Author: Nadia Sparks

CHAPTER 1: SELECTED HUMAN

SERAPHINA'S POV

Werewolves and humans have never mixed well.

Yet barely ten years ago was when the first human made contact with the wolves that were a hidden otherworldly civilization at the time.

A peace treaty had been reached between both kinds and although our leaders may have signed it on a piece of paper, in truth, humans remain the outcasts, pushed off into the corner and neglected like we aren't people too.

I've always had more than a few opinions about their kind - they are beasts, monsters that should never exist in the first place. I know they don't like us, but not all of them share such a mindset, the few who were different were like pillars of hope to the rest of us.

"Seraphina!"

I hear Miss Lucy's familiar voice filter into my thoughts just before her head sticks right into the room I'm in, washing the pots. She's the caretaker of the little human orphanage I've known as home all my life, and also the only werewolf I've ever had the chance of meeting.

"Are you done with the pots? Call the children to come down for a meal." She orders simply, turning back to the kitchen she was in.

The sternness in her tone has only ever been an act to put most of us in check. In actuality, her heart was way too soft and big for her own good. Despite being a humble Omega female, she had opened her own home to orphaned human children years ago.

I nod almost instantly, tossing the pot aside while running to the end of the crooked stairwell at the end of the tiny hallway. I take in a deep breath, summoning the strength from my body before I yell out at the top of my voice.

"Food's ready, time to eat!"

There's not an immediate response from my call. Bone chilling silence follows, before the sudden eruption of numerous small feet thudding against the wooden floors in haste.

Suddenly, a dozen of them come running down just like that, children ranging from 5 and above. Until 15 come rushing down the stairs, shoving the others, and immediately deflecting into the kitchen in true commotion.

I wait until they're all settled and before I can turn to get my own plate, I spot one of our youngest coming down - a twin, almost completely inseparable from his sister, but now without the other.

"Where's Emily?" I ask.

He looks up at me with a frightened gaze but says nothing, shaking his head. The look on his face tells me otherwise and it only takes a moment for the realization behind his action to sink.

I waste no time, running up the stairwell next, peeping into every room I pass before I come across one that isn't completely empty and my guess wasn't wrong.

A group of older girls, all my age, stand over the smaller measly looking Emily, laughing with constant taunts, while she's tattered.

Emma, Riley and Tina, the orphanage's ruthless bullies, and it seems Emily's been caught in their net today.

"Look at the scared little thing, almost like a tiny mouse." Emma snickers, sneering at her like a predator.

"Hey, squeak like a mouse for us, c'mon." Tina taunts, placing the edge of her arm on her head while Riley laughs like there's some funny joke being said here.

The sane thing to do would be to ignore this, or make an excuse that Miss Lucy is coming just to get them to flee, but when have I ever gone with the sane thoughts?

The sight of it all triggers something in me, flaring up my own anger, followed by the highpitched ringing in my ears that always comes right before my outburst and every poor life decision I've ever made.

I pick up a wet mop stick resting against a corner wall and walk into the room abruptly, drawing their attention to me immediately.

"Tired of messing with kids your own size, huh?" I say, walking closer, trying to hold myself back.

The three girls look at me too quickly, scared for their lives until they recognize me and let

out relieved breaths.

"Well, if it isn't Sera. Here for seconds?" Riley speaks to me first, tilting her head to the side and referring to last night.

The day before, she had me locked in the toilet all day and I couldn't go to school just because I refused to do any of their chores.

Her wicked smile and that of her friends now turn to me fully and mostly off poor Emily. I could take the bullying, I always have, but I couldn't imagine the little girl being able to.

Three against one... and a half; that's hardly fair - so of course, I won't play fair.

"Run!" I yell to Emily once our eyes meet and just like that, she gets up on her feet and dashes out through the door.

"Hey!" Emma yells, seeing what I've done.

Before the rest can react to it, I raise the mop stick, smacking Riley in the face with it and pushing her backwards, colliding into the other two like a domino, before I run away.

