

Alpha's Hunt by Starlight chapter 51

Chapter 51 Being nosy

I check in my room.

A single bed, a small closet, and a bathroom. It's fine at the price I paid for it.

I put down my bag and fall on the bed, the adrenaline rush coming to an end. I can only hope Angelina can explain everything to mom. I don't want her to worry anymore.

Knowing Luna Fay, her shopping would end by the evening. Mom would probably reach this place by tonight.

I take a quick shower and change my clothes. All that's left for me to do is wait for mom.

As I rummage through the bag, I find Angelina's gift. Smiling, I open the wrapping carefully to reveal a little box. I open it and see a ring at its center, the hexagonal blue gem shining bright in the dim-lit room.

I slid it in my finger, adoring how good it looks. I'd have to thank Lina for this again.

The door knocks, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"Who is it?" I ask, getting up from the bed

"Room service." A female voice says

Huh, room service in this dingy little place? Well...

There's no peephole in the door, so I simply unlock the door and open it.

The next moment I feel the air knocked out of my lungs, a meaty hand pressing down hard on my mouth, my back against the wall.

"This little thing?" I see a woman enter the room "She went with Winters on the Hunt?"

The man holding me snickers, his dark eyes full of mirth "A dainty little thing for sure."

I try to wriggle out of his grip but fail horribly, my thoughts run in circles, panic clawing at my head.

"Let her speak, Kronk." The woman says, tossing her pale hair over her shoulder

The man removes his hand from my mouth "If you scream, I will snap your pretty neck."

I swallow before nodding "Who are you? what do you want from me?"

"Straightforward," The woman c***s her head to a side, her catlike eyes trained on me "You were Winters' partner for the Hunt?"

I nod at her, ganging my survival options. Kronk here looks to be built of stone, Catlady must be skilled too.

"You know what he is?"

The question snaps me out of my thoughts "What?"

“You stayed the full moon with him,” Catlady says, stressing her words
“You must know that he’s cursed. A blight to the world.”

Anger flares through me, but I refuse to show it. Don’t be angry! Angry
makes you stupid, stupid gets you killed!

“And what does that have to do with me?” I cross my arms

“Be a witness to the monster inside him,” Catlady says “Tell everyone he
killed Alpha Supreme Goldstein.”

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My mouth falls open “How do you...?”

“I am Delilah Hunter, Alpha Zoya’s most trusted warrior.” Catlady tells
me “I’m here to take you to her, to use your

statement to stake claim of the throne that should’ve been her brother’s.”

I almost yell; Her brother tried to kill us! All the compet**ors!

But one look at Kronk tells me I don’t have much of a choice. I swallow
again, ganging my options.

“And if I refuse, you will kill me?”

“Without a second thought.”

“Alright,” I nod slowly “Let’s go.”

“Good,” Catlady grins “You’re a smart girl.”

I grab my bag, my limbs feel numb as we descend the stairs of the dingy motel and step out. In the failing evening light, we turn into a nearby alley. I make out the black van Catlady points at, on the other side of the streets ahead of the alley.

“Wait,” I say to her as she pushes me ahead “Let me check if I have everything.”

As I rummage through the bag, Catlady says “You wouldn’t need money—

“Oh honey, I keep more than just money in my bags.”

The gun points just between her eyes, I c*** my head to a side “Call Kronk and I’ll put a bullet through your head.”

She takes a deep breath. I sense her move before she acts on it. her hand shoots up to knock the gun out of my grip but I whirl around and pull the trigger. Once. Twice.

A bullet goes through Kronk’s thigh, the other through his arm. He drops down with a grunt of pain, Catlady sheiks as if I shot her. she turns her blazing eyes on me, charging forward.

My back slams against the hard concrete wall and I hiss as pain courses through me.

“I’d kill you right now if I could,” she snarls

“Too bad,” I crock out

My foot comes down hard on hers and just as the pressure on my arms eased, my hand shoots forward, and the heavy gemmed ring slams in her

jaw. Without waiting, I grab her by the hair and slam her head against the wall— hard.

