

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 41

Aitee

Since I was disguised as my enemy, taking care of the three guards was a piece of cake. They were soon under my spell and snoozing on the floor. Before leaving the room, I picked up my phone and texted Calvin, alerting him to be prepared. We were working round the clock and even the slightest delay could cost us.

Just like the previous time, I turned the system off and walked away.

A feeling of euphoria swelled my chest as I descended the stairs. I was surely going to gain victory. Even if the guards woke up, I was safe. They would be thinking that Leo was the one who cast his spell on them. After all, everyone knew that he had magical powers.

As I climbed down the stairs I snapped my fingers and my form changed. On the outside, I looked like Danisha, but inside it was me. Aitee.

I had sprinkled the odour-canceling dust on me before I left the house because I didn't want them to detect my scent all over the place. Just like the time I had poisoned Allan, Calvin's request, and when I had helped Natasha escape. The so-called majestic Lycans weren't aware of a thing. They wouldn't be able to detect a scent other than their people.

I looked at the wristwatch in my hand. Just a few minutes were left for our shift to begin, so I decided to go to the northern gate where I saw the soldiers who were waiting for us to take over the duty. I hid behind a bush without alerting them of my presence.

While I waited, I tried to think of a good way to overpower two fully shifted Lycans. Apparently, they would be physically stronger than me, but my power is magic. The best thing I could think of was taking them by surprise.

I waited for Xander and Leo to arrive, hidden from their plain sight. The northern gate was located on the rear of the Palace and was rarely used and was shielded by the massive oak trees in front of it.

It was the perfect location.

Minutes seemed to drag by. I was excited and anxious. Nonetheless, I remained reserved just like a predator would patiently wait for its prey.

Xander and Leo arrived at the gate a couple of minutes apart. The soldiers who were on duty left and Xander and Leo took over. I poured a bit of the sleeping dust on my palm and prepared to make my move before it was too late. I had to get the job done before the soldiers in the security room woke up or someone found them in deep slumber.

“Where is Danisha? She must be here by now,” Leo spoke.

Shrugging his shoulders, “she must be on her way,” Xander mumbled out his reply.

Chuckling, “she is late, but it’s okay. She is the Crown Prince’s girl,” Leo teased him, making Xander snicker.

“Yeah, she is.”

I rolled my eyes. They have been happy for too long and now it was time to ruin it. I squinted at Xander. He was my first target because he couldn’t find out who I was yet. My identity should remain a secret.

I moved stealthily in the shadows, towards the crown prince and when I was close enough, I lunged forward and covered his mouth and nose, forcing him to inhale the sleeping dust.

He fainted and I smirked. That was easy.

“Hey!”

Leo shouted and rushed to assist his friend. I hastily took the pack of sleeping dust and prepared to do what I must.

“You!” he growled and was about to advance at me when I threw the sleeping dust into his face. His reflexes were fast, but not fast enough. I was sure that he had inhaled some of the powder before he grabbed my neck, choking me.

He was strong and I was sure that he could easily snap my neck. But slowly, his grip loosened.

With widened eyes, I watched in ecstasy as he struggled to keep his eyelids open. I could clearly see that he tried to fight against the power of the sleeping dust. However, his feeble efforts were in vain.

“Help!” his shout was pathetic, yet, I covered his mouth as he staggered backwards. The lycans had a keen sense of hearing and I was afraid that they might hear him. Soon he was lying at my feet in a deep slumber.

I stared at him. It worked. Both of them were down.

“Aitee wins,” I chuckled to myself as I picked up the vial I had been carrying in my pocket. I opened the little bottle and forced Leo’s mouth open to pour the contents of the vial into his mouth. I made sure that the vial had trickled down his throat. It was one of the vital parts of the plan. This particular solvent would suppress his lycan and make it easier for Calvin to end him. I looked at the exquisite decorations of the bronze gate. It was closed and there was no sign of anyone around.

Nevertheless, I knew I didn’t have much time. I hastily shifted to my lycan and swung Leo’s limp body over my shoulder before teleporting myself to the lair where Calvin should be waiting for me.

As expected, he was waiting for me at the gate.

“Who are you?” he frowned as I placed Leo’s motionless body on the ground.

Of course, he wouldn’t be able to recognise my Lycan. I ordered my lycan to shift back. Calvin’s mouth hung open.

“Wait... Aitee? You’re...”

He was clearly dumbfounded, but I didn’t have time to waste. I had to get back before anyone noticed anything strange.

“No time. His lycan is suppressed and he is under the influence of my sleeping powder. Be fast and get rid of him. I must go,” I stated and teleported back to the northern gate without wasting time.

When I returned, Xander was still unconscious, just like I left him. Once again, I disguised myself as the blond lycan and lay down a few feet away from him. It was just a matter of time before the drama would begin.

I bit my lip to hold back my snickers. It was almost time for drama. It would be fun.

I grabbed a handful of the remaining sleeping dust and discarded the rest. I didn't want them to find any proof, even if they searched and I had to make it look like I also was bewitched.

I wiped my hand on my face and relaxed. It was time for a little snooze.

“Babe!”

I woke up to Xander's distressed cries. He was slapping my face, hysterically, trying to wake me up. Someone sprinkled cold water on my face, making me wince.

I opened my eyes to see Xander's grey eyes looking desperately at me.

“Wake up! What happened? Where is Leo?” he sounded anguished.

“Huh?” I rubbed my eyes and looked around. Astrea was kneeling in front of me, looking fretful. Knitting my eyebrows together, “what?” I croaked out.

“I... I don't know what happened. I... I think someone attacked. You weren't there....” Xander trailed off.

“Leo... where is Leo? He is in trouble. I can feel it,” Astrea whimpered.

My lips parted as the creases on my forehead deepened.

“You can feel it?” I asked, raising my eyebrows.

She nodded.

Sighing, “when I came here, both of you were lying on the ground. I sprinkled water on Xander's face and thankfully he woke up,” her eyes glossed. “But where is my mate?”

I had to fight against my urge to roll my eyes and scoff. It wasn't time to display much emotion. It was time to play along.

“Did you see anything or anyone?” Xander asked.

Shaking my head, “when I came, you were already unconscious. I tried to wake you up and call for help but...”

I pursed my lips, pretending to hesitate.

“But what?” Xander was perturbed.

“Someone attacked from behind... I don’t know...” I looked away.

