

Chapter 11

Just when I think I've left the crap behind, I find an unexpected guest at the table. The table is more lively, much more chatty than when I was there.

"Are you okay darling?" Luna Estelle asks, "I was starting to worry."

I nod, staring at Audrey. "Hi Aeliana," she waves. "I hope you don't mind that I joined your lunch..."

Mom taps my hand, "The waiter is bringing you another seat."

I don't know what it is, either the degrading conversation I overheard in the bathroom or the fact that she's sitting right here but I snap. "No. She's in my seat." I stare down at her, "Get up."

"Liana baby, it's just a seat."

"And I want it back," I calmly say, my gaze unmovable from her. I vowed never to let her get to me ever again when I left and just because I'm back doesn't mean I can break my own rules.

Kingston scoffs, "It's a fucking chair, you—"

"It's fine," Audrey says, rising. "I'm sorry if I upset you."

I grab a napkin off the table and use it to wipe the seat then toss it on the floor. Everyone is staring. Father too, I realise I've gone too far too late.

Mom clears her throat. "Now that that's settled, we were just discussing your wedding."

"Oh," I nod. They were discussing my wedding without me, does anyone at this table not see how fucked up that is?



When Audrey's seat arrives, she squeezes right between Rowan and Kingston. A space that once belonged to just me.

"Do you have a preferred date?" Luna Estelle asks. "Within the next seven days of course."

"Any." I force a smile, playing with my fingers beneath the table.

"See, I told you she wouldn't mind this Saturday," Mom says.

Saturday?

That's four days away.

"And your honeymoon?" Luna Estelle pauses, her fork motioning between her son and me. "Do you have any place you want to visit?"

"No," Both King and I blurt out.

"Wait, is that—" Rowan's wife gasps, pointing at me. It takes me a moment before I realise what it is that she's looking at but when I do, I cover it with my hair again. Heat flushes all over me, just like it has every time that I think about the mark. "Kingston, you didn't tell me you marked her."

The table goes absolutely still.

All eyes are on me again, and I don't know where to look. King isn't an option, so I turn to his girlfriend, who glares harder than him. Rowan breaks the awkward silence, "He couldn't wait for the honeymoon."

"Rowan," Luna Estelle laughs. "Stop teasing your brother." She says, she thinks of them as brothers, everyone does. "So no honeymoon destination yet, but we can surprise you with one."



"No need," Kingston snaps.

"Aeliana, have you chosen a wedding dress yet?" Audrey asks, smiling at me. "I know a designer and I can make a call so you'd get the dress on short notice no extra charges."

"That's so sweet Audrey dear." Luna Estelle praises, making her grin wider.

See.

Absolute angel in everyone's eyes but I don't want her false kindness or charity and I make sure she knows it. "No thanks." I begin to eat again. Anything is better than this clown show I'm stuck in.

"Oh." Her voice drops. "Well, my friend Rita is a florist, she did Seraphine's flowers and she's often booked for months, but she can make an exception."

I don't speak, I don't care for any of that.

She's distinctly trying to get a rise out of me, to make everyone think she is this understanding godsend woman who is giving up King for me without any animosity and I'm the bitter woman who stole her happy ending.

Mom and Luna Estelle plan out the decor and venue, Rowan's wife offers to help with a few things but then I notice Audrey is making all the decisions.

She makes suggestions and checks with King who agrees with her every idea, not sparing me a glance. My final straw is when she pulls out a picture of a wedding dress and passes it around the table. When the phone reaches me I shove it back across the table. "No."

"I was just trying to—"

"To what?" I snap, "Piss me off? Congratulations you did it, princess. I don't want your suggestions, why do you keep trying to plan my funeral from the sidelines?" My head tilts, "Would you like to be the bride too?"

She pauses, her eyes widening. "No, but we grew up together, so I'd like to be your bridesmaid." she smiles, once again trying to appear too good in comparison to me.

"Well, you can be the bride, Audrey. I might not make it."

"Aeliana," Kingston says. His voice loud and threatening.

"What?" I snap at him. I'm sick of him glaring from across the table and letting his girlfriend plan my wedding. I don't care who plans it but it can't be her. She already has him, why should I spend the worst day of my life in something created solely to fit her taste?

"Do me a favour and lower your voice."

"Why don't you do me a favour and elope with her? Your parents love you, they'll forgive you."

"Liana baby," Mom kicks my foot from under the table. "What has gotten into you?"

"Nothing," I swallow. "I'm just trying to help Audrey get the wedding of her dreams."

"I'm sorry, I was just trying to help." Audrey's lip quivers, "I know weddings are stressful and I spent months helping Sera so I know everything, and everyone you'd need to help you with preparations."

"You didn't have to be mean to her, Aeliana," Rowan says.



"Apologise," Kingston demands.

I pause, my gaze slowly meeting his. "Excuse me?"

"I said apologise to Audrey."

"No," I counter.

"You just humiliated her in front of—"

A laugh bubbles in my throat but I swallow it down. "She humiliated herself by coming here. I will not apologise to her, you may have marked me against my will but you can't control me, Alpha Kingston."

"Kingston, leave it." Alpha Dante says.

"No, she can't act this way." He groans. "Is this the Luna you so desperately want?"

"Wedding fever," Luna Estelle quickly chimes in.. "She's a bride. And on such short notice, give her a break."

Audrey rises from her seat and wipes the invisible tears from her face. "I'm sorry for crashing your lunch, I'll go to my reserved table now." She says, quickly leaving.

Great, that's one less eyesore. But the remaining one glares at me, fuming. "You should go and apologise to her right now. She was trying to be nice, but you just couldn't help bullying her, huh?"

I don't speak.

I ignore him the same way he ignored me all along.

There's no point explaining yourself to someone who never listens. His



girlfriend is right in his eyes, and I'm wrong for setting boundaries.

Kingston leaves the table and Rowan follows him. I don't need to look to know they've gone to her table. They've gone to console her.

Alpha Dante clears his throat. "Well..."

"This is a lovely meal," Father says, shooting me a warning glare.

"Indeed." He nods.

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