



JOSH



I knew it was only a matter of time before someone showed up to bust me out of this joint.

So I was prepared when I woke up to see Jeremy glaring at me through the metal bars.

“What’s up, man?” I said sheepishly.

“Get your things. I have to speak with the judge, and then we’re leaving.”

His words were clipped and terse. For a guy as chill as Jeremy, this meant he was *pissed*.

I was in no mood to argue with him. I felt like someone had taken a dump in my brain.

“Yeah, you got it,” I said, getting to my feet and trying to ignore the nausea that rose along with me.

Jeremy stalked off, and a moment later I heard the sound of the security doors clang open and shut.

Then I heard the click of high heels on concrete.

Michelle came into view.

She looked tired and pale, her brown hair pulled back in a messy bun and her face scrubbed clear of makeup.



This was the real Michelle. The hopeful, beautiful, lonely person that so few people got to know.

And I could see in her eyes that I had hurt her.

My head drooped.

“What are you doing in jail, Josh?” she asked quietly.

I’d heard that question before. Only from my mother’s lips instead of my mate’s.

Why were you in jail again, Carl? She would say to my father every night he stumbled home from the bar.

Why can't you ever just hold your temper?

You're a worthless, drunken excuse for a mate.

That had been before she left him. Left both of us.

I couldn't let that happen. I had to try and explain.

“Konstantin. I went to kill him.”



“So you break into a history museum and terrify some old biddy?” she asked in disbelief.



“But he was supposed to be there!” I insisted.

And he was there, I thought. I just got there too late.

Again.

Michelle sighed wearily. “Sorry, Josh, but you have to help me out here. I get that you are trying to find Konstantin. But what made you think he was in a museum in Tennessee?”

“Because I—” I hesitated.

Should I tell my mate about the sludge?

If she knew that we could track the vampyre, it might help her to sleep easier at night.

But then again, as much as I loved Michelle, I had to admit that she wasn't the best at keeping secrets.

And if she accidentally blabbed about the sludge, I would be in even deeper shit than I already was.

“I... got a tip from an anonymous source. They left a message in my office.”



“Seems like a pretty flimsy lead,” she said.

“So what!” I cried, coming forward to wrap my hands around the bars.



Michelle placed her hands over mine, and my skin thrilled at the touch.

“I don’t care how weak a lead is, how desperate. I will do whatever it takes to find Konstantin, do you understand?”

I could hear my voice becoming louder, more desperate, but I didn’t care.

“Michelle, you came an inch away from dying,” I said, reaching out to stroke her tear-stained cheek. “I can’t stop. I can’t give up. Not until I know that he’s dead.”

She nodded against my palm.

“Thank you,” she whispered.

“I’m sorry I’m not there for you. I’m sorry for this whole mess,” I said.

“It’s okay,” she said. I could hear the lie in her voice. “I’m actually doing a lot better.”

“Things will be better,” I promised her. “But first, we have to kill Konstantin.”





Series

The Millennium Wolves
Book 4 - Chapter 20

Dark Mode



Chapters

“But you can’t keep getting thrown in jail!” she insisted. “Aiden is seriously pissed.”



“Let him be pissed. He hasn’t taken any of this seriously from day one.”

Just then, I heard the sound of the security door opening and then slamming shut.

“Jeremy’s coming back,” Michelle said.

I squeezed her hand.

“Let’s get out of this dump.”

Michelle
hey Si

Michelle
Monica wants us to come in and do more booths

Michelle
kinda after the fact, i know

Michelle
Si?

Sitting on my bed at home, I waited, but Sienna didn’t answer my texts.



Monica called again, and I let it go to voicemail.

I didn't feel like talking to her. She was still trying to get me to tell her where I'd disappeared to earlier this morning.



But I had no intention of admitting that I'd been bailing my mate out of jail.

Or that I'd fallen asleep on top of the covers last night after crying for hours.

That wouldn't be very camera-friendly, now would it?

Michelle

hey guys, you seen or heard from Sienna?

Mia

nope, but then, i'm buried in baby 🤪🤪🤪

Erica

I haven't seen Sienna since the festival

Michelle

she's not answering my texts

Erica

were you texting her about the show

Michelle

...

Michelle

yes



Erica



Michelle

what do u mean

Erica

oh come on mich

Erica

you know

Michelle

i do not know

Michelle

what

Erica

Sienna isn't exactly enjoying doing the show, Michelle. I can't believe you really don't know that.

I frowned at my phone.



I frowned at my phone.

*If Sienna is so determined not to enjoy herself,
what is she even still doing on the show?*

*Doesn't she understand how lucky she is?
Everyone loves her when she isn't even doing
anything.*



Monica was completely up her butt.

Everyone on social media was singing her praises.

How could Sienna not appreciate that?

*Because it's all just an act. None of it really means
a damn thing.*

I shuddered, trying to shake off the feelings of
self-doubt that had been creeping up on me ever
since the Festival of Flame.

No.

This was my chance.

But as usual, Sienna was standing in my way.

She didn't deserve it. Any of it.

Michelle
if she doesn't like it why is she doing it

Erica
omg 😬



Mia
She was worried about You, Michelle

Michelle
???

Mia
r u seriously going to play dumb here?

Erica
u woke up from a fucking COMA and said "hey i want to be famous"

Erica
so she went along with it

Erica
because she loves you

Erica
way to repay her.

With a sigh, I tossed my phone aside.

Underneath my irritation, I felt a pang of worry.

I'd been so hyperfocused on the show, on making sure that I looked good for the cameras, that I had said some terrible things.

I called Sienna's phone, and when she didn't pick up, I tried her hotel without success.

Maybe she's at her gallery.



I headed out.

When I reached her gallery, the sign said "Closed" but the door was unlocked.

