myself locked up, and I ended up losing both you and my Emmaline.” He shook his head, and I felt the man’s pain. Nothing sucked worse than feeling unmanned. “If I’d just listened to your mother, maybe things would have turned out differently.”

“Nothing would have stopped the prophecy,” Mora told him. “Trust me on this. It was...it’s always been something stronger than anyone could have guessed. There was never stopping the prophecy from coming to fruition.”

“Hugo, if I may ask, why are you so adamant about not being turned?” I asked, curious about the seriousness of his convictions on this. “I’d think that you’d want to...join us with how deep you were into the dark arts and having found Mora again.”

Hugo looked me in the eye, and the prophecy didn’t have shit on this man. “Because how am I supposed to see my

Emmaline again if I live forever?” This time, Mora’s fingers squeezed mine. “Suicide is a sin and that is the only reason that I’m still here.” His brows furrowed. “I believe in Heaven, Kalon. I believe in Heaven, and I believe that my Emmaline is there waiting for me.”

A knock at the door caught our attention, and we all turned to see Dr. Simms opening the door, then walking in cautiously. He was eyeing us, not sure if we were good or not. I honestly didn’t blame the man. For twenty-five years, he’d been treating Hugo for delusions, so I could see how he’d be worried.

When he was standing next to the table, he said, “I hate to cut this short, but it’s already after visiting hours, and I don’t want to disrupt things too much.”

Mora and Hugo remained sitting as I stood up. “We’d like to begin the process of removing Hugo from the care of the hospital,” I told him. “Now that he has family, there’s no need for him to remain here. We can take care of him at home.”

Dr. Simms blanched a bit. “Mr. Dreven, Mr. Draka suffers from-”

“We’re very aware of what he suffers from, Dr. Simms,” I said, cutting him off. “While we would like it very much if you kept treating him, we’d like it done on an outpatient basis.” I straightened to my full height. “I’m not asking, Dr. Simms. We are fully prepared to take this to court if we have to.”

“No, no,” he stammered. “That’s not necessary. As long as we can work something out that will allow his treatment to continue, I don’t see a problem with releasing him into your care. After all, he’s been a model patient for the past twenty years.”

Mora stood up, and as soon as she did, Hugo followed suit. He was looking at her with both hope and sadness, and it was strange how he could look that way. Granted, I’d never

had to live my life locked up in an insane asylum, so what did I know about the man's emotions?

My chest jerked with a sharp pain when Mora threw her arms around Hugo, hugging him, her emotions vibrating inside my ribcage. No matter what was in store for us in the future, Mora and Hugo were going to be okay. Though Mora loved her adoptive parents, her relationship with Hugo was going to be something else entirely.

Hugo hugged her back, and it felt sacrilegious to break them up. You had a father and daughter that had been separated twenty-five years ago, so nothing and no one should be ruining this moment between them.

When Mora finally let go, she said, "We'll see you soon, Hugo."

He stared down at her seriously before saying, "She would have been so proud of you, Mora. No matter what, she would have been so proud to see you as the woman that you are today."

"Thank you, Hugo," she whispered emotionally.

As soon as Dr. Simms escorted Hugo out of the room, I reached for Mora, then turned her around, pulling her into my arms. "Are you okay?"

"I'll never be okay again," she replied, referring to her new life. "But I'm going to stop worrying about a future that's going to come for me, no matter what I do to try to prepare for it."

My arms tightened around her. "I never fucking know if you're deciding that you're all in or if you've got one foot out the door."

"I know," she sighed as her arms tightened around my waist. "I'm all over the place." She sounded so goddamn beat that I could barely stand it. "I just need more time."

"You've got an eternity of it, baby," I reminded her. "And I'll be here for you every step of the way."

Mora pulled back, then looked up at me. “I know. I know you will.”

“I love you,” I told her. “All that you are, I love every bit of it.”

“I love you, too,” she replied, and I knew that she meant it, even if she didn’t want to mean it.

“C’mon, let’s get going,” I said, tugging her closer. “We’ve got a lot of things to take care of before we bring your father home with us.

“Okay,” she replied. “But only after you make me forget for a while again.”

She didn’t have to ask me twice.

## Epilogue

### *Mora – (One Year Later)~*

Staring out the window, the city's lights were twinkling as far as the eye could see. With the manor being our primary residence, Kalon had kept his penthouse, even though it had taken me awhile to get over my resentment of the place. Nevertheless, now it was home.

It had taken us three months and countless appointments for Hugo to be released from Pharoah, and as soon as he'd been discharged, he and I had both moved into the Manor with Kalon. Those three months had given me time to talk with my parents and Zaire about finding Hugo, and it had also given me time to introduce them to Kalon and talk to them about our new 'courtship'. Though Kalon and I had gotten legally married one week after returning from my vacation, my parents and Zaire still had no clue. We planned on giving them a traditional wedding next year.

