

Chapter 9

Daisy

I sit frozen for a moment, caught between the urge to retreat and the desire to rise up to his challenge.

What do I do?

The tension around the table is unmistakable. I can feel my mother's shocked gaze and my sister's worried one. Alpha Xavier, however, seems completely at ease, an arrogant smirk playing on his gorgeous face as if he's greatly enjoying this unexpected turn of events.

"I..." I begin again, trying to collect my thoughts while maintaining my composure. His smirk widens. I realize with a jolt of anger that he's waiting for me to stumble. Well, not today.

"A proposal should come out of love and respect," I shoot back, surprising myself with my sudden boldness. "Not as a joke in front of others."

My family remains silent, which isn't a surprise. I didn't expect them to say anything, but Alpha Xavier's reaction is interesting. His expression freezes for a moment before he blinks slowly as if processing my words.

When my mother notices the Alpha's shock, she stiffens beside me, her stern gaze fixed on mine. "Daisy, apologize immediately! You can't talk like that to an Alpha."

Before I can respond. Isabella comes back from the bathroom, completely oblivious to the tension that has built up in her absence. She throws herself onto Alpha Xavier again with a delighted squeal, effectively breaking the spell that had blanketed the room.

"Did you all miss me?" she coos, snuggling into Alpha Xavier's side as if they weren't complete strangers.

He wrinkles his nose, but his eyes never leave mine, even as Isabella loops her arm around him. "Alpha Xavier," she whines with a pout "You need to be more lovey-dovey with your future wife."

I smirk and Alpha Xavier grunts before reluctantly wrapping his arm around her, but it's clear that his attention is still on me. There is something in his gaze now – respect? Or is it curiosity? His previous amusement has vanished, replaced by an almost unreadable expression.

"Daisy," my mother sister, Lina, silently growls. "I believe' an apology is in place.."

"Nonsense," Alpha Xavier finally states, looking from my burning face to my family's horrified ones. "The girl has guts; I will give her that." He grudgingly acknowledges me while sipping on his whiskey again.

Suddenly, he chuckles, a low rumbling sound that seems to shake the rooftop bar itself. “Well, Daisy,” he says. “You’ve certainly made this evening more interesting than I initially anticipated.”

His gaze lingers again on me before he stands up and pulls away from Isabella. She protests with a pout, but he silences her with a quick peck on the cheek and a promise to return.

But before leaving the table, he stops by my chair and looks down at me as if taking in every detail of my flushed face and flustered demeanor. Smirking, he leans in close, his hot breath fanning against my cheek, causing goosebumps to erupt over my skin.

“By the way,” he whispers so only I can hear. “I like your spirit, but if you intend on winning me back, you must dare to be honest even in front of your family members.”

Then he pulls away and strides toward the bar to order another whiskey without another word.

I blink several times, trying to comprehend what just happened while my mother throws worried glances at Alpha Xavier, Isabella slumps back into her seat, a sullen look on her face as she processes her fiancé’s abrupt departure.

“Why is he so interested in you?” she looks up at me with her arms crossed over her chest. “Alpha Xavier is supposed to be my husband, not yours.”

Is she delusional? Alpha Xavier isn't interested in me. No, that bastard just enjoys getting under my skin.

Lina snorts, rolling her eyes at Isabella's dramatics. "Right, because Alpha Xavier is so interested in picking a weak Omega that can't shape-shift instead of a powerful werewolf like you," she mocks.

Ignoring her, I look toward Alpha Xavier. He's surrounded by admirers at the bar but doesn't seem interested in their attention. His eyes are scanning the crowd until they land on me again, a smirk playing on his lips as he raises his glass in my direction.

Our mother sighs in her seat. "That's right, Isabella," she chimes in. "Alpha Xavier would never pick your sister as his future Luna. She isn't strong enough."

Though her words sting, I simply shrug. "And I wouldn't want him to. Alpha Xavier isn't my type," I retort, even though he is exactly my type: tall and muscular.

My mother glares at me, but it's Lina who replies, "You're just saying that because you couldn't be Alpha's first pick even if you wanted to be."

Isabella laughs at Lina's words. "Not every girl can be as lucky as me," she boasts, puffing out her chest under our mother's approving gaze.

"Or as unlucky." I mutter, which causes my mother and sisters to gasp at me.

“How dare you!” my mother exclaims. Alpha Xavier is the most powerful Alpha there is your sister has done well in catching his interest. You deserve to be punished for uttering such disrespectful words!”

“Mom, it’s fine,” Isabella says, placing a hand on our mother’s arm before smirking at me. Daisy is just jealous and too afraid to admit that she wants what she can’t have.”

The sour taste of resentment builds up in my mouth, but I swallow it down since I know better than to challenge my sisters. I’m not strong enough to take them on.

