

The Alpha's Fated Outcast: Rise Of The Moonsinger.

Chapter 2 - The Gala from hell

Lyla

I stood at the foot of the grand stone steps, my heart hammering against my ribs. The pack house loomed over me like a fortress, its cold walls whispering memories of a life I had been cast off from.

I couldn't believe three years had passed since that fateful night when my parents had sent me away in the dead of the night. I had felt like a thief, banished without explanation or warning and nothing but a thousand dollars, clutching a single bag that was my clothes forcing me to vow never to return.

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But now I was back. I swallowed the knot in my throat, steeling myself. I didn't want to come, but my father's command was not a request. The annual werewolf gala was tonight and I was to attend. I had no choice.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed open the heavy oak door, and the rush of familiar scents filled my lungs, bringing with it a flood of childhood memories both painful and good.

I had barely closed the door when my mother's voice reached me.

"You're late," she hissed, her eyes narrowing as she took in my appearance. Her sharp eyes flicked over me as if she was inspecting something unpleasant on the bottom of her shoe. Beside her, my sister, Clarissa, gazed at me with a look that was somewhere between pity and disdain.

"I see you still haven't learned to control yourself during your heat," Clarissa scoffed. "Father, it's not a good idea for her to go like this. She reeks..."

"You think if we had a choice, I would have driven four hours to go and get her," My father hissed "The invitation had stated that every family must send a representative that is 18 and above and ripe for mating. I had no choice. She was never an option, to begin with."

I flinched. "I'm sorry," I began but my mother cut me off with a sharp gesture.

"Save it," she snapped "We've been doing so well without you and we want it to remain that way. Just remember, you're here because we had no other choice. Don't disgrace us today. If you cause a scene, or so much as draw unwanted attention... we will remove your name from the family register and disown you. Do you understand?"

I wanted to tell them that none of this was my fault but I nodded instead, my throat was too tight to speak. The last remnants of any affection my family had for me had vanished a long time ago buried under shame and disgust. I had never been enough for them, not without a wolf, not with the monthly humiliation of my uncontrolled heat cycles.

"I understand," I whispered.

"Good," my mom said coldly. "Clarissa will lend you something from her wardrobe. You might want to also fix that stupid hair of yours..." She turned to my sister "Give her one of your wigs too. It's enough that she's emitting pheromones, showing up with two giant silver streaks in her hair will make everyone think she was adopted."

"Okay, Mom," Clarissa nodded and indicated that I follow her.

I bit my tongue, feeling the sting of tears behind my eyes but refusing to let them fall. I followed Clarissa, my hands trembling as we went.

An hour later, one of the pack warriors dropped me off in front of the grand ballroom, my father had been too embarrassed to do it.

I smoothed my dress and headed towards the ballroom. The sound of laughter, music and clinking glasses grew louder with every step. The scent of power, strength and pure werewolf dominance filled the air as I reached the entrance and the moment I stepped inside, I felt it – the weight of hundreds of eyes turning in my direction.

I felt like a lamb among wolves.

I could feel the heat crawling up my neck, my cheeks flushing against my will. My body betrayed me again and my pheromones spilled into the air announcing my presence like a siren's call. I heard the whispers before I saw the faces.

"What's that smell?" everyone turned, their noses wrinkled in disgust.

"Is she... in heat?"

"No control at all. Disgusting? She should be locked up and not here. Or is she trying to snag a mate with those smelly pheromones?"

My fingers dug into my palms, my nails biting into my skin as I willed myself to remain calm. If I just ignore them... everything will be fine. But then, a sharp voice cut through the murmurs and I saw Cassidy Thorne step forward, a mocking smile on her perfect lips.

"I didn't realize they let mutts attend this year," Cassidy drawled loud enough for everyone to hear. Cassidy Thorne – was the epitome of Lycan and Werewolf beauty

and elegance. Everyone dreamed their daughters would be like her... there was a time when I wanted to be her so badly. "I suppose they'll let anyone in these days."

Laughter rippled through the crowd and I felt my composure crumbling. Murmuring an apology, I forced myself to look away and moved to a quiet corner of the room, my hands shaking. I hated how powerless I felt, how my body betrayed me every month turning me into a joke among the very people with whom I should by birthright associate.

I pressed my back against the wall, trying to steady my breathing and fight back tears when I felt a strange prickling sensation at the back of my neck. Something from across the room caught my eye.

Across the room, a man stood alone, dressed in black from head to toe, melting perfectly with the shadows. His gaze was fixed on me. He had amber eyes, that were sharp and piercing like molten gold. He was devastatingly handsome, with chiselled features and an air of quiet strength...but more than that, there was something in his gaze that I couldn't place.

For a moment, the noise of the ballroom faded and all I could see was him. There was something about his eyes that held me captive – curiosity and ...something more... My heartbeat quickened, not out of fear but out of a strange, unfamiliar longing.

Who was he?

Before I could dwell on it, a shadow fell over me. I turned to see a young Alpha, Darius standing in front of me, his lips twisted into a sly grin. He has taunted me since I was a child and was the first person to spread my wolfless situation when we were 16. All this was because I had rejected the offer to be his girlfriend when we were 12. He still bore malice against me.

"Well, well, if it isn't the Woodland disgrace," Darius sneered. He was with a group of friends, all dressed impeccably with eyes gleaming maliciously. "What's the matter, Lyla? Couldn't find a better place to hide?"

My throat tightened and I tried to edge away but Darius moved closer, blocking my path. His friends closed in on me too, forming a circle around me, all of them wearing identical smirks.

"I see you're having a little – heat problem," Darius continued, his voice dripping with mock sympathy. "Maybe we could help you with that, hmm?"

My pulse raced with fear. I knew that look in his eyes. I tried to step back but Darius grabbed my arm, his fingers digging into my flesh.

"Please," I whispered, "Just leave me alone."

Darius laughed and held my chin "I see someone is getting feisty here. Have you forgotten your place? How dare a deviant like you speak in my presence!"

"Get off me!" I shouted, my voice trembling with both anger and fear. I could smell the alcohol on his breath, mixed with his musky scent. It made me nauseous.

"You know," he said reaching to twirl a strand of my hair around his finger "Some might find your condition – intriguing. All that heat, with no way to satisfy it. I bet you're just dying for someone to help you out, aren't you?"

"Don't touch me," I shrieked looking around desperately, but no one was coming to my aid.

His hand moved from my hair to my waist, and I felt panic rising in my chest. I tried to pull away but I found myself leaning into his touch, biting off a moan. My body wanted this... I wished he could run his hands up and down my engorged nips peeking from my dress already...

"Don't act like you don't want it," he whispered "I can smell it on you." His hand covered my bosom, roughly squeezing it, drawing another illicit moan from me.

"Please," I breathed, barely able to keep my voice steady. "Let me go."

Darius's grin widened but before he could say another word, a low dangerous growl cut through the air, freezing everyone in place.