

Mated to the Werewolf King

Dungeons and Nightmares

Drip.

Moisture from the ceiling crashed to the ground, echoing off the dark dungeon walls. The smell was almost unbearable, a reminder of my current circumstances.

Drip.

Tears slid down my cheeks and joined the odorous moisture on the ground. It was dripping, really. Everything I knew before today had been ripped on its head.

Being a wolf meant being free, wild, and doing what was in the best interests of your pack. This wasn't the best for anyone except the monster king keeping me here.

But, why?

The answer evaded me as other fears filled my mind. I had wanted someone to notice me and take me from the boredom of my life.

So much for wishes coming true...

My family would be worried. The daughter of the alpha taken in the middle of the night would not be a good look to the others in the pack, even if my captor was the Werewolf King.

Sean would be no doubt pissed, his little sister taken and him helpless to do anything. He'd be searching for my scent anywhere it led.

But would it lead them here? Did it even matter now that the king had me?

I shivered in the cold dungeon, allowing the walls to enclose me in their cold embrace. It was better than being anywhere near the monster.

As the memory of riding on his back came to me, so did a burning heat that slowly grew in my body. It felt good. And there was something more than just heat.

Desire.

Lust.

I could hear them kissing.

I could see their tongues searching for each other's.

I screamed at the thought of wanting anything to do with him.

The tears began again, faster, and with more purpose. I would fill this dungeon with my tears and float to the top, out of the castle, and the stream would take me home.

But what if this was my home?

I closed my eyes, feeling the new tears warm my cheeks. Darkness was my solace now. And I let it carry me away to a deep sleep.

The sounds of dripping almost covered the approaching footsteps.

Instinct tore me from my sleep and pulled me to a sitting position.

I wiped away the tears, but they were no longer there.

My cheeks were dry and chafed, no doubt red.

I knew how I must look, and the thought of *him* seeing me this way made me nauseous.

A guard lit the passageway carrying what looked like a lantern.

The light was warm and soft, but my eyes could not adjust quickly enough to the new sensation. I shielded the light with my hand and looked again.

He was smaller than the king but built in such a way I knew it was a man.

Tall.

Strong.

Cold. Like these walls.

Would I even try to fight back? What would be the point?

He watched me as I watched him but did not come any closer.

"Annabelle," said a voice. It was like thunder in the small dungeon, but kind and curious. "I brought you some amenities."

The lantern was lifted higher, and my eyes adjusted. I could now see his face.

It was Xavier! And in his other hand, he held folded blankets.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

Great question...

"Do I look all right? The stone gives it a nice medieval feel but I'm sure the blankets will help."

Xavier laughed. It was warm and inviting. I wanted to let that laugh close around me and give me strength.

"I don't mean to laugh."

"Then tell me what is going on. By the Moon Goddess, I demand to know!" My screams echoed off the walls, ghosts of my anger swirling around us.

I could see the smile on his face. If it was not for the sadness in his now visible eyes, I would have screamed again.

"He is worried you are not a werewolf."

Now, it was my turn to laugh.

"You demand I leave my pack and go with you, throw me in a basement, and then refuse to believe I can shift like anyone else?"

I closed my eyes and tried to shift.

Nothing.

The damp darkness seemed to cool off all my instincts, turning my willpower against me. I could only look on helplessly.

What would he think of me? This beautiful, kind man watching such a weak member of the species unable to do what had been natural for so long.

"We know you can shift. But there are other beings who possess such powers. A being such as a witch."

Witches?!

This was a riot! Laughter bubbled up from deep inside, erupting from my throat.

"Thanks. It felt good to finally laugh. And to think, now, this dungeon feels kinda cozy."

"Keith is beyond reasoning. He is convinced that if the Demon Lord is after you, there must be more to you than meets the eye."

I looked at him again.

"Thanks. That's a real boost to my ego."

The expression on my face changed, becoming gentle and soft. I hoped he could see it. If only the monster they called King could be more like Xavier.

"And you? What do you think?" I asked.

Xavier shifted from side to side uncomfortably.

"That is not up to me to decide."

Of course not.