“s**t! Where is Leo? We must inform mom and dad!”

Flurried, Xander wiped his face as his eyes clouded.

“They are coming.”

Soon enough, mayhem broke in the Palace. When they went to check the footage, they discovered the guards on duty lying unconscious on the floor.

It added to their confusion. I remained by their side the whole time, putting up a facade while they were woken up.

“Who did this? Did you see anyone?”

Sir Elliot demanded as soon as they woke up.

They glanced at each other and nodded.

“It was Leo,” they said.

Out of the corner of my eye, I clearly saw how the royal’s demeanour changed. It went from pure rage to utter confusion and disbelief.

“No,” Astrea gasped. “You’re lying. He will never...”

“I swear that I’m not lying. If you don’t believe us, check the footage.”

I pretended to hold my breath as they turned towards the system, which was, of course, turned off.

“f**k,” Sir Elliot hissed. “When did this thing turn off?” he was undoubtedly agitated.

Sighing in exasperation, he ordered the guards to roll whatever was saved on the recording. The system was working perfectly fine. Gasps were heard when they saw Leo enter the security room.

I forced myself to remain neutral, in spite of being amused by what I was witnessing. They watched wide eyed as he cast a spell on them and turned the system off, right before the screen went blank.

“It cannot... Leo? No...” the Queen shook her head.

“I’m sure there is more than what meets the eye. I’m sure this is a massive deception,” she mumbled.

“But Your Majesty... how do we explain that?” One of the guards asked to which she seemed to have no reply.

Suddenly, Astrea gasped and fell onto her knees. Clutching her shirt, she groaned, as though she was in immense pain.

“Astrea?” the Queen kneeled down beside her, holding her in her arms.

“Bring some water!” she called to which one of the bystanders reacted.

Beads of sweat trickled down her face.

“M...mate.... Leo... ” she wheezed. “He is in pain...”

I almost shouted out loud in euphoria. They were doing it! Calvin truly had succeeded! My lips curled a bit, which I quickly masked with a frown. It was best that I remained silent while she lamented her loss.

I closed my eyes, keeping up the pretence of being concerned. Deep inside, I was rejoicing. Once her mate was gone, there would be no stopping us. On the night of the next blood moon, Astrea will transform into the most vicious beast the eyes had ever witnessed.

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 42

Calvin

I didn't have time to lose. Aitee had done her part and now it was my turn. I shifted to my lycan and took his body. After swinging him over my shoulder, I gestured for three of my men to follow me.

We dashed to the nearest mountain top where I planned to discard his body. All of us were in our wolf forms except for one. One of the rogues was in his human form, riding on his friend's back. I didn't comment or ask him why. I don't mind how they chose to travel as long as we got the job done without any issues. Personally, I believed being in the wolf form was better. Then, even if he woke up, we would be able to kill him easily without much hassle.

As we climbed the mountain, it started to rain. The little droplets of water drizzled, dampening the fur of our wolves. Regardless, we didn't stop, until I heard Leo groan.

I froze. He was waking up.

We were almost at the mountain top. I glanced at the vast greenery that stretched below us. The place was far enough from the claimed parts of the forest and no civilisation lived anywhere near. That was the reason why I had chosen this place. The chances of them finding him was minimal and with his lycan suppressed, his healing would be rather slow. I hoped that he wouldn't be found in time to be healed by their healers after I threw him down the mountain.

He groaned again. He was definitely waking up. I grabbed his body and prepared to complete the task when I felt something burn the flesh of my back.

I shouted out a curse as I dropped Leo onto the rocky mountain surface, who, to my surprise, sprung to his feet and prepared to fight.

"f**k! What did you do?" my lycan sounded agitated, as he growled at Leo, who was glaring at me. To my amazement, he started to fire blue and green flames at me.

That could only mean that.....

"Damn it! You also are a hybrid?"

Kali shouted as he dodged the balls of fire.

Yes, it was annoying. I wasn't aware that he was one and it was pretty bad that he seemed to be talented at handling those balls of fire. My men started to attack him. However he kept fighting back ferociously, his attacks becoming more and more fierce.

It was hard to punch or kick him as we feared getting burnt, but when two wolves attacked at the same time, he wasn't able to stop them. He managed to block one of them, while the other sunk his teeth into his shoulder.

The sound of his agonising screams made my lips stretch in a crooked smile. That was the sound of triumph.

Nonetheless, Leo was quick to react. He placed his hand on the wolf's muzzle and burnt him, making him yelp and let go of him.

Blood was gushing out of his wound, soaking his clothes. His face was contorted in agony. He was severely injured and I knew that this was a moment I could take advantage of.

However, Leo was a true warrior. In spite of being injured and unable to use one hand, he formed a circle of fire bricadding him from us and knelt down in the centre of the circle. Growling in annoyance, I tried to check on what he was doing.

He looked as though he was trying to heal. I knew his efforts would be futile, but his magic had delayed his end.

"What if he teleports like Aitee did?" My Lycan's statement made me go stiff. He was right. I had to do something fast.

The blue and green flames threatened to burn us, yet I had to find a way to finish the job we had started.

"Master! Take me on your back and jump over the flames. We can finish this! I have the poison!"

The one in his human form exclaimed, taking out a syringe and a tiny bottle from his pocket. My eyes widened as I smirked. Of course, the poison. There was no way he could survive that. I let him climb on to my back and took a few steps back.

Determined to succeed, I sprinted towards the flames and jumped over them, successfully landing on the ground.

Leo was still bleeding. As expected, his healing was slow and the determination on his face was now gone. Was he giving up?

I laughed as I walked towards him.

“Are you trying to connect your lycan? Too bad, he is gone!” I sneered, grabbing his injured arm.

He screamed, yet, I didn’t feel even an ounce of compassion. Leo gasped for breath, but instead of surrendering, he created a blue fire ball with his left hand.

I knew he was going to shoot at me, but the rogue was faster than him. He plunged the injection into his left shoulder. Leo let out a cry as the poison entered his bloodstream.

My heart pounded in my chest, as I gleefully witnessed his downfall. Leo slowly went numb. A mixture of tears and sweat trickled down his desolate face. I released him when I felt his limbs go numb. Panting, Leo landed onto the ground, and looked around. He was defeated.

Slowly, the fire that surrounded us dwindled until it was gone. I shifted back to my human form. Sneering in triumph, I stared at him.