Catlady drops down, her forehead bleeding and Kronk has pa**ed out due to the solid silver bullets.

Breathing heavily, I grab my gun and shove it in my bag, my back is still burning from pain, my arms bruised.

I hurry out of the alley and call a taxi.

“Where to?” the driver asks

I need to be somewhere safe, somewhere mom and I will be alright until Luke comes.

I babble out the first address that comes to my mind.

And just like that, we’re racing down the streets, with only one thought in my head;

I need to thank Angelina for the ring.

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“Thank you.”

I hand Ethan his phone. He puts it back in his pocket.

It feels so strange, sitting in his office, the failing light of the sun filtering in through the windows.

“It’s no problem.” Ethan says “Is there anything else I can do for you?”

I shake my head “Carlos said he’d drop mom here personally. We’re only staying for a few days, I hope it’s not an issue—

“You think very little of me, Elise.” Ethan shakes his head “You can stay as long as you want to.”

I smile at him in a show of gratitude. An Alpha’s packhouse is just about as safe a place as I’m going to find.

I didn’t tell Ethan that there are people who want to use me to dethrone my newly crowned mate, I just told him my pack kicked me out.

“About that day,” He begins quietly

I don’t ask what he’s talking about, I have a fairly good idea.

“Ethan, before you apologize,” I hold up my hands “It’s okay. You were stressed. I was stressed. Luke was stressed.

That’s what happens when a bunch of stressed people gets stuck together.”

Ethan meets my gaze, his own remorseful “I shouldn’t have forgotten that you’re a werewolf, I should’ve been more careful.”

“Well, you did. And s*** happened,” I shrug, smile at him “But we can put that behind us now. That cursed Hunt is over.”

Ethan huffs out a laugh “I was starting to think it’s never going to end.”

“Me too,” I roll my eyes

I turn my eyes to the setting sun, the wind blowing through the trees.

Ethan gets up from his chair and opens a French

door, revealing a balcony.

He gestures me to follow and we emerge in the open, the warm evening breeze greets me, soothing after the recent adrenaline rush.

Ethan and I cross our arms on the railing, watching as the sun goes down. I wonder if Luke is looking at it right now,

I wonder when he would come back and we'd start a new chapter of our lives.

“So, Elise,” I turn my face to Ethan, he's smiling his calm, composed smile, his ocean eyes clear “No hard feelings?”

I grin “None whatsoever.”

He turns his face to the setting sun and closes his eyes. I can't help but realize just how much he looks like a fairytale prince right now. A boy with golden hair and ocean eyes.

A boy who's alone.

A prick of empathy enters my heart and I find myself wishing he would have his mate, or a sibling, or someone.

Maybe that's why Ethan thought of me the way he did because other than mom, I have no one to truly confide in. He has his pack, I have my friends but how many of us do they truly get to see?

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He thinks we're similar. Maybe we were before.

“I can feel your stare on my face, Elise,” Ethan says, eyes still closed

“Just imagine how embarra**ing that would be if that wasn’t true,” I say

“But it is.” He turns to face me and c**s his head to a side “What are you thinking?”

Before I can think better of them, words tumble out of my mouth;

“I wish you had someone to rely on.”

Ethan lets out a short, surprised laugh “Pitying me?”

“No,” I shake my head “Just being nosy.”

When his gaze stays on my face for a moment longer, I realize I’ve made a mistake.

“You could change that.”

I look away “Ethan, what you’re saying is not possible.”

He touches my hand, just for a moment “If it was, what would your answer be?”

I glance at him from the corner of my eyes. The seriousness on his face startles me, but his eyes are searching—

always searching. For what? Rea**urance? To know that he’s not so alone?

“If I asked you to marry me, to be my Luna, what would your answer be?”

I take a deep breath. Luke is going to kill him when telling him about this whole ordeal, and maybe stay mad at me for a week.

But I say the words anyways;

“Then I would say yes.”

