

Chapter 10

Abbie

After my heartbreaking visit with Ivy, I leave to grab the few groceries Clarice has ordered from the grocer. It's a beautiful day as I go over the mental list of chores I still need to complete before the guest Alpha arrives. As I walk toward the main gates, I notice the king talking to a man whose back is to me. But as the breeze shifts, every muscle in my body tenses, and I find myself unable to move. My body goes into some sort of shock.

"Abbie, are you okay?" Liam's voice reaches my ears, yet I still can't bring myself to move. My heart leaps in my chest when his hands gripping my arms jolt me out of the odd state I am in. Liam turns me so I face him.

But my eyes automatically go to the stranger standing with the king. His suit is a light gray, his jacket open, and he has his hands in his pants pockets. My eyes roam over his body. The white shirt he wears fits his body in a way that I can see the outline of his abs pressing tight beneath it.

When his eyes meet mine, he appears curious. “Abbie?” Liam’s voice says, and I notice the man’s eyes go to Liam’s hands gripping my arms. His lips move in a way that tells me he doesn’t like Liam touching me. I shake my head, coming out of my daze and stare at Liam, who stares back worriedly at me. He glances over his shoulder at the man the king is with.

“Sorry, I forgot what I was doing,” I tell Liam before quickly rushing out the gates while every part of me screams I should be running toward that mysterious man... toward... I gulp... my mate... not away from him. He makes no move to stop me, and once I am trudging down the road, I shake my head, thinking I must have imagined the feeling I had heard about for so long. I make my way into town, but that nagging feeling in the pit of my stomach never dwindles. If anything, it only gets worse. I had always heard when you laid eyes on your mate, you just knew. And in that crazy moment, it felt like I just knew. As the time passes, it feels harder and harder to conjure up the initial feeling. All I know is something is off.

The entire walk is a daze. Even after I retrieve the goods I’m sent for, I step out of the shop, having no memory of even entering. I’m on autopilot, my mind consumed with the man back at the castle. So consumed, I don’t even notice he has followed me to the small town until I walk right into him.

“You didn’t stick around to introduce yourself, a little rude, don’t you think, little mate?” before the deep voice comes as his hands slide up my bare arms, leaving tingles from his touch.

I take a startled step back, and he puts up his hands in what I assume is supposed to be an apologetic gesture. “Your name is Abbie, isn’t it?” he asks.

I say nothing. Despite him clearly being my mate, he’s still a stranger, though every fiber of my being calls for me to go to him, submit to him.

He glances around, and I follow suit. No one is around, which only makes me more nervous in his presence. “Liam told me your name. No need to be scared. I won’t hurt you, love,” he tells me. But my brain doesn’t seem to be able to function, and he sighs loudly. “I’m Alpha Kade, but you can call me Kade.”

“Nice to meet you,” I tell him, trying to step around him, knowing no Alpha would want a rogue for a mate. His aura isn’t as strong as Gannon’s or anyone else I’ve met here, so I know he is a werewolf, yet there’s power behind it that tells me I’m right in thinking that. He sidesteps, blocking my path again.

“Trying to escape me, are you? I don’t mind a good chase, though I would rather not cause a scene here,” he tells me, making me stare up at him. He catches my chin between his fingers, forcing me to meet his gaze. His eyes flicker, and I watch his tongue dart out between his lips as he looks at me.

“You realize who I am to you?” he asks; his tone is curious, as if probing to see how much I know.

“You’re my mate,” I whisper, bracing for his rejection so I can go about my day. He chuckles softly, leaning down, so close his lips are almost brushing mine.

“Hm, if you know, then why are you trying to run from me?” he asks.

I blink at him, and my brows furrow at his words. “I’m not; I am...” I stop myself, realizing that’s exactly what I am trying to do. He raises an eyebrow at me, his thumb brushing over my bottom lip.

“Good, I am a busy man and don’t have time for silly games of hide and seek. So, shall we?” he asks, letting me go and motioning toward his car. I glance down at my bags in my hands, knowing Clarice needs them for dinner tonight.

“I’ll return you to the castle after lunch. The king has already okayed it,” he tells me.

“You told the king who I am to you?” I ask. He nods, reaching for the bags I grip, so tightly my knuckles are straining against my skin.

“Of course. Now come on, there’s a café down the road,” he tells me, and a giddy feeling rises in my stomach. My mate wants me? He wants to keep me? He’s not rejecting me! I thought for sure when he said nothing, that meant he was going to reject me.

Chewing my lip nervously, I glance at his car. It’s sleek and modern. He opens the door and motions for me to climb in. My mother would have scolded me for getting in a car with a stranger, but mom always said mates were our biggest blessing. They would love us unconditionally and never leave us. When I was younger, I craved to have a relationship like my mother and father had. Though, over the years, I never thought it would be a possibility for me. No one would want a broken rogue for a mate.

Mom’s words flit through my head, a vague memory I hold. “If you find your mate, and I hope you do one day, it will be the

most magical experience of your life. You'll know instantly they are yours, and you are theirs. It's a love that compares to nothing else," she told me, and as I stare at him, I wonder if I will have that with this man. Mrs. Daley always told us we would never have a mate, that we were unlovable and vile. Hearing that enough over the years, I started to believe her. Yet as Kade waits patiently for me to climb into his car, I wonder if Mrs. Daley had it all wrong.

"I mean you no harm. Don't you feel the pull?" he asks, and I nod.

"You're not thinking of rejecting me, are you, Abbie? You wouldn't shun the Moon Goddess in such a way, would you?" Kade asks.

"No, of course not. I just didn't expect you to want me back," I answer honestly.

"Of course I want you. You're my mate. Now, who doesn't want their mate?" he asks, and my cheeks heat at his words.

"So, shall we?" he asks again, motioning toward his car. A giddy feeling bubbles up within me, and I nod, climbing into the car. He leans over me, plugging in my seatbelt before

pausing as he steps away. His hand cups my cheek, his thumb brushing below my eye gently.

“You are a pretty one,” he murmurs, and tingles rush across my face, his scent inviting. I can’t help myself as I inhale deeply, his scent strong, like peppermint and white chocolate. Kade chuckles softly.

“Good to see the feeling reciprocated,” he whispers, his eyes sparkling as they go to my lips. He then clears his throat, letting me go and shaking his head as he shuts my door.