

My Mate, My Enemy

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12-16 minutes

Lux Freeman

My hand was grabbed and shaken vigorously as people passed. They all congratulated my father on his speaking skills and congratulated me for being his daughter.

I smiled tightly at all the people who passed, knowing that if they knew what I was, they wouldn't hesitate to shoot me.

"Lux," my dad called. "Lux."

I blinked and looked at him, plastering a dazed smile on my face. "Yeah, Dad?"

"The car, dear."

I looked around and noticed that a car had pulled up to the curb. I moved toward the sleek, black vehicle and smiled as the driver pulled the door open for me.

Once in, the door closed behind me and I rolled down the window.

My dad bent over, planting a kiss on my cheek. "I'll see you later, hun. I'm going to play poker with a few of the guys from the rally."

I smiled. "All right, I'll see you in the morning, Dad."

My dad tapped the side of the car twice and the driver immediately began driving to the estate. I looked back at my dad and watched as two men got into a fancy red car behind me.

I spun around and watched the buildings pass by as I was driven back to the main estate where I lived. My dad made lots of money off the speeches he did, so we were generally well off.

The car turned right and I relaxed into my seat, knowing that I was close to home. It was pretty often that my father played poker with the people from his rallies.

He was the second-in-command of the Sun Warriors. They were a group of werewolf hunters that had been around for years. My dad was their media representative and liaison.

“Only a few minutes away, Miss Freeman.”

I inclined my head to the driver. “Thanks.”

I swiveled in my seat and noticed the fancy red car was still behind us. Choosing to ignore this, I turned around in my seat and played with my seatbelt nervously. I was a naturally anxious person.

I looked up just as the words *Freeman Manor* passed by and blew out a breath of relief. Today, I had been to two rallies with my father and my head was pounding.

I unbuckled my seat belt as the car rolled to a stop and reached for the door handle just as the car was sent flying forward.

I screamed as I was flung through the air. The driver was thrown through the windshield and skidded forward lifelessly along the pavement in front of the car.

I groaned and touched my head where it had smashed into the seat in front of mine. My fingers came away red and I had to swallow back bile, blood made me nauseous.

“Julius?” I yelled shakily. The driver remained still and I felt a fury of panic tighten my stomach.

I brushed broken glass off my pencil skirt and tucked my bangs behind my ear with shaking fingers.

I was about to exit the car when, suddenly, the car was moving again. I opened my mouth in a silent scream as the car flew through the air and rolled twice.

When I had finally stopped moving, I was lying on the roof of the car. The seat belt, which was dangling above me, grazed my forehead.

I coughed a few times and opened my eyes to see two figures bent over in laughter. An unidentifiable fear gripped my heart as I realized what was happening.

I tried to move but found myself stuck as the doors would not open. Slowly, I crawled toward the front windshield that had been shattered when Julius had flown through it.

I ignored my cut-up hands and knees as I crawled, not caring that my skirt was ripped up the leg and the matching blazer was in tatters.

I rolled out of the car and onto the pavement, grimacing as the glass cut into my back.

“Well, I didn’t think you’d survive that.”

I looked up to see an older man bent over me, his beard was salt and peppered along with his hair. “How did you—?” I started.

The other man, who was bald, interrupted me. “How did we throw the car?” He laughed, and a gold tooth flashed in his mouth. “A little bit of muscle power.”

I felt my eyes grow wide as I realized who, or what, I was dealing with: werewolves. Fear gripped my heart as I thought about everything I had ever learned about them.

“They’ll rip you apart. They’re faster than us and stronger.”

“You mean, you *threw* the car?”

The man with the beard laughed. “Who else?”

I scrambled to my knees, ignoring the urge to puke and the ache in all my bones. I blinked away the blood that was running into my eyes and put my hands out in front of me.

“Please..., don’t do this.”

“Stan Freeman,” the bald man said. He said my father’s name as if there was acid in his mouth. “The man that just about ruined the only chance we had of ending the Feral War peacefully.”

