

## Chapter 5

Zeke looked at the offerings set out for the buffet with disappointment. Though all of it was quality food, as was expected at this academy, considering the amount of money most of them had to pay to be here, none of it smelled as amazing as whatever had been prepared earlier.

“Have you changed your mind?” Derek asked as he loaded a plate full of food.

Sighing, he picked up a plate and put something on it without paying much attention to what it was. He seemed to have lost his appetite without the delicious offering he had been looking forward to.

When he picked up a bottle of water as well, he looked over at his usual table and saw Myles already sitting there with a group of girls—Claire’s group of friends. The three girls went everywhere together and always forced their company on them, as if Claire was trying to pair up her friends with his, too. They turned up at every single place they went—like magic. The girls never ate in the cafeteria, so he could only guess that somebody had told them they were there.

With another sigh, he walked over to his table, nodding at some of his counterparts along the way. This school taught them how to be

diplomatic and maintain relationships, and he thought he did that quite well. It didn't matter that some of them rubbed him the wrong way or that he sensed a lot of fear in them: it was his job to maintain the peace.

“Hi, babe, Claire smiled brightly.

Babe? He frowned at her as he took his usual seat at the head of the table and then opened his bottle of water without answering

Maybe it was time he thought about ending this relationship. Even before his father arranged his mate, he had always known he and Claire wouldn't go beyond a few tumbles in the sheets during the semesters. But Claire had become so comfortable with him that she constantly used these pet names. His father would lose his shit if he ever heard her call him that.

“Is that all you're having?” Myles asked, nodding at his plate.

“Turns out I'm not hungry after all, he answered.

He could sense Claire's feelings. She hadn't liked being ignored, but he was pretty sure it was something he did regularly. Why she still stuck around was beyond him. No, actually, it wasn't. She wanted the honor of being called the next Luna of the Blood Moon Pack, even though he had never put that offer on the table.

She was beautiful enough for that role. She was all chest and but, and she was strong enough, as proved by how well she did in their combat classes. Those had been, and still were, the only reasons he had picked her in the first place. But he wanted a little more in the brains

department for his future mate. And he didn't want a girl who would worry more about her wardrobe than being the mother of the pack. The woman his father had picked for that role ticked all those boxes.

"Did you hear what happened today? Claire asked as she peeled a banana

"No, but I'm sure you'll tell us," Myles said with a tight smile.

"There's a human enrolled in the school."

Zeke paused what he was doing to pay more attention to what she said.

"That's impossible. No humans can find this place, and the Council doesn't make mistakes like that," he pointed out!

"And yet she's here," Claire grinned, her green eyes twinkling now that she had his attention. "You should have seen her. She looks like they pick her up from a homeless shelter. I bet she be dead within a week"

She must be something. You know how things work. Maybe she a weak witch" Derek said as he dug into his food

"No, the stench of human was undeniable. But she's been put in the Omega dorms, so maybe that's true." Claire said with a shrug. "I guess we will know for sure when the lessons start tomorrow"

He ate a bit of the pastry on his plate as he thought about this The Academy was no place for a human, and Claire was night she probably

wouldn't last the week. How did an invite end up in her hands? Had she taken someone else's place!

He decided to put those thoughts aside. It was not his place to question the Council.

"Are you going to the party Claire asked after a while.

Sometimes, he was sure she talked only because she liked the sound of her own voice. Otherwise, she would think first before she opened her mouth.

He pushed his half-eaten pastry away and looked at the woman beside him. For three years, Jared had thrown his obnoxiously loud parties every first night of the semester. So his parties had, for some reason unknown to him become the only parties thrown the day they all got back

Claire had better not be thinking what he thought she was thinking because he would end things with her right there. He felt his wolf stir as he looked at the traitor.

Claire looked down in submission, unable to hold his gaze

"I'm sorry, I forgot," she whispered.

"You forgot?" he asked with a calm he did not feel.

How could someone who wanted to be part of his life forget that Jared was his mortal enemy, the spawn of the bastard v had killed his mother

and several members of his pack? How could she not know that every day was a battle not to rip him apart!

“I’m sorry, Ezekiel,” she whispered again.

He stood without another word. He couldn’t stand to see Claire’s face anymore. People may have sensed his mood because they kept out of his way as he left the dining hall

Two semesters. Two semesters and he could gut that asshole like a fish. Shadow tried to push his way out, and this time he let him. Another run was probably what he needed to calm himself down. He didn’t think twice as he stripped before he had even arrived in the woods, and then it was Shadow’s giant paws thudding on the ground as he sped through the thick trees

He didn’t know how long he ran, but when he decided to head back towards the creek behind their house, it was dark, and he was in control again. He didn’t shift back as he had a drink of water and then lay on a patch of grass to enjoy the peace

As he dozed off, that amazing scent filled his nose again. He was on his feet in a shot as he sniffed the air. That scent. Was it dinner time already? No, that was not coming from the same direction as the kitchen. Shadow took the lead as he followed the scent. He would find it this time. He didn’t think he would get any rest until he figured out where it was coming from

He heard loud music and remembered the asshole's party, but even that was not enough to distract him from following the scent. It felt almost like a compulsion. Like he had to find it, or he would go crazy.