

Chapter 5

KINGSTON

I spent the entire night trying to make sense of my life. Every time I tried to fall asleep, images of Aeliana flooded my mind. Sometime years ago, the choice would have been easy, I wouldn't have thought twice, but today, the choice weighs heavily on me.

My wolf wants Aeliana, I want the pack. Our desires are set on different paths, but to have both I must make the sacrifice. I refuse to let Aeliana ruin everything I've worked hard for. She will regret ever coming back to Mooncrest, she should have stayed out of our lives.

I've been ready since seven AM, and when the clock finally strikes nine, I leave my office. I know Audrey is already out at her Beauty salon by now, and so I skip the crying and whining. 1

Outside, the entire place is buzzing with news of my rejection last night and soon, they'll be buzzing with the news of my upcoming wedding. I spot my Mom's car just as I'm pulling out of the parking lot.

"Kingston!" She calls out from her window, honking at me.

I have no choice but to get out of my car, and meet her at hers. "Mom, what are you doing here so early?"

"I came to find out about your decision." she says, "Aeliana is already in agreement, are you ready to apologise for your outburst last night?"

"It wasn't an—Wait." I pause, her words only now registering. "Did you say Aeliana agrees?"

"Yes," she grins widely. "Pandora called me this morning. She was particularly happy and wanted to get together since we are to be in-laws."

That doesn't sound right, Aeliana wouldn't agree. The eyes that stared at me last night wanted nothing to do with me, they're the eyes of the girl who cut ties with me, and the rest of the pack. What is she planning?

"So what's your decision?"

"I'll marry her," I say, and she immediately smiles. I haven't seen her this happy since my nephew said her name as his first word. "I'm happy it pleases you that your husband is forcing me into this marriage."

"Oh come on, son. Aeliana is a beautiful girl," she grins wider. "Your father isn't forcing you into anything, he is helping you. This is what it should be like, you don't need a chosen mate when fate has blessed you with one."

"I wouldn't say blessed," I grumble. My problem with Aeliana is beyond her looks. Her looks are not an issue, the girl is stunning.

"I would," she argues. "I mean I was okay with Audrey being your chosen, but there's just something about her that unsettles me."

Unsettles her? They get along just fine, they've been to dinners without me countless times. "I don't know, King. Audrey is lovely and pleasant, but you're her main focus. A Luna needs to be balanced and that Aeliana? I've always liked her. She's been very critical, calm, I can see a bit of myself in her."

"Mom, please stop." I groan. "If Aeliana wanted to be with me then she would have, there would have been no Audrey, but she tossed me away once she found someone else to fool around with."

Mom frowns, a hand to her chest. "I am sorry you're grieving your relationship with Audrey, but to be honest with you? I've always hoped Aeliana would be your mate, ever since you were little and now it's



happening.”

I nod. “Again, very happy for you Mother.” Despite the beginning of her statement being sympathetic, she has not once stopped smiling, there’s a shine in her eyes.

“I brought a bracelet for you to give her when you apologise, it has our family crest on it.” She says, reaching into her purse. She shuffles forward something and then pulls a pink little box out. Aeliana doesn’t even like pink. “Here, you should give it to her before she leaves.”

“Leaves?” I frown.

“Yes,” she nods, shoving the box at me when I don’t take it. “Pandora says she will be returning to Clinshore to pack up her belongings. While she will be back in a week, it’s best you show her you’re interested now.”

A train of thoughts races through my mind, Aeliana accepted my rejection despite my Father’s interruption and— “She’s not coming back.”

“What do you mean?” Mom asks, the fear in her voice unmistakable.

“She’s running away,” I tell her. “Aeliana won’t return when she leaves.”

“You should stop her then,” she blurts out. “No Aeliana, no pack, no Alpha. She has an afternoon flight. I’m meeting Pandora for brunch to discuss a few things.”

AELIANA

I spend my time looking for a new place to move to, somewhere where they won’t find me. My best bet is the Blood Moon pack, it’s densely populated, welcoming and best of all, in the middle of nowhere. No one



would ever look for me there, and I make do with the living conditions. I tutored the Beta's daughter a year ago in college, and we're still in touch, she could help me move there while I figure out my next plan.

My plan lacks depth, but I will fill those blanks in while I'm on my flight. I sit in the living room in my pyjamas, pretending everything's alright while Mom gets ready to go out to brunch with Mrs Vale. When she finally leaves the house, I linger a few minutes before I return to my room for my things, and just as I'm leaving, the doorbell sounds.

"I'll get it," I yell to our house help.

I'm thinking mom left something in her haste but when I open the door, I'm met with an unexpected guest.

Audrey Cole. Golden girl, spoiled daughter, pageant-winning princess, pack sweetheart, and Alpha's precious girlfriend. She shoves me inside and enters, uninvited like the house belongs to her idiot boyfriend.

"What are you doing here, Audrey?" I sigh, "Seraphine doesn't live here anymore. Mom isn't home and—"

"I'm here for you, Squeak." She glares. The use of that degenerating nickname does exactly what she wants it to. It sets me back six years. "I was at breakfast and I heard you're going to marry my boyfriend?"

"You heard wrong."

She laughs, "Did I? Or are you really out of your mind and believing Kingston would ever look twice at you. He's mine, Squeak so you'd better rid yourself of those delusions, or you'll only be embarrassing your family again. Don't deny it now, Sera told me you said yes."

"Sera wasn't here," I snap, crossing my arms over my chest. "And I did

say yes.”

“Oh,” she gasps, “Someone has gotten brave.”

“If you think you’re going to touch me? I will throw you, Audrey,” I warn.

“I’m not a little girl anymore, and I have nothing to lose. Don’t make me hurt you the last time I see you.”

“Last time?” she frowns, “You think you can get rid of me just by stealing my man?”

“I’m not stealing anything, he’s yours.” I swallow. “He chose you.”

Her lips pull into a wide smile, “Good, you’re aware. So you should leave, get out of our lives Aeliana. No one wants you here, even your parents are happier when you’re gone.”

She’s right. “I happen to be happier without everyone too, and you didn’t have to come here to warn me about Kingston. I don’t want him, he’s an idiot, and so are you for thinking I’d want him.”

“You want him, everyone wants—” she pauses, looking down at the phone in her hand. “You’re lucky I have to give Sera her honeymoon tickets, but just remember, Squeak. I can break you.”

I don’t bother responding, she walks away, bouncing down the pathway in her designer flats. It’s amazing how much people can change, but it appears her hatred for me is still intact.

Slamming the door shut, I go back upstairs and prepare for my flight. Knowing I’ll never come back again, I take everything I forgot to pack last time. My childhood photo album, the books I inherited from my birth Mom, and while retrieving the books, I stumble on the locked wooden box I kept King’s letters in. I should have burned them when he stopped

writing back.

My flight is in four hours, and I'm ready with nearly an hour to spare. I put my suitcase in the car, but just as I'm about to drive off, I remember my phone is still upstairs, and so I go back for it.

"No awkward fake goodbye," I mumble to myself, jogging down the stairs. "This is good."

Someone answers me, "What is?"

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