An uneasy prickling crawled over my back as I let myself in.

"Sienna?" I called.

No answer. I moved into the place, looking around.

Everything looked normal. Undisturbed.

"Si?"



I heard a shuffling noise coming from the back of the gallery.

For a moment, I froze, an image of red eyes flashing in my mind.

My breathing sped up, and my heart hammered in my chest.

Shit.



“Michelle?”

It was Sienna.

She came through the door to the backroom.

She was a wreck.

Makeup ruined by tears, hair half tied back, shirt splattered with paint.

“Jesus, Si,” I said.

She stumbled toward me, and I went to her, holding out my arms.

She fell into them, sobbing.

“What happened?” I asked, still alarmed. “Did somebody hurt you?”

She shook her head. “I’m just a mess. I’m a total mess.”

No matter how confused my feelings toward Sienna were, I couldn’t just leave her alone and upset like this.

“Well, that I can fix,” I said, kicking into gear.



I led her into the restroom and helped her wash her face.

I had makeup and a hairbrush and set about putting her to rights.

“Can’t have you looking like such a fright, now can we,” I muttered as I worked.

Sienna sat docilely, letting me clean her up.

“Was it like, especially windy today...?” I joked.

“No,” she said, her voice soft. “I just... kind of lost my cool there for a little while. I was... frustrated with my painting.”

I gave her a nod as I dabbed concealer around her eyes. “You and your artistic temperament.”



“Yeah,” she said with a weak smile.

I sat back and looked at my handiwork. “Much better,” I said, then took both her hands and squeezed them.

She gazed back at me; her eyes were bright, but her face was blank.

“You have to put it all behind you, Si,” I said.



The last thing I wanted to do was talk about *what happened*.

But she really needed to get it together.

“It’s over now. Behind us,” I told her.

“I can’t sleep at night,” she confessed, her voice trembling. “Every time I close my eyes, all I can see is—”

“Red eyes,” I finished for her.

Don’t think about it. Don’t think about it.

My pulse was racing.

“You have the same dream?” Sienna asked, surprised.



“Not like... in a psychic way or anything,” I said, trying to laugh it off.

But then I nodded. “But I always feel like someone is watching me.”

So I surround myself with cameras. Then at least I know people are watching.

But I couldn’t say that. Couldn’t really admit that it was true.

“Do you really think Josh and Aiden will catch him?” she asked, her voice low.

I nodded firmly. It was the only thing I could do. “Of course they will.”

Sienna looked away.



I gave her hand a little shake. “Now, come on, let’s go get a late lunch. I bet you’re starving after all that—art.”

“Sure,” she said, turning back to me with a smile. “Thanks, Michelle.”

“My pleasure,” I said.

JOCELYN



After the scene with Nina in the garden, she had stayed away.

Which was good. It was what I wanted.

But when I saw her a few days later, looking utterly woebegone as she sat alone in the cafeteria, my feet had acted of their own accord.

I sat down next to her.

Nina's eyes flicked up and widened in surprise.

We didn't say anything. I picked at the food on my plate, but as usual, I had no appetite.

Nina took a piece of toast from her plate and placed a few slices of avocado on top.

"Here. Eat. Be a millennial."



My lips curled in a smile. "Kind of on the nose, don't you think?"

I gazed at her, wanting badly to fall into her arms and forgive her for everything.

"Apologies are kinda like losing your virginity," Nina quipped. "All about the time and place."

My mouth quirked up. “I guess so.”

I lifted the toast to my mouth and took a bite.

“It’s not bad,” I admitted.

“Good. Eat up. You get all h-angry.”

“I do not!”

Nina lifted a dark brow, and I smiled. “Alright, maybe sometimes. A little h-angry.”

“Like ‘If I don’t get pizza in the next five minutes, I’m going to burn this mother down’ h-angry.”

“Shut up,” I said, but I was smiling fully now.

I sighed deeply, feeling a weight lift off my shoulders.



“I missed this,” I admitted.

Nina’s sarcastic mask crumbled, and her mouth wrenched to one side.

“Me too,” she murmured, reaching out to put her hand on mine.

I left it there and took another big bite of toast.



I left it there and took another big bite of toast.

AIDEN

After learning that Josh had gotten himself thrown into jail, I was ready to move forward on the investigation without him.

However, it wasn't until that evening that I had time to do so.

"Is that it?" Sienna asked breathlessly. She was perched on my desk, nervously watching the bottle of sludge as though it might jump out and attack her.

Which, for all we knew, it might.



"Yeah. Stand back," I told her as I uncapped the bottle.

Both of us froze in anticipation, but nothing happened.

Sienna let out a whoosh of breath.

"Okay, let's see what this stuff can do," I said.

Taking out a small compass, I poured the black goo over the surface.



Then we waited.

It didn't do anything—just covered the compass in filth.

“What is it supposed to do?” Sienna asked, coming closer.

“I thought it was supposed to point to Konstantin's location.”

“Maybe it just needs some time to work?”

So we waited.

Each of us anxiously praying for the needles to begin spinning.

Ten minutes went by.

Twenty.

Nothing.

The needle stayed pointing in the same direction: north.

Unless Konstantin is in the north?

But *nothing* had happened. No indication that the



But *nothing* had happened. NO indication that the sludge had had any effect on the compass at all.

With a sigh, I sat back in my chair.

“Could we try it with another compass? Or like... a GPS or something?” Sienna asked, coming to sit in the chair next to me.

I took her hand and rubbed it against my cheek.

“I don’t know. But we have to try something.”

She sighed. “I know. But I just feel like we’re getting nowhere with this.”

I nodded.

More words hung unspoken in the air.

Konstantin was still out there.



Hellbent on getting to my mate—on killing her in his lust for power.

And we had no idea when he might strike again.

Next Chapter

