

Mated to the Alpha and His Beta novel

Chapter 481

Chapter 481 Stella

I slept late the next morning. By the time I got up, morning sun was slanting brightly through the window of my attic room. I watched the dust motes dancing in the beams for a long time. If I concentrated, I could see right inside them, like each was a tiny little planet all on their own. I imagined each one filled with civilizations, rising and falling. Maybe on one of them, a tiny Celestial, all alone in her bed, was looking at the dust motes in her own sunbeam...

"Gah." I sat up, shaking off those feelings. I was about to get lost in my mind. Maybe so deep I wouldn't be able to get out.

Anyway, my stomach was rumbling. It seemed impossible that I could be hungry with my heart so heavy, but...no matter how many supernatural talents I could use, I was still in this body, and apparently, this body needed to eat on a regular basis.

I'd left my clothes from the night before in a pile on the floor. They stank of sweat and spilled beer, with the faintest hint of the other odors that had filled The Silver Crescent. I wrinkled my nose but tossed them into the hamper. I wasn't sure what to do about washing them.

Here was another thing I was having to learn about skipping from childhood right to adulthood-was I going to have to do my own laundry?

I showered quickly, brushed my teeth, and dressed in a pair of flowered leggings with a long tunic top. I paired this outfit with the same ballet flats from the night before. The mirror told me I looked cute, but I didn't feel it. I looked tired.

Not feeling like putting on makeup, I used a little bit of energy to pink up my cheeks and darken my eyelashes. Nothing too obvious, but at least I didn't look hungover anymore. I didn't want to have to explain to my parents why my face was so haggard and drawn.

I could smell something good wafting from the kitchen as I went downstairs. I followed my nose along the corridors, past closed doors, pausing to peek into any rooms with open ones. I could've dug into the minds of the various staff members passing me on their way to their duties, or even into my Dad's or Papa's, but I was trying not to overextend myself. Using powers on people without their knowledge felt icky, but especially when it wasn't for their benefit, but only for mine.

Was I ever going to figure out how all of this was supposed to work? Shaking my head, I peered into an open room that featured floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. It also had a nice

fireplace, no fire lit now, and a set of cozy looking armchairs facing it. Tall windows let in a lot of light, but sheer curtains diffused it, making it soft. I stepped inside to take a closer look and let out a slow breath.

It was the library from inside my head. Right down to the scrolled woodwork on the arms of the chairs and the floor lamp with the stained-glass shade. With my mouth open in wonder, I went to the shelves and studied the books. I ran my finger along the spines.

The books here were different, anyway. Which made sense, since in my head, the books were a construct I'd imagined as a way of helping to catalog and coordinate the myriad of supernatural powers I could access. Here, they were just books. Novels, non-fiction, even a few photo albums.

Intrigued, I pulled an album off the shelf and flipped through it. I recognized my grandma Gabriela right away, even though she looked so much younger. She was smiling, happy, her arm linked through a man's. That must be my grandfather, Orion. I studied him closely. He didn't look evil.

Frowning, I flipped through more pages. Pictures of my Daddy when he was a pup made me giggle. I could see myself in those pictures. I traced the lines of his face for a moment, imagining what it might have been like if I'd been born a normal pup.

Strangely, the photos comforted me in a way the Moon Goddess's words from the night before hadn't quite managed. I might stumble through social encounters, but these pictures and the resemblance I shared with my father showed me that I did belong here in Constantine. It was my lineage. My home.

"Oh, shit. Sorry. Didn't know anyone was in here."

I turned at the rasping female voice and saw Aunt Selena in the doorway. She carried a carafe that smelled like coffee and an empty mug. Dark sunglasses covered her eyes, and her hair was wet like she'd come right out of the shower. She wore a plain T-shirt and a pair of fuzzy pajama bottoms emblazoned with cartoon characters, along with a matching set of bunny slippers. [SEARCH THE \(Find\)NOVEL.NET website](http://www.findnovel.net) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"I was trying to hide from my sister," she said.

Quickly, I moved around her to close the door. I locked it. Turned back.

"Yeah," I said. "Me too."

Chapter 482

Chapter 482

Stella

"I only brought one mug," Selena said.

I shook my head. "That's okay. I don't really like coffee."

"Huh." She moved past me to one of the comfy armchairs. She put the carafe on the small table between them and plopped herself in the chair, her legs sprawling. The mug dangled limply from her hand. She didn't pour anything into it.

