

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 4

Leo

The vast grand room of the pack house was filled with the invitees. Weeks had passed since the day Astrea had arrived at the Palace to attend the meeting. And the Queen had made the announcement she said that she would make. Since Astrea's birthday was close by, they decided that she could leave with us to the kingdom after celebrating her birthday.

Everyone in the pack and those who were close to the alpha's family from the palace were invited to the celebration. I had arrived with the Royal family. Coming back to the pack was nostalgic. My heart soared with joy as I stepped into the place I grew up in after a long time. I was happy to meet several old friends and ex-classmates. I was delighted to see them after a long time. Although my family members visited me in the lycan kingdom from time to time, walking into their arms in the pack gave me a whole new kind of fulfillment.

However, I was nervous. It was a big night. It was the night that Astrea would find her better half. To us, finding our mates was one of the biggest milestones we would achieve. It was a turning point in our lives. It would mark the beginning of a new life for her and I couldn't help but feel anxious about it. After all, she had been an important person in my life ever since I could remember.

My heart thudded like crazy in my chest. Anxiously tapping my foot on the tiled floor of the packhouse, I looked around. My mind was filled with her memories. The way she looked at me on the day she visited a few weeks back. The way her cheeks flushed and quickly looked away. The bashful smile on her lips. I thought she looked amazing. Growing up had done her good.

A year had made a huge difference but it wasn't unexpected. She was always good looking. In the past, there had been times that I had to fend off boys from our class who were trying to get a bit too close to her. She may be the alpha's daughter and had the authority to order others around, she never abused it. She was friendly and sweet and I didn't like it when other males tried to get too close to her. Licking my lips I rubbed my palms together. It was a warm night, yet my palms were surprisingly cold. Tonight she would find the one meant for her if he was present in the room. But still, I couldn't help but feel protective over her. She was and always will be special to me.

“Dude, chill,” Xander nudged my side, catching my attention.

“I’m fine,” I chuckled, trying to show that I was indeed relaxed. But perhaps, that was a failure.

He smirked and snickered.

“I can see that.” He replied sarcastically. “Come on. She is Astrea. The girl you grew up with. How bad could it be to see her tonight?” He mumbled.

Sighing, “yes, but tonight is her eighteenth birthday. And we are here to attend the party. Tonight she most probably will meet her mate and I’m a nervous wreck!” I told him.

His grey eyes twinkled mischievously as he smirked at me. “Why though? She is supposed to find her mate, right? We all knew that from the beginning,” He responded, his cunning eyes continuously studying my countenance.

I pursed my lips. “Yeah... I know... it’s just that... I don’t know... I hope I won’t lose her afterwards...” I trailed off when I saw his smirk widen.

Chuckling in response, he patted my back. “I knew it! You like her more than a friend! You just aren’t ready to acknowledge that!” Xander laughed.

I rolled my eyes. “Come on, man. She is more like a little sister to me!” I denied his accusations, though my heart’s palpitations increased as I lied.

He was right. I liked her a lot more than a friend and I never saw her as my sister. She was my friend – a friend who I had a hopeless crush on. I realised that I liked her more than a playmate when I was sent away to train in the Palace. Distance made me realise that Astrea had captured my heart in such a way that no one else could. She was the Queen of my heart and deep down, I had accepted it.

What prevented me from trying to break out of the friend zone was fear. Fear of messing up our friendship. In addition to that, I knew that she would find the one meant for her when she turned eighteen. I had been keeping my emotions a secret from everyone, but it looked like Xander had been observant. Trying my best to remain neutral, I glanced at him.

He snickered yet remained silent and I was glad that he didn’t say anything. I wasn’t good at lying and Xander knew it.

Just then a familiar scent filled the atmosphere. Oranges – my favourite. A smile spread across my face as I craned my head to look for her. She had definitely entered the grand room of the packhouse, where the party was held to celebrate her birthday.

My smile widened. I was right. Astrea was grinning as she spoke to one of her classmates. Zelda and Kiara were beside her. I was glad that they were with her. At least the unmated males wouldn't be able to catch her alone.

As I made my way towards her, I couldn't help but admire her beauty. She was wearing a gorgeous black sequin off-shoulder dress that ended right above her knees. My eyes darted towards the males who surrounded her and an involuntary growl escaped my lips.

