Chapter 79 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Matt POV

"Matty, calm down. You are going to be fine. Trust me," Alaia said.

This woman had somehow become my best friend, little sister, and Luna all rolled up in one tiny and fierce package. She was amazing and always knew when I needed her to keep me grounded.

"What if she says no, Bean? I can't handle that right now. Maybe this is all too soon? We should just keep dating casually, at least that way I get to still see her. If she turns me down, that will be it for us."

"You're just asking her to be your girlfriend Matt, you're not asking her to marry you, at least not yet any way. You are a Gamma, you've dealt with situations far more stressful."

I had found Taylor six months ago in a strip club.

No, strip clubs were never my thing, but we were there for Xander and Alexi's joint bachelor party.

When I smelled her cinnamon and vanilla scent, it took over my world. I knew she was mine.

She was a server and came to our booth dressed as a bunny, an almost naked bunny.

Seeing her that way both turned me on and infuriated me. I wanted to touch and taste her while also protecting her from the eyes of other men at the same time.

In less than thirty seconds, she had become my world, my everything, but she barely noticed me.

She was human. The most beautiful thing I had ever laid eyes on.

She had the most incredible chocolate brown skin. It was flawless and pair that with her emerald green eyes, she was a vision.

Her long brown hair that I wanted to tangle my fingers in was pulled back and hung to the middle of her back.

She had curves in all the right places, and the black high heels she wore made her legs and ass even more prominent.

I wanted those heels in the air, those legs spread far apart, and that ass...I wanted sinfully dirty things for it.

She walked out of our booth unaffected by me. It was floored.

I don't want to sound cocky, but no woman has ever, in my entire life, been unaffected by me.

I stood 6'3 tall and had all the muscle tone and definition you would expect from a warrior werewolf. We were continuously outdoors so I kept a summer tan all year round. Dirty blonde hair, baby blue, eyes, and a perfect white smile.

I had eyes, I was a good-looking guy, no doubt about it.

And on top of that, I was a male on the Stone family tree.

Many years ago, one of my male ancestors was cursed by a witch.

She had fallen in love with him, but she wasn't his mate. And he was saving his heart for his one true love.

Out of anger, she cursed him and all the men to ever come from him.

We would be irresistible to all women, young or old, it didn't matter. Even homosexual women, it made no difference.

The only thing that would stop our appeal was if that woman were to become marked, or if we men found and marked our own mate.

Otherwise, it was a bevy of women throwing themselves at you every minute of every day.

On the outside it sounds like anything but a curse, but actually it's horrible.

You never have room to just breath or be by yourself.

Girls sneak into your room at night when you're sleeping and try to have sex with you.

You can never know if they truly like you, or they are just compelled to.

And it's hard to keep male friends because they always think their girlfriends will leave them for you.

Needless to say, with all that I had going on, when she just smiled at me then walked away, any doubts of her being my mate vanished.

I took her out that same night, and every free moment I've had since has been spent with her.

"Matt, no woman would spend almost every single moment with a man she has no intention of getting serious with. You two have been inseparable for months. She'll say yes. And then you can finally bring her home to meet the family."

And that was another thing. I hadn't yet told her I was a wolf.

I was too afraid of scaring her off.

I had made a mess of this whole thing big time and now I was panicking.

"I'll just call her and cancel or reschedule."

I picked up my phone and looked at the screen. I was ready to make the call and let my fear take over.

But her perfect face lit up my screen. Tesoro mio, My Treasure.

I would never do anything to disappoint her.

I put my phone e away and took a deep breath.

"Okay, how do I look, Bean? Should I change my shirt or maybe my hair?"

"Don't chance a thing. Ever. You are perfect Matt, you always have been. Now go get your girl."

She spun me around and pushed me out the door of my room.

"You've got this. I know you do," she yelled behind me as I made my way down to the garage.

She was right, I had this.

Taylor POV

I had a date tonight with Matt and I was so excited and nervous.

Whenever I spent time with him it was a constant butterfly party in my stomach.

He made me feel so beautiful and so loved.

His voice sent chills down my spine and every time he called me his treasure, my panties were soaked.

But when we called and asked if I was free tonight, he sounded weird.

He sounded nervous and I was afraid he was going to leave me.

We had been seeing each other for six months and the most we'd done was make out, heavily.