I felt my heartbeat pick up. “Please, don’t hurt me.”

The bearded man bent down until he was at eye level with me. “You smell like vanilla.” I cringed as he dragged a rough finger across my cheek and earned a laugh from each man.

“Our intention was to kill you,” the bald man admitted. “But we’re a forgiving race.” He grinned again and his golden tooth caught my attention.

“W-What are you going to do, then?”

The werewolf with the beard shrugged. “I think me and Davy can think of something besides killing you.”

“You’re right about that, Pep,” Davy agreed with a crackling laugh. “I bet old Stan would blow a gasket if she was sent off to live with a werewolf. Forced to bear a werewolf’s pups.”

I shivered as he twirled a piece of my white-blonde hair around his fingers.

“Ready to go, blondie?”

All of a sudden, two hands grabbed me and I was yanked to my feet. One of my black flats fell off in the process.

“Go? Go, where?” My voice wavered as I spoke.

Neither of the men answered as I was dragged toward their red car. We passed Julius on the way and I called out his name shakily, silently begging that he would respond.

“I wouldn’t bother,” the bearded man barked. “Your cab driver is dead. But people are easy-come, easy-go to you humans, so I’m sure you’ll get over it.”

I felt my eyes water as I thought about Julius’ seven-year-old daughter who came to my father’s Christmas party every year.

They shoved me into the back of the car and buckled me in tightly. Then, the two werewolves sat in the front and joked with each other, turning on the radio and singing along to the old rock music.

“I wouldn’t bother trying to escape, blondie,” the bald man said as he saw me reach for the lock on the door. “We’d just run after you, and I can beat you in a foot race, I assure you.”

I sat back in my seat and looked out the window, tilting my chin up defiantly.

After a few moments, I allowed myself to look at the two men more in detail. I had never met a werewolf before but they were just as ruthless as I had imagined them to be.

I looked down at my own hands and wondered about my genetic makeup. I knew my mother was a werewolf, but I didn't feel ruthless. I didn't feel strong.

In fact, I was remarkably mundane. Maybe what my father had told me was true. I hadn't inherited my mother's disease.

The bald man turned around in the passenger's seat and grinned crookedly at me. "So, blondie, how many werewolves has your father killed?"

I stuck my bottom lip out. "I-I don't... None."

I felt a hard slap across my cheek and winced as my head snapped to the side.

"Wrong answer," he growled. My eyes widened as he growled. I had never heard a more feral sound.

"We have a problem, Davy," the man with the beard, Pep, announced.

Both Davy and I looked out of the front window to see that a police block had been set up. If I hadn't been in shock, I probably would've cried in relief.

In my panic, I'd forgotten that whenever anyone exits or enters a city, they must go through a police block and show proof of birth.

"Pull out the papers," Pep whispered to Davy.

The bald man leaned forward and rummaged through the glove box until he found a bundle of crumpled-up papers.

When we were two cars away from being checked out, Davy turned around and snarled at me.

"Now, you're going to pretend to sleep, got it?"

I swallowed. "No."

Pep swore. "Now you've done it." Quick as lightning, Davy's hand was wrapped around my throat. I let out a startled noise and clutched at his finger reflexively.

“Listen closely, you little human scum, we’re being nice by sparing you your life. The same compassion would not be found if our roles were reversed.

“So, either you’re going to pretend to sleep, or Pep and I are going to kill you and take down as many humans as we can before bullets are lodged in our skulls.”

“Okay,” I gasped. “I’ll sleep.”

Davy smiled and pulled his hand back, returning to his seat and not saying another word.

A police officer tapped on the glass and Pep rolled down the window, offering a large smile. I pressed my head against the window and closed my eyes slightly, peeking beneath my eyelashes.

“Hey there, officer,” Pep greeted casually. He sounded as though he had done this a million times.

“Hey there...,”—the young officer looked at the papers—“Felix and Mitchell.”

Davy laughed heartily. “I prefer Mitch.”