“I won’t lie. I admire your courage. At such a young age and despite losing your lycan, you put up a good fight. You could have won. I would say you almost did,” I chuckled and grabbed his hair, making him make eye contact with me.

“It’s too late now. We have injected the poison into your body,” I hissed into his face.

“Too bad. You are such a waste of talent,” I commented as I lifted his bleeding body and threw it down the mountain.

He didn’t scream. Perhaps he finally gave up. I watched until he stumbled down the slope and disappeared into the mist. Finally, he was gone and my plan to destroy the royal family could be continued without any obstacles.

I grinned, as I patted the rogue who was in his human form.

“I am so glad you brought the poison,” I told him, feeling rather proud of my recruits.

He chuckled and glanced at the little bottle of vial he held in his hand. As soon as he read the label, the colour on his face drained.

“What is it?”

I asked as I grabbed the bottle. My jaws clenched.

“What the fúck! This is the serum that makes one forget his past!” I growled, clenching my fist.

I stared at the label for a while and let out a ferocious roar that I knew would make the rogues tremble. Gritting my teeth, I threw the little bottle down the mountain slope.

“M...master... I think... in a hurry...”

“Silence!” I roared, feeling irritated by his lousy justification. I didn’t look at the rogue. His sight would only frustrate me.

“Well he tried his best,” my lycan mumbled in my head after some time.

“Besides, he was injured and the chances of him surviving that fall is minimal with his lycan hibernating. And even if he does survive, he won’t remember anything,” Kali, lycan pointed out.

“Don’t kill him off. We need men in our army. We can’t get rid of them just because of a mistake.”

I sucked in a deep breath and nodded. Kali was right. I needed my warriors with me. After taking a few moments to tame my rage, I glanced at the trembling rogue, who was staring at his feet. The smell of fear that radiated from him was prominent in the air.

Sighing, “it’s ok. It was a mistake,” I mumbled and walked away, thinking about my next move.

Leo was gone. Which meant that Astrea wouldn’t have her mate beside her to pull her out of the spell that was maturing inside her. It will reach perfection on

the next blood moon, and by that time, I would be fully prepared to take down the royal family. They were a nuisance and needed to be taken care of.

And I would gladly do it.

Narrator

Meanwhile, Leo's body stumbled down the rocky mountain slope. He heard every word Calvin uttered right before he lost consciousness.

Yes, he was desperately trying to reach Zoro when Calvin got him, but to no avail. Was his lycan really gone like Calvin told him? The thought hurt him, but he didn't want to believe it.

Nonetheless, the slow healing was enough proof that something was extremely wrong. Zoro wasn't there.

When Calvin threw his exhausted body down the mountain, he hit his head and lost consciousness. He wasn't aware that he landed in a river at the base of the mountain. Nor did he realise that he was floating on the surface of the water, while the current carried his injured body away from the werewolf territory.

The forest was still. The wind played with the leaves of the trees, the sound of its repetitive melody serving the loneliness of the atmosphere. Not a howl or a cry of another animal was heard. It was as though all the animals were observing silence, mourning Leo's downfall.

The river carried his motionless body through the tranquil forest until it reached an area where a family was enjoying their picnic at the riverbank.

"Look! Is that.... It couldn't be a person, could it?"

One of them pointed at the submerged body while two of them rushed to check what it was. When they saw that it was a young man who seemed to be beaten up, they dragged him out of the water and checked for signs of life.

"He... he is still breathing, but barely" one of them gasped.

"He is badly injured. Look at these marks.... They... does this look like an animal bite?" their foreheads creased.

“It sure does. And look at that bruise on his forehead. He has hit his head somewhere and he isn’t healing. Maybe he couldn’t heal himself?”

“He couldn’t be a human... the human city is separated from ours by the magical barrier...”

“Human or not. We can’t let him die! Quick! Let’s take him to the hospital! Maybe we can still save him!”

Cutting their picnic short, they hastened to carry the injured lad to the nearest hospital. The doctors and nurses attended to him as soon as he was reeled into the emergency room.

His wound was cleaned and various medicines were given. After a couple of hours, Leo opened his eyes and looked around in confusion. He couldn’t recognise anyone that surrounded him. There were two men who seemed to be of his age. One with curly hair and the other one who had his hair trimmed. Both of them were tall and muscular and shared features that made Leo guess that they might be related.

A female who was wearing a nurse’s uniform also was in the room. But the problem was, Leo couldn’t figure anything out. His mind was blank.

Knitting his eyebrows together, “who are you?” he asked, hoping that it would refresh his mind.

“We found you in the river. You were unconscious and injured. Can you tell us your name?”

Brushing his curls away from his face, the man with the curly hair spoke.

Leo’s lips parted as he tried to remember, but his mind seemed like an endless abyss. He licked his lips. Despite his efforts, nothing seemed to come to his mind.

He had no recollection of his past. There was nothing. He couldn’t even remember what caused him to land in the water. They just informed him that he was found in the river, unconscious, but he couldn’t understand why he couldn’t recall anything?

“I... ” he hesitated.

“What happened?” the curly haired man asked him.

Frowning, “I... I don’t know my name,” Leo whispered, feeling worried.

The curly haired man exchanged glances with his companion, and then glanced at the female wearing a nurse’s uniform.

“Uh... do you remember where you lived? Where do you come from?” The other man questioned.

The creases on Leo’s forehead deepened as he realised that he didn’t recall anything.

He reluctantly shook his head and winced as he touched his forehead. It was painful.

He gulped as he thought about his current situation. Perhaps these men were telling the truth. Maybe someone beat him up. Why else would he be in pain?

“It’s painful,” Leo croaked, and the nurse nodded her head.

“You have received a sharp blow to your head. We can say one thing for sure. You are not a human.”

Frowning, “human?” he asked.

Nodding her head, “while we ran tests on you, our machines have detected strong energy in you. You might not remember anything right now, but you surely have used it recently. Our tests prove it.”

Leo couldn’t understand a word she uttered, yet, he remained silent and chose to believe her.

“Relax, I’ll inform the doctor,” she mumbled and rushed towards the exit.

The men offered a kind smile. Everyone understood that not remembering anything wasn’t a good sign.

Forcing a smile, “can you at least tell me where I am?” he asked the people who claimed to find him unconscious and injured in the river.

“Sure. This is the Wizarding Kingdom. I am Jace and this is my cousin, Jett. Right now you are in the hospital of the Wizards,” Jace explained.

