

# **Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 6**

Chapter 6

Lucas's POV:

24%

"She's not just any Omega," I replied without taking my eyes off Tori. There was something about her movements-purposeful yet unobtrusive- that commanded my attention more than any flashy display ever could.

Matthew leaned forward, squinting down at the café. After a moment of careful observation, he leaned back with a shrug.

"I don't see anything special. Just a silver-eyed Omega working a service job." He took a sip of his drink. "Though I'll give you that-she is quite beautiful.

I didn't respond, my focus sharpening as I noticed two wolves approach Tori's table. Their postures screamed trouble.

Matthew let out an exasperated sigh. "Unbelievable. You drag me out for drinks, which happens maybe once a decade, and then completely ignore me to stare at some waitress."

I abruptly stood, my chair scraping against the wooden floor with a harsh sound.

"Lucas?" Matthew's voice registered dimly as he stared at me, confusion evident in his expression.

"She's in trouble," I said tersely, already moving toward the stairs.

"What's happening?" Matthew's irritation instantly shifted to concern as he followed my gaze. "Oh. Trouble brewing, those guys don't look friendly.

"I'm going down there," I stated, already heading for the exit.

"Wait, I'm coming too," Matthew called after me, hurrying to catch up as took the stairs two at a time.

By the time we reached the café's entrance, the situation had escalated. Tori stood before the two, her stance firm despite being physically outmatched. I remained in the shadows just outside, assessing the situation.

"I'll say it one last time," Tori's voice was controlled but firm. "You need to pay your bill."

The taller of the two sneered. "And what exactly will you do if we don't, little Omega?"

His companion laughed, the sound grating on my nerves. "Maybe she plans to call the Warrior patrol. As if they'd bother with an Omega's complaints."

Tori didn't flinch. "There are security cameras and guards stationed throughout Howling Plaza. If you refuse to pay, I will be forced to request assistance."

The taller one's face contorted with rage. "You dare threaten me, Omega?" he snarled, raising his hand. "I'll teach you your proper place!"

His arm swung toward Tori, but before it could make contact, I caught his wrist in an iron grip.

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Chapter 6

His words died in his throat the moment our eyes locked. Recognition hit him like a physical blow, and I watched with cold satisfaction as all

color drained from his face. His knees visibly buckled, and the stench of fear poured off him in waves.

"A-Alpha L-Lucas," he choked out, his earlier bravado evaporating instantly

"Is there any problem?" I asked, my voice deceptively cold.

"No, Alpha," the taller one stammered, fumbling for his wallet. "Just a misunderstanding. We were about to pay."

They hastily threw bills on the table—far more than their check required and attempted to make a quick retreat toward the exit.

"Stop. My command sliced through the air, freezing them in their tracks.

I narrowed my eyes, sending out a mental command through the pack bond that all Alphas shared with their territory's guards. Within seconds, two uniformed Beta guards appeared at the café entrance, responding to my silent summons.

"Alpha Lucas," they said in unison, bowing their heads slightly.

"Take these two to the detention center," I ordered, my voice carrying through the now-silent café. "Process them according to pack law for threatening an Omega and disturbing the peace."

As the guards secured the two, I raised my voice slightly, ensuring everyone in the vicinity could hear my next words.

"Let this serve as a reminder to all pack members, I announced, my gaze sweeping across the onlookers. "Our laws apply equally to everyone, regardless of rank or status. Harassment will not be tolerated in my territory, especially toward those you perceive as weaker than yourselves."

The message was clear, and I could see several wolves averting their eyes

submission as the guards escorted the troublemakers away.

I turned my attention to Tori. She stood calmly, her silver eyes meeting mine with remarkable composure. There was no trace of the typical intimidation most wolves displayed when facing an Alpha of my status.

"Are you all right?" I asked, deliberately softening my tone.

She seemed surprised by the gentleness in my voice. "Yes. Thank you for your assistance, Alpha Lucas."

I noticed the formal distance she maintained in her address. Without another word, I nodded and turned away, heading back toward the bar where Matthew waited.

Matthew fell into step beside me as we climbed the stairs. "What was that about? Since when does the great Lucas Grayson personally intervene in café disputes?"

