

Chapter 15

Melissa's POV

There have always been moments in my life when I simply didn't understand myself. I would do or think about certain things that would make anyone deem me insane.

Right now was one of those moments, and I had no idea what got into me. One minute I was in my bed trying to go back to sleep, and the other, I was on my way to Maxim's room.

After my breakdown yesterday with Lukas, I had felt much better concerning that night years ago. To finally tell someone really had a great effect on me. For that, I got a few hours of sleep last night, but each time I would stir awake, I could feel that Maxim was still awake.

I tried to tell myself that I didn't care, and he had every right to be having sleeping issues. He deserved it. But that didn't change the fact that my mind wandered to thoughts of him and only him each time I woke up. I felt awful, considering the fact that Lukas made me feel better, and I barely allowed my mind to linger on him too long.

But Maxim. There was so much I wanted to say to him, so much I wanted to do, like punching him in the face.

I knew Lukas told him the truth. I heard their fighting yesterday, but I was too embarrassed and tired to try and intervene. That was the only reason why I got out of bed, brushed my teeth, combed my hair and marched to his room.

I was ready to tell him what was on my mind.

With every sliver of courage and determination in me, I stopped in front of the door I knew was his and knocked once.

I could hear the shower running from where I stood, and the minute I knocked, it stopped. I waited impatiently, and I had to fight against the urge to run away. I took a deep breath as he jiggled the doorknob, and when we were face-to-face, everything in me shifted.

He seemed surprised to see me. His grey eyes were wide in shock but soon softened in delight. I involuntarily allowed my eyes to trail down the length of his body. Water droplets clung to his soft, olive skin and muscles, and the white towel hung dangerously low on his waist, giving me the perfect view of his v-line.

His skin glistened under the moisture, and as I met his beautiful eyes again, I couldn't help but appreciate how handsome he really was.

I knew that naturally, one's mate seemed like the most attractive person on earth, but Maxim had to be the definition of perfect. From his deep eyes, pink lips, chiselled jawline and the very arch of his eyebrows, everything was perfect.

He resembled Lukas a lot, especially around the hairline. But in my eyes, Maxim was a solid eleven out of ten, while Lukas remained at ten.

"Uh, hi." His voice snapped me out of my lusting, and I scrambled in my thoughts for the reason why I was there in the first place.

Without even thinking, I pushed my way past him into his room. It was just about the same size as mine with similar features. A fireplace, a door that led to a balcony and an attached bathroom. But I could see and smell him everywhere. It was personalized just to fit him.

I spun on my heels as he closed the door, keeping a reasonable distance away from him as I took a deep breath. I gathered all the words I had rehearsed in my head on the two-minute walk to his room and stared

him dead in the eye as I spoke.

"I am just going to come right out and say it, because no matter what, we will have to get used to existing around each other sooner or later. I, for one, would like to get rid of the elephant in the room. Thankfully, your brother made me realize that it's best I just come right out and say it rather than hating you in silence."

Hurt flashed across his eyes for a quick second when I mentioned Lukas, but I didn't care.

"Melissa-"

"Wait," I cut him off as I held up a silencing hand. "Let me speak, then you can say what you want." I gave him a moment to accept my terms before continuing. "I'm sure Lukas had told you why I initially tried to reject you."

"Told is an understatement, but yes," he said. His voice was soft and broken, which showed me that he was regretful. And for some reason, the stupid thought made my stomach flutter.

I nodded. "You ruined me, Maxim. You ended my childhood that night. And it was already bad enough that my brother and the kids at school were giving me a hard time existing, but what you did pushed me over the edge. Literally."

"I know, and that's why-"

"I said, let me finish," I gritted out, silencing him instantly. "I hated you for years. I didn't forget your face, and I surely didn't forget what you did. I especially didn't forget the way you made me feel, and for that, I don't think I would ever truly be able to be with you." I laughed humourlessly as another thought resurfaced.

