

## #Chapter 11 Hedy's type

"His Majesty left early into the city for a meeting."

That was odd. Candido was an early riser, but he rarely missed breakfast with me. He pretended like it was just to check up on me, but I think he enjoyed our quiet time together. This morning had been the first time I'd eaten breakfast without him in a long time. It wasn't completely out of the ordinary alone, but in relation to that conversation we had last night and the way he'd evaded my questions about the party, it was odd.

I slipped out of the car when we arrived, waved most of the team goodbye, and headed into the Academy. People were milling about on the front lawn and in the hallway. Some gave me wide-eyed glances, but I ignored them.

"Hedy!" Claire called, rushing down the hall towards me. People parted for her, but they were still staring at me.

Maybe it was because of Francium's confession yesterday? Or had they heard about Bella's engagement disaster? Whatever the reason, I ignored them as Claire reached me.

I grinned and wiggled my eyebrows. "You have some explaining to do about—"

"It's all over the school's forum," Claire said, thrusting her phone at me.

I frowned, looked down, and grimaced. Someone had recorded Francium's confession and posted it.

I didn't see why everyone was so interested in this. There were so many comments on the school forum that didn't make any sense. A lot of them were angry at me for turning him down. They mentioned my relationship with Candido and speculated a lot, but the only comments that really upset me were the ones about Francium not being worthy. Everyone was worthy of love. Everyone deserved it, no matter what issues they had.

I felt bad for the guy, seeing how many people from the New Moon Pack were talking about him. At least his fan club were countering their nonsense.

"Hedy?" Claire asked.

I shrugged and handed the phone back to Claire. "And?"

Claire sighed. "You don't think this might cause problems with his fan club?"

I eyed her. "Everyone has a type."

I gave her a knowing grin. "Some people like the Francium's of the world..."

Her cheeks flushed and she scowled at me.

"And so, people can sit back and admire the aesthetics without feeling anything at all."

Claire rolled her eyes and pinched my cheek. "Don't get lofty or cheeky with me. I know exactly what your type is."

I felt my cheeks warm as we linked arms and headed to class.

"Any ideas about making some headway?" Claire asked. "It's not like it's impossible."

I shook my head. "I don't know what it would take for him to ... see me as an option."

Claire pouted. "Well... you'll be twenty soon... maybe you should revive your old tactics."

I swatted her. "Claire!"

She laughed as I shook my head. I didn't regret telling her about how I came to be under Candido's care, but I never thought she'd bring it up again like this.

"I admire your boldness," Claire said suddenly. "It's only grown. He'd better watch out when your birthday comes around."

I shook my head. There were so many other issues that could pop up. While I did love Candido and want to be with him, there were so many things standing between that future and now, but it was so nice to have Claire on my side. She was half a year older than me, so she sometimes felt like my elder sister and my best friend.

She cared for me. Between her, Candido, and the rest of Full Moon, I couldn't have asked for a better family, not even if we were related by blood.

"Maybe we should go shopping before your birthday?" Claire asked. "Something in his favorite color?"

I rolled my eyes. "Black?"

Claire giggled. "Well, when you put it that way... Maybe red?"

I shook my head, though as someone walked past me in the same shade of red as the fabric that had been found at Moon Shadow's headquarters, I paused.

"Claire... what is that shade of red called?"

"There's no official name, but we usually call it Moon Goddess red." Claire chuckled. "Don't ask me why red is the color and not silver or white. No one really knows."

"Could you get it outside of Candido's territory?"

"No," Claire shook her head, then paused. "Well... yes. I think there's a sister shop in the Red Moon Pack's territory."

I nodded. My intel had been incomplete, but it seemed even less likely that someone from Red Moon would attack Moon Shadow's headquarters. Red Moon had been allied with Full Moon for years. New Moon was neutral towards the two larger packs, but they had never had much of a reason to fight after the hierarchy had been established.

What was clear was that I wouldn't be cracking the mystery of the attack soon, but maybe Claire would have some ideas about what I could do to get Candido to see me.