I didn't answer immediately, my mind still on the silver-eyed Omega below

"You're acting strange today," Matthew continued, studying my face intently

He glanced back toward the café, then at me again, realization dawning on his face. "Wait a minute... is this about her? Are you finally ready to find a mate?"

His voice grew increasingly excited. It is! You've finally found someone you're interested in! Thank the Moon Goddess! I was starting to think you might be gay and secretly pining for me all these years."

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Chapter 6

I shot him a withering glance that would have sent most wolves cowering.

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Matthew immediately raised his hands in surrender. "Kidding! Obviously kidding." He cleared his throat. "But seriously, what's so special about

this one?"

I hesitated only briefly before deciding to be direct. "She's my fated mate.

Matthew, who had just taken a sip of his drink after we returned to our table, choked violently. After recovering from his coughing fit, he stared

at me with widened eyes.

"Your WHAT? Your FATED MATE? As in, chosen-by-the-Moon-Goddess, once-in-a-lifetime, magical-bond fated mate?" His voice had risen to a pitch that made several nearby patrons turn to look.

I fixed him with a deadpan stare. "Would you like to announce it to the entire pack? I don't think everyone in the Northern Territories heard you clearly."

Matthew's eyes widened in horror as he realized how loudly he'd spoken. He slapped his hand over his mouth and hunched lower in his seat, looking around frantically to see who might have overheard.

"Sorry," he whispered through his fingers, his expression a mixture of embarrassment and lingering shock. "But you can't just drop bombshells like that and expect me to keep my composure. This is... this is huge!"

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## **Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 7**

Chapter 7

Lucas's POV:

24%

I waited for Matthew to regain his composure.

“When?” Matthew finally whispered, leaning forward with such intensity would practically see the questions tumbling over each other in his

mind. “When did you find out?”

I took a sip of my whiskey, letting the liquid burn a path down my throat before answering.

“I discovered it two days ago,” I said quietly, my eyes drifting back to the café below, where Tori had resumed her duties as if nothing had

happened. “It was an unexpected encounter.”

Matthew let out a low whistle, shaking his head in disbelief. “Unbelievable The powerful Alpha Lucas Grayson’s fated mate is an Omega?”

Duke immediately growled deep within me, the sound reverberating through my chest, though no one else could hear it. My wolf was fiercely protective already, bristling at even the slightest perceived slight toward his mate.

She is worthy. Duke's thoughts pushed into my consciousness with startling clarity.

I marveled at the power of the fated mate bond. Two days of knowing she existed, and already my wolf and I were aligned in her defense, ready

to challenge anyone who questioned her value.

I fixed Matthew with a cold stare, my eyes narrowing slightly.

Matthew raised his hands in surrender. "No judgment here. I'm just processing. Besides, she's 21 and you're 31 – no matter how you look at it,

you're robbing the cradle." He glanced down at the café again. "How come never bump into my fated mate while driving around town? Some

wolves have all the luck."

I shot him another glance, and Matthew straightened immediately, his expression becoming serious.

"Does she know?" he asked, nodding toward Tori. "That she's the fated mate of Alpha Lucas Grayson? I bet she'd jump for joy if she found out.

Her name is Tori," I corrected him, the syllables feeling significant on my tongue. "And no, I think she doesn't know."

Matthew's expression shifted to confusion. "Wait, what? Why haven't you told her? If you've found your fated mate, why aren't you keeping her

by your side already?"

I watched Tori move between tables with precision and grace, her silver eyes focused on her tasks. Even in her simple uniform, she carried

herself with quiet dignity that many high-born wolves lacked.

"Because after searching for thirty-one years." I said slowly, my eyes never leaving her, "I don't want a mate who accepts me solely out of obligation or fear. This relationship is too fragile."

I turned to face Matthew directly. "I don't want her to be a mechanical pence in my life, fulfilling the role of Luna simply because our wolves recognize each other. I want something deeper."

