

# The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 41 -

23–29 minutes

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## The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 41

### 41 – The Packless

(Caspian)

Holden was working on convincing, actually bribing, their college to have them switch to online classes. He offered to pay for anything they wanted and come and record the classes himself. He told me if that didn't work, he would try to sue them or buy the school itself.

I hoped he could figure out something a bit less intense.

Griffen seemed to be less tense now that he left Nora with Cali and Willa when we had meetings or had to go to the office. I think he thought she might fall and break herself if he wasn't around, and having other 'caretakers' there settled his mind. A bit.

A few days later, there were still no bites on our hit.

I got a call from my private secretary from my office at The Dracos group.

"Sir, there's someone here to see you; he says you don't know him."

"What's his business?"

"He said he's answering your call, I was unaware we were hiring, but he mentioned a job."

"Have him wait there where you can see him. I'm on my way." I hung up.

I didn't like that someone felt comfortable showing up at my office, but it was better than the packhouse.

I knew taking a hit on him was risky, and I didn't expect anyone to actually take it. No matter what amount of money was offered it was a death wish.

I was intrigued to figure out who was waiting for me. I would bet that it was one of his men to arrange a meeting.

I used the back elevator and went to my desk. The floor was empty as it usually was, and I had work to do anyway that I had been neglecting in favor of spending time with Willa and Emmett.

“You can show him in,” I buzzed my secretary.

“Very good, sir.”

After a few moments, a tall man with lightly tanned skin walked in on silent feet. The only indication he was here was when my secretary closed the door behind him.

His long hair was piled on top of his head. One golden brown curl fell over his face, the only thing that wasn't out of place. He stood eerily still in front of me, statuesque. The only way to tell he was alive was by the steady rhythm of his heart, it didn't even look like he was breathing. But he was a werewolf, pure wolf, that much I knew.

“Take a seat,”

“No, thank you,” he responded, meeting my stare, with one brown and one blue eye, “I'll only be here for a few minutes.”

“What is it?” I straightened my jacket and leaned back. I couldn't quite figure him out.

“My name is Ezra, and I'm from The Packless.”

I took a breath that sounded like another project The Silent Assassin was working on.

“What does he hope to achieve with you?” I studied his motionless figure, but he gave nothing away. People were so rarely hard to read.

“Nothing, not anymore.”

“Then why are you here?”

“Me and a group decided to leave the Silent Pack. We will always be thankful for the skills we learned and for shelter.”

“You don't have to convince me of anything,” I cut him off.

He froze for a moment; his brows tugged together slightly as if coming out of a trance, fighting against something so ingrained in him.

“You're right,” He shook his head once, “We left them and formed The Packless.”

“Poetic,” I paused, “For a group of orphans,”

His mouth tugged up slightly to one side, “We thought so,”

“So what do you have for me? Or, more likely, what do you need from me? Protection? Because I cannot guarantee you that from him, nor will I take the risk.”

“A trade.” I was interested, “We know you took a hit on him, but I don’t understand why.”

“I need to find him. It was the only way we could set up a meeting.”

He nodded once, “I can help.”

“In exchange for?” I left the question open.  
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“You can show him in,” I buzzad my sacratary.

“Vary good, sir.”

Aftar a faw momants, a tall man with lightly tannad skin walkad in on silant faat. Tha only indication ha was hara was whan my sacratary closad tha door bahind him.

His long hair was pilad on top of his haad. Ona goldan brown curl fall ovar his faca, tha only thing that wasn’t out of placa. Ha stood aarily still in front of ma, statuasqua. Tha only way to tall ha was aliva was by tha steady rhythm of his haart, it didn’t avan look lika ha was braathing. But ha was a warawolf, pura wolf, that much I know.

“Taka a saat,”

“No, thank you,” ha raspondad, maating my stara, with ona brown and ona blua aya, “I’ll only ba hara for a faw minutas.”

“What is it?” I straightanad my jackat and laanad back. I couldn’t quita figura him out.

“My nama is Ezra, and I’m from Tha Packclass.”

I took a braath that soundad lika another project Tha Silant Assassin was working on.

“What doas ha hopa to achiava with you?” I studiad his motionlass figura, but ha gava nothing away. Paopla wara so raraly hard to raad.

“Nothing, not anymora.”

“Than why ara you hara?”

“Ma and a group dacidad to laava tha Silant Pack. Wa will always ba thankful for tha skills wa laarnad and for shaltar.”

