

Chapter 115 A Better Future

Serena

Lady Georgia was a petite, refined woman. She had a gentle beauty and a kind spirit, and her aura was filled with so much positivity I could feel it radiating through me. She reminded me a lot about my adopted mother who loved to cook and also reminded me about Jessica who prefers little to no make-up and just a simple ponytail to tie her hair.

When I found her busily washing vegetables on the sink, she invited me to help without hesitation. I was giddy to join her that instant since I loved cooking. I told her about the magic food I ate in Aero's manor when I first arrived on Phanteon. She laughed about it knowing it was frozen food and not a freshly cooked meal.

She gave me her secrets on how to make the ingredients taste better. She also expressed her happiness about me and Aero's unbreakable bond. Said that it was inspiring and a great example to the pack. Overall, we enjoyed our time together and I would have loved to spend more with her if not for the sudden rage I sensed inside my husband's mind.

With his father the cause of the problem, Aero was in turmoil. I too couldn't believe King Gideon would do such a thing. To change nature...to actually discredit the Universe in the mating process... it was unheard of. I could only hope he did it for a good cause.

Luckily, Aero understood my plea in behalf of the priest that wedded us and for Sedsah—although I didn't really care about the old man in the first place since we interacted so seldom before the great war happened.

Wanting to console my husband, I went to the hidden room using my fae power. I embraced him the second I materialized and he openly welcomed it.

Alpha Edmond, seeing this, bent his head and left, giving us privacy.

"You got answer now," I muttered as I caught sight of the opened scroll near his boots. "This explains why Rhea and Elijah got it too."

"It is far from over, Serena," he whispered in my ear; his voice filled with controlled anger. "I need to know why my father did this. I need to know his motivation."

"And I will support you in this new quest," I answered. "For your peace, for us, for the future of our sons and our people."

“Thank you Serena.” He withdrew, kissed me with so much passion and I kissed him back with equal fervor. For the next hour, we read the remaining scrolls inside the safe. By the time we left the hidden room, we were wiser—at least in terms of the mating process.

For certain, whether the moon goddess was just made up or not, there was a unexplained force in the Universe that unites two souls and makes them mates for life. Attraction, desire, lust and love were all real, felt by every mated being. The scrolls didn’t explain when this mating process happens: whether it begins at the moment two souls meet, or if it had a certain age followed, or a situation was needed to unlock the mating bond, but it was clear that once the marks appear, they were mated for life.

Will the marks appear only during a wedding ceremony? That was my question when I kept on reading and so far, I found a vague answer to it. All incidents recorded only involved a mating ritual—like a wedding in me, Aero, Elijah and Rhea’s case. There were no other references to it happening outside the ritual. Despite the many scrolls saved by Alpha Edmond, sadly, I was unable to find any other clues to explain more of this phenomenon.

Alpha Edmond met us in the vestibule and informed us that he organized a lunch meeting with his friends; friends that possessed the same crescent moon marks we had.

I was happy with this development and I knew Aero was too but like always, his happiness didn't show on his face the whole time of the lunch.

Instead, he showed deep interest when the couples started sharing their experience.

Althea and Beta Keith, married for almost four hundred and twenty years now, was the last couple in Cydan to exhibit the mate marks. They told us that they had to keep their marks hidden like the others or else they would face consequences.

Healer Jasmine and Omega Shaun, now with four children also mated, expressed their hardship during King Gideon's time. Since Jasmine was a healer, she had to be away always and this proved to be difficult for them because their mark constantly ached.

Captain Alex and his wife, Lady Trista, Lady Georgia's sister, were almost executed by King Gideon's men because they were mistaken as rogues during their nightly visits in a river nearby.

Alpha Edmond said that there was a rogue pack leader he had befriended because they shared the

same resolve regarding the marks, but this leader—unfortunately the most vocal one—was eventually caught and killed leaving his mate alone and depressed. This aforementioned mate ended up to be that old woman in my father's pack house; the one who gave me and Aero refreshments.

When I heard about this, tears ran down my cheeks unhindered. If I had known this was what that server experienced, I would have given her the tightest, warmest hug I could give.

To actually lose someone you love...someone who owned half your heart and soul...someone who gave meaning to living...the thought just broke my heart. I couldn't even imagine losing Aero and living on. God forbid, if this happened to me, I would gladly kill myself.

And then I remembered my father and mother; Aunt Adna and King Alduin... My heart broke even more and additional tears continued to spill from my eyes.

Aero noticed my situation, so he quickly embraced me and buried my face against his chest.

"I apologize, Your Majesty. I didn't mean to make the luna cry," I heard Alpha Edmond say in a very worried voice.

