

Chapter 23

Venus POV

My cheeks heated till my ears. I wished that the earth opened up and swallowed me whole. Mentally, I berated myself for not locking the front door. I bowed to Luna Marie, who walked to me and hugged me tightly.

"It's nice to see you together," she said, grinning from ear to ear.

Sheepishly, I hugged her back and when she removed herself she turned her attention to Aaron who was smirking at me. "Mom," he said, nodding at her.

Luna Marie sauntered to the couch and sat on it with her arms spread over the backrest and legs crossed. "Can I get some coffee?" she asked me, her grin intact.

I hurried to make coffee for her as Aaron sat opposite to her, narrowing his eyes. "Everything okay?" he asked, indirectly pushing her to reveal the news.

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"Yup!" she replied mischievously. "Everything's just fine."

Aaron nodded as I glanced at her while pouring milk on the espresso maker. She was as happy as a cat who got the canary.

Aaron became quiet, trying to read why his mother was so ecstatic.

"By the way," she said to him after a while. "I'm happy that you called her your fiancée in public. The video was really nice." She giggled as I handed her the coffee, blushing all over again.

"It was—" I didn't know what to say.

"You don't have to apologize, Venus," she said, patting the empty space next to her. I sat down over there and lowered my head to look at my lap. "If I were in your position, I could have done something more."

A growl left Aaron's throat. "What the hell, mom! What are you teaching her? Venus is my fiancée and I will kill anyone who touches her!"

Luna Marie tilted her head as her lips curled up

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again. "Your dad would have done the same. After all, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. But—" she turned to me. "I'm also glad that Aaron saved you that day."

This time, I wished that the earth digested me.

"Stop making her uncomfortable, mom," Aaron shot at her. "This was just a stupid incident, and it is over."

Luna Marie chuckled and sipped her coffee. "Mmm... this is great!" she remarked.

"So what is the news, mom?" Aaron asked, leaning back, trying to show that he was least interested, but I sensed he was dying to know.

As she sipped her coffee, she dropped the bombshell, "You two are tying the knot on this full moon."

My mouth dropped to the floor as Aaron's eyes widened in surprise.

"This full moon?" he said in a raspy voice. "That's three days away!"

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"It is," she chuckled. "So..." She placed the coffee mug on the table. "I will take Venus for wedding shopping. There's a lot to be done, even though the ceremony will be simple."

I glanced at Aaron, curious about his response, thinking he'd argue. Instead, he eased onto the sofa and flashed a smile.

"But that's too early, Luna Marie," I protested instead of him. "Three days?"

She took my hand from my lap and said, "Venus, I know that's early, but it's the Elders who have demanded that the wedding take place this full moon. They saw the video and the photo on the news and came up with this decision."

I licked my dry lips. "But—" I didn't know what to say. "Does daddy know?"

"Of course, sweetheart," she replied. "We informed him as soon as we got the news."

"But he didn't call me..." I said, my face falling. Daddy was still angry with me.

"He didn't call you because I said that I will give the

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news to you," she clarified. "Don't take Patrick so hard, Venus. I know him. He is constantly worried about you."

I nodded. "I know..." I looked at Aaron, who was behaving strangely. Again, I expected him to throw his hands up in disgust, but he looked... smug. Even happy. "I have a small request, though."

"Sure, what is it?" she asked, patting my hand.

"I don't want Vicky to know about it. I mean—" I rubbed my hand at the back of my head, letting out a rough exhale.

Luna Marie cupped my cheeks and turned my face to her. Her eyes went straight to my fading red marks on the cheek that came after Vicky slapped me. "How did you get that?" she asked, looking angry.

"It's nothing..."

"Vicky did that to her," Aaron spat.

Luna Marie clenched her teeth. "I understand your predicament, Venus, but I'm sure that Patrick must have already told it to Gaia."

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My mood soured. "Okay..."

"Hey," Luna Marie said. "Don't worry about Vicky now. Aaron will not meet her."

"Yes," Aaron replied. "I'd rather stay here and oversee the wedding preparation."

"You don't have to stay here," I breathed, feeling embarrassed.

Luna Marie chuckled as she got up. "Well, I don't care where he stays as long as we go shopping!"

I didn't understand the connection, but I let it slide. However, when she left, Aaron wrapped his arms around me with my back against his chest. "You only have one hour to go shopping tomorrow. Rest of the time you will spend with me." And then I understood the connection.

Elbowing him gently, I said, "I will spend the entire day shopping!"

A low rumble left his chest as he picked me up and carried me to the bedroom effortlessly. Goddess, just how strong was he? He set me on the bed. "I am ordering food from outside. You won't go back to

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the kitchen. There's a lot I have to talk to you about." But his intense gaze told me he had other plans. A blush crept on my cheeks. He traced it with his fingers and pressed a kiss to my lips. "I love it when you blush for me."

What had happened to the old grumpy, frustrated Aaron? And who was this new affable, friendly, loving Alpha? Moreover, how was it that his demeanor completely changed when Vicky wasn't with him these days? It was surreal. Something I had longed for all my life, and it was too good to be true.

Our reverie broke when Nathan called to him. "God damn it!" he cursed. "The wolf's timing is poor."

I giggled as he took Nathan's call. "It better be good, Nathan!"

"Aaron, Alpha Martin has called for a meeting. There is a rogue attack on the borders and our intel says that a coven of witches is involved."

"What the fuck!" he hissed. "I'll be right there."

Witches were nasty, and we did everything in our stead to keep them at bay. Roughly 500 years back, werewolves and witches signed a treaty to keep their

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distance from each other. Ever since, the witches stayed away from us, controlled by their queen, Ketari. Hence, the involvement of a coven in the rogue attack was shocking.

Aaron disconnected the call. "Baby, I have to go, but stay in and don't venture out. I'll order something for us, and I'll be back as soon as possible."

"I won't," I reassured him.

Before leaving, he kissed my lips. "We'll start where we left," he said, his words a promise.

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