

Untouchable (The Moonlight Avatar Series Collection)

Chapter 4 – The Unwanted

*“I was never good enough for my mum and she never let me forget it” —
Sarah Clay*

Halima

I couldn't understand how she-wolves could wear so much perfume without choking. The amalgamation of perfumes, food, pheromones, and children was a combination so gross it surprised me that no one had upchucked their lunch. The house was lively as ever, with everyone dressed in their best clothes. Children ran through the hallways in their formal outfits as the adults chased them down, and the leaders of the pack barked out their orders for the other wolves to hurry.

The sun had finally set, and the full moon would rise within the half-hour. I was in the kitchen, washing the mountain load of plates and silverware that the pack would use for the Grand Feast.

“Madam, shall we place the desserts in the fridge?”

“Yes! Alice, be a dear and garnish the steak, please!” Lead Omega Cassandra's sweet voice was not what I was used to. With the Omegas, her tone was sweet and helpful, comparable to a wise elder speaking to her children. But it takes a drastic 180-degree turn when speaking with me; with disgust and contempt peppered with hatred.

The food for the feast was placed on the large island some distance away from me, an assortment of the world's finest cuisines. Just glancing at each dish feels as if you were traveling the globe right in the kitchen. As much as I dislike the Omegas, they have a Goddess-given talent with food I'd never tasted.

"Ooh, is that your famous lasagna I see?" My breath hitched in my throat as the familiar voice made my heart pound. I didn't dare to look behind me to know who the voice belonged to. My mother. I forgot she was the chief organizer of the ceremony, in the absence of Luna Celeste. I heard a gentle slap and a "Hey!"

"You know the rules, Ash. No taste testing!" Cassandra replied with a chuckle. "Knowing you, one bite turns into a missing pan!"

"It's your fault for making the food so irresistible." My mother chuckled in amusement. "Maybe just one egg roll—"

"Nope! Out!" From the corner of my eye, I saw Cassandra, a notably smaller woman, push my mother out of the kitchen. An egg roll she successfully swiped was in her mouth. My mother was dressed in a halter-top midnight blue dress adorned with a silver pendant on her neck, with matching bracelets. Her curly hair was now straight, brushing against her mid-back. She looked beautiful.

I wished I could tell her that.

But she didn't acknowledge my presence in the kitchen. My eyes stung with tears once again, but I blinked them back rapidly. *No, no crying. Not now.* Releasing a silent sigh, I continued my duty of scrubbing the ceramics clean, ignoring the distant echoes of excited chatter.

"Racoon, are you going to take all night with those dishes? Hurry!" Lead Omega Cassandra shrieked at me. The chorus of snickers and giggles from the other Omegas followed soon after. The Omegas were dressed as their

best and yet, no amount of makeup or jewelry could hide the true ugliness they hold.

“I apologize, I’m nearly finished,” I whispered, speeding up my work. But whispers didn’t fall on deaf ears, especially if they were a werewolf’s ears.

“Nearly? I don’t need *nearly*; I want them done now!” She sneered, mocking my tone. “No one is in the mood for your screw-ups tonight, slave. One mishap and it’s on your head. Understood?”

“Yes, miss.”

“Good.”

“Oh, I’d give anything to rip her throat out.” Artemis snarled in my head. “*She’s just an Omega!*”

“*Still several rankings above us,*” I replied, already on my last set of dishes. “*Omega is not a bad rank. At least she’s treated well by the pack. She feeds them, after all.*”

“But not us.”

“*Duh, because she hates us. Plus, she’s been ordered not to. Have you forgotten?*”

“I haven’t, but I know you’re feeling the same way as I am.”

Maybe. That didn’t mean I’d admit it. “*I just wish to be alone instead of being on cleaning duty. It’s a big night.*”

“Yes, I know. But something about tonight seems off.”

That caught my attention. “*Off? How so? Is something going to happen?*”

“I feel like something will, but I don’t know what. It’s a weird inkling I have.”

“The only thing happening tonight is just the passage of the mantle. That could be what you’re feeling, Arty.”

“Something tells me it’s not just that. And don’t call me Arty!”

A slight smile graced my lips. Artemis hates the nickname Arty, and it slipped from my thoughts sometimes. As I have completed the final stint of my dishes, I drained the water and clean the sink.

Afterward, I was forced to sit outside the kitchen doors on the floor. Just another show of my humiliation. The Omegas didn’t trust me to be anywhere near the food, so they forced me to sit in the hallway. I didn’t dare to look up at the pack members who ignored me and piled into the assembly hall. Judging by their shining shoes and the fancy embroidery of the hems of dresses and pants, each was dressed to impress. Even the children and teenagers. There were some snide comments here and there, but I ignored them.

Sitting, hugging my knees, was humiliation enough. I was so deep into my embarrassment that I didn’t notice my family passing me by. Raina kicked me in the shin to spur a reaction out of me but ended up walking away when she didn’t get what she wanted. Odessa and others tried to bother me to see if I would whimper or cry, but I didn’t give them the satisfaction. I was too numb. Disassociating myself from the world was the only thing I could do.

I was invisible. Everyone piled into the assembly hall, leaving me alone in the silence. The ceremony noises garbled against my ear, but the cheers were crystal clear.

I truly wasn’t part of this pack.