My fingers tightened around my glass. Call me greedy, but I want her to long to me completely not just her physical presence, but her mind, her trust, her loyalty. My voice lowered. "I want Tori to choose me

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Chapter 7

Matthew leaned back in his chair, eyeing me with newfound interest. "This is fascinating. I've never seen you care about anyone's opinion

before.

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"I've never had a fated mate before, I countered.

"Fair point. Matthew drummed his fingers on the table. "But you can't keep this secret forever, Lucas."

"I'll tell her when the time is right," I said firmly. I paused for a moment, considering. "Though there's a chance she might realize it on her

own.

I took another sip of my drink, contemplating the biological realities of our situation. Omegas typically have a more delayed response to the

mate bond.

Duke stirred restlessly within me, clearly impatient with this biological delay. The wolf in me wanted recognition, wanted claiming, wanted

completion. But the man knew better than to rush something this important.

Matthew stared at my serious expression for a long moment before letting out a deep sigh. His normally playful demeanor gave way to something more thoughtful, almost concerned.

“I honestly don’t know if her catching the eye of someone like you is the best thing that could happen to her or the worst luck imaginable,” he said quietly, his gaze following Tori as she moved. “That girl has no idea what’s coming her way-being suddenly thrust into the spotlight as the mate of the most powerful Alpha in Moonhaven.”

“She won’t face it alone,” I said, my voice dropping to a low, determined rumble. “Whatever challenges come with being my Luna, I’ll be right there beside her. I’ll handle any threat, silence any gossip, eliminate any obstacle.”

The intensity in my own voice surprised even me. “Nothing bad will happen to her on my watch.”

Matthew studied me for a moment before his lips curved into a wry smile “Well, I guess I should tell Megan to finally give up her decade-long crush on you,” he said with forced lightness. “Seems like it’s past time for her to move on.”

Matthew had actively played matchmaker between me and his sister for years, orchestrating “accidental” meetings and creating opportunities for us to spend time together. But love and the mate bond couldn’t be manufactured through persistence or careful planning.

Our conversation paused as we both noticed Tori starting to turn off the lights in the café below. The other staff had already left, and she appeared to be handling the closing duties alone.

Matthew raised an eyebrow, a mischievous grin spreading across his face. Aren’t you going to offer to walk her home?” he asked. “Might as well commit to your role as her knight in shining armor. The heroic Alpha who saved her from trouble and then gallantly escorts her safely through

the night.

I shook my head slightly. “That would be too obvious, wouldn’t it?” My eyes tracked Tori’s movements as she slung her bag over her shoulder. “I will make sure she gets home safely, but she won’t know.”

Matthew rolled his eyes dramatically ‘Listen to you-the great tactical Alpha, applying strategy to courtship.” He shook his head with a sigh “Love really does reduce even the most brilliant minds to mush.

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## **Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 8**

Chapter 8

Tori's POV:

24%

I flipped the café sign to "Closed" and double-checked the register one last time.

My first day at Moonlight Shadow had gone smoothly enough, though my muscles ached from the constant movement. Still, physical exhaustion was easier to handle than the mental strain of navigating my new reality as an Omega fresh out of detention.

After ensuring all the lights were off and the security system was armed, slung my backpack over my shoulder and stepped out into the crisp night air.

The journey home was uneventful, despite the occasional sensation of unseen eyes following my movements.

To my surprise, lights still blazed from the windows of the main house. I'd expected everyone to be in their rooms by now. As I approached the front door, it swung open, spilling warm light onto the porch.

Mia stepped out, followed by a tall, handsome young man I didn't recognize. They were laughing about something, their conversation cutting off abruptly when they noticed me.

"Oh, Mia's smile disappeared. "You're back."

I nodded politely, preparing to walk past them without engagement.

"Wait," the young man said, looking me up and down. "You must be Tori."

I stopped, maintaining a careful distance. He was well-dressed in designer clothes, with the confident posture of someone born into privilege. But I'm sure I don't know him.

"Mia, he continued, his eyes never leaving mine, "this is your stepmother's Omega daughter? She's much prettier than you described."

Mia's face flushed with poorly concealed jealousy. "Yes, that's her."

Hunter stepped forward, extending his hand. "Hunter Cole. It's a pleasure to meet you."

