

## 9. Amethyst

\*\*\*Gwen\*\*\*

The morning birds wake me up and I find myself tangled with Salvador, the heat of his body giving me warmth. Outside, the rain has stopped and despite the complete comfort I feel beside my werewolf, I decide to end this encounter. Ever so quietly, I pull his arm off of me and climb out of the blankets only to realize I was completely naked. My nightgown was still sitting outside in a puddle and completely useless.

Stupid wolf, I mutter to myself as I glare at Salvador. The slick bastard had forgotten to manifest me a new nightgown and I was now stuck in the nude with him in the forest.

Luckily for me, there's a pile of blankets in the tent, and I pull a small one out and wrap it around my body. As I am about to tiptoe out of the tent, I hear Salvador's sleepy voice call out to me.

"Do you always leave men in bed?" he grins, his tousled hair and deep voice making a flurry of butterflies erupt in my belly.

"N-no. Just the idiots," I shrug, hoping he couldn't see the blush on my cheeks.

His grin deepens. "So you plan to walk back to the Blood Moon mansion in just a blanket?" He yawns.

If I knew anything about werewolves, it was that they were exceptionally possessive over their mates and I imagine nothing would infuriate Salvador more than for other male wolves to oggle me while I pranced around in the nude.

"Yes," I smirk, turning on my heel and marching out of the tent.

To my satisfaction, I hear him scramble after me, his fingers wrapping around my wrist as he pulls me back to him.

"Okay ne, you win," he sighs, producing a new nightgown and a robe in his hands. As I reach for them however, he raises them over his head. "But first," he says, puckering his lips. "A kiss."

I would gladly grant him a kiss, but only on my terms. With a smile on my lips, I lean in close to his face. As our lips almost meet, I punch him in the stomach. He instinctively bends over and groans, giving me easy access to the clothes.

"f\*\*\*\*\*g hell," he moans.

"Thank you," I giggle, running back to the tent.

I hear him curse me under his breath as I change. When I return outside, I find him standing in his wolf form waiting for me. I had seen his wolf, Marcos, before but never up close and I gasp at the beauty of his fur. It has a metallic gleam to it, layers upon layers of silver hairs covering his entire body. He was absolutely stunning, his emerald orbs looking back at me, commanding me to stare at him forever. His wolf lowers himself as I approach, as if asking me to climb on top and ride him.

I had ridden a wolf before but it was not an experience I particularly enjoyed. I prefer walking but I remind myself that I have a mission and climb on.

"C-can you take me to River Moon?" I ask, my fingers digging into his fur as he leans back on his hind legs.

He yips and off we go, racing through the trees at an incredible speed. We were practically flying between the territories, jumping over large stones and fallen tree trunks, the wind rippling through my curls. I have to admit, it's an exhilarating feeling to watch the world become a blur all around me.

Within an hour of running, we come upon a large mansion and I frown to myself as Lluvia Blanca guards let us in through the main gates.

"I said River Moon, you stupid wolf!" I grumble as I jump off.

Marcos growls at me for a second before tilting his head to the side and sitting on his hind legs. He stares at me innocently and I stick my tongue out at him.

"Bloody mutt!" I mumble, annoyed at the delay in my plans.

The wolf smiles at me and jumps up to lick the entirety of my face, my scowl melting away to be replaced by a smile.

Pleased with himself, Marcos trots off to some bushes and shifts, Salvador returning in a pair of black basketball shorts. He interlocks our hands and pulls me into the pack house. Several omega wolves give us strange looks as we run through the house.

Salvador takes me to his bedroom, gently closing the door behind us and allowing me to take a peek inside his world.

His room is very neat, although the bed is unmade. Posters of different rock bands line the walls and there's a display case on the far wall with several vinyl records and an electric guitar tucked away on its stand. The room is painted in earth tones and is very dark with the blinds closed.

"I have to take Celina to school in ten minutes," he says as I walk around and stare at his things. "The bathroom is to the left and there's spare toiletries for you to use in the cabinet," he adds, offering me some fresh towels. "I know you're desperate to get to River Moon so after you freshen up, I'll have Valentina take you over there. She'll be at the gates waiting for you."

He presses his lips against my cheeks. "Bye, baby. I'll meet you at River Moon," he smiles before dashing towards the door. "I still hate you," he mutters as he leaves.

The words leave his lips so naturally, as if they were always meant to be ours. Tears line my eyes as I cup the cheek he kissed with my fingers and I stand in the middle of the room in complete silence.

It was a simple gesture, just a kiss goodbye. So why then, did my stomach do flips when he did it?

I find a fresh set of clothes after my shower and quickly change into them. My heart is still pounding from Salvador's goodbye kiss and a part of me misses his presence. I don't understand what I'm feeling and it worries me.

Have I completely lost my mind? I wonder. He had only kissed me goodbye so why couldn't I just let it go?

Realizing my heart would not stop racing unless I had him near me, I rummage through his closet and select a large black t-shirt with an AC/DC logo on it. I change out of my blouse and like a spell, my heart nally mellows out as I inhale the lingering scent of my mate on his shirt.

"I hate that stupid wolf," I mutter to myself as I race downstairs to the gates as Salvador instructed.

