

9: Selene

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The kind-hearted woman who offered me a job is Miranda, and her husband, Ben, is battling an unknown illness, keeping him conned to his room.

She conded in me that she had a daughter my age who succumbed to the same disease her husband is now suffering from. My heart ached for her, empathizing with the grief she carried.

Although I have yet to hold my baby, I can't help but imagine the joy of meeting them for the rst time. I eagerly anticipate cradling my child, even though I have no knowledge of their father. At this moment, that doesn't matter. My baby represents hope and serves as a distraction, a gift from the Moon Goddess herself.

Two weeks have passed, and I've made signicant progress in concealing my true nature. I move amongst humans, serving tables with a welcoming smile, and have even managed to strike up a friendship, albeit cautiously.

I've never had friends before, so I maintain my guard, not allowing my walls to crumble too quickly. You never know when they will turn their backs on you. One thing Starfall Clan taught me.

I'm unsure of the distance between myself and the Lycan King's territory, but my fervent hope is that I never encounter him or any other werewolf again. I'm done with wolves and prefer the freedom of a lone wolf, a rogue in werewolf terms, and I couldn't care less.

In the early morning light, I transform into my Lycan form and venture into the woods, allowing Kira to bask in the primal joys of life. It's a simple pleasure that brings me solace too. The feel of my paws against the mud and dirt, it's therapeutic.

As I turn to acknowledge a young man who's clearly taken an interest in me, I offer him a friendly smile, as Miranda had advised. Maintaining a hospitable demeanor towards customers is essential; I want to ensure they return. Not the other way around.

"You look great, as always, Selene," he comments, his crooked smile giving him a boyish charm.

"Thanks, Jodie," I respond, placing his order before him.

With a subtle, unwanted gesture, he slips a small piece of paper into the front pocket of my apron, his hand brushing against my chest. I raise a questioning eyebrow, but I opt not to voice my discomfort, instead heading back to the counter.

Over the past fourteen days, I've been careful to monitor my pregnancy. Regular visits to the hospital were necessary to safeguard my baby's health. Yet, during one examination, the doctor noticed something unusual, causing a momentary panic. Fearing that my secret nature would be exposed, I contemplated the consequences.

I never got to bring myself to ask Miranda or Imogen if they knew anything about werewolves in fear they might detect something off about me for asking that.

The doctor, visibly perplexed, turned to me, a mixture of curiosity and concern etched on my face. As he relayed his astonishing revelation, his voice trembled with a mix of wonder and apprehension.

"Ma'am," he began, "I've never seen anything like this before. Your baby... it's as if they possess some extraordinary, otherworldly energy. I can't explain it, but there's something truly unique happening here."

Realizing that seeking further medical assistance might be problematic, I resolved to manage my pregnancy alone or seek help from a different doctor when the time came. Regardless, I was determined to provide a safe and loving environment for my baby, away from the harsh realities of my former pack.

Miranda's voice interrupted my thoughts. She asked what was bothering me, noticing the troubled expression on my face. I offered a forced smile, concealing my concerns.

"Nothing really. Just the usual," I replied, masking my emotions.

She glanced at me and then my growing stomach, smiling gently. She was aware of my pregnancy, as I'd conded in her. I'd explained that it was the primary reason I'd been cast out. Pregnancy was impossible to hide.

Miranda reassured me, understanding the stress that came with my situation. She advised me to keep a cheerful outlook, then left for her oce.

"It seems there are some perks to being pregnant," Imogen, my newfound friend, commented from the kitchen as she mixed dough.

I rolled my eyes at her. "No perks here. Just morning sickness and worry."

She bit her lip, suppressing her anger at the mention of my parents. The immense hatred she harbored from just hearing part of my story was a testament to the ordeal I'd been through in my former pack, though not directly from my parents.

"Yeah, I know. Thanks, Gen," I replied, giving her a grateful smile before returning to attend to the next customer who walked in.

