

CHAPTER 24

"So that's your boyfriend?" Zeus said as he guided me around the room to the rhythm of the music.

"Ex-boyfriend," I corrected him.

"He looks like he's twelve."

I roll my eyes, "Well not everyone is hundreds of years old, Zeus."

He pushes and pulls me gracefully as we danced.

He twirled me around and then stopped me with a firm hand on my waist, "You fell in love young?" He asks.

We separated to the sides, making a path where other couples danced through. It was a very traditional dance. We finally stepped back together. I did not look at him and answered, "Yes, we were young."

Zeus observes my every move closely, "He rejects you. Do you still love him?" He asks bluntly

"No!" I snap at him, "Can we please just drop this topic?" The subject of our conversation was dampening my mood and quite frankly...I guess I still kind of felt hurt by Ryan. Seeing him now, I realised he is a weak and overly-emotional, desperate, prideful male. But he had been a part of my life, once. And I can't take that time back and I can't deny that that time affected me a lot.

Zeus's eyes so ened slightly but soon masks it again with his usual hard exterior, "He hurts you." He stated.

I felt my tears sting my eyes, but I quickly blink them away, hoping he didn't see them, "Like I said, this isn't exactly a light conversation for a dance."

Zeus didn't push on the subject and I was glad. I didn't want to talk about him anymore. The song had ended, Zeus steps away and bows as I curtsy. He stands up straight to his full giant height. He turns around and walks back into the crowd.

"Well you guys looked quite close." Genevieve commented as she stood beside me.

I roll my eyes, "Hardly, We're civil, I guess."

"He seems like he's twelve?"

I gave her a look. She giggles and sighs, "Fine. Maybe to you he doesn't exactly like you, but he at least seems fond of you?"

I snicker, "Gen, he's the Alpha Hellhound...he doesn't feel anything," I march past his sister to see Donny standing in the corner with a drink.

I go and stand next to him, "Why aren't you dancing with any of the unmarried females?" I asked.

Donny shrugs and takes a sip of his wine, "I've been to many of these. Every year the females always put on their games faces to try and flirt as hard as they can."

I crunch my nose, "Gross. You guys aren't even that good looking."

Suddenly Sozin appears next to me, "Excuse me? Did you just say that we aren't good looking?"

I roll my eyes, of course he would be the one to hear that.

"For your information, you are only a quarter right...because I am freaking gorgeous." He says with his smug smile, "I mean, I just say the word, and every female here would want to have sex with me."

I laugh, "That is not true! I am sure there is at least one smart, self-respecting female here."

Donny tilts his head with an y expressions, "He's kinda right, though."

Sozin clasps Donny's shoulder, "That's the spirit Donny boy! It is time to accept your ugliness and worship my perfectness. Strive to be like me and you'll succeed in life!"

Donny shoves Sozin o and scoo, "Thank you for reminding me of how self centred and arrogant your ass is, Sozin. I had almost sweetly forgotten and thought good of you for minute."

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Sozin smiles brightly, "Any time my bro, anytime."

I laughed and le those two to bicker at each other. I looked over at my family and decided to go walk over. A dizzy sensation rattled my brain for a moment, making me trip over my high heels.

"Whoa, You alright, Lily?"

I rub my forehead to rid of this weird headache.

I smile up at him, "I'm fine, Ozai. Just a little headache is all."

Ozai looks down at me in concern, "I'm still researching about the..." I shook my head, "I don't want to hear it right now. I don't want to hear about the bite, Nikolai, the curse, the witch, my possible death...I'm tired right now, Ozai."

Ozai rubs me back, "I understand, come," He gently ushers me to a seat where my family are, "You need to get o your feet for a moment," Ozai leaves and pours a drink from the table and hands it to me, "It's orange juice, it will help with the dizziness."

I smile thankfully at him, "Thank you Ozai, for taking care of me."

He smiles down at me, "I'll always watch for you, Lil." He leaves and disappears into the crowd.

I sighed and leaned back in my chair as a little girl approaches me, she had beautiful long black hair with a colourful dress designed in tribal patterns. I smile, "Hello there."

She smiles shyly, "Hi."

"What pack are you from?" I asked gently.

She looks down at her feet, "I am the Arikara Tribe. My father is Chief." She's from the Native American Tribes, "What's your name?" I asked.

"My name is Leah, but my Tribe calls me 'Yellow Bird.'"

I smile, "That's a beautiful name. My name is Lily."

Leah smiles shyly, "That's pretty."

She is so freaking adorable I can't even deal with it. Her eyes were a big brown almond shape. She was just flippin cute! You know that feeling when you see someone is so cute and you just want to squeeze the life out of them? That's exactly what I want to do right now.