His face shows that he didn’t expect this answer. I offer him a little smile.

“You’re a wonderful man, Ethan.” I tell him honestly “And you’ve shown me that Alphas can be kind and caring too.

You’ve shown me a different side of the picture.”

I turn my back against the short railing on the boundary of the balcony “I would love to say yes but—

“Alpha!”

I jump from sheer surprise at the sudden voice, Ethan jumps away from me.

Everything happens in slow motion then. My feet lose their balance, the small railing can’t offer much support and I feel the pull of gravity. Someone shouts my name, Ethan moves to grab me but I can already feel the rush of wind and adrenaline through me.

I close my eyes tightly.

And everything goes dark.

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Alpha’s Hunt by Starlight chapter 52

Chapter 52 Shopping

“She’s waking up!”

My blurry vision clears little, hazy faces appear before me and slowly become clear. I instantly recognize the woman looking over me.

“Mom,” my voice sounds rough even to me

“Elise, dear, are you alright?” she asks, worries thick in her voice

“I’m fine,” I rap out, my hand reaching up to touch my head “Just dizzy.”

My fingers graze the gauze bandage there and my brows furrow.

“You gave us quite a scare, Elise.” A deep voice says

I look sideways to see a man in a suit standing close to the bed I’m in. his ocean eyes stare straight into mine, golden hair messy as if he’s been running his hand through it. my head hurts a little and I cant seem to make out his name...

Ethan. It comes to me in a sharp hiss of pain. Where do I know him from? Why is he here?

“Where...” I look around the big room, it looks like the master suite of a hotel “where am I?”

Mom and Ethan exchange a worried glance. Ethan nods at her and leaves the room, Mom turns her face to me.

“Elise, sweetie, you feel off the balcony.” She tells me gently

“When?” I can’t seem to remember

“Just last night. The healer,” Mom hesitates “she said you’ve hit your head pretty hard. She said you might have damaged your hippocampus.”

“Something does feel... empty.” I hold my head “Like water splashed over ink, the worlds muddled and hazy.”

I look up at her, ignoring the lump in my throat “I remember... I remember that the Alpha’s son was coming. What

happened after that?”

Mom looks at me aghast “It’s been more than three months since that, Elise.”

My throat is parched to the point where the air seems sharp “That’s not so bad, is it?”

She looks uncertain, reaches her hand to squeeze mine, calming my nerves a bit.

“I don’t know, sweetie,” Mom says “You went on the Alpha’s Hunt.”

My brows shoot to my forehead. The Alpha’s Hunt. That thing where Alphas compete to win the throne, right? I remember mom telling me something about it.

“I survived?” I ask in awe

“Not just survived, Elise, you won.”

“I did?”

Mom sighs and gives me a little smile, but the uncertainty in her eyes alarms me.

“You’ll remember soon,” She says, then maybe to assure us both she adds “I know you will.”

I nod, feeling a strange weight press against my head. I try to find my wolf, the wild instinct that runs through me like

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my blood but I can’t find it, as if it’s weighted down by heavy boulders.

“Don’t push yourself, dear.” Mom says “Rest, we will fix this. I promise.”

Her words tug at my head, so familiar, completely strange. I nod and mom goes to the door.

The moment she closes it behind, I sprint out of bed, hissing a curse when my vision lurches but I don’t stop and press my ears to the door.

“She’s going to be okay, right?” I hear mom’s voice like a murmur

“I can’t say, Ms. Attwood.” Ethan’s voice comes “The healer said it’s a small piece of memory, but we can’t say how long until she remembers.”

There’s a beat of silence.

“There’s a chance of internal bleeding if that’s the case,” Ethan hesitates, then says “She might keep forgetting.”

I swallow thickly, the throbbing in my head increases multifold.

“Elise told me of you.”

My eyes widen in surprise. I did?

“She did?” Ethan echoes the surprise I feel

“Yes,” Mom says, there’s another beat of silence “If you two want to marry, you have my consent. The full moon has just pa**ed if you want to—

“Are you sure Ms. Attwood?” There’s barely held elation in his voice
“Would that be alright with both of you?”

