

Untouchable (The Moonlight Avatar Series Collection)

Chapter 22 The Owl

“Sometimes, reaching out and taking someone’s hand is the beginning of a journey. At other times, it is allowing another to take yours.” – Vera Nazarian

Halima

Tonight was the night of Anthony and Alesia’s ceremony. Dwayne and Jackie were to be Co-Betas and a man named Ali was to be Gamma. I met him quite a few **times**, and he **was** a proper gentleman. And cute, too. I set out the outfit I’ve decided to wear on my bed, admiring how the color and accessories work well with each **other**.

Per Lyria’s advice, I went with amethyst purple, which was slowly becoming my favorite color. The dress was sleeveless with a turtle neckline guaranteed to cover my back. The scar from the Mark of the Betrayer still **gives** me a deep sense of shame, so I wanted it covered. The dress was flowy **and** loose, **starting** at my waist, reaching down to my knees. My golden flats with ankle straps rest on the floor near the dress.

Walking in heels was a disaster waiting to happen. And by disaster, it involves me kissing the floor.

A pair of gold bracelets and a single charm necklace rest on top of my vanity, glittering under the pale amber light of my room. I don’t understand how to style my hair, so I wore my curls down. Thanks to the love and **care** from Jackie and Violet, my hair had grown significantly after some trims, now with

the ends brushing my shoulders. All I need to do was apply some product to make the curls pop and I'll be **fine**!

Tapping my cheek as I stared at the colorful makeup palettes, I debate whether to apply makeup. I keep it simple to avoid the risk of looking like a clown with warm neutrals and lip-gloss.

Stripping down for **my** shower, I wash the day's stresses from my body, falling in love with the rich lather of my floral-scented **body** wash. I learn to appreciate the hot water showers, not realizing how much they did me good. I've grown accustomed to cold, pleasureless showers that the joy of a decent warm one was fleeting. Today, I was happy to experience that simple pleasure. After completing my business, I work on my hair in front of the vanity in my towel. I was so deep into moisturizing my hair that the taps on my window startled me.

"Whoa!" I yelped, **jerking** my head towards the window covered with curtains. Tightening the towel around my body, I sauntered towards it. The tapping continued and persisted, doing nothing to quell the anxiety pooling in my stomach. Who or what was demanding my attention? Sucking in my breath, I threw my covers open to see the culprit.

It is...an owl?

The white owl sat on the outside window ledge, peering at me with its large golden eyes. I cock my head to the side, arching a confused eyebrow. "Weren't wolves" natural predators to the owl? What is it doing here? Once I opened my window, the white owl flew in, settling on top of my vanity, eyes still glued on me.

"Um... hello?" I **asked**, keeping a good enough distance from it. "May I help you?"

It stared in silence.

"You know I could eat you, right?"

It still stared.

“Not much of a hooter, I see.” I chuckle at my joke, hoping it would move, but it didn’t. It just sat there, watching me with big **innocent** eyes. “You know, the window is right here...you could fly out at any time.”

It does nothing. I groan. This was ridiculous. Was I about to change into my dress with an owl staring **me** down?

Yep.

Sighing, I rummaged through my closet for my strapless bra and matching panties and dressed for the ceremony. I could hear excited commotion throughout the packhouse and smell the overwhelming mixture of different perfume up and down the hallway, making me gag.

Seriously! She-wolves don’t need this much perfume!

I turn my back to the owl, stretching out my curls to their maximum length. The soft texture of my hair cracks opens **a** smile on my face. I slip on my flats before slipping on my dress. The top part hugged me at every curve. No matter how small they are. I was filling out my clothes the more I gain weight, something I couldn’t do in my worst state.

Smoothing out the flowy bottom, I turned to face my visitor only to see it gone.

“What the...”

“Hoo!” I spun around to see **the** owl on the bed right next to my hip.

“Gah!” Yipping in fear, I fell on the ground, flat on my ass. It hooted as if it was laughing. This damn bird liked to joke, huh? Rolling my **eyes**, I hop on my feet once more, rubbing my sore rear.

“Hilarious,” I say sarcastically. I take the jewelry from my vanity, placing each in their respective places. I place clip-on rose earrings on my earlobes. “It’s

not nice to surprise people like that. I **could** have squished you if I fell the wrong way!"

The owl hooted once, flying on my vanity once more. The bird was now closer than ever, **less** than a foot away **from** me. Oddly enough, the longer I look at it, the less scared I am. My overall deductions of this weird **bird** were that...it was cute. Its golden eyes peer into my brown, conveying a silent message.

I don't know what it's trying to **say**, I don't speak owl!

But I felt something. A familiar warmth. The owl hopped closer to me and nuzzled its round head into my palms. Breaking out into a smile, I run my fingers through its feathers. Soft, it tickled my heart. I feel like I know this owl, or the energy it's giving off. But from where...?

"You're cute," I whisper to it, relishing in its soft hoos. "Are you a male?"

It made a sound like a disapproving grunt. "Um, female?" She gave a lighthearted chirp, happy at my answer.

"I guess I should give you a name, then," I shot the bird a small smirk. "I have a feeling that I'll be seeing you around often."

The owl hooted in happiness, hopping a little dance around my vanity. However, my necklace chain got caught up in her foot, falling backward. I untangled the chain around her tiny foot, gently sitting it upright. She shook her feathers, making me giggle.

"Hmm." I looked at the owl for a while "You're white, like snow. But you came out on this full moon night. I remember in a book I read in elementary schools of diverse cultures having different names for the moon. Hmm." A name finally popped into my mind. "I shall name you. Diana."

She hooted happily, satisfied with the name choice, "Diana, It is then!"

My phone chimed a soft tune, buzzing next to the table lamp, I quickly walked over and looked at my screen to see a reminder that the ceremony will start in five minutes. Hooking my necklace around my neck, I **shot** a smile at Diana.

“I hope you don’t mind Diana, but I need to finish up some makeup and head down to the ceremony. Maybe, another day, we can chat.”

Diana chirped, flying towards my window. I waved goodbye as she gave me one last look and flew deep into the night.

After her departure, I took in my reflection in the mirror. For the first time, I didn’t topple over and cry. The person reflecting at me was beautiful. That person was me. Grabbing a tube of neutral pink lipstick, I apply at

generous amount on my lips before applying mascara, I was not risking anything with eyeliner.

But I felt natural. I felt beautiful. I **feel** like myself, Halima the slave no longer stared back at me from the mirror. It’s Halima the woman.

Putting on the last touches of makeup, I take my cell phone and my small purse and head towards the assembly hall. The palpable ambiance of happiness **and** anticipation was so thick that I could grab

Many pack members were already inside. I place my hands on the double doors, taking in a deep breath to calm myself.

It’s time for Artemis and me to join them. Our new pack. Our new home.

Our new family.