

Chapter 38

Caleb

I can tell Lola has figured out that I'm a vampire. Her eyes are colder now, more guarded as she looks me up and down as though seeing me for the first time. I cringe and nervously scratch the back of my head, embarrassed of what I am.

"So," I awkwardly drawl. "I guess you've figured it out, ha-ha..."

Her chocolate eyes narrow. "This isn't funny, Caleb. You're a vampire, and I'm a werewolf-I could get in big trouble just for talking to you."

I'm surprised she is focusing on the future punishment from her pack and Alpha rather than on the fact I've deceived her for three days. I could have told her from the beginning that I'm not a werewolf, but...I guess I had this unrealistic dream of us actually becoming lovers.

"Are you going to close the door on me?" I ask, carefully measuring my tone. I don't want to sound afraid, but I am. That's the truth of it all. Never have I been so fearful of losing something I never had in the first place.

She crosses her arms in her wheelchair, her face conflicted while chewing on her lower lip. It's a bad habit of hers, but I've

never pointed it out. Her flaws are what make her Lola, and I wouldn't change a single thing about her.

"I don't know yet," she finally says. "It's not just about you or me anymore, Caleb."

"Tell me about it," a bitter laugh leaves my lips as I sit down cross-legged on the porch, hoping to appear less intimidating. When Lola is sitting in her wheelchair, I feel like a giant. "If I return empty-handed to my clan, Taria will kill me with her own hands."

Lola falls silent before asking, "Who is Taria?"

Fuck, I've said too much...but does it matter? The werewolves hate me and I know Lola's Alpha would kill me if he saw me, but I don't mind helping out Lola. I've already decided she is more important than my clan. I guess that's what the mate bond does to a vampire. I mean, I could reject Lola and mark someone else, but what's the point?

She is my fated mate, and I'm sorry, but I've always been a hopeless romantic. I would die for this wolf right here, and I'm not even joking. Call me whipped or whatever you want, but I will choose love over world domination every single day of the week. And Lola is my first and only love.

"Taria is the vampire queen," I say casually as if it's no big deal that I've just revealed the name of the second most feared and revered being in our world. "She is the one who holds my life in her hands...at least, she used to."

The last word dissolves into the air, quieter than a whisper, carrying with it the weight of a thousand unspoken truths. I watch as Lola's eyes widen in surprise, her mouth opening slightly as she takes in the information. I can almost see the cogs turning in her brain, processing the confession that I'd blurted out on a whim.

"The Vampire Queen?" she repeats, her voice thin, almost disbelieving. "You're a part of her clan and yet you chose to...to betray her?"

An impish grin crosses my lips. "I've never been known for my intelligence. I'm more of the guy they call when they need magic shit done."

"Magic shit?"

"I'm very talented when it comes to messing with people's brains...I can also change my appearance and look like anyone I want. Comes in handy when you need to hide from a certain vampire queen that might soon want me dead," I elaborate, smirking at Lola's astonished expression.

"But I..." She bites her lower lip again. "I still haven't decided whether or not I accept this...if I accept you.".,

"Understandable."

"No, Caleb...wait, what? You're just going to accept it? Just like that?" Lola's voice takes on a tone of disbelief, and her expressive eyes are wide with surprise at my lack of reaction.

“Of course,” I shrug nonchalantly. “Happy wife, happy life. Haven’t you heard that saying?”

She giggles. “Caleb, we aren’t married.”

“But we could be,” I suggest, letting the words hang between us, a tantalizing promise of what could happen in the future. The laughter dies in her throat, and she stares at me, shock registering in her widened eyes.

“What? Are you....are you serious?” Lola sputters. “We just met each other!”

“And?” I challenge. “Werewolves don’t live for a very long time, so I’d rather not sit and wait around for the good things to happen, Lola.”

She swallows thickly at that. “Right... you’re a vampire, so you’re going to outlive me.”

“Well, technically, there are ways around that,” I correct her gently, not wanting to upset her further. “But yes, without any of that, my lifespan will be longer than yours.”