“I don’t blame her,” Lina suddenly says. “If I were the pack’s Omega, I wouldn’t dare to dream of being with an Alpha, either.” She laughs cruelly, her eyes twinkling with mirth.

“No one asked you,” I retort, my cheeks burning

Isabella giggles, sharing a knowing glance with Lina. “Oh, Daisy. You’re so easy to tease,” she says sweetly. “You need to learn to be less sensitive.”

Before I can formulate a retort, Alpha Xavier returns, his expression unreadable as he sets down a whiskey glass in front of me.

He takes a seat again, this time beside me instead of Isabella, leaving her with a stunned expression as he turns to me. The smell of his cologne is intoxicating, mingling with the scent of whiskey from the glass he puts in front of me. It makes my heart

hammer against my chest in a rhythm that I'm afraid he can hear.

"Drink," he commands lightly, and there's a hint of amusement in his low voice.

I look at him skeptically but pick up the glass anyway, the smoky amber liquid sloshing slightly as I hold it up to my lips. A couple of swallows later, I am coughing and sputtering while Alpha Xavier watches, an entertained grin on his face.

"It's strong." I wheeze out, and he chuckles.

"That it is." He agrees and takes a sip from his own glass.

His attention is solely on me now, and I can feel the weight of my sisters' and mother's envious gazes on me. Their disapproval used to bother me, but now, strangely enough, I find myself not caring.

Alpha Xavier turns to them then, his gaze cool and detached.

"Your little sister has more spirit than both of you combined." It's not quite a compliment but it feels like one coming from him.

All traces of laughter die out from their faces, and a satisfied smirk curls at the edges of my lips. Even my mother has turned into a quiet statue beside me.

"Now, shall we order our food?" Alpha Xavier asks, completely unbothered by Isabella's jealous glare.

“Of course, Alpha Xavier, Isabella stammers, her previous confidence gone. She’s flustered, scrambling to regain her composure but failing miserably. Everyone at the table knows it, but no one mentions it.

The Alpha simply gives a small smile in reply and picks up the menu, his eyes quickly scanning over the extravagant dishes listed.

“Lamb stew for me,” he states simply, and his choice surprises me.

“Not a steak kind of guy?” I ask, my tone teasing. I’ve always imagined Alphas to like their meat raw and bloody.

Alpha Xavier chuckles again, and I’m starting to like the sound of that. Just who is this guy? Sometimes, he is cold and brooding, and other times, he is confident and sexy—it’s like he has a split personality.

...or am I able to bring out the true Xavier?

“like to change it up every now and then” Alpha Xavier says.

My family places their orders with mumbled and stuttered words, clearly thrown off by Alpha Xavier’s surprising show of favoritism towards me. The waiting staff quickly scrambles away with our orders, and silence descends upon our table.

No one dares to say anything as we eat, but once my mother and sisters excuse themselves to go to the bathroom—probably to plot something sinister, Alpha Xavier turns back to me.

“Now, Daisy,” he begins, a thoughtful look crossing his devilishly handsome face. “What made you say I’m not your type?”

I freeze slightly at his direct question but recover almost instantly. “Well, I begin, my voice surprisingly steady, “You rejected me, and I want a mate who treasures me.”

A bark of laughter escapes him, and he throws his head back in amusement. “Treasures, you? Now that’s hard to believe because you didn’t strike me as the romantic type on the plane,” he grins, shaking his head in disbelief.

By now, my heart is contracting painfully in its cage, but I refuse to let my nervousness show on my face. Instead, I shrug nonchalantly. “There are layers to a person’s personality, you know, I might be funny and direct, but I’m also a person, just like everyone else, I’m someone who craves love and attention.”

My sincerity takes him aback, but he recovers swiftly with an impressed glint in his eyes. “True, most people crave love and attention.

“Don’t you?” I dare to ask.

“No,” he looks away with a bored expression. “Love isn’t for me.”

“A life without love? Geez, what a boring life that must be.”

“Or easy,” he counters. “Love makes things complicated...”

The rest of the meal goes by in a blur, with Alpha Xavier allowing my sister to talk about the dress she wants to wear for

their wedding. It looks like he is listening, which has brought back some of my sister's earlier confidence, but his eyes keep shifting to me. It's not a blatant show, but I notice it and feel the pull of his gaze every time he glances my way.

Once dinner is over and the plates have been cleared away by the waiting staff, Alpha Xavier stands, smoothly pulling on his suit jacket buttoned over a broad chest. His eyes flicker to me as he says, "Daisy, would you join me for a walk?"

His request sends another wave of shock around the table. My mother shoots me a look filled with warning, but I ignore it. Rising from my chair, I wipe my sweaty palms on my clothes in an attempt to seem more collected than I feel.

"Of course," I reply, offering him a small smile.