

3. Hate at First Sight

Mateo's POV

"Umm, excuse me, but can you get the hell off of me?" She snarls at me.

Her voice had an air of arrogance and I could sense the wolf within, a powerful beast at that. I felt the urge to bow before her and I knew then, she was a gold wolf.

She must be the princess Soa, I groan to myself.

I was not fond of the Royal family. In fact, I was not fond of anyone who took their title too seriously. Alphas were just assholes who liked authority, Betas kissed ass and took orders, and gammas were just gloried body guards. As for Royals, they were born into their position. Nothing merited their ability to lead other than their gifts from the Moon and Sun.

They could all care less about what goes on in their packs. Hell, since the recent fall of the Medellin cartel, there's been a scramble for power in the drug world and while we wolves tended to stay away from human affairs, several rogues and even some established packs were partaking in the Drug war. Everyone in Mexico was feeling the inuence of the cartels grow and the royals did little to protect our packs from the growing violence. The Gulf cartel and their allies, the Cali cartel had settled along the coast while to the north, the Sinaloa cartel dominated the market. Sure, our packs were at peace with each other, but wolves were not free of danger from the sudden inux of drugs and weapons. Kids were especially vulnerable and I feared for my brother and sister every time they went off to school. They had not shifted and a single stray bullet could cut their lives short.

To the royals, all that mattered was territory, everything else was just politics. They were constantly conquering new packs and expanding their region of power. If you asked me, they were no different than the greedy cartels plaguing Latin America.

But there was something about this Princess that I found alluring. I had expected a docile Princess, one who would be too consumed with the latest fashion to form an actual coherent thought about the land she was to rule, but I was greatly mistaken. The re in Soa's beautiful amber eyes, those mesmerizing pools of honey looking at me with such pure anger, is telling me this Princess was anything but an air headed Royal.

"Will you quit staring and get off?" She snaps, glaring daggers at me.

I'm on my feet in an instant, offering her a hand to help her up. She looks at the hand in disgust and picks herself up without my help. At a loss and against my will, I bend over in a respectful bow and offer an apology for crashing into her.

"Watch where you're going next time." She growls. "Moron," she mutters.

I grin at this. "For a Princess, you sure are rude."

She blushes and scowls at me. "What did you say?" she hisses.

I shrug playfully and smirk, infuriating her even more much to my amusement.

"I'm just saying, I expected at lot more from a future Queen." I laugh. "A princess who insults her subjects is not likely to last."

Her eyes narrow at my jab. "Who the hell do you think you are to speak to me this way?"

Never mind, she is a snob. I sigh. Another wolf who takes herself too seriously.

I offer her my hand once more and give her a cheeky grin. "Mateo, at your service."

"Mateo what?" She says, eying my hand suspiciously.

"Just Mateo." I reply. I knew what she wanted, but I hated giving my last name. People always treated me differently whenever they knew I was an Altamirano silver wolf. That cursed last name carried power and prestige, but I wanted to be seen for my own merits, not the name of my family.

The Princess looks disdainfully at me, dusting off her dress and xing her hair.

"Well, Just Mateo, what is the name of your pack? I would like a word with your Alpha on teaching you some manners or at least treating woman with respect and keeping your eyes to yourself!" She mutters and I almost burst into laughter.

"Don't atter, yourself, nena. You're hot, but not my type. I'm not into uptight prudes."

A slap to the face shuts me up.

I guess I deserved that.

I rub my sore cheek and smile back at the Princess. Her face is puffed and red with anger. I don't know what it is about the future Queen, but I nd her inexplicably amusing. Perhaps it's her tiny stature. At almost 18 years of age, her Highness stood at a mere 5 feet.

I let my eyes roam her and I take in her features. Her hair is as black as night itself and her skin is a deep olive color that almost glistens in the sun. She had perfect pouty lips that I craved to taste and a cute little button nose. Her eyes were by far the best feature, her gold orbs shaded by a thick layer of eyelashes

Her voice breaks me out of my trance.

"If you ever call me a prude again, I'll-" she stomps her feet furiously as she thinks up a threat and its absolutely adorable. "I'll..."

"You'll?" I grin at her.

She blushes but keeps the scowl on her face. "I'll show you what a gold wolf does when a wolf steps out of line," she threatens.

I ght the urge to roll my eyes and laugh but decide it was best not to keep testing her for now.

"As you wish, your majesty," I say, bowing for her mockingly.

"It's not your majesty, it's your High-"

"Teo! Tell him to stop bugging me!" Valentina squeals, storming over to us as Emiliano shoves something in her face. Her features contort in disgust and she lets out a scream.

I glare at Emi but he's too excited by what's in his hand to fear me.

"Mateo look!" Emiliano chirps as he rushes over to me, a small hermit crab in his hand. "Isn't it cool? Look at its little casita (house). He's so cute! Can I keep him? Can I? Please?"

Emiliano's eyes were like saucers, lit up with pure unadulterated joy for the existence of the little creature.

"It's adorable Emi, now leave your sister alone and put it back where you found it," I sigh, shaking my head disapprovingly.

