

Latent by Queasy

Chapter 9

After I'd finished showering. I emerged from the bathroom, a load of hot steam escaping into the room.

I went in search of what to wear for breakfast, the young omega steadfastly at my heels. She began pelting me with rapid questions.

"How did you do that? I had no idea some werewolves had telekinetic abilities. Why had the Alpha been chasing after you? Are you a hybrid? Half fey? You know, I think you might be because you're really pretty. Do you kn..."

My patience, all the while, had been stretching quite admirably to contain my annoyance. I tuned out her voice as I selected a pair of jeans and a beige blouse.

When I proceeded to wear them, she suddenly fell silent "You can't wear that, Miss."

"Why?"

"For one, Greta would have my head. And two, everyone would be dressed to the nines. It's the Carnival of Lanterns!"

My patience snapped, "So what?!"

"So," she stressed, "you've got to dress like them; or else you won't be part of them."

I scowled, so I was to relieve high school? "Look, I think you're mistaking me for someone who cares about fitting in. I don't, okay? So I'll wear whatever the hell I want to wear." I punctuated my statement by stabbing a leg into my jeans.

The girl winced as if the action caused her pain. –

"I can't let you wear that," she muttered, looking torn.

"Well," I said, brushing out my hair. "I don't have anything else to wear, so you've just got to deal..."

She brightened. "Is that the case? Then you have no cause to worry, Miss! Because Greta will surely know what to do."

Before I could say anything to her heartfelt declaration, she was rushing out the door. I sighed, and continued with brushing my hair.

She returned a while later with a bag, which she proceeded to set down on the dressing table. I looked at it curiously

From it she carefully retrieved a blue strapless gown, glittering jewelries and a pair of silver pumps. She motioned for me to sit on the stool before the table. I did.

Then she started to comb out my hair again and set it into an elegant style. "You've got such beautiful hair, Miss Hilda," she praised as she worked.

"Thank you, and it's just Hilda."

She continued to work in silence, which, in the short time I've known her, was unusual.

I shifted in my seat. "So," I began, "I don't believe I know your name."

"It's Nayla," she said quietly, seeming engrossed in what she was doing.

Comfortable silence reigned after that. I watched through the mirror as she twisted and fumbled with my hair, then came around to poke and prod at my face, before finally saying, "Stand up, Miss, let's get you into your clothes."

After I'd worn the pumps, which were surprisingly my exact size, I shimmied into the dress while Nayla

shuffled behind me to zip it up. She clasped a silver necklace at my nape and wore me a pair of silver earrings.

She stood back to appraise me, her eyes going soft. "You look so beautiful, Miss. Ah-" she said suddenly as if remembering something. "And for the final touch..." She carefully brought out a beautiful white garland from the bag, and placed it on my head. "There," she sighed. "Now you look like a princess."

I beheld myself in the mirror. The white roses stark against my midnight black hair, the diamonds glinting on my slender neck, the shadow of my cleavage showing through the sweetheart neckline, the cobalt blue dress the same shade as my eyes...

Releasing an amazed breath, I asked, "What did you do to me?"

Nayla appeared to panic. "You don't like it?"

Smoothing my hands down the dress, I distantly wondered aloud, "Like it? I love it."

She expelled a relieved breath. "Good, but now we've got to get going," she said urgently.

"Right." I held the long dress away from my feet as I rushed after her.

We walked through halls bustling with werewolves and hastily came down flights of stairs. A silent hall devoid of people led to a set of towering double doors.

In front of it, Nayla bowed before me and said, "Enjoy your breakfast, Miss." With that she turned and left.

Left to my own thoughts and the stiff quiet of the hallway, I stood before the doors, collecting myself. Then I placed my palms on the handles, and turned, entering into the lavish hall filled with Nobles of different calibers.

Around the long glass table set in the middle of the hall, werewolves of different packs, builds and race sat talking amongst themselves, paying me no heed as I drew back a chair and sat down.

The monumental table was lined with oriental vases containing colourful flowers. Silk drapes were pulled back to allow sunlight. The light from the chandeliers above glistened off glass sculptures placed around the white-themed hall.

Near an old Asian Luna sat at the far end of the table, a tall sculpture of an archer was positioned. The pointy end of her drawn arrow was aimed at a boy around my age. He conversed with a group of posh-looking boys dressed in suits.

I awkwardly sat up straighter, realizing that even in all my finery I didn't hold a candle to the people here. Everyone instantly turned to the sound of the doors being shoved open. I walked a tall, blond haired man attired in an expensive looking suit.

He gave an easy smile that immediately put everyone at ease. "Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I'm Alister, the Beta of the Beastclaw pack, and I am sorry to have kept you all waiting for this long."

To smiles and murmurs that said no worries, he continued, "Alpha Vaughan won't be dining with you all, I'm afraid he is..." His face scrunched a little as he looked for the right word. "Indisposed," he said finally.

Or in his Rehabilitating Cell, I thought darkly.

"But rest assured," he continued, "he'll be present for the Lightning."

The Lightning: the official commencement of the festival, where the Alpha lit up one of the lanterns rumored to have passed down generations, and from a Pioneer at that—one of the first werewolves created by the moongoddess.

"Breakfast would be served in a minute." With that he bowed and left the Hall.

Almost immediately a line of omegas filed in, carrying with them large sealed dishes. The spicy smell of food instantly filled my nose and an appreciative murmur rose up in the room.

When all the wares had been placed on the table and every plate filled, we began eating.

As I cut into my salmon, about to put it in my mouth, I felt someone intently watching me. I looked up and was shocked to realize it was father.

Sat opposite me, he continued to watch me, finally asking in a silent tone, "What happened last night?"

I almost spat out seafood. Grabbing a glass of water, I chugged it down. He scowled at my table manners, or lack thereof.

His scowl deepened when I anxiously swiped the back of my palm over my mouth. "What do you mean?" I asked, trying to keep the nervousness away from my voice.

My incorrigible manners forgotten, he leisurely sipped a glass of beer, watching me. "I mean, did anything... unusual happen last night?"

Using my middle finger, I tucked my hair behind my ear. "No. Nope."

Irritably, he muttered something about a seer and fate's will under his breath.