
Chapter 5

"So, Wendell's out there, cooking up something that could wipe us out?"

A shiver ran down my back.

"We've got to stop him, Wolfgang. You need to ask Eleanor for help."

He frowned at that, and I felt a familiar wave of frustration.

"Don't—" I held up my hand, stopping him before he could argue. "She's the only witch we've got, and the only one who knows about potions."

He looked taken aback by the sharpness in my voice. "I don't trust her."

"Well, not everyone we trust turns out to be good for us." The words slipped out before I could stop them. He looked hurt. And he had every right to be.

Could I ever let go of the past that haunted me so?

I'd dreamt of Klaus last night, and many nights before. In these nightmares, I was back in the dungeons, praying Wolfgang would save me before it was too late.

He didn't.

And I wanted to forgive him.

But I also wanted to hold on to the pain.

I turned away, suddenly feeling bitter.

The last person I wanted to ask for help was Eleanor. But Aurora was right.

I looked at her, her soft lips trembling as she spoke.

She looked so beautiful under the glow of the evening moon, not quite full.

"Whatever your issues with Eleanor are, you have to do this, Wolfgang."

I couldn't help the anger bubbling up inside me.

Eleanor had always brushed off my attempts to approach her. She kept pushing my mate around.

Even if it meant putting her through endless trials. It hurt to see Aurora suffer so much, all in the name

of self-discovery.

"I don't trust her," I muttered. "She's always on your case. Always making you do things you don't want to."

"Well, she's not the only one, is she?" Aurora raised her eyebrows at me.

I felt my cheeks heat up. I knew she hadn't fully forgiven me for all the wrongs I'd done when I found out she was my mate.

Yes, Eleanor had put her through trials, but they were probably meant to help her become her best self.

Me? I hadn't done anything like that.

I had dated a woman who had scorned and poisoned her, then tried to have her killed, knowing all along that Aurora was my chosen one.

I had hired her as my maid and practically called her a thief.

It was my fault that Klaus got to her. Aurora was selfless, just like a true luna should be. I was the one who had put her life in danger, time and again.

It didn't matter that she might take a lifetime to forgive me, and maybe she'd never forget.

There were nights when I couldn't forgive myself either.

"Aurora, I—" I sighed. "I'm going to spend the rest of my life making it up to you. In any way I can. But you need to know that I've changed, and it's all because of you."

She looked at me with her deep blue eyes, hanging on to every word I said.

"The alpha I was grew up filled with rage and hatred after losing his mate. All I wanted was revenge against those who took my mother from me. I was so angry that I forgot what love felt like."

A small smile tugged at my lips.

"And then you came along. You, with your stubborn innocence and your sweet face and the way you talk. You were like a child and a grown woman all rolled into one."

She laughed at that. "Hey! Is that a compliment or an insult?"

I held her shoulders and looked into her eyes, trying to convey my sincerity.

"Listen to me. You challenged me. I never thought anyone could stand up to an alpha, until I met you. You made me realize that I had to be good enough for you, and for my people."

She touched my face, her touch gentle and soft.



"Wolfie—"

"And I thank Selene every day that I didn't lose you, even though I came so close. So many times. I don't deserve you. There are very few wolves who can match your grace and beauty."

My creator, my love.

She was my moon and stars.

My soulmate in ether, Astria, and all the other worlds where souls could exist.

She was put on this Earth to humble me, to test me, to show me the beauty of love.

No matter what, I would never hurt her again.

I would protect her with every last drop of the goddess's blood in my veins.

She made me feel almost human, completely whole.

My voice shook. "I don't plan on ever losing you again. As Selene is my witness, in this world and whatever comes next, I want to face every challenge with you by my side."

She leaned in and kissed me. In an instant, the air between us was charged with electricity.

She was pure magic, her touch was like fire and soul.

I pulled her close and kissed her back, letting my tongue dance with hers.

