

Chapter 6 Another One Bites The Dust

Moana

I stood frozen in the middle of the living room, my back turned to the door as I heard footsteps approaching. How did this happen? How did I wind up finally becoming employed, only for it to turn out that my new employer was the same person who I had a one night stand with just two nights ago?

The footsteps came closer. I felt like a deer in headlights.

“Good evening, Miss Moana,” that all-too-familiar voice said from behind me. “Can we speak privately for a minute?”

I slowly turned around to face Edrick Morgan, the handsome and wealthy werewolf CEO, the extremely well-known public figure, the man who I had slept with two nights ago... The man who tried to throw money at my feet like I was a prostitute.

He stood in front of me with Ella in his arms, the perfect picture of a loving father.

“Y-Yes,” I stammered. I watched as he set Ella down, then gestured for me to follow him; as I did, it felt like I was swimming through mud, like my limbs were heavy and useless. Was I dreaming?

We walked through the living room and into his study; I remembered it from my tour with Ella earlier. It had enormous bookshelves lining the walls that rose all the way to the ceiling, with a large carved stone fireplace

and two tall, arched windows. There was a mahogany desk in the middle of the room and a small seating area by the fireplace. At the time that Ella showed me this room, I had found it stunningly beautiful. Now, it felt like a coffin.

“I’m so sorry,” I said as soon as the door clicked shut behind us. I stayed by the door, watching as Edrick casually walked over to one of the plush chairs by the fireplace and sat down. “I didn’t know that you would be the employer. If I had known, I wouldn’t have applied. I promise this isn’t a ploy to get money from you—”

“It’s alright, Moana,” Edrick said, rubbing his tired eyes. “I knew it was you when I hired you. I did it on purpose.”

I scrunched my eyebrows together. “What do you mean?”

“Ella may be stubborn, but I’m not completely detached from the hiring process,” Edrick replied. “I wanted to give you a chance.”

“But... You treated me like a beggar. Like I was a...” I lowered my voice so Ella couldn’t hear. “...a prostitute. And now you give me a job opportunity? What’s the catch here?”

“You wouldn’t take the money I gave you on the street,” he replied coldly, standing. “After that, you wouldn’t take the money I tried to give you after our one-night stand, because apparently your pride is more important than paying your rent. I may seem like an arrogant asshole to you, but I do not owe anyone and I know a desperate person when I see one — so I did the next best thing since you don’t seem to like handouts, and I gave you a job.”

I took a few steps toward him, clenching my fists. “I passed that interview fair and square,” I said. “Why are you making it out like I’m a... a charity case?”

Edrick scoffed and folded his arms across his chest. “Oh, please. Your application was tossed into the reject pile the first day you sent it. I

decided to give you a second chance, when there were dozens of other people with better experience and a better education.”

A lump started to rise in my throat as Edrick spoke. Was this all I was? A charity case? A pathetic example of someone who was just supposed to be grateful that the all-knowing and powerful Edrick Morgan gave me a chance to work for him after sleeping with me in a hotel room?

“You know,” I growled, taking another step closer, “for a man who complained that his one-night stand was just after him for money, it’s awfully convenient that you would suddenly want me to live with you.”

“You signed the contract,” he replied, fixing his steely gaze on me. “You know the stipulations of the clauses. And I highly doubt you have the courage to break them.”

Suddenly, the door creaked open. Edrick and I both looked up to see Ella standing in the doorway, tears streaming down her cheeks.

“You promised you wouldn’t try to steal my daddy away,” she snarled. Even from where I stood, I could see her little fangs poking out and her claws extended. “You’re a liar!”

“Ella—”

Before I could stop her, the little girl turned on her heel and ran away, sobbing. I whipped back around to glare at Edrick, whose gaze had shifted from cold to concerned in a matter of moments. “You should be ashamed of yourself,” I said, walking toward the door. “You knew exactly what you were doing when you hired me.”

I stormed out of Edrick’s office and found Ella’s room, but the door was locked when I tried to open it.

“Ella, please talk to me,” I said through the door.

There was a brief silence, followed by an angry “Go away!”

Sighing, I turned around to see Selina standing at the end of the hallway, her thin arms folded disappointedly across her chest. No doubt she had heard the entire interaction and was looking down on me, too. I couldn't stay in a place where everyone was suspicious of me, like I was some sort of grifter just trying to weasel money out of a wealthy CEO. I would rather be homeless.

I stormed past Selina and went to my room, where my purse with my few belongings sat on the dresser. Hopefully, my landlord hadn't locked me out of my apartment yet. Without a word, I stormed out of the apartment building and back out onto the dark street, collecting my bearings for a moment before finding the nearest subway and heading home.

Just as I feared, my apartment was locked up tightly when I returned, with an eviction notice on the door. I hit the door with my fist and cursed out loud before heading back out onto the street; it looked like I was going to be putting another charge on my credit card, this time for a motel... And dinner, because I was starving.

As I walked down the street, digging through my purse to see if I had enough cash to buy a couple slices of pizza, I suddenly stopped short and felt the hairs on the back of my neck raise as the overwhelming feeling of being watched came over me. I slowly turned my head to see two large men walking toward me on the dark sidewalk.

"Evening, miss," one of them said, his voice gravelly as though he smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. His eyes were a glowing orange color, which was utterly terrifying in the dark, and I realized as he came closer that there was a long scar running diagonally across his entire face. The other man was equally as frightening, with a long leather jacket and an almost hungry look on his face.

"U-Um, I don't have any money," I said, starting to walk away briskly. My heart started to pound as they continued to follow me, and I began to

swivel my head this way and that, looking for anyone who might be able to help.

“We’re not here for money,” the man in the leather jacket said. “We’re here for you.”

At that moment, every fiber of my being screamed for me to run.