Chapter 27

I woke up in the infirmary unable to move at first. The pain running from my head to my knees was keeping me put and the sheets were stained with the blood from my wounds.

The first thing I saw was Miss Elise, she sat on a chair reading a book and she looked calm if it wasn't for her foot tapping away like it was on the run.

When she noticed me stirring awake she closed it and turned to face me. Her auburn hair fell in from of her eyes but she grabbed the lock and put it in the pin at the back of her head. Her eyes fell and her lips turned down in a pout that she tried to mask.

Her throat bobbed as she swallowed and she shook her head to gather herself.

"How are you feeling?" She asked. Her voice was like a soothing balm. It sounded like she genuinely cared but I didn't believe it.

Anyone could fake caring about you. I would know. One minute they say they will protect you and love you forever and the next they let you off with the Lycan king who allows his people to use you as a punching bag.

"Like I've been hit with a cane and kicked to the ground," I said as best as I could with my swollen lip.

She leaned back and patted her skirt.

"Mr Bates has worked for the royal family for decades. He has questionable methods but the king trusts him,"

I stared at her through my swollen eye and could only imagine the

rainbow of colors that would stain my skin.

"That speaks volumes of the king then, doesn't it," I said.

Miss Elise placed her finger on her lips, a wheezing breath left her lips when she shushed me and she carefully opened the book and pretended to read.

The door opened, and Darian stood covering the frame before stepping in.

"Leave us." He said calmly but I watched as Miss Elise grabbed her things and looked down at the floor, not making eye contact as she scurried out of the room; she acted as though he had barked the order but he spoke with calm. However, I could only imagine what storm that calm hid.

Darian closed the door and I watched his back intensively while he moved painfully slow across the floor. You could hide a whole person behind him, his broad back and the muscles that that pressed against his shirt made him look more inhumane than your regular werewolf.

He turned back, his eyes dark and gazing as he looked at my wounds.

"Hello, puppet,"

He pressed the control and the back of the bed lifted so I came up into a seated position. The further up I came, the closer to him I reached.

It didn't matter how long or hard I looked at his face, there was no humanity there, nothing to indicate a single ounce of pity or regret. This was what I was forced to live with from now on.

How can I expect to be treated with kindness by a man who does not know what humanity is?

"That dress is done for. I will send Elise to grab you some clothes,"

His fingers grazed my shoulder and slid under the strap of the dress. He pulled at it softly but the blood, water, chemicals, and everything else that I had been subjected to had weakened the fabric, and with the gentle pull that Darian made the strap came off. At this point, I was thankful that my mother had it made one size too small because even though the strap was off it was still held up by the choking tightness around my breast.

Darian cupped my face with his hand and was gentle. Though it looked like he was enjoying having to be.

He threw me off completely and I didn't know how to act with him or what to expect.

"You need to know where you are, puppet. You need to know your place," he said after a moment of stillness. In that moment I felt like no more than the dirt under his shoe that he would scrape off against the concrete.

"Why are you doing this to me?" I asked in a whisper.

Darian brushed my hair from my face. His thumb drew a line over my jaw and his lips parted when it slid over my swollen lip.

"You are my puppet, Hazel. Puppets are meant to be played with, and I have only just begun playing with you."