

Rejected By My Boyfriend's Dad

Chapter 1

Hope

Have you ever looked at yourself in the mirror and hated your own reflection? I do that every single morning. Why? Because I'm weak and couldn't live up to my parent's expectations.

My mother, the Luna of the Mirage pack, never embraced me when I was a child. Her eyes were blank and lifeless whenever I was around. She despised me, yet I trailed after her like a puppy that longed for her approval.

I remember walking into her room with a stick drawing of our family and saying, "Look, Mommy, I drew this for you! It's our house!"

She took the drawing from my hands, but instead of smiling, she ripped it apart by turning her nails into claws. I watched the pieces of it soar to the floor before she yelled at me in a furious voice. "Annoying, little wretch, stop giving me drawings! You're no child of mine, and I want nothing to do with a wolfless joke like you!"

Those words hurt, but they didn't make me cry. Instead, I tried to impress my mother by pretending I wasn't in inner pain, but as always, it didn't work.

My parents hated me no matter what, but back then, I didn't understand that my family would never accept me, but I do now, and a year ago, I ran away from my pack. I had no other choice. No one respected me back home. I was seen as a nuisance, so I packed my bag and left the werewolf family who rejected me behind.

They didn't even track me down. Funny how my family doesn't see me as a person just because I don't have an inner wolf...

I'm the daughter of Alpha Pike, the firstborn child who was supposed to become the Alpha of the Mirage pack, but my wolf never awakened at birth. I couldn't shape-shift—I still can't. I'm a failure, while my younger sister proved to be stronger than both my mom and dad at an early age. So they made her the Alpha.

And I...I was forgotten.

My family pretended I didn't exist while the rest of the pack started to bully me. They called me weak, and the worst part was that Faith, my own little sister, was among those who bullied me. Marcus, her boyfriend, delighted in using me as a punching bag, and Faith would just laugh as he hit me.

I shudder at the memory. I now live in a new city and work as a waitress at Bar25, and since tomorrow is my eighteenth birthday(yay me!), my boss has allowed me to sit and drink during my shift. No alcohol, but my lemon cola is delicious!

I take another sip of my drink and glance down at my phone. My boyfriend, Ryker, still hasn't called me back after the billion times I've tried to get a hold of him, but at least he has now sent me a text message.

Ryker: I'm sorry I can't make it to your birthday. Something important came up, but I will be home later, okay? See you at the apartment, bye!

While I'm disappointed my boyfriend can't make it to the bar where I work, I'm not exactly crying. Ryker is sweet, but I'm beginning to see a pattern of him never having time to meet up with me. The only time I see him is in the mornings before he heads off to work, and because of that, I want to break up with him.

"Is this seat taken?"

Startled by the voice, I shriek and spill my drink. It runs over the table, and when the stranger reaches out to catch my falling glass, he gets cola all over his crisp white shirt.

"Oh my god, I'm so sorry! I'm such a freaking klutz!" I hastily stand up, grabbing some napkins from the box of cutlery on the table to clean up the mess. "Here, let me help you with that..."

"It's alright, it's just a shirt," he says with a charming smile as he takes the napkins I offer him.

I can't help but notice how good-looking he is. His eyebrows are two angry slashes of dark blonde hair, his jawline is sharp enough to cut diamonds, and the cherry on the cake is

his perfect facial hair. It looks smooth, unlike the hair on his head, which looks disheveled as if he has run his hands through it at least ten times tonight.

He looks to be in his early thirties, but despite his older age, I swoon a little in my seat. I have a weak spot for leather jackets and tall men with broad shoulders. Do I look okay? I'm wearing my blonde hair in a ponytail, and my blouse should be nice enough...I hope.

"I'm Ethan," he introduces himself, holding out his hand.

I shake it. "Hope."

"Beautiful name," he says, his eyes lingering on my face a little too long.

I blush and can't help but feel self-conscious in my stained blouse and white skirt. "Thanks."

We keep staring at each other, lost in each other's eyes, while goosebumps spread over my arms. Ethan is a complete stranger, yet I feel this strange...pull toward him? And Ethan must feel the same way because he doesn't leave.

"Mind if I buy you another drink?" he asks, gesturing toward the empty seat across from me.

I hesitate for a moment, wondering if Ryker would approve of me talking to a stranger, but then I remember that he is not even here for my birthday.

Deciding to be a rebel, I say, "Sure, why not?"

Ethan waves the bartender over and orders two more colas with lemon for me. He then proceeds to get some whiskey for himself.

“So, Hope, when you’re not spilling drinks over strangers, what do you do?”

I snort. “You’re a flirt, and while you’re handsome, I will let you know that I have a boyfriend.”

“Oh, I’m not here to flirt,” Ethan smirks and glances down at the plate of sweets beside me. “But if the burning candle on your cupcake means it’s your birthday, I will be bold and say your boyfriend is a...fool.”

I can tell he wanted to call Ryker something way worse, which is why I’m hiding a smile behind my glass of cola. “Why is he a fool?”

Ethan arches an eyebrow. “Because he is leaving someone as sweet as you to spend her birthday all alone.”

I can’t stop myself from laughing. “That’s so cheesy...do women actually fall for your flirting techniques?”

A silent smile touches his lips. “Yes, but then again, it’s usually enough just to let them see my face.”

Oh, so he knows he is handsome? My interest grows, and I giggle in my seat. “I thought you weren’t flirting?”

“I’m not flirting with you. You’re way too old for me.”