Their united screaming echoes from behind me, but I never stop running. I run down the stairs, past the group of children eating, down to the back door and through it.

I run out of the orphanage and down the path in the back that leads right into the bushes, pushing myself as fast as my legs can take me.

"Come back here, you freaking bitch!" Riley screams from behind, letting me know they've already caught up.

Shit.

Despite the pouring rain, I double my pace, dodging through the trees expertly, having been here more than a few times and just barely losing the three.

Just when I start to celebrate mentally, praising myself from escaping them, I suddenly trip from a root sticking out of the earth and fall face flat onto the hard muddy floors and let out a groan of pain.

I'm immediately disorientated by my fall, feeling a slight pain just in my ankles while I try to get myself together and keep moving, but it's too late.

Their footsteps catch on and soon, they tower over me, breathing hard from the chase while glaring hatefully.

"You freaking bitch!" Riley screeches first, landing the first blow with her foot to my side and the others follow almost immediately.

Each kick and blow to my body lands painfully against my already soaked and wet body.

I groan in pain and struggle to break free; they never stop, releasing all their anger on me.

It doesn't stop until I stop fighting, until the world around me goes numb and my consciousness slowly fades from my body, and I find myself floating on something like a cloud.

Feeling nothing, not even my own body.

"Seraphina..."

A female voice, too faint to recognize, calls to me in a distance eerily, yet something about it feels warm.

I don't respond, knowing that I'm probably dreaming again, losing myself into this imaginary world I've constructed to ignore my own pain.

"Seraphina." The voice calls once more and I'm immediately pulled back into consciousness.

I realize I'm lying flat on the muddy earth while the rain continues to fall faintly everywhere. The girls are nowhere to be seen, probably got tired of kicking, and my body aches so badly.

I sit up, holding onto my bruised sides that hurt like hell and remain just like that on the floor. What's the point of rushing to get up now? I'm already filthy, it can't get worse than this.

That's right, nothing can get worse than this.

This is the life I've lived every day. I'm already used to it, so nothing else could possibly faze me ever.

I sit alone for a while, enjoying the calming silence alongside the pitter patter of the rain against the leaves. Silence that I rarely have moments of experiencing.

I could stay like this forever, far away from those bullies that torment me daily.

The grumble of my tummy that follows reminds me again that I haven't eaten, and the sun is just beginning to set.

The food must be probably almost gone but there's a chance Miss Lucy left some for me, so I get up, finally rising from the sticky earth and shaking off the excess that clung to my clothes.

I walk until I'm back and slide in quietly through the back door and suddenly, I run into Miss Lucy.

"Seraphina!" She whispers harshly the moment I come into her field of vision, looking all over my body in one glance. "Where have you been?"

From her tone, I can tell she's pissed and the next words that will leave my lips will be important.

"Uhm... I went for a walk?" It comes out as a question rather than a statement, and she reads through it almost immediately.

With a huff, she pulls out her hanky, wiping my dirty face harshly like any mother would to

her child.

"Now's not the time for jokes." She chides in a whisper again.

"Why are we whispering?" I ask purely out of curiosity but she says nothing more, taking my hand and tugging me toward the main hall.

I'm immediately greeted by the sight of all the other orphaned kids lined up against both walls of the hallway, facing inwards.

The very same girls that had tormented me just minutes ago chuckle at my outward appearance the moment I walk in with Lucy, and she gives me a spot to stand at the very end.

I ignore them, looking ahead at more important things, like figuring out what's happening. That is just before my eyes fall on him.

A man far on the other edge of the hall with his back turned to the source of light, making his face blurred.

I can barely make out his features but from the size of him, his height and powerful presence, the large build of his body, I immediately know that he's a werewolf - a high ranked one too.

Soon enough, he starts moving. His steps are calculated and slow, radiating royalty and class. He glides through the hall with grace, barely making a sound. The air freezes in his presence, making it hard for me to breathe.

He stops in front of me, and I can't look at him until he faces me. When I finally meet his eyes, I'm shocked and speechless.

