

Chapter 13

The sedan rolled to a stop on the tarmac, its engine purring low. Julian stepped out, buttoning his jacket calm and collectively, his gaze fixed on the figure emerging from the cabin.

Elara appeared at the top, every inch composed elegance—silk dress catching the light, golden hair pinned to perfection, smile practiced but radiant. She descended quickly, heels clicking against the metal steps, and the moment her feet touched the ground, she rushed forward.

“Julian,” she said breathlessly, arms sweeping around his neck as she rose onto her toes and kissed him full on the lips.

The reaction was instant. His wolf recoiled. Not the usual stillness it had always shown with Elara. Not the neutral quiet it had held with every other woman he’d ever touched. No—this was visceral, sharp, a rejection that reverberated through him like a snarl locked behind his teeth.

Elara only deepened the kiss, oblivious, clinging closer. To the watching world, Julian looked every bit the untouchable Alpha. But inside, his wolf prowled in restless defiance, straining away from her touch.

Julian closed his hands firmly around hers, guiding her back a step. “You had a good flight,” his tone smooth, uniform, betraying nothing.

“I did.” Her smile brightened, satisfied, as though she hadn’t noticed a thing. She slipped her arm through his with gentle ease, tilting her head against his shoulder like she belonged there.

Julian turned her toward the waiting car, his palm fixed on the small of her

back. To anyone watching, it was the image of a perfect Alpha receiving his Luna-to-be. But beneath the polished stillness, his wolf still clawed against its cage.

Jace was already there, sharp as ever, pulling the rear door open with a nod.

"Beta Jace," Elara greeted lightly, her voice honeyed but cool as her eyes skimmed over him. "Always so dutiful."

Jace inclined his head. "Welcome back, Lady Elara."

She slipped into the car with a rustle of silk, tugging Julian with her until he was seated beside her. The door shut behind them with a heavy finality, muting the world outside.

The faint scent of roses clung to her perfume, sharp against the leather interior. She crossed one leg over the other, angling herself toward him with seasoned poise. "You kept me waiting," she murmured, fingers grazing his sleeve as though testing his attention.

Julian leaned back, his gaze fixed on the darkened glass ahead. "Business required my time."

Her lips curved, though the smile never touched her eyes. "Business always requires your time." She traced a fingertip over his cuff, lingering as if to remind him she was there. "I only hope I'll start requiring just as much of it. If I'm to be your Luna, Julian, I should be your first priority."

Julian's expression didn't shift. "My priority is the pack."



Her mouth curved again, this time with a hint of challenge. "And soon, I'll be an important part of the pack. I'll need to be seen as such. Properly. Not just in your house, but in your world."

Julian rested his elbow against the door, his expression carefully schooled. "You'll have what's required."

That seemed enough for her. Her smile lingered, satisfied—as though the matter was already settled.

The rest of the drive passed in silence, broken only by the hum of the tires on the road. Elara sat with one hand on his sleeve, her perfume filling the air, as if trying to stake a claim through sheer presence. Julian didn't move, didn't look her way. His composure never cracked.

By the time the sedan pulled into the long drive of the packhouse, the midday sun had dipped enough to slant golden light across the stone steps. A line of omegas was already waiting, heads bowed, ready to greet the Alpha and the woman soon to be named Luna.

Jace was out first, giving instructions as the omegas rushed forward to collect Elara's luggage. Elara stepped from the car, adjusting her dress with grace. Julian strode ahead, silent, the perfect Alpha leading his future Luna into his house.

Once they reached the wing prepared for her, the heavy doors closed behind them, muffling the sound of footsteps and greetings outside. Only two omegas remained, carrying her cases inside.

"Careful with that," Elara snapped when one of the younger omegas

struggled with a heavy case. "That trunk holds designer pieces. If they wrinkle, I'll know who to blame."



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