I nodded but didn't take his hand. "Excuse me, I need to get inside."

"What's the rush?" His smile widened. "We were just about to take a walk the garden. Would you like to join us?"

"No, thank you," I replied, keeping my voice neutral.

I could feel Mia's glare burning into the side of my face as Hunter's attention remained fixed on me.

"Another time, then," he said, his tone making it clear he expected there would be another time.

I didn't respond, simply slipping past them into the house.

Ten minutes later, as I was hanging my one decent outfit to dry in the bathroom connected to my small bedroom, I heard the front door slam. Heavy footsteps stormed up the stairs, and my door flew open without washing

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Chapter 8

Mia stood there, her eyes blazing. "What's the hell wrong with you?"

I continued hanging my damp clothes, not bothering to look at her. "What was what?"

"Don't play dumb," she hissed. "You deliberately came home right when you knew Hunter would be here."

I turned to face her, keeping my expression calm. "I finished work and came home. That's all."

24%

“Liar!” Mia stepped into my room uninvited. “You knew Hunter would be at our house tonight, and you deliberately timed your arrival perfectly to run into him.”

The accusation was so ridiculous I almost laughed. “How would I know that?”

“You’re trying to steal him from me,” she continued as if I hadn’t spoken. Just like you tried to steal Ethan from Fiona.”

That stung, but I refused to show it. “I have no interest in Hunter Cole or any other wolf. Now, please leave my room.”

“Stay away from him,” Mia warned, her finger pointed at my face. “And this is my home. You may have fooled my father, but I know what you really are a criminal Omega who doesn’t know her place.”

After she stormed out, I sat heavily on my bed, exhaustion washing over me. The irony wasn’t lost on me—accused of theft twice in one day, first a bracelet and now someone’s affection. Neither of which I wanted.

Lying back on the thin mattress, I stared at the ceiling, remembering Mrs. Blake had mentioned that Moonridge offered free dormitory accommodations for students who needed them. I needed to look into that option sooner rather than later. Living in the Price house was becoming unbearable, with Mia finding new ways to harass me every other day.

At least Hannah hadn’t insisted I attend Mia’s prestigious academy. Though Moonridge High’s resources couldn’t compare to the elite school where Mia strutted around like she owned the place, I was grateful for the reprieve.

As I closed my eyes, trying to will myself to sleep, an unexpected image appeared in my mind—Lucas Grayson stepping between me and danger at the café. Those piercing blue eyes that seemed to see right through me, the commanding presence that made even aggressive wolves cower.

I was surprised that someone of his status would bother defending an Omega like me. Most Alphas wouldn’t spare a second glance at our troubles.

The disparity between wolves was truly vast—some soared high above, untouched by the dirt of the world, while others like me remained trapped in the mud below, unable to break free no matter how hard we struggled.

Sunday afternoon, I collected my first week’s pay from Greg at the café.

I immediately planned how to use it—two sets of clean clothes to rotate through the week would be my first purchase. And just as importantly, I needed to repay Mrs. Blake for the moonstone she'd lent me

I tucked the moonstone carefully into my inner pocket and headed for the bus stop. My destination was Twilight Market on the outskirts of Moonhaven—a place where lower-income wolves could find affordable goods. The prices at Howling Plaza in the city center were far beyond my

means.

After purchasing two simple outfits and basic toiletries at Twilight Market I wanted to return the moonstone Mrs. Blake'd lent me and ask about dormitory options.

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Chapter 8

As I approached her office, my hand raised to knock, when heated voices from inside made me freeze.

—Sullivan girl has no place here,” a male voice spat. You really scraped the bottom of the barrel with this one, Sarah.”

“Every student deserves an education, White, Mrs. Blake replied firmly.

“She’s an ex-convict! Do you know what that could do to our school’s reputation? One bad apple spoils the bunch.”

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“That’s enough, Catherine, Mrs. Blake said firmly. “The principal agreed to accept her. Tori is a student in my class now, and you have no right to judge her like this.”

Catherine White—I recognized the name as the teacher of Class 19, the honors class.