Aero stood up with me still in his embrace and answered, "It's a sensitive subject matter for her,

alpha. Do you have a room?"

"Oh yes, Your Majesty, right this way," he announced.

Aero didn't bother to ask me to walk. He simply lifted me up and brought me to the room Alpha Edmond prepared for us. It was located on the second floor of the house. Despite in the middle of crying, I knew this because he had to manage two flights of stairs along the way.

Alone inside the room, Aero arranged me in bed and allowed me to cry further. He gave me what I needed the most at that moment and it was silence. He just sat at the edge of the mattress and constantly caressed my ankle.

"Hold me, please," I requested when I calmed down some time later. The coldness of the bed bothered me now and I craved his presence next to me.

Aero left his spot, rounded the corner, and joined me on the mattress.

"Is this pregnancy blues you're feeling Serena?" he asked just as he wrapped his arms around me.

I pressed my forehead against his chest again and answered, "Partly yes." And I didn't need to elaborate it further. He knew what the other half was.

"You know I would never leave you right?" he assured whilst combing my hair with his large

hand.

“I know and I would do the same for you,” was my reply. “I just can’t help feeling sad for all those mates who lost their partners because of some wicked souls who care more about their greed.”

“You’re talking about my father and Geraden.”

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t help hating your father for it.”

“Don’t be. He deserves it.” His other arm tightened around me. “If anything, Serena, I’m glad you didn’t meet him.”

“Can we change this, Aero?” I lifted my head up and met his gaze. “Lift the burden of our people by righting what is wrong?”

“Of course.” His eyes shone with confidence. “We are going to set things right once and for all, Serena.”

This lightened my mood.

“I want to meet other truly mated couples like us, Aero. I want to hear their side of the story.” I confessed whilst running a thumb along the seam of his lips.

“Alpha Aaron’s pack is near Cydan,” he replied. “We can go there while on our way to the castle.”

“That’s a sound plan. I would love to see what the Slandail Pack looks like.”

It was decided. After going down to the living room, we said our goodbyes to Alpha Edmond and

Lady Georgia. We then journeyed westward, into the territory of Slandail or the security pack where Aero claimed to be mountainous.

The roads weren't steep though so the horses were able to sustain the travel. Trees and more trees surrounded the sides of the roads, the hills, and cliffs. At first, they were all a healthy green until when we got to a higher altitude, the leaves and trunks were slightly coated with soft snow.

The air around us was denser and cooler too. Aero said that the Slandail Pack was near the icy mountains of Phanteon so this explained all the snow and cold weather.

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the territory. With his beta and omega, Alpha Aaron greeted us upon disembarking the coach. The last time I saw him, he grew a thick beard and long hair. Now, he was clean-shaven and his hair was in a stylish almost marine-like cut. This suited him better than the whole brooding, Neanderthal look.

They all wore formal clothes, making them look dashing, but the alpha stood out from the three. He mentioned that they were in the middle of a birthday party of a pack member and that Aero and I were more than welcome to join. I sent my husband puppy-dog eyes so that he'd answer yes to the invitation, and I jumped with joy when he did.

Alpha Aaron led us to our room for the night. To my surprise, it was separate from his pack house. Nestled on top of the biggest tree I had ever seen on Phanteon, the tree house stood like a massive building of its own. It was painted a nature-friendly shade of yellow and made entirely out of wood.

We climbed up the spiral stairs to get to the platform twenty feet high above the ground. Alpha Aaron opened the door for us and invited us in. The first thing I noticed was a minibar at the right of the living space and a balcony that could fit three people. Next was a kitchen with a wellstocked fridge and the complete kitchenware. Moving further, he showed us two bedrooms that fitted queen-sized beds.

“Please come down the function hall whenever you are ready, Your Majesties,” Alpha Aaron stated right after he toured us.

I wanted to enjoy the place more but I also wanted to attend the party asap so I nodded at him.

Once the door closed, I immediately used my fae powers to change us into different clothes.

Behind me, I could feel Aero’s gaze.

“That quick?” he asked, his tone of voice not hiding his surprise at all.

“Yes, why not, right?” I flashed him a grin. “We can’t miss this opportunity to mingle with the

pack, Aero, and maybe find more couples that have the marks.”

He watched his appearance in the mirror and smirked towards me. “As always you choose the best outfits for us.”

I joined him in the reflection and gave a nod of approval. We wore matching outfits that mainly favored the black and gold shade. Mine was a sweeping goddess-style gown while his, an open collar tuxedo.

“Yeah? Thank you for the praise, my king.” I grabbed his elbow right away and pulled him towards the door. “Let’s go!”

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