

## Chapter 20

“Baby girl!” Celeste came flying at me once I stepped out of the elevator. “I’ve searched everywhere for you. Where did you disappear to?” The grin if been carrying with me since I mates with the prince vanished once I saw my best friend.

She was the only person I expected to realize I’d moved out of the pack basement and I still hadn’t readied a reason to tell her if she asked why I wasn’t here anymore. As it turned out, I’d run out of time to come up with an excuse as she ambushed me that morning.

“Hi, Celeste.” I hugged her back while my brain went into overdrive thinking of how to come up with a response to her question.

“And you smell different too. What cologne are you wearing?” She pushed me to arm’s length to look at me. “There is something different about you.” She mused and my heart fell into my stomach in fear. I didn’t want her to discover I had mated because if I told her, she would want to know with who and I couldn’t tell her I mated with Valens.

He explicitly forbade me from telling anyone about our mating before he left me in his bed the previous day. My wolf wept throughout the night as I tried to sleep but she woke up happy when we saw the note Valens left on the table.

The note wasn’t warm or friendly. It had simply been a ‘feel better’ note which was cold and detached. Considering what we did the other day, a bit of warmth wouldn’t be amiss. My wolf wanted to be hugged and held by her mate. She wanted to hear sweet nothings and have playful fights. She wanted hugs and kisses and cuddles from her mate but he thought I was a promiscuous traitor who he only claimed for his selfish reasons.

“It must be my new cologne. I’m trying to look a bit more stylish,” I lied. I wasn’t a good liar but Celeste couldn’t be called the most observant person.

“Where did you get the money from?” She sounded suspicious which wasn’t good. When she got suspicious, she asked a lot of questions. I wasn’t a good liar so I tended to flop after one or two tactic questions.

“I told you to be been saving up.” I’d been saving up for a future when I had to leave the pack. I expected the alpha to throw me out if he didn’t kill me first so I saved up every penny I picked up.

Skylar once found my small stash of cash and she set it on fire right in my presence with Lucien holding me and Bethel laughing while I screamed and begged her not to. Then she spat in my face and called me a good for nothing bitch who didn’t need money as I’d always be a nobody.

But now, I was her Luna. I wanted to see her reaction when she heard I was mated to the man that kicked her father out of the pack. The same man she shamelessly chased after despite him displacing her family. I suppose she just wanted to be at the top and she didn’t mind how she got there.

The look I pictured on her face made me want to start training today to get stronger. Valens never said why I still had to hide my mating with him but I guessed it was because he didn’t want me to be a target when I couldn’t seat a fly.

“Oh, cool.” Celeste exclaimed.

When I looked at my friend, I realized something had changed about her. She seemed to be glowing from inside out. Her smile was wider, her step lighter and she bounced on her feet where we stood.

“Did anything happen? You’re pretty excited today.”

“I can sense my mate close.” She grinned at me and my lips pulled up into a smile. “And I think I might know who it is.”

“Really? Who?” I was already so happy for my friend I too started to bounce on my feet.

“You remember Levi?” My eyes widened.

“Of course, I remember Levi!” I exclaimed, my grin widening.

For the past two years, Celeste has been mooning over the quiet boy in our pack. Levi had silky and shiny blonde hair, blue eyes and a dimpled smile. We hardly ever saw his smile because he kept to himself and was really quiet but because Celeste was almost obsessed with him, she’d found his social media page which he kept hidden from other pack members.

Unlike most boys that posted shirtless pictures on their social media, either sitting on their car or fishing, Levi had a picture of him smiling into the camera with his blue eyes alight. He was different and his difference appealed to Celeste who didn’t like men that were too macho or hardened.

“Is he your mate?” I thought of how cool it would be for Celeste and me to find our mates almost at the same time.

“I don’t know but I think so. I saw him the other day and I felt so warm. I’ve felt like that ever since and then this morning, he smiled and waved at me. I can’t describe the feeling, Aysel!” She exclaimed, taking my hands in hers and proceeding to jump up and down while squealing.

Her childishness made me happy sometimes. I liked that she was still a pure sweet girl despite everything. She never failed to laugh or spread positivity. She was the one bright spot in my life and without her, I would have been more miserable in this pack.

“I hope he is the one.” I hugged her to stop her jumping while people passed.

“I love your cologne. It smells fantastic.” She said when I hugged her. I had to take special care to wash off Valens scent from my skin this morning but I could never change my scent now. Our scents were intertwined as one. If anyone paid close enough attention to our scents, they would realize we smelled almost the same.

“Thanks. Listen, I have to go now. The new woman in charge of the kitchen is very strict so I have to be there before her.” I let her go.

“Oh, that’s sad. I’ve started volunteering at the hospital so I may not see you till evening. I’m going there right now even.”

Without a doubt, I knew she started volunteering because of Levi whose mother was a doctor at the pack hospital.

“Say hi to Levi for me!” I laughed as I ran to the kitchen. Astrid would be there in a few minutes so I had to hurry.

In my haste, I ran into someone. I fell backwards and landed on my butt, groaning as my tailbone hit the floor.

“Oh, I’m so sorry.” The girl offered me a hand but I couldn’t take it. I looked up to her, stunned at her beauty.

She had a diamond-shaped face and doe-almond eyes, a cute button nose, full pink and soft looking lips on clear, glowing porcelain skin with rosy cheeks. It sounded cliché but she looked like an angel.

“Let me help you up.” Her soft voice was cool as she spoke and I blinked up at her, taking her hands at the end of it all.

“Clover.” The sound of that cold voice made me freeze up right as I stood. “What are you doing here?” He strode towards us with his aura of power clinging to him. My wolf perked up at the proximity to her mate.

“Alpha Valens.” The girl, Clover, tipped her neck to the side to show her respect for her alpha. He ignored her greeting, fixing his stern gaze in

her without moving until she squirmed and spoke. “Jabari said you found your mate.”

“He was mistaken.” His words were cold and assured. He never once looked at me as he spoke and my heart fell from my chest as despair washed over me. He didn’t seem the least bit affected by my presence as he denied my existence while I sat right there with his mark in my neck and his scent woven with mine.

“How is it possible?” Clover asked, taking a step towards him. I watched their movement with a frown. The woman I admired a few seconds ago made my wolf snarl as she stepped to his side as if it was natural for her to be there.

“It is not the first time this has happened. There was no need to come here when I specifically asked you to stay in Night Howlers and recover.” His words were stern but she didn’t even flinch.

“You behave like you were the only one cursed, Valens. We were cursed alongside you. If there is a chance your curse has been broken, then we may be free from ours.” She glared at him. “I know I’m pretty but I’m not a doll, V and I know when you’re lying.”

Clover. Clover. I knew her. She featured a bit in the legend of Prince Valens. She was his luck-bringer as a child and everyone expected her to break his curse but she couldn’t. Now she was here.