

Mated to the Werewolf King

Public Humiliation

CLANG!

I could hear the chains bound to my wrists as they clashed together.

I tried to look around but the dim light allowed me to only see the ground beneath my feet.

Keith had been taken away, and now I hung in his place, bound with new shackles that neutralized my magic.

Samuel had made sure to let us know that our execution would be witnessed by all the vampires in the kingdom.

He took special pride in being the ringleader of the upcoming entertainment.

Once again, I'd let my trust in the wrong man bring me down.

It hadn't always been like that. My father, Mark, was the alpha of our pack and governed with a heavy hand and a gentle heart.

Sean always gave me hell, but in the end, he was there for me, no matter what.

I tried to think of them to give me hope. A family always stuck together through thick and thin.

Ours was no different.

Images of an imaginary conversation flashed through my mind...

SEAN
You're just going to let them do this?

BELLE
I have no choice! I trusted him and was tricked. Now, he wants to destroy everything I care about.

MOM
We taught you better than this!

BELLE
But I'm not one of you. I never was...

DAD
BS! We raised you as our own. You have the strength and willpower to make anything happen, no matter how hard.

SEAN
All those years with the pack...the lessons about our heritage and how no one will be left behind... Are you really just going to roll over and die?

MOM
We love you, sweetie. And we want you to know you are loved.

A tear rolled down my face and plopped onto the hard floor below.

It was all in my head, but it felt true to form. No matter the problem, my family had always been there to help.

The way things looked, I might never get to see them again.

If I wanted to see the ones I loved again, I would need a miracle.

Tessa!

She was my only hope.

Keeping my mind sharp and my eyes closed, I focused on her essence.

I had reached out with my mind before, but that had been without chains neutralizing my magic.

I had to try. It wasn't in my blood to give up!

Tessa. Please. We are trapped. Samuel is going to kill us. Help us, Tessa.

If it worked accordingly, she should receive the message soon. But was that enough time?

I heard a latch unlock and footsteps approach.

As I hung there, helpless, more tears squeezed from my eyes and fell to the floor.

Please be enough time...

They carried me out to a wooden stage built several feet off the ground.

It was obvious the Vampire King loved a show, and he was about to give his entire kingdom one for the ages.

I was taken to a set of stocks, where my hands and neck were secured. For good measure, they bound my feet with a thick rope made from wolfsbane.

The crowd was large and still growing. Several vampires were already turning restless, so they decided to pelt me with rotten food, drink, and spit.

So much for the vampires remaining neutral.

To my disdain, a large guillotine was rolled out and planted next to me.

The razor-sharp blade glistened in the artificial light, but I swore I could still see specks of blood from the last unfortunate victims.

A roar from the crowd made me think they had just spotted the guillotine, but I was wrong. I could feel the stocks to my right being opened, and that's when I saw her.

Annabelle!

Though we'd both been gagged with cloths, her wincing and stifled grunts broke me in half.

The crowd was now riotous in the square outside the castle, cheering us on to our death.

The show was about to begin.

I wanted to speak to Keith, to tell him all I felt, but the cloth in my mouth only allowed me to grunt and groan.

A rotten fruit exploded across my cheek, sending the crowd into a frenzy. They roared with riotous laughter, drunk with blood.

Then, they all grew increasingly quiet.

Samuel emerged from his castle, taking a long, slow walk through the throngs of people.

The crowd remained silent, almost in a reverie.

"Hello, my kingdom! Are you ready for some fun!?" he asked.

They erupted once again, and my skin felt clammy and cold.

Samuel turned toward me with a smile. "What can I say? This crowd enjoys a show. It would be so rude of me to disappoint my people."

His lips parted and sharp fangs glistened like the blade of the guillotine.

I looked over to Keith, who shared a fearful gaze with me.

I couldn't imagine the amount of pain that had been in fact on him. The lashing from the whips of wolfsbane left more than red markings all over his body.

It had also taken his energy and passion, sucking him dry.

"We are gathered here today to say goodbye," Samuel said.

"Goodbye to an idea of what could have been. Many of us live our lives in regret because of the choices we are too afraid to make."

He paused to look down at me, and I could see he was making a point in shaming me for my choice.

"I say it's a long life for us, so there is no need to spend it burdened by what simply could have been."

He touched my face with his hand, as though admiring it.

Keith let out a growl through the cloth that choked him.

"We asked her to be our queen. Instead, she tried to save this beast and take us down from the inside."

Samuel paused for effect and then looked me in the eyes.

"But I must say, if we are not wanted, then neither are they."

The crowd roared with delight once again.

I started to cry as two of the guards forced me from the stocks and walked me to the guillotine. Keith's muted growling intensified with every step I took.