"What sick joke is the moon really playing, huh?"

"There is no joke, Melissa. We were mated for a reason," Maxim mumbled with his head down.

I scoffed. "Yeah, to add to my ever-torturous life. Look, if your brother makes me his Luna, that won't change the fact that you're his second Alpha. We have to learn to co-exist. So, even though I would never forget how you added to my depression and yielded the way of the past most miserable ten years of my life, I, for one, would like to be at a place where I can see you and not want to kill you. I used to dream that my mate would save me from my sorrow, but finding you had only added to it."

Tears burned my eyes again, but I dared not to let them fall. Not in front of him.

"But you know what, Maxim? I think I deserve at least one shot at happiness in my life. Being with Fiona and surprisingly, being with Lukas had made me feel sort of happy." It seemed like I had just shot him in the chest with an acid-dipped silver bullet as I said this. His face said it all to the point where I even felt his pain.

But I kept going.

"I think... I think I should give it a chance with Lukas. He seems like he can make me happy, he cares and-"

"No," Maxim finally said. His face was twisted and hurt, and his voice was stern. "No, Melissa. You are my mate."

I actually laughed as he said this. "Oh, come on, Maxim. Has everything I just said vanished in thin air? Are you forgetting the fact that you actually rejected me? If it was another wolf, you wouldn't have had a problem with it. But since it's your brother-"

"Yes, you're right," he said, cutting me off. "It is because he is my brother, and it is because I won't be able to survive living in a house with you and him being together. Do you know what will happen if he marks you? I will literally die from that pain, Melissa. And yes, maybe I do deserve it. I had been beating myself up all night for what I did to you all those years ago. If I could go back and change it, I would. But you can't be with him."

"That's just it, Maxim. You can't. You can't erase it, and even if I forget by some miracle, the stain on my heart will always remain."

He was quiet for a while as he simply stared at me. I waited for him to talk, but he didn't. I could see that there was so much he wanted to say, but something was holding him back. I had no idea if it was doubt, self loathe or uncertainty. I couldn't tell.

"It is what it is, Maxim," I told him conclusively. "We can't change anything. We couldn't even if we tried."

"But we hadn't," he whispered, and it was so low that I could barely hear. "We hadn't tried, Melissa. I haven't tried."

I was growing quite impatient with him. "Try what, Maxim? Because if you hadn't noticed, there is nothing we can do anymore. That ship sailed eleven years ago at that Alpha meeting."

"Please, Melissa, just hear me out," he pleaded, and I gave him the benefit of the doubt. "I am so, so sorry, and I know this won't change anything, but I just wanted to tell you that I am."

"Noted."

"And I was a dumb kid. I was getting taller, and my voice was changing. Girls started to notice me, and I only thought about myself. I swear to you, that night, I thought you were the prettiest girl in the room, yet I was such a stupid dick."

"You were," I mumbled as he continued.

"And what I hate the most is that I continued with my life when yours fell apart. I don't blame you if you don't ever forgive me, because I won't ever forgive myself either. I want to kick myself over and over and over for causing you such pain. Do you know how it feels knowing I deliberately hurt you for years? Melissa, it is tearing me apart."

"Join the club," I said as my voice cracked. A tear escaped, but I quickly swiped it away.

"You didn't deserve any of that. I wish I could take your pain and make it all go away. I wish-"

"That's the thing, Maxim!" I shouted at my own frustration. "Wishing, hoping and being sorry won't change anything! Did you completely fuck up my mentality? Yes, you did. Did the moon want to have a good laugh by mating us together? Seemed so. But nothing that either of us does or say will change anything, okay? Just... I'll see you around, Maxim. Because we'll be nothing else but that. Housemates."

And with that, I sidestepped him and moved to leave as the tears finally sprung. Maxim watched as I walked past him, but as I reached for the door, he spoke again.

"I didn't actually reject you," he blurted out, causing me to stop dead in my tracks.

I freaking knew it.