Ethan doesn't laugh, but even though he is deadpanning, I know that he is joking. Anyone can tell Ethan is older than me, but I wouldn't have cared if I were single. He is more than six feet tall, and his muscles are visible through his shirt. This guy is a freaking snack.

As I continue to assess him, he smirks. "If it's not obvious, I'm just kidding."

I snort. "You have a strange sense of humor."

His smirk only grows. "Says the girl who is laughing."

My lips curve. "Touché..."

Ethan says nothing but looks very pleased with himself. He picks up his whiskey, and I look him up and down. "You can't be that old."

His lips curve behind his glass. "You would be surprised."

A flutter starts in my chest when his blue eyes meet mine, and I have to fight not to drown in them. I've never been this affected by a man in my entire life. This one even smells good, and there is a full bucket of butterflies in my chest.

"So..." I drawl and try not to sound as nervous as I feel. "Except 'not flirting' with women at the bar, what are your hobbies?"

"I like movies," he says. "I was actually headed to the theater, but I was late, and they didn't let me inside. Now I'm sitting here, talking to you."

“What movie was it?” I pluck a piece from my cupcake.

His lips twitch. “Is this a test?”

“It is,” it’s not, but I give him an evil smile anyway. “Your answer will decide whether or not I will accept you as my friend.”

Amusement dances in his eyes. “You like horror movies, don’t you?”

I stare at him. “How do you know?”

“You just seem like that type. You know, innocent-looking but hiding a dark sense of humor underneath her friendly smile. I bet you went to the theater to watch *The Conjuring* and didn’t even flinch.”

“You’re right,” scarily accurate, actually. “I did watch it, and you know what? I didn’t even find it that scary.”

Ethan breathes a laugh. “I had to look away for most of the movie.”

“Oh, were you that man screaming in the theater?”

I’m just joking, but Ethan laughs again. “Might have been me.”

I can’t help but laugh with him. There is something endearing about a big, intimidating man admitting that he can’t handle watching horror movies. Call me invested. We fall into conversation. I tell him about my job, my hobbies, favorite animals, and Ethan listens attentively, nodding and

smiling at all the right moments. He is easy to talk to, and before I know it, we are laughing and joking like two old friends.

When the clock approaches twelve, there are wolves howling outside, and Ethan turns his head to eye the window. “Busy night today, huh?”

Since I don’t have an inner wolf, I don’t know what the wolves are saying, yet it doesn’t stop me from joking around.

“They are saying that I should ask what you do for a living before letting you take me home.”

His lips twitch, and he takes out a card from his pocket, sliding it toward me with amused eyes. “I’m the CEO of my own company. It’s not exciting, but it definitely pays the bills, so I can’t complain.”

I look down at the card and back up at him, impressed.

“Wow, that sounds impressive. What kind of company?”

“Import and export business. Do you want to know a secret? It’s not as glamorous as it sounds,” he says with a chuckle.

“Well, I think you’re pretty impressive.”

“Thank you.” For a moment, he hesitates, but when I smile, he smiles back and speaks. “Listen, I know they only let in people above the age of twenty-five into this bar, but if you don’t mind me asking...how old are you?”

I feel my cheeks go red. “Umm...well...”

Ethan looks at me expectantly, and suddenly, I hear static in my ears. I quickly realize it's because the clock has struck twelve. I'm officially eighteen, but that's not the biggest change: my inner wolf is awakening. I won't shape-shift today. It's too early for that, but I can feel the mate bond coming to life, and it's making me panic.

I have a boyfriend, but now, it turns out that my fated mate is close by. It's an Alpha! I can sense their power and—

Ethan clears his throat, and I gasp when I realize he is a werewolf and my mate—my Alpha mate! I don't know what to think but find myself growing confused when he glares at me.

“Are you only eighteen years old?!” He hisses, looking me up and down while seeming to grow angrier by the second. “I've heard of some wolves only awakening on their eighteenth birthday. Are you one of them?”

I feel vulnerable under his gaze, especially since I have now discovered he is my mate. “It seems like it...” I whisper, feeling ashamed.

“How did you even get inside the bar?” Ethan growls.

“I-I work here, but t-tonight is my day off,” I stammer, feeling tears prickle at the back of my eyes. Ethan is scaring me.

“And they gave you alcohol?!”

I shake my head, gripping my glass. “This is cola with a slice of lemon in it.”

This makes him fall silent for many seconds before speaking. “I’ve been ordering you cola this whole evening?”

“Yes.”

For a moment, he just stares at me. I have no idea what is going through his head, but then Ethan stands up abruptly, pushing his chair back with a loud screech. “This is unacceptable. I can’t believe I’ve been fated to be the mate of a damn child! This is a nightmare!”

His harsh words sting and I can feel my heart break into a million pieces. I never asked for this, and I certainly didn’t want to be mated to someone who thinks of me as a child.

“I’m sorry,” I say, standing up as well. “I-I d-didn’t think my wolf would awaken on my eighteenth birthday. I mean. I’ve heard stories of people awakening on their eighteenth birthday, but I didn’t think there were any truths in those stories! And I’m sorry for not telling you my age sooner—”

“Stop talking,” Ethan growls and immediately catches my attention when he steps forward. He is tall, way taller than me, and easily grabs my chin between two fingers. “Let me make this easy for you, Hope.”

I stare up at him, aware that we are the only ones moving in the bar. Time has been stopped by powerful magic—it must be one of Ethan’s abilities, and soon, his lips move.

“I, Ethan, Alpha of the Nightslash pack, reject you, Hope, as my fated mate and Luna.”