The silence stretches between us as Lola digests this new information. Her chocolate eyes are pools of confusion and turmoil, and I can almost see the cogs turning in her head as she processes my words.

“So that means I will have wrinkles and graying hair while you look like a member of a K-pop band forest?” her tone is half teasing, half sad as the idea settles into her mind.

I chuckle nervously, hoping her willingness to speak to me is a good sign. "Well, I could always glamor myself to look old and decrepit if it makes you feel better."

She bursts out laughing then, her head tilting back as genuine mirth bubbles up within her. Her laughter is a sound I've always found intoxicating, and it makes the tension in my shoulders ease considerably. "I can't believe you'd do that for me

"Anything for you, Lola," I reply earnestly, hoping she doesn't think I'm joking.

She turns to me then, her eyes shimmering in the dim porch light. She's quiet for a moment, just staring at me before she finally speaks. "Is this normal? The way we are....you being a vampire and me a werewolf-"

"No, it isn't," I say quickly, pausing when she raises a brow at me. "But it's not unheard of. The vampire queen believes her son's mate is a werewolf, or...well...she hasn't shared such private information, but it's a rumor."

Lola smiles. "So we might not be the only example of a vampire and werewolf couple in this world?"

"Possibly," I smile back at her, my heart racing as I recognize a hint of warmth in her tone.

The silence lingers again, but this time, it feels less tense and more contemplative. Lola gazes out into the endless night while I continue observing her, captivated by her every move and expression.

"I won't let you inside," Lola suddenly says. "But maybe I could bring my laptop, and we could...watch a movie together? You have to stay on the porch, though."

I grin, my heart pounding wildly in my chest. "I'd like that."

"Me too."

Hours pass as we watch movie after movie, the genres varying wildly from romantic comedies to horror flicks.

Over time, Lola's initial hesitance gives way to comfort, her body relaxing against the back of her wheelchair. Although we are separated, with her sitting inside and me outside. I can see her reflection on the laptop screen. I can also see the steady rise and fall of her chest as she breathes, feel her presence so close yet so far from me.

Damn, I'm in love with this girl.

When morning comes around, I don't want to leave, but Lola is getting tired. A little yawn leaves her lips, and my heart tugs at the sight.

"Tired?" I ask

She nods, rubbing her eyes. "It's been a long night."

"I should probably go" I say, although every fiber of my being tells me to stay with her, even if I can't be right next to her. But it's clear she needs rest, and the last thing I want is to keep her awake longer than necessary.

“You could come back later tonight?” she offers, her voice quiet and uncertain.

My heart lurches at the invitation. “You’d be okay with that?”

She smiles softly, shrugging her shoulders. “I enjoyed spending me with you, Caleb. Even if you stayed on the other side of the door.”

I return her smile, feeling lighter than I have in weeks. “I’ll see you tonight then.”

As I turn to leave, Lola calls out to me, stopping me in my tracks. “Caleb?”

“Yes”

“Just...be careful, okay?”

“I will.”

With a final wave and a smile, I push off from the porch and melt into the shadows, leaving Lola’s house behind. I’m so happy it feels like I’m flying, but my cloud-nine moment comes to an end when I hear rustling in the bushes.

I’m being followed.

I stop in my tracks to listen. A low rumble echoes through the quiet night, sending shivers down my spine. I can feel in the ground, and it only means one thing.

Werewolves.

My instinct is to flee. I might be a capable fighter, but the last thing I want is to hurt one of Lola's friends. It would shat if I accidentally killed a pack member of hers while trying to defend myself.

That's why I raise my hands to surrender when a large, white wolf with wings on its back walks out of the bushes. It snarls at me, its pink eyes gleaming with hostility.

This must be Daisy, the reincarnated werewolf queen. She is a friend of Lola, her best friend, which means touching even a strand of her fur is a big no unless I want to lose Lola forever.

"I mean no harm," I say, keeping my voice steady despite the pounding of my heart in my chest.

But the angelic wolf doesn't listen.

It lunges forward, its teeth bared and body poised for attack. I don't want to fight Lola's friend and let the wolf bite into me. The pain registers in my mind, but I don't react

The things we do for the ones we love.....