

Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 46

Chapter 46 Utterly unromantic

I mutter another curse.

Is there anything in here that I can wear?

I look through the closet, the clothes in which had belonged to one of the previous Alpha Supreme's daughters. Most of her clothes must've come from some crazy designer.

Who the hell wears a dress with a gaping hole on the belly?

Finally, I find a mustard yellow, knee-length dress. Looking at it with skeptical eyes, I decided to give it a try.

I hurry into the bathroom and zip it up, brushing my fingers through my hair as I stare into the mirror. At least the top part is decent.

Since the sink mirror can only offer so much of a view, I step out to look at my reflection in the dresser mirror.

A smile curls my lips upward. Who knew yellow was my color?

I do a little twirl, giggling to myself. Is it okay if I keep it? I am liking this dress.

As I busy myself with making silly faces at my reflection, the door clicks open. I look over my shoulder to catch

familiar stormy blue eyes and grin.

"How are you feeling, Hazel?" Luke asks as he closes the door behind

"Amazing!" I grin wider

I do feel great, the pain from my wound is almost gone and my head isn't spinning at all anymore. I feel so light, so strong like I could do anything at all.

I turn my eyes to the mirror again, the tiredness on my face is gone and a strange glow has found its home on my face. Happiness.

Luke's reflection appears behind mine, the faintest smile on his lips. He presses a light kiss behind my ear, causing a shiver to race down my spine.

"I'm glad, mi more," he says, both his hands fall on the dresser beside me, trapping me in place

I turn around to face him. he's standing so close to me, my nose almost touching his. And there's nothing wrong with

it. Realization leaves me slightly breathless.

His stormy eyes look over me leisurely, as if absorbing my image, making my heart beat a tempo against my ribcage.

"I've been waiting so long for you, Hazel." Luke's warm breath fans my face, his fingers brushing against my arm

"For your mate?" I ask, hooking my arms around his neck

He shakes his head, the storm in his eyes darker "For you, Elise."

His lips capture mine, stealing my breath. My mold against his, desperate for rea**urance that this is real. That I belong with him and he belongs with me. Luke's lips move against mine with burning desire, making my stomach twist into heavenly knots, my knees weak.

His arms wrap around my waist, sitting me on the dresser. My hands tangle in his hair, a growl thrums from his tome, making goosebumps rise on my arms. Luke's hands travel up my back, slow, exploring, as his teeth catch my bottom lip. A strange sound escapes me, embarra**ingly loud.

Luke lets go of my mouth, his lips trail down my jaw, burning against my skin. My muddled mind barely registers his fingers on the zipper at my back, his mouth travels down my neck. His lips skim the mark, making electricity shoot

through me, a startled gasp leaves my mouth.

He s**s hard on the mark, my grip on his hair tightens, my throat parched with desire, and my heart racing with anticipation. The zipper slides down, making the neckline of the dress go lower. Luke shifts his attention from the mark to my collar bone, kissing and nipping along my skin, making me feel things I've never felt before.

I know what happens after someone marks their mate. I know specially what happens between mates when the full moon is approaching. Everything in my heart says yes, everything in my body wants to give in to this desire thrumming in the air.

My hands let go of his hair and find his arms, pulling away.

"W-Wait,"

Luke stops, frozen for one moment before he looks up at me, his eyes almost black.

"This," I move an inch away, breathless "This is too much."

Luke's brows pull together in confusion as he straightens, effectively giving me a little space. I gently push his arms down and pull the zipper back up. I'm aware of his eyes on me, aware of my pounding heart. I try and fail to meet his gaze.

Warm finger tucks under my chin and lifts it to meet stormy blue eyes.

"You don't want me?" Luke's voice is quiet as if he doesn't want to say the words out loud

"I do," I say softly "I do but, this, it's moving too fast."

He doesn't say anything but nods. I don't think he understands what I'm saying. I take a deep breath, holding his hand in my own.

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"It's just..." I struggle to find words "I always thought about my mate as an escape plan. I never went as far as to

think we..."

I peek at Luke from under my lashes. Embarras**ment is not something I feel often, nor is it something I can handle well.

"No man has ever touched me like this before," I rub my thumb over his knuckles "This is just so new to me, unknown territory I don't want to rush through."

I want him, I did even before I knew he's my mate. But my mind will not let me give myself to anyone, even to him, so easily. Not when it had always been wary of every man who approached me.

Luke's face is ten times as unreadable as always, I refrain myself from fidgeting and hold his gaze.

Finally, his lips twitch upward. His shoulders shake and I stare in bewilderment when he starts laughing, shifting his arms so he holds me, his forehead falls against mine.

"You a**hole," I slap his chest, trying to repress a grin "You're laughing at me?"

"You look so tense, Hazel." Luke says, his eyes t****ling "As if I would object to such a little request."

"You-You're not upset?" I ask him, wide-eyed

“You belong to yourself before any other,” Luke says, his voice clear and hard as always “I can wait my whole life if that’s what you want.”

I try and fail in repressing a smile, my heart warms at his words “You make me sound so boring.”

“Well,” Luke tucks my hair behind my ear “You are pretty unromantic, Elise.”

I gasp, mocking surprise “I am not!”

“Hazel, it took you days to realize I’m falling for you, even when we were practically living with each other.” Luke shakes his head

“It was because you’re so utterly unromantic,” I say “How was I supposed to know you liked me when you never even gave me a compliment?”

“How shallow of you, my love,” Luke sighs mockingly “I would’ve gladly laid my life for you and here you are, complaining about words.”

“Well, I don’t want you to die for me,” I chirp “Little compliments here and there will do.”

Luke nuzzles the tip of his nose against mine, making me giggle “I love it when you laugh.”

He presses a chaste kiss to my lips, my laugh stops in a gasp at the unexpected action, my face turns red “I love it when you blush because of me.”

“Which is rare,” I roll my eyes with a smile

“But what I love the most,” Luke says “is you. Just you, all of you, only you.”

A soft laugh escapes me and I wrap my arms around him, resting my face against his chest.

“Ditto on that last part.”

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I peek from behind the shelves, the motionless target in sight.

I tiptoe towards the high back chair, my hands raised to cover his eyes and surprise him. I brace myself to pounce, a grin on my face.

The next moment, the chair turns, two hands grab me around the waist and lift me to someone’s lap, wrapping around me in a secure hold.

“Sneaking up on me, Hazel?” Luke raises an eyebrow at me

“Oh come on!” I throw my hands up “I masked my scent! How could you know I was here?”

“Hyperactive senses, Elise.” He says, turning the chair back around “Why are you here? You should be resting.”

“I’ve been resting ever since you left.”

“That was two hours ago.”

I give him a look “If I stay in that bed for any longer, my lower limbs are going to become useless. Do you want that?”

Luke sits me on his desk so we’re on eye-level “I want you to heal properly before you quite possibly fall down the stairs and crack a rib or two.”

I puff up my cheeks and cross my arms “I am not that clumsy.”

“I believe you, Hazel,” he says, a faint smile on his lips “Did you call your mom?”

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I nod “Just now. She wants me to come back as soon as possible.”

The smile fades away “Did you tell her?”

I bite my bottom lip and shake my head “I didn’t know where to begin.”

Luke lets out a breath, leaning back in his chair. I furrow my brows, I thought he’d want me to tell her as soon as possible.

Noticing my expression, Luke takes my hands in both of his, shifting to face me fully. My heart rate doubles by the small contact, but I do my very best to keep my head.

“Elise, keep an open mind about what I’m going to tell you,” Luke says, his voice is as hard as always, but I notice the pinch of concern in it

I hope my worry isn’t showing on my face.

“Okay,” I nod at him calmly

“No one can know about this,” he holds my hands tighter “Not until I officially become Alpha Supreme, not until we move to the New York HQ.”

"Why?" my face is all angles of confusion

A shadow across his face "If anyone found out about you, it won't take them long to plan something to get to me."

"Get to you for what?" I ask

"I'm a new ruler, not even official," Luke says "There are countless people probably planning a**a**ination attacks right now."

I stare at him, mind running a million miles per second. Luke searches my face, looking for a hint of what I'm thinking. Considering the way his grip tightens a notch, I think he comes up short.

I shrug.

The look of pure surprise on his face makes a laugh bubble from my lips.

"Alright, so we cant make it public just yet." I grin at him, eyes crinkling in amus****t "It's only for like what? One week?"

Luke flashes me a small smile, the relief on his face barely readable but there. He presses a kiss to either of my hands.

"I thought you would insist that you can keep yourself safe." He says

"I can, Winters." I say, raising my chin "But I'd rather not look over my shoulder every ten seconds to make sure no one is stalking me for taking me hostage."

