

Chapter 8 Consider her as the bride

Axel

I do not waste time as I march towards the training grounds. After my conversation yesterday with Liana, I must get to the truth, or I will go insane.

"Wyatt!" I call out and he looks at me questioningly. "A word. Now!"

"Yes, Axel," he replies and jogs towards me.

I wait until he is in front of me before I continue.

"What's your business with Liana?" I ask brusquely and Wyatt at least has the decency to look uncomfortable.

"Axel, I'm sorry about yesterday, I ..."

"I don't care about that," I cut him off. "Answer my question."

"She ... she was my mate," he grunts, and I know he is swallowing hard at the humiliation that she rejected him.

"So, it's true she rejected you because of Gwen?" I raise my eyebrows.

"Yes," he admits reluctantly.

"Goddess, Wyatt," I shake my head in disbelief. "You sacrificed your career for a quickie. What's wrong with you?"

"It's not like that," Wyatt looks at me with blazing eyes. "I love Gwen. I would've marked and married her the moment I saw her, but I didn't because I wanted to be Delta. There's a reason on why I didn't mark Liana or sleep with her. She's only a means to an end. I don't know what I've done wrong to be punished with a mate like Liana. She has a terrible background and a basic education. Even for a human, she's pathetic."

"So, you strung your clueless human mate along for the ride?" I smirk. On the one hand, I am overjoyed that he has no interest in Liana, but on the other, I want to slap the snot out of him for badmouthing her like that.

"What choice did I have?" Wyatt hisses at me. "Unless our laws change, I can't be with the woman I love."

"Okay," I nod, and Wyatt relaxes a little. "Just explain to me what Liana is still doing here. Why hasn't she left our borders?"

"I swear I don't know," Wyatt shakes his head. "I thought she left and was surprised to see her yesterday. I'll take care of her, just give me ..."

"No," I cut him off brusquely. "I've seen how you take care of women. I'll get Nick to take care of it."

I do not wait for his reply before I turn around and walk back to my office. I need time to think and get my head straight.

The happiness that surged through me when I realised I have found my true mate, was surreal, and I was ready to claim her there and then. But then I learned she is human, and on top of that, she was entangled in some messed up business with her former mate. And now Wyatt confirmed that I was right to be cautious.

I have known Wyatt my entire life and I might not like him, but I know he is ambitious and takes his rank seriously. He would not have gambled on his career without reason. And as future alpha, I have so much more to lose.

No, before I claim Liana as my mate, I must know everything about her. She might be mated to me, but that does not mean she will be a good Luna. Fortunately for me, I have a way out of this. I can still hold my title and reject my mate. It is all a matter of timing.

"Axel," the Beta, Nick, walks to me and holds out an envelope. "I have bad news. Luna requested an investigation into Paula."

"Are you shitting me?" I grunt as I take the envelope.

"Why Nick?" I moan as if I am in pain. "I didn't even tell Mom I'm considering her as my possible bride."

I open the envelope and cringe inside when I look at the photos of Paula in bed with another man. I already heard the rumours, and it is no surprise to me, but still, this is not something I wanted to see.

"I don't know, man," he chuckles. "She's your mother."

"I'll go talk to her now," I pat Nick friendly on his shoulder as I pass him with long strides toward Mother in her beloved garden.

I grind my teeth when I see her. I love my mother dearly, but damn, she is nosy like it is nobody's business. There is no way in hell I am telling her about Liana.

"Mother," I call to her, and she looks up smiling.

"What's this?" I hold up the envelope and raise my eyebrow at her.

"I don't know," she shrugs as she takes off her gloves and walks to the nearby table with fresh lemonade and glasses. "Lemonade?"

"No, thank you," I sigh as she pours herself a glass.

"The suspense is killing me," she smiles as she takes a seat. "What's in the envelope?"

"Your research on Paula," I place the envelope in front of her.

"Have you looked at it?" She asks sweetly as she takes a sip. "It's rather entertaining."

"Mother, I never had any intentions of marrying Paula," I explain as I take a seat across from her. "She can sleep with whomever she wants."

"But the two of you have been dating for months," Mother exclaims. "Why invest so much time into her when you're not serious?"