Leo sighed and gulped. "So you are all wizards?" he asked.

They nodded in response.

"I don't even know my name..." Leo trailed off.

Sighing, "don't worry. Everything is going to be fine," he reassured, patting Leo's shoulder softly.

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 43

Astrea

The efforts to find Leo never ceased. It continued well into the next day. Meeting dead ends was heartbreaking. Xander and Danisha were the last ones who saw him, but sadly, neither of them knew what happened to Leo.

"I was guarding the gate when someone grabbed me from behind. Danisha wasn't there. I remember him teasing me about something right before I was attacked. I smelt something funny. I don't know...it wasn't anything I have smelt before. Then I just lost consciousness... I don't remember anything else," Xander told us.

Sir Elliot turned towards Danisha who was seated next to Xander. Xander, Danisha, and I were taken to the Queen's office. I was ruined. The pain I experienced before told me that Leo was in grave danger. If only Xander and Danisha could point us in the right direction. Or at least hint us who could have done it.

"Danisha?" Sir Elliot cocked his brow.

"I... I was late so I ran all the way to the gate. The first thing I noticed was that Xander was lying on the ground. I looked around, but Leo wasn't on sight. I was going to call for help but someone attacked me from behind... the attacker covered my mouth and nose... I don't know what happened next," her forehead was creased as she spoke.

"Neither of you saw, or heard anything suspicious? How come you couldn't detect a stranger's scent?" the Queen let out an exasperated sigh.

Xander and Danisha exchanged glances. Xander pursed his lips as he leaned against the chair. There was no explanation for that, except that each time

something happened, the intruder's scent was undetectable. Even during the time Allan was poisoned, and the time when Natasha escaped. The night Zelda was kidnapped also was a mystery.

"Maybe..." Danisha trailed off.

"Yes?" Sir Elliot asked.

"Maybe Leo did it?"

Ash growled, baring her teeth, but I shoved her back, preventing her from taking over. I had to bite my lower lip to stop myself from retorting in fury. Clenching my fists I fought against the rising determination to lunge at her.

"I'm sorry. But I can't think of anything else after seeing that video footage..." she hurriedly added when Xander threw an odd look at her.

"I don't think he would do that. It definitely wasn't him who attacked me. He was standing a short distance away from me when I was attacked," Xander firmly stated, defying his girlfriend's accusations.

"I also don't think Leo would do such a thing," Sir Elliot mumbled, agreeing with his son.

"But... he might be working with..."

"Danisha," Xander groaned, massaging his temple. "No. I won't believe that. Not unless I see solid proof. Something is going on."

My eyes watered. At least they believed that Leo was innocent. I couldn't care less what

Danisha thought about him. I knew that he would never do something like that.

"Isn't that video enough proof?" she snapped, much to our surprise. She was quick to mask her frustration, nonetheless. Anyway, it was too late. She was positive that Leo was behind the mishaps.

Xander grimaced.

"What the hell is wrong with you? You are being weird!"

“That’s enough,” the Queen intervened.

“Were you with him before their duty started last night?” she asked me and I nodded my head.

“He spent the whole evening with me. After uncle Cade’s family left in the afternoon, we spent the rest of the evening in our room. He was with me until he had to leave for duty. That was around 8 pm,” I summarised what happened that night.

“So, up until 8 that night, he was with you, in your room?”

I nodded confirming it.

Sighing, the Queen turned the computer screen on and replayed the video clip.

“Here, we can see that he entered the security room at about 7 pm. So, which means, if Leo, the real Leo was with Astrea, this,” she turned towards the screen, “is someone else.”

My lips parted and my breathing hitched. So that could only mean that someone impersonated him.

“But... how is that possible?” Xander exclaimed, staring at the screen, shocked.

“Magic,” the Queen replied.

Danisha’s face was hard to read. She was just staring at the screen in disbelief. Their reaction was understandable. The revelation was alarming.

“We have had such a case in the past. A case of a magician impersonating your dead relative, Zander,” Sir Elliot told Xander.

“So this proves that this person on the screen isn’t my mate,” I happily exclaimed.

Danisha sucked in a breath.

“May I... leave? This is a lot to digest...” she said, her voice trembling as she spoke.

She was allowed to leave. Xander stood up and patted my shoulder.

“I know he wouldn’t do anything that might hurt the kingdom. He doesn’t have it in him,” he told me.

“Your little girlfriend doesn’t seem to be too convinced,” I pointed out, forcing a smile.

“Maybe she needs time,” he shrugged.

“We trust you and Leo. If he was truly with you, then this,” Sir Elliot pointed at the screen, “is an imposter.”

I nodded. At least they didn’t accuse him of treachery and that was a relief.

Three days had passed since that fateful night and despite my efforts, tears trailed down my cheeks non-stop. However, with time, I was learning to live with the pain – the pain of being separated from your loved one and the pain of watching him being wrongly accused.

Although none of our friends and family believed that Leo would betray the throne, the news of the video footage spread among the commoners like wildfire. Unfortunately, most of them seemed to believe that it was him.

“We don’t believe that he would do it. It cannot be him. Come on. Don’t lose hope,” Sarah squeezed my hand as she sat on the edge of my bed. I forced a smile as I glanced at her and Elena who was watching me sympathetically. I was grateful for them. After Leo, they were my best friends and during the darkest moment of my life, they have become my light.

“Someone must have impersonated him... or maybe the system was bewitched. Who knows... All of it is proof of a mole among us. I just don’t think it could be Leo,” Elena mumbled and then pursed her lips.

Blinking away my tears, I nodded.

“I know. It’s just that...” I trailed off when my throat tightened.

It’s just that I know he is hurt, yet I am unable to do anything about it. I am not able to be there for him when he needs me the most.

“I... I can’t,” I whispered as I covered my mouth, attempting to halt the sobs escaping my lips, but it was useless.

“Aww,” Sarah hugged me, followed by Elena. Although they never felt the pain of losing their mate, they seemed to understand my pain. I cried on their shoulders. Shedding my tears seemed to console me to some extent. It lightened the burden in my heart.