“You don’t hava to convinca ma of anything,” I cut him off.

Ha froza for a momant; his brows tuggad togathar slightly as if coming out of a tranca, fighting against somathing so ingrained in him.

“You’ra right,” Ha shook his haad onca, “Wa laft tham and formad Tha Packclass.”

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His mouth tuggad up slightly to ona sida, “Wa thought so,”

“So what do you hava for ma? Or, mora likaly, what do you naad from ma? Protaction? Bacausa I cannot guarantaa you that from him, nor will I taka tha risk.”

“A trada.” I was intarastad, “Wa know you took a hit on him, but I don’t undarstand why.”

“I naad to find him. It was tha only way wa could sat up a maating.”

Ha noddad onca, “I can halp.”

“In axchanga for?” I laft tha quastion opan.

“As you cen imegine, leeving him hes not been eesy, he’s demending peyment in trede for whet he thought we were worth.”

I elmost esked whet their deel wes, whet they were owed in exchange for their upbringing, but it didn’t metter. It wouldn’t do anything besides setiete my curiosity.

“He doesn’t went you to leeve. He cen end will treck you down.” He noddad once, so slight I thought I imegined it, “You went me to kill him.”

He everted his eyes for e short moment, teking e deep breath.

“I will give you the locetion where he wes lest opereting.”

“Where is he steying?” I esked if anyone knew it would be someone from The Silent Peck.

“Where clients esk him?”

“How do I know-”

“How do you know this isn’t e trep?”

We stered et eech other for e moment. He untucked his shirt end loosened his belt. Pulling down the side of his pents, e feint pele scer stood out sterk egeinst his skin. It wes herd to determine whet it wes or wes supposed to be.

“It’s supposed to be his symbol. Not even the symbol of The Silent Peck, his symbol. We belonged to him, not ourselves, not even the peck thet beceme family,” He geve me e smile devoid of ell emotion, “The thing is, if you brend e kid, they don’t sit still. Our bodies chenge e lot, end we ere left with this. To give him credit, we were some of the first, so he didn’t think eheed pest the cleiming his orphans.” His fece herdened, lost in his memories.

“No feelings for your ceptor?”

“Hetred.” His eyes fleshed bleck, meking their mismetced color the seme.

“You don’t have to believe me. I went on out. Safety for my brothers and me.”

“What will you do?”

“I don’t know, I never had the option.” His face was emotionless even though his voice gave him away.

“Write it down,” I motioned to my desk, and he bent over, scribbling something.

He slid the paper to me and held my stare for a long while.

“You cannot attack the place; it won’t work. It’s the starting point for men to gain access to him. I can’t guarantee anything will come of it. It might work if you’re smart and send someone who can be trusted. Your best bet is someone outside your peck. He won’t do business with them. Crescent Moon members are off-limits. Everyone knows it, and he will know it’s a trap.”

Now, that would be difficult.

“It’s all I have. You have to take it from here. No guarantees.”

“I hope this works,” This was a lot to get in contact with one man.

“I do, too,” His gaze looked hopeful, almost longing for a moment before he slipped back into his essential facade.

“Don’t stay in there too long; it becomes you.”

“What do you mean?” He asked.

“It’s harder and harder to pull yourself out of it. The place you build becomes you. You think it’s your protection, but it will consume you, change you into someone you don’t recognize.”

“Oh,” Understanding crossed his face.

“A mate helps,” I offered.

“We don’t get one. We found a way out of that weakness.”

I shook my head once, “They aren’t the weakness; they’re your strength.”

“Not to us,” Hurt flashed through his features, but they were cool and steady a second later.

“You sure you weren’t followed?”

“I was trained by the best,” He gave me a real half-smile now, “It’s a long shot to trust you, but I would do anything to help my brothers,”



“I’ll do my best, end if-”

“If I cross you, you’ll hunt me down end kill the people closest to me by henging them with my entreils still hot from my geping wound where you took them?”

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“Something like that,” I smiled at him.

“Noted, Prince.” He bowed his head slightly.

“As you can imagine, leaving him has not been easy, he’s demanding payment in trade for what he thought we were worth.”

“Ezre.” He turned, and I wouldn’t have known he had left if I hadn’t watched him walk out.

I looked down at the piece of paper.

The Dome – Go around back and ask for The Timber Inn.

The Dome was a nightclub on the outskirts of town, not in my territory, but well known amongst humans.

