

Chapter 11

Abbie

As we drive, Kade turns on some music, and his relaxed demeanor starts to soothe my nerves. I can't help but steal glances at him, taking in his strong features and the way his muscles subtly shift under his shirt as he drives. We arrive at the café, and Kade guides me inside, his arm casually draped over my shoulders, leading me to a table.

We sit across from each other, and Kade orders us both coffee and sandwiches. He maintains eye contact with me, creating an intense atmosphere that makes the air between us heavy. It feels like he's studying me.

"Tell me about yourself," Kade says, breaking the silence.

"I'm just a rogue," I reply softly, feeling a bit out of my depth.

“Come on now, Abbie. There must be more to you than that,” he presses, his gaze piercing. I shift uncomfortably in my chair, not used to talking about myself. Sensing my reluctance, Kade decides to talk about himself instead, which relieves me.

“You know, my pack is lovely,” Kade begins, a hint of pride in his voice. “They are going to be so excited when I bring you home. You’ll love the pack house, it’s beautiful.”

“You want me to leave with you?” I ask, surprised.

“Of course, you’re my mate. We are supposed to be together. You wouldn’t turn your back on what the Moon Goddess wants, would you?”

I shake my head, but my thoughts instantly turn to Ivy. I have never been without her. Although he is my mate, he’ll look after me, and I won’t have to be a maid, but what will become of Ivy?

“Once I have you home, and we complete the mating ceremony, and I mark you, then I’ll introduce you to the pack,” Kade adds.

“Mating ceremony?” I ask nervously.

“Of course, why is that an issue?” he inquires, his eyes narrowing slightly.

I say nothing, the idea giving me a mix of emotions—none of them are good.

“So once you’re back, you should pack what things you need because once I am done helping the king, we’ll be leaving.”

“I don’t know if I can go, that is up to the king,” I tell him.

“Nonsense, don’t worry, I will handle the king. Besides, it’s the law; he can’t stop you. Mate bonds are protected,” Kade assures me, his tone confident, dismissive of my concerns.

But the thought of leaving Ivy behind weighs heavily on me. I’ve never been without her, and the idea of leaving her feels like abandoning a part of myself.

It’s just about dark by the time I return to the castle. Kade drops me at the front gate and I can’t wipe the smile off my face. My mate wants me, and he seems nice. He tells me all about his pack and the packhouse, about duties I am expected to perform

as his Luna. It's nice, though I am still a little wary. I wait for the other shoe to drop, keeping an eye out for the rejection, but it never comes.

Easing through the gates, I nearly jump out of my skin when Liam moves off the wall beside the iron gates.

"Gannon has been looking for you," he states, and I swallow nervously. While with Kade, I completely forgot about Gannon for those few hours. Guilt swamps me and my heart beats faster.

"You need to tell him, Abbie," Liam tells me. I say nothing because I don't know what to say. I never thought I would be put in a position where I have to choose.

"Are you going to reject Kade or turn Gannon away?" he asks, stepping closer, and for the first time since meeting Liam, I take a step back from him. He doesn't look happy with me, and his entire demeanor is off. He looks like the callous killer I have heard rumors of.

"He's my mate, Liam," I answer softly.

"Yes, but you're a werewolf, you can reject your mates," he says. My brows furrow in confusion at his words.

“You want me to reject my mate?” I ask him, knowing doing that would be shunning the Moon Goddess for the gift she gave me.

“Kade is not a good man, Abbie.” He doesn’t elaborate further. Instead, he turns on his heel and walks off before calling over his shoulder.

“You need to tell Gannon, if you don’t, I will,” Liam states, not bothering to stop.

“Wait,” I call out to him while chasing after him. He slows but doesn’t stop as he walks through the double doors.

“You can’t tell him. I barely know the man. You’re acting like I am about to run off with him,” I snap, annoyed at the accusation in his tone. Liam turns on me instantly, and I back up at the murderous look he gives me. My back hits the stone wall, and I gasp at his closeness.

“That is exactly what you will do. You will run off with your piece of shit mate and forget him. Just like she did. Then I will be left to pick up the pieces,” Liam snarls.

“He’s my mate,” I whisper, suddenly feeling tiny next to this man with the way he has me trapped and cornered. Everything he’s saying goes against everything I’ve ever learned about mates. We are supposed to be with our mates, not reject them. He reaches a hand up and I flinch, but he only twirls a lock of my hair around his finger.

“Gannon loves you. Kade doesn’t. That man isn’t capable of love. I guess you’ll find that out the hard way,” he whispers before letting go and stepping back.

“What’s that supposed to mean, Liam!” I growl. He glares at my tone. I didn’t mean for it to come out the way it did, but it’s too late to take it back.

I like Liam... but I don’t exactly trust his character analysis of other people given his own rather sociopathic tendencies. Maybe he’s just saying all of this to mess with me.

“Do the right thing, Abbie. You need to tell him. If you don’t and I have to, I will skin your mate alive and make you watch. If you want to be with your mate, fine. But don’t lead Gannon along. You hurt him like she did? Not even Gannon will be able to save you from me,” he says, his tone of voice turning darker along with his eyes. Tears prick the corners of my eyes at his words.

What is he talking about? Who is ‘she’? I don’t want to hurt Gannon. I’m overwhelmed by my own thoughts.

“I don’t want to hurt Gannon,” I tell him.

“Then you’ll tell him or reject your mate. If you want to be with that twat, Gannon will understand. But if he finds out because he caught you or I had to tell him, it will destroy him. But know this, Abbie. Just like you and Ivy are forever bound together, so are Gannon and me. Nothing will come between us,” he says while stepping toward me again.

His canines slip out, and his claws extend from his fingertips as he grabs my face. His thumb brushes over my cheek, and I swallow, feeling more like prey than I ever have in my life.

“You hurt him, and he may forgive you,” he tells me while his hand moves to my throat, his fingers wrap around my throat, his claws grazing the back of my neck and making my skin prickle with goosebumps as he leans in so close his stubble brushes my cheek.

“But I won’t. And I am not the sort of man you want to make an enemy of,” he whispers next to my ear.

A tear rolls down my cheek, and I nod before feeling his tongue move across my cheek, licking up the tear that brimmed and spilled over.

“So just keep that in mind. Like you and Ivy come together, so do Gannon and me. He is a good man, but I’ll let you in on a little secret. I’m not,” he growls before pecking my cheek and walking off, leaving me feeling sick with fear.

I stand there petrified, watching him leave when the door across from where I stand opens up. The king walks out of his office and stops, stunned to see me standing there crying.

“Abbie?” the king asks, and I look at him. His eyes go to the end of the hall where Liam is before he turns toward the stairs and disappears. The king sighs and pushes his door open wider, nodding toward it.

“Are you okay?” he asks, and I nod.

“I need to get back to my room,” I tell him, walking off.

“Abbie, is this over Kade being your mate?” The king calls out, and I stop suddenly angered that he would dare mention mates when he has locked his own mate away and rejected her over who her mother was.

“Even if it is, you would be the last person I would ask advice from, especially when your mate is rotting in a stable like a damn farm animal,” I snarl before walking off. I hear his growl behind me, and I half expect him to order me out of the castle too, but as I reach the stairs and look back at him, he stands by the window staring out at the stables. Good, I hope the bastard feels guilty.