No wonder your students perform so poorly,” Catherine sneered. “When their teacher insists on collecting garbage for her classroom, you’re doing them a disservice with your bleeding heart, Sarah. Mark my words—you’ll regret this decision.”

I knocked firmly on the door, deliberately loud enough to interrupt their argument.

The voices inside fell silent immediately. After a moment, Mrs. Blake called out, "Come in."

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## **Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 9**

Claimed by the Alpha's Love

Chapter 9

Tori's POV:

I pushed the door open to find Mrs. Blake standing behind her desk, her face flushed with anger, while Catherine White stood with her arms

crossed, lips pressed into a thin line.

Both women froze when they saw me.

Mrs. Blake recovered first, her expression quickly shifting from surprise to concern. "Tori! I didn't expect to see you today."

Catherine gave me a contemptuous once-over, her nostrils flaring slightly as if she'd caught an unpleasant scent. Without another word, she brushed past me, her shoulder deliberately bumping mine as she exited.

After she left, Mrs. Blake's shoulders sagged. "How much of that did you hear?" she asked softly.

"Enough," I admitted.

"Please don't take her words to heart," she said, gesturing for me to sit down. "Some people here... they have very rigid views about social hierarchy."

I shook my head, my voice steadier than I expected. "It's fine, Ms. Blake. I heard worse."

"Thank you for accepting me into your class," I said quietly.

Mrs. Blake's eyes softened. "What happened in the past should stay in the past. It's time to look forward now."

I reached into my pocket and carefully pulled out the moonstone. "I wanted to return this to you."

Mrs. Blake smiled as I placed the smooth, luminescent stone in her palm. "Tori, you don't need to return this."

"I can't accept that," I said firmly. "It's too valuable. I hesitated before adding, "But I appreciate your kindness more than I can say."

She looked like she wanted to protest further, but must have seen the determination in my eyes. With a small nod, she closed her fingers around the moonstone.

"Speaking of my situation, I continued, "you mentioned Moonridge offers free dormitory accommodations for students. Would it be possible for me to apply? I kept my voice steady, not wanting to reveal my emotion."

Mrs. Blake's expression softened with understanding. "Absolutely. We have several vacancies in the girls' dormitory right now. The facilities are basic but clean." She reached for a drawer in her desk. "I can help you with the paperwork now, if that works for you."

Relief washed over me. "That would be great. Thank you."

"Don't mention it," she said warmly.

The paperwork took less than twenty minutes to complete. By that evening I was approved for immediate occupancy in Moonridge's east campus dormitory. Moving out was even simpler than getting approved-ad so few possessions that everything fit into my single backpack.

When I informed Hannah of my decision to move to the school dormitory, her only response was a dismissive wave of her hand and a

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Chapter 9

muttered, "Less trouble for everyone." Not a single question about why I was leaving or if I would be safe. Not that I expected anything

different.

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I entered the classroom earlier than usual the next morning.

The hallways of Moonridge High were quieter at this hour, with only a few students milling about, most of them keeping their distance when they noticed me.

Mrs. Blake had worked hard to keep my history confidential – only the teachers and administration knew about my detention. But students still saw me as an oddity: a 21-year-old Omega trying to finish high school with teenagers. The whispers followed me everywhere.

As I made my way to my seat in the back corner of the classroom, I froze mid-step. Something was different.

My isolated desk, purposely separated from others as if my status were a communicable disease, was no longer alone. The empty desk beside mine now had textbooks stacked neatly on its surface, a pink backpack hanging from the chair.

I glanced around the empty classroom, confusion washing over me.

Mrs. Blake had arranged this isolated seating on my first day, not out of cruelty but practicality. After several students had loudly protested about sitting next to an “average Omega,” she’d quietly moved me to the back corner, creating a buffer of empty space that seemed to satisfy everyone.

“It’s temporary,” she’d assured me with an apologetic smile. “Just until things settle down.”

No one wanted to sit next to the misfit Omega.” But now someone had invaded that empty space.

Who would willingly choose to sit next to us? Tracy, my wolf, stirred with curiosity.

I shrugged it off. Probably just someone’s idea of a prank-leave their things here, then make a big scene about not wanting to sit with me after

all.