True to his word, Valentina's wolf is already waiting for me. I smile at her and she lowers herself into a playful bow. Her wolf wags her tail in delight and I'm once again assaulted by a wolf's tongue. I give her a good ear scratch and she nally backs down.

"You look lovely Miss Valentina," I smile as I stroke her Silver fur.

She stares deep into my eyes as if to say the same.

"Thank you," I reply as she lowers herself for me. "To River Moon please. I need to speak to Queen Aurora immediately. I'm afraid it is a matter of life or death."

Valentina turns to look at me, worry in her eyes but I reassure her with a good pet to her snout. I climb aboard the large wolf and she takes off immediately.

It's not long into the run when I realize she was not taking me to River Moon at all but to a foreign territory directly North of Lluvia Blanca.

"Valentina, I think we're going the wrong way, darling. River Moon is due East," I shout into the wind

The wolf howls with laughter and I decide to let her do her thing. I trusted her.

We rush past several trees for what seems like hours before Valentina nally slows down. Several guards greet us as we cross into the foreign territory, the forest giving way to a large and beautiful lake. Valentina runs around its circumference and I stare at our reaction in the water for a moment.

Who would have thought I would one day be friends with wolves, much less mated to one? If only Missus Crowell were here. She would freak out!

Beyond the lake, we come upon a number of construction sites, however no one seems to be working on them. It was an odd sight to see. Valentina maneuvers her way between the growing buildings until we come upon a large building structure, heavy machines lifting metal beams onto it.

At the base of the site, Queen Aurora stands before a group of women, burly men, three Alphas and Evan, her gamma. She and the women are dressed in workout gear while the three Alpha males are dressed in business suits and ties. She looks furious, swinging her arms around and barking orders at the group of men, all of whom looked terrified of the tiny Queen. The men and Alpha's hang their heads in shame and as we come closer, I notice that several of the girls were crying and it becomes evident why the men were being reprimanded.

"Do you three understand what is being built here?" Aurora roars at the Alphas and their men. "Do you understand what this place means to me? To them?" She points to women behind her.

"We understand, your Majesty," Alpha Wesley explains. "But these are men... They have eyes... We can't control what they do with them..."

Aurora's eyes narrow to slits and even my body goes stiff with fear.

Goddess have mercy! He did not just say that!

"But I can," Aurora snarls. "STRIP OFF YOUR CLOTHES TO YOUR UNDERWEAR. GET ON THE GROUND, FACE DOWN. ALL OF YOU!"

Every man in the vicinity is on the floor stripped down to their trousers, face down as their Queen instructed. Several of the girls turn around or avert their eyes, a bit uneasy to see so many half dressed men while Aurora walks up and down the crowd of men to make sure they all followed her orders.

Her voice trembles as she speaks. "You know, I once woke up as you are now... In the middle of the forest, my face in the dirt, stripped of all my dignity... with a man on top of me..."

My heart breaks as I realize what she means.

"Every woman standing before you here has been in the position you now find yourself in... stripped of their peace of mind, their dignity... treated like dirt..." She adds quietly, the murmurs in the crowd going dead silent. "We have all been stripped just as I have, the daycare center, all the works!" she giggles. "It will be the crown jewel of my Kingdom. Every Luna is already on board and allocating resources for us and Oliver has been a huge help getting me investors to help fund the buildings. Lluvia Blanca has offered a work force to construct everything and Cerulean Sea is providing security, guards and their best female trainers to get these women properly trained."

"Seems you've been busy."

"Busy but happy," Aurora sighs contently. "I'm so glad you're back, Gwen," She smiles. "How have you been? Please tell me you're here to stay," she puts.

I scrunch up my nose and she sighs in defeat. "Afraid not, dear. I'm actually here on business. It's quite urgent actually."

Her face grows serious and she instructs the group of women to carry on their training without her. She then opens a portal to the River Moon pack ome.

"Tell me everything," she commands.

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Aurora heads in for a shower while I wait downstairs with Valentina for a light breakfast. I'm quite pleased to find that Aurora's kitchen is stocked with a variety of teas and biscuits. Valentina makes small talk with me but I can tell she's extremely worried for me and whatever problem I'm facing.

"I'm alright, darling. I promise," I sigh, placing my hand over hers to calm her worries. "Just in a bit of a pinch, I'm afraid."

"Well whatever pinch you're in," Aurora says as she walks into the dining room and settles into her seat. "We'll get you out of it. Just tell us what to do."

While her words are comforting, I remind myself of Cillian's instructions.

"...Tell anyone about this little arrangement, including the Ivory mutts and I will eat the pup..."

I've known Cillian for several decades and know he wasn't blung. Dakota was dead if Aurora knew the truth of the Ruby.

"I need access to Tais and Ira's belongings if they still exist," I sigh after a long pause.

Aurora's face contorts with confusion. "Why do you want their belongings?"

"It's just urgent," I shake my head. "I'm unfortunately not at liberty to tell you why but please know I don't mean any harm. I would never jeopardize the safety of your Kingdom. Tais and Ira just have something I need."

Aurora purses her lips and thinks for a moment. She drums her fingers on the table and after a long silence, she clenches her fist and stands to her feet.

"Follow me."