For three days, we have been scouring the whole territory, hoping to find him. Yet, I wasn't going to give up. I wasn't going to lose hope nor was I going to stop looking for him. I was sure that he was hurt. I felt his distress through our bond that night. My right shoulder felt like it was mauled. It was agonising. I tried to reach him by mind link, but for some reason, I couldn't. There was something wrong with our connection. Ash tirelessly tried to reach Zoro, but her efforts were in vain. All of it told us one thing. Someone had attacked him and my mate was in deep trouble. The person I could think of was Calvin. Who else would do something so nasty?

How he managed to get Leo was a massive mystery. There were so many unanswered questions, and I was exhausted. Exhausted from worrying about him. I was worn out by wishing that I knew where he was. Still, I hoped that he would be able to defeat the villain who attacked him and come back home.

Nevertheless, three days passed by with nothing. No intel, and no news about my missing mate. Not even a whiff of his scent and all of it pointed towards witchcraft.

Someone knocked on the door and I wiped my tears. Although I exhibited my tears to my closest friends, I tried to conceal them from the rest of the world, even my parents. I trusted them with my life, but I wanted to show them that I was strong and that I would face it like a real alpha.

Besides, I didn't like to show how much his absence was affecting me, because I was sure that a traitor among us was causing the damage. I didn't want an enemy to see my tears.

“I'll get it,” Elena offered, standing up.

As soon as she opened the door, a familiar scent told me who they were. Pretending to be fine, I glanced at the entrance. My parents, along with Leo's parents, were at the door. They had come back to the kingdom, as soon as they heard about what happened to Leo.

“H...hey...” I forced a smile, as I scooted over to the edge of my mattress.

“Can we come inside?” his father asked.

I let out a humourless chuckle.

“Of course. Please,” I said and stood up.

Mom walked over to me and gave me a hug which I gladly accepted.

My eyes stung, once again. Cursing my tears, I quickly wiped them away. I didn't want to cry. At least not all the time and definitely not in front of everyone.

“It's okay to cry,” Ava stepped forward and caressed my hair. I glanced at her and noticed that her eyes also were puffy.

Did she cry? I never saw her cry in the past...

“It is okay. I don't think tears are a sign of weakness, Astrea. Sometimes we need to let out our emotions and sometimes tears are perfect for that. Because we are part human and emotions are a part of being one.”

With those words, silent tears rolled down Ava's cheeks. However, she was quick to wipe them away.

“You are strong and so is Leo. I am sure that both of you will rise above this,” my mom whispered, as she caressed my back.

Inhaling a shaky breath, I removed myself from my mother's arms and faced them. The lump in my throat was making it hard for me to speak. Yet, I swallowed it and forced myself to say something.

“I... I am not giving up,” my voice was just above a whisper, yet loud enough to be heard with their enhanced hearing.

“That's my girl,” dad stepped forward to place a soft kiss on my forehead.

“He is still out there. And what I know is that he will fight. He won't give up,” his mother, Ava reassured.

She was right. He was still alive. I could feel the bond. Although agitated, Ash too was finding peace because she could still sense the connection with Zoro wasn't broken. If he had died, I would feel the pain of our bond breaking. I

looked at his parents when I remembered what Ash had told me a couple of weeks ago.

The parents would feel the pain of the bond breaking if their pup dies.

Which meant that they also didn't feel it, hence they were positive that he was still alive, wherever he was.

"You also were gone for a month. We couldn't find you. We were so scared and worried..." my mom told me.

My forehead creased. Could it be that they took him to their lair?

"I was kept in a place that was hidden by magic..." I told them.

Ava narrowed her eyes.

"Magic... I think it's time we contact grandma. And maybe get help from Amelia too. This magic business is getting worse day by day," she mumbled under her breath.

Leo, please be okay. I begged in my mind.

Lord, Please protect him. I prayed silently and Ash let out a heartfelt howl in my head, as though she was saying amen to my prayer.

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 44

Leo

It was frustrating that I couldn't remember anything. My mind was completely blank. I wished I had something to remind me of my past, but there was nothing.

I had no choice except to believe what I was told. At least Jace and Jett seemed like genuinely decent people. They visited me every day in the hospital.

According to them, I possessed a lot of energy. Yet I didn't know how to use it. If only I remembered what I could do using magic, perhaps I wouldn't have to spend a week in the hospital. Maybe, I would have been able to heal my wounds sooner.

“Hey Jack,” Jace greeted me as he entered the hospital room followed by Jett.

“Who?” I smiled as I asked anyway.

“Jack. We have to call you something,” he shrugged.

Chuckling, “and Jack, it is?” I asked.

“Yeah. Jace, Jett, and Jack! The perfect trio,” he grinned. “You fit in perfectly.”

“Cool,” I shrugged my shoulders.

“Uh, so, Jack. The nurses just told us that you can go home now...” Jace trailed off when I winced.

“But ... where do I go?”

“We have a spare room in our house. My parents have agreed to let you stay. You still need a lot of rest. Although you are allowed to go home, you aren’t fully healed,” Jace replied.

I sighed. I didn’t have much of a choice... did I?

Jace’s family was nice. They treated me like a member of their family. Jace and Jett were like brothers who had welcomed me into their joyous household.

Although I was discharged from the hospital, the doctors advised me to rest because I needed time to recover fully before trying to channel my powers. I was eager to re-learn what I could do, but of course, I had to wait.

The wounds healed and the pain in my body slowly disappeared. Within two weeks, I was able to do small tasks like making the bed on my own, which I thought was a great achievement.

During the entire time I lived in Jace’s house, either Jace, Jett, or his mother would help me clean my room and I was ashamed of that. I was grateful that they were letting me stay in their house, preventing me from going homeless and I wanted to be useful.

Jace’s home was cosy. It was a large townhouse where his entire family of four lived. His parents, sister, and him. Jett’s home was adjacent to his. His family was larger and livelier than Jace’s. He had two brothers and a sister.

Their presence made my stay brisk. Not once did I feel like an outsider. As days passed by, I found myself growing fond of them. They were cool and my life seemed to be perfect except for one thing – my past was a mysterious chasm.

“The wounds have healed nicely,” Jace mumbled as he inspected the bite marks on my right shoulder. He and Jett did that every day for the past two weeks. Ever since I was discharged, they made sure that my wounds were healing without getting infected. They were like my personal nurses.

“Yeah. Maybe now I can try to channel my powers and find out what I can do,” I mumbled.

Sighing heavily, “I just can’t think of a good explanation as to why you were attacked by an animal,” Jett commented as he stood up from the bed and walked over to me. Jace was still inspecting the skin on my right shoulder and neck. Perhaps, he was checking the scars on my body.

