

Chapter 54 Gala Day

Moana

On the morning of the gala, I woke up early with Ella to get ready for the day. She had an appointment with a stylist and hairdresser before the gala. Selina explained to me, after I questioned the reasoning behind this for such a little girl, that it was commonplace for these sorts of events.

Even though Ella was not publicly known as Edrick's daughter, everyone in attendance at the gala was aware of it, and it was important for public relations for Edrick's daughter to look her best — even though she was only eight years old. It felt a little ridiculous to me for such a young girl to be subjected to hours of having her hair done and being fitted for a perfect dress, but I didn't complain.

Once Ella was bathed, we walked out to the dining room for breakfast. Much to my surprise, Edrick was sitting there with his plate of food, a coffee, and a newspaper.

“Good morning, Daddy,” Ella said, walking up to him and planting a kiss on his cheek.

“Good morning, Princess,” he replied, not so much as looking in my general direction. “Are you excited to get your hair done?”

Ella sighed and sat down at the table. “No,” she grumbled as she began to pick at her eggs and sausage with her fork. “I hate getting my hair done.”

“It’ll be alright, Ella,” I chimed in as I sat down next to her and tucked a napkin into the front of her shirt to keep her from getting scrambled eggs on her clothes. “It’s no different from now you play with your dolls and do their hair.”

“Except I’m not a doll,” Ella said. “I’m a real girl.”

I smiled and, wanting to cheer her up, gently tickled her waist and made her giggle. “Well, you look like a doll!” I exclaimed. The air became filled with the sweet sound of the little girl’s laughter. I glanced up momentarily to see Edrick’s eyes gazing at me over his newspaper, but he quickly hid his face again.

Just then, I turned around to start eating... but that was when the smell of the eggs and sausage hit me. I felt as though I was about to retch. I couldn’t keep a gag from coming, which Ella unfortunately saw before I covered my mouth.

“Are you okay, Moana?” she asked. “Are you gonna puke?”

I shook my head, my eyes watering. I was still holding my hand over my mouth to steady myself as I breathed deeply through my nose — but as I did, the smell only worsened, and I gagged again.

Selina, who had poked her head out of the kitchen at Ella’s mention of vomit, suddenly saw what was happening and rushed over. She took my plate away. I heard some banging around in the kitchen for a few minutes before she reemerged with a black coffee and plain toast.

“Thank you,” I whispered.

Selina only nodded. I took a sip of my coffee, feeling relieved, but that feeling of tension only returned as I looked up again to see that Edrick was now staring daggers at me over his newspaper. Surely he noticed that something was awry, but before I could say anything, he finished his meal and quickly stood. I watched as he planted a kiss on the top of Ella’s head, then disappeared without a word.

“Are you sure you’re okay, Moana?” Ella asked, c*****g her little head to the side with a concerned expression on her face. She spoke with her mouth full, giving her the appearance of a funny little chipmunk with her chubby cheeks.

I nodded, taking my napkin to wipe a bit of sausage grease off of her lips, then pulled her plate closer to her and tapped the edge of it with my finger. “Eat your breakfast. The stylist will be here soon. Don’t you want to go on our walk before she gets here?”

Ella, satisfied with my response and excited now over the prospect of our morning walk, wolfed down the rest of her breakfast. I soon felt the positive effects of the black coffee and plain toast on my stomach, and felt well enough to go on our walk.

When we returned from our walk, the stylist arrived soon afterwards. Once Ella was busy with the stylist, I headed to my room to get some rest before the gala. Not long after I laid down, however, I was startled by a knock on the door. Before I could even answer, the door cracked open and Selina stepped in.

I sat up, puzzled as she walked over to me with something in one hand and a glass of water in the other.

“Here,” she said, handing me the glass of water and opening her other hand to reveal two large pills. “They’re vitamins for expecting mothers of werewolves. It should help with the nausea so you don’t have any accidents tonight.”

I hesitantly took the pills, but I trusted Selina, so I popped them in my mouth and swallowed them. “Thank you,” I said. “And thank you for what you did at breakfast this morning, too.”

Selina didn’t answer. I watched as she walked over to the door, but just before she left, she hesitated and looked over her shoulder.

“I hope you make your decision soon,” she said. “Please try not to put it off for too much longer.”

I bit my lip, then opened my mouth to speak, but she was already gone. I sighed, laying back down on my bed. Instead of resting, I spent the entire afternoon puzzling over what I should do about this baby.

That night, I put on a simple, but elegant, black dress with low heels, and a simple silver necklace. I pulled my hair back into a half bun and put on some subtle makeup before walking out of my room.

Ella was dressed in an adorable little emerald green dress with matching Mary Jane shoes and a pearl necklace. The stylist had done an excellent job, even going so far as to weave tiny little pearls into Ella’s hair.

“Moana, you’re so pretty!” she said, running over to me with a grin on her face when I emerged from my room. “You’re like a princess.”

I smiled and crouched down to her level, pinching her cheek with one hand. “I think you’re the only princess here,” I said, which made her cheeks turn rosy.

Standing, I then took her small hand in mine before we stepped onto the elevator. Edrick was already waiting in the car, and as we made our way across the lobby, then stepped out into the warm summer air, I felt almost as if Ella and I were mother and daughter ourselves and began to feel a little emotional over it. I quickly pushed the thought out of my mind and chalked it up to the pregnancy hormones. The driver gave me a polite nod and opened the back door for us.

We climbed in, and I noticed that Edrick was sitting in the back seat along with us. His cold gray eyes landed briefly on my stomach as we began to drive away, leaving a nervous lump in my throat.