

#Chapter 10 You think his eyes are charming?

It was a weird question, but it wasn't the first time that Candido had started a strange conversation with me.

I thought about it and answered, "People say he's the most handsome guy at school, and he receives a lot of love letters in pink envelopes every day."

Then I laughed. "Ohh Claire thinks his eyes are very charming."

Candido clenched his fists at his sides as I frowned at the glass I had been offering to him for the past few moments. Why wasn't he taking it back?

Candido took a deep breath. "You think his eyes are charming?"

"Not me. Claire."

"I don't care." He said stiffly. "I'm asking what you think."

Candido looked so serious. More serious than I had ever seen him. It wasn't like him to fixate on something so trivial.

I usually told him all about my day, but there hadn't been much to say today, and my mind wasn't on my day at the Academy, let alone Francium. Maybe there was something going on with the New Moon Pack. Was he in negotiations with them about something and wanted a sense of them?

I thought about it and hummed. "Francium does look more mature than our peers and looks quite gloomy. I don't understand why he likes me. You do know everything! I've grown up. When will you stop having me watched?"

"You don't like him because he's more mature than his peers?"

"That's not the point! When are you going to stop monitoring my every move? I'm not your private property."

"Answer me. Do you like him or not?"

His eyes were fixed on me. He looked a little scary, though his handsome features and his shaggy golden eyelashes made him look sexy.

"Why do you care? Who are you to me?"

"I'm your guardian."

"You are my Candido. Candido. Candido."

I loved the way his name jumped on the tip of my tongue. Challenging his patience was exciting for me. I wanted to provoke him a little. Would he be angry with me, would he bite my lips or pin me to the bed?

I stared at his lips, my palms sweating with nervousness.

"Impudent little wolf."

"What are you going to do with me? Candido. I know you're

not going to--"

He reached out a hand toward me, and my heart pounded wildly.

I imagined him cupping my chin and kissing me.

I cried out as he pinched my cheek. Damn! Why couldn't he just kiss me? Couldn't he tell I was getting angry?

"Not happy? Don't like me pinching your round cheeks?"

He seemed to be satisfied to see me get angry.

So he pinched me a little harder as if it felt good to do so.

I glared at him, not averting my gaze

"...I'm grown up, Candido, and you're acting inappropriately," I said seriously.

I'd rather him do something a little more inappropriate to me than that, like kissing me or pushing me down on the bed. My ears burned just thinking about it.

"Hm." He looked at me carefully and suddenly let out a chuckle, "Go to sleep, little wolf."

He turned down the hall and left without taking the glass with him.

"Good night."

I stared at his back and wondered why he was smiling.

Did he know what I really wanted?

I bit my lip. On the one hand, I was afraid he would find out my little secret. On the other hand, I wanted him to know how much I liked him. It was more than just fondness. I loved him like any woman loved a man.

I turned back into my room and locked the door behind me. I set the glass on the dresser nearby and returned to work, pushing the strange conversation out of my mind and hoping for the best.

The clue I found among the physical evidence of the scene made me smirk. It was a piece of clothing. I opened the evidence file about it and skimmed through the basic analysis before running a deeper analysis on it. The shade of red was familiar, but I couldn't put my finger on it until the cross-reference search returned several results.

The fabric was a specialty shade made only in the capital, and it was only sold to people in the capital during certain holidays. While it didn't narrow down the suspect list by much, it did help paint a picture. The holidays that used this shade of red were all dedicated to the Moon Goddess, and they were all super religious and ceremonial. It meant that the attacker either wanted us to think some sort of religious zealot had attacked us or an actual zealot had attacked us.

But why?

It was strange to think that someone so devoted to the

Moon Goddess, enough to dress for the holidays, would think to attack Moon Shadow. Stranger still that someone like that would be able to find Moon Shadow. Unfortunately, the team that I assigned to the attack couldn't use a scent to trace the attacker. It had been too faded when they got there or erased.

It was possible that the attacker had only worn the clothing briefly before the attack, so their scent hadn't soaked into the fabric, or they had disguised their scent somehow.

Both options gave me a headache. It was a dead end for now. I sent another set of messages about how to proceed and to keep me up to date on the investigation before shutting down the computer and lying down.

The most realistic answer was that it was someone connected to the vampires infiltrating our society, but why would a werewolf devoted to the Moon Goddess side with them? I didn't know much about vampires. They weren't talked about much in the history books. All that was taught was that we had been at odds with them for so long, longer than recorded history. Was there some connection? Some conspiracy within the Moon Goddess' cult that would answer these questions and point us in the right direction?

I didn't know, but I was sure to find out. As I drifted off to sleep, I thought of Candido and the way he'd stared at me as I licked my lips. I shivered a little and felt my face heat all over again.

His gaze had been hungry. I could almost imagine him leaning down and kissing me, pulling me up against him, and holding me still, so all I could do was give in. I shifted in bed, feeling hot all of a sudden, and pouted.

As much as I imagined it, it wasn't likely to happen. Not yet, anyway. I was turning twenty soon. Until then, I could only be a child in his eyes, legally.

As soon as I came of age, I wasn't going to let him treat me like that anymore. Candido wouldn't know what hit him.

The next morning, I headed to the Academy. Team Gamma-2 ushered me into the car like a princess, but my mind was still reeling about the attack on Moon Shadow. The investigation was a bit at a standstill for now, but the measures I had taken would pay off soon, I hoped.

I frowned. "Where's Candido?"

Not seeing him in the morning unsettled me. Was he avoiding me on purpose? Did he know how I felt?