

Chapter 6: Drake

The moment Leana's warm lips touch my cold ones, and her wild yet floral scent floods my nose, my fangs come out, slicing through her lower lip.

I'm up and across the room before I make the mistake of tasting her blood that is now resting in warm droplets on my lips.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that," she says. But I'm facing away from her, afraid that if she sees my blood lust for her, that it will all be over, and I'll never get to prove to her that I can be the kind of mate she deserves.

"I just...I wasn't prepared and..." I glance over my shoulder, seeing her pressing her finger over her lip. "Are you alright?"

"Yes. I heal quickly."

I nod, turning away. Unable to resist any longer, I lick her blood off my lips and the ecstasy that flows through my body is overwhelming. It takes everything in me not to fly to her and sink my teeth into her neck, sucking more of the most delicious blood I've ever tasted in my life.

I lift my head, trying to get control of my emotions and my need to feed on my mate.

"You should get back into bed," I tell her, putting my hand on the wall and leaning against it as I calm myself.

"I really am sorry," she says, and I hear her get up and move toward the bed.

"I am the one who is sorry. You have nothing to apologize for," I tell her, needing to reassure her that I'm not mad at her. I'm furious with myself,



with the thing that I am. A creature that can't even kiss his mate without going into a blood frenzy.

I don't move until I hear the sound of her breathing level out and become deep. At least she isn't so afraid of me that she can't sleep in the same room with me. I thank her Moon Goddess for small favors.

I go to my side bar, throwing back two more shots of whiskey, burning the taste of her blood out of my mouth, before going to sit back down on the couch to keep watch over the Guardians.

It's early in the morning when there's a soft knock on the door. I get up to answer it, smelling the food.

"Thank you, Diego." I say, helping him set up the food. I know that Demetrius sent him as he said he would. If Diego is here, it means Demetrius is keeping an eye on others for me.

I walk him to the door. "Will there be anything else, your highness?"

"Check to make sure my father and his entourage are still sleeping." 1

"Yes sire," he says, and I close the door, hearing movement on the bed. I turn and see Lily carefully getting out of bed. I appreciate that she's trying not to wake Leana.

"Are you sneaking us out?" she asks quietly.

"Something like that," I say. I know Giovanni will have someone watching my room, so he and my father will know when we leave, but that doesn't mean I can't get them out before my father can raise his dead to come get me and them.

Lily heads to the bathroom and I turn to make sure everything is ready for my mate to eat. I feel eyes boring into my back and I turn, seeing her



sitting up in bed. She looks like she's about to say something, but Lily comes out of the bathroom. Instead of speaking, Leana grabs her things and heads in to get ready.

While they eat, Diego returns, letting me know my father and Giovanni are still asleep.

"And his watchdog?" I ask.

"Is watching from down the hall. He'll know the moment you walk out," he tells me.

I thank him and close the door.

"When you're ready, we can go," I tell them as they finish eating. The sooner the better.

"Would he have tried to keep us here?" Lily asks as she and Leana grab their bags.

"I don't know, but I'm not taking any chances," It's as close to the truth as I can get because I know Leana will know if I'm lying. I will eventually kill my father or force him to step down and when I do, the vampires' alliance with the Guardians and werewolves will go back to the way it should be.

As we're preparing to leave, Lily tells me what I already know, that others knew they were here and were expecting them to check in. Because my father has disconnected the wifi in the castle, they weren't able to get any reception to call their families to let them know they were safe. If they don't check in soon, the werewolf packs will wage war against us, and I know which side will win. It won't be ours.

"I think you showed your strength last night when you vaporized my



father's second in command." I say, looking at Leana. She blushes and I'm instantly reminded of the taste of her blood in my mouth.

I look down as my fangs extend. "We should get going," I say, turning away from them so they don't see my fangs. It takes several minutes for me to get them to retract. I need to feed, and I need to do it soon so I don't inadvertently hurt my mate.

Once we're out of the castle, I guide them through the vampire lands and to the border. I realize they think that I'm letting them continue on their own. There's no way I'm letting my mate go right now. I need more time to let her know that she shouldn't reject me. And I'm desperate to spend more time with her. It's not only her blood that is drawing me to her. Her warmth, her kindness, her...humanity are drawing me to her like a moth to a flame.

"If you don't mind, I'd like to escort you the rest of the way to Araphyra. I don't think vampires are welcome into King Ailduin's realm, but I can at least make sure you have safe passage until you get there," I say.

"That's not necessary." Leana says and I feel as if she's stabbed me in my dead heart. It shouldn't hurt, but it does. She already wants to be away from me. I guess I can't blame her after I sliced her lips last night. Who wants a mate that they can't even kiss. And yet, I can't let her leave me. Not yet. Not like this.

"I would like to. It would make me feel better after the way you were treated in my father's home."

"We would be happy to have you with us, Drake. Or, do we call you Prince Drake?" Lily asks me.

"Drake is fine, thank you. I would feel better knowing you make it safely to Araphyra," I say, looking entreatingly at Leana. If she says no, I'll



follow them from a distance anyway, watching over them, watching her. But I want to be close to her, I want to bask in the sunlight that she is casting over me.

When she nods her agreement, the two of them shift and I have my first glimpse of my wolf mate. She's as gorgeous as her human, her golden blond fur shimmering in the early morning light.

She comes over to me and I crouch down, getting closer to eye level.

"Hello, Kella. You are a beautiful wolf," I say and I'm rewarded with her rubbing her large face against me. Her scent is much more wild than Leana's and I wonder if the blend is the combination of the two of them, a meadow of wildflowers in the middle of the forest.

I let her scent me, happy that at least Kella seems to want me and wants me to smell like her. I've heard about wolves scenting their mates. It's a way of claiming to others that the person belongs to them.

When she's done, we take off running, me on two legs and the two of them on four. We run for a couple of hours before we stop. Lily and Leana shift and call their families. I listen as both of them talk their families out of waging war against my father and all vampires.

Because I'm paying close attention, I hear Leana hesitate. She looks up at me and then turns away. "I'll tell you when I'm home," she says into the phone. I know that her older brother, Richard, is her Alpha and I assume that's the masculine voice I hear on the other end of the phone.

Lily steps away from us as Leana hangs up and turns back.

"Is everything okay?" I ask her.

"Yes. Rich isn't going to wage war against the vampires, but your father



needs to tread lightly. If he goes against the Guardians or the wolf packs, even his seat on the council won't save him from the wrath of the Guardians," she tells me.

"If my father is involved in going against the Guardians and my mate in any way, the Guardians will have to get in line, because my father's life will be forfeit by my hands," I tell her, my lip curling back in a snarl.

Leana steps up to me, her scent making my head spin. "You have a lot to learn about what it means to have a Guardian as a mate," she says.

I frown and I'm about to ask her what she means when Lily comes back.

"Ready?" she asks.

I nod, but tuck that little nugget of information into my mind for later. I'm not sure I like the implication of what Leana was telling me and I need to know more about what it means to be mated to a Guardian.



Cooper author

Double Drake update today. We're still in a crossover period from Enchanting the Prince.

78