

78 The Spy

Eve~ 1

When she pulled away, I was still frozen in place.

Then her expression fell. "Oh, I am sorry if you don't want to be touched."

I just stared at her, my mouth agape. Then I shook my head, my hands in front of me. "No, no, it's not that at all," I denied, still shaken by her attitude. "It's just that..."

"That what?" she asked, her brows raised in genuine confusion.

I opened my mouth to complete the sentence but thought better of it and put on a shaky smile. "No worries." I felt a lump in my throat nonetheless. Her attitude toward me had completely caught me off guard.

It was far too early into the alliance for Lycans and Werewolves to tolerate each other, not to mention being friendly enough to hug. I was flabbergasted.

"Hey," she waved her hand in my face. "I think I lost you there."

I was snapped out of my thoughts, and my gaze

I was snapped out of my thoughts, and my gaze settled again.

Jules laughed, her voice light and unaffected, as though she hadn't noticed the walls I'd unconsciously put up around myself. "I know, I can be a little... much," she said with a grin, tucking a stray curl behind her ear. "But Aunt Miller always says the world could use a little more warmth, especially around here."

Her words were genuine, her friendliness so disarming that I found myself mirroring her smile despite the confusion and the instinctual caution I usually wore as armor. "It's just... I haven't met many people here. Or rather, none who seemed so... welcoming."

Jules's eyes softened, and she gave a little shrug. "Well, I'm not the type to hold grudges. Life's too short, right? Aunt Miller told me a little about you, just the basics. I thought it might be nice to have someone around who treats you... you know, like a person and not a 'werewolf.'"

My heart twisted slightly at her words. The way she'd said "person" was as if it were the simplest thing, something I'd almost forgotten in this place. She was something, I thought. To chalk up the enmity between Lycans and Werewolves that

My heart twisted slightly at her words. The way she'd said "person" was as if it were the simplest thing, something I'd almost forgotten in this place. She was something, I thought. To chalk up the enmity between Lycans and Werewolves that had lasted for centuries to nothing but a 'grudge' was something I never thought possible.

"Thank you," I managed to say, my voice softer than I'd intended. "It... means a lot." And, in that moment, I realized just how starved I'd been for this—simple kindness, without strings attached, without the weight of titles and alliances.

Jules waved off my gratitude, still smiling. "Think nothing of it. Besides, it's my job to look after you while Aunt Miller's away. And trust me, I'm a pro at making tea and sneaking sweets into the diet plan."

I chuckled, feeling some of the tension in my shoulders ease for the first time in days. "Diet plan?" I asked, through my chuckling.

She cast her gaze on my body. "You are, um... quite slim," she commented.

I looked down, suddenly conscious. "Genetics," I lied. My chest was on the bigger side, and luckily, it helped cover up the fact that I was still underweight, but it seemed that Jules was

"Then you should have been a model, not a royal," she complimented. "I'm getting carried away," she pushed the sleeves of her uniform up. "I'll get your bath ready."

"Thanks, of course."

She nodded before making her way to the bathroom.

Hades~

I took a slow drag, watching the smoke curl around my fingers as I exhaled, but it did little to ease the tension that coiled in my chest. "She really had to go that far?" I asked, my tone even but laced with the cold edge I knew she'd recognize.

"Yes, your majesty," Mrs. Miller replied steadily. "I thought it would help put her at ease."

My gaze sharpened on her, calculating. "Ease, yes. But let's not forget the centuries of blood spilled between our kind and hers. 'It's lovely meeting a werewolf'—don't oversell it. I need this convincing, not cloying." 2

Mrs. Miller straightened, her expression reserved. She was a professional, and I expected

has to not like me "Indeed, your majesty."

I tapped the ash from my cigarette, letting a cold silence settle. "I don't need her thinking she's stumbled into the arms of an old friend. You've briefed Jules, yes?"

"Yes, sir. She understands that her role is to befriend her, not to become attached," Mrs. Miller confirmed.