"I mean, it's okay. I just don't...I mean, I don't need a mug, that's all. I can get one if I want to," I hastily amended myself. Drinking coffee was an adult thing to do, right? Only littles didn't drink coffee. "You're talking way too fucking loud," Selena said.

"Sorry." I coughed into my hand. After a second, I locked the library door, but I wasn't sure if I should sit in the chair next to hers.

Or leave. I could leave. Maybe I should. She clearly didn't want anyone around her.

"What are you doing in here?" She sat up straight enough to pour her mug full of coffee, then slouched back to sip it slowly. She grimaced. "Fuck, that's gross. And hot. Ugh. Is there any alcohol in this room? I need some hair of the dog."

"I don't...understand what that..." Quickly, I accessed some of that internal library, seeking a knowledge skill that would let me extrapolate the meaning of her phrase from context. "Oh. That works?"

"It's supposed to." Selena's gaze was still hidden behind those dark glasses, but I could feel her eyes boring into me. "I don't usually drink that much, but last night felt weird."

I looked around the room for something that would help her and found a small bar car stocked with decanters, crystal glasses, and even a bottle of wine. My own stomach churned at the sight of that. I held up a decanter of clear liquid.

"This?"

"Ugh..." Selena groaned. "If I never see tequila again, it'll be too soon."

"I think it's " I took off the cap and sniffed. The alcohol stung my nostrils. A quick scan of internal information. "Vodka?" Search the FindNOvel.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Oh. Sure, that'll be fine. Maybe. Fuck if I know." She sounded lazy and kind of angry, but there was a small tremble in her voice that I could tell she was trying to hide.

Anyone else wouldn't have noticed it at all, so I pretended that I didn't, either.

She held up her mug, the coffee sloshing, and I added some vodka to it. Selena sipped. Grimaced. Sipped again. This time, she shrugged and fell back against the chair again. "Is it working?" I asked her.

She snorted. "Maybe. I might have to hurl. Who knows."

"I'm sorry."

"Look," she said, barely concealing her snarl. "I don't need your sympathy, okay? I'm fine. Why don't you go play with some toys or something. Leave your old auntie alone." Irritation straightened my back. "I'm too old for toys."

"No, you're not. You're like, three years old."

"I..." My frown felt like it was carving deep grooves into the sides of my face. I tried to smooth my expression, but the waves of aggression rolling off her were a lot to fight. I cleared my throat. "Oh, that's right," she said with a sneer before I could find the words to say anything. "You're special. Special, Celestial, Stella. Tell me, honey, why are you in here hiding from my sister?"

"I was just looking for a book. I'm tired of her hovering over me. That's all." It felt disloyal to say that about my mom, even if it was true. "Why are you?"

"Because I don't want to see her. Duh." Selena glugged back the rest of her mug and held it out. "More."

"It's a little early to get drunk, isn't it?"

"Did I ask you?"

"Well," I said after a moment's hesitation, confused about why she was being so mean. My brow furrowed, and I didn't try to smooth it. "You literally just did."

"Ugh," she said again. "You're like a damned little robot, aren't you? Taking everything literally? Shit, I can see you processing like a fucking laptop."

My mouth popped open in shock, dismay, and...yes. Anger. "What an incredibly rude thing to say!"

"That's me. Rude AF."

Again, I had to scan to interpret what she meant, and when she smiled snidely, I shut off that internal search.

"It means 'as fuck,'" Selena told me. "Which is totally different than ass fuck, in case your little..." She twirled her finger around in a circle in my direction. "Whatever the fuck you have going on in there can't figure it out."

My chin went up. "I don't have anything going on."

Her laugh did not sound like she thought I was being funny. "Sure you don't. I'll say it again. Go away and play with your toys, you infant."

"I'm not an infant! I'm grown enough to go to The Silver Crescent, just like you. Only I'm not stupid enough to get so drunk it makes me hungover!" This was partly true, anyway.

Selena sat up. "Liar. I'd have seen you, or someone would've noticed the special Celestial in our presence."

Briefly, I transformed into Elleah. Then back to my usual appearance.

"Holy shit," Selena breathed. "That was you?"

Then she burst into hysterical laughter.

Chapter 483

Chapter 483 Stella

"Oh, my sister will shit a ton of bricks if she found out her precious little snookum-ookums was out last night. At the Crescent, of all places? Girly, she never even liked going there herself. She said it was trashy." Selena snorted more laughter and shook her head. She put the mug on the table and swiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "Shit. What were you doing there?"

I put the decanter of vodka back on the cart while I tried to get myself into some kind of emotional coolness. Selena had really made me mad. Hurt my feelings, too.

