

Chapter 12

I slowly start to walk around the large area that has been transformed into a beautiful outdoor ball area. There's a huge make-shift dance floor in the centre with a massive stage at one end that has a DJ set up and playing music, while to each side of the dance floor, there are rows and rows of tables and chairs all dressed beautifully in white table clothes and flowers and candles in the centre.

The trees that surround the area are draped in hundreds of pretty lights while old-style lanterns are hanging off odd branches lighting the place up beautifully. As I look around I realize that there are no food tables anywhere. Usually at balls, this large food is laid out BBQ style for everyone to help themselves. If there are no food tables then that must mean that there's a sit-down meal.

That seems like a lot of work and effort and even though it was a lovely effort for them to put into the ball, it will also no doubt mean that I won't be eating again tonight. It's been 3 days since I last ate and that was just one piece of bread and I'll be honest, it's starting to take effect. I'm used to being starved for days and have gone longer than this before but the endless beatings that I have taken these last few days aren't helping. I can slowly feel myself starting to fade and I hate it.

Shouting and cheering bring me out of my daydream and I quickly realise that someone has found their mate causing a small smile to grace my face. It's always happy news when someone finds their mate, even if I don't know them, I wish them well. My sad smile quickly turns to a wince when something accidentally bumps into me causing my ribs to scream out in

pain.

"Shit, I'm sorry. Are you ok?" I look up at the tall guy who looks concerned and can't help but smile and nod "I'm ok. Thank you." This person has no idea that he's the first person outside of Lily and the Elders to be nice to me in so long that the tears that are trying to break free are not from the pain im in, no, they are from the kindness that he's showing me. I'm pathetic. He gives me another smile and then carries on walking through the crowd while I pull my head out of my ass and go in search of Lilly.

I make my way through the crowds taking my time trying not to bump into anyone. Walking is insanely painful and I can't even try to hold my ribs to help because it will look suspicious and my father will lose his shit. After walking around for a few minutes, I head over to a corner that looks quieter to take a breath before I continue to look for Lilly. I see Alpha Stone standing on his own seeming to be watching everyone looking happy and it makes me smile. Elder Stone is one of the good ones.

These balls must be incredibly hard for him and yet from what I've heard he turns up every year and is always genuinely happy for the couple that finds each other here. He met his mate here over 20 years ago, sadly she died a few years later giving birth to their son, their son also died and from what I've heard, Elder Stone almost ended his own life.

To go through that much pain and sorrow and still be such a good person.. . yeah that man is one of a kind. As far as I know, he's remained on his own since then but I'd like to think that one day he'll give love a second chance. I can't imagine his mate would want him to be alone for the rest of his life.

I decide to go and say hi and slowly make my way over to him only as soon as I'm just a few feet away from him Lexi starts whining in my head and my stomach feels like it going to fall out of my ass. Fuck, he's close, isn't he? "He is, baby girl. Please, let's go say hi!" Lexi begs but I can't. I won't. He doesn't want me and I'm not about to try and push myself on someone, especially an Alpha.

I take another step closer and I swear his scent instantly gets ten times stronger then suddenly my whole body starts to tingle, it's so intense that a gasp leaves my mouth as his broad back comes into view. He turns around to face me and our eyes lock for a moment, the look in his eyes telling me that he doesn't want to see me then he turns around and starts talking to Elder Stone as if I'm invisible and this time I run. I'm in pain physically and emotionally but somehow I manage to run and not look back at what could be but never will be.



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