I swear this was a f\*\*\*\*\*g trap.

---

After Lorelei and Emmett were asleep, I explained to everyone my meeting today and passed them the note.

“How would they know if they were from this pack?” Griffen asked.

“No idea, but the blood oath wouldn’t let him work with them anyway.”

“Who do we trust outside of our pack besides Wille’s parents? I can’t think of many people that I knew well enough,” Holden asked.

“Absolutely not. We’re not using her parents.” I growled.

“I wasn’t suggesting it. It was an example,” Holden held his hands up.

“I’ll go,” Celi didn’t look at any of us, instead studying her drink swirling around in her glass.

“You’re a human,” Holden stated.

“Yes,” She looked at her mate with an eyebrow raised.

“I don’t know how much intel he has on us; he might already know that you’re mated to my Gemme,” I said, trying to shut it down.

“And he might not,” Celi responded, meeting my stare.

“No,” Holden growled.

“Not up to you,” Celi looked at him.

“I’m sure there are other options,” Wille stated. She looked worried, as well.

Celi shrugged, “It will be the least human thing I do,” She turned her gaze to Holden.

“What?” His eyes went wide.

“I’ll do this, and then after this ordeal is over with, you can change me,” She shrugged as if she was talking about nothing, “My least human act.”

“What?” Wille asked this time.

“Then I can be part of the peck, but for now,” She took a sip.

“Change first,” Holden said, “You don’t have to be human, and you can protect yourself better.”

Celi looked nervous for a second and chewed her bottom lip.

“That would give us an edge. If he knew about Celi, he knew she was human. No one would know that she had changed.” Griffen leaned back, thinking it over.

“It’s not the worst option,” Nore added, “I know she won’t change her mind so.” She shrugged, and Celi gave her an appreciative smile, Nore nodded back.

“No,” Holden stood up, “There are risks with you changing.

“You were begging me to do it days ago. Do you not trust me going to this place to talk to some lackey of an assassin?”

“I don’t trust them.” Holden met her gaze, Celi shrugged.

“I need to know this is dealt with. I need to do this for them,” Her voice didn’t waver as she looked at Wille.

“I can’t,” Holden started.

“You won’t,” Celi snapped her golden gaze at his, “I won’t let that happen, and I’m assuming you guys will have backup,”

“We will,” Griffen said.

“Okay then,” Celi nodded once, standing up, “Let’s do it.”

“It’s painful, and you can’t go back,” I looked at her, but she didn’t move her eyes from her mate, “Fine, I’ll have the doctor here monitoring your change. We can watch Loreli, or I can if you want Wille there.”

“We have it covered,” Nore added, smiling at Celi, “Nothing to worry about here.”

“Okay,” Celi seemed worried. She tugged at her hair, “Okay,” Her shoulder straightened and she reached her hand out to Holden.

“I’ll get it set up. Go,” I urged them; better to get it over with now if this was happening.

“I’ll be back whenever, and then I’m going to go f.uck up an ass.” There was a fire in her eyes.

I couldn’t have asked for a better mate for my Gemme, a friend for Wille, or a leader in my pack.

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## **The Rejected Luna’s Prince Chapter 42 -**

20–25 minutes

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### **The Rejected Luna’s Prince Chapter 42**

42 – Ember

(Cali)

I thought I knew pain.

Mental, physical, emotional, all of them at once.

But holy f.uck b.all of fire.

My insides were being burned, and I couldn't wrap my mind around anything besides the pain.

It was hot, too hot, and then a cold so searing that it might have been worse than the heat, or maybe it was all heat.

It was all darkness, but the darkness seemed to throb; it was pulsing, a living thing.

The only thing that kept me tethered to this world was the pain and something warm in my hand that was the only thing not burning me alive.

A voice broke through the pain, reaching me, and I felt something else. Sweat. I was sweating. A man's voice floated in and out, and then a beeping accompanied it.

The beeping sped up, faster and faster. This might be the end. I messed up. I shouldn't have done this. I choked a sob, thinking of leaving Loreli, but she had a new family now, and I knew she would always be taken care of.

The beeping sped up faster. It was almost as fast as my speeding heart. The voices sounded faster, too, panicked. Then the warmth was gone, and I was left cold.

This was the end.

No, it's the beginning.

Of my insanity? Of my life in the after-world? I thought.

The beginning of your new life

Yay, I thought dryly. My delusion was being cryptic.