With my back to her, I said, "Why are you being so mean to me for no reason?"

"Aww, puddin'. I get that you think you're special, but trust me. I'm just a bitch to everyone."

I took the seat next to hers. "I don't think I'm special. I actually am special, Aunt Selena."

"So fucking earnest, too. And don't call me that." She grimaced.

"Why not?" search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Because I told you not to, kid, and I'm your elder."

"Don't say that," I told her harshly. "Don't call yourself anyone's elder. That's...they're gone."

Selena's mean laughter faded. So did her smile. She studied me in silence, and after a few seconds, shook her head. "You're a piece of work. I can tell you're my sister's daughter, all right. You both have the same smug, self-satisfied face."

My hands flew up to touch my cheeks. At her wide eyes, I put them down. I tried hard to stop myself from frowning. "I don't. And you shouldn't talk about my mother that way."

"I'll talk about her any way I want to. She was my sister long before she was your mother."

"But...it's mean," I said, sounding helpless. "I just don't understand."

Selena got up and stalked to the bar cart. She opened the vodka decanter and drank directly from it. She put it down, then whirled to face me with her fists clenched. I could see the flare of her gaze even through the dark sunglasses. Her wolf snarled, and she bit it back.

"She abandoned me," she said finally. "She just up and fucking left, okay? No clue where she was. What she was doing, if she was okay, nothing. I had to watch my mother grieve her like she was dead, okay? I can never forgive her for that."

"She was trying to save you. And everyone else. And she did," I told my aunt, even though I could tell my words weren't going to change her mind.

I could do something else to her that would, though.

"Don't you fucking dare," Selena growled. "I can see it on your face, I told you that. If you're going to go around manipulating people, you'd better learn to hide it with a little more skill."

I didn't say anything, but I didn't try to use any energies to calm her down, either.

Selena made a wild gesture at the books on the wall. "Yeah, I studied up on you, kid. Some of these books, only a couple, have information in them about Celestials. So I know all about you, and what you're capable of. So don't you dare try."

To my alarm, her breath hitched in and out on sobs. Silver tears trickled out from beneath the sunglasses. She didn't bother to wipe them away.

"You think it's been easy for me? Ever since I turned eighteen, it's been like every step I take, some horny dude is there trying to get in my pants. I can feel their stupid wolves circling mine. I can't even go out dancing without having to fend them off. The other girls are nearly out of their minds with jealousy because all the guys they're interested in taking as mates are slobbering over me. I can feel them," Selena said. "I can feel them starting to hate me because everyone wants me so much. And none of them, not a single damned one, actually wants to take me as his mate. My sister has three mates, and I can't even get one guy to like me."

"That's not my mom's fault. She didn't make you a hybrid."

"No, but she sure as hell could've stuck around to help me figure out how to get through this!"

I shook my head and kept my voice low. "Ah...I mean, Selena, she couldn't have. Don't you get it? There was more at stake than you. If she hadn't gone off the way she did, you probably—"

"Oh, I know. I'd have been mated the moment I turned eighteen. Probably to two males who might not have liked me, either. But don't you get it? As awful as that might've been, at least I'd have had my sister here!" Selena burst into thick, harsh sobs.

I knew she didn't want my sorries, so I didn't say it again. I did step closer to her. I reached but didn't dare touch her. Instead, I said the only thing I could think of.

"I can help you."

Chapter 485

Chapter 485 Stella

Selena sobered up, her laughter fading to silence. "You're serious."

"Yes."

She tilted her head to look me over. Her eyebrows knitted together. "Last night...they were all circling me, like they were sharks and I was a bucket of chum. It was making me crazy, you know? Like, I just wanted to dance and have a good time."

"You keep calling them other things, but I know what you mean. I heard you scream."

"Some asshole grabbed my butt. But I put him in his place. Nobody else really noticed. I didn't think I screamed. Maybe I shouted a little, but the music was so loud..." Selena's voice once again trailed to silence. She coughed into her fist. "Okay, this is freaky."

"I'm sorry. I don't want to be freaky."

For a moment, I thought she was going to give me another sarcastic comment, but my aunt only nodded. "I get it. You can't really help it, though. Can you."

"I guess not."

"Is that why you changed how you look?"

It was my turn to nod.

My aunt sighed and let her head fall against the back of the chair. She stared at the ceiling. "I used to think I wanted guys fighting over me, you know? I wanted to be so pretty, so special, so...whatever. "Oh, gosh. You are so pretty!" The words tumbled out of my mouth before I could stop them, not that I wanted to. My aunt was beautiful. "If anything, I wish I looked more like you."

