

## Chapter 5 - Turn my world upside down

Zara's POV

"I cannot believe you are doing this to me," Levi groaned, which seemed to be the hundredth time in this hour. He had been complaining about our mating arrangement, and the subject was now socially getting on my last nerve.

Was it even possible for him to simply comply with my request and follow along without all the extra drama? The mating ceremony wasn't such a big deal.

We were just claiming to be chosen mates until we found a more suitable mate, or maybe our second chance mate—that's if such mates still exist.

I sighed, closing my eyes, as I counted to ten. I didn't want to lose my cool composure; it was moments before the mating ceremony, and my father would notice if something was wrong.

"Come one, Levi," I said, taking his hands in mine. I was about to beg. This was important to me. He must help me, or else I will be forced to mate with Alpha Noah, and that thought revolts me. "The concept is not all that bad. At least you are aware of the kind of mate you will have. You are familiar with me. We will be ne."

"Are you serious?" he snarled, pulling his hands out of mine. "What excuse will you offer the pack when we do not mark each other? Hmm?"

"I will come up with something," I replied with a sigh.

My father had put a lot of effort into this mating ceremony. He even went as far as to invite every Alpha on the continent to attend the ceremony.

There was no way we could back out now. The pack house was already filled with Alphas, Lunas, and ranks from all over who had come to witness the exchange of our mating vows.

Levi started to pace back and forth with his hands in his hair.

"I do not think I can do this, Zara," he remarked. "I cannot lie in front of all those wolves. They will know the ceremony is just a lot of bullshit!"

"Levi, you are not lying," I snapped. I was about to lose my temper. I took a deep breath. "You are simply protecting your future Luna from her has-been-mate, and by doing that, you are keeping the pack safe and out of his hands. Stop worrying now. Everything will work out the way it should."

"It is easy for you to say," he snapped. "You are not the one who will not be able to fulfill his obligations to his mate. Or did you forget that I am gay?"

"Seriously, Levi?" I scowled. "I have not forgotten about that. That is the exact reason why this would work out perfectly."

"You have got to be kidding me," he growled. "Have you ever given this plan of yours much thought?"

I shook my head.

"Nope, not really," I replied and shrugged. "But think of it this way. We can simply reject each other as soon as we find our second chance mate, and everything can go back to normal. I promise you, everything will work out just fine. Trust me."

"You think that by finding your second chance, everything will go back to normal?" Levi shrieked, throwing his arms in the air. "It is easier said than done!"

"What is?" I asked, knitting my eyebrows together. What was Levi going on about?

"Finding a second chance, mate!" Levi snorted. "You have about a one in a million chance of getting one."

"No, it is not," I argue. "Second chance mates still exist. Rejected wolves can still find love a second time."

"What happens if we don't?" he asked. "What are you going to tell the pack when we can't give them the next heir?"

"That will not happen," I muttered. "The goddess will not let the pack go without an heir."

I haven't given much thought to the implications of mating with Levi.

Even if we cannot work out the dynamics surrounding our mating arrangements, I still think this is the best option.

It is true that Levi is gay, but I never put much thought into his sexual preferences. I loved him for who he was; I saw him for him. I trusted him with everything I had.

If Levi chickens out now, I will have no choice but to accept the proposal to be Alpha Noah's mate and Luna; otherwise, he will have the power to challenge my father for the Silverado Pack Alpha title.

"Are you sure?" Levi asked, coming closer and placing his hand on my shoulder.

I nodded. The goddess always made sure there was an heir to her blessed packs. I doubt that she will turn her back on us now.

My gaze roamed over the reactions of me and Levi. If we were a normal couple and this ceremony wasn't staged, we could have easily gone through as an ideal power couple.

I sighed, laid my hand over his, and raised my eyes to meet him in the mirror.

"I am," I said. "Our love for one another has never changed. We trust one another. All you need is a little faith. We can do this. The goddess will provide; I know she will."

A knock on my bedroom door startled both of us, and a moment later, the door opened to reveal Janey. The redhead omega was tasked with helping me get ready.

"Zara, can I come in?" She asked, knitting her eyebrows together, when she saw Levi. He was not supposed to be with me before the mating ceremony.

I gave her a nod and returned my attention to Levi.

"Go get dressed," I said. "I will see you shortly."

"Very well," Levi said with a sigh. "I will wait for you at the altar."

"I will be the one dressed in white," I chirped, a little too excited. Levi huffed and rolled his eyes before walking out the door and shutting it behind him.

Janey seemed curious, but she decided to just keep quiet and started with my hair.

I watched as her hands skillfully transformed my hair.

"Did you finish your studies at beauty school?" I asked in an attempt to strike up a conversation.

"Next week, I will be taking my final exam," she stated, glancing up to meet my gaze in the mirror. "Hopefully, then, I will get my diploma."

"You certainly know what you are doing," I said. "I love my hair like this."

"Thank you," she muttered. "However, I am far from having your hair done perfectly."

"That is absurd," I said. "My hair looks amazing. There is no doubt that you will ace your exam."

Janey blushed at that, and a smile appeared on her lips.

"Thank you for the compliment," she uttered.

After Janey finished my hair, she moved on to my makeup, and once she was done, she turned me to face the mirror.

My hands were drawn to my red lips as I gasped in shock when I saw my reflection in the mirror.

I have never been one to wear a lot of makeup—I usually just wear foundation and eyeliner—but I looked like a magazine cover model.

"Are you pleased with how you look?" Janey asked anxiously when I didn't say anything.

"Yes," I replied. "It is perfect, beyond my expectations."

"Do you think Beta Levi would approve?" She asked.

It surprised me that she asked me if Levi would approve instead of my father.

"He would love it," I said. "Thank you."

Janey headed toward my closet and carefully pulled my mating dress from the hanger. My mother gave me the dress as a gift; it was her old mating dress, passed down from Luna to Luna.

The dress had undergone some modifications, which I was excited to see.

My heart leaped out of my chest as soon as Janey revealed the dress. It was even more exquisite than the original dress.

"Amazing!" Janey said. "Is this Luna's old mating dress?"

"Yes," I replied, touching the pearly top and the modifications I had made to the old dress.

"Beta Levi is one lucky wolf," she said. "The Alpha ought to feel pleased by your choice."

"He is," I replied.

Janey helped me get dressed, and tears sprung to my eyes when I saw my reflection in the mirror. The dress was a perfect fit!

The moment Janey tied the last button, there was a soft knock on my bedroom door, and my father, appearing as though he had been called, peered around it.

"Bloody hell!" he exclaimed when he saw me. "Zara, is that you?"

He swung the door open, shock, amazement, and disbelief visible on his face.

"Hello, dad," I said, feeling my face turn crimson under all the makeup.

"Wow!" He gasped once more. "You look amazing! I almost didn't recognize you!"

"Thank you, Father," I said, turning my gaze toward Janey. "However, Janey is solely responsible for this picture-perfect image of me."

After thanking Janey and extending his arm to me, my father and I left my room to go down to the proceedings.

However, I never thought that the most intoxicating scent would turn my world upside down.

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