

Chapter 6 - Even worse

Zara's POV

The inside of the mating hall was beautifully decorated. White wild owers were hanging from the ceiling, and red rose petals were scattered on the oor, creating a beautiful overy path to the altar.

My father made sure that this stunning ceremony would be remembered for years to come.

The hall was packed and overcrowded with huge wolves, and there were even wolves standing outside hoping to get a glimpse of the mating proceedings.

Levi was anxiously dding with his cuinks as he waited at the altar. Next to him stood his two brothers, Jack and Frank, three years older than him, playing the best-man part.

My gaze roamed over Levi. He looked so handsome in his black tuxedo, white dress shirt, black dance shoes, and navy blue bow tie. His golden hair was neatly combed back, and he had a deep and serious frown stuck on his face. He did not seem to be too happy about today, but as my best friend, I knew he wouldn't let me down.

On the other side of the altar, my cousins, Jeanie and Sandra, stood, both dressed in navy blue dresses owing down to the oor. They were each holding a small white bouquet of roses.

"Did Janey do Jeanie and Sandra's hair too?" I asked my father.

"She sure did," he replied.

"I am impressed by her work!" I commented.

"So am I," he replied.

Levi caught a glimpse of me standing at the entrance, and he stopped dding with his cuinks and froze in place. He blinked a couple of times before his jaw hit the oor. It took him a few seconds before he could x his composure, and a smile appeared on his lips.

"Wow!" he mind-linked. "You look gorgeous!"

Levi's facial reaction got a lot of attention, and the whole hall turned to look back at me and my father.

My face heated, and I bit my lip. I wasn't used to this kind of attention.

"So do you too, handsome," I replied, embarrassed.

"I feel kind of honored to be the one standing next to you at the altar," Levi said, a beautiful smile on his lips.

My father chuckled next to me, nding the situation humorous.

"It seems like no one expected to see you this beautiful," he said proudly. "You should dress up more often."

I raised an eyebrow, huffed, and rolled my eyes. It wasn't at all true. I regularly went and dressed up for events.

"But you never looked like this!" Kaya mused. "You look amazing! Janey did an excellent job. People will now expect you to look this way more often."

"Not going to happen," I replied.

The wolf howl marked the start of the proceedings, and my father pulled me forward toward the path to the altar.

The moment had come! I would stop at nothing to ensure the safety of my people.

My father and I strolled down the path together until the sweetest smell of honey and vanilla attacked my nostrils.

I became intoxicated by the aroma and started to move more slowly. The scent was overpowering my senses, and I was dying to have a taste of it!

"Mate!" Kaya howled and fought for control. Startled by what she said, my body stiffened, and my heart rate escalated. I was unable to control my breathing. I managed to push her back.

"Mate is here!" she grumbled, angrily at me. "Find mate! Find mate now!"

Why now? Why here? Why always at the most inconvenient times and places?

Was this some kind of uke or my punishment for deceiving everyone with my plans?

"Are you nervous?" My father whispered in my ear. He must have noticed my reaction just a few seconds ago.

I looked up at him and shook my head.

"No," I lied. I was now beyond the word nervous!

"You can always cancel if you are not sure about Beta Levi," he said calmly.

That made me smile. My father was always so patient with me.

"I know you two have been friends for, like, forever," he continued. "But I never thought that you two would actually go and tie the knot."

Neither did I. This subject never even made it onto my personal agenda.

"You know," he said, side-glancing at me. "Alpha Noah..."

Kaya growled in my mind. Alpha Noah's name only brought her pain and suffering. I would not want to go through that pain with her again.

A scene from that night, when Alpha Noah rejected me, ashed through my mind. The rain was pouring down on me, and it was shivering cold outside. The more I ran from the pain, the colder I became—it was the emptiness that Alpha Noah left inside my heart, growing like cancer inside me.

Kaya was devastated and even more heartbroken than me. She couldn't understand what he saw in his chosen mate. She was nothing more than an omega.

Kaya pleaded with me to give Noah another chance. She begged me to go back and search for him.

I sighed, remembering that I had given into her request.

We sneaked into the Red Howl Pack and easily found Alpha Noah's chambers. His pack seemed to be laid back, with minimal guards on duty. I could hear him inside his room, grunting and moaning.

Someone was with him. Was it her?

My heart broke, sending another painful feeling through my body. I knew what it meant, but Kaya refused to give up and leave. She wanted to claim her mate.

I closed my eyes and swallowed hard as I slowly pushed the door open. The scent of an unknown she-wolf had already tainted Alpha Noah's intoxicated grassland scent.

I wanted to gag and turn around and run away, but Kaya refused.

Kaya grabbed control, hearing Alpha Noah moan and grunting even louder.

If only I hadn't given into Kaya's request.

The banging of the headboard slamming against the wall increased, and Kaya froze.

I could feel her heart shattered in a million pieces, yet she did not turn around. She took one more step forward, ignoring the banging of the headboard against the wall.

