

Mates, Plural

Elowen POV

Everything exploded into chaos as the three nobles prowled towards us.

Daxon launched into a full shift mid air, fur ripping through his skin as Talon took over, his jaws clamping down on a vampire's arm and throwing him through a row of lockers. Rylen and Jace followed suit, shifting as claws slashed and magic lit up the air like fucking fireworks.

Taya grabbed my wrist, dragging me behind a pillar, her dagger already out. The rogue vampire noble fought like a beast unchained. He was lethal, precise, and savage. Protecting me with a fury I didn't understand but couldn't deny. Lyssira whimpered in shock.

"Mate. Another. Mine," she whispered, and I nearly choked. I didn't have time to freak out. One of the vampires broke away and darted toward us. I raised my palm on instinct, and silver light erupted from it, blasting him down the hallway with enough force to crack the floor.

Well. That happened. And then, howls. Dozens of them.

The Strike Team had finally arrived.

A wave of warriors surged down the hallway, massive wolves and armored fighters wielding silver lined weapons and spells. The air thickened with magic, growls, and the scent of vampire blood.

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The three nobles snarled, clearly outnumbered now, and hissed with fury.

"This isn't over," the silver haired one spat, eyes locked on me. "You will be ours."

They vanished in a blur of shadows and smoke, gone just as fast as they arrived.

Except the one who had claimed me.

He stood in the wreckage, blood soaked and panting, still shielding me with his body. He turned slowly, and those dark, otherworldly eyes met mine again, so full of confusion, reverence... and recognition.

"My name," he said hoarsely, "is Ashrian Vale."

And then he dropped to one knee.

"Elowen Skye," he whispered, voice breaking, "I have waited for you... for lifetimes."

I couldn't move at first. Couldn't breathe. Ashrian Vale.

A vampire. Noble. Deadly. My fucking mate?!

Lyssira was no help, practically vibrating with joy in my head like a puppy who just found an entire buffet of chew toys. "Ours! Another! I knew it! He smells like smoke and cinnamon, he's perfect!"

Perfect? My head was spinning, my heartbeat still jackhammering from the

fight.

But when he dropped to one knee, bloodied and breathing hard, eyes full of that gut wrenching awe I'd only ever seen in Daxon before... something cracked wide open inside me. I stepped toward him.

Every part of me...wolf, woman, warrior, hybrid, reached for him. My hand trembled as I touched his cheek. It was cold and smooth. Sparks ignited under my fingertips, and the bond snapped to life like a whip of pure silver flame.

Ashrian gasped as if branded, his eyes flooding with emotion he didn't try to hide. His arms wrapped around me, and I collapsed into him. We held each other like survivors clinging to shore.

Mine.

The word wasn't spoken. It didn't have to be. It pulsed in the air between us. Taya coughed. Loudly.

I pulled back, blinking as reality crashed back in. Rylen and Jace looked like they'd just seen a ghost and wanted to punch it. Daxon... gods bless him... was fighting every single instinct he had not to rip Ashrian's head off and ask questions later.

"I didn't come to hurt her," Ashrian said, standing now. "I came to protect her. I always have."

Daxon's jaw was clenched so hard I could hear his teeth grind. "Then start

talking."

Before Ashrian could answer, heavy boots hit the floor. Alpha King Draven stormed in with a unit of enforcers behind him and Luna Queen Aelira at his side. His eyes locked on me, then Ashrian.

His entire body went rigid. "The fuck is a Vale doing near my son's mate?"

"Dad," Daxon said sharply, stepping forward. "He protected her. He claimed her."

Alpha Draven blinked. Once. Then again. "You're telling me your mate has bonded with a vampire?"

"Apparently." I stated, my voice cracking.

Draven stared at me. "We're going to need the war room."

The walk back was chaos. No casualties, thank the gods. School was shut down until further notice. Warriors lined every hallway.

We arrived at the Stormclaw Keep in less than fifteen minutes. The war room pulsed with magic, tension, and the lingering scent of blood. Ashrian stood beside me, Daxon on my other side, his jaw still tight but no longer feral.

Alpha Draven folded his arms and glared across the table. "Talk, bloodsucker."

Ashrian nodded. "My name is Ashrian Vale, third son of the Vale House."

Centuries ago, I joined the Aegis Protocol under orders from my mother. But once I saw what they were doing, experimenting, killing, and breeding hybrids...I began working against them. I've been sabotaging their operations ever since."

I felt like my stomach dropped to the floor. "You were with them? You saw what they did to people like me?"

"I did," he said, his voice low. "I couldn't save everyone. But I tried. And when I found out about you..." His eyes lifted to mine. "I stayed in the shadows. I made sure they didn't find you."

"Until now," Draven growled. Ashrian nodded. "Now they know. And they'll come for me, too."

"They already did," I whispered. The room fell silent.

And for the first time in a long damn while...I wasn't scared.

Because I had not one, but two powerful, deadly, possessive mates. And Lyssira was ready to tear someone's throat out.

Let them come.

I cleared my throat, feeling like I'd just announced I was pregnant with Satan's triplets at a church potluck.

The war room was dead silent. Daxon stood rigid beside me, still brooding and alpha as hell. Ashrian stood on the other side like a stone statue with

fangs, unreadable but... somehow steady.

And across from us? Alpha Draven. Luna Aelira. Rylen. Jace. Taya. Every single one of them waiting for me to explain what the actual fuck was going on.

Cool. No pressure. "Well," I said, glancing between them, "looks like I'm collecting mates like Pokémon."

Taya snorted. Rylen choked on his own spit. Daxon growled. "Not funny."

"A little funny," I muttered. Ashrian arched a brow, looking amused. Smug bastard.

I took a breath and straightened my spine. "The truth is... I don't know how many mates I have. My dad's letter said 'mates, plural,' and warned me I'd be hunted. I assumed that meant people like me, hybrids..were rare and valuable."

I paused, letting that sink in.

"But now? It's more than that. The Moon Goddess appeared to me. Told me I was chosen. That I had to awaken my fae side. That I'd need help... protection, strength and love."

Daxon flinched at the word love.

"So yeah," I went on, my voice rougher now, "I've got a werewolf Alpha heir on one side, and a noble vampire spy on the other, and apparently

the universe isn't done yet. So if anyone else wants to come out of the woodwork and say they're my fated soul bound ride or die, speak now or shut the hell up forever."

Silence. Then Alpha Draven rubbed his temples like he had a migraine the size of a pissed off bear. "Do you have any idea how many?"

I shook my head. "Nope. Could be three. Could be five. Could be enough to start a boy band."

Jace grinned. "Do we get jackets?"

"Shut up, Jace," Rylan muttered.

Taya squeezed my arm and gave me a small smile. "Whatever happens, we've got you. But holy shit, babe. You better start a group chat or something. This is gonna get messy."

Daxon didn't speak. He just reached for my hand and laced our fingers together, his wolf humming quietly in my mind. Ashrian didn't speak either, but he stepped closer. Just enough to let me know he wasn't going anywhere.

I wasn't just a hybrid anymore. I was the Moon Goddess's chosen.

And my soul was apparently hot real estate.

Who knew?