"But I want to keep it. I promise I'll take good care of it!" Emiliano whines. "What if someone steps on it and kills my little friend?"

Emiliano's heart is too pure sometimes.

"Emiliano, it's not a pet," I say, crouching down to face him. "This beach is its home. Imagine if someone kidnapped you and took you to their house to live as their pet, away from your family and friends. Your little friend here has a family. You don't want to separate him from his family, do you?" I ask.

His face falls and he shakes his head. "No..."

"So put him back, kid. He'll be much happier here."

Emiliano sighs with a heavy heart and strokes the shell of the hermit crab with a delicate nger.

"You know, you can nd him a much better place to live here on the beach," the Princess offers, her voice scaring me for a split second.

I had completely forgotten she was there. It seems Emiliano and Valentina hadn't noticed she was there either and they both blush bright red at having missed the beautiful girl standing right in front of them. They nervously bow and the Princess smiles politely at them, stepping over to Emiliano.

"Emiliano is it?" She asks and he nods timidly. "You can put him on the rocks over there so no one steps on him. He can live a long and happy life here where he belongs," she chirps.

Emiliano's blush deepens as she speaks to him.

"T-thank you, your Highness," he stutters before bowing once more for her and dashing over to the cliffs as she suggested.

Valentina xes her hair frantically and curtsies for the Royal once Emiliano leaves

"Your Highness, what a pleasure to meet you," she giggles excitedly.

"My, what a polite young lady. Nothing like the brute standing next to you," she mutters, her gaze turning to ice as it settles on me.

Valentina laughs. "Oh don't mind my older brother. He's an i****t but completely harmless."

I growl at her but she only shrugs me off. Valentina's eyes light up as an idea pops into her head

"We would be most honored if you accompany us for dinner. You could meet our parents! They're-"

I shove my hand over her mouth to shut her up and she slaps at my hand. The Princess raises an eyebrow at me but I only smile as I continue to smother Valentina.

"They're not home right now, is what she meant to say and we should really get going, your Highness. Besides, I'm sure you have much more important things to deal with than hanging out with the mill wolves of the mill wolves. Have an excellent walk. Excuse us."

I quickly shove Valentina in the opposite direction while the Princess stares blankly at us as we leave, completely bemused by the events that unfolded.

When we're a safe distance away, Valentina shoves me away.

"Run of the mill wolves? Teo, we're silver wolves, Altamirano silver wolves at that. Now you got her thinking we're a bunch of nobodies! And why were you so rude to the Princess?" She hisses.

"One, we're not supposed to be here so how exactly would you plan on explaining to our parents about your connection to the Princess? Two, she was rude to me rst. And three, being an Altamirano wolf does not mean we're better than anyone else. Remember that. It's just a name for crying out loud. We're no different from any other wolf. Besides, you know I don't like aunting my powers around like that."

"There's nothing wrong with being proud of what you are," Valentina huffs. "We're silver wolves. No point in hiding it."

"Perhaps when you're older, you'll understand my point of view," I sigh, ruing up her hair. "For now, let's just go home before Mom and Dad nd out we left without telling them."

Valentina rolls her eyes as I whistle at Emiliano to come over. Her sprints over and I take them through the jungle until I nd a suitable place to shift.

Soa's POV

When I return from the beach to the hotel, my father calls me into his conference room.

"Yes, your majesty?" I say quietly as I enter the room.

My mother is sitting by a window over looking the city and beach below. She looks regal in her silent despair.

"Me puedes explicar porque aceptastes la propuesta de ese muchacho? {can you explain why you accepted that young man's proposal}" my father asks.

I stare at me feet and sigh. "Madero is a beautiful city," I reply. "It's a beautiful city and it's home to several wolves who are under our care."

My father listens quietly, knowing I have a point to make. I admire this about him. He's a leader who actually listens and doesn't just impose his will. I hope to be a good Queen as he is a good King.

"But... this city is under attack. Not by wolves but by the cartels. Just walking through the city, I could see the damage and the fear of the people. As much as I hate to admit it, Mexico is in the pockets of those drug lords and it won't be long before the cartels start affecting us too. I will not add to the burden of our people. If the King of Estrella del Monte wants to combine our kingdoms and that in turn strengthens our armies, then a marriage is a small sacrifice to pay for security."

Father gives me a stern look but I don't budge.

"Father, you taught me that my peoples needs come before my own. So left me protect our people. Let me marry Julian," I plead.

My father pulls me into a hug and kisses my forehead. "When did you grow up all of a sudden? You were just a kid."

I chuckle into his chest. "I'm almost 18, father. I assure you, I'm not a child anymore."

He pulls back and cups my face. "You will always be my little girl, no matter how big your crowns gets, young lady. Remember that."

"Speaking of birthdays," my mother nally speaks. "Your beloved Prince will be making an appearance at your birthday ball," she sighs. "And he's also requested to take you out to dinner in an attempt to get to know you."

I nod. "Alright."

She stiffens her back. "So get ready. He's waiting for you downstairs as we speak."