

## SIX

I was forced back into the duties I thought I'd escaped. Yes, forced. A warrior dragged me back to the kitchen and I got a good scolding from Maria. She did not know I ran away. All she cared about was the perfect execution of the hand-over ceremony. Nothing else mattered but her reputation as a diligent and dutiful event planner for the Silver Moon pack. The warrior hung around the kitchen. Every time I came out with a tray, he was there, keeping an eye on me and trailing behind me to make sure I didn't escape.

This was Kade's way of ensuring I did what he asked, that I continued to stay back in this wretched pack, acting as his slave for the rest of my life. The thought of how long I would continue like this made my shoulders sag as I carried a stack of plates to the large hall that would soon be open to guests.

Today, I was part of the cooking and catering service so I put on a white shirt and black skirt like all the other omegas working alongside me. It would be a long day. The official event was scheduled to last for five hours. At midnight, we would all watch the initiation ceremony after which

there would be an after-party for the youths to celebrate all night.

As my punishment for turning up late today, Maria put me on duty to serve both during the day and at the night party. She must think I did not deserve sleep because of my one-hour lateness.

"Move out of my way, omega." A random girl in the pack shoved past me to get to her friends.

They were all dressed in tight-fitting, short gowns with flawless and beautiful makeup covering their faces. Their hair and nails were done and the girls giggled, admiring themselves as they got together. The three of them looked like dolls laughing, hugging and giggling.

The pack invited several Alphas from prominent packs and these Alphas would come with their Betas. One or two people may be lucky enough to find their mates at such a large gathering and the rest could settle for short flings with powerful men.

The girls were dressed to the nines and the men did not fall too far behind. Everywhere I went, I saw a cluster of dazzling-looking people catching up with friends and excitedly whispering about what Alpha or Beta they looked forward to seeing the most.

"Alpha Adrian will be arriving soon," I heard one cluster say as I worked to set up the banquet area.

Members of the pack came in to admire the hall's setting before the event started, but none of them volunteered to help out the omegas who decorated the place they were fawning over. They all walked about in their heels and fancy dress shoes, making the omegas have to work around them.

After setting up the banquet area, I went back to the kitchen to join the others in bringing the food to the hall I had set up. The warrior assigned to make sure I did not escape followed indiscreetly as I went back and forth, not bothering to help me haul plates and food.

"Have you seen Alpha Dimitri? He and his Beta arrived an hour ago. Man, he got my panties wet from one look!" A girl sighed, clutching her hands to her chest.

"He looked at you?" Another girl asked, the envy clear in her tone.

"Forget Alpha Dimitri. I heard Alpha Cahir will be arriving today."



"No way will Alpha Cahir be coming. He always sends his Beta to functions like this but I would not mind though, I have seen pictures of that man and damn is he hot!" A girl fanned herself.

"Yeah, Beta or Alpha, we would be lucky to catch the eye of one of them."

I closed my ears against the mindless gossip around me. From girls praying to catch a man's eyes to men betting on snagging one of the daughters accompanying their fathers, the talk started to disgust me so I allowed my misery to take over me as I worked.

"Hey, you." Someone in the crowd called as I covered the chafing dishes after I was done setting up only for someone to pull me by the hair. I winced at the sharp pain I felt on my scalp at the tight grip on my head.

"Who are you to ignore me?" I twisted my body to see the person who had such a tight grip on my hair. "Did you not hear me call you?" She spat out, her green eyes darkening as she glared at me.

"Avalon, what is it this time?" I sighed, trying to pry her hand from my hair.

"You bitch!" She dragged me closer by my hair. "Who are you to speak to me like that!?"

Avalon was one of the few Alpha she-wolves around my age in this pack. She had vibrant red hair and dark green eyes, pouty lips and a tall slender body. She had the nastiest attitude on anyone I ever met. She was rude to everyone but she was even ruder to me and for what!?

"I am sorry, I did not hear you call. What is it you want?" I asked in a tired voice. This pack had the ability to drain all of my energy in a short time. I did not know what Avalon wanted from me but a lot of times, she just wanted to humiliate me to make herself feel better.

"You need to learn your place." She shoved sharp and pointy nails into my chest, making me stumble back. "This is Kade's occasion. I don't want you ruining it for him," she declared.

No one on the planet knew that Kade and I were mates because no one was there when our wolves recognized each other. We were the only ones there when he rejected me and I accepted his rejection and I knew darn well the shame of being mated to an omega like me would never allow him to tell

anyone. On the other hand, I had no one to tell anything because I had no friends. Yet sometimes I wondered if Avalon knew. She was rude to everyone but why did she make it a point to pick on me? It made me think she was jealous of me because of Kade which made no sense as I was rejected already!

"What makes you think I am ruining it for him?" I asked her, tired of her stupid antics, irked by everything.

"When I am talking to you, you keep quiet!" Her palm struck my cheek. My head whipped to the side and stayed like that for a full minute. I didn't even have the strength to cry or fight back. "Who are you –" Her hand raised again and I readied myself for another slap but someone caught her hand midair.

"That's enough." I raised my head to see Kade staring down at his girlfriend with indifferent eyes.

"Baby, this bitch insulted me!" Avalon lowered her hand, her ugly expression morphing into one of sadness and helplessness. "I was just trying to teach her a lesson." She sniffed.

"Leave this place." He addressed me with cold eyes. "And make yourself scarce throughout this event." He pulled his girlfriend with him. "The event will



start in thirty minutes." He announced to the crowd watching the drama unfold.

I exited the hall behind them, feeling nothing but fatigue deep in my bones. After the incident, Maria took me off the list of people to serve in the hall, placing me in the kitchen to wash the dishes and join the preparation for the night party.

The party was in full swing now. All the sounds in the pack house had migrated to the hall and I could hear bits and pieces of what was happening in there. I and a number of other girls were working in the ginormous pack kitchen when Avalon walked in, her heels clicking on the ground.

A few people turned to greet her but she ignored all of them, walking toward me with purpose shining in her eyes. I knew a confrontation was underway and it involved me the minute the door opened and she walked in. High-ranked people like Avalon did not enter the kitchen for any reason. They always had omegas to serve them.

"Stay away from my boyfriend," she snarled as she came to stand behind me. I pretended she was not talking to me.

Asides from her rudeness, Avalon had a flair for

drama and she did not know now was not the best time for drama. No matter how much Kade doted on her, how did she think he would react to her causing trouble on a day so important to him?

"Are you deaf or do you think you have a chance with him because you have huge breasts?" She sneered. I ignored the urge to look down at my chest. I was curvy but nothing about my breast was huge.

"I am talking to you!" She poked my shoulder as a cool feeling washed over me. Home never had a scent to me but the scent I perceived next made me feel at home. "Here, maybe this will help you return to your senses!" Avalon's words faded from my existence as I turned.

Mate!

My wolf howled one word as I turned to see a man filling the doorway. Before I had time to process the new revelation, scalding hot liquid poured from my head, roasting my skin.

"You should run." Those were the words I heard but they sounded like 'you are dead,' considering the harsh voice that spoke them and the growling that followed.