

## Chapter 21: Mate

Alpha Ethan's POV

I didn't want the ball here in the first place so of course, I didn't want to attend. I didn't search for my mate over the years and I didn't want to search for her tonight.

After years of Olivia reminding me that the Goddess had a mate for me out there, she planted a seed in my head. I have to admit the seed has started to grow.

Did I want to scour the country for my mate? No. But would I be lying if I said I didn't wonder if she was going to be here tonight? Yes.

Outside of Odis and Olivia, I keep no one close and I preferred it that way. For an Alpha, having a mate is crucial. Having a mate made you stronger, don't ask me how but it just does.

Since I was hosting the ball, I had to be there first to greet the visiting Alpha's and their Luna. I couldn't help but smile when guests started flooding in. They couldn't help but shoot me frightening glances.

I sat at the head of the Alpha table. When Alpha Joshua and his Luna came in they greeted me and quickly took their place at their seats. Alpha Joshua was the only one tonight who didn't give me a scared look.

I went back to gazing over the guests as they mingled. Unmated males and females gave me more frightful looks but I did see that some had lust in their eyes.

"Do you think she's here, Alpha?" A deep yet lighthearted voice called out to me. My Beta, Odis, was itching to know.

"Maybe," I said in a short tone. He knew that I wasn't looking for my mate nor would I be disappointed if this weekend ended without finding her.

"Would you claim her if you found her?" I could hear the curiosity in his voice. I looked at him with mock shock.

I could feel my head start throbbing. He was shuffling around and mentally pacing. I could feel his anxiety like it was my own.

"What is it, Elijah?" I asked, trying to mask my annoyance and irritation.

"I'm not sure..." Elijah whined, his agitation only growing by the second.

I was not going to be able to deal with this and guests at this rate. Elijah and I both froze as a sweet aroma caught our attention. The smell only got stronger. I've never felt a smell but this smell felt warm and I could almost taste it on my tongue. Vanilla and honey filled my senses and calmed our irritation.

I couldn't help but scan the crowd, I needed to find the

smell. Before I knew it, I was following the smell into the crowd.

My wolf and I needed to find her. I froze when I saw her. She bit into a chocolate-covered cream puff and the moan that left her lips had my wolf want to claim her.

My gaze lowers as I took her in. Elijah and I searched her body with a fervent need. Her chest scooped low and her dress outlined her silhouette beautifully. Her hair fell softly down her back.

A need to touch her took me by force. She froze and looked through her plate. I couldn't hold back a smile when she knew the smell didn't come from her pastries.

"Mate!" Elijah and I said at the same time. A feeling spread through my body as I stared at her face. Her eyes widened in surprise as she locked eyes with me.

"Mate," I said aloud. I don't know how or when but I stood in front of her. I watched her as her chocolate brown eyes slowly looked down my body.

I watched in interest as her eyes froze at the tattoos peeking out from my wrist. Her eyes made their way back up to my face. She looked at my hair and her eyes stopped at my lips. Lust flashes through her features before she quickly put the thoughts aside.

Being closer to her now, I let my eyes roam her face, her cheekbones are flushed. She has a cute button nose. My

eyes roam to her neck and my wolf is itching to mark her.

I've never given a woman so much attention. She had our undivided attention and I smiled knowing she already had Elijah wrapped around her little fingers.

I reach out and wipe the chocolate from the side of her mouth. I'm shocked by the sparks that erupt from my fingers and spread throughout my body.

"Do you know who I am?" I ask my little mate. I didn't see her earlier when I greeted Alphas so she couldn't be an Alpha's daughter.

"Other than the fact that I am yours... I don't know who you are," she whispered and I smiled as I watch a pink blush spread across her features.

Elijah urged me to grab her hand and hold her. "What's your name, little one?" I asked her, unable to focus on anything or anyone but her.

"Adea," she whispers. She looks up at me with those chocolate eyes. "My name is Ethan, the Alpha of Desert Moon."

Her brown eyes widen and a gasp leaves her lips. I should be worried about her being afraid of me but Elijah and I can't help but imagine her beneath us.

I needed her. 3

## Chapter 22: Tug-of-war

"My name is Ethan, the Alpha of the Desert Moon pack," he says like it isn't a big deal. He's the Alpha of this pack? Hearing him say Alpha, I automatically think of Shane.

Thinking of him watching us here together like this scares me to my core. Is he watching us? Is he angry? Pulling my hands together, I fold my hands to try and stop the shaking.

Think Adea, think! What do I do? He takes a step towards me and without thinking I take a step back.

"Don't be afraid of him Adea! He's ours. The Goddess made him for us," the voice whines, and I can see her mentally pacing.