Shrugging my shoulders, “Same here,” I replied to Jett. “I wish I could remember.”

“Wait... is this a mark?” Jace sounded interested as he traced the crook of my neck.

Frowning, “mark?” I asked as Jett leaned forward to check it out.

Both Jett and Jace remained silent for a while before speaking.

“Yeah... I think... Who is Astrea?” Jett glanced at me, his lips curled in a little smile.

My lips parted as a jolt of excitement coursed throughout my body. The hair on the back of my neck rose. I shuddered.

Astrea? Who was that? Could that be someone important in my life? Why was my heart racing at the mention of that name?

“Astrea...”

I gulped. The name rolled off my tongue with ease. I liked that name.

“Yeah, you are marked by a werewolf. I can say that much. Which could mean that you are mated to one.”

What?

My forehead creased as I stared at Jett as though he had grown two heads. But seriously though... what in the world was he talking about?

“Whoa... wait... werewolf? Marked? Mated? You know that I don’t understand what you are talking about, right?”

I voiced my confusion.

“There are many species living in the mystical world. Among them werewolves, vampires, dragons, and us... Even fairies, elves... many more. Werewolves are blessed with soulmates. Sometimes they are mated to other species too,” Jace explained and all I could do was gape at him in shock.

“My girlfriend’s sister was mated to one. She also carries a mating mark on the crook of her neck,” Jett butted in. “I saw it when they visited during the last holidays.

Raising an eyebrow, “mating mark?” I asked.

Jett smirked.

“Yeah. Mating mark. Like in coupling... having s*x...”

I pulled my lips together and remained in silence, trying to digest what I was told. So all of that must have been a part of the life I had forgotten about. Astrea... soulmate... mark... my lips stretched in an involuntary smile. I liked the sound of that.

After spending a moment in silence, I walked towards the mirror to check the mark on my neck. The wolf tattoo I admired each time I caught a glimpse over the past weeks, was actually a mating mark. I traced at letters written in cursive underneath the wolf.

So it must be true. How could I deny something so clear? If Jett had seen a similar mark on someone who was mated to a wolf, then Astrea must be my mate. A lot must have happened in my life and a tragic accident must have landed me in the Wizarding Kingdom. One thing was certain about my past. I had found love and most probably was in a relationship.

I pursed my lips. Astrea... What a beautiful name. I wonder if she is as beautiful as she sounds...

I sighed and glanced at the two who were staring at my movements, from the reflection of the mirror.

“Damn. What’s good about having s*x if I can’t remember any of it?”

Jett and Jace burst out laughing. Smirking, I turned around to face them.

“What? It’s real,” grinning, I commented and went to sit beside them.

“True,” Jace agreed.

Sighing, I lay on the bed, staring off into open space. What if I had a beautiful family waiting for me at home? They must be concerned about me. More than two weeks had passed since I woke up with no recollection of my past. Perhaps, they would be lamenting for me for the whole time.

I had to focus on healing since according to the specialists, I was healing slowly. They said that I shouldn’t be involved in brisk activities to minimise the risk of complications but now I was cured. At least I think I had healed enough to try and find my family. I must find them... I need to find Astrea.

My mind wandered around. Jace has an awesome family, but not a partner. Maybe I also do. Perhaps my parents also were waiting for me to return. But... are my parents still alive? Do I have siblings? Or cousins?

My mouth watered with the desire to meet them all. How wonderful would it be to see them... I may not remember, but I surely would cherish them.

“I want to find my family,” I stated, still staring at the ceiling. “I want to look for them. Perhaps my mate is worried sick. Maybe my parents are also waiting for my return.”

“They must be. Werewolves are territorial creatures and when they love, they love fiercely. Your mate must be heartbroken,” Jett explained.

“But... don’t you think that he might have a family here too? I mean, he is a wizard. That’s for sure. So a part of his family might be here,” Jace pointed out.

“For us, that would be easier to find, because we don’t know which pack his mate belongs to and to enter a werewolf pack would be troublesome if you aren’t invited,” he added, making me frown.

“Why?” I asked.

“I told you, they are territorial. They might consider anyone trespassing their turf an intruder and lock you up if you’re lucky,” Jett explained.

My frown deepened.

“How is that lucky?”

“Well, they won’t hesitate to maul you to death. So yeah, getting locked up is being lucky,” he replied.

“Wow,” I whispered. “But... where do I start? I won’t be able to recognise any faces.”

“We will help, of course,” Jett assured me.

“Maybe your girl’s place is a good start?” Jace suggested, nudging Jett’s side with his elbow.

“Her sister’s mate might be able to help?”

“You’re right,” Jett looked at me, “so...”

“Yes! Let’s go!” I jumped to my feet and rushed to get dressed.

We whizzed through the busy network in Jett’s flying car. He parked in front of a cosy looking house. Jett let out a deep breath as he climbed out of his car.

Jace chuckled.

“His father-in-law to be is a funny guy,” he said winking.

“Funny for you,” Jett scoffed.

I snickered at their playful exchange despite not understanding the reason for their chatter.

“Be ready. This is going to be fun,” Jace chuckled.

Jett anxiously ran his fingers through his hair before ringing the doorbell and heaved a breath.

“I hope her dad isn’t at home,” he mumbled.

However, when a middle-aged man opened the door and glared at him, the colour on his face drained. So this must be the guy he doesn’t want to see.

“You’re back. I see I haven’t scared you away yet,” he grumbled.

“Uhh...” I could sense Jett’s anxiousness as he shifted on his feet.

“I would like to meet Alicia...”

“Why? Do you want to ruin her?” the man narrowed his eyes on Jett.

“N..no, sir....” he stammered.

“Well?” the man folded his arms across his chest and glared at Jett. “Why are you after her?” he demanded.

Jett inhaled a sharp breath and looked at the man in the eye.

“Because I love her,” he said firmly.

“Dad?”

A female called, interrupting the man’s interrogation. A dark haired young lady peeked at us. As soon as her eyes landed on Jett, her face beamed.

“Jett!” she exclaimed and then frowned at her father.

“Dad! Are you still trying to scare him?” she asked her father.

The middle aged man shrugged, but the stern look on his face was gone. It was replaced with a playful smile as he faced his daughter.

“I couldn’t be more careful about the boys who come at my door, right?”

Rolling her eyes, “dad!” the female groaned and covered her face as she shook her head.

