

## Chapter 37 Heat of the Moment

### Moana

When I opened my door, all I could smell was alcohol. Edrick was standing in the hallway. He was swaying slightly back and forth, his steely eyes unfocused in front of me. Even though it seemed he only just got home, he already had a glass of whiskey in his hand — he must have filled it as soon as he came in the door.

“Why aren’t you in my room?” he grumbled, his breath reeking of whiskey. I took a step back, scrunching up my nose from the smell. “I waited for you for two hours, but you never came,” I replied. “I assumed you wouldn’t be home tonight.”

Edrick was silent for several moments before speaking: “Well, I’ll sleep in here, then.” Before I could stop him, he pushed past me and into my room.

“How much have you had to drink?” I asked, closing the door quietly.

Edrick chuckled sardonically and turned around to face me with a shrug. “What does it matter to you?” he asked. As he stared at me, I wondered to myself if he even knew or if he had lost count of how many times he’d refilled his glass tonight.

I shrugged. “I’d like to know if I’m getting into bed with someone who’s going to vomit all over himself in the middle of the night. I’ll get you some medicine and a trash can, if you think you might need it.”

Edrick mere scoffed. He plopped down onto the armchair across from my bed and began to work at his shoelaces, but his fingers were clumsy from the alcohol.

“I’ll help you,” I said, walking up to him and crouching to untie his shoes; before I could do that, however, he yanked his foot away.

“I can do it myself.” His voice was low, almost a growl.

“Listen,” I said, standing and folding my arms again as I looked down at Edrick and watched him struggle with his shoes. He was fumbling with his shoelaces with one hand and was still holding the glass of whiskey in his other, and was somehow getting away with not spilling any of the whiskey on himself or my chair. “I’m sorry that I lied earlier, and I know it wasn’t right of me to worry Ella or anyone else for the sake of going to Ethan’s exhibition. But you have to understand that I only feel obligated to lie because of how much you overreact whenever you see Ethan. Your relationship with him is concerning to say the least.”

Edrick shook his head as he yanked one shoe off, then the other. “I’m paying you to take care of my daughter and to help me sleep, not to question my personal relationships,” he grumbled. He stood and walked over to the bathroom mirror, where he began to fumble with the buttons on his shirt. “If you want to take some time off every now and then, that’s fine. But what’s not fine is you blatantly carousing around with that man after I explicitly told you to stay clear of him.”

“That man?” I asked. “You mean your brother?”

Edrick slammed his hands down on the bathroom sink, taking in a long, shaky breath before speaking quietly. “I told you that he is not my brother.

And regardless, I don't want you spending time with him. Especially not alone."

"You sound jealous," I said.

Edrick scoffed. "I couldn't possibly be jealous. I already told you that you, of all people, would never have a chance with him. You seem to forget too often that you're nothing more than an ordinary human nanny."

I was taken aback and hurt by Edrick's harsh words, so much so that tears began to well up in my eyes. "You always bring up my status whenever you want to insult me, like it's ammunition," I snarled. "It's not fair, it's cruel for no reason, and it's simply untrue. You keep saying that Ethan would never look my way because of my status, but unlike you, he's actually done nothing but treat me with dignity, like an equal. Even the servants here have begun to feel some respect for me, but no, not you. I'm not worthy of respect because I'm 'just an ordinary human'. Maybe I should just quit, if it's so important to you, and you can hire someone who you deem to be worthy of your glistening respect."

I wanted to say more. I wanted to tell Edrick that I had my own wolf, and I knew that Mina wanted me to say something too from the way she began to react strongly to Edrick's cruel words, but I decided to keep that bit to myself. He'd never believe me, anyway.

"Well, quit, then!" Edrick said, raising his voice and storming out of the bathroom to face me, stopping a few feet away. "Go ahead: leave Ella and I alone again. See if Ethan will take you in, if you're so enthralled with him. But don't come running back to me when he discards you for being a human."

"So you are jealous," I replied, raising my voice as well. "Why don't you just admit to yourself that maybe, just maybe, you want a repeat of our one night stand? Or are you too pompous to even admit that?"

Edrick glared at me for several long, silent seconds. I could feel the tension rising between us, so thick I could cut it with a knife if I wanted to. Part of me wanted to reach out and hit him, but there was another part of me that wanted more than that... And it seemed that there was a part of Edrick that wanted that, too.

Suddenly, he rushed toward me and pinned me up against the wall with his body. My head reeled as he pressed our lips together, his tongue working its way into my mouth...

"I'm sorry," he suddenly said, staggering backwards and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "You're right. That was inappropriate."

It was inappropriate; I knew that. But at the same time, it felt right in that moment. Mina began to grow excited inside of me, the same way I had felt her grow excited on the night that Edrick and I found each other in the maze... Except this was different. She wasn't just playing a game now, and neither was I.

Without thinking, because I had also had a few drinks that night, I found myself reaching out and grabbing a fistful of his shirt. I yanked him toward me, pressing our lips together once more. He let out a moan into my mouth as my hand traveled down his chest then over his groin. I fumbled to unbuckle his belt as his lips worked their way down to my neck.

He picked me up and carried me over to the bed, throwing me down and reaching up the skirt of my nightgown to feel for my panties, when we were suddenly interrupted by the sound of soft knocking on the door.

"Moana?" Ella's tiny voice called from the other side of the door, followed by another series of knocks. "Daddy, are you in there?"