"Thank you for understanding, Hazel."

"You don't have to thank me." I wink at him, then a sudden thought crosses my head

"What about this though?" I ask, tilting my head to expose the mark on my neck

"We can hide it."

I put on a thinking expression, then nod "Turtle necks and a boatload of perfume, I got it."

Luke shakes his head "That won't work, Hazel. The change is in your very scent, your aura. It's not that simple."

"Then what?" my brows furrow

Luke's face is impa**ive as he stares at mine, finally, words wretch their way out of his mouth.

"Korra can mask it."

"No way," I pull my hands away, my nose crinkles at just the thought "I don't want to mask it, and her spells sting pretty bad from what I remember."

"She's our best option." Luke sighs "I've thought of other ways only to come up short. She's the only witch capable of anything close to masking a mark."

I bit my bottom lip, brows pulled together. Well... I can handle a bit of a sting and it's not like I want an inexperienced witch to turn me into a toad by accident.

After a few moments of awkward silence, I finally make a face at him.

"This relationship better be worth doing all this for," I say

Luke leans forward, brushing his fingers along my jaw, trailing towards my neck, over the mark. The storm in his dark eyes gravitates towards my wide eyes, he flashes me a smirk, showing a hinting of glistening canines.

"I wouldn't doubt that."

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He stands up from his chair, face coming dangerously close to mine and I hold my breath, frozen in anticipation.

He reaches around me and grabs a file.

With a smirk loaded with mirth and haughtiness, Luke leans back and opens the file, the pen in it tells me he's been working on it.

I gape at him. That bloody b*****!

"Something the matter, Hazel?" Luke raises an eyebrow, giving me a fleeting glance before looking at his file again

"You look flustered."

"What are you doing?" I ask, willing my attention to shift from the thoughts of bashing Luke's head in his desk

"Selecting a day for the execution."

I nod “Oh, that’s understandable— What?!”

Luke looks at me as if there’s nothing wrong with that “The men at the second lodge, they were warriors from

Goldstein’s pack, sent there to ambush the participants.”

I gape at him “So you’re just going to get them killed?”

“They violated the Hunt rules,” Luke says, his voice dead of emotion “There’s no saying they wouldn’t try to avenge

their Alpha later.”

“Luke, no.”

“Excuse me?”

“This isn’t their fault,” I say vehemently “They were just following orders!”

“Following orders to kill us,” Luke narrows his eyes

“Whatever it was, Luke.” I say, my voice softening “They don’t deserve this.”

“You want me to send them back to their pack?” He asks dispa**ionately “Where they would tell their new Luna that

Goldstein was planning to attack the participants and got himself killed?”

“Why would that matter? He was the one who did wrong.”

“Zoya Goldstein is as witty as her brother was, if not more.” Luke says “She’s going to use this against us.”

“Just because Alpha Goldstein was a horrible king doesn’t mean you have to be like that too,” I say

“I’m not a king, Hazel.” Luke says coolly, leafing through the file “I’m a leader. And I cannot lead those unfaithful to me.”

I resist the urge to throw my hands in the air. I need to handle this carefully, Luke will come around, but I need to push him in the right direction.

“You don’t want to execute all of them,” I say softly, touching my fingers to his cheek “you wouldn’t do something so ruthless.”

“Elise, Hazel, I can’t just—

“You can,” I say softly, persistently “That’s what they’re expecting you to do, to kill them. If you show them forgiveness, they will be forever grateful. They will be loyal to you.”

I can almost see the gears in Luke’s head moving, his eyes calculating, a storm of thoughts brewing in them. A gleam settles in the deep blue as he c***s his head aside.

“Perhaps,” he says slowly “I can make as an exception this once.”

I know he has something in mind other than sending them back to their pack, but at least they’ll live.

“See?” I say, a smile lifting at my lips “If you just move your head from the rigid pathways, things can work out pretty well.”

But Luke only stares at me, eyes thoughtful. I can tell his mood has shifted from scheming by the way the tautness of his face is replaced by a little smile.

“You’re going to be a great Luna, Elise.” He says a hint of pride pinched in his voice “My Luna.”

“What can I say?” My lips curve in a smirk “I’m known to be pretty amazing.”

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Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 47

Chapter 47 The chains of restraint

I sigh in pure bliss. Goddess, this is the way to live.

I turn the page of my book, the sunlight illuminating the library also warms it up. My hand returns to run through the soft tendrils of hair in my lap— attached to Luke’s head.

The sound of him turning the page of his book is loud in the soothing silence.

With considerable willpower, I turn my eyes away from my book and towards the grandfather clock against the wall.

“It’s already been two hours,” I say out loud, surprise evident in my voice

Luke lifts his head off my lap and straightens himself, pulling his legs down the couch “I could’ve sworn it’s only been twenty minutes.”

I stretch my arms above my head, a grin curving my lips as I pull my legs up and settle comfortably on the couch, my

book in my hands.

“Go do your Alpha duties,” I say to Luke with a dismissive wave “I’m going to finish this one today.”

Since I can’t really meet the rest of those who survived due to the risk of them finding out about the mark, Luke had

showed me the library that’s just in front of the staircase leading to the top floor— the whole of which is reserved for the winners.

I see Luke frown from my peripheral. When I give him no attention he sighs and heaves himself off the couch.

“Why don’t you come along?” he says “I could use a review on the accommodations for the unsupervised packs.”

“We did that last night, remember?” I say, mindlessly turning the page of my book

“Did we?”

“Yes.”

When he doesn’t move from his place for a few more moments, I raise my hooded eyes to meet his, feigning confusion.

“I will be going then,” He says, picking up his suit jacket and shrugging it on

He walks to the door, steps sluggish and determined at the same time. I bite my lip not to grin as I say;

“Luke?”

He pivots on his heel, intent gaze on me “Yes?”

“Would you mind sending a cup of tea here?” I say innocently “Thank you.”

His eyes narrow a fraction, I’m dead sure he can see the amus****t dancing across my eyes but he only gives me a

nod and goes out of the door, shutting it behind with a thud!

A laugh escapes me— more like a mischievous giggle. Luke does not like being ignored.

Only moments later, a maid comes in. I look up, a little surprised for a few reasons. The first being that it was too

quick of service to be real, the second being that the maid has no cup in her hands, the third being it that doesn't make sense why she's here if not for the tea.

"Alpha Supreme is asking for you in his office, Ms. Attwood." She tells me

Seriously? With a huff, I push myself off the couch and place a bookmark in my book.

"Did he say what for?" I ask her as we start for the door

"No, Ms." The maid replies "But there are guests in his office."

Guests. My heart leaps in my chest at first thought that it must be mom, mom here to see me.

Homesickness crashes over me like a tide of rough water, drowning any logic or sense and the next thing I know is

that I'm racing above the stairs, towards his office.

Without knocking, I go through the door open, face warm and breaths short from having run up so fast. My eyes instantly land on Luke, then to the visitor's chair, a woman turns to face me.

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I almost step back with disappointment.

Korra. Not mom.

Of course you dumba**! How could she be here right now?

Trying to cover up my expression, I offer her a small smile.

"Hello," I say as I walk towards the other visitor chair

"Expecting someone else, dearie?" Korra asks, her blazing yellow eyes fix on my mark

"No, not really." I lie smoothly "How come you're here?"

She turns her gaze to Luke, mirth fills her eyes "Ya didn't tell 'er, beastie?"

Luke's eyes narrow at that word, a low growl rumbles through him but he says nothing of it.

"You knew, didn't you?" Luke gives her a customary disdainful glance

"Please," She rolls her eyes "This is 'ow fate wanted it, so this is 'ow it went."

He keeps his glare on her for a few more moments, then turns to me.

"Hazel, I told you we cannot let anyone know about us yet." He says I nod "Korra's here to help with that."

"You told me that." I say, turning my face to the witch "Can I trust you not to blow my head up?"

"Not remotely."

The glare that Luke sends her even makes Korra hold a hand up in defense.

"Cool down, beastie." She flashes him a grin, golden teeth gleaming "I ain't hurting yar treasure."

Luke gets up from his place to make his way towards me, his hand falls on my shoulder. He gives it a rearing squeeze. I take a deep breath, biting my bottom lip.

Am I going to do this? Remove the mark that saved my life? That's supposed to be the most expensive jewelry

I ever wear?

I turn my eyes to Luke, his gaze is apologetic, reflecting the ruefulness in my own eyes. With a sigh, I internally shake myself.

Get a hold of yourself, Elise. It's temporary masking.

I nod at Luke, surprising both of us with a fierce grin.

