

## Chapter 0023

The next day, I pick up Jason and head to school.

“So, what do you think today’s surprise will be?” He asks as soon as he gets in the car.

I look over at him, “What makes you think there will be another gift today?”

“Come on Car. The man basically staked a claim yesterday. You think he isn’t going to follow that up with something today?”

“What do you think it will be?” I ask him.

“No clue, but I do know this. Anyone who is ANYONE will be in the cafeteria for lunch today to see what happens.” Great. Just what I don’t want.

“Still no clue who it is?” He asks, looking over at me as we pull into the parking lot. “Not one, but I’m guessing someone at this school is laying bets. Can you find out who is in the running for me? That may help me narrow it down some.

“Anything for you my friend!” And that’s just one of the many reasons that Jason is my best friend.

All day long, the school is buzzing about my secret

admirer. Seriously, does no one in this school have a life?

When the bell rings for lunch, I admit to feeling some trepidation. First, I'm concerned that Liam may make a guest appearance. I have no idea how that will go over, but I know it won't be good. And then, there's the fact that everyone will be watching me to see what happens next.

I walk into the cafeteria and look around. Everyone stops what they are doing and looks at me, watching. I stand there for a second, before heading to the lunch line to get food. No one stops me or follows me, so I get my lunch and go to sit down. Conversations start up again and I can tell everyone is a bit disappointed that nothing is happening. If I'm being honest with myself, I'm a bit disappointed as well. Like Jason, I had thought that my secret admirer would do something after the blatant offering and Artemis's acceptance yesterday.

As I begin to eat, a hush falls over the cafeteria and I whip my head up to see what is happening. A barbershop quartet is walking my way. The four older wolves are wearing what I think of as the standard uniform, a red and white vertically striped button down vest over a long sleeved white shirt. This is paired with black slacks and the classic point, the hat.

It's a small brimmed white hat with a thick red hat band wrapping around the bottom half of the crown that matches the stripes in the vest.

A small smile spreads across my face. He didn't let me down. Today I was going to be serenaded. Damn, this guy's good.

One of the guys takes out a harmonica and blows the key that they will begin singing in. It's not a song that I've ever heard, but I realize quickly that the song must be called You're a Heavenly Thing.

When they sing the line about "sprinkled roses all over you", they actually sprinkle rose petals over my head. And when they sing "took the model and threw it away", I had to laugh, as they mimed throwing something away.

Then, at the end, they kept singing "you're all mine, all mine". He is indeed staking his claim again, telling everyone here that I'm his.

When they were done, everyone, including me, stands and claps. They take their bows and then turn back to me. "Let me guess. There's a card?"

One guy pulls an envelope out of his pocket and hands it to me as they make their exit. I wait until they were gone before opening the card.

Cara,

Let me make my intentions clear

I want to make you mine.

I know you aren't yet of age,

To know if fate will make us mates.

I'm willing to wait for you

And I am sure that you will be mine.

You heavenly thing.

-Patiently, hoping one day soon you will be mine,  
Your Secret Admirer

I can feel that once again Artemis has pushed forward. He is clearly staking a claim on both of us and she is all in, basking in the admiration.

Jason is reading over my shoulder, "Well, he certainly wants to make sure you you know he's staking a claim. Can't get much more clear than that."

I look at my dearest friend, "Who the hell is he? This is really daring and very public. He must either be very confident or very stupid."

"I don't know, I've seen Artemis more in the last three days than I have in the last month, so he must

be doing something right.”

That he is.

I decide to do some damage control and text Liam, letting him know that there was a barber shop quartet today at lunch. I don't hear back from him the rest of the day. 1

Jason finally gets back to me with the list of names that are at the top of the bets for my secret admirers: Alpha Rik, Beta Chase, Alpha Liam, and Trevor. I had to drag the last name out of him. I burst out laughing as Jason said the final name is his. So, I can cross two of those names off the list. It's not Jason or Liam.

Beta Chase was never on my list, but I don't want to remove him prematurely. So that leaves three. Rik and Trevor were already at the top of my list too.

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Today is strength training with dad, and he joins in with me. He is still exceptionally strong from the waist up. While he is totally paralyzed from the waist down, he has not let that keep him wheelchair bound. He is right there doing all the upper body exercises with me; chest press, bicep and tricep curls, pull ups, dips, you name it, he's doing it. And when I move to lower body exercises, he continues punishing his upper body.

My father may be called the Broken Warrior (yes I've heard the name), but I'd put my money on my dad over any warrior in our pack if they were to go head to head on upper body strength.

When I get back to my room, I smell my flowers before I shower and crawl into bed. I check my phone again and realize that I never heard back from Liam. I don't know if he's pissed or where his head is at, but I leave him alone. He'll contact me when he's ready. ①

That night my dreams are filled with wolves fighting over Artemis, warriors fighting over me. But the most disturbing dream was an Alpha battle between Liam and Rik. Both ended up bloody and beaten, but in the end, Rik won. I watched as Liam lay on the ground bleeding out while Rik came and kissed me, before sinking his canines into my neck. The sting of the bite makes me shoot up in bed, reaching for my neck.

Panting, I realize that it was just a dream and that my neck is unmarked.

I look at the clock and see it's already 3am, so I just get up and get ready for training.