"Do everyone have special names in the Tribe?"

She nods her head.

"What name would you give me?" I asked playfully.

She giggles, "I don't know."

Her giggled was contagious. I couldn't help, but want to giggle too, "You can give me any name. Anything! What would you give me?"

She stood there pondering until her eyes brighten, "You're 'Star Dancer.'" I smile, "That is an amazing name. I like it." Star Dancer...pretty cool."

Her mother was calling Leah, so she had to go, but I would never forget her. She was a sweet little girl.

I realised I sat down next to to my Uncle Noah. He turns to me and gives me his cheeky wink, "How's my favourite, Niece?"

I smile tiredly, "I'm okay, just a little under the weather."

Noah frowns, "Had Zeus been treating you right?"

I lean on his arm and rest my head on his shoulder. He was always my favourite uncle, "He doesn't treat me badly."

"That's not what I asked, love. Are you alright?" He asks firmly.

I smiled and nodded my head, "I'm fine. How's home?"

He sighs, "It's different without you. It doesn't feel as whole anymore. We miss you, love. You were the first little girl to join the family."

I felt myself become as my mind reminised through the memories of my childhood, all of my big uncles playing tea parties with me. My Aunties laughing with me, my cousins and sister playing with me. Family...there's nothing like it...speaking of family...

"Uncle Noah, I met someone...someone that I think would be very important to you."

My uncle frowns but leans forward to listen closely, "I found this old woman who owns a bakery cafe. Her presence felt familiar for some reason. I began to talk with her...she came from the Maverick family."

His eyes widen, "She's a lycan?"

I nodded my head, "She's your grandmother. She's one of the last pieces of family you have here...". I grabbed a napkin and wrote something down and handed it to my uncle, "Here take it, it's the address and name of the bakery shop. I think it could be good for you to see her before you leave Arcadia."

Noah shakily takes the napkin from my hand. He was silent for a moment, until leans forward and wraps his big arms around me. I wrap my arms around his waist. He whispers into my ear, "Thank you, love. You have no idea how important this is to me."

I smiled as he kissed my hair. He leans back and studies my face, "Now I know you lied, how about you tell how you really are. Are you actually okay, Lil?"

"I don't know." I raised my head, "Uncle Noah? When you and Aunt Mia first realised you were mates, you didn't treat her nicely did you?"

I felt him tense, "Well I didn't treat her badly." He mumbled.

I snicker and roll my eyes, "That's not what I asked," I said in an English Cockney accent.

Uncle Noah chuckles, "Alright alright, to answer your question. No, I didn't treat her nicely."

"How did she forgive you?"

My Uncle Noah's eyes always so en and glaze over whenever he thought of my Aunt Mia, they were still completely in love, no matter how long it's been, "I know it's hard to understand, but forgiveness doesn't always have a reason. Sometimes it comes from a place of grace and mercy. I didn't deserve to be forgiven, neither did Solomon or Xander. Or any of us bastards."

Noah chuckles, "The sorry of Noah's head, in and don't curse in front of the lils."

Aunt Mia smacks, "Sorry, love." He leans in and gives her a peck on the lips. Mia leans in smiling, "To answer your question, honey...sorry I was intentionally ease dropping."

I laughed and waved it o .

"Forgiveness is only possible when you don't hold the worst of that person against them anymore. For you to let go."

"And also?" My Aunt Ayla came leaning in from my other side, "I was intentionally ease dropping too, by the way...unapologetically at that."

She leans in further and said, "Solomon treated me like crap when I was a teenager. He was horrible. I had every right to dumb his ass."

"So why didn't you?"

Ayla sat there and she smiles, "Because as much of an asshole he was, I saw the change in him. I saw his heart and I couldn't be mad at him anymore But I also realised that no one is perfect. There is no such things as a perfect male or female. Every person has their faults and every person has their flaws. But you have to decide if you can handle those flaws or not. And I realised for my own personal journey that I could."

Soul leans in, joining in the conversation, "Look kid, at the end of the day love trumps in. I know it's cheesy, but that's what the tricky part is choosing to love. Everyday you have to choose to continue to love this person through their flaws and faults and they have to do the same for you."

I loved hearing their stories and how they got to the place where they are now. Where they are completely in love. But for me it was dif erent. Zeus hasn't really done anything devastating because we don't have a strong enough connection.

Zeus made it clear from the very start that there would be no emotional attachments at all. That I am a necessity. I guess if I were to forgive, it would be for my own sake. I'm sure he wouldn't care if I forgave him or not. But it's so than my own heart won't harden as Zeus's rigid one.