A well-placed touch from him could have me cumming in seconds, but I wanted to feel all of him.

Whenever we got close, he would stop us.

I could see that he wanted me as much as I wanted him, so what was keeping him from taking me?

I stood in my closet searching and searching for the right outfit.

I wanted to be perfect for him, even if he was leaving me.

My best friend Morgan was stretched out across my bed, just staring at me and eating Hot Cheetos. Offering zero help.

"Morgan! I thought you were coming big over to help. Eating my fucking snacks is not helping."

"Bitch, please. You could wear a tattered shirt and shit stained sweatpants and Matt's eyes would still light up. He worships the ground you walk on."

She didn't understand. She was happily single and didn't see the need to put so much effort into a date.

"Tonight, is big, Morgan. I can feel it. So please help me find something to wear. Then you can eat all my Cheetos when I'm gone."

She smiled and hopped off the bed. That girl would do anything for a good snack.

We spent about twenty minutes going through every item in the closet before I was finally satisfied.

A tight black knee length pencil skirt and an emerald green silk spaghetti strap top to make my eyes pop.

I finished it off with my favorite four-inch pumps.

Only being 5'3 had its disadvantages, especially when the man I was dating was a full foot taller than me.

But Matt loved me in heels, so I wore them as often as possible when we were together.

I decided to wear my natural curls in my hair, partly because I had spent too much time finding my outfit and because I was too lazy to put any real time into it.

A bit of black eyeliner, mascara, and clear lipgloss and I was ready.

I was pacing my living room floor, checking my watch over and over.

"He's late Morgan. He's never late. What if he's not coming?"

I looked over at her, begging her to fix this.

She rolled her eyes and went back to scrolling Facebook on her phone.

"Morgan! This is-"

I was cut off by the ringing of the doorbell, but I couldn't move. He was here and now my nerves were on overdrive.

"Jesus, Taylor. You're really hopeless."

She stood up and opened the door.

For some reason, I still couldn't move. I couldn't look over. What if he didn't like my outfit. Was I overdressed?

"So, I'm really done with men for now, but I must admit, you're looking like a total snack tonight Matt. She's in here hyperventilating over nothing..."

Morgan was cut off by Matt rushing in past her to stand in front of me.

He gently touched my face and lifted it up to meet his.

"Are you alright, Tesoro? What's wrong?"

He was always so damn sweet. I had never met anyone like him in my life.

"You were late, I thought you had changed your mind about coming," I told him honestly.

He smiled then leaned down to press his lips against mine.

"I'm so sorry beautiful, you know I'd never stand you up. Parking was terrible. I thought of calling up and just having you come down, but then I remembered. You are my treasure and you deserve a man to come to the door to pick you up and drop you off. Nothing less."

Damn. He was amazing.

"You two disgust me. Now get out so I can watch my crime shows and snack in peace," Morgan interrupted.

He took my hand in his and lead me from the apartment and down to his car.

Once he had me settled in the passenger seat, he ran around to the driver's seat and hopped in.

"Have you always been such a gentleman, or an I just special?"

"You are more than special, you deserve to be spoiled. And my mom raised me and my brothers to treat women with a certain level of respect. Her family is old school Italian, old world values."

Ahhhh, so that's how he was able to easily slip into Italian like it was nothing.

"I never knew you were Italian. The last name 'Stone' doesn't exactly scream 'lasagna.""

I slapped my hand over my mouth and squeezed my eyes shut.

I did NOT just say that.

I was so embarrassed, but when I heard his deep sexy laugh, I loosened up a bit.

"That was terrible, I'm so sorry."

"Don't be. I love how you always make me laugh. And Stone is my father's family name. He met my mom when he was traveling through Italy after high school. Her family name is Giordano. Is that 'lasagna' enough for you?"

I rolled my eyes and laughed.

"Yes, it's perfect. "So, who do you look more like, your mother or your father?"

"I'd saying I am a mix of both. Believe it or not, there are blond hair and blue eyed Italians out there, more than you would think. My mom is one of them. My dad is the opposite, brown hair and hazel eyes. My hair and eyes are all mom, but my height, facial structure, body type, that's all dad. Dad has a darker skin tone while mom is more on the pale side."

"Pale skin huh? What would she think of my skin tone?"

