

1. The Proposal

June 1994

Soa's POV

"Soa, querida, levántate. We have an Alpha meeting in the Coastal provinces in a few hours. You must get dressed."

Ugh. Alpha meetings. I'm almost 18. The only meetings I should be going to are meetings at the beach with my friends.

What friends? Solana, my wolf laughs. You don't have any!

Stupid wolf and her facts.

"Soa!"

I pull the covers off of myself and sit up in bed. "I'm up, mamá," I shout back.

Mamá bursts into my room. She scowls at me when she sees me still in bed.

"Get dressed. Prince Julian will be there so try your best to look nice."

What do I care if he's there?

Julian is heir to the throne of the neighboring kingdom, Estrella del Monte. I've never met him but I hear he is exceptionally handsome ... and the biggest asshole that exists in all of México.

Mamá walks to my closet and pulls out a yellow form tting dress with long sleeves and my tiara from my crown jewels collection. I only wear my tiara during special occasions and never in front of humans.

"Mamá, it's summer and very hot. I'm going to melt in this," I say in the most polite voice I could muster at the moment. "Can't I wear something girls my age would wear?"

"A princess does not sweat nor does she complain. Now get dressed. Have you reviewed the matters we're discussing today? As the future Queen of this kingdom you must--"

"Always be prepared and knowledgeable about the current events of the Kingdom. Yes Mamá, I know."

She cups my cheeks in her hands and pushes them up to force a smile on my face. "I know you hate Alpha meetings but in just 3 short years, this will be your Kingdom. You must be prepared to lead."

"I know," I sigh. "It's my duty."

She gives me a few more pieces of advice before running off to fetch my father and help him get ready. The maid, Cassandra, helps me into my dress and does my hair and makeup.

I should probably introduce myself, huh?

My name is Soa Isabel, Crown Princess of the Sol de Oro kingdom and the only heir to the throne. Both of my parents are of Royal blood with my father, King Juan Carlos, being the reigning monarch of Sol de Oro. My mother, Queen Ana Lucia, is second in line for the Luz Marina throne, and thus a Royal by both blood and marriage

To be perfectly clear, though, my family reigns over werewolves only. To the rest of the human world, we are just a wealthy Mexican family with a lot of connections.

Like every Royal werewolf, my parents were Gold wolves with elemental powers. My father could manipulate water and ice while my mother could bend earth. When I was 13, I shifted for the rst time and discovered I could control the re element.

Currently, I'm in training to take the crown when I turn 21. This unfortunately means I have to attend boring Alpha meetings, study the packs we reign over and their laws/policies, and train in combat so that I may protect my Kingdom in battle.

As much as I complained about the duties and responsibilities I had as a Princess, I knew I wanted nothing more than to lead my kingdom. Father often took me on visits to our packs and it was always wonderful to see the peace in which they lived in thanks to my Dad.

I meet my parents downstairs and together we make the 2 hour drive to Ciudad Madero for the meeting. This was a particularly important meeting as the Alpha King of Estrella del Monte, Jose Antonio, and his son, Julian, would be present. It's rare for Royals of different kingdoms to be in the same room given how territorial we can be so this was a big deal.

Furthermore, the Alpha of the highly respected Altamirano Silver wolf clan would be attending. Silver wolves were about as rare as Gold wolves and thus highly sought after, but the Altamirano clan was special. Every wolf in the clan had incredibly powerful gifts, gifts that greatly outshined those of other silver wolves. I'd never met a silver wolf so I was excited to meet an Altamirano silver wolf, no less.

As we arrive at one of my fathers hotels, I catch a glimpse of Julian and his father in the lobby. The rumors weren't wrong, Julian was the prince any princess would be lucky to have. But of course, his personality didn't match his looks. From where I stood, I could see him arrogantly ordering the servants around and he looked down on the humans around him. When our eyes meet, he winks at me.

Ew.

We head for the conference room where the meeting is to take place. I'm technically not supposed to attend an Alpha meeting, given I'm not 18, but exceptions are made for the future Queen and I am given a seat between my mother and the Royal Beta, Guillermo. Directly across the table, King Jose and Julian take their places. Julian's eyes settle on me and a smirk stretches across his lips.

Could he quit staring? Creep.

The other Alphas arrive but the room goes quiet when Alpha Manuel Altamirano and his wife, Valeria, enter the room, exuding prestige and power with their very presence. I was quite frankly holding my breath as they bow and take their seats. I didn't dare breathe until my father's voice boomed a greeting at everyone present.

"Buenas tardes, welcome all to this meeting. We are most honored to have his majesty, King Jose and his son Julian among us today and we have much to discuss. First order of business, the border lands. It seems the border packs have noticed a rise of Estrella del Monte wolves sneaking onto our territories. Care to explain, your majesty?"

"Well it seems a few of your wolves have done the same-

"Nonsense!" An Alpha cries out. "Those are blatant lies!"

"Silence, Alpha Enrique. Let the King explain," my father commands.

The King's face hardens and he gets to his feet. "I suggest you keep your wolves in check, King Juan. Such insubordination would never happen on my territory--"

"Watch it, King Jose," my father snarls, jumping out of his chair. "This is my kingdom and you do not get to tell me how I run things here."

King Jose growls at my father and I fear a ght might break out between the two kings.

"Now there's no need for hostility," my mothers chirps, beaming at her King and his rival. "We are here for discussion. So let us discuss these issues," she says, gesturing for everyone to take their seats once more.

The kings take their seats begrudgingly and send menacing glares at one another.

For the next hour or so, the Kings and the Alphas get into heated arguments, sending threats to one another over the border dispute. My mother works tirelessly to keep my father in check, calming him down as the tension grows thicker.

As another hour drags on, it seems we won't be coming to an agreement any time soon. To make matters worse, Prince Julian hasn't taken his eyes off me since the meeting started and I shift uncomfortably in my seat. Mom glares daggers at me to keep still and I lower my gaze to my hands to hide my embarrassment.

Beta Guillermo seems to notice my discomfort and leans over.

"Don't let him win, your majesty," he whispers. "A little prince can't out play you at a staring contest, can he?"

I grin back at Guillermo and let my eyes settle on the prince.

Game on, Prince.

I hold his stare, narrowing my eyes at him. Prince Julian stares back coolly before chuckling to himself and lowering his eyes to his lap, the smirk on his lips never faltering.

What's so funny?

He leans over to his father and whispers something in his ear. The King's eyes land on me and he chuckles lightly to himself.

"It seems the answer to our problem has been sitting here this whole time," King Jose laughs. "I have a proposal for you, King Juan. Well, actually it's for your princess."

My entire body stiffens when he mentions me while my fathers eye brows furrow in confusion.

"What do you propose?"

"Well, it's actually quite simple," King Jose shrugs. "You have a Princess. I have a Prince. Both unmated. Both unmarked. Both next in line for the thrones."

I feel the blood drain from my face as I start to understand where he's going with this.

"I propose that my son marry your daughter."