“You promised...” she sighed.

“Okay... fine. I won't scare him,” he smirked as he stepped aside and allowed us to speak.

“Jett,” she whispered, smiling as she wrapped her arms around his neck, as soon as her father left us alone.

“Al,” Jett breathed out as their lips connected in a delicate kiss.

Jace cleared his throat. “We are right here,” he uttered.

Beaming, she glanced at us after breaking the kiss. “Hey, Jace. It's good to see you. Who is this?” she asked, smiling at me.

“Uh, Jack... this is my girlfriend, Alicia, Al. And Al, this is our friend. We call him Jack... remember I told you about a guy we found in the river?”

“Oh... yes... earlier this month?” she asked Jett, raising her eyebrows.

“Yes. We are trying to help him locate his family. We have found a mating mark on his neck like the one on your sister's. Maybe her mate could help?” Jett summarised our situation.

“Oh... sure... come inside. Let me call her...” Alicia picked up her mobile phone and started to dial her sister as we walked inside. She gestured for us to sit down on the couch.

I waited in anticipation, hoping to hear a positive answer.

“Amelia, hey...” she smiled as she spoke to her sister.

They spoke for a while and Alicia asked her if they could visit so that they could meet me. However, her sister seemed to be extremely busy. I felt my heart plummet as she offered an apologetic smile as she ended the call.

“She isn't in the pack at the moment. It seems something big is happening in the lycan kingdom and she had to go there to help them. Some dark magicians are causing trouble so the lycans have asked them for help,” Alicia explained.

“Oh...” Jace mumbled. “They have asked for help from the wizard king too. They had specifically requested to send Miss Wilma to help them. She was more than prepared to leave. Part of her family is in the lycan kingdom. I think... her son and her family live there... I'm not sure...” he added.

“Really?” Jett raised his brow.

“Oh, bad timing, I guess,” I sighed, and forced a smile despite my sinking heart.

“But I think Miss Wilma will be back soon. She can’t stay away from the Magical Academy for long. She is the HoD, and she is very passionate about the studies of rising wizards,” Jace added.

“You... work with her?” I asked. He seemed to respect her a lot.

“Not really. She is my mentor. I graduated from the academy and joined the army. Jett, here, specialised in engineering,” he explained. Suddenly, his forehead wrinkled, as though a thought struck him.

“Actually... I think we should take you to meet her when she comes back. She is the best teacher. Maybe she would be able to teach you about your powers... what do you think?” he suggested.

I sighed. I was eager to learn what I could, but at the same time, I yearned to look for my family.

Nonetheless, I shrugged my shoulders.

“I guess that’s a good idea... that’s something I can do until I find my family,” I agreed.

“Yeah. It is. Don’t worry. We will be with you and I promise to help you find your family,” Jace smiled. “I hope you will keep in touch afterwards,” he added.

Chuckling, “of course. How can I forget what you have done for me,” I replied.

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 45

Leo

Jace and Jett brought me around the kingdom in the hopes that someone would recognise me. Jett drove me to his office while Jace chauffeured me around. I ended up visiting most of the Wizard Kingdom’s main locations and meeting many of their friends. However, we had to return each time without running into someone who knew who I was.

It was depressing. I was losing hope by the end of the month.

It wasn't the end of the world, though. There is still reason to be optimistic.

That was what I kept telling myself. A member of my family was a member of a werewolf pack. All I had to do was figure out which one it was. Even though I didn't know which pack my mate and her family belonged to, there were occasions when I felt compelled to try to trespass their territory. It was, however, a long shot.

I would be chastised if I ended up in the incorrect pack. In that case, I wouldn't be able to find my family or re-discover the abilities I'd lost track of. I was hoping to achieve both objectives as soon as possible, so the risk of trying to cross the perimeters of a pack was a little too daunting.

I gradually gained strength in the days that followed. I began to utilise my hands more effectively. After a few weeks, I attempted for the first time to connect with my internal energy.

It started off as nothing more than tiny sparks exploding from my fingertips. It was aggravating. Jett and Jace, on the other hand, were encouraging.

"It's possible that the powers need to be reawakened. It's possible that it went dormant as a result of the trauma your body endured."

They informed me. As soon as miss Wilma returned from the lycan kingdom, Jace promised to take me to meet his mentor so that I might regain the talents I had lost.

Regardless, I never gave up trying. Weeks passed, and not a single day went by without me attempting to reactivate my abilities. It was difficult, and dealing with failure after failure was discouraging.

Nonetheless, I didn't allow anything to get in the way of my desire. Finally, after countless endeavors, I was able to ignite a small flame on my fingers.

I was giddy as I glanced at it. It was a significant accomplishment. Despite this, I believed I still had a lot to learn.

"Hey, Jack, what's up...?" It was Jace who entered the room. "What are you doing?" He inquired as he peered inside the space.

I looked at him with a grin on my face. His lips stretched.

“Wow, you finally activated your abilities!” He was overjoyed.

“Yeah,” I said, my gaze drawn to the small fire flashing on my palm. I tried to touch the flame, grinning from ear to ear.

“Ouch!”

When the heat burned my finger, I let out a yelp and Jace began to laugh.

“That was a blaze. What did you expect to happen?”

I scratched the back of my neck with a smug grin.

“Well, I’m not sure... ” I shook my head and shrugged my shoulders. “Hasn’t your mentor returned yet?”

I stretched my body while I changed the subject.

He took a deep breath and exhaled heavily.

“I’m not sure. She had never been gone for so long before. Whatever was going on in the Lycan kingdom had to be significant.”

I flopped back into the mattress with an annoyed moan.

“I should probably get started on something. It appears that I am stranded here.” I made a comment. “I want to do something useful.”

Shrugging his shoulders, “I can teach you what I know,” Jace volunteered, much to my joy.

I exclaimed, “Yes! That would be great!”

His countenance suddenly changed. Pursing his lips, he looked at me.

“Right, Jett and I have been talking about something,” he mumbled as he entered the room.

I focused entirely on him. Something about the way he spoke drew my interest. It gave me the impression that the subject was highly delicate.

“Yeah, what is it?” I inquired enthusiastically.

He leaned forward on the bed, his elbows resting on his knees. As he tapped his foot on the tiles, his face was wrenched into a deep grimace. I waited for him to say something, but he stayed silent, creating an uneasy atmosphere in the room.