I excused myself from my family. I looked around the crowd. Zeus was leaning against one of the pillars with his usual cold face, however, there were three females all talking to him. Running their hands and fingers over his shoulder and arm. His eyes connect with mine. He doesn't react, he just observes me.

I smirked and roll my eyes as if I didn't care. Because I didn't? It's not like I wanted to storm over their and rip that girls arm o or anything. Or to murder every female here for staring at him...nope...didn't care at all.

I turned and bumped into someone, "Oh my goodness! I'm so sorry!"

I looked up and saw a guy standing there, he smirks down at me and shakes his head, "It's fine. You're alright. It's my fault I'm sorry." From the energy and dominance radiating o of him, I'm assuming he is an Alpha.

I brushed the skirt of my dress and curtsied politely, "My name is Lily."

The Alpha's eyes flickered in curiosity, "I am Alpha Jethro. It is a pleasure to meet a fire beauty as yourself." He bends down and kisses my hand. I stood there slightly taken back, no one has ever treated me so formal before.

"Thank you for coming tonight, Alpha Jethro, your company is most important." I tried to say as professional as possible. I could see Jethro's eyes sizing me up.

I cleared my throat and tried to smile, "Where is your, Luna? I would very much like to meet her?" I purposely asked for the luna just so than I would know that Jethro wasn't trying to be flirty or anything.

The Alpha smiles but it did not reach his eyes, "I am afraid my mate has passed. She was murdered by a hunter a few years ago."

My eyes went round and I felt embarrassed for asking such a thing now, "I am so sorry. I didn't mean to."

Jethro shake his head and waves the matter o with his hand, "No no. It was a very long time ago."

I nodded my head in understanding, "She must have been very beautiful." "She was. Actually, you remind me of her a lot."

I looked down, to ground and grinned, "Thank you."

The Alpha stepped forward rather closely, "Do you have a mate, Lily?" He was looking at me so so ly. His eyes a chocolate brown. He actually seemed like a nice guy. I think he was just lonely and my heart hurt because I knew exactly what he felt like.

I smile sadly, "Yes, I am. I'm sorry."

Jethro takes a step back he bows and says, "Forgive me, I didn't mean to be forward. I didn't know you were mated."

I shrug, "Well I kinda am, at least."

"Who is he?"

Zeus face changed into a so one into one of concern, "Zeus of the Hellhounds?"

I nodded.

Jethro took a step forward, "You should be careful, Lily."

I snickered, "Thank you for telling me that. It seems everyone worships him like he's a god or something. It's nice to have a change in opinion."

I felt Jethro's hand on my back as he said lowly, "Zeus is powerful, but danger, does not mean he uses it wisely all the time. If you ever feel in danger, come to me. I will take you in my pack for refuge."

I took a step out of his hand and politely, "Thank you for the offer, but I must-"

"For what o er?" I felt chill run up my spine as I heard that deep voice appear.

Zeus stares at Jethro very sharply, "Alpha Jethro, it's been a while."

Jethro bows his head respectfully, "It has. I was just talking to your beautiful mate here."

Zeus glances down at me for a moment before gazing back to the Alpha. I felt Zeus's hand rest on my waist as he said, "Yes, she is exquisite, isn't she."

Jethro took a step forward, "Yes, She seems like a jewel. Funny that she is mated to someone of your...status."

Zeus was silent as his pupils dilated and his shoulders tense up, he o ers a very tight smile. He was getting angry. I didn't want to cause a scene, so I placed my hand over his that was resting on my waist and I began to so ly stroke it. I could see Zeus taking a deep breath as he relaxed, "She is my mate which means she was made for me."

Jethro shrugs and said nonchalantly, "Maybe the Moon Goddess has finally made a mistake, a er all." Zeus drops his hand from my waist and steps to Jethro, both of them awfully close as their eyes blazed with a battle of dominance, but I knew. Regarding authority and dominance, Zeus will always win.

"You're right, the Moon Goddess has made a mistake. I'm looking at it," Zeus snarls at Jethro's face.

Jethro looked like he was going to snap. At a ball in between them and pushed them apart, "That's enough. We are at a step! Not a bar. You are both Alphas, start acting like it."

Jethro, "He was!"

"I don't care!" I said harshly, "This is Zeus's home that he has welcomed you to, I am his mate. Disrespecting him is the same as disrespecting me. Push your emotions aside and start acting like a leader." I said to Jethro.

Jethro stood there breathing heavily as he stared at Zeus, both of them having this unspoken hatred toward each other.

