

Chapter 1

Cleo Yates' POV

My bags were packed. They had been packed for days but I still wasn't ready to leave. I am not sure that I could ever really be ready but as the future alpha of this pack I have responsibilities. Every future alpha and their chosen beta must undertake one year of leadership training once they finish high school. For me and Caleb this would start tomorrow morning.

The training takes place at a specialised training facility within the territory of the royal pack. Even though the facility is on the outskirts of the pack a good few kilometres away from the palace itself it was still much too close for my liking. I had good reason to hate the royal family and the thought of being so close to them for a whole year was abhorrent.

"Come on, we can't put this off any longer." Caleb said.

He was leaning against the doorway to my room in dark tattered jeans and a tight tattered black t-shirt. His long brown hair was swept back into a ponytail ready for our drive.

He was smiling at me in the same carefree way that he always did. Anyone else would think he was relaxed and happy but I knew him well enough to know that he was dreading this even more than I was.

"I think we could get away with a few more minutes." I said.

His t-shirt really did make his muscles look perfect, I am sure that he only wears such tight fitting clothes to tease me. I bit my lower lip. His eyes drifted to my lips then down at the rest of my body. He rubbed the back of his neck and laughed.

"Absolutely not princess." He said. Despite his casual tone I could tell he was tempted, his heart rate had increased and his irises had changed colour.

"Why not?" I asked, running my tongue along my bottom lip slowly.

"Because I know you. I know if I give in to you now then it will be way after midnight by the time we arrive." I smiled, he knew me too well.

"I just don't like that we will have to pretend not to be together for a whole year." I said.

I didn't like how vulnerable it made me sound. I wasn't used to being the vulnerable one. I was brought up to be strong and independent. I was the kind of person that people came to when they needed something not the other way around. I wasn't meant to show weakness but I was going right into the heart of enemy territory.

I had hoped having Caleb there with me would be enough to push back my fears but the closer we got to leaving the more worried I got. I wanted him to hold my hand and tell me that everything would be ok and I felt ashamed of myself for feeling this way.

"I know but it is only while we are around the other students." He said.

He walked over to me and wrapped his arms around me. I leaned into his shoulder and let his clean fresh scent wash over me and calm me down.

"I am just scared. It is the first time I will have been back since that night." I said.

I knew that he would know what I meant without me having to say the words. That night three years ago had changed the course of both of our lives so profoundly. Neither of us would ever forget that night or fully get over the pain that it caused us.

"I know but if we stick to the plan then we can get through this together. Then when we get back you will be alpha and I will be your beta and your chosen mate." He placed a kiss on the top of my head before dropping his arms from around my waist. He was still standing close enough for me to feel his breath on skin.

"Now let me help you with your bags, we have a long drive ahead of us." He said.

He turned around and walked over to the door where my suitcases were stacked up ready to go. He picked up the two largest cases with ease and left me room. I listened as he descended the stairs while taking deep breaths to steady my nerves. Once I was feeling more like myself I picked up my remaining suitcase and backpack and followed him.

There was a large crowd of people waiting just outside of the front door to our mansion. Despite me telling everyone who would listen that I didn't want to make a big deal over our departure it looks as though the message still didn't get through. Almost everyone in the pack had turned up to say goodbye to me and Caleb.

They had set up a small table with decorations and some drinks. There was a large hand painted sign which one of the pack members had propped up against the side of the mansion. They had even strung bunting up between some of the trees in the driveway. Normally I hated this kind of attention being directed at me but even I had to admit that this was nice.

Caleb and I spent some time walking around the party and talking to the other pack members. Everyone seemed excited about me taking over the pack in a year's time which was a relief.

I was worried that some of them might be unhappy about me taking over the pack because the current alpha wasn't my real father. He was my closest living relative just as I was his but I still had moments where I would worry that some people might not recognise my authority after I was made alpha.

After getting hugs and well wishes from what felt like hundreds of people we finally made it to the car. My adopted father was standing there waiting for us. He looked nervous.

"You both need to promise me that you will be really careful. The royal family is very dangerous and you are the only family I have left now." He said.

"I know, I won't let my guard down around any of them." I said.

I didn't trust any of them. The king had a reputation for having a hunger for power that was only surpassed by his hunger for blood. I wasn't normally the type to judge people on their reputations but I had seen some of his cruelty first hand and I had no doubt that this assessment was accurate. Besides, you had to be a certain type of person to name all your children after gods and it wasn't the kind of person you wanted to get mixed up with.

"If there was any way I could get out of this I would." I continued.

"Don't worry alpha, I will take care of her." Caleb said, flashing me one of his perfect smiles.