

Three

EMBER'S POV

Diana, with her perfectly styled dark hair, shot me a disdainful look. "What's this, Lucas? Why did you decide to bring this worthless orphan to school today?"

"It's nothing. She'll be living with us now, apparently in honor of her dead father," Lucas said nonchalantly.

"So, you're not just a worthless orphan but also a beggar clinging to our boyfriends for help," Diana mocked.

Vera and Fiona, glancing at Diana, exchanged smirks, relishing any opportunity to humiliate me. Their laughter echoed down the hallway, their eyes lled with malice.

I bit my lip. There was no point in trying to defend myself; it would only make things worse. The triplets seemed to enjoy watching me get bullied rather than intervening.

The bell signaling the start of class was once again my saving grace.

Diana leaned in, her voice low and venomous. "Enjoy your time as their charity project, Ember. But remember, it won't last forever."

Vera and Fiona sneered, sharing a look that revealed their plans beyond mere verbal torment. They all stormed off, allowing me to breathe a sigh of relief.

Just another day in my unlucky life...

"Hey!" I heard Zealina, my best friend, calling excitedly. Quickly, I wiped away my tears as she ran towards me, so she wouldn't know I was about to cry.

"Oh gosh! Today's the day, I'm so freaking excited," she gushed happily.

"Day for?" I asked, completely clueless about what she was talking about.

Zealina raised one of her eyebrows in annoyance.

"Take a look around," she deadpanned.

It was then I nally took in the decorations and banners around me. Oh, the mating ball! I had completely forgotten about it.

"Oh," I muttered sheepishly.

Every year, Lunar Haven Academy held a ball where werewolves above eighteen met their mates. This was going to be my rst mating ball since I turned eighteen.

"You're coming to the mating ball, right?" she asked.

"I can't wait to meet my mate," she giggled excitedly.

Zealina had spent all last week talking about her fantasies of meeting her mate and all the cute stuff she was excited about doing.

"Well, have fun at the ball. I'm not going," I said, turning to head to my class. With a speed I didn't think her petite body had, Zealina ran towards me and pulled me back, almost making both of us fall.

"Oh no, you are denitely coming with me," the way she sounded, I knew there was no arguing with her.

Not that I didn't fancy the idea of meeting my mate; I was just scared of what I knew would happen afterward.

The rejection...

I mean, there was no way anyone at Lunar Haven Academy would accept me as their mate. I would just be a taint to their reputation, the same way I tainted the school's name.

"Don't worry, Ember, you'll meet your mate, and I bet the Moon Goddess is kind enough to make sure you're mated to someone lovely," Zealina consoled me, seeing the sad expression on my face.

"Yeah..." I grinned, visibly brightened up.

"That's my girl!" She giggled.

"Let's head to class before the warning bell," she said.

I followed Zealina to class, grateful for her kind words.

The day dragged on, each passing minute bringing the mating ball closer. Zealina's excitement contrasted sharply with my growing fear. The idea of rejection was too hard to push away.

When the nal bell rang, signaling the end of classes, Zealina practically dragged me out of the Academy, heading for her home nearby. I was glad I didn't have to get ready under the same roof with the triplets.

Zealina began sorting through tons of dresses, throwing one after another onto her bed. "You need to nd the perfect dress for the ball," she declared excitedly.

Soon after, we were fully dressed and my makeup was done. I felt like a completely different person; I felt beautiful...

As evening arrived, the moon showed its beautiful appearance. It was a full moon tonight.

Zealina and I headed out towards the academy where the mating ball was being held. I took in a deep breath before entering the large hall.

The sounds of laughter and music lled the air as we entered the grand hall. Couples twirled on the dance oor, their happiness evident. Zealina grabbed my hand, pulling me into the lively crowd.

I quickly noticed that none of the triplets were present; they were already nineteen and still hadn't found their mate. I guess they weren't interested in showing up for the mating ball after last year's disappointment. Their girlfriends, on the other hand, were present and sulking in the corner.

They caught sight of me looking their way and glared at me in anger. I turned away from them and tried to enjoy the night without letting my mood be spoiled by them.

As the ball came to an end, I was still unable to nd my mate. Zealina had already found her mate and was away somewhere else with him. Now I was all alone, mateless.

Of course, the Moon Goddess didn't think I deserved a mate either. Staring at the couples dancing became too painful to bear, so I ran out into the dark night.

Just then, a delicious scent hit me like a ton of bricks. My wolf leaped in delight, eager to nd out where this scent was coming from. I followed the scent eagerly like a child after its treat. As I walked farther along the Academy's backyard, the scent seemed to grow more intense and sharper. I was near...

"Mate!"

I heard three deep voices growl loudly, making me freeze in my spot.

The voices were way too familiar...

I turned slowly behind me, and my mouth dropped as I stared back at the strikingly handsome faces of Lucas, Tristen, and Caleb.

The Alpha triplets are my mates!?!?