"Whoa. Is that a growl?" Xander whispered as he followed me. I rolled my eyes. I didn't care what anyone thought. I just didn't like the fact that the guys were standing too close to her – a bit too close than I liked.

"Hey," I cheerfully greeted her. Her face brightened as her lips stretched as she turned around to face me.

"Leo!" She squealed and jumped into my arms. My heart raced as I placed my hands on her hips, holding her close to me.

"I'm so happy to see you!" She mumbled into my ears. Smiling, I pulled her closer and inhaled her scent.

Oranges. I loved it. A shiver ran down my spine, yet my heart sank when our bare skin brushed against each other. I guess I was hoping that I could feel something with her. Something more...

I gulped as she pulled away and looked into my eyes. My disappointment increased when she didn't say anything. If we were supposed to be more than friends, we would have felt it. At least her wolf would have recognised me as her mate. What a letdown.

Despite my plummeting heart, I forced a smile.

"Happy Birthday," I whispered.

"Thank you," she smiled.

Xander cleared his throat. "Happy Birthday, Astrea," he said, handing her a little wrapped box. "This is a little gift from Zelda and me."

I placed my hand in my pockets and wrapped my hand around the little box inside it. I wanted to give it to her, but not in front of everyone.

Time passed. We all had a marvellous time. The food was great and so was the music. Although she went to spend time with other members of the pack, I kept an eye on her. Partly because of the possessiveness I felt over her and partly because I wanted to know who her mate was.

The clock struck midnight and the party was over. The omegas were quick to start cleaning the place as soon as the guests left the packhouse. Our parents and the other grownups had retreated to their rooms, taking the younger kids with them. Xander, Astrea and I waited for a while to chat before going to our rooms.

"You mean... you didn't find your mate tonight?" Xander raised an eyebrow as he leaned against the railing of the balcony. Sipping on a bottle of water she nodded.

"Well, I was hoping that you would," Xander mumbled, throwing a glance in my direction.

"Well... maybe he isn't born yet!" She laughed.

Pursing my lips, I looked at the little lights that illuminated the packed ground. I was still unhappy that it wasn't me yet, I wasn't someone who would go against destiny.

"I'm going to my room. We have to leave early tomorrow morning. Have you packed?" Xander asked her.

"Yes," she grinned.

"Excited?" I smiled and she bobbed her head in response. Xander yawned and patted my shoulder.

"I'm going. You also better go and try to rest," he said.

"Yeah. I'm going in a while."

I waited with Astrea for a while. An awkward silence filled the air and my hands went numb with cold. I wanted to say something but my tongue seemed to have forgotten to form words.

Damn it. I grew up with her. I shouldn't be speechless. I grumbled internally. Oh, how I wished my lycan had woken up already. Then I would have someone to discuss with. And perhaps give me the push I need. I still had a couple of months to go for him to make his first appearance.

"So... are you trying out for the team?"

It was she who broke the silence. I shrugged.

"We can't until we complete our transformation. As soon as I shift, yes, I will," I told her.

She nodded her head to show that she understood. A cold breeze blew and she wrapped her arms around herself.

"We better get inside. It is getting cold out here," she muttered.

Instead of replying, I removed my coat and placed it on her shoulders. Mouthing a 'thanks' she adjusted it so that she was covered up.

"Actually... I have something for you," I told her.

Heaving a deep breath, I fished out the little box I had kept in my pocket. Her eyes widened when I revealed a crystal necklace that I thought would suit her well.

"Oh my God, Leo! That is so beautiful!" She gleefully exclaimed. Grinning wide, she turned around and lifted her hair. I picked the delicate chain and draped it around her neck. Using my clumsy fingers I clasped the hook, the softness of her skin making me sigh. When I didn't feel any sparks like I hoped I would, a sad smile formed on my lips. She wasn't mine.

"Leo, I love it," turning around, she gasped and touched the white crystal that reflected the silvery light of the full moon.

"Thank you."

Once again, she wrapped her arms around my neck. I sucked in a breath. Why did it have to be so hard? Why couldn't wolves choose their mates like we, lycans could? Why did she have to find the one meant for her?

I had a lot of complaints. Why did I have to fall so deeply for her if she wasn't meant to be mine? I felt my eyes sting, however, I quickly blinked it away.

Closing my eyes I held her tight in my arms, thirsting for her. I wanted to do a lot more than hug her. I wished I could... If only she could be mine...