"None of those men want me, actually me. They aren't even attracted to me because of how I look or dress, or the sound of my voice, or my sense of humor. None of that shit matters to them, because the only reason they're panting after me like they're the ones in heat is because my ancestors aren't all wolf shifters." She let out a harsh chuckle that sounded like it hurt her throat.

"I know that. I'm sorry."

This time, she didn't tell me to fuck off. She rolled her head to look at me. "You say you can help me, though?"

"I did last night."

She let her face tip toward the ceiling again. "Is that why they all of a sudden started leaving me alone?"

"Yes. I felt your distress, and I couldn't watch it anymore. It felt like they were getting ready to hurt you. At least some of them wanted to."

Selena sat up, her body shaking with a shiver of revulsion. "That's so fucking gross." SEARCH THE website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"I don't know if any of them would have, but they were thinking about it."

"I know. I could feel them, too. But you made them back off?"

I nodded. "It was just a little pulse. A tiny push. I didn't want to get in their heads too much, so I didn't do anything they'd be able to really feel. I just kind of shielded you from them. Made you..." "Not invisible," she said. "I'd have noticed if you'd done something that intense."

"No. But a little transparent, maybe?" I chewed the inside of my cheek, trying to remember exactly what I'd done. "I just kind of nudged them into wanting something else. Another beer. A dance with a different partner. It won't last, I mean, they might start feeling like they want to pursue you again."

"But you could nudge them again, right?"

"I think so." I took a few seconds to scan my internal library, calculating different ways I could keep her safe from the toads. Or the sharks. Whatever it was she wanted to call them. When I focused on her again, my aunt was sitting up with an odd expression.

"It really is kind of like watching a computer work through a program," she said. "I don't mean for that to hurt your feelings, Stella. It's just that you get this distant look in your eyes. Then you come back." "I'll work on that. You can help me. It'll be part of the fitting in."

Selena sighed. "I don't know, kid. I don't think your parents will be cool with you going to bars with me. I mean, they can't be down with you using your Celestial powers to change yourself so you can go out partying."

"My Abba...it was his idea."

Selena's eyebrows shot up. "Get out of here right now."

Confused, I stood but she waved me to sit again.

"No. I mean, I'm just surprised that Mason would do that."

"He feels out of place, too. He wanted to help. And even though I bungled it on my own, if you help me, I think it could work."

"Does my sister know about it?" When I hesitated, Selena laughed. "That's a no. Well, that's fine with me."

"You could forgive her," I said.

She shrugged. "I could. We'll see."

"So...you'll help me? And let me help you?"

"Yes," she said, then leaned forward with a wicked grin. "But not here in town. I'll have to take you someplace else."

Chapter 486

Chapter 486 Stella

No matter how much I asked, Selena refused to tell me about this club.

She shook her head and waved a hand at me. Some color had come back into her cheeks. She thought it was the vodka, but I'd been subtly sending out some healing energies to her. Nothing overt, just tiny touches to her liver and stomach. I knew she'd be mad if she thought I was manipulating her body...and that was something I'd need to ask the Moon Goddess for guidance about.

Wasn't it okay to use my talents for good use, even if the other person didn't know and might not want it?

"Quit grumping about it," Selena's voice broke into my thoughts. "I just don't want you spilling the beans to my sister or your dads. They'd never let us go where I'm planning to take you."

"Why not?" I thought I was being clever, trying to get her to reveal more to me, but Selena just laughed and wagged a finger at me.

"Nope. You'll find out when we get there. We'll leave later tonight, oh, like around nine. That'll get us there by..." She paused and grinned. "Not telling you, in case you decide to use some of those freaky tracking talents or whatever you've got going on to map out all the possibilities within travel distance." [SEARCH THE FindNOVEL.NET WEBSITE](http://www.findnovel.net) TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

I rolled my eyes and crossed my arms over my chest. "You're just being ridiculous now."

"Are you telling me that if my sister gets a whiff of our plans and confronts you to your face, you're not going to tell her everything?" Selena sounded gruff, but I could also tell that she was curious. I squirmed a little. "I don't want to lie to my parents."

Her eyebrows rose, and her smile tipped up the corners of her lips. "But you will, huh?"

"I..." I could feel my expression twist as I tried to keep it looking neutral. I'd never talked much about this to anyone. "I did basically lie to them from birth until just a short time ago."

"About being a Celestial," she said.