“It’s yours and her choice, dear.” Mom says then sighs “After Elise recovers, you two can go about as you please. But

I would appreciate matrimony first.”

“Of course, after Elise recovers, we shall discuss this further.”

I quickly move away from the door and slide into bed just as mom comes back inside. As soon as she closes the door behind, I blurt out;

“Talking about my wedding without asking me?” I cross my arms

“So you heard,” Mom doesn’t even look surprised “Then you heard everything, I suppose?”

I look away, catching the meaning behind her words. Mom settles down on the bed beside me.

“How could you say that?” I mumble “I barely know him.”

“He’s your mate, dear.”

“What?”

“You told me that you met your mate on the Hunt,” Mom tells me calmly, so why is my heart beating so fast? “That

he’s an Alpha and he has the most beautiful blue eyes.”

“I don’t... remember.”

“Being near him will help,” Mom says “If he marks you, you might even remember everything.”

“Mom, this isn’t a fairytale,” I hate that a note of anxiousness leaks in my voice

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Mom reaches over and hands me a gla** of water but I can’t swallow. It feels too heavy on my tongue, too thick.

“I’m not saying this is,” Mom says, gently rubbing my back “But, sweetie, if he marks you, your rank will increase.

You will be a Luna, your recovery would be very fast.”

I let out a shaky breath “No, Mom. I don’t want to marry him even if he’s my mate. Not like this, not when I remember nothing about him.”

“That’s alright, Elise.” Mom presses a kiss to my head “Just rest and sleep. Everything will sort itself through.”

At my constant asking, she fills me in that Ethan is the Alpha of a neighboring pack and we’re at his packhouse. I’d put on a condition to go on the Alpha’s Hunt with Alpha Luke. Freedom.

And now mom and I have nowhere to go.

Seriously past me? what were you thinking?

The sun rises further and I can't sit in bed anymore. I go to the bathroom and change the dressing on my head. I touch the back of my head, feel the dried blood on my hair.

My injury is still a little sour, but I don't think it needs bandaging anymore.

I leave the room despite mom's insistent demand that I rest, promising to return quickly. I need to feel this. Walking on my own feet, feeling the fresh air.

Ethan's pack manor is bigger than ours. The omega quarters are in the main packhouse. Everyone I pass by offers me a different kind of greeting. Some smile, some wave, some simply glance and then continue on their work.

It feels nice, to not be some kind of blight just because of my rank.

I reach the main doors and step out of the manor. In the gardens ahead, children are playing around with each other, laughing and shrieking. Why doesn't our pack have any kids?

My gaze travels to two men nearby. One of them I recognize, the other I don't.

I take a deep breath, my mind made up as I walk to Ethan. I need to talk to him, tell him I can't marry him like this.

"Ethan," I call as I near them

He whirls around to face me, surprised but not in a bad way.

“Elise,” he takes my hand in his own gently, I feel nothing “Are you alright now?”

“I feel better,” I nod “But I need to talk to you.”

“And I need to talk to you,” the other man says, running a hand through his brown hair “I stayed the night, I wanted to see you when you woke up.”

I stare at him. The well-placed angles of his pale face, marine eyes, and brown hair. I can’t put a name on that face.

“Sorry but,” I cringe a little “Who are you?”

Silence descends on the three of us. The unknown man looks aghast as if it’d just slapped him. Or told him that he looks like a sea urchin.

“You don’t,” breath catches in his throat “Remember who I am?”

I shake my head apologetically “Sorry,”

“But, but that’s impossible!” he says, eyes frantic “Elise, it’s me! Carlos! You’re best friend, how can you not remember me?”

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I try to focus on that name, focus if I have a best friend but I come up blank. Blank faces and blank voices. I remember mom, Alpha, Luna, Ethan, and... and who else? Words and images jumble together in my head.

