

## Chapter 12 – Kidnapped by My Mate Novel

He ran a hand through his hair and shrugged, still smiling widely. God, he was beautiful.

“Yeah, basically. If we were a normal couple, we would’ve had sex multiple times by now.”

That took me aback. “If we were a normal couple? A normal couple?” I asked angrily. “We’re not a couple at all! You forced this on me! I don’t even want to be here!”

He sighed and sat up. He brought a hand up and cupped my cheek, running his thumb over my cheekbone.

“I’m sorry, Belle. I know how confused and overwhelmed you must be. I promise this wasn’t how it was supposed to go. God, if we hadn’t met on a plane, this whole mess could have been avoided.”

“Why would that have made any difference?”

“I could have courted you the proper way, asked you out, and marked you when you were ready. “But the turbulence happened, and that asshole who stared at your boobs also needed to face the consequences. Marking you was the only thing that would keep me from ripping his head off.”

His hand brushed over the bite mark on my neck, and I could only assume that he was talking about when he’d bit me in the airplane bathroom. Shivers ran down my spine.

“You’re only a human... You’re so, so vulnerable, and I could see that you had gone through so much. So my wolf forced me to do it. “I had to protect you. I guess I could have just let you go once the plane landed.

“But I knew you needed to be near me. The pain of being apart would have been unbearable, especially right after I’d marked you. I had to take you with me. I’m sorry.”

He looked truly and genuinely apologetic, and for that I was grateful. But it didn’t make it okay.

“I need answers,” I said. “I’ve never been so confused in my life.”

He nodded. “I know. Ask away. I will tell you anything.”

I let my shoulders sag in relief. It surprised me he was being so compliant.

“Um...” Where do I even begin?

As I sat beside him, I felt his hand on my leg, starting to rub up and down.

My body relaxed a bit. I leaned toward him. His other hand went to my waist and squeezed.

Our bodies were gravitating toward each other, becoming closer and closer by the second.

“No!” I suddenly snapped out of it. I pushed his hands away from me. “No, you can’t touch me. I can’t think when you touch me.”

I grabbed one of the pillows and put it between us, then placed more pillows atop and around it.

“What are you doing?” Grayson asked.

“This is my side of the bed,” I said, pointing to where I was sitting. Then I pointed at Grayson’s side.

“That is your side of the bed. You stay on your side, I’ll stay on my side. Then I think I’ll be able to get through this.”

“You think a pillow barrier will keep me from you?”

I shook my head.

“Well, if your touch didn’t turn me into a pool of melted goo, then we wouldn’t have this problem!” I yelled. When I saw him trying to contain his laughter I sighed.

“Just please stay on your side, okay?”

He raised his hands in surrender. “Whatever you say.”

“Okay,” I said. “Okay, so you’re a werewolf.”

“Okay, so you’re a werewolf.”

Grayson raised an eyebrow. “Caught that, did you?”

I glared at him. “How?” I asked.

“How what?”

“How are you a werewolf?”

He leaned back, thinking about it for a second.

“Well, it’s complicated. We’re not sure. I was born like this. I got my wolf when I hit puberty. You don’t become a werewolf or anything,” he sighed. “We know that our ancestors must’ve had something to do with wolves, but we’re not sure exactly what that was, or how our kind came to be. We can only assume that it had something to do with magic.”

“Magic?” I asked.

He nodded. “Yeah, some sort of ritual to strengthen our ancestors or something like that.” He shrugged.

“So are... other things real?”

He gave me a questioning look. “Other things?”

“Yeah, like witches and wizards, or fairies or vampires?”

His eyes darkened a bit.

“Yes, all real. But we all keep to ourselves. Our species don’t exactly...get along.

Vampires and werewolves have been at war for centuries.”

I paused for a second. “What about the Easter Bunny?”

Grayson stared at me for a second. He tried to contain it, but he eventually broke out in laughter.

“I tell you about a war between werewolves and vampires, and you associate that with the Easter Bunny?”

I looked down at my hands. He was right. I probably sounded like I was five years old.

I felt fingers slide under my chin and lift my head up. My eyes connected with Grayson’s.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered. “I didn’t mean it that way. That’s a very valid question after all you have gone through over the last couple of days. No, the Easter Bunny is not real. Nor are the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus.” He smiled. “I’m sorry if that ruins your childhood.”

I did feel a tad bit disappointed, but tried not to let it show. I grabbed his hand that was still under my chin and moved it away. I pointed to where he was sitting.

“Your side,” I reminded him.

He grumbled something quietly under his breath but followed my orders, not looking happy about it.

I took a deep breath, preparing myself for the next question I was about to ask.

“Why am I here? What do you want from me?”

He sighed. “Belle...” He leaned forward, and I could tell that he desperately wanted to touch me. He glared down at the pillows before looking at me once more. “You’re my mate.”

“Yeah, you’ve mentioned that. But what does that mean?” I said stubbornly.

He looked hesitant to tell me as he fidgeted where he sat.

“It means that we’re meant to be together. We’re meant to be a couple and love each other. We’re soulmates.”

I stared at him for a few seconds. I didn’t think I comprehended what he’d said.

“I’m sorry?”

Grayson stared deep into my eyes and I felt as if he could see straight into my soul.

“We’re soulmates,” he repeated.

“What do you mean? That doesn’t make any sense.”

“I know, but let me try to explain. Wolves usually mate for life. Mating for life is especially true for werewolves. Every werewolf has what we like to call a ‘mate,’

someone they are destined to be with forever.”

“Like... Like you mean”—I hesitated with my next word—“romantically?”

He smiled. “You’re adorable.”

I blushed deeply, and he chuckled.

“Yes, I mean romantically. Like husbands and wives in human terms. Just more like husband and wife at first sight because we know we’re meant to be together right away.”

“I-I...” I didn’t know how to respond. “And you think I’m your mate?”

His expression intensified. “I don’t think you’re my mate, I know.”

I scooted away from him and his eyes narrowed. I was feeling extremely conflicted. It was like half of me wanted to jump into his arms and never leave, and the other half wanted to run for the hills.

Could it be that he was just making this all up?

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Well, it starts with a scent. You scent your mate when you first come near them.

It’s supposed to be the most amazing thing you’ve ever smelled in your entire life.”

He leaned forward, breathing in deeply.

“I smelled you when I stepped onto that plane, and I knew you were mine.”

“That’s how you knew?” I asked skeptically. “Because I smelled good?”

He nodded. “There are other things too. Like when we touch. There are sparks.”

I looked away. He was talking about the small fireworks that traveled throughout my body whenever he touched me. I’d felt them. And the feeling terrified me because that meant at least one thing he was saying had to be true.

“Belle,” Grayson said, “I know you know what I’m talking about. You’ve felt the sparks, haven’t you?”

I licked my lips. “Um...I don’t, I don’t know...”

He held up his hand. “Touch me.”

I looked at him skeptically. “I already told you, I’m not—”

“I will not do anything, Belle,” Grayson interrupted. “Just touch my hand.”

His voice brooked no argument, so I slowly lifted my hand and placed it gently against his.

Tingles immediately appeared in my hand, traveling up my arm and down to my toes. I gasped.

“You feel them?” he asked as he threaded our fingers together.

I nodded, amazed at how good the sparks felt. As crazy as it sounded, there was something definitely magical about his touch, and what he was telling me kind of made sense.

He smiled widely as he looked at our intertwined fingers. His smile took my breath away.