



## JOCELYN

The pack-house dungeon was a holdover from another era.

While previous alphas had used it with abandon anytime someone looked at them the wrong way, I'd never seen it used during my tenure with the East Coast Pack.

I wandered down the poorly lit corridors, letting our connection guide the way through the winding tunnels that lay beneath the pack house.

The feelings I had for Nina in my heart were still strong, even though my head was telling me that everything I knew about her was based on a lie.

As I turned a corner, I found Nina shackled to the wall of a cell, covered in dirt and dried blood.

I put my fingers through the bars as my eyes began to water. I hated seeing her in this state.

I didn't care what ulterior motives she had; no one deserved to be treated like this.

She lifted her head and smiled weakly at the sight of me.





"Jocelyn? I thought I felt you down here, but I didn't believe it. I didn't think you'd ever want to see me again..."

"I wanted to give you a chance to tell me how you really feel. Nina, be honest with me—is what Aiden said true?"

"Did he say that I'm a lowlife, scum-of-the-earth lost cause? Because if so, then yeah, it's true."

Normally Nina would've said something like that as a joke, but there was no hint of humor in her voice. Only pain.

"I'm coming in," I said, unlatching the door.

I knelt down in front of Nina and pulled out a rag and some antiseptic from my medical supply bag.

"Let me treat this cut on your face," I said, dabbing her chin as she winced. "Who did this to you?"

"Jocelyn, you know I ain't no snitch," Nina joked.

Nothing about this situation was humorous, but it was honestly better if I didn't know. I was supposed to get people out of the hospital, not put them in it.





"I imagined that my first time in restraints with you would go down in a much sexier way than this," Nina said, forcing a smile.

"So, I'd get to be the dominant one? I'm intrigued." I placed my hands above Nina's heart. "Can I?"

She nodded yes.

I closed my eyes and focused my energy. I started absorbing Nina's pain into my body, and this time it actually worked.

My veins turned black, and my body began to ache as if it had just been tumbling down a cliff.

"Stop, that's enough," Nina yelled.

I fell back, drained, but Nina seemed to be in better condition already. Color was returning to her rosy cheeks, and she looked as wild and beautiful as ever.

"Why the hell did you do that?"

"Because you'll need your strength... I'm setting you free."

"Jocelyn, no. You'll be imprisoned yourself for this." she protested.







I placed my hand on Nina's face. "Haven't you figured out yet that I'd do anything for you?" I kissed her softly, and she kissed me back.

"I just need to find something to break these chains," I said, searching the cell.

"Actually..." Nina pulled a key out of her pocket.

"Wait...how? Why are you still here?" I gasped.

"Isn't it obvious?" she asked. "I wasn't gonna leave without giving you an explanation."

"Nina, I don't need it," I said, unlocking her shackles.

"Please, Jocelyn, I have to tell you."

I folded my arms and looked away. "Okay, go ahead."

"First, you have to know that my feelings for you were always real. I never lied about that, not for a second. But I am a spy. I was sent here... by someone very powerful," she said in a serious tone.

"Who? Another pack?"

"No. it isn't a pack, but I can't give you a name.





"No, it isn't a pack, but I can't give you a namulation of some one who's not to be trifled with."

"Wait... Sienna? You were sent here to spy on Sienna?" I asked, shocked.

"Yes, I was to watch her, and... if certain events played out, I was to eliminate her. Those were my orders."

"Who the hell would want to hurt Sienna? What threat could she possibly pose?"

"Jocelyn, promise me you'll stay away from this. I couldn't bear to see you get hurt. I've already hurt you enough."

Nina pulled me into her arms and placed her forehead against mine.

"I have to go, Jocelyn. I could never do what's been asked of me, especially not to someone close to you. But when I break my bond with my benefactor, I'll have to face the consequences."

"Then I'll face them with you. We'll go together," I said, tearing up.

"I have to face this alone. But, Jocelyn, know this...," Nina lifted up my chin and pressed her lips against mine with all her passion. "You









deserve the world—and I just wish I could give it to you."

"Don't go, Nina," I said, my voice cracking.

She backed out of the cell with tears streaming down her face. "This isn't goodbye. We'll see each other again."

Nina was a good liar. But she couldn't lie to me.