I stumble back, feeling my head swim in uncertain waters. Ethan is quick to steady me by the arms.

“I’m sorry,” I breathe out, feeling my heart sink “I can’t remember you.”

“Come on,” Ethan says to Carlos as he steers me towards the manor “We need to see the healer again.”

Back in the room, I was before, the healer checks over me ask me questions I don’t know the answers to.

“What is happening to me?” I ask her yet again, bare sherds of the calm left in me

“Ms. Attwood, please calm down—

“Tell me.”

She looks at Ethan, hen at Mom and Carlos. Ethan gives her a small nod.

“I’m not sure, Ms. Attwood,” The healer sighs “I suppose you remember the things you were reminded of just as you woke up. Why you cannot remember your childhood friend is concerning.”

“What do we do then?” Mom asks

“Hope for the best,” The healer says gently “If the condition worsens—

“There’s a chance of that?” Carlos inquires

The healer hesitates and then nods “There’s a fifty-fifty chance.”

“Other than waiting,” I ask “Isn’t there something we can do?”

There’s silence in the room, all of us stare hopefully at the healer.

“If your wolf wakes up, the recovery can increase multifold.” She finally says

“Perfect.” I breathe in her words like fresh air “How do I do that?”

“You’re an omega, Ms. Attwood,” the healer says carefully “You cannot even shift very well. There is not much we can do.”

“And if she’s not an omega anymore?”

My gaze snaps to Ethan, his face is all angle of composed determination.

“If she’s marked, will that help?”

The healer falters, eyes wide “Well, yes. That would be our best bet.”

He meets my gaze, I swallow thickly.

If he’s my mate, if I’m slow about to lose all my memory, if that would save us all a boatload of trouble...

I take a deep breath.

“I need to go shopping.”

Alpha’s Hunt by Starlight chapter 53

Chapter 53 Invited

✧ Luke’s POV ✧

“We leave tomorrow,”

The monks of the royal chapel look at each other, exchanging silent words.

The rituals are complete, three days have pa**ed. The beast is peaceful, as peaceful as he can be knowing that his mate is out there without him to protect her.

“Very well, Alpha.” One of them says “We see great potential in you, despite the darkness that looms inside.”

I have to stop myself from rubbing my temple. They talk about it as if I haven’t been controlling it since I was eleven.

With a brief nod, I leave the small temple they have on the side of the chapel. Goddess, I’d be glad to get out of this soon forsaken robe and into a proper shirt.

I take quick steps towards the residence nearby, the evening sun spills its golden light all around, making the shadows grow taller.

When I reach my room, I strip off the robe and after a quick shower, get dressed in a plain shirt and pants.

Tomorrow, I will go back to my pack. As soon as we can manage, Hazel and I will leave for the New York HQ along with her mother. I’d told father not to get started with that contract until I’m there, Hazel and her mother would be safe within our pack borders.

What would my little queen be doing right now? Laughing at something, making trouble, or finding some to get in.

The door of my room bursts open, my head snaps in its direction, eyes narrowed.

Casper hurries inside, paying no heed to my glare, his face set in panic.

“What is it?” I ask, already steeling myself for some kind of trouble

“We’ve been invited to a wedding tonight.” He holds out an invitation card

“We can’t attend, we’re leaving tomorrow,” I say

“Take a look,” the worry in his voice makes me grab the card

My eyes go over the words, not making sense.

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Alpha Ethan Parks weds Ms. Elise Attwood

Elise’s POV

I pace around nervously in my wedding gown. The sun has long gone down, we’re waiting for the moon to reach the highest point of the sky.

What am I doing What am I doing What am I doing?

My clammy hands skim the soft white tulle of the skirt, pearly beads s***tered on it. my eyes flicker to the mirror.

The makeup artist has outdone herself, I look like an angel.

A fallen angel. I tear my eyes away from the beauty in the mirror and pace the room. Alone.

Is this what I wanted my wedding to be like? Without friends? Without planning? With my freaking memories?

Stop it, I shake my head. You can have a huge wedding reception after this, this is necessary.

