

# Forsaken by the Moon Goddess

## Chapter 4: Family and Judgement

Benedict

“Sweetheart, we’re having an important political dinner this weekend. I don’t know if you have any plans, but you’ll have to cancel them. This is important,” my mother says when I walk in the door after school.

Oh darn. I won’t be able to go to Christa’s birthday party. What a disappointment. Not!

“Of course I’ll be there, mother,” I say, kissing her cheek as I pass.

“Bene! Wait up,” my sister, Bethany, says as she rushes into the house behind me.

My mother decided that we should all have ‘B’ names, Benedict – my father, Benedict – me, Beatrice is my mother and that left Bethany for my sister. Personally, I’d love to have pups someday with names that begin with ANYTHING other than a B.

“What happened with Slade? I know you know,” Bethany says. She and Slade are in the same year. It’s another reason I don’t like upperclassmen bullying freshmen. What if they were bullying MY sister.

“Slade Hartwell?” my mother sneers. “Is he as much trouble as his sister is? You should stay away from him, Bethany.”

“Oh mother, stop it. You’re the one who is always saying we should be above such things a judgmental behavior, but look at you. You’re ALWAYS so judgmental of the Hartwells,” my sister says, challenging my mother. I’ve notice that since she’s gotten her wolf, my sister has become quite vocal about the things she doesn’t like about our family.

Personally, I silently applaud her. I can’t speak out like she does. I’m too much in the limelight. But my sister has nothing to lose by being herself.

“Not the Hartwells, darling, just those adopted children of theirs, Sloane and Slade. Those two should never have been allowed into the packs. They’re nothing

but trouble. I heard that Sloane girl beat up Alpha Carson's Beta. What self-respecting girl does that?"

"Perhaps the better question, mother, is how did Alpha Carson's Beta get beaten up by a girl?" I ask, jumping to Sloane's defense. Honestly, I do it so often at school that it almost comes naturally for me now.

"Oh, not you too, Benedict. That girl is trouble with a capital T. You both need to stay away from them."

"Let me ask you something mother. Would it change your mind to know that Louis and four other ranked members surrounded Slade, a freshman like Bethany, and were bullying him when Sloane entered the situation and punched Louis in his face, protecting her brother? Would it?" I ask already knowing the answer.

My mother can't STAND Sloane and Slade. But she would never say anything outwardly in case she offended Alpha Roman and Luna Samara. Goddess knows we can't afford to get on the wrong side of the most powerful pack in the country. But that doesn't mean that my mother, who says we should not be judgmental, doesn't have whispered conversations with her friends about why those two should never have been allowed in the packs to begin with.

My mother presses her lips together, knowing there is nothing she can say that will sound anything other than judgmental, before spinning on her heels and walking out of the kitchen. Her heels clap sharply enough on the tile floor, echoing around the room as she leaves, to tell me she's not happy without having to say a word.

"Is that what really happened?" Bethany asks.

"Yeah, that's what really happened."

"Good for Sloane. Louis is an asshole," she says.

I grin at my sister. "Don't let dad hear you using that kind of language."

She looks at me and smirks. "Where do you think I learned it from?"

I laugh and my sister kisses my cheek. "Don't become like them. Please Bene. You're better than they are. I mean, dad's okay, but mom's a shit," she says.

"Good to know that I'm okay, but what did your mother do now?" my father asks walking in.

I glance at my sister who sighs heavily.

“I don’t appreciate her double standard, Dad. It’s not fair.”

“Who is her double standard against?” he asks.

“The Hartwells,” she says, watching our father carefully.

Our father, who used to being under constant scrutiny, doesn’t flinch and the look on his face doesn’t change. But I can see the tension in his lips. I probably wouldn’t recognize it if he hadn’t spent years training me to keep my face steady in the face of any type of news. Sometimes I wonder if he doesn’t ask my sister questions like this just so he can practice keeping his face from reacting to whatever is said to him.

“I’m assuming you’re talking about two Hartwells in particular?” he asks, his voice carefully modulated.

“Of course,” Bethany says.

“On that note, I’m out of here,” I say.

“Really Bene, you’re leaving me? You know dad agrees with mom on this.”

“And yet, you still brought it up,” I say, kissing the top of her head and nodding at my father before walking out.

“I didn’t bring it up! He was eavesdropping!” she calls as I head to my room.

It’s a good lesson for my sister. She needs to remember that there are always ears around and she should be careful of what she says, even in our home.

The rest of the night I spend doing homework. I’m not sure how many people in the school know that I’m currently in line to become Valedictorian, or that Sloane is hot on my heels to overtake me. Since I love a challenge, I have no intention of losing. But I’m not even sure SHE knows that she is in the running for Valedictorian. The only reason I know is because Principal Rollins called me into his office and practically begged me to do whatever was necessary to ensure that I became Valedictorian, so he didn’t have to give that title to Sloane.

A part of me wonders if he would fudge the numbers to make me Valedictorian even if I didn’t surpass Sloane. Since I would never want to get the title without earning it, I’m doing everything in my power to make sure that I do.

The next day at school is pretty much the same as usual, except I notice that Slade is walking around campus completely unmolested by upperclassmen.

“Thank you for getting the word out,” I say when I see Ellis.

“I’m not going to lie, there was a lot of grumbling about it. But you know that no one will go against you.”

“I do,” I say, watching as Slade passes some upperclassman. They try to stare him down, but no one says a word and he doesn't flinch at their glares.

“What if that was Bethany, Ellis? What if it was her or your little brother who was being bullied. Wouldn't you want someone to step in?”

He sighs. “Yeah. Yeah, I would.”

Everything remains calm until after lunch. Then, I feel something from two of my pack members. As I hone in, I realize it's fear.

I growl, following the pull to my pack members who are obviously in trouble.

“Alpha, what's going on?” Ellis says, rushing up to me.

“I'm about to find out,” I snarl.

When I walk out of the hallway into the area where the school has its lockers, I'm shocked to see four she-wolves on their knees with their necks raised in submission. I stomp forward, pushing through the crowd who goes silent at my approach.

When I finally get through the sea of people, I'm shocked to see Sloane in front of the she-wolves. Her aura is so strong that it's nearly suffocating. She's the one forcing the she-wolves to their knees.

“Sloane!” I bark. “Let them go!” I command, letting my Alpha aura out.

When her eyes meet mine, I realize it's not Sloane who is forcing the girls' submission, it's Aisling.

“No,” she snarls at me.