"Should I just get it done with?" Korra asks, almost bored

"Let's do this while the fit is on us," I say

She closes her eyes, muttering words under her breath. Wisps of gold spin out of her wand and slowly swirl towards me. The wisps curl around me. I feel pain shoot up my skin as if someone is burning my skin with a blue-hot flame.

My lips part instinctively and a blood-curdling scream escapes. I rub my arms, my neck feeling as if something is ripping my skin off. Melting something off me, as if I'm being put from one skin into another. I can't hear my voice but my throat is burning raw with pain.

My senses give in, numbing and bending away under the pain that comes over me. I feel like I'm falling, but I don't reach the ground. I keep falling and falling and falling until there's something soft against my back.

I wrench my eyelids to open up, my vision lurches and so does my stomach. I feel sick, like that one time I did when I

thought it's a good idea to ride in the washing machine with the door open.

With a groan, I heave myself up the bed.

The next instant, I find myself looking into familiar stormy blue eyes, raking over me, searching.

"Are you alright, Hazel?" Luke asks "Does it hurt anywhere?"

"Just dizzy," I rub my temple "What the hell happened?"

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A different voice answers me from the other side of my room.

"What the stars willed, dearie. I removed yar mark."

"That, that's impossible," I say, my wide eyes land on Korra

"Ya 'haven't completed the bond, dearie," Korra says simply

With a low growl, Luke advances at her "The deal was to mask it, make it undetectable."

Korra grins "What's done is done."

Luke gives her a death glare "I should kill you right now."

"The leash has already slipped," she looks pointedly at his hands

Mine and Luke's eyes follow her line of sight and I see his fingers elongated, pointed to sharp claws.

"Need some air, beastie?" She raises an eyebrow, but the momentary glance she sends my way doesn't go unnoticed by me

"I'm not leaving you alone with her," Luke growls lowly

"As ya wish." Korra shrugs but casts a glance at me again

She makes her way towards the window, probably ready to take flight when she looks at me yet again. Curiosity

grabs me by the shirt front and shakes me hard.

"Wait!" I say, without waiting for anyone to answer, I get off the bed

My head spins slightly, but I feel a lot better than I did a few moments ago. Luke instantly moves to my side, placing a hand on the small of my back. I can feel his skin burning with withheld anger.

"You want to say something," I say to Korra "Then say it."

She c***s her head, thinking. Then nods, maybe to me, probably to herself.

"Send 'im out and I will."

Another low growl slips past Luke's lips, he takes a step forward but I hold him back.

"Just for a moment," I say quietly "You can wait just outside the door."

His eyes snap to mine and I'm taken aback by just how dark they are "No. I'm not letting you out of my sight."

"Luke, please." I cup the side of his face "If anything goes wrong I'll scream my lungs out, promise."

His eyes dart between both of mine, unconvinced, concerned.

I try again "At my request?"

His jaw tightens, every muscle in his body tenses like springs under pressure but his head jerks a nod. He turns his stormy eyes to Korra.

Luke lets out a breath and I see the armor slide back in place, he puts his hands behind his back, looking down at the

witch with an impa**ive face.

"Anything happens to her," he says slowly, calmly, each word hard as a rock "And Braxton will have to face the consequence."

For one split second, Korra's eyes widen but she recovers too quickly. A shadow crosses her face, making her yellow eyes more pronounced.

"Done yar share of bargaining, haven't ya?" she asks, a slight sneer in her voice

"My whole life is a series of bargains, witch." Luke says "And I always keep my end of the deal."

With that he leaves the room, closing the door behind. I shift awkwardly on my feet.

"So what did you want to say to me?" I ask calmly

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Korra turns her glare from the door to my face "Keeping in mind that full moon is coming, I'll let him go this time."

I give her a tight-lipped smile, she lets out a muffled sigh.

"The stars seem ta love playing with ya, dearie." She says

My brows pull together "How so?"

"Ya know what 'e is, what 'e is gonna become on the full moon." She says I nod "And ' is marked on ya, the beast's

a**urance that 'is mate belongs ta 'im, is gone."

My stomach turns in unease "Luke wouldn't hurt me, he never has."

"And 'is mate just so 'happens to be an omega," Korra ignores my statement "A fragile doll 'e needs ta protect."

"Luke isn't like that," I say, a bit severer this time

"Winters ain't," Korra shrugs "But the beast is."

Korra's amber eyes settle on mine with a seriousness I haven't seen before "Don't let the beast break the chains of restraint Winters has on 'im."

She turns to the window again and what she says next is barely audible to me;

"The beast cant hurt ya," she whispers "But 'e can hurt many people ya would like ta see alive."

Then she shifts into a raven and takes off, leaving me with a racing heart and a swimming head.

I open the door and find Luke just outside, his head snaps to mine and I usher him inside.

“Are you alright?” he asks me instantly, I nod “What did she say?”

I chew my bottom lip “To be careful.”

Luke drags a hand down his face, rubbing his jaw before he lets his hand drop. He closes the distance between us,

cradles my face in his hands, and sets his forehead against mine. His skin is warm against my own, callous hands on my soft cheeks. No stars erupt across my skin, but the sure, warm tingles of his touch make my heart flip.

“Did it hurt a lot?” he asks quietly

My lips tug upward in an easy smile “Like hell.”

“I’m sorry.” Luke says, disappointment evident in his voice “I didn’t know—

I press a quick kiss to his lips “You don’t have to apologize to me.”

His lips quirk upwards at my words, but the smile dims the moment I step back. Luke leans down to kiss me again but I swiftly turn my face so his lips touch my cheek.

“What?” I hold back a laugh at his bewildered expression “I’m tired.”

Luke narrows his eyes at me, a hint of playfulness gleaming in his eyes “Of course, Hazel, you should rest.”

He leans forward so his lips brush against my ear, causing a shiver to race down my spine.

“Trust me, you’ll need it in the long run.” He whispers

“Aren’t you being too desperate, Winters?” I ask

His shoulders shake with silent laughter “You don’t know what desperate looks like, Elise.”

“You need a cold shower,” I pull away from him, a half-embarrassed, half-amused look on my face “And a reminder that you have work to do.”

With a huff, he lets go of me “Rest, and tell me if you feel anything isn’t right.”

I roll my eyes despite my smile “I will,”

Reluctantly, Luke goes out of the room yet again, closing the door behind. The worry I’d felt while talking to Korra evaporates quickly. She’s probably just angry at Luke. Luke wouldn’t lose his calm, he hadn’t lost it before.

Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 48

Chapter 48 Someone I love

Humming, I take a long shower. When I come back out, the sky is thick with dark clouds, I see the lightning flash in a distance. Luke isn’t back yet.

Combing my fingers through my wet hair, I wonder if I should go down to meet the others.

Seven teams made it back, six excluding us. Luke told me Ethan and Tyler made it back and so did Joseph and

Freddie. The others I don’t know, but I do want to meet my friends.

My mind made up, I make my way towards the stairs and go straight to the first floor. I reach the first door and raise my hand to knock when the realization hits me.

I have no idea which room they’re in.

Muttering a curse, I move the gears in my head.

Just then, a maid goes past me, an idea hits me like lightning. The sound of thunder in the background only adds to create the effect.

“Wait,” I quickly walk to her, she raises an eyebrow at me in confusion “Do you know where Alpha Parks’ room is?”

“Sure, Ms. Attwood.” She nods “The second last on the left.”

“Thank you,” I grin at her but just as I take a step forward, she speaks again

“If you are hoping to meet him, Ms. He’s not there.” She tells me “He left for a jog with his beta just five minutes ago. They said the rain wouldn’t be a problem.”

“Oh,” My shoulders drop “And Alpha Vanderwood? Where is he?”

“He just asked for coffee in the library.”

With a smile, I nod at her and turn to the stairs again. Soon enough, I reach the library on the second floor.

Without knocking, I slip inside. Using my ninja maneuvers, I quickly detect a mop of dark hair against one of the couches.

I slowly creep forward, making no sound whatsoever, finally, I am close enough to the couch to scare the s*** out of him when I hear;

“And you said I’m creepy.”

“Seriously?” I frown at him, peeking from behind the couch “What is it with everyone knowing I’m there?”

“Your scent is strong, Attwood,” Joseph looks up from the chessboard in front of him on the table “And every

Lycanthrope here is either Alpha or Beta, except you, of course.”

I huff “Yet I’m the one who won.”

“Winters won.”

“Same thing.”

He gives me an amused look “What are you doing here?”

“Cant I check up on my housemates to know if they’re alive?” I give him a look, propping myself on the couch

“I appreciate the concern,” he says with a quirk of his lips “I’m surprised you’re alive, Elise. Heard you took a silver bullet.”

