

Chapter 33: Secrets and Sweet Dreams

"Did he, did he hurt you?" Gabriel asked, fixing his eyes on Amelia. Amelia took a step towards him and he could sense that something wasn't right. Amelia's body felt like it was on fire, like every nerve ending was heightened. She shook her head 'no' and then reached out to touch his chiseled chest. She knew it was the drug but the drug was stronger than her reasoning. She couldn't help herself; she wanted him and she wanted him now.

She brought her mouth to his and kissed him, deep and slow. He ran his fingers through her hair and sighed. He pulled back and looked into her desire-filled eyes. Without a word, he led her to the bedroom and laid her down gently on the bed. His every touch ignited a spark on her body as he slowly undressed.

"My God, you're so beautiful," he said. All that was left now were her panties. He looped his thumb into them and pulled them down, off her legs.

Suddenly feeling very exposed, Amelia came off the drug a bit. She was still groggy and full of desire, but she had enough wits about her to stop him.

Temporarily.

Gathering her strength, she said: "I remember the night I became Luna. Our first night together. You refused to mark

me." Her head lolled to the side and he knew the drug was still affecting her. "Gabriel, you rejected me long before the official rejection. And I knew it. I should have left. I should have left the moment I realized that you never loved me. I don't know why I waited for your official rejection."

He watched her closely as she spoke. Her words were full of hurt and pain. She turned her head and looked him in the eyes. "I'm not in my right mind right now. It's the drug doing this. The drug is making me want you. But if you take advantage of me, I'll never be able to forgive you."

He nodded. She was so vulnerable. So exposed. He took the sheet and covered her naked body. Then he leaned down and gave her a soft and gentle kiss on the forehead.

"Don't worry," he said. "You're safe with me. I won't force you." He was hit with the overwhelming urge to protect her. He wasn't sure where this feeling was coming from, but it was strong. "I'll stay with you tonight. To make sure you're okay."

Amelia did not feel okay. The drug was making her feel very uncomfortable. It filled her with an unspeakable desire, and she struggled against it. Gabriel could sense her unease. She was breathing heavy and shaking.

Just then, he thought of something. He reached into his torn clothes pocket and pulled out the ruby stone. He placed it in her hand. "This will help ease your discomfort. It can help clear werewolf blood of any toxins, including drugs."

Amelia held the ruby and shimmered in the soft glow of the bedroom. Her breathing slowed down and she closed her eyes. She felt a bit better.

"How about I tell you a bedtime story? To help you sleep?" Gabriel suggested. He stroked her hair and then her cheek with the back of his hand. She nodded slightly, her eyes still closed.

"Well," Gabriel began in a soft voice. "This is my family story. You see, my father loved my mother a lot. They grew up together. But my mother was not his fated mate. One day, a woman showed up with this ruby. She had made it for my father. The ruby shows who the real Alpha is, but it didn't shine for my mother. The Alpha can still choose who becomes his Luna, of course, whether she's the chosen mate or not. My father chose to stay with my mother, even though the ruby said she wasn't the real Luna. This caused them to argue a lot. Things were never the same after that ruby." Gabriel placed his hand on Amelia's chest. Her breathing was nice and steady now.

"Go on," she said, with a half smile.


"Well, after my father died, my mother changed. She became mean. She claimed she hated the concept of 'fated mates' because she was never my father's 'true' mate. I think that's why she didn't like you. Because we were fated. Now, Sophia and I grew up together, just like my mother and father had. Sophia always had feelings for me and my mom

knew it. She wanted me to be with Sophia. But I never had feelings for Sophia. Not like that. I saw her as a little sister because she was my best friend's sister – my beta. When he died, his last words were about Sophia. He asked me to look after her. I had to. He died for me. But there's more to it. There's a secret. A dark one that no one except me or my mom knows."

Gabriel paused then. He wasn't sure if Amelia was still awake but he needed to go on. He needed to confess this secret to her, whether she was listening or not.

"His death was a premeditated assassination. But it was me they were trying to assassinate. He died protecting me. But I didn't come out unscathed. During the assassination, my wolf was hurt. Badly. It was...it was blinded. No one knows though because my wolf has an extraordinary sense of smell and it's very mobile. I can recognize enemy movements, and I'm still very strong. But the truth is – my wolf is blind. And that's not something I can just simply accept."

Gabriel waited for Amelia to react. She didn't. So he went on. "I've been trying to restore my wolf's vision. For the past three years. I have to. If I don't, the doctor said it will start to affect my vision. He said my eyesight will slowly deteriorate. My mother thinks no one will want me. A blind wolf? A blind man? She told me only someone who really knows me will truly accept. Sophia. She wants me to be with Sophia. Always had. So when you showed up, I don't know. I was


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never really confident. I was afraid that you'd never fully love me. Or truly accept me. So when you asked for a rejection, I figured I was doing you a favor. I was letting you go. Why would you want an Alpha with a blind wolf? I was also taking a lot of medicine, to try to heal. It affected my mental state. I didn't even fully realize it at the time. It made me angry and mean. I wasn't good to you. I'm sorry, Amelia."

Gabriel finished his confession and looked to Amelia. She was in a deep sleep now and he had no way of knowing how much of the story she'd heard. He touched her bottom lip with his finger tip and sighed. Then he kissed her on the forehead again and tucked the blankets up around her.

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Chapter 34: But You Don't Love Him

Amelia awoke and felt Gabriel's arm across her chest. She slowly opened her eyes, still a little groggy from the drug. She turned her head and saw Gabriel's sleeping face, inches from hers.