I go to the window, the sky is beautiful tonight, the moon is high. I open the window to let the cool air cascade over me, my eyes fall shut.

“I’m afraid I will close my eyes and when I open them again, you will not be here anymore. You will not be mine.”

My eyes snap open and I s*** in a sharp breath. That voice. Who was that? My head throbs with pain, something desperately claws at my head.

The door clicks open, I snap out of my trance. Mom is dressed in an elegant soft pink dress, her hair arranged in a top knot.

“You look, beautiful dear,” Mom smiles at me, tears glistening in her eyes

“I don’t know mom,” I say quietly “everything feels so heavy.”

“It’s alright sweetie,” Mom comes over to me and wraps her arms around me “You’re going to be okay.”

I cling to her, like a child fearing the dark. But the heavy stones in my stomach don’t go away, the lump in my throat is super persistent. I can’t think, I can’t reason my stupid emotions.

“It’s time to go,” I pull away from mom to see Carlos in the doorway, dressed in a suit

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He offers me a hand, I swallow thickly before taking it. He’s going to walk me down the Altar.

Everything is fine. Ethan is your soulmate, the man you've been waiting for all this damn time. Your freedom, your escape.

The church is only a little away from the packhouse, so close we can just walk to it. Carlos opens the door of a car

for me, I hesitate, feeling sick just by looking at it.

"Can't we just walk?" I ask

Carlos raises an eyebrow "Your dress we get messed up."

"It won't take more than five minutes, dear." Mom squeezes my hand

I look at the tall trees, for some reason, they look familiar, like old friends. Under the dark sky, they seem so pristine, a wild beauty.

Pain finds beauty a reliable disguise.

A hiss escapes my lips and my hand goes up to my head, pulsing with pain. That voice again.

"Come on, sweetie," Mom's voice reaches me, a note of worry in it
"We're getting late."

She wasn't lying when she said it won't take more than five minutes because the ride ends far too soon. We reach the church too quickly.

Mom kisses my cheek and Carlos puts my arm through his. When my gaze meets Ethan's, I don't feel freedom, I feel choked, I feel caged. Every cell in my body is screaming at me to run.

Soon enough, my hand is given in Ethan's. His blue eyes are so beautiful. Why don't they look to be of the right color?

The priest takes his place. The local church for Lycan weddings is deep in the woods, the roof open to give a view of the moon. Ethan's voice reaches my ears;

“While we both wish it, I give you what is mine to give,

I shall serve you in those ways you require,

Happiness will be sweeter coming from my hand,

I pledge to you my heart and soul, and you are all I desire.”

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Why isn't his voice like the one I just heard? If it wasn't him saying that, who was it then? I swallow, my tongue seems to be in dust but I force the words out anyways;

“I pledge to you that yours will be the name I say in the night,

And the eyes into which I smile in the morning,

For you will be my body and mind, every bit of my love,

May the moon allow our hearts to meet, our souls to intertwine.”

It had taken mom quite some time to make me memorize them, but since I have so much vacant space in my mind, I didn't forget.

“Now you may mark the bride,” the priest steps away

I numbly register Ethan's arms wrap around my waist, the scent of sandalwood and cinnamon drifts over to me.

“You look beautiful, Elise.” He’s so close, I can see the flecks of grey in his blue eyes

My mouth has been glued shut, my mind s***tering like sand, and everything in me is recoiling and yet still.

“It’s going to be okay, love.” He lowers his head, I feel his lips brushing against my neck “Everything is going to be better.”

He presses a soft kiss to my skin. Why Why Why don’t I feel desire? Need? Something other than this feeling of being hanged into icy waters?

“Elise,” his canines scr*** my skin and I s*** in a sharp breath “Tell me to do it.”

I try and fail to swallow. People are staring now, my nerves are sky-rocketing

“I... I—”

The doors of the church slam open. Ethan pulls away from me, his arms wrapped in a protective hold around me.