I'm part of you now. We were given to each other

Lovely.

I'm your wolf, my name is Ember

Oh. oh

It worked. You're alive; you just need to open your eyes.

I was scared to do that. It didn't feel real.

Don't be scared; I'm with you.

Great, this thing can read my mind. I swear if she was always this upbeat..



Yes, and I heard that. I am literally part of you.

I groaned and forced my eyes open, blinking against the bright light above me. The light dimmed a bit, but I think it was just my eyes adjusting.

Everything looked so much sharper. I could hear sounds that didn't make sense to me—the smell of sweat mixed with a bit of metallic blood, fresh sheets, and home.

I snapped my eyes to Holden's, his scent. He always smelled good, but this unlocked something deep inside me. He smelled like when my grandmother would make fresh bread, something I didn't know I remembered.

"Cali," he breathed, his blue eyes softening as he scanned my face.

"Holden," I smiled back; the familiar planes of his face eased me back to reality.

He took my face in his hands, and I jolted back from the touch. It felt electric. Sparks shot through me, radiating from my cheeks. I touched my cheek and looked at him.

What did he do?

"The mate bond," he shrugged, smiling, holding out one hand. I tentatively put my hand in his, and the warmth and tingles erupted from our touch.

"Wow," I knew I wanted him, knew there was something different about my attraction to him, but this, this was beyond anything I was expecting. I wonder how Willa held out for so long if this is what she felt for Caspien.

"That was really great, under four hours, one of the fastest I've seen." I was aware of someone else in the room, Holden's living room. I thought I would be in a clinic or hospital or something.

"Caspien had it set up," Holden shrugged, motioning to the wires and machines that surrounded me.

"I think you're good to go. Great transition," The doctor came into view, and I recognized him from one of Emmett's appointments when he was sick.

"T-thanks," I managed. Nothing about that seemed great, but I was still reeling from it all and the new sights, sounds, and feelings.

"Holden knows how to contact me if you have any questions, but I don't think you'll need anything else." He smiled and started to unhook me, "Welcome to the pack, officially."

"Thanks," I smiled at him. Being part of something bigger than myself wasn't something that I ever thought I wanted. But this, with him, was something I could get behind.

“I think I need a shower,” I looked down at my sweat-dampened shirt.

“I’ll join you,” He pulled me up, leading me into his bathroom.

I stood in the mirror studying myself. My curls were unruly; the ones that escaped my bun were matted to my face. But I didn’t look any different.

“I tried to put it up, but I didn’t know how,” Holden shrugged. I smiled at him, yanking loose my lopsided bun, barely in the hair tie.

“Thanks,”

He rubbed his neck, “I was worried for a minute there,” I met his eyes in the mirror, “Okay, for longer than a minute actually.” He came up to me and placed his hands on my hips, kissing my neck in a spot that sent shivers through my spine and settled into my core.

I tilted my head. That mark, his mark, was gone.

“Once this is done, I’m going to mark you here, and you will mark me, and you won’t ever be able to leave me,” He growled into that spot again. The spot where I had his mark before was so sensitive, “Of course, if you’ll let me, again.” He pulled back a little. I nodded once, closing my eyes; I could think of nothing I wanted more than to be his forever.

He tugged at the oversized shirt I didn’t remember putting on. I lifted my arms, helping him remove it. He lowered his mouth to brush featherlight, kisses on my bare shoulder, removing the clasps of my b.ra. He tugged down the straps with his teeth until it fell at my feet.

Goosebumps pebbled my b.reasts, and it had nothing to do with the cold. I didn’t feel cold at all; it was the desire and anticipation that swirled through me, ignited by his strong large hands making their way up from my hips to cover my b.reasts. He caressed them and made his way up to my neck, biting gently and sucking. I tilted my neck to give him better access.

The sparks tingling through me were almost too much. They set me completely on edge. I thought s.ex with him was addictive before, but now the slightest of his touches had me spiraling.

“Now, Holden.” I breathed, and his lips met mine, sucking at my lower one, taking it into his mouth before grazing his teeth across it. I whimpered as heat flooded to my core.

“Now,” I repeated, and he stepped away. My body seemed to curl in on itself at the absence of him, my mate.

Our mate

Great, now she was following me to the bedroom.

I am literally a part of you, you chose this – She sounded annoyed; this was going to be fun –  
Now go back to our mate

Just wait til you see what he can do with that d.ick of his She growled in my mind, and I smiled.