My hands ew to my lips when I saw Alpha Noah's bare back, his pants lying around his ankles and him thrusting into a redheaded girl. She was standing on all fours on the bed with her ass in the air.

"Ahh," the girl moaned. "Deeper, Alpha! I want to feel all of you inside me. Please! Please, don't stop! "

It wasn't even his chosen mate he was f*cking!

Was that how my life would have been?

As soon as the thought occurred to me, I immediately dismissed it.

"No, I am ne," I said. I assured my father.

I was sick of hearing about that foolish, obnoxious wolf who thinks he owns me. After tonight, he would have to move on and nd another she-wolf to amuse himself. He had his chance.

My father nodded, and we headed forward. My gaze unintentionally moved over the sea of wolves, searching for the person behind the delicious vanilla and honey scent.

I could not help but notice Alpha Noah. He and his beta were seated in the third row from the front. His stunning face was contorted with utter fury.

"He has some nerve to come to the proceeding!" Kaya growled in my mind. Just the mere thought of having Alpha Noah here in the proceedings angered her.

"My father must have invited him," I replied. "And to think I once found him good-looking."

"I hope he is not going to do or say something stupid today," Kaya said, the hair on her back raised.

"I doubt that my father would allow that," I replied. "My father made sure to put extra precautions in place in case someone tries to sabotage today's proceedings."

My father stopped a couple of feet from the altar and Levi came closer, shaking my father's hand.

"Look after my daughter. Treat her with love and respect," my father said seriously. "Or else..."

Levi's eyes grew wide, his back stiffened, and he shivered and swallowed hard. All the while, I mued a chuckle behind my hand.

Levi had always been very careful of my overprotective father, and I couldn't blame him.

I was the only child, not because my parents didn't want more pups, but because my mother lost her ability to conceive more pups due to a rogue attack.

My mother was pregnant with me when the attack happened, and my father almost lost us both that night. My father doesn't speak about that night, but my mother told me how painful it was for him to see her on the verge of dying.

"Yes, Alpha," Levi said, his voice breaking. "I will take good care of your daughter. You have my word."

"You have my blessing," my father said. He nodded, lowered his head, kissed my cheek, and handed me over to Levi.

I found the proceedings dragging and boring. I have never been one for long speeches.

The elder person who was doing the proceedings was giving us a lecture on how to live our lives as a mated pair, and I wasn't really focusing on any of that.

We were not planning to do the deed; I would never expect Levi to go that far.

"Why are you not listening to the elder?" Levi mind-linked.

"I am," I replied via the mind-linked.

"You are not," he argued.

"Are you calling me a liar?" I asked, raising a perfectly molded eyebrow and turning my gaze to look at him.

"Yes. No. Maybe," he replied.

"Which is it?" I mind-linked, shifting my eyebrows together.

"I don't know," he mind-linked me, looking down at me. "You seem very distracted. Even more distracted than your normal self."

"It is because I am," I replied, turning my attention back to the elder.

I couldn't help but wonder to whom that intoxicated scent belonged. I could taste the scent on my tongue, and my mouth watered to have a taste of it.

I was even more curious to know from which pack he came.

I was dying to know what he looked like.

My heart pinched hurtfully inside my chest. So far, he has made no effort to stop the proceedings and claim me.

Was he scared, or did he just accept the fact that I had taken a chosen mate?

"Why?" Levi asked. "Do you have cold feet?"

"No," I said. "But I'm pretty sure that my second chance mate is watching the ceremony."

"What?" Levi gasped, making the elder stop talking, and murmurs followed from behind us.

That was not the reaction I was hoping for at a time like this!

"Is there a problem?" The elder asked, removing his reading glasses and placing them on the podium.

"No, no, no," I said, giving Levi the death glare. "Please continue, elder."

"Are you sure?" He asked, searching for any traces of dishonesty.

"We are sure," I said. "Please continue."

"Beta Levi," The elder asked. "Are you ne with proceeding?"

Levi opened his mouth, yet he didn't say anything; his gaze slowly shifted toward me.

"Levi, don't do this. I beg you, don't you dare say no," I mind-linked him.

"Yes, elder," Levi said. "Please proceed."

"Very well," the elder said, returning his glasses to his eyes.

"Where were we? Ah, yes," the elder said as he continued to search where he stopped.

"Zara, I think we should stop the proceedings," Levi linked after a moment. "Your mate will be hurt if we-"

"If he really wants me, he can come and claim me right here," I replied.

"Oh," Levi said, a naughty smile on his lips. "Cavemen style. You like it rough, huh?"

"No," I replied, rolling my eyes. "That way, I would know that he really cares and wants me, but so far, he hasn't made any effort to stop this ceremony."

"Maybe he is shy," Levi replied.

"I doubt that," I said. "Wolves are not shy about claiming their mate. They make a big fuss about it to ensure that everyone knows that they have found their mate and are now taken."

"Maybe he is cautious," Levi commented. "Maybe he was rejected before..."

"Maybe," I replied, and a breath escaped my lips.

For some reason, this almost felt even worse than Alpha Noah's rejection.