I nodded. My heart was heavy, but I also couldn't deny it. "I was born knowing and aware, and guided by the Moon Goddess to only reveal my true self over time. If I'd done it right away, my parents wouldn't have been able to handle it. Everything has to happen at the right time."

"I don't believe in the Moon Goddess," Selena said. Her eyes flashed.

"How can you not believe-"

"I mean, I believe that maybe once upon a time, there was some kind of thing or whatever, but is she still around? No. Does she answer prayers? Hell, no."

I wasn't quite sure how to answer

this without making her angrier. "It's not her job to answer prayers. We have to make our own choices and be responsible for them. The Moon Goddess is there to guide us, but in the end, we all do what we do on our own."

"So why bother with her, then?" Selena demanded. She got up from her chair and went to one of the shelves, to run her fingertips down the row of books before turning back around to face me again. "If we can't count on her, why should any of us ever ask her for help?"

"I..." Once again, I started to speak but couldn't find the words.

Selena gave me a triumphant look. She stabbed her finger at me in the air. "Ha! See! You don't know, either. And if a Celestial can't figure it out, I sure as hell can't be expected to."

She had so much anger inside her, and I thought I could understand a lot of it. I wished there was a way I could help her through it, or take it away...but that would mean actively shifting her emotions. I'd just told her all about how we have to make our own choices and be responsible for them. Helping an upset stomach was one thing, but it would've been hypocritical of me to manipulate her into letting go of her angst.

That was something my aunt was going to have to work through on her own.

The door to the library opened to reveal my mom.

Selena shot me a look. "I thought you locked it."

I could only shrug.

"There you are," my mom said, worry clear in her voice. "I went to your room to make sure you were okay, and when you weren't there..." "I'm fine, Mama."

My mom's gaze shot to her younger sister, and her expression softened. "Hey, Selena. I'm so glad you're here. Maybe we can grab some tea?"

"Why don't you go on ahead and get it," Selena said. "I'll meet you in the dining room."

My mom's expression was a mixture of happiness and uncertainty, but she nodded and quietly let herself out of the door. She closed it behind her. As soon as it was shut, my aunt turned to me. "See?" she hissed. "It doesn't matter how tall you get. She's never going to let you grow up."

Chapter 487

Chapter 487 Stella

I couldn't shake what my aunt had said. Obviously, my parents were all still trying to adjust to how fast I'd grown up, but I'd thought they were all taking it in stride. At least as much as they could have, anyway. And I couldn't blame my mom for being protective of me. Not after all we'd been through. What mother wouldn't worry for the daughter she'd seen destroy an army?

But I couldn't live my entire life being watched over by my parents. First of all, now that my body was finally aligned with my mind, I knew that sooner rather than later, the Moon Goddess would tell me of my final purpose. Second, my Abba's advice was sticking with me. I couldn't know how long I had here in this world, and I wanted to experience as much life as I could...while I could. And, finally, I wanted my mom to have the same chance.

At eighteen, she'd been mated to the Constantine Alpha and his Beta. Shortly after that, she'd gotten pregnant with me...then her memory had been stripped from her. For her protection, sure, but even so, it had left some psychic scars on her that might never be totally healed, even if she didn't know that. She'd met my Abba. Fallen in love with him. The Moon Goddess had given all four of my parents her greatest blessing, but I knew more than anyone how being unique and special wasn't always the blessing it had been meant to be. [SEARCH THE FINDNOVEL.NET WEBSITE](http://TheFindNovel.net) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

It was a lot of work. It caused stress, being different. Even the good parts could feel like they were too much, overwhelming.

My mom was manifesting her worry for me by being overprotective. Understanding it didn't make it easier for me to handle, but I was trying not to flip out on her.

"You never had your teenage years," she said now from behind me.

I'd been staring out the window of my bedroom, out across the tops of the trees. Toward the unknown. The sound of her voice made me jump a little.

"I didn't mean to scare you." My mom laughed a tiny bit, shrugging her shoulders. "I thought you'd be able to sense that I was there...I mean..."

"Because I'm a Celestial," I finished for her. At her open, curious expression, I decided to keep going. "Yes. I'm sure I could keep my senses on alert all the time so that nobody could ever sneak up on me. I could call on so many different kinds of skills to protect me from any threat. But that's tiresome, Mom. And I don't want to live like that."

Her lips pressed together, and her gaze flared as her wolf rose a bit. Then it shadowed. She nodded.

"I want you to feel safe, Stella."

I crossed the room to take her hands. "I do. I promise you. I do."

