

A Lawsuit

Aphrodite:

I woke up the next morning with a pounding headache. Opening my eyes, I was surprised to find myself sleeping on the small queen-sized bed near the window. Because Lara and I sometimes worked late, we decided to turn the break room into a makeshift bedroom for days when we couldn't make it back home.

Lara must have carried me to the bed. What would I do without her? And here, my mother was thinking she was a bad influence. It was me who didn't deserve to have Lara as a friend.

I sighed heavily, pushing myself out of the small bed, and proceeded to make myself a cup of coffee, determined to face whatever the day had in store for me.

As I made my way to the office, I couldn't shake the feeling of unease that settled in the pit of my stomach. It felt like something was about to go wrong. When I walked through the door, I was a bit surprised to see Lara waiting for me, her face glowing with excitement. Unlike me, she was well-dressed and energetic, ready for the day.

"Aphrodite, you won't believe it!" she exclaimed, practically bouncing on the balls of her feet.

"Emily loved the guy we found for her! They're already getting to know each other, and she said she's never been happier!"

My lips curled into a smile at Lara's infectious enthusiasm. So far, we hadn't encountered any difficulties with our matchmaking app, and everyone seemed satisfied with the partners we found for them. But something about it felt too good to be true.

Or maybe I was just feeling miserable about myself for being single while everyone else found the love of their life.

"That's amazing, Lara," I said, still maintaining my smile despite the feeling of loneliness consuming me. "I'm so glad we could help her find happiness."

Lara nodded, her smile widening. "And the best part is, she said she would pay us triple the price for our services!"

Before I could respond, my phone buzzed in my pocket, and I pulled it out to see a message from someone I didn't recognize.

I furrowed my brow as I opened it, my heart sinking as I read the words on the screen.

I felt as though the air had been knocked out of me as I read the contents of the message. My hands trembled as I scrolled through the words again, unable to believe what I was seeing.

"What's wrong, Aphrodite?" Lara asked, her voice trembling with concern as she reached out to touch my arm.

I looked up at her, my voice barely a whisper, as I held out the phone for her to see.

"We're being sued, Lara," I said, the words tasting bitter on my tongue. "Someone is accusing us of destroying the mate bond created by the moon goddess and creating an unnatural process."

Lara's eyes widened in shock as she read the message, her hand ying to her mouth in disbelief.

"But that's impossible," she said, searching my eyes for answers. "We've never done anything to harm anyone. How could someone think that about us? Or maybe it's a prank from someone trying to play an expensive game on us."

I shook my head, my mind reeling with the implications of the message. "I don't know, Lara," I said, my voice hollow. "But we need to figure this out, and fast." I muttered, feeling the weight of the accusation settle on my shoulders.

Maybe creating this matchmaking business was a mistake, and I should find something else to do with my life. But even as my doubt crept in, I knew one thing for certain: I loved helping people find love, and the joy on my clients' faces was something even facing a lawsuit couldn't stop me from doing.

My phone began ringing, pulling me out of my thoughts. I saw my mom's name boldly written on the screen. I knew the reason why she was calling again, but right now, I wasn't in the mood to face another lecture about finding love. Not today.

Finally, my phone went silent, just like my world did. Everything felt like it was falling apart, and I didn't know how to stop it.

"Maybe I should just quit," I said, the words tumbling out before I could stop them.

"I want to run far away from here and never look back." Lara looked at me, her eyes wide with shock, but she didn't give me a judgmental look.

"Aphrodite, you can't be serious," she said, her voice trembling. "You can't just give up like that."

I shook my head, tears welling in my eyes. "I don't know what else to do, Lara," I said, my voice breaking. "I can't handle this lawsuit, and I can't handle the pressure from my mom. I just want it all to go away."

But even as the words left my lips, I knew I couldn't abandon Lara, as it would be very selfish of me to do so just because I was having little problems. She had given up everything to work for me, and if I quit now, she would be left with nothing.

And then I remembered the day Lara had quit her job in the most dramatic way possible. She had punched her rude boss in the face, and because of that, he had used his power to make sure she couldn't work anywhere again.

If I quit now, Lara would be left jobless with no way to support herself. And I couldn't do that to her.

I took a shaky breath, wiping away the tears streaming down my cheeks, determination settling in my heart.

"I can't quit, Lara," I said, faking a smile to appear strong.

"Not now, not ever. I won't let anyone stand in the way of what we're doing here." Lara looked at me, her eyes shining with gratitude.

"Thank you, Aphrodite," she said, reaching out to squeeze my hand.

"I don't know what I would do without you." I smiled, feeling a sense of purpose returning to me.

"We'll get through this, Lara. How much do we have in our bank to face this lawsuit?" I questioned her, but before Lara could respond, I heard the sound of someone opening the door.

Looking past Lara, who was much shorter than me, I saw a tall, handsome man standing in the doorway, a confident smirk playing on his lips, which surprised me.

"Sorry to interrupt," he said, his voice smooth as silk. "I knocked, but no one answered, so I let myself in."

I felt a surge of irritation at his audacity, but I pushed it aside, trying to focus on the task at hand.

"Can I help you with something?" I asked, my voice cold. The man's smirk widened into a grin, and he stepped further into the room, his eyes ickering over me and Lara appreciatively.

"I think it's me who is here to help you. Did you get my message? I'm here about the lawsuit," he said, his tone casual. "I represent the Werewolf Council, and they're not too happy about what you two have been up to."

The werewolf council?

My heart sank at his words, and I exchanged a worried glance with Lara. This was even worse than I had feared.

"What do you want?" Lara asked, her voice sharp. The man shrugged, his grin never faltering.

"Just a little chat," he said. "To see if we can't come to some sort of agreement." I narrowed my eyes, suspicion creeping in.

"What kind of agreement?" I asked, my voice wary. The man's grin widened, and he took a step closer, invading my personal space in a way that made my skin crawl.

"Oh, I think you'll like it," he said, his voice low and suggestive. "But first, why don't we sit down and talk about it?"

I glanced at Lara, unsure of what to do. But she just nodded, though I noticed her guard was up, just like mine.

"Fine," I said, my voice firm.

"But make it quick."