The sound of water brought me back. Steam started to permeate the air. I turned to the shower to find Holden fully n.aked, and ready for me.

Yummy

He closed his hand over his length, I could watch him all day, and I had for hours before. We took turns p.leasuring ourselves while the other watched without touching. The memory of that afternoon sent a new wave of delight through me.

“Cali,” He watched me, his eyes roaming over me in a way I never thought I would like.

I hated being objectified. I didn’t want anyone to think that they owned me or I owed them anything. But with him, it was different. Everything was. It was a turn-on to have him claim me, possess me in a way I had never wanted. It was mutual, I claimed him, and he claimed me. I was his; he could look at me however and whenever he wanted. There was a freedom to that sort of mutual desire that accompanied a sort of respect I didn’t know existed.

He held out an arm to the shower, “Wouldn’t want to waste water,” He flashed me a smile.

I bent down to remove my u.nderwear and strode past him. He grabbed my arm and pulled me to him, tilting my head up in a claiming kiss. My n.ipples pressed against the hard contours of his chest, and I m.oaned in his mouth at the feeling of it. His hand wrapped around me and pressed me to him further as if he could physically make us one.

He pulled back and frowned, “I want to hear every sound that I elicit from you. Everything that my body makes yours feel, I want to hear it,”

“I need you,” I leaned back, looking up at him. I needed him more than anything. I don’t know if it was the bond or me being a wolf; I didn’t f.ucking care. There was nothing in this world that would sustain me more than him.

“Alright, skip the foreplay then,” He sighed and tugged me into the shower.

He brushed my hair back as the hot water started to fall, running through my hair and relaxing my sore muscles. I didn’t realize how sore I was. Actually, I must have been clenching or moving or something the entire time I was changing.

“I’ll give you a nice long massage, followed by all the foreplay you’re making me skip,” He growled into my ear.

I grabbed his velvety length, wrapping my hand around it and sliding my hand up and down him. He g.roaned, a sound that came deep within him, like a rumble. It was primitive, and it would be my undoing. He grabbed onto my a.ss tightly, slapping it once before taking it into his hands and holding on.

“You’re ready for me, you have been for a while,” His eyes opened, and he focused on me. I twisted my hand in a way I knew he liked, “Goddess, Cali, the things you do to me,” His eyes shut again, and his breathing became more shallow.

I studied my mate, how the water dripped over her perfect contours that apparently were made for me alone. I still wasn’t sure that was right, but I wasn’t going to return him if it was some cosmic fluke.

He grabbed my b.utt tighter, and I moved forward, letting out a gasp.

“Turn around,” He released me but looked reluctant.

I placed my hands on the shower wall and s.pread my legs wide; I wanted this, him to claim me. I needed nothing but to be close to him, to show him how much I craved him, and I needed him to show me.

I felt the head of his d.ick rub against my opening. I sighed in relief. I knew what would come would be everything I asked for without even saying it.

He knew me, my body, better than I knew it myself.

He moved slowly, opening me up. He leaned over, barely inside of me, placing one hand on the shower wall intertwining with mine. His other hand came up to draw a circle around my n.ipple.

“F.uck,” He breathed as I clenched against him, wanting more.

He slowly thrust into me, taking my n.ipple in his fingers and rolling it slightly. My head snapped up when he entered me f.ully, almost lifting me off the ground with his motion.

“Are you okay?” He asked, “I don’t want you to slip.”

“Go, don’t care, just go,” I mumbled. I wanted it all without hesitation, and he gave me that.

His hands came to my hips, holding me in place for him. I clung or tried to cling to the shower wall, damp with condensation. He pushed into me hard and fast with long strokes.

A fire started within me, curled deep and low, and fueled by something I had never felt.

It wasn’t just lust; it was love, trust, and this crazy a.ss mate bond.

The sound of him bottoming out, the feel of his hands digging into my flesh, the sparks that danced on top of and underneath my skin all intertwined and sparked the fire.

It built and twisted and turned into something I couldn't control. It lapped at me and sparked from me deep inside.

A low rumble reverberated from him, and I shattered. The last of my pleasure peaked and shot through me, igniting every nerve ending; traveling to places I didn't know could feel pleasure. It coursed in waves, but he held me still, pumping deep inside me as the fire flared.

He was the only thing grounding me, or I swear this fiery pleasure would consume me.

"Holden," I panted. His name was a prayer on my lips.

"Cali," My name was a promise on his.

