

Chapter 7 Destined Mate

"Midnight Pack is throwing a welcome party for Michelle tonight. Grandpa told me to bring you."

The second Samson said that, I wanted to say no. Nothing good could come from being trapped in the same room as Michelle.

But then I remembered this was their grandfather, Hugh Ortega's, plan. If I refused, it would look bad.

So I sighed and followed Samson out. Of course, Michelle came along too, tagging in for the ride to the dress boutique.

Clearly, she wasn't letting her guard down around me.

Inside the boutique, Samson relaxed on the couch while Michelle rushed over, all smiles. She grabbed my hand and played the sweet big-sister role. "Amanda, don't be nervous at the party later. If anything happens, just come to me, okay? Don't worry."

I rolled my eyes in my head at her fake sweetness, but kept a polite smile on my lips. "It's fine. Hugh already told me Samson's taking me tonight, and with him there, I feel safe."

Her expression froze for just a second, and her hand tightened on mine before she caught herself. Then, quick as ever, she slipped her friendly mask back on.

"You're right. Anyway, let's pick a dress—we can't keep Samson waiting too long." Another sugary smile. "I study fashion and gowns all the time. Want me to pick one for you?"

"Sure."


"What about this one?"

She lifted a dark green strapless dress. It was the kind of gown a 40-year-old would wear, not someone my age.

It was obvious she was trying to make me look dumb.

"What? You don't like it?"

She probably thought I was some clueless girl with zero sense of fashion. So I played along, grinning like I loved it.

Perfect.  take it."

Please. With my face already hidden under this disguise, why would I care about the dress?

Her grin slipped for a moment, but then she caught herself. "Great. Then let's get your makeup done."

"I'll pass. My skin's breaking out lately—I can't wear heavy makeup."

I tossed out the excuse and shut her plan down. She didn't argue. Honestly, she'd probably be thrilled if I looked bad tonight.

When I stepped out of the dressing room, Samson's frown said it all. Next to Michelle in her soft, sky-blue gown, I looked like a mess in that dark green.

But he didn't comment. He just drove us straight to Midnight Pack's castle.

The moment we arrived, Michelle hurried off to greet guests.

I was about to enjoy a moment of quiet when I overheard her voice nearby, whispering with her cousin.

"Michelle, is that Amanda? How can someone so ugly stand beside Samson?"

"Since she dared to come to this party, I'll make sure she regrets it."

"Jessica, don't be reckless."

"Relax, Michelle. I know exactly what I'm doing."

A smile tugged at my lips. Two silly little girls, biting off more than they could chew.

Sure enough, a moment later, someone shoved me hard.

And wouldn't you know it—I was standing right by the swimming pool.

I could've teleported out easily, but then I realized it was the perfect excuse to ditch this boring party.

So I let myself fall, planning to swim back up after a few seconds.

The second I hit the water, the freezing cold wrapped around me.

The heavy rush of drowning pressed in, and just as I was about to push myself up, a strong arm suddenly wrapped around my waist.

A wave of warmth, steady and powerful, pulled me up toward the surface.

The moment my face broke the water and I sucked in air, something else hit me just as strong.

It was a strange yet familiar scent. It was distant yet so close. Something I hadn't felt in forever rushed through me all at once.

And then Alice's voice screamed inside me. "Amanda! I smell our destined mate! Open your eyes right now and see who it is!!"

My heart pounded. I snapped my eyes open and stared straight at the person holding me ...