"Because I was trying to get to know her, before I consider her as a bride," tiredly I push my fingers through my hair. How many times are we going to have this conversation? "I know about her and Hank. The only reason we haven't broken up is because she's out of town."

"Well, I was only looking out for you," she defends herself. "I'm your mother, I care."

"I know, Mom," I lean forward and rest my hand on hers. "But please, I beg you, stay out of my business. You'll be the first to know when I'm serious about someone and then you can investigate her at heart's content. Okay?"

"Fine," she rolls her eyes at me. "But don't take too long. You're scheduled to take over from your father in six months, and both of us would prefer that you do so with a significant other by your side."

"I know, I know," I sigh as I stand up and place a kiss on her cheek before I walk to my office.

Liana

I am in a miserable mood as I take the bus back to Nina's. It has been two days since the Wyatt incident, and I still have not found a job outside of the pack's borders. I stare blindly out of the bus window at the passing scenery. I honestly thought that my previous employer would take me back, but they do not even have an opening for a dishwasher or waitress.

In fact, I have handed in my CV to every single restaurant in the city, but no luck. I even tried the pubs and bars I came across.

I will have to expand my search, I sigh inwardly. Hopefully, I can get something as a cleaning lady. I am not trained for anything else.

I am so caught up in my thoughts, that I completely miss my stop. By the time I realize my error, the bus has reached the shopping centre.

Oh, well, I am not in the mood to go home now anyway, I think to myself as I get off. I need a moment to be alone and sulk. But if Nina sees me like this, she will make it her mission to cheer me up and I do not want that. I want to feel sorry for myself. Even if it is just for an evening.

I push my hands into my jacket pockets and stroll past the shopping centre towards the adjacent park with a waterfront. I walk past the couples that are holding hands or making out on the benches. I walk past the kids that are skipping rocks on the water until I find a secluded tree. I make myself comfortable against it as I look at the colours changing on the water as the sun sets.

My phone starts ringing but I do not answer it when I notice it is my mother calling. I cannot deal with her right now. She and my dad are furious at me for not going through with the wedding.

I never thought of myself as a stupid girl, but lately, I am reconsidering. I was a damn fool for giving up my job for a man. It does not matter that I was in love and engaged. I should have kept on working. Dealing with this breakup would have been so much easier.

Even with Nina's support, I feel totally alone. I cannot tell her how much I miss Wyatt. She will only try and comfort me that it is for the best that I learned the truth before the wedding. And yes, she would be right. But that does not smother my feelings for him. He was a part of my life for seven years. I cannot erase it or turn my feelings off with a button.

I feel like a failure on so many levels. Not only was I not good enough for my ancestor but hearing that I lack the qualifications and experience the last two days to find a job, is not boosting my self-esteem either.

By the time I am ready to go home, it is dark, and I am completely alone in the park. I stand up and stretch out my stiff limbs from sitting in the same position. I am just about to leave when I hear Axel's voice and quickly, I hide behind the tree.

I do not want him to see me. After Nina explained the laws to me, I am too afraid to face him. I peek around the tree and notice Axel and a stunning woman not too far from me. Fortunately, I am standing wind down and they will not pick up on my scent. But even with that luck, there is no way that I can sneak away without them noticing me.

I groan and roll my eyes as I move back behind the tree. I have no choice but to wait until they leave.

"Axel, please," the woman pleads with him. "We are good together. What happened in the past week that you changed your mind?"

"You mean other than you are f****g Hank?" Axel asks sarcastically.

"It was only one time, and we were on a break," the woman argues. "And you know very well I was a virgin when we slept together the first time."

"It's over, Paula," Axel's stern voice reaches my ears. "If you wanted to be my Luna, you should've stayed away from Hank. The Luna of this pack will know only the touch of one man."

"Axel, please," the woman cries openly. "Give me another chance."

"I'm walking away now," Axel replies coldly. "And when I turn around, you better be out of sight or there will be consequences."

I close my eyes and push myself closer to the tree when I hear him walking in my direction. Please don't see me, please don't see me, I pray silently.

He walks past and comes to a standstill a few feet away from me. He has his back towards me, and I silently move around the tree so that he cannot see me. Paula is already out of sight, and I was just about to make my move when Axel talks.

"Did you enjoy the show?" He asks and turns around.