

TEN

"What are you doing? Hurry up and take this to the prince!" Astrid shouted at me. I stood with the tray shaking in my hands, fear paralyzing me from head to toe. I didn't want to do this but I had no choice. I didn't want Skylar to implicate Celeste because I refused to do it. She'd not rest until she destroyed everything that I was and held dear so I didn't have any choice but to comply with her wishes if I didn't want something bad to happen to my best friend.

I took the tray from the kitchen and mixed the poison into the drink on the Alpha's tray. This would be the second time I would deliver his meals to his room in the penthouse of the pack house. I hoped that like the first time, he wouldn't be around when I entered the room.

The suite was dark when I entered, only a small light from an open door illuminated the place. Dropping the tray on a table, I straightened, prepared to run out as the Alpha himself stepped out of the bathroom. My mouth flapped open and closed like a fish when he came out with only a towel on his waist and another drying his hair.

I should look away. I should flee as I planned but my body reacted to his. My eyes stayed glued to his chest beaded with water and a small splatter of dark hair. It took great discipline to wrench my eyes away from his chest but then they got fixed on his Adam's apple.

He'd stopped drying his hair to observe the omega that dared come into his room to stare at him like a creep, invading his privacy without concern but I couldn't pull my eyes away. It was as if a magnetic force held me captive and forced my gaze to stay on his body.

He said nothing as my eyes followed him, my heart beating faster as he walked towards me with a grip on his towel. No words formed in my head as he brushed past me to the food I just put out on his table. My heart thumped faster.

'Mate'. A small voice whispered in my head. 'He's our mate. He's our mate,' Artemis exclaimed when his skin touched mine as he passed.

"Don't – don't drink that!" I exclaimed when he grabbed the drink, his broad back blocking my view of the tray.

"It speaks." He turned with a raised eyebrow. "Who are you?" He raised his eyebrows at me as he raised a glass of the poisoned glass to his lips. I flew at him to knock the cup away from his grip but he caught me, holding the glass away from me. Damn me and my bad reflexes! ²

"Don't drink it! It's poisoned!" I cried when he still held the glass. I slapped the glass away from his hand after much struggle. It fell to the ground, the red liquid spilling on the plush white rug beneath us.

"You're trying to poison me, ome –" The rest of his words died as a rush of different emotions flittered through his

eyes. "You have brown eyes."

'... and the Alpha Prince saw no colours but grey after the wicked witch cursed him.'

I flew out of the room before he could fling me out. I wrenched out of his grip before I could see the disgust in his eyes. He'd searched for over a hundred years, roaming the earth in search of his mate, the only person who could break his curse. It must feel like another curse to him to be mated to someone like me. I couldn't bear another rejection so I ran.

'Go to him! Go to our mate. Why are you running? He'd never hurt us!' Artemis screamed at me to return to Prince Valens but I didn't stop running until I got out of the pack house, going down the stairs in record time without taking the elevators. I ran out all the way from the pack house to the streets, bumping into people as they walked by.

The evening star was out and people rounded up their businesses for the day to spend time with their families while I ran without a destination in mind, thinking of nothing but putting space between me and the pack house – me and him. All the while I ran, Artemis kept telling me to go back, to go be with our mate but she would come back to her senses soon and see why we needed distance between us and the Alpha Prince. 1

Prince Valens. My mate.

Just thinking about it made my head swell. Unbelievable.

How could it be that the Moon Goddess, of all the men and women in the world, decided to give me to him? He deserved a strong Alpha female who could conquer by his side.

Second-chance mates were rare. In fact, mates were rare not to talk of second chances. About twenty percent of werewolves never found their mates and more than thirty percent of werewolves found their mates after they mated with someone else. Only a small percent, let me say two percent, of wolves ever had second chances. It had to do with the small fact that mates rarely ever rejected each other and even if they did, the other party refused to accept the rejection because accepting a rejection comes with more pain than being rejected in the first place. A rejection is like a bitch-slap while accepting that rejection felt like a blow from a heavyweight champion; a severing of the strings that held mates together.

'Now that you have run this far, what next? You can't live out here. You have to go back!' Artemis kept urging me to return.

In truth, I couldn't set up camp outside of a flower shop but I could delay the inevitable which I planned on doing by staying out here for a while. I could do with a bit less pain these days.

'Go back home. The streets are dangerous at night!' Artemis took up other tactics to lure me back to the pack house but I resisted. Prince Valens would reject me but before I welcomed the pain of another rejection, I would take a walk

to clear my head and ruminate on the magnificence of such a discovery.

Unfortunately for me, I ran into Skylar and her gang while I walked. Lucien froze when he saw me. I wondered if he forgot to break up with Skylar or if the Alpha female didn't allow him to.

"Well?" Skylar ran up to me like an eager child. "Did you do as I asked?" She demanded while her boys brought up the rear.

"I did." I turned away from her before she saw the fear in my eyes. I'd done what she asked but not in the way she asked me to. How could I tell her I failed to poison my mate?

"You're Prince Valens' mate? Ha! Keep dreaming, loser! That would be her reaction.

I wished it was a dream.

"Is he dead?" She demanded.

Even if I knew he wasn't dead, even if I knew he didn't take the poison, the idea of him being dead filled me with so much pain, I almost doubled over.

"What is wrong with you? Answer me." Skylar pushed me when I hunched forward a bit.

Someone from behind wrenched her hand off my shoulder. We all froze then slowly, I turned to see the man behind me. Beta Jabari looked ready to murder Skylar on the spot. His

eyes looked like soulless black orbs as they darkened.

"Let go, you're hurting me!" Skylar whimpered as he continued to squeeze her wrist. Bethel and Lucien stepped forward and to show them who was boss, he tightened his grip further.


"Do. Not. Lay. A. Fucking. Finger. On. Our. Luna." He drew out each word with venom dripping from them as he stared her down. He flung her hand and she exclaimed. "You are lucky I am in a good mood but try this another time and I swear to the moon and stars, I will make you hate the day you were born." He vowed. "After you, Luna." He took a step aside and I had no choice but to walk past. ³

"I - I'm sorry," I said to him when we reached halfway to the pack house.

"I'm the one who should be sorry." His gruff voice announced. He didn't say anything after that and I didn't have anything to say either so we kept mute and walked back to the pack house.


He held open the door for me as we entered the elevator and he punched in the number for the penthouse. I forced myself not to tap my feet. I forced myself not to fidget as the big man beside me made the elevator feel smaller.

The elevator pinged and we were in the penthouse. "You found her. Right on time too." Prince Valens walked out of a room as we entered. "Did you enjoy your run?" Jabari excused us with a bow. "Come, little mate, tell me why you

 +15 BONUS

poisoned me." While he spoke, all I thought of was his lack of a shirt.

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