

Chapter 22 - Real Parents

LIAM'S POV

Ava stood in front of Ella sneering at us. I had my arm around Ella and I could feel her still shaking.

When Ella had headed to the bathroom, I was talking to the receptionists, trying to secure the penthouse suite for Ella and I to stay in. I could tell that she needed to rest. She'd worked hard on the snow and seeing me in my wolf form had been a lot of excitement for the day.

I wanted to secure the best room for her for the night.

"Funny running into you here," I heard behind me. And when I turned around, Ava was standing there, a sexy grin on her face. She had on a tight black outfit that left nothing to the imagination.

"Ava, what are you doing here?" I said with a frown.

Ava pouted, making a sad face, "Is that how you say hi to an old friend, Liam?"

I reached a single arm to try and give Ava a quick side hug but she grabbed me around my entire middle and breathed me in. And refused to let go.

"You smell so good Liam, I could just eat you right up," Ava said. She playfully bit my chest and I could feel the sting of it through my shirt. I stepped back. Ava was always trying to get close to me, but I wasn't interested.

"You here with your family or something?" I said.

"Sometimes I come here with them. My family has had a VIP membership for ages," She said.

"Really?" I said. I'd only recently gotten my VIP membership and it had been fun getting to experience all that the lodge offered.

"Have you been to the indoor garden?" Ava asked.

"Not yet. I didn't even know there was one," I said.

"Oh, let me show it to you then," Ava said with a smile.

I turned to loo at the bathroom, frowning. What was taking Ella so long? "I'm here with Ella actually."

Annoyance flashed across Ava's face, but she quickly covered it up with a cheerful smile. "Oh, I'm sure she'll be alright. We're only going to be gone for a quick second. We'll be back before she even notices that you're gone."

Ava was probably right. I'd seen on the map of the building that the indoor garden was just around the corner. And then I got the idea of surprising Ella with a flower when she walked back in.

The receptionist looked up then and smiled, "Is everything alright, Ava? I hope the room is okay for you and Noah?"

Ava's eyes widened. Did the receptionist just mention...my brother? I turned to Ava.

"Noah is here?" I said.

Ava glanced away from me. A guilty look settled across her face. I didn't know why, but that guilty look made me feel unsettled.

"Ava, where is Noah?" I asked slowly.

At first Ava didn't say anything. Then she quickly glanced towards the bathroom, towards the place Ella was. And then it clicked. I realized why that uneasy feeling was settled in my stomach. I knew why the fact that Ella wasn't in my sight was getting my heart beating faster.

I turned around and bolted towards the restrooms. Ella was alone with Noah. And the look on Ava's face told me that whatever he was doing with her wasn't good.

Even though Noah claimed not to care about Ella, I still so the envy in his eyes whenever he caught sight of Ella and I together. What if he was trying to win her back. I could imagine him whisking her away on some special date he'd planned.

That was the thing. Even as I was trying to show Ella how much I genuinely cared for her, Noah had the benefit of time, of their history together. There was no way that I was going to let him swoop in and steal my girl from me.

When I got to the bathroom, I threw the door open. I thought I would see him trying to sweet talk Ella into getting back with him. Instead, what I saw was Noah all over Ella. He was trying to force himself on her, trying to kiss Ella even though it was clear that was the last thing Ella wanted.

I yanked Noah off Ella and threw him to the ground.

"You bastard!" I yelled.

I pummeled him with my fist with fury. When I saw the worry on Ella's face, I walked over to try and comfort her.

That was when Ava showed up then, looking at Ella and I with disgust, "Liam, you are dragging your legacy in the mud by continuing to fraternize with this... basic girl,"

"Get out of here, Ava," I said as I walked over to hold Ella. She was shocked but tried to remain strong.

"I'm okay," she said.

As Ella and I walked past Ava, Ava grabbed my wrist and held on.

"Liam, why do you keep forgetting who you are? You are and Alpha werewolf. You are king!"

I yanked my arm out of Ava's. "I'm never going to get with you, Ava. So stop throwing yourself all over me."

Ava sneered at my words as if she didn't care that I had just called her out on how desperate she always was around me. Her lips called, "Oh and so you're in love with this creature, is that it?"

She spat the word love out like it was dirty.

"Ella is not a creature. She's—" I said but Ava cut me off.

"She's weak, she's frail, nowhere as strong as us. She's completely unworthy of our kind, can't you see that?"

Her words felt like a sting to my chest. Anger rose up in me, "Get out of my way,"

"Trying to be with her is idiot, Liam. Do you really think she could ever understand what it means to be one of us? She will always be an outsider, and so will you if you decide to be with her," Ava said. Her words came out with a force that felt different from the things she'd said before.

Ava wanted me to know that she meant what she said.

"Maybe she's right," Ella whispered.

I shook my head, "Ella, don't listen to her." I pulled Ella in closer and continued down the hall. I had to get Ella into the penthouse suite I'd gotten for the both of us. I could tell that Ella needed to rest.

"I don't want your reputation to suffer because of me. I swear," Ella paused, a heaviness settling on her.

"Nothing is going to stop me from seeing us through," I said. And I knew that I meant that. Even though Ella and I were fake dating, I knew that I wanted so much more from her. We'd agreed to keep this situation going until the end of the semester.

But I was looking past the end of the semester. That's why I was trying to show Ella that I cared so much for her. That's why I was showing her I could be the kind of man she needed. Her protector. Her lover. Her best friend.

Ella frowned with worry, "Liam, look at all the things people have already said about us?"

"I don't care what anybody says," I growled.

Ava stepped forward then, a cruel smile on her face. "What about your real parents? I'm sure you would care about what your real parents would say, don't you?" Ava said, her voice low and mocking.

Anger rose in me at Ava bringing my real parents into this.