

Chapter 0024

"Lovely isn't a strong enough word to describe her." He growled, the sound rolling over me. "Don't you agree?"

Leonardo's grin widened. The cameraman at his side snapped a few pictures of us standing there, staring into one another's eyes like the doting couple we pretended to be.

"Of course, Alpha. But you haven't yet told us who this breathtaking beauty is?"

I couldn't bring myself to move from Caius's side. There was something about his warmth that was addictive. Then again, it was a rather chilly night. Keeping close, I extended my hand to Leonardo, curling my lips into a coy smile as he brushed his lips against it.

"I'm Anastasia Lasko."

His eyes popped open, going wide enough for me to make out the various shades of brown within them. Even his face paled. "Anastasia Lasko as in the future Luna of the famous Eclipse Pack?"

"Do you know another Anastasia Lasko?" I winked, causing some color to come back to his cheeks. "I'm only teasing, Leonardo. Yes, I am the future Luna of the Eclipse Pack."

I had to hand it to the reporter. He sure did pull himself together quickly, replacing his eager and excitable mask.

"What a surprise that is! The future Luna is so very far away from home, but clearly she's enjoying her vacation." He said to the camera. Seeing how close Alpha Caius kept me to his side, he let out a

knowing laugh. "So, are you two an item? I'm sure both your people would love to know. Especially if you factor in the rumors floating around the Eclipse Pack."

Rumors? Had someone slipped that I ran away?

Alpha Caius's expression turned dark, but Leonardo was too busy speaking into the camera to notice. As he turned to get our response, I reached up and lightly dragged my nails across Caius's stubbled jawline, turning his head my way. A tremor wracked his body, followed by a low growl that had both our eyes widening.

A growl that shot directly between my legs.

I recovered quickly, flashing Leonardo a coy smile. "An item? I suppose you could say that. Then again, can you put a label on something so...passionate?"

As suspected Leonardo took the bait. He whirled around to the camera, spouting off speculations about our relationship and where it might progress in the future. I even heard the word mate thrown around a few times, which was downright laughable.

Of course, it only made Caius's mood sour.

"Let's go, you big grump." I murmured, tugging him away. Pausing to preen at the body guards who opened the club's doors for us, I continued to talk quietly in Caius's ear. "Surely you're used to reporters talking by now. Let him spin his stories and solidify our relationship."

Caius's grip tightened on my waist. I bit the inside of my cheek, ignoring how the bite of pain made my lower belly grow warm.

"He's spreading rumors that we're mates." He said with visible contempt.

I rolled my eyes, hiding the way his words grated on me. "What a tragedy that would be. Let him spread his rumors. They'll serve to make people think we've been dating much longer than we have. Once you propose it'll seem like it's been a long time coming. The media will look back on this moment as when Alpha Caius revealed his mate to the world, and not as our first official date."

It was clear from the harsh set of his shoulders that he wasn't happy with things, but he conceded with a grunt. As we entered the club, darkness and flashing lights swallowing us whole, he glanced down at me.

"You have experience handling the media?"

"Goddess no," I huffed, raising my voice above the thunderous music. "My father hates them. What I have experience with is people. You don't stay on the run for as long as I've been without knowing how to make connections." 2

Alpha Caius steered me away from a group of she-wolves wearing plastic crowns and bachelorette party sashes, and to a staircase blocked off by velvet ropes and burly security.

"I assume it's one of your connections that now has my car." He grumbled.

Recognizing the two of us, security waved us through with little hassle. I peeled myself from Caius's side, quietly mourning the loss of warmth, and sashayed my way up the stairs.



I paused to smirk over my shoulder, "I have no clue what you're talking about."



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