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"You've met my wife before." Hector stated andlooked over everyone.

"Estel Storm is your wife? She's incredible!I'veheard some of her stuff over social media!"Lucy grabbed Hector's forearm."I mean, Z got to meet her and talk to her!"

His smile widened even more. "He did. She told me about it."

Bryan elbowed him. "Couldn't get her to change her last name to yours?"

Hector shook his head. "Nah. I changed my last name to hers. It was better than having to do the paperwork for all seven kids."

Everyone snapped their heads to him; even my eyes widened. I hadn't heard she had kids. It wasn't in any information about her. Though, there wasn't much I could find in general. I'd tried to do a deep div e on her once I found out Auri was using the name Estel Storm. In the middle of digging around, a little fairy flew across my screen and dropped a note.

'Nice try, Ezekiel. You aren't going to findanything.'

Pipsqueak had struck again and I knew I wouldn't find any information on her based onthe face that Pipsqueak was helping curate the information being published online about her. There was always social media but it was never on her own, always posted on someone else's and it never had more information outside of where she was playing, what song and who she was. I'd given up after that.

"Seven? You married into a household of seven? How did you manage that?" Jax was as shocked as everyone else.

"It took some time but I managed to fit in. A fewof them were a little more than skeptical about me but... she made sure that I was allowed time with each of them to settle into our relationship."

Hector's face was that of a proud father. One I had see on Bryan's face and on Vale as well. It was something I was glad that he got to experience. For so

long I had seen the loneliness in his eyes and the desperation for a family that wasn't just the pack. I'd seen him take care of the twins and love them so much but you could see the wistful look he'd get sometimes. Now, that look was gone only to be replaced by pride.

"Morgan is watching them tonight for us. Whenwe talk, you'll either have to head to us or we have to have the whole family over. He's got some work he's doing for..." He stopped himself, smirking."... my wife." "I'm not interfering. You are going to get yourass kicked and I'm not saving you." I looked at him sternly, shaking my head.

Everyone looked at me confused but Hector nodded. "That's fine. But neither of us will save you from Vale. You're on your own with him."

Inhaling sharply, I chewed on the inside of my cheek. He was right. I absolutely had no room to talk. Finally, after a couple seconds, I groaned.

"I know."Was all I said as he laughed.

All of us had our attention away from the stage as we were talking but the moment her voice rang through the crowd, everyone turned their heads. We had reached well past shock at this point. After looking at everyones face, I let my eyes follow theirs to the stage.

Auri was in her element. Her hair was still the short shoulder-length that she sported in the club. This time the blue hair was gone, showing her natural white color. She was wearing jeans and a short sleeve button-up that was ocean blue. Her smile radiated as she sang, her eyes glowing their bright amber color. There had been so many questions I wanted to ask her but Vale would have burned the club to the ground if we talked longer. For the time we did talk, she had made her focus about me. Maybe now, after Vale deemed enough time in the dungeon had passed,I could finally ask her.

Her voice was a pure as it always was and it seemed more fitting with the bands genre of music. It was a lot like when she was first singing in Morgan's old club. The mic was attached to her cheek instead of being confined to holding one with a cord. She was free to move, dance, and interact with the band members, which she did. I smiled, knowing this was where she always wanted to get back to but never thought she would after she lost her voice.

"You... fucking.... bastard."

This time, Bryan didn't give Hector notice. His fist hit Hector's cheek, who stumbled to the side. Hector's face wrinkled as he rubbed where Bryan's fi st had connected.

"Yeah, yeah. You only hit me because you wouldlose against her."

"That's AURI. You... you..."

Hector smirked. "Married the love of my life? Yeah, yeah I did."

Bryan tried to deck him again but he dodged this time. I felt goose bumps break out over my skin before a mind-link was opened.

'Bryan, please leave my poor husband alone. Ifyou have issues, you take it up with me.'I smiled and looked back up at Auri, who wasn't even looking at us.

'Oh, you are going to get it as soon as you get offthat damn stage. Auri, I swear to the Goddess that not even she is going to be able to help you.'

There was the familiar laughter of Auri. Looking at the others, I assumed they all heard it as well considering everyone broke out into smiles.

'Bring it on old man.'

He scoffed and crossed his arms over his chest. "You two have so much explaining to do, I don't even know where to begin. I'm so pissed right now."

Hector was still rubbing his cheek."I know. We will. Just not tonight."

We all turned and watched the band. It was easy to get into the music and eventually Felix took Lucy to go dance. AJ disappeared to grab us more drinks and we settled in comfortably in the outdoor concert. After a couple songs, Auri moved to behind the piano and was playing beautifully.

"I has so many questions I can't even thinkstraight." Bryan was watching her, his face serious. "Her eyes... they look like Vale's."

Hector hummed. "Well, you will have tonight to get your questions in order and we will be happyto answer them tomorrow. We came out because we needed to have a chat. Morgan and I also took this long to convince Auri to come out of hiding. She was reluctant, especially with the kids, but too much has been going on and too much has been happening."