“Who told you?” my eyebrows shoot to the sky

“Parks wanted to see you, Winters said you’re still recovering.” He says, moving a piece from the black’s side and then moving one from the white “By the way, how are you now?”

“I’m good,” I say cheerfully “Never been better.”

Joseph casts me a sideways glance, his lips curve in a smirk “So, you and Winters?”

I raise an eyebrow at him, hoping he can’t hear how my heart has started to gallop.

“What do you mean?” I play dumb, faintly aware of the splatters of rain on the windows

“Don’t give me that look,” he rolls his eyes “I know about his curse.”

My mouth falls open “What, how?”

Joseph takes a moment to think, then moves the black’s queen, knocking over white’s king. Checkmate.

“My father attempted to kill him.”

“What?”

Joseph picks up his coffee mug and takes a sip, leans back in his seat.

“He came to our pack some four years ago, talked to my father on some matters.” He tells me calmly “He and his little crew of warriors were to leave in a few days, my father told me we would finish them off in the night. I asked him the reason. He told me.”

He takes another sip of the coffee and looks at me with those too clever forest eyes “I don’t think I’d ever forgotten the night a single Lycan killed ten trained warriors.”

A beat of silence passes and then I’m compelled to ask;

“What about your father?”

“Gone.”

My eyes widen in horror “Did he, Did Luke—

“No,” Joseph says “He’s not dead. He’s in exile for planning an attack on your pack a few months later. He helped some rouges, the Alpha Supreme found out. He was exiled without trial, no one bought his story of the boy beast.”

I let out a breath I didn’t know I was holding, Joseph exhales a laugh.

“You’re acting as if it would’ve been bad if Winters had killed him.” He says

“How can you say that?” I ask applauded “He’s your father!”

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“A father who killed his two older children to save his t**le.”

I’m openly gaping at Joseph. He rolls his eyes at me.

“Get yourself together, Attwood.” He says lightly, but I detect the careful warning in his voice, telling me not to show sympathy “Things happen, people go on. I don’t remember much of it anyway.”

I decide to change the topic to “Yeah, Luke and I.”

“Knew it,” he flashes me the usual self-content smirk “I must admit, Winters is a lucky b***** to get to stay with his mate the entire Hunt.”

“You must be missing you mate too, huh?” I ask, then a grin comes to my lips “I’m sure she’s glad to have you away for a while.”

“Penelope adores me,” Joseph huffs “And she shares my admiration for chess.”

I find myself genuinely smiling at him “I’m sure she does.”

“Now that you’ve given me the official t**le of being your housemate,” Joseph says “I expect you to have the first official dinner at my pack.”

“Official dinner?”

He nods at me as he stands up “The new Alpha Supreme receives a lot of invitations for an official meeting with other packs.”

I stand up as well “I expect a grand feast.”

Joseph gives me a little bow “As you wish, your highness.”

I smile at him, only to realize a moment later that he probably has to go and I’m standing just in front of him. He’d have to move around the table to leave, or I could just step back and save him the trouble.

In my haste to move back, my foot hits the table’s leg and I lose my balance. Instinctively, trying to hold something for support, my hands find Joseph’s arm, causing him to fall with me.

The mug slips from his grip and shatters to the floor as we both fall on the couch. Joseph manages not to crush me by holding himself by the arms. I almost cringe at the awkward position.

Before either of us can move, a low growl reaches my ears.

The next instant, I hear a crash as the table is tossed away, its gla** top shattering with an ear-piercing sound. Joseph has hauled off me, and I hurriedly scramble up to see him being held against a shelf.

“Stay away from her,” Luke’s lips curl in a snarl, displaying his elongated canines, his hand clenched around Joseph’s throat

I stare at Luke, petrified in my place, if he tightens his hold he’s going to kill him. Something hits me like an iron fist in my guts.

“Luke, let him go,” I scurry off the couch and towards them, trying to pull him back from a struggling Joseph

His head snaps to me for a moment, eyes dark like obsidian, rage swirling in their depths. Without thinking twice, I step back.

He turns his face back to Joseph, whose face is turning red, his own hands have shifted, trying to claw off Luke’s grip in vain.

“She’s mine,” Luke growls at him

I flinch at the raw possession in rough his voice. My heart starts to pound hard against my chest. Something is very, very wrong here. This is not Luke’s voice, it cant be.

Internally shaking myself, I grab his arm yet again, trying to pull back.

“He knows that,” I say, desperation taints my voice like poison “He has a mate, remember!”

His chest rises and falls as quickly as Joseph’s, a few painful seconds die in the process of his hand leaving Joseph’s throat, who quickly pushes Luke away from himself, drawing in sharp breaths.

Two burning arms wrap around me in crushing hold, reminding me so much of the last full moon.

“Don’t touch her again.” Luke’s voice rumbles with a growl

I cant see Joseph’s face, but he says nothing. I feel a face pressed in my hair, taking a deep breath.

“My mate,” A rough voice whispers “Only mine.”

I manage to snake my hands between us, hopelessly trying to push him a bit away. Finally, relenting, Luke pulls away just enough to look at me. Anger, possession, and adoration all mixed up in his eyes. My brain jams in place, unable to comprehend what’s happening.

Something in him snaps, clearing away the dark mist to give way for the stormy blue.

Luke's eyes widen a fraction, eyebrows pulling together as he abruptly lets go of me. I hear the sound of a door slamming shut as he leaves.

I whirl around to see Joseph, leaning against the shelf, the bruises on his neck already fading.

"Are you okay?" I ask

"Fine." He nods, still staring at the door "You?"

"I'm okay." I let out a breath "Joseph, I'm sorry, my clumsiness got this messed up."

He finally looks at me again and shakes his head "This is expected. Lycans are possessive even these days, and he

is... something ancient."

"This isn't," I swallow "Always going to be like this, right?"

Joseph keeps staring at me for a while "I don't know."

I try to swallow the lump in my throat "I should go."

"Elise," Joseph calls as I near the door, I look over my shoulder "Give him time, this must be new for him too."

I give him a quick nod "I'll keep that in mind."

I quickly make my way to my room, when I throw the door open, I can't see him anywhere. I'm not sure if I'm relieved or disappointed.

I bite my lip in thought. Should I look for him? But Luke will come back when he's done processing this right? I should give him time.

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I sit, pace, lay down, and pace again in my room as the minute's tick by. The rain outside gets harder. He doesn't come back.

Finally, when it's past midnight, I decide that's this is enough. Leaving my room, a storm of thoughts swirls in my head.

I don't know if I want to have this conversation. I'm sure Luke doesn't want to have this conversation. But we can't avoid this, I refuse to let a dumb incident be a hurdle between us.

I go to his office and without knocking, go inside. Blinking, I look around. He's not here. I close the door and look through the other rooms.

The thunder roars, illuminating the otherwise dark hallways. I contemplate calling out his name but I don't want to risk him walking away.

Looking inside each room, my disappointment increases. But he should be here! Unless he went out. But he wouldn't go out in this weather, would he?

My feet accelerate their pace and so does my heart and I silently pray to the Goddess for him to be here.

I reach the second floor and just as I quickly pass a balcony, my steps falter.

I step back, slowly, hopefully, and there, standing in the pouring rain I see a tall, dark silhouette.

The thunder roars again, I quietly step out into the rain, biting back a gasp as the icy water hits me. My hand reaches out to touch him but I hesitate before pulling it back

A whisper leaves my mouth "Luke."

Impossibly, over the sound of the splashing rain and rushing wind, he hears me. He whirls around, eyes wide a

fraction, muscles taut.

For a moment, we just stand there; in the pouring rain under the dark sky, looking at each other, asking a thousand

questions in the silence that envelopes us.

My feet move forward, my hands reach up to hold his face and I vaguely wonder why he seems so taller than usual.

Tenderly, my freezing fingers graze his burning skin. His stormy eyes burn with deep regret, a pain ages old.

Breaking the spell of silence, my mouth opens and words tumble out;

"Why did you leave?"

Luke snaps out of his trance, he briskly steps away from me before turning his back at me once again.

"Why are you here?" his voice is harder than it's ever been before

“You just took off and you’re asking me why I’m here?” I say

Another flash of lightning illuminates the balcony, I notice his hands digging into the railing.

“You should go.”

I gape at his ripped back, feeling irritation and confusion arise in me. Why is he acting like this? I didn’t do anything

wrong!

“Do you think I came here at this hour of the night, in the pouring rain, just to turn back?” I ask, my eyes narrowed

His neck muscles tense, other than the sound of thunder, I get no response.

“Luke, look at me,” I say in a firm voice

He doesn’t move an inch. Closing the distance between us, I take his arm and force him to look my way.