He pulled up to the red light and looked over at me.

"She would think it was beautiful, just like I do. We don't see race, and we never have. We just see the person. Yes, you're a woman of color, so what?"

He shrugged a shoulder and turned back to continue his drive.

It was always clear to me that he didn't care that I was a black woman, but I was always curious about what his parents would think.

Now I know.

He laced our hands together and pulled my knuckles to his lips.

I had dreams about this man's lips, I had never in my life felt something so soft.

"You're perfect."

I couldn't handle all the compliments he was raining down on me, so I turned to the window and watched the scenery pass by.

Pulling up to our destination, I looked up to see we were at one of the fanciest restaurants in town.

Fleur de Lune had only opened three weeks ago, and the waiting list was insane.

The chef had three Michelin stars, so I knew it was way out of my budget.

Matt drove up to the valet and after leaving his keys, he walked around and took my hand.

"Whoa, Matt. We can't afford this place. And how did you even get a reservation," I said, grabbing his arm and pulling him to a stop.

"This is Alaia's restaurant. Xander bought it for her since she's so in love with food."

Right, Alaia. The female best friend that I've never met and Xander, Alaia's husband and Matt's boss.

It was getting hard keeping everyone straight. I didn't have any faces to go with the names and he didn't seem in any rush for me to meet any of them.

He smiled down at me and pulled me forward towards the front door.

When we entered, the hostess warmly greeted us and ushered us back to a quiet booth in the back.

It was cozy and intimate, I loved it.

I picked up the menu and my eyes bulged looking at the prices.

"Holy shit, man. This steak on here is an entire week's salary for me!"

He just laughed and took my hand.

"You order whatever you want. I'm friends with the owner, we're not paying what everybody else pays. I promise."

He ordered us a bottle of wine I had no idea how to pronounce and I decided to let loose and enjoy myself.

If this was our last night tonight at least he'd put in the effort to make it memorable.

And I'd enjoy this expensive ass food.

I ordered a huge juicy steak, a lobster tail, and the most amazing cheesy mashed potatoes I'd ever tasted.

As we sat and ate our meal, the conversation flowed freely.

This may have been one of our best dates ever and the idea of it being our last made me sad.

Matt seemed to notice the change in my mood and reached over to take my hand.

"What's wrong Taylor? Did you not like your dinner?"

"No, it was perfect. And I'll dream about those potatoes for weeks. It just feels like you may have brought me here for a reason. It's making me nervous."

He took a deep breath and let go of my hand.

Oh, no.

"I did bring you here for a reason. I guess now is as good a time as any to discuss it. I've had a great time with you these past few month, some of the best of my life but-"

I couldn't do this. I could already feel my heart breaking.

"Stop, Matt. Don't do this. Let's just enjoy the rest of the night and part ways as friends. Can we do that?"

"But, why? I don't want to be your friend Tesoro, I want-"

He didn't even want to remain friends? I thought I could at least have that but maybe this was better for all of us.

"Excuse me, I'll just go grab a cab back to my apartment. Tell Alaia that I appreciate her allowing me to dine here. It was amazing."

I stood up to go but before I could take a step, Matt grabbed my arm.

"Taylor. Sit down and let me finish my sentence. Please."

Why?!

Why did he have to actually say the words? I already knew what was coming, I had accepted it.

He lifted my chin, pulling my eyes from my lap.

"Taylor, I'm not breaking up with you. I've been in love with you since the moment I saw you in that tiny little bunny costume. I'm trying to ask you to be my girlfriend. I want you to be mine. Please?"

"Oh, shit!"

He looked so confused at my reaction. I needed to clarify.

"I'm sorry! I've just been so nervous about tonight. You've been so weird! I thought you didn't want to be with me. And I've never met your friends, but you always talk about them!"

I then lowered my voice to a whisper.

"And you refuse to have sex with me. WHY won't you have sex with me?!"

A huge laugh burst out of him. And it pissed me off. This was serious.

"What's so funny, Matt? I want to know!"

"I'm sorry, Tesoro. You're right. I just feel like I'm completely bombing this. Just give me a moment, please."

I took a gulp of my wine and waited for him to explain.