"Holden," I begged him for more, not to stop.

"Cali," He gave me everything I needed.

He thrust inside me in a few long strokes. His accompanying growl sent a fresh wave of pleasure through me.

"Wow," I breathed.

"Welcome to werewolf s\*x," He leaned over and kissed my ear lobe.

"Again," I commanded, and he listened.

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"Are you ready?" Caspien's voice was severe, more so than usual.

"I'm as ready as I'll ever be. This is our one chance. We can't or won't be more prepared."

"We could always be more prepared," Holden said.

"How very un-Holden-like of you," Caspien almost smiled.

"If you want to change your mind," Willa tugged at a piece of her shiny black hair and chewed her bottom lip.

"I don't, and stop staring at me," I looked at them, "All of you," I crossed my arms.

"We're just worried," Willa said, averting her gaze when mine met hers, but she smiled when she did that.

“And I’m ready. Let’s do this so I can get back to werewolf sex.”

Willa snorted once.

“The reason for my change was to do this as soon as possible, get ahead of them. Now let me do it,” I pleaded, and thankfully no one said anything.

“We won’t be far, d.amnit I wish you could link us,” Caspien ran a hand through his hair, shaking his head, “You know what to do if you need help?”

“Burn the place down,” I looked at him.

“Something like that,” Caspien gave me a smile, an actual smile.

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I stepped out of the car a block away and walked toward The Dome. I made my way to the back immediately. Keeping my head high and avoiding direct eye contact. Focusing on my destination, I kept my pace steady but quick.

I knew what I was doing, where I was going, and that I belonged there. At least it looked like I did to the few people I passed.

Go around back. That was the only instruction. It was vague, and I didn’t like vague. There was a door past some blue dumpsters that reeked of stale alcohol. It was wooden and looked like it led to nowhere, but it was attached to the back of the building. I could hear a low hum of hushed chatter on the other side.

I paused for a split second.

You can do this

I jumped a bit. Great, just what I needed. I wasn’t used to having a constant positive inner monologue that tried their best to terrify me.

Sorry, just trying to help

I know, I know. Thank you, just keep your eyes out, or whatever

My eyes are your eyes

Well just stop popping up

How about you stop being so jumpy?

I closed my eyes and took a short breath, pushing the door open. My eyes adjusted to the dim light, too dim for human eyes, and I stepped in.

It was dark, wooden, and looked like a bar that had been untouched for decades or centuries. I shrugged; nice touch. I appraised the place as fast as I could. An older woman, an old woman actually, made eye contact with me from behind the one bar in the room.

No one else seemed to notice me, or if they did, they didn't show it.

I sauntered to the bar, trying to imitate Holden's casual gait. They were all so self-assured, so silent. I wondered if that was a werewolf thing or if that came with the confidence of knowing your place and knowing it was leading a literal gigantic pack of werewolves.

I placed my arms on the sticky bar and pulled back slightly, frowning.

"Can I get you something?" She asked; her voice sounded like something from a movie, like too grandmotherly. I didn't think that made sense.

Yeah, it's weird – My annoying counterpart jumped in, she growled at me, and I fought a smile.

"Something strong," I met her golden eyes, her face was filled with wrinkles, and it looked soft, even though I couldn't imagine this woman smiling or making any facial expression to have earned those etched lines of time.

"Hm," She turned around and grabbed a bottle, she set a glass down hard, and I jumped a bit. I was surprised it didn't break. Maybe werewolves had some kind of special glass too. She poured some brown liquid into it, and the smell burned my nose.

Her eyes turned to slits for a moment, her mouth a thin line as she studied me. I met her fiery stare and took it all in one sip. It burned, but I had been in so much more pain yesterday, and this, this was nothing.

I didn't flinch. I didn't give anything away.

"Another," I set it down on the counter, plastering on a sweet smile, "Please."

"Hm," She poured another, a frown set on her face, "We only accept cash."

I swirled the liquid in the glass, "Good," I looked at her, "Cash, I can do it."

She nodded once, "What do you need?"

"Besides your gracious hospitality," I tilted my head; she never broke my eye contact, she must be used to bitches, and I could respect that, "I'm looking for some help dealing with someone."

"Dealing with them, how?"

“Let’s just say they’re too.. Alive at the moment,” I frowned into my glass, my gaze far away before I took a sip of this burning liquid. Holy s.hit, what was I thinking?

