

2. Obligations

Soa's POV

His words seem to echo off the walls, colliding with my ears in painful bursts. The room fills with murmurs as the Alphas discuss the proposal amongst themselves.

Me? Marry his son? I was disgusted just looking at him!

Prince Julian smirks triumphantly at me, filling every cell in my body with unbelievable rage. I want nothing more than to pound his devilishly handsome face with my fists so he never looks at me that way again. But alas! I am a princess and princesses don't have violent outbursts or go on murderous rampages in front of guests.

I somehow manage to tuck away my repulsion, plastering an unbothered smile on my face and staring back at the condescending King and his ***** son.

My father, on the other hand, looks ready to explode, offended by such a suggestion. He jumps up from his seat, sending his chair crashing against the wall and shattering it to pieces. I inch at the sound and hear Prince Julian snicker at my reaction.

"You want to wed my one heir to your pitiful son?" He snarls.

The King's face darkens and his eyes shift to a yellow-green color, his wolf taking over in anger. He snarls menacingly at my father, who responds with a low growl.

My mother grabs hold of my father's hand to calm him and whispers soothing words in his ears. My father visibly relaxes, although the look of anger doesn't leave his face. An uncomfortable silence fills the room.

"This eliminates the need for a border entirely," the King nally speaks, putting away his rage. "Your princess will take the crown, as will my son. If they're married, they can combine the two kingdoms together and rule it as one entity, together. I see no issue with my son taking your daughter as his Queen and vice versa. Both are gold wolves, both have strong backgrounds and both have trained their entire lives to lead. I could not think of a more perfect union," he adds.

I could! I want to scream. A rat and the prince would make a lovely couple!

My mother turns to me and I can see the gears working in her head.

She's not actually considering this, is she?

I want to shout at the top of my lungs that I refuse to marry a man for political gain. I want to marry my mate. For years, I've dreamed of nothing more than to have what my parents have. The unconditional love they share, the happiness they gave one another with just their presence. I was 18 in two months which meant my wolf would sense her mate soon. This can't be happening! They can't rob me of this dream, can they? It was my right to marry the man Moon Goddess picked for me!

"And if we don't agree?" My father asks threateningly.

I sigh with relief. Thank you father!

The King shrugs nonchalantly. "Then I'll have no choice but to declare war on Sol de Oro. Those lands are mine and I intend to defend them with my own breath. I'm giving you a way out to avoid such a conflict. Your Kingdom is enjoying peace unlike ever before. Do you really want to jeopardize that over a land dispute?"

The room comes alive with discussion as the Alphas all offer their opinions on the matter. My father listens carefully to their concerns, turning over to me every once in a while. I remain still as a statue in my seat, afraid that if I move, I might burst into tears. All the while, I feel the Prince's eyes on me, boring holes into my head.

My mother's eyes fog over as she mind-links my father her opinion. They discuss my future amongst themselves, stealing glances at the prince and I. Despite my calm demeanor, I could hear my heart pounding in my chest and I feel the need to puke up my breakfast.

This can't be happening.

As the discussions progress, it seems my future is set. I steal a glance at the Prince, his arrogant smile never faltering. He looks amused by all the commotion of the proposal. I remove my gaze and listen carefully to concerns of the Alphas regarding the borders. They were not ready to fight a war.

The Altamirano wolves stare at me in pity and I force a strong smile on my face. I did not want their pity. I wanted their respect. No matter the outcome, I will be Queen and I will not appear weak before my future subjects.

Solana whimpers as I come to my decision.

"I accept the offer," I reply, desperately trying to hide the contempt in my voice. "I will marry Prince Julian."

The room falls dead silent and my father's eyes fill with sadness as he turns to look at me.

"Soa-"

I reach for his hand to stop him and rise to my feet, keeping my face free of emotion. My heart was shattering into a million pieces but I would not give Prince Julian the satisfaction of knowing how much this hurt me.

"My King, you have worked tirelessly to achieve the peace in which this kingdom lives and I will not jeopardize the fate of my people for the sake of my own selfish desires. It is my duty to protect the packs under Sol De Oro," I say, my voice remaining calm and strong despite the urgency of pain I felt inside. "If marrying the Prince of Estrella del Monte secures the peace of my wolves, then so be it. Sol de Oro will be my kingdom, regardless of who leads beside me."

My father stares blankly at me.

"Father?"

"We will talk about this later, Soa," he replies dryly, turning back to the alphas in the room. "Please excuse yourself from the meeting."

"Father-"

"I will not ask again," he snaps in his Royal voice. "Leave. Now."

"Juan!" My mother snaps. "This is her decision. If she wants to make it, then she can!"

My father scowls at my mother and it seems they have an entire argument via mind link. As I wait anxiously for their response, the prince and his father seem to have their own private discussion and my anxiety grows.

My father gives a menacing growl, letting me know he's lost the battle with my mother. My heart falls to the pit of my stomach.

"Is this what you want Soa?" He asks, his voices softening for me.

No!

I turn to the prince, a deant look on my face.

"Yes," I reply quietly.

Father sighs, closing his eyes to contain the emotions swirling within. "Then you have my blessing."

I swallow the lump forming in my throat. "Thank you."

"Well then," King Jose says cheerfully. "We must sort out the logistics."