Our hands came up to hold each other. Mine wrapped tightly around her waist.

She breathed out my name.

Before I knew it, I'd laid her on the ground, and my lips were on her nose, her closed eyes, her forehead and neck, moving down to the soft curves of her chest.

"I love you," I whispered against her neck, gently licking the spot where I had marked her as mine.

"I love you today, tomorrow, and in a thousand other universes."

"Well, isn't this touching?"

The mature, lilting voice sounded like a knife scraping against stone. I clenched my teeth and sat up.

Aurora looked visibly flustered.

"Eleanor! I thought you'd gone to bed?"

She looked from her to me, disapproval and a strange glint in her eyes. "I had, but the night was so beautiful, I felt like taking a walk."

Why did Eleanor always have to talk in riddles? It felt like she had a grudge against me, and me alone.

And it seemed like her grudge was because I was Aurora's mate.

Why was that?

Sure, I was protective of Aurora, but that was just instinct.

I was wired to be wary of anyone who could harm Aurora. And it didn't matter that Eleanor kept insisting she was looking out for Aurora.

She kept pushing Aurora's buttons, and it hurt to see my mate upset, worn out, and sad because of this old woman.

Suddenly, she turned her piercing gaze on me.

"Maybe you'd like to join me for a walk, pup?"

I showed my teeth. "You will address me as Alpha Wolfgang, and nothing else."

She laughed at that. "I'll call you whatever I see fit. Right now, you're acting like a stubborn, foolish little pup. So that's what you are."

I was on my feet in an instant, Cronnos ready to burst out of me.

Who does she think she is?

Let me out and I'll show her who the real alpha is.

She's always trying to take our mate away.

Calm down, I tried to reason with him. If I lose it now, Aurora will be mad. I can't risk that.

You're always overthinking. You never act. What's the point if we can't protect our mate from people who hurt her?

Shut up, you old mutt! I snapped.

"Having a little chat with yourself, are we?" Eleanor smiled, but her eyes were cold. "So, are you coming for a walk?"

"Go ahead," Aurora said, her voice hopeful. "I'll go up and get some sleep. I'm tired anyway."

She wanted me to go.



I sighed, giving in to the inevitable.

I took pleasure in making people like Alpha Wolfgang feel uncomfortable.

The palace grounds were stunning, caught between the day and the night.

The golden glow of the sunset bathed everything in a soft light.

Rory's mother would have loved it here. She would have been proud of how far her daughter had come.

If it weren't for this insolent pup walking next to me, his distrust clear in his eyes, Aurora would have come into her own a long time ago.

The palace was grand and majestic, surrounded by sprawling gardens and a shimmering moat that mirrored the deep blue sky above.

It felt like I had stepped into a different world, one that was both magical and captivating.

"The rose gardens are my tribute to my mother," Wolfgang said out of the blue.

So, the pup had a history. But that didn't mean he could use it as a weapon in the present.

He was the reason Rory had been attacked, making her question her worth over and over.

That meant he was the reason she hadn't come into her own, especially when it came to her powers.

He had done a good job with the gardens though; I had to give him that.

Bright flowers bloomed everywhere I looked.

The air was filled with the sweet scent of roses and other delicate flowers, and the sound of water trickling from the fountains added to the serene atmosphere.

"Your mother was a scent seeker, I presume," I said thoughtfully, more to myself than to him.

He looked at me, surprised. "How'd you know that?"

"Her choice of flowers. Roses appeal to a very specific group of wolves. They're known for their love of scents, but also for their gentle hearts."

The paths were lined with tall trees that swayed gently in the cool breeze, casting dappled shadows on the ground.

As I walked along the moat, I watched as fish darted beneath the surface, their silver scales sparkling in the sunlight.

The water was so clear that I could see all the way to the bottom, where pebbles and rocks were arranged in intricate patterns.

I stood there for a while, captivated by the beauty of the scene before me.

"I know what you're after, pup."