“How are you two tonight?” the officer said, sweeping his flashlight over their faces.

He swiveled the light to my face and I snapped my eyes closed. I hoped there was enough light for him to see the blood smeared down the side of my face. “Who’s that?”

Davy looked over his shoulder and clapped Pep on the shoulder. “That’s my niece. Felix, here, is my younger brother.”

The officer shuffled through the papers and frowned. “Her name is Carry Miller, correct?”

Pep grinned and nodded. “She’s my care-bear. We had a long day in the city and she’s tired. We went to see Stan Freeman speak today.”

I felt my stomach twist and watched as the officer suddenly appeared more friendly.

“I saw that guy speak two years ago. He’s great, isn’t he?”

Davy’s smile was tight on his face. “The best.”

“Well, have a nice night.” The officer passed Pep back the papers and signaled us forward. Apparently, we were clear.

I turned and watched the police block fade into the distance and had to resist the urge to cry. I had just blown my one chance because I wasn’t brave enough to try.

“You’re a good actress, blondie,” Davy said with a laugh.

We drove for what seemed like hours. They kept the radio blasting the entire time, singing along to classic rock. I cringed when “We Are the Champions” played for the fourth time.

“It’s about time we got here,” Davy grumbled. “My back is killing me.”

The car rolled to a stop in the middle of an open field. To my left was a tiny house with a roof that looked like it would collapse at any moment.

“Let’s go, girly,” Pep ordered.

I was shuffled out of the car, and I cried out as I was jerked around, causing my stiff bones to crack. I looked down at the white shirt under my blazer and cringed; it was covered in blood.

I half walked and was half dragged toward the house. As I looked around, I noticed eyes staring at me from behind the tall grass.

One pair of eyes moved, and someone stepped forward to reveal a large, fur-covered body. I squealed as the wolf came closer to sniff my hair. I was paralyzed with fear while Davy and Pep laughed.

We entered the house, turned right, and went down a set of stairs. I could hear whoops and yells emitting from the basement. When we made it to the bottom of the steps, I realized what was going on.

Five humans had been scuttled into the corner; they looked frightened as werewolves yelled and laughed among one another. When they noticed me, they went silent and turned around.

“No way!” shouted one woman. She moved forward and touched the side of my face before giving it a hard slap. “Why if it isn’t little Lux Freeman.”

Apparently, I was well known.

An older man to the right snapped his head up, my name catching his attention. He was far more contained than the other werewolves in the room, and better dressed.

Nonetheless, his eyes, which were hazel, still had the slight yellowish hue that identified him as a werewolf.

“You told us you were going fishing, not that you were going to reel in a shark,” one of the guys shouted. This comment was followed by laughter.

“We saw her and couldn’t pass up the opportunity.” Davy leaned down to my ear and whispered, “Now, go make me some money.”

I was thrown among the five other humans, who all backed away from me. I curled my knees up to my chest and wrapped my arms around them, wishing I could disappear.

“Let’s start the bidding with the scrawny boy in the back.” The boy behind me gave a quiet gasp and the betting began. Soon after, he was sold to a large woman for three hundred dollars.

One by one, the other humans were sold off until only I was left.

The announcer grinned at me, shoving his long straw-colored hair behind his ear. “Now, for our main attraction, Lux Freeman, the daughter of Stan Freeman, the Man of Hate.

“Let’s start the bidding at one thousand dollars.”

Immediately, hands shot into the air, and bids were shouted as each werewolf tried to get a piece of me. I cringed and covered my ears with my bloody hands, hoping I would wake up in the car.

“I will give you seventy-five thousand dollars for her.”

I snapped my head up to look at the older man in the business suit. His yellow eyes smiled at me from across the room, sending a cold shiver down my spine.

Off to the side, Davy and Pep were silently celebrating.

I was picked up and yanked to my feet. The announcer with the long hair leaned over my shoulder and whispered in my ear, “Have fun.”

And then everything went dark.

