

Chapter 2

Ava's POV

I'm watching Lily running around the great hall.

It's been three hours since Caleb told me about the visitors and Lily hasn't blinked since.

When I told her that Lycan King Cameron would be here tomorrow at 11:00 and that she would be expected to act as host, she dropped the napkins from her hands, her face ghost white, and started squealing, 'oh my god' over and over.

It took about thirty minutes to snap her out of it and I've been gently guiding her through all the preparations.

The thing about Lily is, she wants the help, but she doesn't always want to know that you are helping. She really wants to be a good Luna and have the respect of the pack, but she doesn't have a clue on how to host, let alone a Lycan king.

I mean, hell, I don't even know how to host a Lycan king.

But I have been making little suggestions quietly to Lily, and she has been repeating them to the chef, maids, and the council.

The Lycan clan will have a buffet lunch, catered dinner, nice clean bedrooms for the night, and a quick breakfast before heading out early the next day.

It's custom to host a welcome celebration for visiting packs, but given the circumstance of this visit, we decided to host a nice, but more casual style, dinner instead.

I also had Lily add extra members to the patrol, we want to look like a strong pack while our Alpha is away.

I quickly volunteered the night shift. I don't sleep well anymore anyway, and I'll be back in time to help get Lily ready in the morning.

I watch as Lily looks around the great hall with a manic expression on her face.

She turns to me. "Do you think it looks ok? Oh my goodness, King Cameron!" She shakes her head in disbelief, her eyes wide. "What was Caleb thinking inviting him here while he was gone?"

"Um, well, I don't think Caleb had much of a choice in the matter Lily. My guess is, he'd probably rather be here than off ghting some vicious pack." My sarcastic tone goes right over her head.

"Well, maybe if it goes well, King Cameron will come back afterwards for the Luna ceremony." Lily nods her head, her eyes getting a dreamy look to them. "Oh, can you imagine, Daphne would just die if we had royalty at the ceremony!"

Daphne was Lily's frenemy growing up. She mated to a beta at a neighboring pack before Lily mated to Alpha Caleb. Lily was super pouty about Daphne getting such a powerful mate that she wasn't even going to go to their mate ceremony. Until she mated with Alpha Caleb. Then she was more than happy to show up in a slinky pale pink dress on her new Alpha's arm.

"Well, you have this under control, I'm going to go get ready for my shift." Lily nods absently, I'm not sure if it's at me, or if she's just nodding at the thought of having a Lycan king at her Luna ceremony to make everyone jealous.

I hurry out of the hall and start running when I reach the road. It's a short jog to our house where I let myself in the front door up the stairs to my bedroom.

I change into small black athletic shorts and an old grey tank top before throwing my hair into a messy bun on top of my head.

I catch a glimpse of myself in my mirror and feel a fresh wave of pain. I wore this out on countless patrols with Caleb.

Shake it off Ava. I take a deep breathe and rush down the stairs, slipping my feet quickly into tennis shoes, and taking off at a run to the patrol meeting spot in the woods.

I love running through the forest, in human and wolf form, it's such a freeing feeling.

Caleb and I use to go on runs together. We'd run to his aunts abandoned house on the outskirts of town so we could be alone...

I shake my head as I reach the meet up spot. I can't keep thinking about him. It hurts too much, and I really don't want anyone seeing these thoughts while we patrol in mindlink together.

Kevin is waiting for me in the clearing where we always meet up to start our patrols. He's an older man with greying hair, too old to go off to ght other packs, but still able to handle his own against the occasional lone rogue.

I nod at him as I walk over and he nods back.

"Annie and Dave have already left. You can cover the south side tonight, I'll take the West. Meet back here at 5:00."

I nod in acknowledgement and go behind a tree to take off my clothes before shifting to my white furred wolf.

I can feel my spirits lift as I bound through the forest, no longer thinking about Caleb or Lily, just letting my mind be blank.

I spend the next several hours letting my mind stay that way, running around the forest, listening and smelling for anything out of the ordinary, enjoying the feel of the forest oor on my paws.

5:00 comes fast. I meet up with the others in the clearing, go behind a tree to get my clothes on, and say a quick hi and bye to the new shift.

I run back home to get ready for the day. I made a promise to Caleb that I would help Lily today, which means I don't have much time.

As soon as I get home, I shower, dress quickly in a modest pale blue dress, and go to Lily's room.

I knock and open the door at the same time.

Lily is still in bed, a hot pink sleep mask covering her eyes.

"Lily!" I whisper loudly and poke her arm.

She grunts but doesn't wake.