“Do you have any idea,” I jab a finger at his chest “how worried I was?”

“You don’t have to worry about me, Hazel.” He looks away

“Luke, what are you talking about?” I stare at him, brows furrowed in confusion

“Monsters are not to be worried for,”

“You’re not—

“I saw the way you looked at me,” He steps away from me, a strange sort of restlessness on his features

I stare at him, wide-eyed and stunned. Getting no answer out of me, Luke runs a hand through his hair, pushing the dark strands away from his face.

“You looked at me like you want to run away,” his eyes clench shut as if he’s in too much pain “as though I terrify you.”

My heart falters, crushed with an unknown pain, and my shoulder sag under its weight.

“You don’t scare me.” I say, my voice hushed in the rough winds “You never will.”

“How can you not be afraid,” he asks, staring down at his hands— claws “Of what might surface through me?”

I step forward and hold his face. Luke’s eyes gravitate to mine, looking like shattered gla** after a storm.

“How can I be afraid of someone I love?”

Even in the pouring rain, his body radiates heat. Standing on my toes, I hook my arms around him, his arms wrap around me, holding me as though I might vanish any moment.

“This won’t happen again, Elise.” his voice is so low I almost don’t catch it over the sound of the rain “I swear.”

“I know,” I whisper, then little smile tugs at my lips “But I kinda really like hugging in the rain.”

His shoulders relax slightly, Luke presses a soft kiss to my temple “This won’t happen like this again.”

I nod “Yeah, there should be a garden and background music.”

He smiles then. The first deep smile I’ve ever seen him give after the one on the finish line. It melts my heart as I look at him, really look at him. At a man who’s been told of the monster he might become his whole life and yet he had the strength to take that t**le down and build a new one.

Goodness, I have fallen hard.

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I lean forward to lock my lips with his, Luke instantly returns the gesture but I stop before that. A strange feeling crawls up my body, my eyes widen in realization and I turn my face just in time before—

I sneeze.

Sniffing, I turn back to Luke with a sheepish smile.

“Come on,” He smiles, his hand seems to engulf mine on a whole new level

Luke guides me back inside and pa**ing through the dark hallways to my room before flickering on the lights I had

turned down before leaving.

“You should take a warm shower, Hazel.” Stepping away from me, Luke opens the closet and takes out a long sweatshirt

Taking the shirt from him, I look up—way up at his face “And you?”

“I’ll take a shower in the other room,” Luke says

Nodding, I step away from him into the bathroom. Taking off my soaked clothes I take a quick warm shower.

Sneezing a few times, might I add. Then I dry off and put on the dry shirt.

My mind wanders back to what happened not so long ago. I know the full moon is coming, but Luke was fine just before... Korra removed my mark. But that can make him go so out of control was unimaginable.

Korra had warned me, maybe I should’ve been more careful. But what about a full moon? Is Luke going to shift during the ceremony? What about me? He won’t try to mark me, would he? It’s not like I don’t want him to, but I don’t want it to be like this.

With a storm of questions, I step back into the room. My eyes instantly land on Luke sitting on the bed. I focus my eyes on his face, his damp hair, and his dark stormy gaze but he looks calm, not as guilt-ridden as he did a while ago.

My gaze travels to his hands and, for a millisecond, I freeze. They’re still not back to normal.

Surprised, I walk up to him and curiously, cautiously hold his hand in mine. It should be back to normal, every other time it happened, it goes back in a while.

He waits for me to speak and I do too, but no words come out of my mouth. I look up and my eyes meet his tired ones, a note of worry in them.

A small smile tugs at my lips as I interlock his fingers with mine.

“Let’s sleep, yeah?” I ask

Luke presses a kiss on my forehead and nods.

I have so many questions, so many queries and yet I can’t make myself ask him anything. I will, of course, but not now.

Now is not the time for that.

Luke lays down on the other side of the bed, a little away from me. Both of us lay on our sides, I curled up and his ramrod straight, staring at each other.

“Luke,” I say after a moment “I’m feeling cold.”

“Strange,” he says, “I think it’s warm.”

Well, if that’s the case. I scoot over to him. In an instant, his arms wrap around me so his head falls against my

chest, no doubt hearing my fast heartbeat.

The thunder roars again, rain splatters on the gla** windows and my body relaxes completely in Luke’s hold. I nearly drift off to sleep before realizing that he was still awake.

“Can’t sleep?” I ask quietly

Silence. Then;

“Yes.”

I tilt my head to look at him, a little sleepy smile on my face.

“You have me here and you still can’t sleep,” I say, hushed amus****t in my voice “I have the right to know why.”

Luke shifts his hold on me so we’re on eye level, in the dimly lit room I make out the slight furrow between his

brows, not a wink of sleep in his eyes.

“Elise, if I ask something of you, will you grant it to me?” He asks, his voice quiet in contrast to the storm outside

I ignore the worry in my mind “If you ask me to kill you again, I just might.”

He doesn’t find that funny, instead, his fingers interlock with mine, engulfing my hand in warmth.

“Don’t give up on us.”

I blink, confused at what he just said. He presses on;

“I will not lie to you, Hazel. Even after I become Alpha supreme, even after I mark you, I might not be able to control my shift on a full moon, I might not be able to hold back my instinct when another man comes close to you,” Luke says

“But I swear, Elise, I will never hurt you. I will get this under control. I—

I press a kiss to his lips “Shut up,”

A small laugh escapes me at his bewildered expression “You worry way too much, Luke.”

I pull my hand out of his and trail my fingers down the side of his face, along his jaw “You don’t have to explain yourself to me. You kept no secret about yourself, I fell in love with it all. I’m not going to take the good you offer and frown at the bad. I know you will work this out, and I’m always happy to help.”

I can almost feel him relax, he buries his face deeper in the pillows, hooded eyes staring at me.

“Maybe after so long of having everyone fear me,” he says softly “I keep worrying that you might fear me too.”

I snuggle closer to him, tucking my head under his chin. His scent and warmth engulf me in comfort, I can hear his rhythmic heartbeat as I close my eyes.

“I’m here,” I whisper “Don’t ever forget that I’m here, Luke. You’re not alone anymore.”

“I know, love.”

Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 49

Chapter 49 Mia Regia

Today is the day.

When I wake up, Luke is of course already gone, since I wake up at 8 and he wakes up at 5. Fidgeting excitedly, I rake through the closet and find a knee-length white dress that looks sophisticated enough.

I quickly take a shower and dry my hair, put on the dress, and apply a bit of makeup. Quickly zipping up my ankle boots, I take another look at the mirror.

The door opens, I see Luke’s reflection, already dressed in a navy suit. I grin at his surprised expression as he sees me

and do a little twirl.

“Ta-da!” I say excitedly “So, how do I look?”

He c***s his head to a side “You look beautiful, Hazel. What’s the occasion?”

I stare at him, dumbfounded “Well, we’re leaving for the royal chapel, aren’t we?”

He takes a moment to consider my words, then gives me a nod "Yes, I suppose Casper will be here in a while, then we will leave."

I squeal excitedly and rock on my toes, which is kind of hard considering that I'm wearing pencil-heel boots.

Luke stares at me thoughtfully "And you are so excited because we're leaving?"

"Of course I am!"

"I had no idea you wanted to be rid of me so badly, Hazel." Luke gives me a mock wounded look

My excitement screeches to a halt. I blink at him "What?"

"Casper and I are leaving for the royal chapel. The other competitors have already left." Luke says, walking towards me "A few guards will take you back to the pack estate. After the ceremony is over, I have to stay there two nights due to some ridiculous tradition. Then I will come to get you."

I gape at him as he reaches around me to pick up a watch and changes the one he's wearing right now.

"Why are you so surprised?" Luke lifts my chin to close my mouth "We talked about this."

"I thought you were joking!" I use my hands to exaggerate

My mind goes back to the conversation we had about this ceremony two days ago, the day I'd woken up and bombarded him with questions after the too emotional confessions.

"Too bad, Hazel." He leans down and presses a kiss to my cheek "I don't want to let you out of my sight, let alone stay away for three days, but it can't be helped."

"But why?" I demand "why can't I come with you?"

"There's a constant risk of assassination."

"Then maybe you shouldn't go either!" I glare at him

Luke shrugs coolly "After spending so much time with me Hazel if you still think I can't hold my ground then you're hopeless."

"This is so unfair!" I give him an accusatory look

“I don’t see how keeping you safe is unfair.”

“Because I want to go!” I narrow my eyes at him “We’ve worked so hard for this together, you cant ditch me now! I won’t stay behind like a fragile doll!”

Luke straightens his back, towering over me with the authority of an Alpha.

