

Chapter 2 The Werewolf CEO

Moana

“She’s with me.”

The bouncer whipped around to face the man standing on the stairs. I stood there, my eyes wide, as I realized that the man who was mysteriously helping me get into the bar was the same man who had almost hit me with his car on the street and then promptly threw me a wad of cash like I was a beggar: Edrick Morgan, CEO of WereCorp. I considered just turning around and leaving, but before I could, Edrick came down the stairs and waved the bouncer away, fixing his steely gray eyes on me.

“Come on,” he said, peering around me to look out the door and onto the street. “It looks like it’s going to rain again. You don’t want to be walking around in the rain, do you?”

I felt as though there was something a bit condescending in the wealthy werewolf’s tone, but he was right: it had been raining for most of the day, and had already begun to sprinkle again. I didn’t want to walk home in the rain and get more soaked than I already was, so I silently followed Edrick up the stairs.

“You’re still wearing those dirty clothes,” Edrick said in a somewhat cold tone of voice as we reached the top of the stairs. “I gave you money to replace them. Why didn’t you use it?”

I frowned.

“I may be a human, but I won’t take money from rude and arrogant people who throw cash at me out the window of their car like I’m a beggar on the street.”

Edrick sucked his teeth and looked me up and down for a moment before curtly turning to a woman who stood nearby. She seemed a little older than me and wore a plain black staff uniform. He muttered something to her that I couldn’t quite make out and she nodded, turning to me and smiling with one arm outstretched.

“Right this way, miss,” she said as Edrick turned and disappeared into the main room of the bar. I glanced over my shoulder at him one last time as the woman guided me away, leading me upstairs to a private room. As she unlocked the door and opened it, my eyes widened. The room was full of racks of expensive clothing, shoes, and accessories.

“What’s this?” I asked, turning to face the woman.

“We like to provide the best for our patrons,” the woman replied with a smile. “This room is specially designed for our female patrons to come and freshen up, touch up their makeup, or perhaps change their clothes in the event of a wardrobe malfunction. It’s not normal practice to allow a... human to use our facilities, but seeing as Mr. Morgan owns the majority share of this club, you’re welcome to wear whatever you like. Take your time.”

Before I could say anything else, the woman closed the door and left me alone.

I looked around at all of the expensive clothes and fine jewelry with a puzzled expression on my face; was Edrick Morgan not so arrogant and cruel as I thought? Did he feel badly about our encounter in the street and wanted to make it up to me, or was this all some sort of sick joke?

Either way, I was still too distraught over discovering my boyfriend with his mistress earlier, and this seemed to be my ticket to having a good night...

I eventually emerged from the room wearing a simple black dress that reached my ankles. It was made of a soft silk, with thin straps and a plunging neckline. I also picked out a pair of strappy black heels and a clutch purse.

When I came down the stairs with the woman, I felt my heart start to race as I noticed Edrick look up from his table. His eyes lingered on me for a few long moments that felt like an eternity before he looked back to continue his conversation with the other man who was sitting with him.

“To compensate for the accident earlier on the street, Mr. Morgan has agreed to cover the expenses of the evening,” the woman said. “That includes any drinks and food you order, as well as the clothes. Please feel free to take a seat at the bar.”

I looked down at my dress, feeling my face go a bit hot. Something like this was so far from what I normally wore, and now it was mine? I glanced up to ask the woman if she was sure I could keep the dress, but she was already gone.

Swallowing, I walked into the main area and slid up onto one of the barstools.

“What would you like to drink?” the bartender said.

“Um... Gin and tonic, please,” I replied, fiddling with the clasp on my purse as I glanced around at all of the other bar patrons. Most of them seemed too preoccupied with their drinks and their conversations as a woman in a red gown softly played the piano on a small stage.

The bartender returned with my drink a few moments later. I muttered some words of thanks and swirled the liquid around in my glass as I attempted to settle into my seat and try not to act too out of place.