Her fingers squeezed mine gently before she let go. She went to the window I'd been staring out of. "It's so beautiful here. You've got the best view in the whole house. I just want you to know you can come to me about anything, little star. You bypassed all the awkward years, right from child to adult. I want you to know that I understand if there are some rough patches between us."

"Did you have them with your own mom?" I felt a little weird calling my mother's mother "grandma." That had always been Gabriela for me. I'd barely met my other grandma.

My mom turned and nodded. "Sure. We had our arguments. She wanted what was best for me, but I wasn't always ready to listen to her, and I didn't always agree. I love my mother, but we...well, we are different."

I sensed a tension in her. A sadness.

Something to do with me and the twins. I didn't want to dig into that without her permission, so I withdrew the tendrils of my senses. This wasn't as hard as keeping up a constant vigilance would've been, but it was somehow more insidious. It would be too easy to open myself up to the high emotions of the people I loved so I could help them. But, I hadn't done it with my aunt, and I wasn't going to do it with my mom.

"Has she seen or talked to you since we've been back?" my mom asked. Her voice was so purposefully steady that I knew she was only able to keep holding it that way with a lot of effort. "No," I said softly.

Her flinch was small, but I saw it. Her head hung and her shoulders drooped. She nodded, like the answer didn't surprise her. She drew in a long, deep breath and stood up straight. My mom's brave smile didn't fool me. I suspected it didn't fool her, either.

"I didn't think so," she said. "I'll leave you alone now."

For a moment, she looked like she was going to hug me, but then she backed off. She left my room, giving me the space I'd thought I wanted.

It wasn't actually as great as I'd thought it would be.

Chapter 488

Chapter 488 Stella

The day had taken a long time to pass. I'd spent it exploring the mansion. Then, I'd taken the twins into town for ice cream. They'd have to start school soon, and I had to admit that I didn't envy them having to do that...even if I did wish, just a little, that I'd had the chance.

Thinking about my mom's sadness that there seemed to be a distance between her and her mom, and also her sister, I vowed that I wasn't going to let my relationship with my siblings get any further apart. Back at home, I popped in on my Dad, Abba, and Papa, but they were totally occupied with pack business. Unlike my mom, they didn't seem interested in hovering over me, but I figured that could change fast enough if they thought they had any reason to worry. I definitely didn't want that. Abba snagged my sleeve as I was leaving their office.

"How's it going?" he asked, pitching his voice low and glancing back at Dad and Papa, who were bent over the desk, looking at some kind of files. "With the...you know."

"Oh, I, um...I'm sure it'll be great, Abba. I'm going to try it out later this afternoon when I go shopping. I need some new outfits."

He laughed, shaking his head, then drew me closer to kiss my temple. "Good for you. Have fun, honey. Let me know how it goes." "I will," I promised.

It wasn't a lie. Not really. I could go shopping wearing Elleah's face, if I wanted to.

"You need to go shopping," Selena told me with a roll of her eyes. "I'm not going out with you looking like that."

She waved at my long, navy skirt and matching flowery blouse. She pointed specifically at my navy ballet flats. I looked down at them.

"They're comfortable. And I just got them!"

"You look like you teach preschool," Selena said. "Not the look we're going for. Change your face and let's go."

Shopping with my aunt was way more fun than it had been with my mom and the grouchy twins. Or maybe it was shopping as Elleah and not as Stella. Elleah's golden hair and gray-blue eyes were a perfect match for an ice-blue silk camisole that Selena insisted I pair with black leather pants and a matching black leather jacket. She added heavy soled black boots that laced up tight to the ankle. Then, she stepped back with an approving nod.

"Still comfy, but not so dainty," she said. "You look like a real badass."

I blushed at my reflection. "I feel silly. All that black leather. It's not me."

"Of course, it's not you," she said with a laugh. "But it is Elleah Whitehaven."

We paid for the clothes and I left wearing them. Outside of the store, Selena looked serious. "You sure this is cool? The...you know."

She waved her hand up and down along my body and twiddled her fingers in my face.

I watched a couple of people pass us on the sidewalk. They gave me a curious glance but that was because I was a stranger, not because I was Stella Constantine. They kept going. I waited until they'd passed.

"Abba said it was the best option. I trust him."

"Okay, well, you can trust me. You look great. The guys will go crazy for you."

"I'm not sure I want anyone going

crazy for me, said in alarm. I made sure nobody was overhearing us when I leaned closer to her. "I thought the whole point of us going out to someplace different was that we weren't going to have anyone going crazy!"