A man entered the café, dressed in typical straight jeans and a shirt that snugly emphasized his chest. He took a seat at a table by the window, bried glancing in my direction before immersing himself in his phone.

"Hello, what can I get you on this lovely afternoon?" I inquired, tilting my head and offering a friendly smile.

"Just coffee," he replied, still engrossed in his phone. A denite red ag for rudeness.

"Dark or light, sir?" I maintained my professionalism, even in the face of such behavior.

"Dark," he curtly responded, effectively shutting down the conversation.

As I walked away, Imogen noticed my expression and couldn't help but laugh. I didn't share her amusement, so I crossed my arms beneath my chest. It struck me as surreal to experience such normal interactions with someone I could now call a friend.

Only a few weeks ago, I would have dismissed such a scenario as a distant dream upon waking. Nobody had wanted me, and I had been utterly alone. While I forced myself to act normal, it didn't truly feel like me. This wasn't who I was, but I was equally uncertain of my identity.

"That's Sawyer, the college bad boy who thinks every girl wants him," Imogen informed me, her eyes rolling, though a blush colored her cheeks.

I raised an eyebrow at her. "Is little Imogen crushing on our bad boy, Sawyer?"

She rolled her eyes again, but her blush persisted. "No, of course not. Why would I? He's rumored to have a new girlfriend every week. I won't be one of those."

"He's good-looking enough for you to have a crush, Gen," I teased, turning to look at Sawyer.

With shaggy blonde hair cascading onto his forehead, a straight aquiline nose, and those dark eyes I had glimpsed earlier, he wasn't unattractive. His well-dened muscles gave him the appearance of an athlete to match his good looks.

"He isn't half as attractive as the Alpha," Kira grumbled in my mind, causing me to jerk in surprise.

Did she just mention the mate who had rejected us? I had been striving to forget the pain of that rejection, but Kira couldn't let it go.

"Yeah, he's an attractive jerk who rejected us. Keep hanging in there, Kira," I snapped back, my irritation evident even within my thoughts.

"At least the Lycan King is more handsome than the Alpha," Kira's voice softened, as if she regretted her previous words.

Kira was the polar opposite of me, unapologetically honest and forthright, while I preferred to avoid confrontation whenever possible. Never had one except with Scarlett.

"Enough about him, too. Have you forgotten that he killed my parents?" I trembled even within my own thoughts, feeling utterly powerless.

"Yeah, sorry," Kira mumbled sympathetically before retreating into silence.

"Thanks," I replied.

"Nah, thanks. He won't notice me anyway," Imogen shued her feet, brushing a strand of her vivid pink-dyed hair from her face.

Dyed hair was a rarity within the pack, perhaps a subdued color, but this bright pink stood out. It perfectly complemented Imogen's girlish charm and her bubbly personality, which included a cute button nose and full, enigmatic lips that would captivate anyone, regardless of gender. She was a true vision, her slender gure gracefully curved with a small waist, ared hips, and prominently perched breasts. Her porcelain skin glowed with radiance, leaving no room for complaints about her appearance.

"Why wouldn't he notice you? You're one of the most beautiful girls in your school," I complimented her, appreciatively scanning her gure.

Imogen didn't boast of exaggerated curves, but her proportions suited her body and could easily be likened to that of a plastic doll. Her slim waist beautifully accentuated her aring hips and the proud display of her breasts. Her awless, porcelain skin completed the picture. There wasn't a single thing not to admire about her.

"Uh huh! You haven't seen the girls clinging to his arms," Imogen countered as she turned back to prepare his coffee.

When I delivered the coffee to him, he took a sip and then abruptly raised his head, locking eyes with Imogen from across the room. There was a moment of silent communication, and if they had been wolves, it seemed like he had declared her his mate mentally.

In response, Imogen hurriedly retreated into the kitchen, and I was left staring at him, perplexed. Something about this interaction felt strange. I couldn't help but wonder whether his eyes had genuinely ashed just then.

I swallowed, my curiosity piqued.