"So, I'll start with the biggest 'issue', the sex. All I have to do is catch a hint of your scent and it brings out the animal in me. It makes me rock hard, painfully so. If I could have you riding my dick right this very moment, I'd do it without a second thought. But I know you. You've never been with a man before, and you saved yourself for a reason. I respect that more than you know. I would never want you to give that special part of you to someone you're only 'dating'. It's not fair to you."

I wouldn't admit it out loud, but that was a damn good reason to explain the fact that we haven't had sex yet.

"And you haven't met my friends because I've been self-conscious about your meeting them. They are all incredible and you'd love them, I'm just afraid that you won't want me once you truly know me."

"How could I not want you, Matt. You're all I want, all the time."

"It's better if I show you. Can I do that?"

Now I was getting worried. What would he have to show me that would make me not want the sexiest sweetest man alive?

"Okay, show me."

"Not here though. Let's pay the check then I'll take you somewhere. I'll explain it all, I promise you."

I swear if he was taking me off somewhere to show me his custom "human hair sweater" collection I'd lose my shit.

TWO | PLEASE DON'T RUN FROM ME

Chapter 80 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

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Matt POV

This was not in the plans. I was just supposed to ask her to be mine tonight, then I'd show her my wolf later.

But she was so scared that I didn't want her, I knew I had to do everything I could to convince her that nothing was farther from the truth.

Now I was driving out to the woods lining our pack border to shift for her.

This was going to be a disaster.

"It's so beautiful and peaceful out here. And the smell is incredible," she said as she rolled down the window and let the breeze dance across her face.

She had closed her eyes and tilted her head up towards the moon, a small smile playing at the corners of her face.

She appreciated nature and the moon like a wolf, everything she did made me more and more in awe of her.

She turned to me and put on her serious face.

"So, you have something to show me, right?"

"Right?"

"Is it a freaky ass sweater collection?"

"Uhhh, no. Why would you- never mind. Just, no."

"Is it your dick?"

She waggled her eyebrows at me and licked her lips.

I knew she was joking but damnit if I didn't want to pull over and take her on the hood of my car.

"No, baby. It's not my dick. Well not really, you may see it but- no! I'm not driving all the way out here to show you my dick. I could have done that at the restaurant."

"True. So, are you going to kill me?"

"No, Tesoro. I'd never hurt you. I'd never lay a finger on you. You know that."

"That's what they all say..."

What did that mean? Had someone hurt her in the past?

I gripped the starting wheel as a growl escaped my lips.

I tried to cover it with a cough, but she heard it and looked at me quizzically.

"Did you just growl? Damn, that was sexy as hell. You should do it more often."

She turned back to the open window and continued to enjoy the scenery.

If only she knew how much growling I really did, she may want to take that statement back.

As soon as I crossed the pack border, I sent a quick mindlink to Xander and our Beta, Kade letting them know I was here.

I didn't want them to send patrols over and scare Taylor and more than I knew she already would be.

Hey guys, I don't have a lot of time to talk but I'm on the west border. I've got Taylor with me and I'm taking her to the waterfall. I'm going to show her my wolf.

Oh, shit! That's crazy. Do you think she'll freak out or what?

Matt, ignore Kade. Just be careful with her and let us know if you need anything.

I pulled to the side of the road then walked around to take Taylor's hand and help her out of the car.

"We're walking into the woods a bit, so you may want to leave your shoes behind. Don't worry, I'll carry you," I added when she looked from the dense forest floor to her adorable little feet.

"Just trust me okay?"

She nodded once before she pulled her heels off and placed them on the passenger seat.

I then picked her up bridal style and began the five-minute walk to the waterfall.

We heard the water before we saw it, and when we finally reached the clearing, I heard her gasp at the sight.

It really was magnificent, and with thought being a full moon it was even more majestic.

I gently sat her on her feet, and she walked over to the water and dipped her hand in.

"It's warm! That's amazing," she laughed before she stood and walked in to her ankles.

"There is a hot spring at the top of the falls that keeps the temperature perfect all year round."

"This is amazing, I would love to live somewhere like this."

She was so innocent and sweet. I hoped she wouldn't hate me when this was all over.

I grabbed her hand and pulled her from the water.

I then took off my jacket and laid it on the ground for her.

"Sit down, please? And just listen to what I have to say. And trust me, I won't hurt you. Ever."

She looked around nervous.

"Okaaayyyy."