"But I would not have been with you this long if I thought you were a danger to us. I truly am sorry for all that you are going through. I pray the Moon Goddess will show us the right path."

I shook my head and waved him away. It was such a dismissive gesture to the only kind soul I knew, but it was all I could muster.

"There will be food sent down shortly."

"I don't want it."

If only I were a better liar. Food sounded amazing. My stomach seconded those thoughts with a loud rumble Xavier was sure to hear.

"But you haven't eaten all day," he pleaded.

"And I won't. Now, leave me alone. I need some peace and quiet."

The pain on his face made it clear I had wounded his best intentions.

"Very well. But I promise, you have nothing to fear. We want to find out what is going on as much as you do."

I could only turn away from him.

"I understand. I promise you this...I will do my very best to try and talk some sense into him. But there is a reason he has been the Werewolf King for so long. You must remember that as well."

Did I truly have an ally here?

I wanted to reach into the past and take back everything I had said to him.

When I turned around, he was gone. His footsteps disappeared up the steps, moving farther and farther away until I could hear the rumble of the closing door. A lock slid into place, ensuring my capture.

With the number of blankets Xavier gifted me, I was able to make a layer to lie on as well as one for my body and a pillow to rest my head.

I turned the lantern down to a lower burn to ensure it would last. Shadows grew along the walls, forcing me to remember the nightmare I now found myself in.

It seemed impossible to sleep. So many things had happened that it didn't seem real. The decree that I was to be mated to the Demon Lord, the attack on the werewolves, and the subsequent victory. Seeing Keith kissing her!

My blood began to boil, so I closed my eyes hard. Tiny specks of light flickered across my darkened vision, stars of brightness in this otherwise dark dungeon.

I couldn't believe sleep would find me. Refused to think I would find calm in this turmoil.

CLINK.

I awoke in the middle of the night. New shadows had found their way onto the dungeon walls, shifting into different shapes with each blink of my still adjusting eyes.

I turned up the light of the lantern and looked around. Nothing.

Sleep pulled at my eyelids, nearly ushering me back into the dream world.

Then, I heard something else...

CREAK.

The hinges of a door opening.

"Who is there?" I called out, my voice showing more panic than I intended. Receiving no answer, I gathered the lantern and moved toward the stairs.

The stones were cold on my feet as I climbed each step one by one. I followed the spiral path until more light caught my attention. What I saw at the top was too much to be believed.

The door was open!

Was this a trap? I didn't know and wasn't intending to find out. But the deep, resonating voice calling my name made sure I would not descend. Not yet.

Annabelle.

I hated that name and shook my head. I wanted to go back down and curl up in the warmth of my blankets. My feet had other ideas.

With only a few more steps, I was through the door! Long corridors lit by lanterns on the walls seemed to go on forever, unending.

Annabelle.

My body turned involuntarily, pulled by the soothing baritone sounds.

Soon, a large door stood in front of me. Its wood was strong, with ornate carvings.

An energy I had never felt pulled my hand forward. Like a magnet attracting iron, I could only be sucked forward by this invisible force. It seemed to be my destiny.

The throne room was vast and empty. It was a minimalist's dream: nothing besides lanterns emanating a tired light that fell on crimson-colored banners.

In the middle was a large throne made of dark wood.

Once again, I could barely believe my eyes. Someone was sitting on the throne!

A fire grew in my body once more. But it was not the same as before. This time, it felt different.

My feet carried me closer. It was too late for me to turn back now, even though I knew why it did not feel the same.

Sitting on the throne was not Keith, King of the Werewolves.

This is someone else.

Someone whose energy was darker, fiercer. This person was part of no pack.

He looked up at me, and my blood froze—the same blood that had burned moments earlier.

The Demon Lord was looking at me with a large smile on his face.

"There she is. My love. My Annabelle."

I tried to scream, but his evil smile sucked the air from my lungs.

The lantern fell from my grip.

As it hit, flames erupted.

The flames engulfed the throne and the Demon Lord, giving him sudden powers that fed the fire, shooting it toward the ceiling.

I felt my skin boil as my body landed with a thud at the foot of the throne.