"He deserves every kind of disrespect. He doesn't want you, Lily," I flinched at his words, but my blindness does not waver, "He will toss you aside like a common whore once he gets what he wants from you."

I gaped at his words that had struck me. Zeus steps in and pulls me aside when he snarls in a dark and low voice, "You don't speak to her like that. She is above you. You will be the one I'll be tossing a er I beat you to a pulp."

Jethro goes to throw a punch. And I didn't know what happened. I just reacted! All I knew at that moment, was that I didn't want Zeus to get hurt. I quickly stepped and pushed Zeus out of the way, he was so caught o guard that he stumbled in shock as he saw me get struck down.

I was dizzy on the floor. I felt a throbbing sensation on my head as my vision focuses back to normal. I see my family rush over to me. My father and Xavier came, shouting at me, but I couldn't focus on them. My head cleared as well as the muted sound of voices. I heard shouting and cursing. Everyone stared wide eyed at was behind me. I looked over my shoulder and saw Zeus punching Jethro.

No! "Zeus!" I yelled at him. He froze mid-punch. He looked at me, eyes burning with rage. I weakly shook my head. He growls and snarls as he gets o Jethro. Jethro gets up, glaring at Zeus.

Zeus stands there, "Guards! Escort Alpha Jethro out of my territory." Guards came and took Jethro. He glances at me and his eyes so ens, "I'm sorry, Lily." He said before the guards kept pushing him away.

Zeus came to my side. His hands tucks under my arms and li sme up. I stumble slightly, but I got my footing. My father came and pulled me away from Zeus into his arms, "Is this what my daughter has to go through by being here!?"

I pushed away and said, "Dad."

"NO!" He shouts, "I am not letting you stay here with him anymore. You are coming home right now!"

"You are her father," Zeus says, "And I will respect you for that, but you will not treat her away from me. She has a purpose here."

Uncle Xander and Uncle Solomon came and held my father back as he shouted, "You will get her killed! She deserves better than you! Let her go you son of a bitch!"

Zeus's eyes blazed with anger again. Ozai and Sozin appeared and began to hold Zeus back too, "Don't lecture me about getting Zeus to let her go. He could have died when she fell into that ice! Where were you? Why were you not watching her in a time of war?" Zeus shouts back. My father and my mate began to argue with each other. I sighed. I was tired of this.

"Enough!" I screamed. Both of them fell silent as them and everyone else turned to me, "Has anyone ever asked me what I wanted? What I wanted to do? Do I have no say in this?"

No one answered. I shook my head and walked away. I just wanted to get away.

"Lily!" Zeus yells for me. But I just walk away.

I looked over the crowd and noticed that Ryan wasn't here anymore. I sighed in relief. I was glad he was gone. I didn't want a reminder of my broken heart anywhere. I walked out of the ballroom and I went down the hallway for a little bit, just to have space from the big crowd of people. I didn't want to think.

I looked up at the paintings around the halls. They were beautiful. There were portraits of the Hellhounds and scenery and all. Very well painted and detailed. I heard people approaching and I saw a lovely couple holding their small daughter.

He looked at her like she was everything. He was also heavily pregnant. I looked like she could pop any day. He had his arm round her waist when she groaned, "I want this baby out of me bébé!"

Her mate laughs and gives her a peck on the lips, "I know bébé, I know. We can always try and induce the labour!"

She laughs and smacks his arm playfully.

(I so hope you guys understand this scene because I am OBSESSED with them)

I wanted something like that one day, but I knew having that with Zeus would be impossible. Might as well forget about it.

I began to hum as I looked at the art when I heard a ruckus come from one of the rooms. I frowned and went to look, making sure everything was okay.

I opened the door to check and my eyes widened as I stood unmaking. Ryan was having sex with one of the freaking females! Who was freaking mated! I stood there with my mouth open.

Ryan froze. He looked down at the girl then back up at me. He shook his head and forth quickly as he stood up trying to pull his pants up, "No no, Lil, it's not what it looks like!" How can it NOT be this? What is freaking looks like? Does he really think he can talk himself out of this?

...Well this night just gets better and better for me doesn't it?

How can it possibly be not what it looks like? I was already hurt from him before...but this? Really? I didn't want you to cry. I hated crying! But I felt my eyes flood with tears, "You love me, huh? You want me to run away with you, huh?"

The girl looked confused and uncomfortable as she sat on the bed trying to readjust her dress.

Ryan took a step forward, "Look, Lil. I do love you! You and I are..."

And that was my tipping point. "Fuck you! I love you!" I scream at him, "I loved you! And you went and I try to fight against it. He was smiling until he saw my face.

