

King Julian

He sat, one hand stroking his stubble absentmindedly in the throne room. King Julian supposed he should be happy, after all he had his daughter Serena, her mate Xavier and his grandchildren to keep him occupied and busy, sometimes his castle full of chaos. He wouldn't have it any other way but he longed for more. He longed for what his daughter Serena and her mate had. Their love was clearly evident for anyone to see, absolutely adored their children and each other.

He frowned. He'd never had a mate to love or to cherish and while he had Serena up until recently he hadn't even been aware of her existence. He'd missed all of her milestones, her first smile, her first laugh, when she began to roll over, crawl or walk. All of her birthdays. He loved her dearly but he also wondered what it would be like to have other children as well, ones he would get to help raise. In no way would they replace his daughter but he'd get a chance to hold a baby in his arms that wasn't a grandchild.

Julian knew he was dreaming. There was just no way he'd ever meet his mate, at least not cloistered in this castle and he couldn't leave Serena and Xavier to run it could he? He toyed with the idea. Serena and Xavier had learned everything he had shown them and had more than once assured him they were capable. Would it really be so bad to let them show him what they really were capable of?

But where would he go? He sighed. Maybe it would be wise to travel to each pack on a long trip? Surely one of the packs must have his mate somewhere? He'd never heard of a wolf not having a mate, so he couldn't possibly not have one? He just had to find them.

He heard the throne doors open and smiled as his beautiful daughter Serena came in, a slow smile curving on her lips as she regarded him, easily plopping into the chair next to him and leaning back with a sigh. Then she glanced at him with her eyes narrowing and he braced himself. He knew that look, it meant whatever she was about to say was serious and come hell or high water he'd better listen to her.

"Father" Serena said seriously "you've been so distant, so detached lately. I've seen the way you watch Xavier and me. It's because you want a mate of your own, isn't it?"

"Yes" Julian admitted sheepishly "don't think I don't love having you and Xavier and the grandchildren around but it's just I don't know, lonely I guess without someone next to me to take enjoyment in it as well."

Serena could understand that. With Xavier she felt like the missing part of her had finally slotted into place. Her father deserved to be happy, she wanted him to be happy. After learning of her existence and the way she'd been conceived he'd still welcomed her with open arms and had helped her in so many ways. This time she was determined to help him, whether he wanted it or not.

"You are going on a trip" she said casting him a sideways glance and halting him when he opened his mouth to speak. "It's time you took the time to travel and find the other half to yourself. I and Xavier are more than capable of running the castle and taking on your responsibilities. Stop telling yourself you need to be here, because right now as horrid as it sounds, your being here is making you unhappy."

Julian hung his head sheepishly. "I don't mean to come across as being miserable, it's just I want what you and Xavier have. I guess I just don't understand why the moon goddess hasn't blessed me with one yet" he told her.

Serena looked at him thoughtfully. "Has it occurred to you that maybe your mate is wondering the same? Or maybe that they are so special that you've had to wait for a reason only the moon goddess knows."

When his daughter put it like that thought Julian maybe she was right. It cheered him somewhat and he gave her a genuine smile, glad to see how at ease it put her as she smiled at him just as brightly.

"I think you might be right" he told Serena slowly "if you and Xavier are happy to manage without me then I think that I'll start organising to travel. At any rate it will be a vacation worse case scenario but it could also finally bring me the other half I'm waiting for."

Serena patted him on the arm "you know we'll be here" she admonished "so start planning already. Will you be taking guards with you?"

He hesitated "I don't want any of the packs to be expecting me and the guards could give it away. On the other hand I would prefer not to do it alone in case I come across a large number of rogues. I might be powerful but even I can be outnumbered."

"Then I'll have them dress casually like pack members" Xavier's voice shot out from the doorway as he came and joined his stunning wife, picking her up as she laughed and firmly planted her on his legs as he took her spot on the chair. ""You can take a missive pretending to just be a messenger from the King who is touring the packs and getting their opinions on things. "

"There's a lot of Alpha's who will recognise me though" Julian said glumly not seeing how that could possibly work.

"Not if I change your hair colour and eye colour" Serena said calmly and he looked at her warily. His daughter had just discovered that while she couldn't do large spells anymore, apparently things like glamour and changing one's features fell under something she could do. The last person who had made her angry had wound up with bright purple hair for a week until they apologised and she lifted it. Now everyone in the castle was super polite to her, not wanting to end up with horrible hair themselves.

"Alright" Julian declared, feeling a weight lift from his shoulders "I'll let you guys take over and I'll leave tomorrow" he said eagerly. Now that his mind was made up he didn't want to prolong the trip, his excitement rising in him as Xavier shook his hand and Serena gave him a peck on the cheek.

"Great" she murmured as Xavier chimed in "I'll organise the men then. Good luck" he whispered as Serena covered her head and began to look thoughtful. He rushed out of the room as Serena began to mutter "what colour should I change your hair too."

Julian tried not to shudder and desperately hoped it wasn't some absurd and vivid nonsensical colour. The last thing he wanted was to be a laughingstock amongst his men.