"We can worry about those later," my father growls. "For now, the only thing that matters is that Sol de Oro and Estrella del Monte's borders are open to the each other and there shall be no more disputes over territory."

The King's smile widens in agreement and the meeting continues. I no longer pay attention, my mind replaying the events that just occurred.

What have I done? I panic.

As the meeting drags on, I feel myself suffocating and I tug at my mother's dress under the table. She scowls at me.

"What is it?" She hisses.

"Can I be excused?" I plead.

She gives me her full attention. Her rigid features soften as she notices my trembling hands.

"Take Roberto with you," she sighs.

I nod and quietly excuse myself from the meeting, feeling the eyes of my future husband follow me as I exit the room.

Roberto, the Royal Gamma, comes rushing out when he sees me burst into the hall way.

"Que paso, su alteza, {what happened, your majesty?}" he asks as I struggle to keep my emotions in check.

"Nothing, I just need some fresh air," I lie.

He frowns at me but I refuse to give him further details and ask for a nice stroll along the beach nearby.

"As you wish," he sighs.

Mateo's POV

"Teo let's go!" Emiliano cries excitedly as he pulls on his swim trunks. "We have to be back before our parents come home from the meeting!"

I toss a ball between my hands and grin at him. "Don't worry, kiddo. We'll be back before they even notice."

Valentina storms into the bedroom, glaring at Emi and I. "Where do you two think you're going?" She crosses her arms and taps her foot impatiently. "You know Mami said we can't go to the beach."

I jump off Emiliano's bed and crouch down in front of her. "Well Mami isn't here right now, is she?" I snicker, sticking my tongue out at her and ruing her hair.

She scrunches her nose at me and pushes my arm away

"Ugh! Don't mess up my hair," she grumbles.

"Oh come on Vale, you know you want to come," I tease her.

"Me? Spend four hours with you and captain ***** over there?" She says, gesturing to Emiliano with her head. "Uh. No thanks. I'd rather eat sand."

"That can be arranged," Emiliano chirps, slinging his arm over her shoulders and pulling her head into his armpit, forcing her to smell his prepubescent stench

She screeches at him to let her go and frantically swings her arms around, slapping his face and his chest with all her might.

I growl, pulling them apart to keep them from killing each other.

Twins. Double the trouble, double the annoyance.

"Knock it off, both of you," I snap. "Vale, get dressed for the beach."

"But-"

"No butts, I'm in charge until our parents get back and I say we go to the beach."

Emiliano sticks his tongue out at Vale, enraging her and she attempts to lunge at him again. I lift her up before she touches him and throw her over my shoulders. She protests, but I hear her laughter as I carry her out of Emiliano's room and towards her own, throwing her onto her bed.

"Five minutes. We'll meet you downstairs," I order and she nods excitedly.

When her five minutes are up, Valentina meets us in the living room dressed in some high waisted shorts, a striped t-shirt, and sandals.

"Took you long enough," Emiliano mumbles, causing Valentina to snarl at him.

I glare at both of them and they stop immediately. We head to the kitchen and grab a few sandwiches and cokes for the road and throw them into my backpack. Finally ready to go, I shift into my silver wolf, my little siblings gasping at the sight. Their first shift was coming up soon and they were both eager to discover what gifts Moon Goddess would bestow upon them.

It was no secret the Altamirano bloodline was incredibly powerful. My father, Alpha of our clan, could manipulate the atmosphere, creating storms on a whim. I was gifted with telekinesis, controlling objects with my mind. Regardless of their gifts, however, Emiliano and Valentina would be strong, respected wolves. Our family name ensured that.

Goddess how I hate our name!

Valentina strokes my fur, admiring its metallic gleam and I nudge her with my snout to hop on already. I lower myself and both of them climb aboard, grabbing tufts of my fur to hang onto. I run as fast as I can through the territory, hearing Emi and Vale squeal with joy as the wind rushes past them. We reach the beach in just under 20 minutes and they give me some privacy to change into my swim trunks.

The beach isn't too packed today and we quickly find a spot in the shade near the cliffs. Emiliano makes a B-line for water, diving into the warm water the second he reaches the shore while Valentina runs off to collect some sea shells to thread into bracelets for her friends. I watch my two siblings play carefree in their acts. No responsibilities holding them back. Free to live their lives as they choose. I envied them.

No one expected them to lead the pack one day. No one forced them to train endless hours or study war tactics for future usage. No one decided their lives for them.

Being alpha is an honor, my wolf, Luis, snaps.

There is an entire world out there to explore, I retort, staring off into the horizon. So much I'll never get to see if I stay here.

Your family is here, Luis argues. There is nothing out there that you need.

I purse my lips in disagreement. I've had this argument countless times with my wolf and even my father but no matter what I said, they wanted me to lead the pack while I ached to roam the world and discover all of its secrets. Annoyed, I get to my feet, dusting off the sand on my legs and walk aimlessly along the shoreline.

Luis, however is not nished with his sermon and continues to berate me about becoming the next Alpha of our clan. I'm so immersed in our argument, I don't notice the girl walking towards me and collide right into her, knocking both of us to the ground. My strong build covers her body and her face ushes angrily.

She is easily the most gorgeous girl I'd ever seen and I stare dumbfoundedly at her for a few seconds, unwilling to take my eyes off of her.

"Umm, excuse me, but can you get the hell off of me?"