“You’re not going, Hazel.” He says, his voice hard as stone “I’m not going to put you at risk again.”

I hold his stormy gaze with my burning one “If you’ve forgotten so quickly, I can handle myself.”

His hands come down on either side of me on the dresser, Luke leans forward, his face is all angles of determination, eyes narrowed a fraction.

“Why do you always want to put yourself in danger?” he asks, his voice dangerously low “Why can’t you just stay safe for once?”

“This is what you signed up for, Winters.” I say, then my lips tug upwards “Besides, if I were such an obedient maiden, we wouldn’t be here.”

Luke opens his mouth to say something but then closes it again. I look at him suspiciously, what is this man—

All conscious thoughts fly out of my head when he brushes my hair away from my face, his hand slips behind my neck as he leans forward to put his lips against mine. A million burning flames embrace me in their hold as my eyes flutter shut.

“I can’t risk you, Elise.” Luke whispers against my mouth “Not when I just have you back.”

“Why don’t you trust me?” I ask “After everything we’ve done together?”

I reached out to grab him by the shirt in front of tugging him towards myself harder, a low growl rumbles through him to me.

“Don’t you think I can protect myself?” I ask, then I change my strategy “That you can protect me?”

Luke kisses me hard then. Hard and desperate and demanding and that’s exactly the way it wants it. I want this moment to shatter a million times yet every reality will be the same. I feel him nudge my face upward, his lips pushing apart my own, and his tongue slides into my mouth.

A breathy moan leaves me as I melt into him, hooking my arms around his neck, my toes curling in my shoes as the intoxicating flavor of him fills my senses.

His mouth leaves mine burning, I look up to meet his hooded eyes, trying and failing to catch my breath.

"I trust you, Hazel. And I trust myself to protect you more than anything" Luke says "but I don't trust myself not to

kill anyone who tries to hurt you."

"You're overthinking," I hold his face in my hands "Stop being such a prude."

"I overthink and that's why we're still alive."

"How could you just leave me here?" I ask, pulling my hands away "I'm your partner! Your mate! Aren't I the Luna Supreme?"

Luke opens his mouth to deny but then realizes what I'm saying is perfectly right. I grin as he scowls.

"You're not going to stay here, are you?" He says, disliking obvious in his voice

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"Nope." I chirp "Trust me, you're going to thank me later,"

Luke lets out a rattled breath "You're going to be the death of me."

"I'm going to take that as a yes," I grin

Just then the door slams open, habitually, I jump away from Luke.

Casper comes in my line of sight, his face flushed from running, suit-clad form hunched, blond hair flying and grey eyes instantly settling on me and Luke.

"All the angles and their babies," Casper huffs out "You two are alive."

The next instant, he has one arm around me and the other around Luke holding us in a tight embrace.

Luke scowls, I giggle.

Nevertheless Luke pats him on the back, Casper lets go of us, beaming.

“When Alpha Jax told the news I almost collapsed from relief,” He says “You’ve outdone yourself Winters.”

“I think not,” Luke says coolly “It was rather obvious.”

Casper huffs “You should brush up on your common courtesy,”

“I can’t agree more.” I nod solemnly

Casper turns his bright grey eyes to me and the next moment he’s lifted me off my feet in a crushing embrace.

“Thank you, Elise, from the bottom of my heart for tolerating this rock and surviving.” He says, letting go of me

“I deserve medals, I know,” I say smugly

All smugness washes off my face when he presses a kiss on my forehead.

“We can get that arranged—

He’s pulled away from me by a very pissed-off Lycan. Casper staggers back as Luke lets go of him and I resist the urge to facepalm myself. Why did he have to do that?

“Get a hold of yourself,” Luke’s voice rumbles with a low growl, his hand already reaching for mine

Casper’s wide eyes take in our interlinked hands. He looks at Luke’s dark eyes, then he looks at me, I offer him a little smile, then he looks at our interjoined hands again.

“Is she, are you two,” Casper gestures with his hands as if they would convey his message but then words splutter out of his mouth “Tell me you b*****, is she the one?”

Luke clears his throat, snapping out of his instinctive haze, with a face blank, he says;

“Yes. Yes, she is.”

“Holy mother of f***s—

Luke holds Casper back before he can hug us again, but Casper doesn’t seem to care, his lips are pulled in a splitting grin, eyes t****ling.

“This is brilliant, perfect!” Casper says I can almost feel the elation in his voice “To think we had your mate in our pack all this time!”

Luke murmurs something along the lines of “Don’t remind me.”

“So, this is our official meeting as Luna and beta,” I say with a grin “Pleased to meet you, Beta Casper Hendricks.”

“The pleasure is all mine, Luna.” Casper gives me an exaggerated bow

Luna, I grin at the t**le. Yeah, I can get used to this.

“Come on,” Luke tugs at my hand “We’ve already wasted enough time as it is.”

“Yeah, the driver is waiting to take you back...” Casper trails off “Uh, are you going back?”

Luke shakes his head “There’s a change in plans. Elise will attend the ceremony with us, then she will go back.”

He gives me a pointed look as he says that, but well, I suppose we can make a compromise.

“All righty let’s go then.”

...

Everyone stands up as Luke gets up from one knee, a golden crown glistening atop his dark hair, a cloak fashioned from the hide of the legendary white Lycan dr***d over his shoulders. He stands erect, hands clasped behind his

back, looking every inch the King they just declared him to be.

My hands sting from clapping too hard.

So I decided to put my fingers in my mouth and whistle.

Through the crowd, his eyes snap to mine, dark hues of stormy blue and I can’t help the pride that flows through me.

The gla** roof of the chapel displays the starry sky and the full moon almost at its peak. Luke had the ceremony

started before the moon could rise fully, it didn’t make much difference in the procedure, but it did stop him from eating the guests.

All the Alphas that attended the ceremony and the participant Alphas surround him, shaking hands, congratulating, inviting him for dinners.

“Your boyfriend just got famous,” Casper says to me, hands in his pockets

“He’s always been,” I say with a smile

“Aren’t you jealous?” He raises an eyebrow, glancing at where a very bored Luke is flanked by female Alphas and betas

Just as I look his way, he seems to sense my gaze. His eyes gravitate to mine, irritated itched on them.

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“Nah,” I wave my hand dismissively “They have no chance.”

Casper laughs a little “You should talk to Gloria soon.”

I raise my brows at him “And who’s that?”

“My possessive little mate,”

I gape at him “You have a mate?!”

“Come on, Elise,” Casper gives me a bemused look “You think I traveled the world with Luke and never found my mate?”

“Then why isn’t she with you?”

“I met her last year, but we were still traveling then.” Casper shrugs “Gloria was a warrior in training at that time. I’d rather stay away from her than have her give up on all she’s worked for.”

“Aww, Cas, that’s so adorable.” I nudge him with my elbow

“Firstly, thanks for acknowledging my good heart, and secondly,” he gives me a look “Cas? It sounds like a girl’s nickname!”

“You do love drama.”

“You wound me, Luna.”

“And me too,” a familiar deep and hard voice says

Luke takes my hand in his, away from prying eyes. I feel the scorching warmth of his skin. Maybe to anyone else,

he would look perfectly fine, but I can see the tension in his shoulders, the way he’s rubbing his temple now and then.

He's having a hard time keeping it under control, I squeeze his hand, hoping to be of some comfort.

Luke couldn't dose himself with wolfsbane because it would tamper with the ceremony. Goddess, we've managed this on a thin margin.

"You've never given me a nickname," Luke says

I grin "What about all those during the Hunt? Like b*****, idiot, a**hole—

His finger pressed against my lips "Maybe you need to reconsider, Hazel."

Before I could reply, Casper coughs distinctively.

"There are praying eyes everywhere," he coughs again "Get a hold."

"One of the few smart things you say, Hendricks." Luke puts my arm through his

We go around the Chapel, interacting and talking. It's strange how all these Alphas and Betas are talking to me, respecting me. It feels good, to be considered an equal.

Well, most of the time.

"Alpha Winters!"

"Alpha Pines," Luke nods towards a man

My eyes fly in his direction. He seems to be in his mid-twenties, maybe a year or so older than Luke. Dressed in a

neat tux, with chestnut curls down to his shoulders, he looks pretty handsome.

"My man," he shakes Luke's hand heartily "Congrats! I can't wait for you to take charge. It's about damn time young

men told hold of authority."

"Thank you, Xavier," Luke says formally "I'm sure you're happy about this."

His brown eyes fly to me and he offers me a crooked grin "Didn't know you brought along a date, Winters."

Luke raises an eyebrow "You didn't recognize her?"

Xavier looks surprised "Should I?"