My eyes fly to the doors and I realize they aren’t open after all. They’ve been ripped off their hinges.

One man stands in the doorway, his voice rings with a heavy growl when he says;

“—Already have a mate.”

Alpha’s Hunt by Starlight chapter 54

Chapter 54 Not a monster

Five armed men stroll inside behind him.

I'm frozen in place, my mind racing a million miles per second and my heart leaping but the only thing I can think properly is complete b*****;

He's gorgeous.

I want to kick myself. I have a mate! I shouldn't be thinking that about a random stranger who just ruined my wedding.

Then why are you so relieved?

The man with stormy blue eyes doesn't look so appealing anymore when his lips curl in a murderous snarl, his eyes turn darker when they settle on Ethan and me. People part before him like the red sea as he storms towards us.

"Get away from her," his voice vibrates through the church

"Alpha Supreme," the priest steps in front of him despite his trembling

"This is holy—

"Out of my way," his dark eyes narrow

Ethan pushes me behind himself and I feel a prick of annoyance. What is he doing? This is about me!

"Stop this blasphemy," Ethan growls, I see his fingers start to elongate, ready to shift if necessary "She's not your mate, Winters. Everyone knows it."

“I will give you one moment to save your miserable life, Parks.” A rough voice says, a shiver races down my spine at

the seriousness in it

“This is my territory, you cant—

And suddenly Ethan has ripped away from in front of me. that man, the Alpha supreme, shoves him aside as if he’s a rag doll. I take a step back, eyes darting in every direction to find an escape.

When the Alpha Supreme turns his eyes to me, I can’t believe the change on his face. The feral expression gives way

to the worry, the dark rage recedes, and stormy blue stares at me as if I’m a gush of fresh air, a bag of gold, a starry sky.

Or maybe a good enough person to blame something on.

“Hazel,” his voice is so soft, it steals my breath

That word. That name. I know it, it’s so familiar, important. Before I can dig deeper in my head, he’s in front of me, warm arms wrap around me in a secure hold.

“Hazel, I’m here,” he puts his forehead against mine “I’m sorry I took so long, Mia Regia, but I’m here now.”

My eyes dart between both of his. They’re so tender when they look at me and I feel myself being drawn towards them. Hazy muddles images and words swirl in my head but I can’t remember, I can’t remember anything.

I take his hands off myself, averting my gaze at the confused expression on his face.

“I’m sorry,” I say quietly “Who are you?”

Alpha Supreme stares at me, pain itched on each angular line of his face
“Hazel, stop it. I’m here now, you don’t need to be afraid of anything.”

“I told you,” I say calmly, firmly “I don’t know you.”

“Impossible!” I flinch at his harsh voice, he seems to snap out of his anger to hold my face, cradling it carefully in his rough palms

His eyes are desperate when they look between both of mine, searching.

“Hazel, it’s me,” He says, quietly “Elise, how could you possibly forget me?”

It pains me to take his hands off my face, it hurts even more to see the defeated look that crosses his features.

He reaches out to me again “Hazel—

I step back, out of his reach “That’s not my name.”

Tension stills his frame, black seeps into his stormy blue gaze, shielding the pain in a wave of rage.

He whirls around, chest rising and falling rapidly, fur sprouting on his clawed hands.

“What have you done to her?” he charges at Ethan, grabbing him by the shirt front

“Whatever it is, it’s none of your concern,” Ethan wrenches himself free of his hold “She was your partner for the

Hunt, and that’s over. Now see yourself out of my wedding. Elise—

I gasp as I take another step away from them. Alpha Supreme’s hand is digging in Ethan’s face, blood trickling down and dropping on his wedding suit.

“Don’t say her name,” He growls lowly

Ethan’s pack warriors shoot up from their places, his beta rushes forward but then my view is blocked by the warriors

flanking me, mom’s face comes in view.

“Come on,” she’s tugging at my arm “We need to get out of here.”

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“Mom, who is that?” I ask her in a frantic whisper

“Alpha Luke Winters,” Mom casts him a disappointed look “You accompanied him on the Hunt. I didn’t know he was going to fall low like this.”