"Good." I leaned back, regarding her coolly. "Ensure that Jules doesn't push too hard. Ellen needs to believe in this." I recalled Amelia's words.

The princess is hiding something. Something that I guess is pivotal.

If Amelia could not get her to open up, it was time for fresh blood. A younger person that she could relate to. In the meantime, I had to expand on the operation. By the time that Jules had uncovered what she was hiding, and I had put the case to rest, Ellen would fit right into the plan for the war.

"Yes, your majesty," she responded, her gaze fixed and unflinching.

I nodded once, dismissing her with a curt wave. "Then see to it. And remind her—this needs to be subtle. We're here to gain her trust, not pretend

Eve~

Hades closed the door behind him without saying a word again. A part of me shriveled each time that it happened, but I swallowed the feeling. Soon, Jules came in with her bright smile that seemed to make the room a little lighter. She set down a tray with a steaming cup of tea, a small gesture that softened the chill Hades had left behind.

Jules set the tea down beside me and gave me an encouraging smile. "All right, let's get you set up. Mrs. Miller likes to leave things a bit... clinical, doesn't she? I'll make sure you're comfortable."

As she moved around the room, filling the tub and setting out fresh towels, she kept up a steady stream of lighthearted chatter. "You know, I had no idea how many rules there'd be here—practically a manual on how to pour tea, let alone anything else," she laughed, rolling her eyes in an exaggerated way. "Aunt Miller swears by it, but me? I like a little more freedom."

I nodded, finding myself drawn in despite the caution I usually kept between myself and anyone in this place. "I noticed," I said, unable to

I nodded, finding myself drawn in despite the caution I usually kept between myself and anyone in this place. "I noticed," I said, unable to help a smile. "You're a bit... freer than most people here."

Jules chuckled, setting out a tray of soaps and oils near the bath. "It's hard not to be. I grew up in a house full of loud cousins and chaos. Quiet feels unnatural." She wrinkled her nose, clearly entertained by her own rebellious streak. "I always end up sneaking snacks and avoiding a few of Aunt Miller's endless rules."

As she went on, I felt the room lose its cold edge, her warmth and energy a welcome relief. I couldn't help but relax, her open, unguarded nature loosening the tightness in my shoulders.

"All right, bath's ready. I'll help you get settled," she said, gesturing toward the tub. "And don't worry, I won't stick around if you need privacy."

I hesitated, still adjusting to the ease with which she moved around, but gave her a small nod.

"Thank you, Jules. Really."

She smiled, passing me a warm robe. "Nothing to it. Now, you relax here, and I'll get a proper meal sent up. Maybe even sneak in a pastry or two if we're lucky."



As she went to arrange the food, I sank into the bath, letting the warmth wash away the chill that seemed to cling to me. For the first time in what felt like forever, I allowed myself to sink into the comfort Jules had offered, her light-hearted approach a strange, welcome balm against the heavy weight of the alliance.

A few minutes later, she returned with a tray of fresh, comforting food.

I finished up and ate while she completed her work.

As I ate, she started to talk again, her voice light, as if she were trying to keep the atmosphere casual. 1

"You know, I've been meaning to ask..." Jules paused, eyeing me with curiosity. "You've been here for a little while now, right? Have you had a chance to explore the tower much?"

I blinked, surprised by the question. I had never really thought about it. "I... haven't really had the chance," I admitted, my voice low. "I've mostly stayed in my room. Haven't... ventured out much."

Jules raised her eyebrows, clearly surprised.

"Really? Wow, I would've thought you'd want to see more. The tower's huge. I'd be getting lost all



78 The Spy



I looked down at my food, feeling a little self-conscious. "I just... didn't really have time to."

Jules smiled, her eyes softening. "Well, if you'd like, I could give you a tour. It's a lot to take in, but it might be nice to see it, right? I could show you the parts Aunt Miller doesn't usually bother with. Some of them are a little... less formal."

Comment ¹⁰

View All >



Post your first comment!



Vote



Fandom



Send Gift