

# HIS REJECTED MATE'S REVENGE

## Chapter 2 | HIS REJECTED MATE'S REVENGE



Astrid's POV.

If high school had royalty, Ariana would be queen. No, scratch that—she is queen. Walking down the hallway with her entourage feels like watching a music video: hair that gleams like it belongs in a shampoo commercial, lip gloss so shiny it reflects the fluorescent lights, and that perfect laugh that makes every guy trip over his own shoelaces.

And then there's me—her twin. The footnote to her fairy tale.

The bell hasn't even rung, and I'm already counting down the hours until I can hide in my room again.

I'm at my locker, swapping out my English book for my art sketchpad, when I hear it. The laugh. Hers. Loud, perfect, and cruel. My stomach twists.

"Look at this!" Ariana's voice carries down the hall like an announcement on the PA system.

I freeze. I know that tone. That tone means trouble—for me.

I was always the butt of her jokes and pranks, always the one at the receiving end.

Slowly, I turn, and my worst fear is confirmed: Ariana is standing with Madison, Chloe, and Liam—the boy half the school drools over. In Ariana's hand is my sketchbook. My private sketchbook.

Oh no.

Those are in my portfolio.

What I would submit to Edom.

My throat closes.

"Give that back."

Ariana smiles sweetly, which is her signature look before she ruins someone's life.

"Relax, Astrid. We're just appreciating your... artwork."

Madison leans over Ariana's shoulder, her fake nails clicking against the cover.

"Ooh, what's this? An angel with, like, a sword? Cute. Super edgy."

"Seriously, Ari, your sister's got a wild imagination." Liam says, laughing as Ariana flips to another page.

"Is this supposed to be her wolf? Damn, this wolf is sexy."

Liam let out a wolf whistle, and heat flooded my cheeks as they all laughed.

I shove through them and snatch the sketchbook out of Ariana's hands, clutching it to my chest like it's a life preserver.

"What is wrong with you?"

Ariana tilts her head, giving me that innocent look that everyone falls for. Everyone except me.

"What? We were just looking."

"No, you weren't," I snap. My voice shakes, and I hate it. "You were making fun of me."

Her smile widens, sharp and sugary.

"Astrid, don't be so dramatic. Honestly, you should thank me. At least people are finally noticing you for once."

"Noticing me?" I choke out a laugh that sounds more like a sob. "By humiliating me?"

Ariana shrugs like it's no big deal.

"Oh, come on. It's just a few drawings. Who cares?"

"I care," I whisper.

She leans closer, lowering her voice so only I can hear.

"Then maybe stop hiding behind them and try being... I don't know... normal. Freak."

Before I can respond, Madison's voice cuts in.

"Hey, Ari, come on. We're gonna be late for wolf history. Liam, you coming?"

Liam grins at Ariana.

“Obviously.”

She gives me one last smirk, the kind that twists in my gut like a knife, then saunters off with them like nothing happened. Like she didn’t just rip me open and leave me bleeding in front of the whole hallway.

The bell rings, but I don’t move. I just stand there, clutching my sketchbook so hard my knuckles turn white, wishing I could disappear.

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By lunch, the whole school knows. Of course they do. Ariana doesn’t even need social media to spread gossip—she has her smile, her charm, and a fan club that hangs on her every word.

I sit at the far corner of the cafeteria, stabbing my salad with a plastic fork like it personally offended me. The whispers float across the room like smoke.

“Did you see her drawings?”

“Total freak.”

“Like, does she think she has the third eye?”

"She hasn't shifted yet, and she's drawing her wolf."

"Her wolf's probably going to be red."

"That would be so ugly, yuck."

"She might be like her grandmother."

I keep my eyes on my tray, but my ears burn.

“Mind if I sit?” a voice asks.

I glance up and almost drop my fork. It’s Mason—quiet, tall, always reading in the library like me. We’ve never really talked, but I’ve noticed him. Mostly because he’s the only person in school who looks like he hates being here as much as I do.

“Um... sure,” I say, scooting over.

He sits down, dropping his backpack on the bench.

“Ignore them,” he says, nodding toward the whispering crowd. “People here are idiots.”

A surprised laugh escapes me before I can stop it.

“That’s... accurate.”

He smirks, pulling out a book from his bag.

“You draw, right? I mean, obviously, since...” He gestures vaguely.

I groan, dropping my head into my hands.

“Don’t remind me.”

“Hey,” he says softly. “They’re just jealous.”

I snort.

“Yeah, sure. Jealous of what? My ability to make a total fool of myself?”

“No,” he says simply. “Jealous that you’re good at something they don’t understand. You’d definitely make it at Edom. You should apply.”

For a second, I forget how to breathe. No one’s ever said that to me before.

Before I can respond, though, a shadow falls over the table.

“Well, isn’t this adorable?” Ariana’s voice drips like honey, but it’s poisonous. She’s standing there with her friends, tray in hand, eyes sparkling with amusement.

“Go away, Ariana,” I say through clenched teeth.

“Relax,” she coos, sliding into the seat beside me without asking. Madison and Chloe take the other spots, practically boxing me in. Mason tenses across from me, his jaw tightening.

“So,” Ariana says loudly enough for half the cafeteria to hear. “Astrid’s got herself a lunch date! Who knew?”

I want the floor to open up and swallow me whole.

“Stop.”

This was extremely embarrassing, with someone who didn’t even know me.

Way to go, Ari.

“Why?” Ariana grins wickedly. “This is cute. Really. You two can bond over... I don’t know... books and weird self-sketches. You both are probably mates. Two nerds fated together buried in books.”

“That’s enough,” Mason says, his voice calm but firm.

Ariana blinks, feigning innocence.

“Oh? I’m just looking out for my sister. She doesn’t get out much. Don’t want her to miss out, or she would be so much alone in her books.”

Madison giggles.

“Or at all.”

My cheeks burn hotter than ever. I shove back my chair, my legs trembling.

“I’m done.”

I grab my tray and storm out, ignoring Ariana’s laughter trailing behind me like chains.

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By the time I make it to the bathroom, the tears I’ve been holding back finally spill over. I lock myself in a stall and sink to the floor, clutching my sketchbook against my chest.

Why does she hate me so much? We’re twins. Sisters. Aren’t we supposed to have each other’s backs?

The truth is, Ariana doesn’t just want to be the best. She wants me to be less. And I’m so tired of letting her win.

I wipe my eyes and flip open the sketchbook. The angel with the sword stares back at me, strong and unbreakable. Everything I’m not.

Even the picture of how I imagined my wolf to be looked strong and independent, with a backbone.

She is probably going to turn out to be a red wolf like grandmother, but she sure as hell looked fierce.

Nothing like me.

But maybe... maybe one day I will be.