“Hm,” My gaze raked back to hers, “I haven’t seen you here before.” She said.

“Do you remember everyone that comes?”

“Yes,” She raised an eyebrow slightly and crossed her arms, jutting a hip out. It was a motion that felt so young, like a petulant teenager. It was a jarring scene.

I must have looked confused because she straightened herself and snapped once at me, “You’re new,” It wasn’t a question, “How did you find out about us?”

Us, so she was part of this operation.

“You hear things,” I swirled my glass again, running my finger along the rim for something to calm my nerves and make me look impassive.

“Not these things.”

“Yes, you do,” I shrugged. I remembered Willa saying she had heard of this guy but thought he was a myth.

“So, can you help me?” I asked after a too long moment.

“Yes,” She tapped her chin, “Cash up front.”

I smiled, shaking my head once. Caspien said to only do half up front, at most.

“A quarter,” I said, putting the glass down.

“You don’t know the price.”

“From what I was told to expect to pay, a quarter would buy the club this place is hanging off of,” I took another sip; it wasn’t as bad anymore. I think it was because my throat was burned off.

“I want to know who I’m working with,” I said, setting down the now-empty glass.

“Another?” She asked. I shook my head once.

“I want to know who I’m working with,” I repeated, firmer this time.

“You might be able to meet who is contracted for your job, but you will never be able to reach him,” She laughed once. It sounded young and wicked and dry.



“I’ve been told no before,” I shrugged, not moving my gaze from hers, “But it always ends up being a yes in the end,” I pulled my lips back slightly.

“Oh honey, he never shows himself, except to his highest clients, and you, you aren’t that.” She sneered, looking down at me somehow, even though I was taller.

I stood up straighter, peeling myself from the bar.

Was this woman jealous? Protective? Maybe a mother figure of sorts. Or maybe she was just really loyal to her job. Gross.

I bet they have amazing pizza parties once a month. That would be enough to buy her loyalty.

How do you know about pizza?

I’m not feral, I am literally a part of you. How many times do I have to say that?

At least twenty more

“No mindlinking,” The woman cut me off.

“I was talking to myself.”

“Your wolf?” She asked, narrowing her eyes. Yes, I guess that was the right term, stupid newborn werewolf.

“What other kind of payment does he take?” I batted my eyes, resuming that fake smile. “I heard he was a force.” Don’t know what that even meant, and don’t know why I said it, but I would stick to it.

“Cash only,” Was all she said.

“I can do that. Let’s call this a test, shall we?” I leaned closer to her, crossing my arms on the bar, ignoring the stickiness that made me want to recoil, “If he can pull this off, I can guarantee contracts worth more than what all his top clients pay together,”

“You’re not the first person who has claimed that.” She laughed once, a dry laugh this time.

“I might be the first one that has actually backed up that claim.” I looked down at my nails; they were perfect, so I looked back up at her.

“What do you want with him?” She asked, her voice devoid of all emotion.

“What does it matter to you? Let him meet me, and he can decide if he wants to go forward with anything that he wants with me,” I took part of my bottom lip in my mouth, biting it slightly, her eyes narrowed in on my lips. I swore she was jealous. Was it because I was young?

“He won’t take you up on that.”

I shrugged, pushing off the bar, “I can tell you I will not be meeting him in,” I looked around. It wasn’t hard to fake my disgust, “Whatever this medieval tavern is,” I winced, “I get that there’s a way things are done. I respect it; really I do. But I will not be playing any more games. If he’s serious, he knows how to contact me,” I slid a business card with a number on it, “If not, he’s not the only assassin here.”

“But he’s the best.”

“I know. That’s why I came here first.” I raised an eyebrow and pulled out a thick wad of cash. I felt nauseous at the sight of throwing all this fresh money away. It was for a good cause; he would die in the end, and I could probably rob him then.

I laid it on the bar, and the woman’s eyes widened slightly before narrowing into slits. It didn’t stop her from wrapping a slender hand around it and pulling it into her jacket. I really hoped she was someone with connections because if not, I just wasted gods knew how much money on tipping this witch.

“I’ll see what I can do, but he-”

“He won’t want to meet me,” I repeated, sighing. I flipped my hair over my shoulder, “Give him the option.”

I turned on my heel and started to walk towards the door. My heart started to race for the first time since I got here.

What if I did that wrong? What if I said something incriminating? I should have stayed, watched, waited.

“Wait,” a deep gravelly voice called out from behind me.