Luke glances at me, I smile at him before turning my eyes to the Alpha standing in front of us.

“Elise Attwood,” I offer him a professional smile

His eyes widen and his jaw drops “You accompanied him on the Hunt?!”

I can’t help the laugh that escapes me “What were you expecting, Alpha?”

“Some old battle-ax,” He says, looking pretty serious “At least not a bathing beauty.”

“I’m flattered,” I roll my eyes with a smile

“Allow me to introduce myself,” he sweeps my hand in his and presses a kiss to my knuckles “Alpha Xavier Pines,

Alpha Supreme of Europe.”

“Pleased to meet you.” I nod

“Feel free to be pleased by me anytime, little lady.” He winks

Luke’s arm around my waist tightens just slightly. I offer Alpha Xavier a small smile, praying to the Goddess he does not get his nose broken.

“Say, I have a vacancy for my secretary,” Xavier says, not at all bothering to be subtle

“Ever thought of visiting

Canada, Elise?”

Before I can reply, a hard voice does it for me.

“Elise will be staying here, Alpha Pines,” Luke’s voice reverberates with a low growl

“With me.”

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Alpha Xavier looks at him, then looks at me and holds his hands up in mock surrender, a little smirk playing on his lips.

“I was merely joking, Alpha Winters.” He says “I should get going.”

I let out a sigh and turn to my favorite brooding granite statue “Did you have to do that?”

Luke’s eyes meet mine, the obsidian took over the blue “Yes.”

"It's not like I was going," I tell him

"I didn't like the way he was looking at you," Luke says, pulling me closer to himself. His eyes go over the room

once "I don't like how any of the men are looking at you like it's some mating ball."

I grin at him and wiggle my brows "Are you insecure, my love?"

Luke narrows his eyes a fraction "Irritated would be a better word, Hazel."

"Then pick up a few things from me," I say cheekily "Like not being irritated by people flanking your mate."

He frowns a little as I say that "So you wouldn't be bothered by any woman flirting with me?"

"Nope." I shake my head

"Why?"

"Because I trust you," I smile, touching my fingers to his cheek "And if any dumba** goes as far as to kiss you, I'll have to get her executed."

"That would take some explaining, Hazel," Luke says, a faint smile on his face

"Don't worry," I wink "I'm pretty good at convincing people."

"You two just cannot stop that, can you?" Casper says, walking over to us, a frown on his face

"Stop what?" I ask, dropping my hand from Luke's face

"This," he makes a discrete gesture towards us "In a setting like this, someone is always watching."

Sighing, I realize he's right. We do need to keep our guard up.

The party goes on for a few more hours and in the dark hours of the morning, we finally make it outside towards the residential area build in the chapel's neighborhood to accommodate guests.

While Luke deals with the remnants of our guests, I take a shower and change into a loose nightshirt and sweat pants for a little while, I'll have to leave in a few hours.

I brush through my hair while standing by the window, the moon high in the sky, humming to myself when the door opens. A familiar rich aroma drifts over to me and soon enough, two arms wrap around my waist, pulling me to a warm chest.

“Waiting for me, Mia Regia?”

“No, not really,” I say, a little smile playing on my lips

Luke’s lips brush against my ear “Liar.”

I’m aware of the way my heart gallops in my chest “Whatever makes you sleep at nights, Winters.”

Since I’d brushed all my hair against one shoulder, the side of my neck catches his attention.

“You make me sleep at night,” his warm lips brush over my cold skin “But you’re leaving.”

“I’ll be back soon,” A little whimper escapes my mouth as my head unconsciously moves to a side

“Not soon enough,” His lips move down before going up again, leaving fire in their wake

My eyes flutter close and I let myself fall into him, my skin singing with sensations and my mind only anticipating where his lips would go next.

“My Elise,” Luke presses a kiss to my cheek, my jaw, my neck “Only mine.”

My muddled senses don’t let me reply. His hands linger at the hem of my shirt, I don’t tell him to stop, his warm arms slip up and around my bare waist making my breath hitch in my throat.

“Even if you don’t come back,” His voice is husky with possession “I will always find you. I will never let anyone take you from me.”

My mind comes in sharp focus, I move his arms from around me and he lets me before I turn around to face him.

Luke leans forward, my hands fall on the windowsill behind me, his arms cage me in place.

“You don’t trust me to come back?” I can’t hide the hurt from my voice

“No,” Luke says quickly. “No,” His voice softens “I trust you with my life, Elise. I just…”

He lets out a breath and puts his forehead against mine, his obsidian eyes look at me with so much affection, it escapes my mind that these eyes belong to something deadly primitive.

“Every time I thought of my mate, I thought she would run away from me. Like everyone else.” His voice is quiet in the fragile silence “You’re the first one to have seen me and not turn away.”

His fingers trail down the side of my face, my neck, my arm, obsidian eyes follow their path.

“This feels so surreal, Hazel, so perfect it doesn’t seem true. I’m afraid that I will close my eyes,” He closes his eyes, a furrow between his brows “And when I open them again, you will not be here anymore, you will not be mine.”

“This is real, Luke.” My arms wrap around his neck and place a soft kiss on his lips “And I will always be here.”

A faint smile touches his lips as he opens his eyes, the blue much more prominent than the black now.

“Keep yourself safe while I cannot, Mia Regia,” Luke says “I will be back to you as soon as possible.”

I grin at him “You said you’re not a king.”

“But I never said you’re not a queen,” he says, locking his lips with mine, making me feel like a true queen

Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 50

Chapter 50 Hasta La vista

I sigh yet again.

Trees run along the roadside as the car speeds ahead. My eyes stare out of the window dully. What is wrong with me?

I didn’t think I’d miss him like this.

Maybe this is karma for telling Luke you’d be glad to have some time being single again when you were leaving. I crinkle my nose at my thoughts. I shake my head as if trying to ward off the gloom cloud.

The SUV is enveloped by unbearable silence. The two guards sitting across me, dressed in dark suits look like they’ve swallowed gum.

No, I'm not going to act like a lovesick puppy. I'm going back to mom, to Carlos and Angelina and Morgan. My family.

That thought cheers me up a little.

Not much interested in making conversation with my guards, I content myself with the scenery outside the window. The sun is rising, scattering its golden light all over the earth. Only a millennium later, I see the familiar streets of

Minneapolis, the hustle of the city, and soon, we're racing down the earthen road to the pack estate.

The car stops and just as the doors unlock, I jump out of the damned vehicle and take a deep, deep breath.

"Ms. Attwood, we have orders to guide you up to the very entrance." One of the guards says in a deep, gravelly voice

I nod at him and start towards the main gates, holding myself back from breaking into a sprint. Once I cross the threshold, the guards bid me goodbye and turn away.

As if a leash has been broken, I sprint forward towards the vast gardens. Everything is exactly the way it was seven weeks ago.

No one to greet me, no celebratory preparations even though they had received word that I would be arriving today.

Why is the familiar behavior making me grin?

Because it doesn't matter anymore, and I don't want to feel sentimental about leaving this place.

I reach the omega quarters, the little building makes a rush of homesickness go through me.

I take a deep breath outside the door, my hands trembling from the onslaught of emotions. I grab the handle, turn and enter.

The living room is dark, even the window curtains are drawn. Furrowing my brows, I reach for the light switch and flick it up.

"WELCOME HOME!"

I'm frozen in my place, stunned by the decorated living room, all of the omegas grinning at me. Angelina is holding a

huge cake in her arms.

“Elise my dear!”

The next moment I’m engulfed in a puff of motherly love as mom crushes me in her arms. I faintly register the tears flowing out of her eyes as she kisses my cheeks, my forehead.

“Mom, I’m okay.” A watery laugh escapes me as I wipe her cheeks

“That’s my girl,” Morgan says, patting me hard on the back, her grin as fierce as always

“Do you like it?” Angelina asks nervously, gesturing at the decorations

“You, all of you, I didn’t think,” words betray me, those b*****s and I hug mom and Morgan “I missed you all so much.”

“You missed your birthday,” Ka**y says, coming up to me with a smile “So we thought we should make it up to you.”

“Thank you,” I’m saying, a little shaken by this happiness that has pounced on me so unexpectedly “All of you,” I gesture to everyone in the living room “This is more than what I would’ve ever expected.”

“You don’t need to thank us,” a scrawny boy says, I remember his name to be Victor “We should thank you, you’ve

given all of us something to be proud of.”

A loud clang of agreement rings through the air, everyone is hugging me, taking pictures, giving me cards of what

they think about my adventure.

You’re the bravest Omega I know.

I want to be as strong and resilient as you are.

You show them higher wolves that we Omegas aren’t less than anyone.

