

## Chapter 0016

"Why do you wear it?"

"Why did you run away from your pack?" He replied.

I flicked my hair over my shoulder and snorted, "Thought you said you didn't care."

"I don't."

"You cared enough to ask though." I pointed out, earning a death glare in response. The topic of Jayden Warner wasn't something I wanted to get into. Not now, and possibly not ever. Instead I decided to play towards his expectations of me. My lips twisted into a bitter smile, "I didn't want to follow Daddy's rules, of course. Why else would a spoiled little girl like me pitch a fit and run away from home?"

He grunted as if he expected as much. Dickhead.

"I wear it because I have no interest in finding my mate." As we pulled up along the curb to a string of boutiques, Caius wrenched open his door and muttered a response as he slipped out. "Let that be the end of our game, Ms. Lasko."

I followed big and brooding into Marios, a two-story boutique whose upper level had a balcony that provided the perfect view of Seattle. The skyscrapers glittered in the morning light like crystals jutting up from the earth.

We entered through a set of glass doors and was immediately bombarded by a slender brunette toting a platter with two glasses of champagne. I didn't miss how she straightened her spine and hiked

up her pert breasts before sauntering over to Caius.

"Alpha, what a surprise! I haven't seen you since you last came here with—" His glower caused her to stop in her tracks. She cleared her throat before reconstructing her pretty smile. "Well, it's lovely to see you again. You've always been our favorite customer here at Marios." Finally she seemed to notice me. The sparkle in her eye sharpened as joy morphed into cold cunning, "Who do we have here? Shopping for your..."

The obvious pause made me wince but gave me plenty of time to loop my arm around Caius's and flutter my lashes.

"His girlfriend, of course."

"Of course." She mirrored in a sickly-sweet voice.

Alpha Caius, unsurprisingly, was a horrible actor. He couldn't hang up the glowering, grumpy persona and proceeded to bark orders at the woman.

"My girlfriends," Was I the only one who noticed the undertone of distaste? "luggage was lost on her flight, so she's in need of a new wardrobe. Shut the store down while we're here, and make sure your employees know that I have men stationed around the perimeter of the building. No one goes in or out without my knowing."

The woman, whose name I still did not know, led the two of us deeper into the store. We passed mannequins in gowns and pants suits and lingerie, each garment carrying brands I haven't been able to afford in years.

I was very much just like other girls, and I couldn't care less over that



fact. Why should I be ashamed of my love for shopping and getting my nails done? I never understood why women were made to feel silly and frivolous over the things they enjoyed.

Like most things, I blamed it on the patriarchy. 1

There was no doubt in my mind that I'd be paying Alpha Caius back for every penny spent, so I had no intention on holding back.

While he took up half the curved couch overlooking the dressing rooms, I started my hunt. Anything that caught my eye was then slung over my shoulder or thrust into the arms of a squirrely shop associate who stammered as though I were seconds away from ripping out their throat.

Before long I had a rack of clothes waiting at the dressing rooms and a mountain of shoes.

Since we'd be spending a lot of time in the public eye, I made sure to choose outfits that complimented my curves. I refused to wear a paisley shower curtain because our kind couldn't handle a woman who loved her body. 1



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