She was gone.

\*\*\*

As I returned to the Yule Ball, wiping my tears away, I heard shuffling and screaming coming from the ballroom, punctuated by Josh shouting at the top of his lungs.

"MICHELLE!"

What the hell was happening in there?

I pulled myself together and ran into the ballroom to find mass chaos. All the guests were scattering as Michelle—

Oh my God.





She was suspended in midair, half shifted, with tables, chairs, and cutlery floating in a vortex around her.

I'd read of rare stories like this in restricted healer journals, but I had never thought I'd see it in my lifetime.

Possession.

I rushed over to Josh, who was trying to get through to her.

"Michelle, listen to my voice. You can fight this. I know you're in there," he said, tears rolling down his face.

"Josh, look out," I yelled, tackling him just as a flying table smashed into where he'd been standing.

"Jocelyn, I don't know what to do," he said, hopeless.

"I might have an idea... but you'll have to get me close."

## SIENNA

I couldn't stay here. I wasn't safe.





Konstantin knew my location, and just because I'd banished him from my head didn't mean he wouldn't come looking for me again.

I needed to get to Aiden at the pack house. He didn't even have a clue that a vampyre was in our midst.

A vampyre that I'd invited in.

Konstantin was a threat to the pack, and he'd been right in front of me the whole time.

As I ran through my gallery, the lights began flickering.

I was already too late.

Konstantin appeared in a cloud of black smoke, blocking my exit.

"Sienna, my dear, were you leaving? I only just got here."

"You're sick, I should've never trusted you!" I spat.

"How else were you going to find your parents?" he sneered.





"I'll find them on my own. I don't need you or your powers."

Konstantin let out an evil laugh and materialized right in front of me.

"I have one more gift for you, Sienna," he said, touching my forehead before I could stop him.

\*\*\*

I was in the woods at night, but they weren't any woods I recognized.

This wasn't my memory; it was Konstantin's.

I heard twigs snapping in the distance, and I braced myself.

I was sure Konstantin couldn't physically hurt me when we were mentally linked—otherwise he would've done so already. But whatever he wanted to show me would be designed to hurt me psychologically.

Footsteps. They were getting closer.

My mother burst into the clearing, panting and out of breath. She was running from something.





A familiar cloud of black smoke descended on the clearing, making it impossible to see anything, until it materialized into Konstantin.

He advanced toward my mother with menacing intent.

"Where is she? Where is the child, Vanessa?"

"You'll never find her, Konstantin. I've made sure of that."

"Foolish woman. You've let your love for a child override your good judgment. We could have untold power."

"No, Konstantin. You've let your lust for power destroy anything that was good in you—if there ever was anything to begin with."

"Vanessa, there's no need for you to meet the same fate as your mate. He didn't want to cooperate either—and you saw the consequences of that."

"I deserve whatever fate the deities deem fit for me after what we did. I accept my penance, but my daughter will not be a pawn for you or them. She deserves a normal life."

What the hell was she talking about? I was shaking.









There was nothing I could do but watch; I was his captive audience.

"You disappoint me, Vanessa. You're alpha stock. Power runs through your blood. But if you refuse to recognize that..."

Konstantin disappeared then reappeared behind my mother with a blade at her throat.

"No, you bastard!" I screamed.

She closed her eyes, a peaceful look on her face.

All I could see was red.

\*\*\*

Our link severed, and I fell to the ground.

"Everything you told me was a lie," I said, gasping for air.

It felt like my own throat had just been cut.

"You misjudge my intentions. I'm the only one trying to lead you to the truth."

Konstantin knelt down and lifted my chin so I was forced to meet his gaze. I was too stunned to fight



Our link severed, and I fell to the ground.

"Everything you told me was a lie," I said, gasping for air.

It felt like my own throat had just been cut.

"You misjudge my intentions. I'm the only one trying to lead you to the truth."

Konstantin knelt down and lifted my chin so I was forced to meet his gaze. I was too stunned to fight back.

"You have no idea who you really are, the power that you hold. There are those far more dangerous than me who would seek to destroy you before you unlock that power. I simply want to help you."

Black smoke billowed out of Konstantin's cloak and engulfed me.

"Let me relieve you of your burden."

**Next Chapter**