## Chapter 46

Tranquil waves crashed on the horizon, the sound like music fling her ears. The setting sun cast an orange glow for as for as her eyes could see. And it was gorgeous.

She reached the top of Mount Isaac- named after the first to carry the royal bloodline centuries agoand filled her lycan lungs with the crisp air.

From up there, the lilac glow between the ocean and the sky reminded her of the garden behind the palace building.

Memories washed over her then, fueling what her heart desired the most.

"You're not making this challenging. Princess Annalise." Oliver mused from behind as he slowed his steps.

Tossing her head around, she giggled.

"I'll always outrun you, Captain Oliver!" Sticking out her tongue to the dark knight of the royal palace, Annalise panted as she sped off down the cliff.

Tough but agile, her paws barely touched the stones as she meandered down toward the shore.

It was a beautiful night. But, of course, it would be. A lunar eclipse meant that at any moment now, the sun and moon would align with the earth and paint the sky in a mellow gold shade.

And Annalise loved all that was gold.

She slowed down as she followed the sound of Oliver's paws. Taking pleasure in the soft beach sand beneath her paws, she shifted and sighed as it slipped through her feet.

Shyly turning in her skin, Anna witnessed Oliver's wolf freeze a few feet away.

"A-Anna? " Oliver stammered as his jaw dropped.

Perfect. His reaction was nothing short of what she'd expected. Oliver was always predictable.

Unless she knew him better than anyone in the castle.

Just like she'd known that two years ago, he'd be chosen as the captain of the royal guard.

Perhaps she was always one step ahead of him. That's why she'd chosen this night to confess what she felt.

He wouldn't do it. Not without mulling over the consequences of a relationship with his best friend's sister. Tearing himself if, for one moment, he thought he was jeopardizing his position at the palace.

Her luscious lips curled into a smile, coercing him to step forward. In a trance, as his beady blue eves trailed down the length of her bare body, Oliver transformed.

"Come here, Captain," she simpered as she wiggled a finger at him.

Still dazed, he seemed to move as if a magnetic force pulled him closer.

"Annalise... "

"Shh..." Pressing a finger to his plump lips, she felt a spark of something baser, so electric, that it coursed all the way to the apex of her thighs.

Tucking her bottom lip between her teeth, Annalise marveled at the way the golden light caught his already honeyed skin

"Perfect," she appreciated as she took a step back.

"Yes, you are," he returned as he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her.

Oliver crushed his lips to hers then, and perfect couldn't encapsulate how extraordinary it felt.

The kiss they shared spanned the immersion of the sun and moon in the sky. Her lips were tingly, her supple body compliant to the firm contours of his.

"Oliver..." she murmured as a smile tugged at her lips. Frowning as she blinked, she soon realized that she'd fallen asleep.

Lifting her head from where it rested on the edge of Oliver's bed, she picked up his hand and kissed his knuckles.

It had been hours since she'd convinced Jakov to leave her with Ollie. Though hesitant, he'd finally relented with a firm order to call him as soon as Oliver woke up.

But as he began to stir awake, Anna had no intention of calling Jakov.

Besides, it was well after midnight, and she needed time alone with him. Her heart compelled her to be there as his lashes fluttered open, and he groaned.

"Shh. Ollie... " she cajoled sweetly and squeezed his hand with gentle reassurance.

But Oliver tensed, slipping his hand away. Suddenly regretful that she'd removed the restraints binding his wrists, Annalise tried to take his hand back. But he hadn't even looked at her.

Plummeting from the high of the dream she'd been having, Anna's heart fell as if she'd fallen off a cliff headfirst.

Oliver stared at the ceiling, mentally counting the wooden tiles so he wouldn't slip again. The recollection of what he'd done earlier that day came tumbling back as soon as he opened his eyes.

And now Annalise was in the room with him. He was a danger to her and couldn't live with himself if he lost control again.

Though calmer now, Oliver wasn't in the clear yet. What he'd done, or almost did, was unforgivable. Why he hadn't been burned at the stake for his crimes, he didn't know.