He's nothing like the wolves I've read in books or heard in tales, or rather, they had underestimated the ungodly allure they could have over humans.

Pure silver eyes that shimmers with an innate light that grips my soul almost instantly while staring right through. He has striking features perfect for any human to possess.

Midnight black hair that shimmers even with the lack of light around us.

He's clearly in his mid-forties but aged like the finest wine. Although beneath it all, there is a hint of sadness masked by the look of annoyance in his eyes.

Shit, I'm staring too much.

I pry my eyes away almost immediately.

"This one is filthy." He comments and it's only now I hear the deep powerful voice of his.

Miss Lucy steps forward almost instantly, cowering visibly in his presence while avoiding looking into his eyes.

"My apologies..."

"Is it by choice or a sign of disrespect?" He interrupts her before she can explain, already taking some sort of offense.

Miss Lucy immediately goes into panic mode, stuttering to explain herself.

My eyes fall on the girls again, the main cause of my appearance, choosing to remain silent even now when it's their fault, while this strange man grills our caretaker.

Like all bullies, they're just too cowardly to own up to their own deeds.

"Well, it depends on how you look at it, sir." I speak, suddenly not being able to hold my own tongue well enough and hating the position Miss Lucy is in because of me.

He looks at me almost immediately, raising a brow... not of annoyance anymore, but interest.

"Sera!" Miss Lucy tries to chide me but he raises his hands immediately, forcing her to pause.

Now he turns fully to me; I have his full attention.

I gulp with immediate regret and nervousness, having put myself in an irredeemable position once more.

"Sir? Haven't been called that in a while." He humors my words unexpectedly and is now waiting for me to respond.

"If not sir, what do they call you then? You look like a 'sir' to me."

I immediately hear her suck in a deep breath that makes me think I've fucked up again. Maybe I have, maybe I should have shut up after the first thing I said.

The smile that forms on his lips next is unexpected and takes me off guard momentarily.

"I'm called many things actually; my liege, your majesty...Alpha King of all wolves..."

The last statement puts it all together instantly, explaining the reason behind Miss Lucy's grave expression, behind the sudden chilling air and the unnerving feeling in the air.

He's not just any wolf but the Alpha. Not just any Alpha, but the king himself, ruler of the congregation of packs.

I gulp a ball of my own saliva while having my own mind blown away immediately.

"Cool." I just barely make out underneath my breath.

And my expression seems to entertain him because he chuckles next.

Light and airy like the wind.

"I like you." He comments causally.

I'm torn between surprise and flattery.

"Thank you... I have that effect on most people." The ones I don't annoy.

His eyes move back to Miss Lucy next, while she just barely manages to remain conscious without panicking for my own sake. I can see that she might just pass out at any time if I keep talking.

"She's perfect." He says, referring to me before the smile fades and his stiff expression returns. "My men will come for her in the morning."

A vague sentence that leaves me puzzled, yet she nods, bowing her head slightly at his command.

He doesn't bother mining more words before he makes his way towards the door.

"Wait... coming for what?" I ask at the top of my voice, not wanting to let him go before he explains what he means.

"You will understand soon enough." He says casually, still moving to the door, about to leave.

But I'm still unnerved, despite his vague words, this is the only opportunity of a lifetime.

I have never heard or seen anything about him besides the fact that he's a blood thirsty Alpha, cruel when he needs to be and just in his ways.

And that he was the one that decided to let in humans despite the advice of the council of Alphas.

He's like a myth I've only heard of and a hero of some sort, and I don't even know his name properly.

The desire to know more, to not let go of this very moment pushes me forward and I dare to speak again, in desperation.

"What do your friends call you?" I ask without thinking, as I've always done.

I've come this far, there's no point in being scared.

He pauses just as his hands come in contact with the door knob, standing like that for a moment before he turns back to me and once again, that small smile plays at his lips, as though the question has brought him nothing but delight.

"My wife calls me Silvan."

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