Jax stood up from his lean against the side of the shop. "What do you mean? It's been pretty quiet on our end."

Hector's lips pursed together for a moment. "On the surface, yes. Everything looks fine and dandy. Honestly, Vale did a good job but..." He glanced as Auri stood as she played the piano, a smile creeping back onto his face. "... he's been too narrow-minded. Auri warned him and he didn't listen. This is what comes of that."

This time, I growled. "He decided to reach out to all the races before focusing on the packs! How is that being narrow-minded?" My voice rose at the end, anger seeping in.

Hector shook his head. "I'm not talking about this now, Zeke. We can talk shop tomorrow. For now, let's enjoy the music and the beer!"

AJ came bounding back with beers in his arms. We all took one but I was still stewing from what Hector said. I took a long gulp before leaning back against the building. As mad as I was, the music was too good to keep up my stewing. I'd been listening to Auri for years and actuallybeing able to hear her live in the genre I had been listening to on repeat brought a smile to my face.

"What the hell? Hector? Is that you?"

My back went rigid and my smile dropped as a hand slipped around my waist. Looking up, Vale had a frown on his face as he looked over at Hector. Much like when he met us, he put his hands up in resignation.

"Alpha King Vale, glad you could make it."

"Vale!You're here!" I smiled sweetly but it wasoverly pushed.

Vale didn't seem to notice. "I promised. I just had to finish up my work." Vale kissed the top of my head before looking back at Hector. "I almost didn't recognize you. What happened? You look ..."

"Like I get carded everywhere I go? Yeah."

Hector huffed and I laughed as did everyone else listening. "We needed to come speak with you but we wanted to enjoy the festival first."

"We? Who's we?"

Hector looked from me back to Vale. "My wife. You've met her before: Estel Storm."

Vale went from a furrowed brow to a shocked one. "Wait, Estel Storm is your wife?" He started to shake his head. "That woman, while a great singer, is not to be messed with. She... "I know exactly who she is, Vale." For the first time, I heard Hector's voice sharpening. His eyes were hard as he stared at Vale. "You don't know who she is. I'd hope you take some time to get to know her as she is now."

I swallowed hard, my heart hammering in my chest. It was going to be so bad. There was no way I could fake ignorance. Plus, I wouldn't outright lie to Vale. I'd already been withholding the truth but I drew a hard line at actually lying to him outside of if I was okay. There was movement behind him and I leaned to look. My eyes widened.

"Mr. Everfell? And... Alpha Týr?"



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Oh shit. It was the only thing I could think. Looking back at Hector, his face no longer had the smile as he looked over at Vale's father and brother. Swallowing, I turned back to the two wolves.

"Nice to see you again, Mr. Everfell." I held outmy hand to him.

He nodded. "Nice to see you again as well, Alpha Ezekiel. You can call me Logan, no need for formalities when you are my son's mate."

My smile was strained as I turned to his brother. "I don't think we have ever met. I'm AlphaEzekiel."

"We haven't. Alpha Týr, Vale's older brother. I'mglad I get to meet you, finally. Vale talks about you often."

I chuckled awkwardly. "Yeah... I hope it's all good."

Týr chuckled as well. "You would think you were handed to him by the Goddess herself. Nothing to worry about."

All I could think was that it wasn't going to be for long. I looked back at Hector who was still stone y faced looking at the two new additions that no one knew were coming, expect for Vale I'd guessed. Part of my was a little perturbe d he didn't say his brother or father were coming but it was about to explode and I didn't really have time to be petty.

Logan stepped up to Hector, looking him over. "Why do you look the same as when we were kids?"

"Some of us age better than others." Hectorreplied to him, crossing his arms over his chest.

Hector's eyes were flickering back and forth between his wolf. Slowly, Vale started to pull me back a little away from the two. Suddenly, Hector's head snapped over to the stage before his face filled with the goofy grin I'd seen when Auri was talking. His wolf stepped back and he just shook his head.

"This just got a little more fun." He finally said, rubbing the back of his neck.

Scoffing, I shook my head. "We are all fucked."

Hector barked out a laugh. "Truce?"

I smiled at him and nodded. "Truce."

"What the hell is he talking about?" Vale lookeddown at me.

"He came to introduce us to his new wife." llooked up at Vale, finally unable to put this off any longer. Vale rolled his eyes again. "Yeah. The new wife he married in less than a year. I'm excited to see who she is."

Logan scoffed. "Please. You didn't marry anyone. You said you wouldn't."

"I said I wouldn't unless it was the rightwoman."

"Yeah and you killed your mate."

All of us looked at Hector how growled. "Logan, you're already on thin ice. I'm warning you, go too far and my wife will be the one to stop me and she will

take at least a couple seconds. Long enough for me to rearrange that fat face of yours."

