

Chapter 3

Cleo Yates' POV

"Wake up sleepyhead. We have arrived." Caleb said.

I opened my eyes. The car was parked outside of the academy. I didn't come out this way very often when I lived here. The academy is on the outskirts of the royal territory so it wasn't a place many people came to without reason. This was good because if the royal family saw me there was a good chance they would recognise me, even after so long.

"I guess I'm as ready as I'll ever be." I said, taking a deep breath. Caleb leaned in towards me, running his fingers across my cheek.

"If there is anyone who can do this, it is you." He kissed me gently for a few moments before pulling away and getting out of the car.

I followed him reluctantly. The building was more imposing than I remembered, or maybe that was just my own ambivalence affecting my judgement. The building was about twice the size of the pack house back home and was made of dark bricks which gave it a very ominous, gothic appearance.

It reminded me of a haunted house in a horror movie. The kind that just screams at you to run in the opposite direction. Just like the characters in those movies I am ignoring all those signs and heading straight for danger.

As soon as we set foot into the building we were intercepted by a broad man who must have been at least 6ft5. He looked to be in his late forties but judging from the scars I could already see on his arms and face he was once a fierce fighter. I guess that once he had got too old to fight he started teaching here instead.

He was holding a clipboard and pen in front of him. His size made them look comically small in his hands. I wanted to laugh but I decided against it, he didn't look as though he had much of a sense of humour.

"State your names, rank and pack that you represent." He said.

He spoke to Caleb without even so much as glancing at me. I can't say I was surprised given the king's reputation. Even so, it still annoyed me being dismissed like that.

"My name is Hope Blackwood, future alpha of the Blackwood pack. This is Caleb Foster, my future beta." I said, stepping forward so he had no other option than to acknowledge me.

Giving my cousin's name as my own felt odd but we had agreed before we came here that it would be safer that way. I watched his face intently as I spoke for any sign that he didn't believe me or knew who I really was.

There was a moment of something, perhaps shock as I stated my name but it was gone before I could be sure. He looked down and wrote our names on his clipboard. I tried not to worry about his reaction. He had no reason to think I was lying so there was no reason for him to dig further into my history.

"My name is Grant, I am one of the trainers here. You are in apartment three. Lessons start tomorrow at 8am, all the information you need is already in your apartment." He said.

He pulled out two sets of keys from his jacket pocket and handed them to us. Once the keys were in our hands Grant turned his back on us. I guess he wasn't interested in engaging in small talk, not that I minded too much.

I turned away from him and walked towards the stairs which were located at the back of the building. There were eight apartments in total split over the top two floors of the building, apartment three was on the top floor.

Crown Prince Mars Hunt's POV

"You need to find your mate soon. You will be twenty one in a few months but we can't go ahead with the coronation unless you find her." My father said.

He was giving me his weekly 'pep talk'. Did he really think that I wasn't trying to find my mate? Sure, at first it had been fun being an unmated prince and I had done much more than my fair share of philandering. After a couple of years however, this lifestyle got boring and now it was just annoying.

Everywhere I go women constantly throw themselves at me, I can't even go for a drink with my friends without creating a scene. Not to mention that every single one of them only wants me for my title.

I thought about taking a chosen mate a couple of years back but the idea of spending eternity with someone who doesn't actually want me is just not appealing. I need my mate, she is the only one I could be sure would love me for me.

"I know, I am doing everything I can." I replied. A smile crept over my father's face. I should have known that he was planning something when he called me to his office rather than talking to me about this over breakfast.

"There might be something I can do to help. I was thinking of arranging a banquet and inviting the alpha and beta families of all packs in our kingdom. It will take a few weeks to plan but we can get started right away." My father said.

I had a feeling that this plan had been underway for some time. He had been spending a lot of time talking to alphas from the surrounding packs over the last few weeks. At the time I had wondered what was going on but I knew better than to question my father.

"Your highness." I turned around to see Grant standing in the doorway.

"Grant, did all the students arrive?" My father asked.

"Yes they did and that's why I wanted to talk to you. One of the future alphas is a woman and I am sure that I recognise her from somewhere but I am not sure where." Grant said. He looked as though he was deep in thought.

"A female alpha? Next they will be letting omegas become alphas." My father said, snoring with laughter. Trust my father to focus on something completely irrelevant.

"That would be preferable. Omegas are easier to control and they won't spend all of the pack's money on clothes and shoes." Grant said.

I could tell that my father was starting to get annoyed. His muscles were tense and his eyes had changed colour.

"What is her name?" I asked, trying to change the subject before my father went into a full scale misogynistic rant again.

"Hope Blackwood. Do you recognise the name?" Grant asked.

"No but the Blackwood pack is a long way from here so that isn't really a surprise. I will get someone to look into her background but keep an eye on her in the meantime." My father said.

Grant nodded his head in agreement then turned to walk out of my father's office. He took a few steps then stopped in the doorway.

"One more thing. She didn't ask me for directions to the rooms. It was almost as though she has been here before." Grant said.