

The Match Maker

Aphrodite:

I sat at my desk, my fingers ying across the keyboard, as I worked on the latest updates for our matchmaking app, aiming to make everything much more sophisticated. It had taken me almost a year to design the app and another month to upgrade it, but nally, I was almost done. Seeing the results, I knew it was all worth it.

Pausing for a moment, I glanced outside my window, inhaling and exhaling the cold breeze, which was the only thing that was free in my world. It was almost dark already, and working all day had made me lose touch with time, but I wouldn't have wanted my life any other way. It was boring, but it came with a high level of satisfaction.

Returning my gaze to the computer screen that illuminated my face, I was suddenly interrupted when the door burst open. My head snapped up to see my best friend and coworker, Lara, walking in condently, wearing a grin so wide it seemed to stretch from ear to ear.

"Aphrodite!" Lara practically shouted as she sprinted towards me. "You won't believe it! We just landed a huge client who's looking for love!"

My hands ew over my mouth as surprise ickered across my face. "Seriously? That's incredible news!"

Lara nodded eagerly, her brown curls bouncing with each movement. "But wait, it gets even better," she said, practically vibrating with excitement.

"Our app is starting to go viral in our world! We're getting more requests every day!"

A surge of excitement rushed through me, and I couldn't help but smile. Maybe our little matchmaking business was nally starting to take off. Going to school in the human world to learn their technology, despite my family disapproval, was so much worth it in the end.

"That's amazing, Lara," I said, pride creeping into my voice. "I always knew we were onto something special; it was only a matter of time." Lara grinned even wider, if that were possible.

"I told you we could do it," she said, crossing the room to give me a quick hug.

"Now, come on. We've got work to do!" She scolded, and I laughed, pushing myself away from my desk, feeling a renewed sense of energy coursing through my veins.

If our app was going viral, that meant we had even more chances to help werewolves nd their happily ever afters. And there was nothing I loved more than spreading a little love in the world.

Lara and I made our way to the small conference room where we would discuss our latest client, excitement bubbling between us. The room was cosy, with just enough space for a small table and a few chairs.

"So, tell me more about this client," I said, taking a seat across from Lara, who pulled out her notebook and ipped through the pages, her brow furrowing in concentration.

"Her name is Emily," she began, scanning the notes she had written. "She's the beta's daughter who was recently rejected by her lover—the alpha's son of her pack—and now she's looking for someone who's in a similar situation and hopefully of high rank as she is."

Despite her rejection, she didn't want to settle for less, and rightly so.

I nodded, immediately understanding. Rejection was never easy, especially for werewolves who were so deeply connected to their mates. That's where our app came in. We helped rejected and neglected wolves nd love among each other to help them move on from their rejected mates. Not everyone was destined to nd their true mate—take me, for example.

"Do we have any potential matches in mind?" I asked, leaning forward eagerly. Lara nodded, her curls bouncing with each movement. While I was in charge of designing and upgrading the app, she was in charge of nding the perfect match for our clients.

The higher the rank of our client, the more money we make.

"I've already started going through the proles on the app," she said, tapping her notebook. "I think I found a few promising candidates who might be a good t for Emily."

I smiled, feeling a surge of pride in my friend's abilities. Lara had always had a knack for matchmaking, and I knew she would nd the perfect match for Emily just like she had done for others's.

"Great work, Lara," I said, reaching across the table to squeeze her hand. She handed me a note to go through. The men listed were high-ranking, consisting of alphas, betas, and even gammas, which made me happy. To make our work easier, they were all handsome.

"I think I like the man with dark hair," Lara said, and I nodded in agreement, not looking up from the note. "I think so too," I muttered, and as we worked, I couldn't help but feel a sense of excitement building inside me.

This was what we were meant to do. Helping werewolves nd love, even after heartbreak, was what we did best. And I couldn't wait to see the smile on Emily's face when she found her happily ever after.

As Lara and I poured over the proles, my phone buzzed on the table, interrupting our conversation. I glanced down to see my mother's name ashing on the screen, and a sense of dread settled in the pit of my stomach.

"Sorry, Lara, it's my mom," I said, reaching for the phone and answering it reluctantly.

"Hello?"

"Aphrodite, sweetheart, it's me." My mother's voice came through the line, her tone as sharp as ever.

"I was just thinking about you, and I couldn't help but wonder if you've made any progress in nding yourself a mate." I felt my jaw tighten at the familiar pressure in her voice.

My relationship with my mother has always been complicated, to say the least. She was constantly pushing me to settle down and nd a mate, as if that was the only thing that mattered in life. If she knew I was using my time to help others nd love, she would kill me. Literally.

"I'm working on it, Mom," I said, trying to keep the frustration out of my voice. "I promise."

There was a brief pause on the other end of the line, and for a moment, I thought she might actually let it go. But then she spoke again, her tone softer this time, but no less cutting.

"You know, Aphrodite, you're not getting any younger," she said, her voice laced with concern. "You need to nd your mate before it's too late. You are twenty-ve, honey, and all your friends, apart from Lara, are married with kids. I think she is a bad inuence and the reason why you are still single. Cut her off before it's too late. She is nothing but bad luck," my mom warned. I clenched my sts, trying to keep my temper in check. Why couldn't she just leave me alone? How dare she talk about Lara like that?

"I'm very busy right now, Mom," I said through gritted teeth. "I will talk to you later and let you know when I nd someone."

With that, I ended the call, feeling a surge of frustration and anger coursing through me. Why couldn't she just let me breathe, just once?

I took a deep breath, trying to push aside the hurt and frustration. I couldn't let my mother's words get to me, not now. I had a job to do, and Emily was counting on me to help her nd love.

But how long would I continue to push my frustration aside when she calls me every day of my life? Trust me, I would have blocked her number long ago, but that would only make matters worse as she would come to me personally and create a scene. I couldn't let that happen, so I apart from Lara but to keep picking up her calls.

"Lara, I need you to wrap things up here," I said in a shaky voice. "I need to step out for a moment."

Lara looked up from the proles, concern written all over her face.

"Are you okay, Aphrodite?"

I forced a smile, hoping to reassure her. "I'm ne; I just need a moment," I lied, knowing that Lara could see right through me. But she didn't press the issue, instead nodding in understanding.

"Of course, take all the time you need," she said, and with a grateful nod, I stood up from the table, my legs feeling shaky beneath me. I made my way to the small break room, my steps slow and heavy.

Once inside, I sank down into one of the chairs, the tears I had been holding back nally spilling over. I buried my face in my hands, trying to mue the sound of my sobs as memories of my ex, Elijah, ooded back.

He had been my everything, or so I had thought. But then he broke my heart, leaving me shattered and alone.

But I didn't blame him, though he was human while I was a werewolf. When I told him about my true identity, the poor guy freaked out, and I never heard from him again.

We had spent our whole college life together, lled with love, and when it was all over, the pain of knowing led me to start this matchmaking business—the pain of knowing just how much it hurt to be rejected and alone.

But even now, years later, the pain still lingered—a constant ache in my chest that never seemed to go away. I sighed sadly, reaching for the bottle of alcohol sitting on the table and pouring myself a generous glass.

Maybe it was the wrong way to cope, but right now, I don't care. I took a long sip, relishing the burn as it slid down my throat, warming me from the inside out. And then, with a heavy heart, I closed my eyes and let the darkness take me, hoping that sleep would bring me some measure of peace, if only for a little while.