Selena rolled her eyes again. "I just don't want anyone trying to hump me to death while I'm trying to dance and have a good time. I want to have fun, not fight off men who can't control themselves. The only time want a guy to be out of control is when I decide I'm into him. And listen, I'm not ready to be mated yet, so that's not going to happen for a long time."

"Why don't you want to be mated yet?" I asked curiously as we walked along the sidewalk. Search the Find Novel.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"You think want to end up like my

sister? She's barely twenty and has three kids. Not to mention three mates." Selena shuddered. "One dude seems like a pain in the ass to deal with, much less three. S

"My mom loves my fathers!"

Selena let out a snorting guffaw. "I'm sure she does, but the whole idea of that is, like, no thanks."

My expression must've shown my feelings, because Selena sobered up.

"Oh," she said. "You want...?"

I shook myself and lifted my chin. I put an extra surge of confidence into my stride. Stella? Elleah? Whatever face I was wearing, I was still the same inside, right? "Let's just go dancing," I said.

Chapter 489

Chapter 489 Stella

I stared up at the tall, black brick building in front of us. It had taken us over an hour to get here with Selena driving so fast I would've feared for my life if I hadn't known I could cast a protection bubble around us in the event of any emergency. Even so, my heart was racing and my palms were sweating from the wild ride.

And anticipation.

"This is a human club," I said under my breath.

Selena giggled. "Yep."

"I've never been to a human city," I murmured, holding back to let some clubgoers go in ahead of us. "I've barely even been around any humans."

Selena tugged me off to the side. "I thought you were in that, whatever you call it. That enclave place. Weren't there any humans there?"

I shook my head. "There might've been, but remember, I was small for a lot of that. And once I grew up, we had to get out of there. Fast."

A shadow passed over my aunt's face. For the first time, she looked sympathetic. "That must've been really hard. And scary."

"It's what I was meant to do," I told her sincerely.

"Even so," she said.

After a second, I nodded. Then, I laughed with embarrassment. "I faced an army of raging High Council wolves who were determined to kill me and my entire family, but somehow, I feel more scared about going into that club."

"You look fantastic," Selena assured me. She dug in the small crossbody purse to hand me a compact mirror and tube of crimson lipstick. "Freshen up."

When my hand looked like it was shaking, she helped me. She stepped back to assess, then gave me an approving nod. I couldn't stop myself from grinning at the tiny face I could see in the small mirror. "Ready?"

"Yes," I said. "As ready as I'll ever be."

"Just follow my lead," she said, then stopped short with a furrowed brow. "Shit. I'm going to need you to do a little handwaving to get us through the door."

"Huh?"

"Humans can't get into a club like this until they're over twenty-one, not eighteen like shifters can. And, you need a form of ID," Selena explained. "You don't have a driver's license, do you?" "No..."

"Me neither," she said with a laugh she hid behind her hand.

"But you drove us here!"

"Yeah," she said, totally without shame.

"How do you have a car without a driver's license?" SEARCH the (Find)NOVEL.NET website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Selena laughed again. "It's not my car. Let's just say I...borrowed it."

"You stole it?"

"Borrowed," she insisted in a low voice. "C'mon. Can you get us inside or not?"

I looked back up at the many storied, black-brick building. I could hear faint music thumping from inside it. It got louder when the doors opened, letting people in or out. A tall, man stood guard at the door, checking small plastic cards watched him turn away a pair of young guys with hopeful looks on

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their faces.

"Come back when you're old enough," the guard said. He kept their plastic cards as the younger guys slunk away.

I sighed with a frown. "Selena...you didn't tell me it was going to be like this."

"What's the difference?" she asked. "You're wearing a different face and body to fool people into thinking you're someone else. Why's it such a big deal to fool the bouncer into letting us in?" "I'm not doing it to fool people," I argued.

She laughed. "Yes, you are."

My frown deepened. "Maybe we should just go home."

"We came all this way! And you look so good," she wheedled in a voice that told me she knew I wasn't going to be able to resist.

The truth was, I did want to go

inside. I wanted to see what a

human club was like, and...I did look

good. The mass of golden curls tumbling over my shoulders and down my back, the red lipstick, the leather jeans that molded to my butt and legs... Selena had said looked like a badass, and I was feeling like

one.

"You've got some kind of mind-control powers, don't you? Vampires can compel people, right?"

"Yes." There were other kinds of supernatural beings that could manipulate others, too.

She grinned at me until finally, reluctantly, I grinned back.

Selena tucked her arm through mine and forced my feet to move. In front of the guard...no, she'd called him a bouncer. Probably because he bounced people out of the way? In front of him, she positioned us both.