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I’m still marveling at the ingenuity of this whole ordeal when I hear a familiar voice;

“Seems like you’ve forgotten me, Elise.”

I whirl around, the cards still in my hand when I see him, dressed in his warrior's uniform. Carlos flashes me his

usual crooked grin and the next thing I know is that I collide hard with him, wrapping my arms around his neck,

almost knocking him off his feet.

"How can I ever forget you, you b*****?" I ask, grinning widely

"You're still the little s*** I remember you to be," Carlos laughs, ruffling my hair

"Idiot," I give him a mock glare

The party goes by in a haze of me telling my stories, eating cake, asking how things have been in the pack, telling them about the crowning ceremony.

A few hours later, I'm curled on my bed, relishing the familiar feeling of my head in mom's lap, her hand stroking my head.

"Your hair has gotten so damaged, dear." Mom says gently "But it'll be fine. I'll mix up my herbal oil, it does wonders for the hair."

I hum, mindlessly trailing my fingers on the sheets, mind running a thousand miles per second.

"Mom," I finally say "I met him."

Mom's hand stops moving, I hesitantly push myself in a sitting position, looking at her startled face.

Then she seems to snap out of her stupor.

"Who? When? Where is he?"

"I can't tell you who," I give her a teasing smile "But I met him on the Hunt, he's dealing with some important stuff right now."

"Who is he?" Mom takes my hands in hers, a wide smile on her face, eyes crinkled

"What is he like? Tell me!"

"You'll just have to meet him," I laugh "But I can tell you what he's like. He's a dominating, bossy, perfectionist. But he's good to me, he tends to get overprotective but I can sway his mind. Sometimes."

“An Alpha,” Mom muses, I nod “What of your rank? I swear to all that is holy if he even thinks—

“No,” I say quickly “No, he doesn’t care about that. He doesn’t care about anything other than making sure I stay with him.”

“So where is he now?” Mom asks impatiently “When will he ask for your hand in marriage?”

“He’ll come to get us in a few days,” I tell her “But geez, mom, I’m not getting married so soon.”

“It’s the proper way, dear.”

We’ll just have to see about that, wouldn’t we?

“What does he look like?” Mom asks me excitedly, I shake my head “Come on dear, I need to know just how cute my grandchildren will be.”

Blood rushes to my face “Mom!”

She laughs and pinches my cheek “Just teasing dear,”

I give her a brooding look, she nudges me.

“Fine, just one thing,” I finally give in “He has the most hypnotizing blue eyes. There. I’m not ruining the surprise more.”

Mom squeals like an over-excited school girl. I can’t help but smile, adoration welling up inside me. soon, I’ll take her far away to New York, where she’ll be allowed whatever she pleases.

The door knocks, Morgan peeks in “Sorry to disturb the mother-daughter time, but we need to go Juliette.”

“Where?” I furrow my brows

Mom sighs as she gets off the bed and puts on her shoes “We have to go shopping with Luna, dear. You know Morgan and I always go with her.”

“Can’t you stay?” I ask, like a child asking her mom to sleep in the same room

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“I tried to sway her,” Morgan says with a sigh “But you know Fay, she’s stubborn.”

Mom presses a kiss to my head and leaves with Morgan, the door closes behind. I huff. I know why Luna insisted on going shopping just now, to let me know it's not a big deal that I'm back.

Well, mother-in-law, I hope you can swallow your hate for me for your son.

I leave the Omega quarters and step out only to see two-pack warriors coming in my direction. They stop a short

distance away and exchange a glance.

"What?" I raise an eyebrow

One of them, a heavy-set man with dark eyes, Eamon, clears his throat.

"You have to leave, Attwood."

"What?"

The other one, Kyle, holds out something for me. I take it and realizations hit me. My contract.

"The Alpha says that you and your mother are to leave in an hour." He says

"But mom's not even here!" I give them a fierce look

Eamon shrugs, Kyle only looks away before they both walk away, leaving me in a confused panic.

I race back inside the quarters and pick up the landline, remembering the contact no. Luke gave me I dial. the call rings. He doesn't pick up.

"Damn you, Winters," I grumble and dial Casper's number. He doesn't pick up either.

Is that part of that stupid ritual? That no one contacts them?

I slam the phone down. Think, Elise! You idiot, why didn't you remember this? Maybe I can use the money mom saved for my wedding? Go with the original plan and stay in a hotel for a day or two? Luke can find me, I can give

Carlos the address of the place.

Nodding, I hurry to my room and pack all my things and quickly scribble two notes.

I hurry out of the quarters, a few thousand dollars in my bag. I run into Angelina on the way out.

“What are you doing?” she asks me, eyeing the bag

“Leaving this soon forsaken place,” I say “My contract, remember? I’m sure everyone knows of it.”

“Rumors.” Angelina nods, her brows furrowed “But, Elise, you can’t leave?”

“Seems like I am,” Easy words, coming to me as if they don’t mean anything

Her eyes become the size of the moon “But where will you go?!” She asks

“I have a place in my mind.” I give her one of the two letters “Give mom this, it explains everything.”

With a troubled face, she nods. I quickly go around her towards the pack warrior residence.

“Carlos!” I call as I near the training grounds

Beta Drake glares at me, then he barks something at Carlos, he mutters something before quickly jogging towards me.

“What’s up?” he asks, but his eyes flicker to the bag “Elise, don’t tell me you’re—

“Leaving,” I nod “I have to go quick, brother. But do me a favor?”

He nods, but the tension in his shoulders tells me he doesn’t like this.

I give him a little piece of paper “This is the address of the hotel I’m going to, when Luke comes back, you have to give him this.”

His eyes widen, but brows furrow “Why? What am I supposed to say to him?”

“Just, don’t ask questions,” I tell him “Give him this, tell him Elise says he’s an idiot for not picking up.”

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His eyes widen further “I can’t say that to the Alpha Supreme! He’s going to have my head.”

Trust me, saying that might save everyone a lot of trouble.

“Just give it to him.” I say “Please.”

“Okay, okay,” he exhales “You drag me in the craziest things.”

I grin, adrenaline and recklessness mix in a dangerous blend in my veins. This is what I wanted, a chance to run free,

to put my unquiet mind to use, to follow all the crazy ideas that pop into it.

I'd be lying if I say I'm not enjoying this adventure.

I'd probably end up telling mom everything when she comes to the hotel.

I turn around, to see Angelina running up to us.

"Here," she huffs "I got this for your birthday."

She holds out a little packed box. I accept it with a smile and put it in my bag.

"Thank you, Lina." I hug her "Don't miss me too much, I'll come to see you again."

"Would they let you?" Carlos asks, his voice taut

I turn to him with a grin "I'd like to see them try to stop me."

"Lost your head on the Hunt, Alice?"

I cringe as the familiar voice reaches me, slowly, not wanting to, I turn to look in the direction of the voice to see

Casper's twin. Darcie's grey are eyes just like his, but lacking any of his joviality or kindness.

"Finally, we're purging crap like you." Darcie smirks, crossing her arms "It's about damn time."

I give her a pa**ive look "Trust me, I'm the lucky one in that situation."

"Smart talk all you want, Elise." Darcie sneers at me "But now everyone knows what you are. A selfish b****. People have it worse than you, but you just have to make it look like our pack has been horrible to you."

Maybe seven weeks ago, I'd be angry at her words, wanting to prove her wrong, but right now only a humorless chuckle escapes me.

"You're right, Darcie." I nod, mirth filled in my voice "I'm a selfish b****, one who would steal all she isn't given.

One who's learned to lick freedom off the knives since she wasn't fed by a sp***."

I lean forward, my voice low and haughty when I say;

“And I don’t regret it.”

I straighten myself, ignoring the look of surprise on her face. Giving Carlos and Angelina a parting glance, I turn around, ready to start a new chapter of my life. Life is no longer dependent on the whims of strangers.

But my feet stop. His isn’t the ending I want this chapter to have.

I turn back, a grin on my face.

“And I don’t regret this either,”

My knuckles slam against Darcie’s nose.

That moment is forever burned in my memory when Darice loses her balance, arms failing, and falls on her behind in an ungraceful heap.

I whirl around and sprint for the gates she yells for the warriors, a laugh bubbles past my lips and I know they can’t catch me now. The one thing I learned on this Hunt is to run.

At the gates, I cast one final look back. Darcie’s nose is swallowed, she’s yelling something and Beta Drake is trying to calm her down. The warriors look amused and surprised, Angelina is grinning and so is Carlos.

Darcie’s livid gaze meets mine. I grin at her and give them all a two-finger salute before I call;

“Hasta La Vista, b****es!”