I was brought to my knees with my head faced down, waiting for the blade to drop on me.

"Any last words, Annabelle?" Samuel asked.

So much for a miracle...

I looked up again, searching for a sign—something I could hold onto that would assure me death wouldn't be so bad.

But my tears blurred my vision, reminding me not all stories ended like a fairytale.

"Now she's at a loss of words, huh?" Samuel joked.

The crowd laughed with him.

Then, I heard it...a high-pitched howl that was soon joined by many more.

Their howling raised every hair on my body and caused my flesh to burn with excitement.

A whole sheet of grey and black fur descended through the streets, tearing down anything in their path.

It must have been the entire army, ripping the crowd to shreds.

I managed to spit the cloth out of my mouth and sent out a loud howl.

"Do it, now!" Samuel yelled at the headsman who'd been slow to pick up on the danger quickly approaching.

Suddenly, I felt something at my feet, and the wolfsbane rope was sliced in half.

The stocks were unlocked, and a strong hand pulled me to my feet, giving me a body to lean on.

The face looked familiar, but I couldn't remember anything about the wolf beside me.

He handed me a leather pouch of water, and I took it down in only a few gulps.

I rushed toward Belle, but she had already been freed. I gave her the pouch, and she happily drank down its contents.

"Go!" Belle said to me, as she wiped her mouth. "Let them feel the wrath of the Werewolf King."

Her words filled me with an overwhelming power.

Despite my pathetic condition, I reached deep inside and mustered every last ounce of my energy.

Within moments, I had transformed into my wolf form and joined the pandemonium in the streets.

I watched as Keith happily tore through the vampires that stood in his way.

Samuel, on the other hand, was surrounded by his minions, trying with all his might to make it back to his castle.

I watched as he ran into opposition and was forced to move back toward the stage.

A wolf standing beside me shifted into human form.

It was Xavier!

"You're not safe here, Belle!" he shouted.

"I'm not safe anywhere! Let me help," I said, holding out my shackles.

With unimaginable strength, he managed to break my bonds, freeing up my powers.

A blast hit me from behind and sent me to my feet.

I turned around to see Samuel standing at the edge of the stage.

His group of vampires had dispersed and were fighting the wolves trying to protect me.

"This is all your fault!" he screamed, pointing a menacing finger. "And I will make you pay!"

Samuel charged at me, his fangs out, ready to rip into my neck.

With fear and anger building inside, I summoned a surge of energy and sent a blinding burst of light toward him.

Samuel was stunned as it hit him right in the chest, shooting him back toward the guillotine.

He managed to land where my head had been only seconds prior, and the force of his fall jarred the blade loose.

With perfect timing, the blade descended upon the Vampire King, slicing him in half.

A large werewolf finished off the job and made sure he was dead, ripping his cleaved body limb from limb.

I looked out at the crowd, where both vampires and werewolves were locked in vicious battles.

I felt rage inside my core, expanding throughout my entire body. My arms and legs glowed blue, lighting up the entire stage.

An explosion shot out from my palms and rose to the earth above that separated the vampire kingdom from daylight.

It hit like a ton of dynamite, and within seconds, an entire section began to cave in. Chunks of stone and minerals fell hard to the ground.

The light of the true sun began to shed over the entire kingdom, burning every vampire to death within seconds.

"Belle! I can't believe you did that!" Xavier cried, running up to me with a hug.

He was in human form, entirely naked, but seeing any familiar face right now was enough for me.

Keith soon joined us and gave me a hug that lifted me off my feet.

His touch was all I wanted to feel, yet I couldn't help but think of the fallen around us. They had given their lives to make sure we would survive.

A true family, giving up selfish desires and making sacrifices for the good of the pack.

I could tell Keith felt the same way as I watched his mournful gaze fall over the bodies littering the ground.

He held out a hand to Xavier, who accepted it gladly.

"Thank you, friend. I may not remember your name, but I will always remember your kindness."

At first, Xavier laughed at the thought of his King not knowing his own right-hand man. Then, he looked at me, and his expression changed.

"You really don't remember me?" Xavier asked.

I put a hand on his shoulder. "Keith has been overcome with a powerful dark spell. It has wiped his memory."

Xavier looked once more at Keith.

"Do you remember any of us, Werewolf King?" he asked.

Keith looked at those gathered around. Everyone stood silent, confusion upon their faces.

What would they do with a King who didn't even remember his people?

"Keith!" a female voice called out.

Zena pushed through the others and wrapped her arms around Keith, planting a kiss on his lips that sent my blood boiling.

Before Keith could respond, she kissed him again.

This time, I watched as he gave in to the feeling, pulling her closer.