As for Brander, Phaeron, Thorin, and the covens, as far as I knew, we'd been left alone. Kalon still attended their meetings, and he still associated with his family, but I still refused to have anything to do with any of them. I had my own family, and I had my own priorities that needed my attention. I was still adjusting to my new life, and I couldn't care less about what Kalon's family expected of me.

Now, while I still went to work, my afternoons were spent with Kalon before he headed to work, and my evenings were spent with Hugo, learning everything there was to learn about him and Emmaline. Luckily for me, my parents and Zaire had been super understanding about Hugo, and everyone was doing their best to be supportive of my relationship with him. There'd also been a couple of family dinners that had

gone beautifully, and I really couldn't ask for more from my family right now.

“What are you doing, baby?”

I felt Kalon's arms wrap around me from behind, and my body automatically leaned back into his embrace. “Just thinking.”

“I really wish you wouldn't do that,” he replied, a hint of mirth in his voice. “You're always ready to leave me when you start overthinking shit.”

“At least, I can control the visions now,” I teased back.

“There is that,” he smirked.

As soon as Kalon and I had returned to the cabin, we'd read my mother's diary from front to back. I hadn't worried about violating her privacy because her diary had affected Kalon just as much as it had me. Besides, I'd needed his life's experience to make sense of the things that I'd had no idea about. We'd read the diary three times before we had begun to pick it apart, and though we had learned a lot, one thing had been absolutely clear about my mother's diary; she'd written it to help me. There'd been pages and pages of how to control and decipher my visions. There'd been countless pages of what I could do to manage the impact of the visions on my life. There'd also been pages on how to read the signs around me. Again, I was still adjusting to my new life, but it was manageable now.

“Maybe I need to quit my job and find something that matches your hours,” I suggested.

Kalon sounded cocky as hell. “Is that your way of saying that you miss me when I'm not around?”

Choosing honesty, I said, “Yes.”

Kalon turned me around in his arms. “So, quit your job and come work with me.”

I arched a brow. “I am not going to go work for you, Kalon. I like to pay my own way.”

“I didn’t say that you should come work *for* me, Mora,” he pointed out. “I said that you should come work *with* me.”

“They’re still your clubs and your restaurant,” I retorted. “That would be working *for* you.”

“You’re my wife,” he reminded me. “Those clubs and that restaurant belong to you, too.”

“Can we fight about this another day?” I drawled out. “I’m actually in a good mood today.”

Kalon leaned down and nuzzled my neck. “How about you bring me dinner later, so that I can fuck you in my office at Celestial?” Kalon divided his time in between his clubs, and this week, he was checking in on Celestial.

“I would love to be your dinner,” I said honestly, and now that Kalon was no longer worried about feasting from me, he did it often. Our feeding also strengthened our bond to the point that we no longer doubted our love for one another.

“One day, you’re going to tell me that you’re happy and it’s going to be everything, baby.”

“And it’ll be all because of you,” I replied, already happier than I ever thought possible.

The End.

# Acknowledgments



The first acknowledgment will always be my husband. There aren't enough words to express my gratitude for having this man in my life. There is a little bit of him in every hero that I dream up, and I can't thank God enough for bringing him into my life.

Second, there's my family; my daughter, my son, my grandchildren, my sister, and my mother. Family is everything, and I have one of the best. They are truly the best cheerleaders I could ever ask for, and I never forget just how truly blessed I am to have them in my life.

Then, of course, there's Kamala. This woman is not only my beta and idea guinea pig, but she's also one of my closest friends. She's been with me from the beginning of this journey, and we're going to ride this thing to the end. Kam's the encouragement that sparked it all, folks.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who's purchased, read, reviewed, shared, and supported me and my writing. Thank you so much for helping make this dream a reality and a happy, fun one at that. I cannot say thank you enough.



## About the Author



M.E. Clayton works full-time and writes as a hobby only. She is an avid reader, and with much self-doubt but more positive feedback and encouragement from her friends and family, she took a chance at writing, and the Seven Deadly Sins Series was born. Writing is a hobby she is now very passionate about. When she's not working, writing, or reading, she is spending time with her family or friends. If you care to learn more, you can read about her by visiting the following:

[Smashwords Interview](#)

[Bookbub Author Page](#)

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# Other Books



## *Duets & Series*

The Enemy Duet

The Seven Deadly Sins Series

The Enemy Series

Resurrecting the Enemy (Enemy NG Standalone)

The Enemy Next Generation (1) Series

The Enemy Next Generation (2) Series

Embracing the Enemy (Enemy NG Standalone)

The Buchanan Brothers Series

The How to: Modern-Day Woman's Guide Series

The Heavier...Series

The Holy Trinity Series

The Holy Trinity Duet

The Vatican (Holy Trinity NG Standalone)

The Holy Trinity Next Generation (1) Series

The Holy Trinity Next Generation (2) Series

The Eastwood Series

The Blackstone Prep Academy Duet

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