He'd hurt his best friend and deserved the worst kind of punishment for it.

"What are you doing here, Anna?"

"Why wouldn't I be here?" she retorted with a snort.

Peeling his eyes from the ceiling, Oliver frowned at her.

Goddess! She was a mess. Stupid, stupid Ollie for thinking she'd been working with the humans to kill him.

What a vile thought to have about someone so pure. Even with dark bags sagging beneath her eyes, her lips cracked from endless gnawing as she did when she was in deep thought. Anna was still the bona fide specimen of the Moon Goddess' creations.

And all he was doing was tainting her with the corruption of his infection. The bite mark gleamed on her neck as a reminder.

"Leave, Princess Annalise," he demanded as he turned his head away. Perhaps she'd leave if he wasn't so informal.

"Princess Annalise now, huh?!" she scoffed. "Then you'd know that I don't take orders from you, Captain Emmerson."

Groaning when he realized he couldn't get her to leave so easily, Oliver reluctantly turned to face her again.

"Anna, please-"

"Please, what?! she angrily burst as she knocked the chair out from under her as she stood. "Did you forget the promise we made to each other that night on the beach?"

How could he forget? Of course, he didn't. When even in the midst of hallucination, it was that night he'd been hauled into.

Jaw tightening as he wrestled with his conflicting emotions, Oliver climbed off the bed. The starless night did no good to douse the memories. An empty canvas was where vivid images of that night were painted into his vision.

"I promised to stay by your side." Shoving his hands into the pockets of the army fatigues that didn't belong to him, he winced. A pang of longing formed a tight band around his heart and squeezed it.

Just as he wanted so much to wrap his arms around her.

"And I promised you the same, Ollie."

He hadn't realized she'd followed him until her arms came around his waist. Tensing, Oliver stood dead still.

He couldn't do it. He couldn't give in and harm her again.

"Anna, don't, " he whispered as he closed her eyes. It wouldn't hurt to relish in her warmth as she leaned her check on his back.

But it would hurt her.

"I can't break my promise to you." she murmured from behind. "And you can't either."

"No!"

Oliver peeled her arms away and stood back. Watching the color seep from her face only made him want to hold her more.

But he didn't trust himself.

"Just leave me alone, Annalise! I'm not me! I can't control what I'm becoming, and I don't want to hurt you again! "

Running his hands over his head in frustration, Oliver turned to walk away.

But Anna's dainty fingers clamped around one wrist.

"Anna..." he warned through gritted teeth.

"I won't let you break that promise!"

Sighing as he dropped his head defeatedly, Oliver couldn't bring himself to pull away. Was she using her lycan powers?

Why hadn't they used it yet to remove his wolf and end this curse?

"Oliver, look at me."

Shaking his head, Oliver couldn't wrap his mind around why he didn't walk away. His feet refused to move. Battling his mind and his heart which told him to stay right there, he only shook his head.

Annalise had released his hand and was now standing in front of him. Cradling his face between tender palms, she forced him to look at her.

"You're still my Ollie. I don't care what happens. I'm not going anywhere," she declared as she stared deeply into his eyes.

Hesitantly wrapping his fingers around her wrists, Oliver shook his head between her palms.

"What if I hurt you again?"

"You won't, because no matter what, you're still Captain Oliver Emmerson, the wolf I've been in love with for as long as I can remember.

"No, I'm not-" he began to protest when Anna pulled his face forward and crushed her lips to his.

A surge of electric awareness sparked between them as he caved and pushed her up against the wall.

Hungrily devouring her very breath, sweet and intoxicating as it was, Oliver pulled away when she reached for his zip.

"No, Anna, "he groaned through heavy pants. "You know what happened before."

Anna lifted his hand and kissed his palm. "This won't be like that."

Oliver frowned as he watched her tenderly kiss each of his knuckles, then the inside of his wrist.

"What are you doing, princess?"

Anna smirked with self-satisfaction. He knew what it did to her when he called her that. And she wasn't about to let the opportunity slip by.

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