

Chapter 23

Emily's pov

I swallowed, throwing the bag strap over my shoulder and rising to my feet.

"We're alone. We can't be al-

My words are cut off when Bryson turns me around, my ass now pressing to the table.

He cages me in with both his hands beside me.

"I don't give a fuck if we're not supposed to be seen together alone Em. No one, not even the damn werewolf council can keep us apart." He seethes, angry eyes peering down at me.

I tore my eyes away from his. "You should care Bryce. This is your future. You can't have a bad reputation."

Goosebumps raise on my arm when Bryson fingers touch my chin, pulling my attention directly on him.

I held my breath, stunned by the emotions playing in his eyes.

"If I had to choose against the leader position over you Em. I'd choose you." He whispered, honestly swirling in his voice.

His words took my breath away, and I find myself fighting the urge to cry.

I smacked his fingers away from my face and push away from him completely.

"That's the thing Bryce, I don't want you to choose. This is your destiny and I can't get in the way of that. Your mate-

His fingers clutch my arm, turning me around.

I gasped as I am squished to his chest.

"My mate," He says tightly. "Will not come between us. If I even have one. I told you, I won't accept her if she-

I glared, pulling out of his hold harshly.

"Don't you dare ruin your chances of getting your destined mate Bryson. I get that you're in love with some girl, but your mate is supposed to be your other half! The love you'll have for her will be undeniable."

Bryson laughed dryly, running a hand through his brown curls.

"You don't get it Em. Still....you don't notice." He shook his head, eyes shinning with a bit of amusement when they connect with mine. "What's it going to take for you to see?"

My brows knot.

"See what?"

He shook his head. "I can't tell you. Not now. Not when you'll stop me from rejecting my mate for her."

I frowned.

"You're still on that rejecting topic. Bryson, you must know what you're gambling. Happiness. Love. That's what a mate gets you." I whispered.

Bryson's jaw ticked.

"I already have that with the one I love. No bond can come between the love I have for her. That's the thing Em, I'd die for her. I'd do anything for her. Even if that means to cut the bond between me and my mate."

My stomach hurts. My heart hurts.

Bryson was deeply in love with that mysterious girl.

I press my lips together, shaking my head.

"The day is approaching. Soon you'll have that choice." I lift my eyes to his.

"Promise me that you'll choose right. I just want you to be happy Bryce. That's all I ever want." I whispered.

He nod, taking a step forward and cupping my cheek. "I promise. Now can you stop avoiding me Emily? You know I can't stand to be away from you for too long."

I sighed, moving out of his hold. "Bryce.....we can't. Please. Just for once, can we follow the rules."

His eyes flashed and I could feel the pain coming off of him. He looks down.

I want to walk back into his arms and hug him. But I root my feet where I stood.

I can't afford to ruin this.

Not until I know he had his mate by his side and was passed down the title without any complications.

I just want him to be happy.

He smiles sadly, snorting lowly. "You're not going to change your mind huh?"

I shook my head, clutching the bag. "This is for your own good and reputation."

His eyes lift and it feels like someone just punched me hard in the chest. Bryson's eyes gleamed. Tears.

He was going to cry.

The last time I saw Bryson cry was when I fell and scrapped my knee on a rock. We were pretty young then. About ten.

"I don't care about those things Em. I just care about you." He cracks.

The pain in his voice made it unbearable to look into his eyes.

My heart squeezed.

Pain was all I could feel.

"And I care about you. Which is why I'm choosing this route. We part ways until the day of the ceremony."

Bryson addams apple bobbed as he swallowed hard.

He shook his head.

"I don't think I can Em."

I hugged myself. "Please Bryson at least try. We can still mind link each other."

My throat hurt and there is a huge lump in my throat.

His teary eyes down into my eyes. "It won't be the same Emily. I need to touch you...feel you....breathe you." He whispered.

My heart skipped, my nails scrap against my skin, fighting the urge to jump into his arms and hug him.

But I fought the urge.

"I'll see you on the day of the ceremony, alpha." I smiled softly to try and ease the tension.

Bryson doesn't look happy and tucks his hands in his pocket, rocking back and forth on his heels.

"I guess this is it then?"

I smiled. "Don't make it sound as though I'm leaving for good Bryce."

"It kinda feels like it." He cracked, smiling sadly.

I smiled sadly and reached out to squeeze his arm. "I promise I'll be right by your side when they announce you as our new leader. I'm not going anywhere Bryce. I promise you that."