

Alpha'S Unwilling Mate - Free Story by Elle Chipp

Chapter 1

Beggars Can't Be Choosers

Emma

When a wolf comes of age at 18, not only are they expected to take the oath and join the pack link, but they are finally able to sense their mate.

I'd been counting the days until my birthday, wondering hopelessly who the moon goddess would pick to be my perfect match. But here we are, 5 years later and I'm still none the wiser.

It's hard not to lose hope. Almost all of the other wolves my age have mated by now and with 24 right around the corner I'm starting to give up hope. At first, every time we had a visitor from one of the neighboring packs or gatherings in the summer I would jump at the chance hoping to find them, but now I'd rather hide in the kitchens to avoid the disappointment.

My older brother, Owen is more than happy with that approach and has even gone as far as to start threatening anyone who shows interest in me of late.

Thank goodness it hasn't happened recently though, the larger the suspense the more protective he gets and I don't even think my fated would be good enough for him.

Since it's been so long, I *have* received one or two offers to be a chosen mate in the past, but while I might be losing hope, I'd like to think that the moon goddess has a reason behind it. Besides, what's to stop them from abandoning me and being unfaithful if they ever do meet their fated?

Is it so bad to want to be the only one for them? To want someone destined for you and only you? Why is this the case for so many others, yet more and more unlikely for me?

I mean, there have been cases of finding your fated as old as 60, but imagine living your life alone only to know that they were out there all along and you lost so much time. That being said, I'd take a day with my fated rather than nothing at all. Beggars can't be choosers.

With so much spare time on my hands, I've been able to develop my skills in the kitchen and really invest in a culinary education. My alpha has been very supportive (probably because my late mother was the best chef he ever had) and has let me gradually take over the management of the pack's kitchen the more confident I've become.

I'm just grateful that it's the beta's job to order groceries, I don't need a degree to know that my dad is a sucker for the puppy dog eyes. That was something my mother was happy to teach me before her passing.

"Emma!" The voice of my alpha booms behind me and I jump up from the stove I was bent over.

I'm attempting to shape "Happy Birthday" in caramel ahead of the Luna's birthday next week as I know that this particular sweet treat is her all-time favourite.

"Yes, Alpha?" I bow my head and accept the fact that I'll need to start again now that my concentration is blown.

Caramel might not be rocket science, but I'd like to see NASA try and nail this in between batching meals for 300 hungry wolves.

"We have guests coming unexpectedly tomorrow, another Alpha. I'd like to make a strong impression and expect nothing but the best, will you have enough time for 15?"

My mouth falls open. Dinner tomorrow night for 2 alphas and 13 others? The last time another pack visited I had 2 weeks' notice and a test run, never mind the fact that Betty the housekeeper is currently ill and I've been helping out where I can.

"Yes, Alpha. I will place an order right away and start preparing now."

I mean, what else can I say? He's my alpha and what he says goes. After all that he's done to get me here, I'd hate to disappoint him.

"I'll have the others come in to help with what you need." He turns to go before pausing for a second as if needing to add something and he does. "Oh and Emma? Spare no expense. It's important we come across as strong tomorrow."

He leaves as swiftly as he came and I've never seen him so anxious over a meal before, never mind so formal. He tends to come down here to sneak cake while the Luna is out, not saying things like 'expecting nothing but the best'. Who are these people to work him up so much?

I realise these thoughts aren't very productive and shake them from my mind. I need all the time I can get to start sketching out this meal so that I can get my father to order what we don't have in the pantry.

Spare no expense. Yeah, he really shouldn't have said that. I've been dying for an excuse to add to my truffle oil stash for a while now and what screams 'nothing but the best' more than that? Caviar? It's far too cliché and to be honest I've never really been a fan.

Given the opportunity to put on something special, I'm going to wow my diners with the *crème de la crème* of my capabilities. But what's always frustrated me with high-end food is that you can go hungry right after eating it. My personal approach and one I'll still be going with tomorrow is to mix high-end ingredients and presentation with hearty foods. I want them to feel full, but in the 7th heaven all the same.

Now that I think I have some sort of plan, I can start my ritual of cleaning the whole kitchen. I need to start with a blank canvas when doing something like this, it's easy for all the pots and pans to pile up on me as I go. It also gives me chance to reflect on my meals and what equipment will be best to prepare it.

I just hope to the Moon Goddess that I can actually pull this off.