“Well?” The silence was broken by me. “What exactly is it?”

Dread began to sink in my chest all of a sudden. It had been nearly two months since I moved into his home. They didn’t demand that I pay rent or buy groceries. To be honest, I didn’t have much to offer them, but could it be that they’d had enough of me?

I took a big gulp. Maybe he wanted to tell me that I should contribute to the household. He might be finding it hard to express. Perhaps I should start by breaking the ice for him...

“Is this about me, Jace?”

He gave me a sidelong glance when I voiced my thoughts.

“I’ll make an effort to locate work. I’m not sure what I could do, but maybe a janitor’s job might suffice for the time being...”

His scowl became much more pronounced.

“What?”

I just shrugged. “You know... so I can assist with grocery shopping or even pay the rent.”

He answered, “What the f**k... there’s no way you’re going to pay us anything.”

“But...”

“That was not what we were speculating about,” he cut me off.

“We talked about the situation you were in when you were discovered. You were barely alive at the time. There were serious bite marks on your body, as if something or someone was attempting to kill you. Not to mention the

enormous quantity of energy you expended, as determined by hospital tests. What if someone was attempting to kill you, Jack?"

He sounded truly concerned.

"It was assumed that you lived among the werewolves. Perhaps someone didn't like the fact that you were hitched to one."

He mentioned it, and pulled his lips together in a grim line. I kept looking at his face. His demeanour indicated that he was worried about my well-being, and while I didn't like the sound of what he said, I had to concede that he had a point.

"Please accept my apologies, Jack. But I'm very concerned about you. I don't want the person who attacked you to be able to complete the task he began. I believe I appreciate having you around since you're an awesome friend," he explained.

I found myself smiling sadly.

"But, my mate..." I trailed off when I saw him nodding his head.

"You've been marked by her. That suggests she is most likely interested in you," He informed me.

I considered it for a while.

Why should I back off if she wants me?

I straightened my back with a fresh resolve.

"I don't care that someone is attempting to murder me. That person is free to go to hell. I'll track her down and we'll be together. I am not afraid of being in danger."

My declaration was unequivocal. With a smirk and a nod, Jace left the room.

"I don't believe you've ever been afraid of danger. You're a savage. You surely did put up a great fight against whatever attacked you."

My lips twitched in response to his remark.

Yes, I'm a fighter, and if necessary, I'll battle for my love.

Over the days that followed, Jace attempted to teach me what he knew, as promised. I was able to make better flames and have better control of my gift with his help. Despite accepting that finding my family would have to wait until the Lycan kingdom's turmoil was calmed, I kept longing for a stronger indication of who I was.

Every day after he returned from his duties, Jace trained me. I prepared for him as usual because my sessions were what kept me going. Without it, my life would have been monotonous.

Jace barged into my room, grinning from ear to ear, clearly enthralled by something.

"Guess what?" He exclaimed. He sounded overjoyed. "Miss Wilma has returned and agreed to visit you tonight!"

My pupils dilated. "Tonight?" I asked.

Nodding his head, "yes," he confirmed. "She returned last night because she needed to attend to some pressing affairs at the Academy. She may need to depart again, so if we want to meet her, we should do it when she offers us the opportunity. She is the most knowledgeable magician I know of. It won't be a waste of time to meet her," he advised me.

"All right," I said as I glanced at the clock. "Time?"

"Eight."

My heart began to race. Was I prepared to face an experienced witch? No, I don't believe so. What if she's conceited and arrogant?

"It's possible that meeting her will jog your memory as well. She has enlisted the help of a large number of young wizards and witches. It's likely that you were one of her students. She might be able to assist you..."

"If that's the case..." says the narrator. I took a step forward. "Let's go!" I stressed.

He laughed at my enthusiasm.

"Wait... It's only a few minutes past 5."

The remainder of the evening seemed to go by in a blur. I wished the time would speed up a little. That night, I couldn't wait for the clock to strike eight. I didn't eat much at all throughout supper. I was overly enthusiastic about the meeting.

My heart pounded in my chest like it had never thumped before as Jace drove me to the venue after dinner. When it came time for me to enter the house, I took a few deep breaths to try to calm my racing heart.

Jace patted my back and chuckled.

"Relax. You're going to be alright," he stated.

I followed Jace as he approached a red brick home and rang the doorbell. The door swung open, which I guessed, magically, because there wasn't anyone at the door.

"Come in," said a female voice.

As I entered, I took a deep breath. An elderly lady stood near a wooden table, frowning at a large piece of paper that was spread on it. The paper appeared to be a map and she was deeply engrossed in it. Her scowl seemed to have exacerbated the creases on her wrinkled face. She didn't even bother to glance at us.

She occurred to be worried about something. I waited for Jace to start the conversation and remained silent.

"Miss Wilma," he said courteously.

She let out a weary sigh while her eyes remained glued to the map.

"So much is happening," she mumbled. "And it is exhausting."

She was busy, apparently.

"Anyway, it's good to see you, Jace. It is always a pleasure."

She turned towards us before forcing her thin lips to stretch as she greeted Jace. As soon as she saw me, she went completely still. Her smile evaporated almost instantly as her eyes opened in surprise. She exhaled deeply and covered her lips with her hand.

“Leo!”

In my head, the sound of her surprised statement echoed. I went rigid. Leo? Who was that? Her eyes glossed but she quickly blinked her eyes.

With her lips parted, she stepped towards me and reached out to touch my face with trembling hands.

I was stunned. I couldn't discern her reaction. She cupped my face with her thin, icy hands, as a tear rolled down her cheek.

“Leo...” she whispered.

I glanced at Jace. Who was Leo? And why was she calling me that? Did I look like someone named Leo? I wouldn't want to break the heart of an elderly lady. Or could it be possible that she knew me.

She turned towards Jace. “Where did you find him?” Her voice quivered.

It was apparent that she was forcing herself to speak. Her voice was barely above a mere whisper as she spoke.

Jace nervously shifted on his feet. “He was in the river. He... he was unconscious and beaten up. Uh... miss Wilma, do you know him?”

His eyes were fixed on the elderly lady as he inquired.

She let out a humourless chuckle.

“Yes, why wouldn't I recognise my own blood? This is Leo, my great grandson. The one we have been looking for this whole time in the lycan kingdom.”

My mouth hung open. Her revelation felt like a gust of wind that shook my entire being.

The Lycan kingdom?