Settling into my seat, I pulled out my notebook and began reviewing yesterday’s lunar phase calculations. The classroom gradually filled with students, their voices dropping to whispers whenever they glanced my way I kept my head down, pretending not to notice.

“Well, look who’s still here, a sneering voice interrupted my concentration “The old Omega didn’t drop out after all.”

I looked up to find a malicious girl standing before my desk, flanked by two other girls.

“I don’t know why they let someone your age back in with normal students she continued, looking me up and down with distaste. “Shouldn’t you be in adult education or something? Four years is a long time to be away from school.”

I remained silent, which only seemed to irritate her more.

“Hey!” she snapped, leaning closer. ‘I’m talking to you, Omega.”

“She’s clearly not interested in whatever you’re saying, came a clear voice from behind them. “So maybe take the hint?”

The three girls turned to see who had dared to interrupt.

A petite girl with curly brown hair and bright eyes pushed past them, carrying a stack of books and wearing a smile that seemed completely out of place in this tense situation

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Chapter 9

“Who asked you?” That girl snapped.

“Nobody,” the girl replied, still smiling. “Just like nobody asked for your opinion on who belongs where.”

The girl’s face flushed with anger. “Are you sure you want to make an enemy of me?”

“Lily, one of her friends whispered urgently, tugging at her sleeve. “Don’t forget she’s Principal Walker’s niece.”

Lily froze but quickly recovered, tossing her hair over her shoulder. “Whatever. She’s not worth our time anyway. With a final glare in my

direction, she and her friends retreated to their seats across the classroom

The curly-haired girl turned to me with a bright smile, as if the confrontation had never happened.

“Hey! I’m Morgan Baker,” she said, extending her hand.

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## **Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 10**

Chapter 10

Tori's POV:

24%

I stared at the outstretched hand in front of me, momentarily frozen. After four years of isolation and the cold shoulder treatment, genuine

kindness felt foreign, almost suspicious.

But something about her easy demeanor broke through my hesitation. I reached out and shook her hand.

"Tori Sullivan," I said quietly. "Thank you for your help."

"No biggie." Morgan plopped down in the seat beside mine.

I stared at her in confusion. "You... asked to sit here?"

Morgan grinned. "Yep! You looked way more interesting than my last deskmate."

"Why would you want to sit next to me?" I asked bluntly. "You know what everyone says about me."

Morgan shrugged. "People say lots of things. Most of it's garbage." She began arranging colorful pens and notebooks on her desk. "Besides, my mom always says you should make your own judgments about people instead of listening to rumors."

She glanced at my half-completed worksheet and her eyes widened dramatically. "Whoa, you're actually good at these lunar calculations! Like, really good!"

"I'm completely hopeless at this stuff," Morgan admitted, gesturing to her blank paper. "Like, seriously, the moon phases might as well be written in ancient wolf runes for all I understand them."

She looked between my paper and her blank one with newfound hope. "Oh thank the Moon Goddess, I might actually survive this class now. You're my salvation, Tori Sullivan!"

“You don’t have to sit here,” I said carefully. “They will start treating you differently... isolating you.”

Morgan waved her hand dismissively, seemingly unbothered by the prospect.

“Are you kidding? That’s like an added bonus!” she lowered her voice to a conspiratorial whisper, “Please. The only advantage I care about is being able to take my naps in peace without anyone poking me awake. Trust me, I’ve thought this through.”

Before I could respond, Mrs. Blake entered the classroom, calling everyone to order. As I turned my attention to the front, I couldn’t help but feel slightly disoriented by this unexpected turn of events.

A deskmate. A possibly friendly deskmate. I wasn’t sure whether to be grateful or suspicious.

Be careful, Tracy warned in the back of my mind. No one is this nice without a reason.

And she was right. I’d learned that lesson the hard way. Four years ago. Fina had been just as friendly-sharing secrets, braiding my hair during sleepovers, promising we’d be friends forever. I’d believed her completely, opened my heart to her. Then she d orchestrated my downfall when I became an obstacle to her being with Ethan.