I bit my lower lip to keep from laughing. I'd heard about the escapades from Auri and the fact that she had been playing a prank on the guys in her home pack. I'd met Logan a while ago while Auri went missing and he came storming into the pack house. He didn't look like any of the weight had come off. From the photos Vale showed me, Týr was in much better condition. After Auri left, she'd stopped the prank but apparently, Logan's body didn't get the memo.

"She's probably an ugly bitch who only marriedyou because you knew the Alpha King."

Vale finally stepped in. "Dad, stop. You two are grown ass adults even if I'm questioning ifHector is right now."

Logan looked back at Vale. It seemed he was going to say something, but Auri started to sing the next song. Vale's eyes widened but it was Logan who looked like he just about broke his neck from how hard he whipped around to look at the stage.

Vale smiled widely. "Holy shit. I didn't realize she was playing the festival."

Hector smirked. "Yeah. Once the band found out she was here they begged her to play a few songs with them. She didn't agree at first but caved eventually."

My eyes slid from Hector to Logan. His mouth was open, eyes wide, and tears started to fall. Even Tyr looked emotion as they watched their mother sing for the first time in over 20 years. The emotion made it hard to swallow to not join them.

"Mom?"Týr was the first to say something as hetook a step forward.

Vale looked back at Týr. "What? No. That's Estel Storm. Great singer. I think she is a fey."

"No, Vale. That voice..."Týr took another stepforward before covering his mouth with his hand.

Vale looked from him to Logan who was shaking. "Dad?"Logan hadn't heard him though."Auri... how... what...?"

"Dad?" Vale asked again but this time, his voicewas higher and more worried. "Dad... that... that can't be Mom. She's..."

Suddenly, Logan ran into the crowd. He disappeared among the bodies and Týr choked out a sob. Hector came over to him and rubbed his back. It was hard seeing a grown man completely break down but it was understandable. Týr was old enough to remember what Auri was like when she had her voice. Not just that but to see her with sight and not look like she'd been tortured as much as she had over her life.

"That's not Mom!I would have known!I mean...she has white hair! So what? That doesn't mean anything!"Vale was shaking his head, trying to convince himself that it wasn't her.

"Vale..."My voice was quiet amidst the stormthat was going on in his head but he still heard me.

He stared at me for a moment. "You knew...?"

Taking a deep breath, I nodded. "That artist you point ed out on my phone when you said Estel was like her... that was Auri. I knew. Ever since she sang, I knew it was her."

Vale opened his mouth and then closed it againfor a moment. "You lied to me?"

When he said it, my heart dropped. "I... I didn't tell you. But I didn't lie. If you had asked me about her, then I would have told you. She never said I needed to keep from telling you but..."

"So you just never fucking told me? Zeke, you'remy mate! My partner. I trust you with everything. I've been looking for my mother for years. Years, Zeke. Why... would you do this?"

"Trust me then when I say you didn't need toknow. Auri would have left. She wouldn't have stuck around and you would have chased after her."

Vale loomed over me, his anger licking against my mind. "Of course I would have! She was right fucking there!"

"Exactly! Place yourself where you were at that

time. You were just getting the treaty step up. Just getting the packs on board. Would you be willing to throw that all away to chase after Auri when she didn't want to be found? She wasn't ready and now she is. Now, she is here and she is willing to talk to us. I knew you trusted me and I didn't say anything because you didn't need to know at the time."

"And now? Now, do I need to know, Ezekiel?"

I winced as he used my full name. "Now, you get to ask her everything you want. You get toreconcile your relationship..."

"After you've been in contact with her for howlong?"

"Vale..."

He cut me off. "I've never been so fucking disappointed in you. You deliberately withheld the information from me. Not just as my mate but as my order as the Alpha King. There will be consequences, Ezekiel."

I nodded. "I'm aware, Alpha King."

My tone was sharp and I saw him wince when I used his title in a non-sexual way. If he wanted to use my full name and he wanted to treat me as a regular Alpha then I would use his title.

Hector's eyes were narrowed as he continued to hold Týr.

"Vale, don't go too far. Zeke did what he thoughtwas right."

Vale growled at him, baring his teeth. "You have no room to say shit. I should punish you even worse. You not only withheld information, you've been with her this whole damn time."

Hector shook his head, completely unperturbed by his show of anger. "Simmer down, Vale. Auri and I can be over in the morning. We will be happy to answer questions..."

"Questions? You're lucky I don't put you two ontrial!"

This time he laughed. There is nothing you can force your mother to do. I know that and you know that."

I grabbed Vale's forearm just as his canines slipped past his lips. He was going straight for Hector and I tried to hold him back but he ripped his arm from mine. His Alpha King power was starting to see p out as he stepped closer to Hector. Týr had his neck bared as did I but Hector looked utterly unimpressed. Suddenly, it was gone. His presence, his anger, I even watched as he shoulder's slump as his canines disappeared.

