

Arch-Enemies

Chapter 5: Leana

The moment Drake walked into that hideous feeding room, I knew I'd found my mate. Of all the places, in all the world, I found him here. When our eyes locked, I realized that my mate is the worst possible option of a mate for me, a vampire. The Moon Goddess must have a sick sense of humor.

However, as the night went on, I realized that Drake is more like his grandfather, not his father. And while I'm not thrilled that my mate is a vampire, Lily encouraged me not to make the same mistakes that she's made with hers.

"Give him a chance, Lea. Don't judge him too quickly," she had said as we got ready for bed. I had pulled his sweatshirt over my head and nearly moaned out loud at his scent. I never gave much thought to the scent of ice, but it is interesting to me that Lily is mated to a Prince that smells like snow and now I find that I'm mated to a Prince that smells like ice. Maybe it's some kind of royalty thing.

I'm sure Lily has noticed all of my not-so-casual glances at Drake tonight, but I can't help it. I've never thought of a vampire as being sexy, but this man....wow. He's built differently than a werewolf. Alphas are big and beefy, full of muscle. Drake is tall and lean, but there is no mistaking the muscle under this clothing. He walks with a grace that models would kill for and his face looks like it was carved by angels. His long, dark, curly hair is just begging for me to run my fingers through it, and I'm dying to find out if it's as soft and thick as it looks.

After Lily and I get into bed, I hear Drake open the door and speak to someone. Whatever that man says, it doesn't make Drake happy. When he comes back in, he locks the door and sits back down. My back is to him, but my ears are completely in tune with him. I hear the soft sigh, the glass as he swirls it around but doesn't drink it, his shoes as he kicks them off.

When Lily's breathing deepens, letting me know she's asleep, I decide it's time to take control of the situation and talk to my mate. I don't know when I'll get another chance.

I pull the comforter back and turn, crawling out of bed and my eyes connect with Drake's.

I move to sit next to him on the couch, tucking my feet up underneath me.

"Do vampires feel the mate bond?" I ask him, jumping right in.

"Most vampires don't have mates, but I'm a royal vampire. If you're asking if I know that you're my mate, the answer is yes."

“What is that like for you?” I ask, curious.

He smiles, looking down at his drink. “At first, your scent was so tantalizing that I thought it was because you are a Guardian. But then I looked in your eyes, and in that moment, I knew that you were meant to be mine.”

I reach out and take the glass from him, taking a sip.

“And what does that mean for you? Having a mate?”

“I don’t know, exactly, I’ve never had one,” he says, smiling at me. My heart stutters in my chest at his magnificence. He frowns, looking down at my chest before looking back up at me.

“Sorry,” I say, looking down and taking another sip of the liquid courage.

He reaches out, stroking my fingers as he takes the glass from my hand. This time, my heart rate increases, thudding in my chest.

“If your heart flutters in a good way because of me, don’t apologize. If I had a heartbeat, you’d hear mine going all over the place.”

“Really?” I ask him. It’s very strange not hearing his heartbeat.

He smiles, looking down again. “I swear I actually felt my heart beat for the first time in decades earlier.”

He looks at me and it feels like he is looking into my soul. “You are the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen in my life, Leana.”

I can feel the heat of my blush on my cheeks. “So beautiful,” he says as his fingers caress my cheek.

Kella begins purring, not caring that our mate is a vampire.

‘I care, but look at him. He’s gorgeous. He’s a prince. He’s...’

‘A vampire,’ I say, cutting her off.

She whimpers, and I see Drake trying to figure out what’s going on.

“What do you know about werewolves?” I ask him.

“Werewolves or Guardians?” he asks.

“Either.”

“Well, I know that you’re very warm, which I’ve never cared about, but touching your warmth is very appealing. You have a wolf spirit and in the case of a Guardian, you have enhanced abilities that make you strong and powerful, able to disintegrate annoying vampires at your whim.”

“It was more than annoyance,” I tell him.

“With Amir, I have no doubt.”

He looks at me. “I don’t understand the wolf spirit though. I’ve heard that the wolves have their own presence in your mind, separate from yours.”

“Yes, Kella, that’s my wolf, has her own thoughts, her own mind. Usually she and I are in agreement about things, or she doesn’t care enough to become involved.”

“And with me?” he asks, watching me closely.

“She is very involved,” I say.

“Can I speak to her?” he asks and before I can answer, Kella has pushed forward.

“Hello, mate,” she says and I can tell he hears the difference in our voice, sees in it the golden color of my eyes.

“Kella,” he says, taking my hand and bringing it to his lips. His eyes stay on hers. “My mate,” he says, kissing our hand. “I hope you will convince Leana to give me a chance. I have wanted to find you for a very long time. I hope both of you will give me a chance to prove to you that I can be the sort of mate that you desire.”

I pull Kella back, along with my hand. “What do you know of what I desire?” I ask.

He is unperturbed by my actions. Perhaps he expected them.

“I know that as a Custos Regni, you are a protector of others, all supernaturals that require assistance. I know that what you saw tonight disgusted you, as it disgusted me. And I know that you must be questioning, if not your Moon Goddess, then fate, for bringing us together after what happened to your mother.”

He reaches out stroking my fingers, until I open them. He gently entwines his fingers with mine, pulling my hand to his face and stroking the back of my hand over his cheek.

“I know that as a Guardian, you are powerful enough to wipe out this entire coven, that because you are a Guardian, you would never do that unless you were given a good reason to do so. I know that as a council member, you will serve justice and as your mother’s daughter, you will be able to tell if someone is lying,” he says, his eyes locking onto mine.

“So, I want you to know that there is nothing in this world that I want more than you.”

“True,” I say softly, watching him, entranced, mesmerized as he runs my hand over his cheek. I can feel it warming with my touch.

“What I don’t know, Leana, is if the mate bond is strong enough that you will give me a chance. If you will give me the opportunity to show you that even though I am a vampire, that I’m part of the eternal damned, I am still a good man.”

I look at him, weighing my answer. But he’s been honest with me, so I will be honest with him.

“Tell me one thing before I answer your question.”

“Anything.”

“Would you kill me if you tasted my blood? Would you drain me dry?”

I watch as pain flashes across his face and he pulls my hand away from his cheek.

“I honestly don’t know. And I hope I never find out. The world is a better place with you in it, Leana Holstin.”

There is no lie in his words, and I can see the sincerity in his eyes.

Rather than answer, I lean forward and press my lips to his.