

Chapter 10 You think you can buy me?

7-8 minutes

Freya

10PM. Crescent Moon.

"You're going to be a Luna?" Elena squealed, clinking her martini against my whiskey. "Of the Shadow Pack? Silvano Moretti's Luna?" Her eyes were wide with disbelief and joy. "The same Silvano who's been voted 'Most Eligible Alpha Bachelor' three years running in Werewolf Society Magazine?"

I couldn't help but laugh at her enthusiasm. "The very same."

Her voice shot up an octave. "Wait—are you telling me this is the Alpha you had that wild night with? Goddess above! You slept with him? Already?" Her excitement quickly morphed into a sly grin. "So... how was it?"

"Elena!" I hissed, glancing around to make sure no one was listening.

"What? I'm living vicariously through you. Paris is beautiful, but French werewolves are so... traditional." She made a face. "Now spill it. Better than my brother?"

I couldn't help the laugh that escaped me. "Significantly," I admitted, taking another sip of whiskey. "Silvano is... attentive."

"Attentive," Elena repeated, looking disappointed. "That's the best description you can give me?"

"Fine," I leaned forward, lowering my voice. "He made me howl. Literally. Three times. And that was just the first round."

Elena fanned herself dramatically. "Sweet Goddess! No wonder you agreed to marry him."

Artemis purred contentedly inside me at the memory. "It wasn't just about the sex,Elena. He offered me a contract that's almost flawless. Not only does it give me the chance to prove my skills in a new pack,but it also hands me the perfect opportunity to get back at your brother."

We both dissolved into laughter.

"The only complication," I said when our laughter subsided,"is that I have to stay at Stone Lake for another month to finish the transition. Jasper is making it as difficult as possible,of course."

Elena's expression darkened. "He's such a child when he doesn't get his way. Always has been." She took a large sip of her drink. "So what's the plan? You're going to work with Jasper by day and sleep with his rival by night?" Her eyes twinkled mischievously. "That's deliciously scandalous."

I was about to respond when Elena's gaze shifted to something over my shoulder,her expression transforming from amusement to shock. "Oh my God," she whispered. "Don't turn around yet,but you're not going to believe who's here."

Of course,those words made it impossible not to look. I turned casually,scanning the dimly lit bar until my eyes landed on a secluded booth in the far corner. My blood ran cold.

Mia sat there,but not with Jasper. She was practically in the lap of a tall,muscular man I didn't recognize. As we watched,she giggled and pressed her lips to his,her hands wandering places that would make Jasper howl with rage.

"That two-faced little bitch," Elena snarled,her eyes flashing wolf-gold. "She has my brother wrapped around her finger,convinces him to publicly humiliate you,and now she's cheating on him?" She slammed her glass down. "Not on my watch."

Before I could stop her,Elena was sliding out of the booth,her expression murderous. I hurried after her,torn between wanting to witness Mia's comeuppance and knowing this could only end badly.

"Elena,wait," I hissed,catching her arm. "Think about this. Jasper won't believe us without proof."

Elena's smile was pure predator. "Then let's get proof." She pulled out her phone,aimed it discreetly at the canoodling couple,and took several photos in rapid succession. "Now," she said,tucking her phone away,"let's have a friendly chat with the future Luna of Stone Lake."

We approached the booth, and I felt Artemis stirring inside me, hackles raised at the proximity to the woman who had caused us so much pain. Mia didn't notice us until Elena cleared her throat loudly.

"Well, well, well," Elena drawled. "Fancy meeting you here, Mia. Jasper mentioned you were working late tonight. This must be... what? A business meeting?"

Mia froze, her lipstick smeared across her mouth, eyes wide with panic. The man beside her—handsome in a polished, artificial way—merely looked annoyed at the interruption.

"Elena," Mia stammered, hastily putting distance between herself and her companion. "What a surprise. I was just—"

"Cheating on my brother?" Elena suggested sweetly. "Again? Because that's exactly what it looks like."

The man beside Mia chuckled, his arm still draped possessively around her shoulders. "Ladies, ladies. No need for drama. Mia and I were just getting acquainted." His gaze slid over me with undisguised interest. "And who might you be, gorgeous?"

His voice set my teeth on edge. There was something oily about him, a sleaziness that had nothing to do with his expensive suit or carefully styled hair.

"None of your concern," I replied coolly. "Mia, does Jasper know you're 'getting acquainted' with other men?"

Mia's panic transformed into defiance. "This isn't what it looks like. Reed is an old friend."

"Must be a very good friend," Elena remarked, pointing to the hickey forming on Mia's neck. "Do all your friends leave marks like that?"

Reed laughed again, his eyes never leaving me. "You're Freya Stone, aren't you? The ex-Gamma everyone's talking about." His smile widened, revealing too-perfect teeth. "I've heard a lot about you. They didn't mention how stunning you are, though."

Mia's expression darkened. "She's nobody," she snapped, her hand possessively gripping Reed's thigh. "Just my mate's former employee who got fired for incompetence."

I felt Artemis surge forward,ready to tear into this woman who had the audacity to lie so blatantly. I tamped her down,keeping my voice level. "Is that the story you're telling now,Mia? I seem to recall you begging for mercy in Jasper's office yesterday."

"You threatened me!" Mia shrieked,face contorting with anger. "You're just jealous because Jasper chose me. He's my mate,not yours!"

"And yet here you are," Elena interjected coldly,"with your tongue down another man's throat. Some mate you are."

Reed watched our exchange with growing amusement. "Ladies,please. There's no need to fight over me." His gaze returned to me,trailing over my body in a way that made my skin crawl. "Though I wouldn't mind getting to know the famous Gamma a bit better. How about it,sweetheart? Ten thousand for one night. I bet you're worth every penny."

Silence fell over our small group. I stared at him,momentarily speechless at his audacity.

"Excuse me?" I finally managed.