"Lily!" I poke her harder and she wakes, pushing her eye mask up. "We need to get ready for the visitors!"

Lily sits upright and her face turns to panic. "King Cameron!" She squeals and jumps out of bed.

It takes a lot of back and forth, but I nally convince Lily into a light pink tted dress that has a modest top and goes to her knees, instead of the skin tight hot pink mini dress with side cutouts. She still looks amazing, but she isn't revealing nearly as much skin as she usually does, which is what I think Caleb was hoping for.

Her straight white blond hair is half pulled up in a sophisticated hair do with a diamond covered clip holding it in place and her huge diamond stud earrings exposed.

She looks stunning. She looks like a barbie doll.

We are about to head to the packhouse, just waiting on Lily to grab her purse, when I catch a glimpse of myself in the hall mirror.

I didn't even take time to blow dry my hair and I'm regretting it as I look in the mirror at my big wavy hair looking like a wild mane around my face.

I open the drawer to a little catch all dresser under the mirror and rummage around for a hair band. I nd one and pull my hair back into a quick loose braid down my back.

Lily comes into the hall and looks up from her purse.

"Oh! Ava! Your hair..." She looks wide eyed at my freshly done braid. "You really should leave it down, it looks like you slept on it in that braid, it's all loose and falling out. I think we have time for you to straighten it..."

"It's ne Lily." I walk towards the door. "No one will be looking at me anyway."

Lily's face went from a critical frown to a smile instantly. "Oh, you're right Ava, I'm sure King Cameron will be wanting to talk to the future Luna." She walks to the door and stops expectantly.

I roll my eyes and step in front of her to open the door for her.

"Let me get that door for you, your highness." Once again, the sarcasm goes unnoticed.

Lily giggles as she walks through the door. "Oh Ava, I already have a mate, remember? Otherwise, I'm sure King Cameron and I would really get along."

I throw my head back in an epic eyeroll as I follow her through the door.

How could I forget you already have a mate? I only dated him four years before you took him from me.

I shake my head and catch up to Lily as we walk to the packhouse together, Lily holding on to my arm to keep her steady in her four inch high heels on the uneven pavement. She's a foot taller than me in them. She used to complain all the time when I insisted on always wearing ats while she wore heels. Being eight inches taller than me already, she said we looked weird next to each other. She changed her mind as she got older though, she liked having everyone looking at her, the tall beauty, instead of the plain shortie next to her.

When we reach the packhouse we pause, people are frantically running around doing last minute touch ups.

"No no!" Lily squeals at a young girl putting white tulips on a table. The girl pauses and looks terrified as Lily hurries toward her, her high heels clicking loudly on the wood oors.

"I said I wanted pink roses!!"

I walk over to the buffet table that still has coffee out. I'm going to need a lot of this today after my all nighter. I mix a ton of cream and sugar into my coffee cup and watch my sister freaking out on all the helpers.

I'm just wondering if I might be able to sneak away for a short cat nap when Kevin rushes in the room.

"Lily! They're here! They arrived early!"

I'm so shocked that I accidentally sloosh my coffee down my dress. s**t!

I hastily grab some napkins and start dabbing away blindly while I look over at Lily.

She's frozen in shock, hand in the air, her nger still pointing at a table she was apparently telling someone they had set up incorrectly.

"Lily!" I hiss loudly and wave her over to me. I need her to pull herself together. I told Caleb that I would help her, and I don't want him to be let down.

Lily comes to with a shake of her head and takes quick clicking steps toward me, her eyes wide.

I throw the napkins on the table and walk towards the door, still waving her over, so we can meet the visitors at the entrance.

Lily is almost to my side when it happens. I smell something I had never smelled before, and it was the most wonderful and enticing scent in the world.

I stop walking as I watch a group of the largest men that I have ever seen striding through the door. All are nearly seven feet tall. All are extremely handsome. And every single one is incredibly intimidating.

About eight of them walk in and step aside to make room for the largest man of all to walk through.

He was easily seven feet tall and the most gorgeous of them all. He wore a green dress shirt that was tted against his wide shoulders and huge arm muscles and tucked in at his slim waist into dark wash jeans. He has dark brown hair with just a slight wave to it, intoxicating big hazel eyes that were incredible intense, high chiseled cheek bones, and kissable full lips.

He keeps walking purposefully past his men, his eyes meeting mine. I'm frozen in place, I feel like the closer he walks to me, the more likely I am to melt into the oor and I can't stop staring at him.

He walks all the way up to me, his eyes blazing into mine, wraps an arm around my waist to pull me up and against him and growls, "Mine!"