He gave us a bored look that turned a little more interested as he looked her up and down. Then me. "Ladies."

She nudged me.

I held out my palm, fingers up. I focused on an image of two driver's licenses with appropriate information on them. "Here are our IDs."

He looked at my hand, eyes narrowed. Then nodded. With a grin, he stepped aside and even opened the door for us.

"Have a good night, ladies," he said. "And welcome to Paradise."

Chapter 490

Chapter 490 Stella

"Why do they call this place Paradise?" I asked Selena when we were through the front doors and standing in a vaulted entryway.

"It's what the humans call the place they think they go to in the afterlife," she said in a low voice. Her eyes were wide as she looked around. She grinned, looking excited. "But this place looks more like the opposite of heaven, if you ask me."

I took a few seconds to scan my internal library for information about humans and their afterlife and then nodded. Human heaven was supposed to be white, high above the clouds, and filled with creatures they called angels playing harps. I had to laugh a little bit to myself. Angels existed all right, but they were not the way humans thought they were.

Selena was right about this place. Humans had an almost universal idea of hell that had been described by books, movies, and TV for so long that even people whose faith didn't support an idea of a hell would've recognized that was the vibe this place was putting out.

"I don't get it," I said to her.

She laughed. "They're trying to be ironic."

Paradise was dark, with velvet draperies on the walls, covering up bricked-in windows. Dim, flickering torches lined the walls. A small alcove off to the left led to restrooms, and another on the right looked like a place to leave coats.

The music was louder in here but coming from a different room. Selena tugged my arm toward another set of doors. These were massive, made of carved wood with huge brass handles in the shapes of some kind of bird with a huge beak.

They weren't heavy, though, and when I pulled one, I almost fell back from how easily it opened. Selena laughed at me, but I didn't take offense. I was too eager to get inside and see what kind of paradise this place actually was.

"You haven't been here before?" I asked her as we both went through the doors.

She shook her head, her eyes getting even wider as she looked around the massive space. The ceiling was so high it looked like it disappeared into the sky, and sparking lights and painted stars gave it the appearance of a galaxy lit up with hundreds of stars. Flashing lights swirled different colors across the ceiling and along all the walls. A giant silver ball covered in mirrors dangled from the center of the ceiling. The lights reflected off it, sending out shards of brilliant light in all directions.

"This place is fantastic!" Selena had to shout over the thumping beat of the music pounding out of the speakers. She clung to my arm.

The people on the dance floor were bumping up and down in time to the music, and I couldn't stop my feet from shifting, too. The far end of the room had some black leather couches and chairs set up. The wall behind them had more of those dim torches, and also...

"Are those...shackles?" I asked Selena.

"It's a dungeon theme!" she shouted over the music. "Humans are soooo into their themes!"

I looked around, taking in all the

other oddities. A coffin tipped against one wall with the door hanging open and a mannequin inside it wearing a tuxedo, a cape and with its arms crossed over its chest. Red eyes glowed, and fangs protruded from its mouth, [Search The \(Find\)NOvel.net](http://SearchTheFindNOvel.net) website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"That's what they think a vampire looks like," Selena said, pointing and laughing. "They are so lame sometimes."

"How did you find out about this place?"

She shrugged. "I've been to the human city a few times. But I never was able to get into any of the clubs!"

I laughed. "What would you have done if we got turned away tonight?"

"I wasn't worried. I knew you'd be able to get us in," she said. "Let's get some drinks!"

The long wooden bar was so busy we had to push our way through a bunch of other people to get to it. I had to admit that Selena had been right about my clothes. I never

would have fit in wearing wheel m

I'd

had on before, but here, the black

leather was perfect. She managed to press up against the bar and shook

her hair over her shoulders.

I watched her and did the same thing.

"Two gin and tonics," she shouted as the bartender turned toward us. To me, she said into my ear, "Hey, can you do your magic wand trick and get us free drinks?"

I could. I felt a little funny about it,

but when the bartender slid two glasses toward us and gave me an expectant look, I quickly pulsed a bit of invisibility toward him. He looked right through us. He'd forgotten we were there and was already turning to help someone else. Content

Selena crowed as she drew me away from the bar. "Drink up, niecey-poo! This party is just getting started!"

I watched her down the drink in two fast gulps.

Anticipation and excitement were flooding through me, tinged with a little bit of uneasiness. Her eyes gleamed, a flash of her wolf that had heads turning her way. Were things about to get out of hand?

And...did I mind if they were?

