

## Chapter 4 The Interview

### Moana

I pulled up to the address of the house a couple of hours later wearing a brand new set of clothes. During the time between getting the phone call and arriving, I took out my credit card, which I only used for emergencies, and ran out to buy something new to impress the family. It was just a crisp button-down shirt, tailored pants, and loafers, but as I pulled up to the enormous mansion in the mountains and saw the line of women at the door, I was glad that I had purchased the new clothes. I made sure to double check that the tags on the clothes were hidden, which I had kept on in case I didn't get the job and would need to return them.

As I parked and walked up the pathway to the front entrance and got in line with my resume in my hand, my heart started to pound.

My heart started to pound even more when I noticed that women were not only filing into the mansion, but were also coming out with sad and defeated expressions on their faces. One girl, who was very pretty and looked a little younger than me, even had tears streaming down her cheeks as she came out with her resume crumpled up in her hands.

Was the employer so awful that he was making these poor women cry during their interviews?

As the line got shorter and I slowly made my way inside, I felt a lump rise in my throat. The inside of the house was stunningly beautiful, with dark Tudor-style wainscoting and creaky wooden floors. There was a massive

double staircase in the front foyer, which was where the women would go when their names were called — up one side looking excited and confident, and down the other side looking defeated after their interviews.

“Name?” a woman’s voice said from in front of me. I looked up to see an older woman with gray hair that was pulled back into a tight, slick bun. She wore a dark blue dress with a high collar that was buttoned all the way up and had a clean gray apron on top that looked like it was freshly ironed. Needless to say, as she stared at me with her thin lips pressed into a straight line, she made me nervous.

“Moana Fowler,” I said, feeling my voice crack a bit under the pressure.

The woman muttered something to herself and looked down at the clipboard in her hand, making a tick mark next to my name.

“You’re human?” she said, shooting me a somewhat disgusted look. I nodded. “Very well. Take a seat.”

I walked over to the area where other women were sitting and found a spot in a plush armchair in the corner, where I sat quietly and mulled over my potential responses to interview questions in my head.

My train of thought was broken a few minutes later as an older woman came running down the stairs in hysterics. “She’s a little monster!” she said, tears streaming down her wrinkled face. “In all my years of being a governess, I have never — and I mean never — met such a cruel little thing.”

The room fell silent as the woman marched out, followed by a few other women who must have decided that whatever waited for them upstairs wasn’t worth it. I, along with several others, decided to take the risk; I really needed this job, regardless of the child’s behavior. The children at the orphanage I volunteered at absolutely loved me, even the difficult ones, and I was certain that I could find the good side in this child, too.

I sat there for hours while I waited for my turn to have my interview, and eventually, as the sun went down and I sank into the plush armchair, I found myself involuntarily nodding off. My night out with Mr. Edrick Morgan left me more exhausted than I was willing to admit.

“Moana Fowler.”

I jumped, awoken abruptly as the stern woman from before called my name and looked up to see her standing over me.

“Oh! I’m sorry,” I said, sitting upright and nervously wiping a bit of drool off of the corner of my mouth with the back of my hand. “Is it my turn?” I looked around to see that the waiting room was completely empty.

“Go home,” the woman said sternly, stepping away from me and gesturing toward the door.

“But... I haven’t had my interview,” I said frantically, standing with my resume clutched in my hand. “I’m sorry I dozed off, but it’s been hours—”

“Ella doesn’t wish to see any more candidates,” she interrupted. “Especially not young, pretty girls such as yourself.”

I felt my heart drop into my stomach as I shook my head vehemently.

“No,” I pleaded, “please let me see her. I promise you won’t regret it if you just give me a chance.”

The woman stared at me for several painfully long moments before sighing. “Fine,” she said, turning and starting to ascend the stairs. “But don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

I excitedly followed the woman up the stairs, where she silently led me down a wide hallway that was lined with large, ornate wooden doors. Finally, we stopped in front of a door at the end of the hallway. She opened the door and let me in without a word.

“I told you I’m tired!” a small voice growled from behind a high-backed chair that faced the empty fireplace. “I don’t want to see anyone else!”

“Well, I’d like to see you,” I said softly, stepping toward the chair.

A small head of blonde hair poked out from behind the chair and glared at me, appraising me, for several moments as I stood in the middle of the room. Suddenly, as if my appearance didn’t meet her standards, the little girl leaped out of her seat and rushed toward me, her childish face twisted into an angry snarl and her werewolf fangs bared. Between the mop of messy blonde hair poked two pointed little ears on either side of her head, which twitched backward aggressively.

I stood my ground and stared down at the little ball of fury, which only became more furious as I continued to ignore her displays of aggression.

“Why aren’t you running like the rest?!” she shouted, her high-pitched voice turning into a squeal.

I crouched down to meet the little girl’s gaze. Her hair had fallen into her eyes. I slowly extended my hand to brush it away; she flinched, growling and baring her teeth, but let me do it when I persisted, revealing sparkling blue eyes.

“You’re very pretty,” I said softly, watching intently as the little girl’s ears pricked up and her lips slowly closed. “What’s your name?”

She paused, staring at the floor, and when she spoke her face was still pointed down at it. “Ella.”

“Nice to meet you, Ella,” I said. “My name is Moana. Can I ask why you want to scare me away?”

“My daddy is a handsome and rich man,” she said, her voice now a whisper. “All of the young and pretty girls like you just want to work for him so they can marry him and take his money. No one wants to be here for me. I told Ms. Selina that I didn’t want to see anyone else, but she brought you instead.”

I paused for a moment, feeling tears prick at the backs of my eyes at the little girl’s words.

“You know,” I said softly, holding out my hand with my palm up and feeling the dread lift out of my stomach as Ella touched my fingers, “I was an orphan when I was your age. I understand what it’s like to not feel wanted.”

“Really?” Ella said, looking up at me with wonder on her face. “You’re not here to steal my daddy away?”

I shook my head, holding back laughter as I thought about how silly it would be for a wealthy Alpha werewolf to be interested in me, a human.

“No,” I said gently. “I’m here for you.”

Ella and I both looked up as we heard the door creak open. I looked over my shoulder, still crouching, to see the woman from before standing in the doorway. “It’s past your bedtime, Ella,” she said, clasping her hands in front of her.

“I want this one,” Ella said, walking cheerfully past me and skipping out the door as if she hadn’t just been threatening to bite my face off.

The old woman — Selina, as I had discovered her name was — cast me a disbelieving look, her eyes narrowing as she sized me up.

“Hmph,” she said under her breath once Ella was out of earshot. “What did you do to make her choose you?”

I shrugged. “Finding a common ground is a powerful thing,” I said, following Selina from the room.

When we got downstairs, Selina opened the front door to let me out. “We have your address on file, and a car will be waiting for you first thing in the morning to take you to sign your contract and begin your first day. Be ready at six o’clock sharp, and not a moment later.”

Smiling, I nodded and walked past Selina with a light feeling in my body despite her curt attitude, then paused and turned around to face her. “What was the father’s name, by the way?” I asked.

Selina pursed her lips and looked at me coldly. “You’ll receive the details once you sign your contract,” she said, promptly closing the door in my face and leaving me alone on the doorstep.