"This is my home, well a few miles further down the road is my actual home but this land that we are on belongs to my pack."

"Pack? What's a pack? Like a pack of wolves?" she asked with a laugh.

"A pack is a family. I live here with my family."

She looked around then her eyes got huge before she jumped to her feet.

"Are you in a fucking cult? Have you brought me here to make me drink the Kool-Aid or some crazy shit like that?!"

"Baby calm down. I promise I'm not in a cult. Sit down, please."

"No! I want to stand. What's going on?"

I took a few steps back before I began stripping off my clothes.

"What are you doing? I thought we weren't here for your dick."

"We're not, Taylor. I'm trying to show you why we're here. Just please, don't run from me. My heart couldn't take it."

She wrapped her arms around her chest and gave me a small nod.

When I was completely naked, I crouched down and let my wolf, Logan, come forward.

His thick gray fur began to sprout over my skin as my bones shifted, popped, and reshaped.

After years of shifting, it no longer hurt, but feeling your nose change into a snout and your nails into claws was far from comfortable.

When I was done, I stood on all four paws and towered over Taylor's petite frame.

She took a small step backwards like she was going to run, and Logan instantly let out a small whine and whimper.

He didn't want to be the reason we lost our mate, it would destroy him.

He held his head down in a nonaggressive stance and took a step forward.

She stood in place, she didn't move. This was a good thing, right?

One more step and we were standing close enough for her to reach out and touch us if she wanted.

But she didn't want that at all.

I could smell the fear pouring off her. It broke my heart and made Logan whimper even louder.

When the tears trailed down her face, that was it for us.

Logan, let me shift back. She's terrified and I don't want to see her like this.

My mate shouldn't be afraid of me Matt, I love her. I'd never hurt her.

I know, but she doesn't. Let's shift back now, I need to take her home.

Logan lifted his head and let out the saddest most painful howl of our lives.

The sound carried through the trees on the still night air and shook Taylor to the core.

She let out a small muffled cry before her eyes rolled back and she fell to the ground.

Taylor POV

Why is it so damn hot in here?!

It felt like I was buried under ten of the thickest heaviest blankets ever created.

When I moved my hand, I bumped against a hard-naked chest.

Not what I was expecting at all.

I opened my eyes and looked around.

I had no clue where I was. This wasn't my bedroom, but it didn't look like a hotel either.

I felt myself begin to panic, old memories began to resurface, and it became harder and harder to breath.

The bed shifted beside me, and I shut my eyes as tight as I could. I didn't know who it was, but I was terrified.

"Tesoro calm down. It's just me. It's Matt."

When he placed his hand on my arm, a flashback of the scene in the woods sprang into my mind and I couldn't help myself. I screamed as loud as I could.

I jumped from the bed and tried to get as far away from him as possible, but he was too fast. So fast that I didn't even see when he jumped from the bed and stood in front of me.

"Taylor, please don't do this. I promise I won't hurt you baby, please."

The pain in his eyes and his voice was killing me, but he was some kind of monster. He was a wolf disguised as a man, or a man disguised as a wolf. I didn't know, but it wasn't fucking normal.

"No! No, no, no! Don't touch me. I can't do this. Please let me go. I promise I won't say anything to anyone ever. Just don't hurt me, I'm begging you."

My legs went limp and I fell to my feet. I had never been more terrified in my life, and I had lived with some heavy shit.

"Baby don't do that. I can't ever hurt you. It's impossible. Hurting you would only hurt me."

But I couldn't hear him. He was going to rip me to pieces, and no one would ever see me again.

I didn't want to die before I had the chance to experience life.

But what could I do now? He had me trapped wherever this was probably in the middle of the woods.

Through my blurry tear-filled eyes, I saw him gently ease out of the room and close the door behind him.

He had probably locked me in. Maybe he was going to get his giant wolf "killing kit".

I know that sounded idiotic but my ability to form coherent though was completely gone.

So, I balled up on the floor, and I cried.

He had been so perfect from the start, I should have known that no man could be this amazing.

How could I have been so stupid to have let another man into my life?

I didn't even fight him, I just let him in and gave him my heart without hesitation.

A small knock on the door jolted me up from the floor. I pushed myself into a dark corner and waited.