“What’s a beautiful girl like you doing sitting all alone?” a male voice suddenly said from beside me. I jumped a bit and turned to see a middle-aged man in a suit leaning on the bar next to me with a drink in his hand. He had salt-and-pepper hair, a somewhat stocky build, and smelled strongly of whiskey.

I couldn’t come up with an answer, so I awkwardly laughed and took a sip of my drink in the hopes that the man would get the hint and leave me alone, but he persisted. Despite Edrick Morgan’s burst of kindness in letting me into this bar and paying for everything, I was still uninterested in doing much more than having a drink or two and going home for the night. After finding my boyfriend with another woman, I wasn’t interested in conversation.

“Let me buy you another drink,” the man said, leaning closer to me. “Something better than gin and tonic. I’ve got plenty of money, being a beta and all; you can have anything you want...”

“Oh, I’m fine with this,” I said with a weak smile, trying to hide my disgust overhearing the word ‘beta’. “Thanks anyway.”

“Nonsense,” the man said, either not noticing or not caring that I wasn’t interested as he sat on the stool next to me, his body uncomfortably close to mine. “I’m Mark, by the way. Mark Schaffer.” He stuck out his hand for me to shake, and when I did, his palm was a bit sweaty.

“Moana,” I muttered, pulling my hand away as soon as possible.

“Interesting name,” he said. “You know, I’m the Beta of...”

My mind went blank as Mark continued to prattle on about his money, his lineage, his multiple vacation homes, this and that... I tried my best to appear polite, but eventually, I couldn’t take it anymore.

“So that’s why I prefer the gulet yacht—”

“I’ve got to use the restroom,” I said suddenly, interrupting his spiel about which type of yacht was the best. He frowned as I abruptly stood and

gathered my purse, clearly annoyed that I cut him off, but I didn't care. Without another word, I walked to the bathroom and shut the door behind me, taking a few deep breaths as I leaned on the sink.

I stayed in there for a few minutes, splashing some cold water on my face and checking my phone, until I was certain that Mark had gotten bored of waiting for me at the bar, then headed back out. Thankfully, he was gone when I walked back to my seat. I let out a small sigh of relief as I sat back down, but that relief turned to annoyance when the bartender approached me and handed me a red drink in a cocktail glass, informing me that Mark had paid for it.

Sighing, I picked up the glass and looked over my shoulder. Mark was sitting at a corner table, watching me like a hawk; not wanting to cause any sort of fuss, I raised my glass and mouthed the words "Thank you" before turning back and sipping on the drink.

As my head started to get light and the room started to swim around me a few minutes later, I realized that taking a drink offered to me by a strange man at the bar was a horrible idea... but I was too far gone already, and as I tried to get up from the bar, I felt myself stumble into a man's body.

"Whoa there," Mark's voice said as his arms wrapped around me. "Looks like I need to get you home."

I felt my heart start to race as Mark began to guide me away, too weak and disoriented to tell him no. Just then, as my vision began to fade completely, I felt another hand on my shoulder; cool, and not sweaty like Mark's.

"Where are you taking her?" Edrick's stern voice said, so low it was almost a growl.

"Oh, I'm just taking her home," Mark stuttered. "S-She had too much to drink. We're old friends."

“Is this true?” Edrick said, leaning down and coming into view. As his gray eyes locked on mine, all I could do was shake my head.

I wasn't sure what happened after that, but the next thing I knew, I was in Edrick Morgan's warm embrace in the back of a car.

“Where do you live?” he asked.

I tried to answer but he stopped me after I mumbled a few unclear words. “I'm taking you to a hotel then.”

In my semi-conscious state, the feeling of Edrick's warm arms around me made my body tingle.

“Stay...” I slurred, nuzzling into the crook of his neck. Edrick jolted away, muttering something about my state of mind, but something about the smell of his cologne made me persist...

And soon, I felt Edrick Morgan, the wealthy and handsome CEO of WereCorp, relax into my touch.