

Alpha’s Unwilling Mate

Serving Fate

Emma

“...And that my friend is a wrap,” I exclaim excitedly to no one in particular.

Everyone else is too busy serving drinks to the guests upstairs or preparing for the dinner service that is about to commence.

I still can’t believe that I managed to find the time to fix my hair and pull on a black dress as part of the uniform. It was tempting fate to try it on too soon but the sauce of the main wouldn’t show anyway and I chanced it before plating.

Derek, Abbey, and Craig have come down to help me with the trolley and I allow myself to marvel for a second at the perfect presentation of this first dish.

“Wow, Emma. I’ve never seen you cook so fancy!” Craig exclaims while Derek lets out a low whistle of respect.

Each plate is a carbon copy of the other, right down to the placement of the decorative cress. There are Caesar salad croquettes in the centre, surrounded by the smoothest spinach and romaine purée that I have made to date.

My mother would be proud of me tonight just with this course, as this one was her recipe. I like to have at least one belonging to her per dinner party that I cater and this is a personal favourite of mine.

With a deadline like this, I could use all the luck and good vibes that I can get and it’ll cheer my brother up as well, he loved this even more than I did.

“Thank you both, now let’s get this up so I can prep for round !” My words are strictly business but I doubt they miss the grateful blush on my cheeks.

They might know nothing about food but even complimenting how it looks is enough to warm my heart. I’m biased at the end of the day with it being my work, and who doesn’t love a compliment? I just don’t want to jinx anything by accepting their praise, nobody’s even tasted it yet.

We use the trolley to migrate the food over to the elevator and then up to the first floor. The whole time my wolf is stirring inside of my chest and for a second I actually think that she’s going to come out right here in the hall.

She’s never been so lively before and I wonder for a second if they can serve without me. She’ll blow this whole meal and I can’t have that given who’s here.

Thankfully, the second I plan our excuses, the idea of letting down our alpha must have resonated with her and she hands back the reigns of control. We’ll need to have a serious talk later!

The large oak door creaks open in front of us, allowing entry into the grand dining room reserved for the more formal occasions and elite circle. I’ve been in here many times both eating and serving but never have I felt so ill at ease. I wish I didn’t ask Derek to tell me who was here, it doesn’t take a genius to explain the tension in the room.

I place the first plate down in front of our alpha and from there the others are able to serve. I smile at my father as I present his next and he winks at me after an exaggerated look of appreciation. He’s always been my biggest fan and I try to control the affection on my face. This is a professional affair after all and I’m not really meant to make eye contact with anyone I serve.

While turning to collect another ready for Owen, I am overwhelmed with the irresistible smell of black coffee and cinnamon. As an avid drinker of the beverage myself I understand the appeal, but it’s ’o’clock at night. Surely it’s too late for that, especially with this only being the starting dish?

I can’t get it out of my senses as I finish my section and leave the room in a sort of daze. It has to be my favourite smell as it reminds me of my lazy Sunday mornings with my mother, but how many of them must have been drinking it for it to have been so strong? It’s not a popular combination either with it being February, cinnamon tends to be a December spice.

“Who had the coffee?” I ask as Abbey follows me downstairs, clearly not wanting to stay in the dining room with the others and I can’t say I blame her to be honest. The tension was actually painful.

“Coffee? They all had either wine or beer as far as I could see.” She replies with a shrug of her shoulders and moves over to the blender to dip a finger in the now served purée.

“You’re lucky I always make spares, there’s a croquette or two in the fridge if you want a snack while I heat the main?” I offer and her face lights up.

Now that she’s out of my hair I can start to cook the racks of lamb while they eat and rejuvenate the tangy orange sauce. If there’s any spare for this one, I sure as hell won’t be sharing it with Abbey.

The lamb doesn’t need to be left in for long which is why I’ve left it to the very last minute. It doesn’t take an oracle to predict that we wolves like our meat on the rarer side and I don’t want to risk any of them becoming well done.

I feel like a tornado as I weave around the kitchen, stirring, taking temperatures, and finally plating. This is where I feel the most in my element and it’s a shame that all of my hard work is going toward the guests above. They don’t deserve a nice meal from us if the stories are true and who’s to say they won’t turn on us like they did with the Crescent Rose Pack?

The thought makes me shiver and I’m thankfully distracted by Derek and Craig walking in with a trolley full of empty plates. The entrée was a success!

Back to the hall we go with the mains and once again my wolf awakens inside of me. Thankfully, I am expecting her now and am ready to shove her back down with any quick signs of movement. She is not going to spoil this for me and I want to see my father’s reaction, it was his supplier that was able to get us lamb so big.

The door opens and I am hit by that same smell! Surely they’ll have drunk it all by now and I’ve never known someone to have seconds of coffee at a dinner party. That’s ridiculous and would pair horribly with my food.

As I place the first plate in front of our alpha again as is custom, I allow myself a second to look around the room and identify the heathen behind it.

Only instead my eyes lock with the alpha on the other side of the table and my wolf screams inside my mind like a crazed beast, *MATE!*