"Taylor? It's Alaia. I'm Matt's friend. I'm going to come in, okay?"

When I didn't answer I heard the door click then slowly ease open.

A tiny yet insanely beautiful woman about my age walked in and gently closed the door.

She had long dark brown hair down past her waist and the brightest golden eyes I had ever seen.

Her caramel toned skin and bright white smile made me relax slightly, but my guard was still way up.

"Taylor, I'm not going to hurt you. I just wanted to come in and talk to you for a little while. Is that okay?"

She seemed like such a sweet and caring person, so I nodded my head.

"Good. So, Matt told me what happened and I'm so sorry sweetie. I know this can be a lot to take in, but he really is as good as he says he is. He's as good as you have seen, you just need to understand the other part of him too."

I mustered the courage to speak for the first time since Matt had left the room.

"Are you a wolf too?"

She smiled before she answered.

"Yes, I am. I am the Luna of this pack, my husband Xander is the alpha."

"What does that mean?"

"Well, the pack is just a collection of wolves who live and coexist together as a unit. We are a family. We celebrate each other's successes and grieve each other's losses, together. The alpha is the leader of the pack, he makes sure everything runs smoothly for all who follow him. The Luna is the Alphas mate. She's his equal in all things, and she helps to support her pack with love, compassion, and understanding. Kind of like what I'm doing here now for Matt."

"He said you were his best friend?"

"I am. He was one of the first people I met when I came here, and he accepted me immediately. He was like a big brother when I couldn't be with my own. I love him, he's one of the best people I have ever know."

This was a lot. But the way she explained it all, it was so much easier to understand.

"So, you said you were the Alpha's mate. What is a mate?"

"Well, a mate is a partner. It's a partner that the Moon Goddess herself chose especially for you. Your mate competes and compliments you in every way. They are your other half, and when you find them, you are finally whole. You are Matt's mate, Taylor. That man would lay down his life, just to make you smile. He's waited his entire life for you. Only you."

"But I'm human. How can I be the mate to a wolf? How does that work? How can a human be a part of this world?"

"If it's alright with you, I'd like to bring my husband in here. He's human, maybe he can help explain some of this."

"Wait, the Alpha is human?"

She smiled and shook her head.

"No, sweetie, Xander is a wolf. As an alpha he is one of the more powerful wolves we have. It's my husband Alexi who is human. He's the one I want to bring in with us."

So, this was some weird cult shit!

"I promise you that this isn't common, two mates for one wolf. And it's a long story how it happened. We don't have sister wives or anything weird like that. Don't worry."

"So, you just get to have two men? What's wrong with them? Something has got to be wrong."

I was being rude, but I wanted answers.

"They are both perfect actually, they have given me love, devotion, three amazing children, and too many orgasms to count. Tall, sexy, scrumptious men, and they are all mine."

Okay, Ms. Alaia. I liked her, a lot.

"Sure, I'd love to hear how another human lives with wolves. Thank you."

Her eyes clouded over, and it scared the shit out of me.

It looked like something out of a horror movie.

When they went back to gold, she focused them on me and apologized.

"I'm sorry, I was mindlinking him. It's a way of silently communicating with each other no matter where we are. I should have warned you in advance."

"Yea, well I saw a man turn into a big ass wolf earlier. I can handle a few cataracts I guess."

Then I thought about something.

"Wait! You can do that link thing with him and he's human. Can you do it with me?"

"I guess I could. I'm a special, powerful werewolf that can easily communicate with almost anyone. And if you become Matt's mate and he marks you, you will be able to link with him. But

you won't be able to hear the rest of the pack the way the rest of us do. Alexi used to be a wolf, so he still has a few extra abilities."

This was information overload. But I needed to know all that I could about this man and his pack. If I was going to be in his life, I didn't need any extra surprises.

I heard a quick knock on the door then it opened to reveal a tall GQ model walking in.

"What is up with this place? Are all the men here this good looking? How do you keep your panties on?!"

There goes that mouth of mine again.

The man laughed and damn if it wasn't a deep and sexy rumble his chest.

"I'm sorry, ignore me. I tend to lose my filter when I'm nervous."

She shrugged me off.

"Don't worry about it. Yes, they pretty much are all delicious specimens. And about the panties? I had three babies in less than a year. So, I don't think I can offer any advice on that one."