"Then you go making promises about how you love me and the how you want to cherish me and take care of me?!" I wasn't thinking, but a loud smack sound echoed in the room when I realised I slapped him right across his face, "Screw you, Ryan!"

I turned and I ran down the hall. I picked up my dress and I ran with tears falling down my face. I gulped. I was never the self-pity type. But knowing that my ex-boyfriend and my mate don't want me...I couldn't help, but assume that maybe something was wrong with me.

I rubbed my eyes and I didn't know where I was going. I smashed into a wall, making me stumble back. Big hands grip my waist and steady me. Am I dreaming or does the wall have arms?

I looked up through my watery eyes and saw Zeus. His brows were in a tight and deep frown as he saw my tears. He looks behind me, at the place where I was running from. He saw Ryan. He looks back at me then back at Ryan again, making the connection.

He clenches his jaw and his lips curl into a snarl. His calm exterior screamed danger as he walked past me and starts to storm to Ryan. I run and grab Zeus's arm, "Zeus don't! Just leave it!"

Zeus pulls my hands o his arm as he continues to march toward the room with eyes that oozed of anger. His nose was flared and his lips began to form into a snarl with every step he took toward Ryan.

I kept trying to pull Zeus away, but he was too strong, "Zeus! Stop!"

He storms into the room and goes straight for Ryan. Ryan's eyes went round as he beheld a very angry hellhound.

Ryan backs up with his hand out, "Hold on, wait a minute, let's just all..."

Zeus didn't even say a word as he grab Ryan by the throat and slams him against the wall. The girl on the bed screamed in fright. Zeus gets near Ryan's face and said in a low snarl, "What did you do?"

Ryan's round eyes looked at Zeus and answered in a struggling voice, "It wasn't what it looked like!"

Zeus pulls Ryan forward then slams him back into the wall by his neck, "Bullshit. Why does my mate have tears in her fucking eyes?"

Ryan coughed out, "I-d-didn't do a-anything!"

Now it was my turn to be angry, "Bullshit!" I yell. I swing my arm back and punch him square in the face. His nose instantly pouring down with blood. Zeus let's go of him as his eyes held a bit of shock that I literally just punched the guy in the face.

I winced as I rubbed my knuckles. That actually hurts to punch! The movies make it look so easy! Ryan laid groaning on the ground as he cradled his face. I roll my eyes. Pussy.

Zeus yanks Ryan up and growls, "Leave now before I kill you." Ryan grabs the rest of his clothes and scurried o as quick as he could, not even giving me a second look.

I gulped and muttered, "Asshole." As I le the room.

I marched down the hallway, back to the ball.

"Lily!" Zeus shouted.

But I ignored him. I didn't feel like talking or defending myself right now. I went back to the ball and bumped into Donny. He was smiling until he saw my face.

He holds my shoulders, "Hey...what's wrong?"

I sni , "Everything is wrong! This whole night is wrong! It's like fate is out for me!"

Donny wraps his arm around my shoulders and guides me to the corner of the room.

"I'm sure it's not that bad. Zeus only got into that fight because Alpha Jethro was being a dick to you, he did that for you."

I shook my head, "No. He did it for himself." I was exhausted. I was just watching all the people talking to each other about different things of all kinds. I contemplated leaving. I could just go back to the room and sleep.

"I'm just going to go to the bathroom," I told Donny. He nods his head and asked if I wanted him to take me, but I didn't.

I le the crowding ball room and I went up stairs. I skipped Zeus's room and went to my own. I didn't want to be near anything that would remind me of Zeus right now. I loved my room. I felt like I haven't seen it in ages.

I walked out onto the balcony and saw more people looking at the beautiful garden. I frowned because I didn't want people in that garden. The garden was my place, my sanctuary.

I leaned on the rails and looked up at the moon. It was still shining bright as ever. I wish I could escape this place and live up there in the sky. I would much rather be in the company of stars and the moon goddess than people down here.

Out of no where, a hand covers my mouth and an arm wraps tightly around my waist. My eyes wide and I try to fight against it. This strong person drags me inside and kicks the doors shut. He throws me on the bed and steps back. I scramble against the head board and stood there shaking.

Nikolai sits on the chair and snickers, "You should have seen your face. You looked terrified."

I scowled at him, "What're you doing here?"

He placed his hands behind his head casually, "Just checking up on my favourite girl."

I roll my eyes, "Leave!"

He snickers, "You feeling dizzy, yet?"

The word dizziness was something I was very familiar with. I was having random dizzy spells. I never thought to connect it to the bite.

"Oh so you have?" Nikolai enquires, "Yes you should be fully transitioned by the end of the week."

"How do I stop it! Make it stop." I snarled at him