Allen, the Secretary of State of Full Moon, was Claire's father. Him and his entire family were loyal to the Alpha King and had always been in service of the pack's alphas. I knew how much it bothered her to keep my secrets, especially after she told me why she had approached me in the first place.

It felt so long ago that we were barely acquaintances. Allen had asked her to look after me at school. She'd told me that she had first seen it as just another duty to the Alpha King and her father, but we became real friends so soon after that I could barely remember what those first days were like.

I smiled at Claire. "Thank you."

Her eyes widened. "What have I done now?"

"Keeping my secrets."

Claire blinked and her smile softened. She bumped her hip into mine.

"What are friends for?" She wiggled her eyebrows. "Besides, I hear men like to be surprised."

"Claire!"

She laughed all the way to class.

After our mourning classes, Claire and I didn't have classes together again until the afternoon. I had about an hour between our last class together and my next class, while she had a break right after mine. It was just how our schedules worked out despite all our best efforts. 1

"I was wondering when I'd run into you..."

I frowned and turned, recognizing the voice. It was Bella dressed like the little princess Steven and Lilian had made her be. Due to the way Lilian and Steven had treated us, Bella had been able to enter the academy a year before I had. Candido had put me through tutoring to get me ready to enter the academy last year. I was grateful since Lilian had never cared about my education, and neither had Steven.

We had been attending the academy together for a year now, this being the second year, but Bella had never looked for me. I hadn't looked for her either, content to never see her again if I could help it. No one knew we were related save the handful of people from smaller packs who knew I was also Steven's daughter, but I heard enough about her through professors and campus announcements. She was an honor student of her year.

I remembered the way she screamed at me, promising to make my life a living hell, but I hadn't taken it to heart. She had made my life a living hell for years because no one had been around to protect me. Or rather, no one had been

willing to protect me. She was delusional if she thought that I wasn't protected just because I was at school. I saw a member of Team Gamma-2 drifting nearby, well within sight and undercover as usual. Their job was just to make sure I didn't get into too much trouble, they hadn't had to step in since I started, and unless Bella found a way to make herself seem like a victim, she wouldn't try to hit me.

"So good that we could run into each other, big sister."

My eyes widened as she slid into the seat across from me. She smiled brightly, but it didn't reach her eyes.

"Now that you're at the Academy, feel free to ask me for help," she said lifting her nose. "You know I'm an honor student, don't you?"

"She's so nice," someone whispered.

"Are they really sisters?"

"They look nothing alike."

I almost rolled my eyes at the scene. Bella was pretty, but that was all she was. She kept people unaware of her true personality with a pretty smile and moments like these, but it was obvious that Bella was preening at all the compliments.

But I knew better.

"Really a Beauty and the Beast story," someone snickered.

"Dumb and Brilliant."

Someone laughed. "No wonder Bella never talked about it before."

Bella smiled at me smugly. Was that really her goal? I glanced at the bandage around her wrist. I would have thought she had better things to do with her time, like dealing with her fiancé's scandal or studying, but how could I think that a broken wrist would undo years of Bella's upbringing and her personality?

She had always been petty.

"Is that math?" Bella asked. "I hear you're a pretty mediocre student, so you must be struggling a lot."

I rolled my eyes, ready to leave her and her admirers here, but someone else came over to the table.

"Bella, you're so nice for helping her," she said.


"You know I try to be nice when I can, Linda," Bella said loudly. "Even with pathetic people like her."

"She is pretty pathetic," Linda agreed and leered at me. "I mean, shouldn't you be at least trying not to embarrass your sister looking like that? Eat more vegetables, fatty."

Bella laughed.

I tilted my head and smiled. Maybe I was looking at this all wrong. Instead of letting her embarrass me, instead of just



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walking away and not engaging in a way that I had never been able to do in my childhood, I should stay right where I am and give her a taste of her own medicine.

"I've got a question."

"Oh, you've finally—"

"Where is the new graph located if the original is transformed by three?"

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