

The Banished Beta's Saving Grace

Chapter 4: Eli

The irony of this situation is not lost on me, proving that the Moon Goddess does, indeed, have a sense of humor. I kidnapped a Guardian nearly a year ago to forcibly take her as my mate. She ended up being underage, so me trying to mark her didn't work.

While I've seen the error of my ways and realize what I did was a terrible thing, here I am, looking into the eyes of my mate, who is also a Guardian.

She walks over to me, eyeing me cautiously. "What can I get you to drink?" She asks me.

"I'd like a water, your name and what time you get off work. I think we have some things to discuss, don't you?"

"Water. Coming right up." Before she can turn away from me, I grab her hand. "And your name?"

I hear someone standing up behind me. She looks past me. "It's okay, Benny."

She turns back to me. "My name is Grace and I don't think we have anything to talk about. Are you going to leave before you order food, or should I really bring your water this time?"

Okay, the sass is turning me on. Well, if I'm honest, anything my mate does will most likely turn me on, but I love a girl who is strong and sassy. Not that I have much experience with them. I've been on the run for years and in a cell for the past 6 months having my ass beaten nearly every day.

"I'm not going anywhere Grace."

She nods and turns to head in the back to get my water. I feel the man, Benny, walking up behind me.

"Son, unless you want a world of trouble, you better leave that little girl alone."

I stand, turning to face the man who may be tall, but he's not as tall as I am, he's lean where I'm broad, making him half my size, physically, if that, and he's at least twice my age, not to mention, he's human. "Sir, with all due respect, I don't have any intention of hurting Grace, but I do need to speak with her."

To his credit, he doesn't back down from what is obviously a fight he can't win. Before he says something that will piss me off, Grace is there, getting in between us.

“Benny, go sit down, I’ve got this.” She turns and looks up at me, but not a lot, my girl is tall. “You!” She points her finger in my face. “Sit down.”

And I know in that moment that my girl is an Alpha. I can feel the power of her aura pushing out. I’m not even sure she realizes it. I do as she commands, not entirely of my own free will. Damn.

She leans over the table and her delicious scent of cherry blossoms fills my nostrils. “I get off in 30 minutes. I’ll talk to you then. Do you want food?”

I smirk at her because I can tell that her being this close to me is having an effect on her too. She may be acting like she’s all kinds of pissed off with me, but I can smell her arousal at being this close to her mate. “I’ll take whatever your favorite is.”

She smirks back at me, and I realize I may have made a mistake.

When she returns, I chuckle. A banana split. Not my choice of dinner, but I’ll deal with it for one night.

I eat slowly, watching her as she goes around taking orders, cleaning tables, and talking to any customer that isn’t me.

I have so many questions for her. Where are her parents? Why is she working, being that she’s an Alpha? Why is she working in a diner in a human town outside of any pack land? Does she know she’s a Guardian? If so, does she understand that as soon as the word gets out that a Guardian has passed away, every Alpha male in the country will be searching for her, putting her at great risk. Does she understand the mate bond? Most werewolves respond differently to finding their mate than she did. She almost acted as if she was angry that I’m her mate. I hope she doesn’t think I’ll let her reject me. Not happening.

I need to contact Rik Forte, Alpha of the Canyon Ridge pack, and find out which Guardian died. I’m guessing it was during the battle with the vampires. It won’t matter if it was Clint or Angel, both Canyon Ridge and Shadow Falls packs will be in mourning. They need to know that I’ve found their reincarnated Guardian. I don’t know why Grace is here, in this small town, but she will need to be protected if she won’t allow me to mark her right away. The safest place for her will be with the other Guardians and me, her mate.

There’s a lot for us to emotionally unpack in our first conversation.

When her 30 minutes are up, she comes to collect the dishes from my table before going behind the counter and disappearing into the back. I perk up my ears, ensuring that she doesn’t plan to sneak out the back. I’m pleasantly surprised when she returns, with a purse hanging across her neck and chest, and sits down across from me.

She stares at me a moment. “Well? You wanted to talk? Talk.”

“Not here, I’ll walk you home.”

“I don’t think so. I have no intention of letting you know where I live.”

I lean forward. “You know what I am, so you know that I can track you. I don’t think you want your human friend to hear our conversation, do you?”

She looks past me and realizes that he’s watching us and trying to listen in on our conversation.

She stands. “Goodnight Benny.” She says and waits for me to stand up and follow her out.

Before we walk out the door, Benny calls out to her. “Call me and let me know you’re okay Gracie.”

She nods and we step outside. I have so many questions, but as jealousy flares in my gut, Louis thrashing around in my head, the first one that comes out of my mouth has nothing to do with anything I’d been thinking about. “What is he to you? Benny. He’s old enough to be your father.”

“Old enough to be my grandfather, and he’s most likely the reason that I didn’t end up in the human foster care system. And you’re not exactly one to talk about being old. What are you, forty?”

I scoff at her comment about my age. I want to know more about Benny, but that will do for now. “My name is Eli, I’m 32, and does that mean that your parents are dead?”

“My mother is dead, I have no idea about my father, nor do I care.”

“But you’re an Alpha.”

She turns, looking at me startled. “How do you know that?”

“Uh, because you commanded me back there to sit down and I felt your Alpha aura pushing over me.” I watch as surprise crosses her features and I raise an eyebrow. “You didn’t realize you were commanding me?”

She shakes her head. “No, I didn’t mean to. I just didn’t want you hurting Benny.”

“What is your wolf’s name?” I shift the conversation.

“Maia.”

“And I’m correct that you just got Maia since I saw you a week ago and you didn’t have a wolf then?”

“Yes, she awakened on my 18th birthday.”

“Happy belated birthday.” I make a note to get her a birthday present, although I have no idea what.

She shrugs. “I don’t particularly care for my birthday. I have too many negative memories surrounding it. Getting Maia actually made this one worth celebrating.”

I don’t push on that, but I plan to learn more about why her birthdays haven’t been good. I’m getting a bad feeling about her being an Alpha, not caring about her father, losing her mother and not getting her wolf until she was 18. It’s quite possible that her father banished her, thinking she was a wolfless wolf. It wouldn’t be the first time I’d heard of Alpha children being banished or abused because they ‘disappointed’ their parents by not getting a wolf.

“Maia.” I address her wolf. “Do you know what you are?”

I watch her golden eyes come forward, Louis pushing forward as well to see his mate. “Yes, I am a Guardian.”

“And do you understand what that means?”

“As our mate, our destiny is to protect you.”

Okay, that wasn’t what I was expecting. “Protect me from what?” I ask her.

“Anyone or anything that may threaten you.”

I blink a couple of times, clearing my head. “Okay, we’ll come back to that. But, I don’t need your protection. However, I do believe that you need mine. Do you understand that if any Alpha finds you, they will try to force you into a mate bond with them. You are a powerful wolf and they will want you in their pack permanently.”

She stops and turns to look at me. “And what about you?”

“What about me?”

“Do you want me because I’m a powerful wolf?”

“I want you because the Moon Goddess fated us to be together. That means that you are the other half of my soul.”

“I don’t believe in the mate bond.” That came from Grace.