I shake my head, "No, we don't know him. This comfort we feel from him and this pull to him is all the mate bond!" Why can't she see this? We can't trust whatever this is. 3

My wolf whines in my head, "That's not true!" I can feel her desperation like it were my own but I know that her feelings aren't mine. I can see this situation for what it is and I know ... I just know I can't trust him. I can't trust her feelings. 10

"Look at him! He's huge, do you think such a man is going to be gentle with us? He's known throughout all of the pack territories to be ruthless. 2

He's conquered other packs and doubled his pack numbers.

An Alpha doesn't get to his station by being kind," I try to knock some sense into her.

This tug-of-war of emotions between my wolf and me is exhausting. Her big white head drops and I can feel her hurt through our connection.

"Finding him only adds another self-absorbed, violent, giant of an Alpha to our worries. What do we do when Shane finds out? What do we do if he's watching us right now?" I cry and I know none of this is her fault but I can't hold back the words.

Ethan grabs my hand, and I'm pulled from my thoughts. I watch as he turns on his heel, and pulls me in the direction of the side door. I stare at the back of his head, trying to ignore the tingles shooting up my arm, trying to ignore her excitement. The music gets quieter as we get outside and walk farther from the hall.

We pass a tall beautiful water fountain but I don't get to look over its beauty as we come to a stop. In one swift motion, he pins me against a wall. I stand still and shut my eyes as I wait for what's going to happen next.

After a few moments, when nothing happens, I open my eyes slowly to look at him. I have to look up and when I do I lock eyes with lustful cold eyes.

His hair is drooping over his eyes and his lips are slightly open. His scent and warmth are stimulating my senses and I can feel goosebumps break out across my body.

Are all men like this? The thought crosses my mind and my wolf whines. "What's happened to you before isn't normal. Those things weren't supposed to happen to you Adea."

I feel a tear escape and run down my cheek and I bite my lip to stop it from quivering. I won't beg anyone ever again. It doesn't matter how I feel, he'll just take from me... like him. 1

He presses his head against the cement wall above me and in doing so his chest connects with my cheek. "Why do you smell of an unmated male?" He asks slowly in a low tone.

Shit. I forgot about that. Our sense of smell is strong but an Alpha's sense of smell must be 10 times stronger. "My... escort is male," I tell him. Unsure of what else to say about Shane.

"Are you seeing him?" He asks quietly. Am I in trouble? I know he can't be jealous... we just met. Be reasonable Adea, his new mate smells of an unmated male. Of course, he'd want to know what's going on.

How do I answer him? Should I tell him that I'm not seeing him? That's not entirely true. Do I tell him that he likes me? That he's possessive of me? Do I tell him that he's seeing me? My wolf lets out a snort, "That would be more accurate."

"More or less..." I say quietly and I feel him tense and take a step back. This time when I look up into his eyes, they're glowing. His hands grip my arms and he pulls me closer to his body. "Are you testing my patience little one? Do I look

like I'm joking?" 3

His husky voice is calming even when he's angry. "I don't know what you want me to say." His touch has calmed me and I can feel the mate bond working on soothing my fears. "He's ... more than a friend," I tell him honestly biting the insides of my cheeks. 3

Ethan lets go of me and punches the wall behind me. I still when he leans down and into my neck. He inhales deeply, "Have you fucked him?" 3

I feel my body tense up and my hands start to shake again. I clench my hands into fists and look him in the eye, "No... we almost did but... it didn't happen."

He lets out a breath I didn't know he was holding and a small smile pulls at his lips. In a quick motion, he steps away from me and pats his hands together.


The smile on his face is gone as quick as it had appeared and his eyes are back to being cold. "After this weekend is over with, you'll be staying here."

I close my mouth and clench my teeth together. Knowing that I have no choice in the matter and nothing I say will change his mind.

"Who you were seeing before doesn't concern me," he growls. "What does matter is that today you became mine."

"From today onward you are mine. You will never see this pup again, and you will tell me if he reaches out to you. Am I



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clear?" I nod and the thought of hurting him makes my heart clench.

"What pack are you from?" He asks me in a cold tone. I can feel him distancing himself from me.

"I'm from the Half Moon pack, my alpha is Alpha Joshua, and his Luna, Rose." Fear starts to eat at me as I wonder what's going to happen when Shane realizes I'm not going back.

"Don't worry about Shane, our mate will take care of us. My name is Korra by the way," Korra whispers, and I ignore her. "Make sure to say your goodbyes. I'm going in first, come in when you're ready," he says before leaving me standing in the garden.

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