He stayed with me all night, she thought as she looked at his gorgeous skin and thick, dark eye lashes. Something tugged at her heart. Nostalgia? But you don't love him anymore.

She resisted the urge to reach out and stroke his cheek. He looked so sweet and handsome, there beside her, fast asleep.

But you don't love him anymore.

The weight of his arm across her chest felt so nice.

You don't love him, Amelia. You can't.

Amelia looked to the ceiling. She felt protected, lying there beside him. His breathing was easy and slow. He had been so loving to her last night. So kind. She'd never felt so cherished by him.

But you don't...

She reached out to touch his cheek.

Love him...

Her heart yearned.

Anymore.

He stirred at her touch and his eyes opened. She sat straight up, tossing his arm off her. She instantly felt awkward, naked under the sheets.

"How are you feeling?" he asked. "Have the drugs worn off?"

"Yes," she said, not looking at him. "I'm sorry. I heard you telling me something about your parents. A story. But I dozed off in the middle of it."

So she didn't hear it, Gabriel thought. My confession. The part about my blind wolf.

"Was it important?" Amelia asked. "The story?"

Gabriel shook his head. He had wanted so badly to confess his faults to her. But maybe that wasn't the best thing. It was probably for the best that she hadn't heard.

Just then, there was a knock on the door followed by Desiree, the manager from the night before. She walked into the room, her arms full of fresh clothes for Gabriel. She faltered slightly when she saw them in bed together, Amelia wrapped in only a sheet. She blushed, embarrassed by her intrusion. But then her face changed to recognition.

"Gabriel!" she said excitedly. "I didn't recognize you last

night in your wolf form.”

Gabriel searched her face, unsure of who she was. “I’m from your pack,” Desiree explained. “I left a long time ago, though, to work here. I never got the chance to thank you. You’ve done so much for our pack as Alpha.”

It warmed Desiree’s heart to see her pack’s Alpha and Luna in bed together. She immediately understood what had transpired the night before. Gabriel had come to save Amelia.

But wait...

Amelia had told her that they were separated.

They don’t look separated.

Desiree assessed the situation. Amelia was sitting, her back to Gabriel, fumbling with her hands. She seemed awkward and uncertain. Gabriel, however, did not. He looked, well, forlorn was the word that came to mind. And then she understood.

She walked over and placed the clothes on the bedside stand beside Amelia. Then she winked, leaned in, and whispered: “Don’t worry, love. His eyes don’t lie.” And with that, she left.

What an odd thing to say, Amelia thought to herself. What does she mean by that?

They sat in silence for a few more minutes. It was an

awkward situation and they both knew. Amelia had kissed Gabriel last night and let him undress her. She was drugged, sure, but it still...

And Gabriel had poured his heart out to her, confessing his deepest, darkest secret. She'd been out cold, sure, and hadn't heard him. But still...

Gabriel finally broke the silence.

"You mentioned you're going to the amusement park today? I'd be happy to walk you around. You know, Stormfang has been building all the rides for the Moon Goddess Glory winter celebration. We've built them for several packs. So I know a thing or two about amusement park rides. I might be able to offer you some advice?"

"Don't you need to find Sophia?" Amelia snapped back. "I mean, she's here. In the hotel."

Gabriel sat up then. "No. I already got what I needed." Amelia shook her head. Gabriel continued, his voice gentle. "She's not going to be my Luna, Amelia. I never intended for any of this..."

But Amelia cut him off.

You don't love him anymore.

"Honestly. Whatever. I don't care, Gabriel. It's none of my business."

And with that she climbed out of bed, taking the sheet with

her, gathered up all her clothes and headed to the bathroom to get dressed.

They walked up to the gates of the amusement park together. Amelia's face lit up at the sight of it.

"It's marvelous!" she exclaimed, and her smile made him smile.

"Yes, it is," he nodded.

Because it was. The park had been built by humans and it was a spectacle in and of itself. It was enormous, and equipment was the very best of the best. Amelia had known it was slotted to be a massive park, but she hadn't known the scope until now.

They walked around the park together and talked easily. They laughed and joked with one another. To anyone else, they looked like a young couple on a pleasant vacation. They had never been this way with each other before. Kind, caring, easy-going.

The sun shone down on Gabriel's face as he laughed at Amelia's story about last year's Moon Goddess Glory celebration. Her friend had gorged on corn dogs and then gone the Spin and Whirl – a ride that spins so fast you get plastered to the side of it from the centrifugal force.

"I told her not to go on," Amelia said. "But she wouldn't

listen. Well...guess what?"

"What?" Gabriel asked, his eyes wide with genuine interest.

"When she got off she felt sick. So sick that she spent the rest of the day sitting in the shade."

"Not on Moon Goddess Glory day!" Gabriel asked, enraptured by Amelia's story.

"YES! Can you imagine? Missing out? Because you ate too many corn dogs and then spun yourself silly?"


He laughed. A real, genuine laugh. He reached out and touched her arm, still laughing. She instinctively put her hand on his. He stopped laughing and looked into her eyes.

She studied his face.

It was this, she thought to herself, her hand still on his. This is what we were missing. What we were always missin. But... Everything seemed too late. Why couldn't they have opened to each other earlier?

Truth be told, Gabriel hadn't been that bad to her. He'd given her the best of everything. Designer clothes, expensive jewelry, gourmet food. He'd done well with business in the human world, and he'd shared his wealth with her generously.

But they'd never told each other stories, like this one. Simple, silly stories. They'd never just hung out together and laughed. His hand was warm under hers and his eyes

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sparkled. If only they'd taken more care when they were together. If they'd communicated better. If they'd been sweeter to one another.

But...

You don't love him anymore, Amelia.

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