That betrayal had taught me an expensive lesson: every smile could hide sharp teeth, every kind gesture might be setting a trap.

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Chapter 10

24%.

I glanced at Morgan’s cheerful face as she organized her colorful pens. She seemed genuine, which made me feel guilty for my suspicion, but

then again, so had Fiona.

True to her word, Morgan lasted approximately fifteen minutes into the lecture before her head started nodding.

By the time Mrs. Blake was explaining the influence of lunar phases on wolf transformation energies, Morgan was fast asleep, her head cradled on her folded arms.

I tried to focus on taking notes, but found myself occasionally glancing at my sleeping desk mate. A thin line of drool had escaped the corner of her mouth, creating a small dark spot on her sleeve.

She's like a puppy who fell asleep mid-play, Tracy commented in my mind, her tone amused.

Maybe we've misjudged her, she continued in my mind, her tone thoughtful. She seems genuinely nice.

When Mrs. Blake announced the end of class, Morgan jolted upright with such force that she nearly toppled out of her chair.

"Wha-? Did I miss something?" she mumbled, wiping the corner of her mouth with her sleeve.

"Just the entire class," I replied, unable to keep a small smile from forming.

Morgan groaned, scratching her head awkwardly. "I just didn't sleep well last night."

I nodded understandingly.

Mrs. Blake assigned us to work on calculations related to the moon's phases and their effects on different wolf classifications.

I found the exercise straightforward, quickly working through the formulas for Alpha, Beta, and Omega energy fluctuations during different lunar phases.

I finished the worksheet in record time, but when I looked up, I was surprised to find Morgan surrounded by at least five girls from our class.

Rather than being isolated as I'd feared, Morgan was at the center of attention. The girls huddled around her desk, whispering excitedly and giggling.

I caught fragments of their conversation-all centered around Lucas Grayson.

Is it true his eyes glow silver-blue when he's angry?"

"Do you know what kind of Luna he's looking for?"

“Has he really turned down every arranged mating the council has suggested?”

“Have you ever seen him without a shirt on?”

Morgan seemed increasingly irritated by the barrage of questions, her earlier sleepiness replaced by visible frustration.

\*For Moon’s sake, I don’t spy on him! I’m not some creepy stalker,’ she hilly exclaimed, throwing up her hands. Now seram before I tell everyone about that time you got tejected at the pack run, Heather.”

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Chapter 10

The girls scattered quickly, some looking disappointed, others embarrassed Morgan turned to me with an apologetic grimace.

“Sorry about that. Did they disturb you?”

I shook my head. “No, I was finished anyway.”

24%

“Being ‘popular’ isn’t all it’s cracked up to be,” she sighed, making air quotes around the word. “Just because my mom works at the Grayson estate, everyone thinks I have insider gossip about Lucas.”

I hesitated, curiosity getting the better of me. So...you know Alpha Lucas

For a split second, something flashed in Morgan’s eyes-nervousness?-but it disappeared so quickly I might have imagined it.

“I guess? Sort of?” Morgan shrugged, her tone deliberately casual.

“My family has lived in the staff quarters at Grayson territory since before I was born. My dad helped save one of the Grayson elders during a territory dispute years ago, so they’ve always been good to us. I’ve seen Lucas around occasionally.”

She paused, studying me with sudden curiosity. “What about you? Do you know him?”

The question caught me off guard. Flashes of our few encounters raced through my mind. The fact that we’d barely exchanged two sentences.

“No,” I said, shaking my head.

Morgan’s expression shifted—first confusion, then unmistakable relief washing over her features.

“Oh. Okay,” she said, her shoulders visibly relaxing. “He’s basically the most eligible bachelor in all of Moonhaven, you know. Every unmated female from here to the northern territories probably dreams about him.

I couldn’t help but think of Lucas’s striking features—those intense silver-blue eyes, his commanding presence, the rare white wolf form. Combined with his position as First Alpha and his business empire, he was undeniably the catch of the century.

“He certainly has the... qualifications,” I admitted.

Noticing the dreamy look that had crept into Morgan’s eyes, I couldn’t resist teasing her a little.

‘Including you in that admiring crowd, I take it?’

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