Luke. Luke Winters. My partner.

My head is about to explode with the weight on it. There’s a crash as we leave the church, loud growls ring in the air.

“He said he’s my mate,” I can feel my heart thundering in my ears as we rush forward, warriors all around us “Why would he say that?”

“I don’t know,” Mom says “But we need to go to a safe place, the pack manor maybe. We—

Loud growl rings in my ears, the warriors brace themselves, shifting around us and charging forward.

“Go!” one of them says

My mind is still spinning when Mom nods and starts forward again. I turn my face to look back but all I can see are

Lycans, jaws snapping, lips curled, growls echoing in the air.

We reach the pack manor, empty since the whole pack was in the church, Mom bolts the main doors, and the next moment they rattle horribly.

Mom stumbles back as the door rattles again, she turns to me, her face pale but determined.

“Hide,”

“I’m not leaving you here,” I say as the door rattles again, the heavy oak wood creaking

Mom shrugs off the shawl from her shoulders, I see a resolve on her face that I don’t remember seeing before.

“I’ve lost Elijah,” she says, moving her neck on one side and then the other “I won’t lose you.”

I hesitate, then nod. I’ll keep close, if he tries to hurt her, he’ll have to face me.

Whatever that's worth, I think as I run around the corridor and grab a heavy vase on my way.

Just as my back pressed against the wall, I hear the sound of thunder crash as the wood turns to splinters.

"Where is she?" A low growl reverberates through the still air

"Far away from you," Mom's growl positively surprises me "Why are you after my daughter?"

There's a beat of silence, I hear someone taking deep breaths.

"I know you can hear me, Hazel."

I s*** in a sharp breath, shift on my feet, gauging my options.

"Your daughter is my mate," A deep, hard voice is saying "I want her to come with me."

"We've been living in your pack for years," Mom's voice is stern "You two have crossed paths before. What you say is a white lie."

"If you let me explain—

He stops talking just as his eyes swim to mine. I'm aware of my heart leaping madly in my chest. His shirt is soaked red with blood, his lip is bleeding, so is his arm but he doesn't seem to care.

"Elise," he instantly starts towards me but mom steps in his way, black flashes in his eyes but he holds back "Hazel,

what has he done? Has he blackmailed you? Threatened you?"

“If you are my mate,” I ask, ignoring his questions “Why can’t I feel it? why is there no connection?”

“Hazel, You know why.”

That was a test question. He was supposed to be confused, my wolf is asleep. I wouldn’t feel anything right now. But he doesn’t know that.

“That only means one thing,” I lift my chin, meeting his intense gaze with my steady one “I’m not your mate.”

Dark, obsidian eyes flash with raw possession and anger. In an instant, Luke has gone around mom, just in front of me. I stumble back from surprise and fear, my back hits the wall. I hold my hands up instinctively, eyes closed tightly.

This is it. I’m about to die.

Warm, callous fingers graze mine and I flinch, very away from the tremble in my limbs.

Only silence follows. Hesitantly, I open my eyes, they land on mom first, standing just behind him, a heavy metal showpiece in her hand but she looks less certain now.

My gaze swims to the nightmare towering in front of me.

He closes the distance between us carefully and leans down, so we see eye to eye.

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“Elise,” he says softly, his voice almost fragile “Please Hazel, it’s me, Luke.”

His finger grazes my cheek like I'm made of gla**. My head is swimming, my heart is pounding hard against my chest.

"I don't remember you."

This time he flinches, as if his finger singed by touching me. I can't see his pupils anymore, I swallow thickly. Oh, dear moon.

But Luke only leans forward. I close my eyes, holding my breath. Something warm and soft pressed against my forehead.

"Stay here, Hazel. I'll be right back to get you."

He turns around and I do what comes to me instinctively. I grab his hand, his skin is scorching. His head snaps back to mine, I try to withdraw my hand, he doesn't let go.

"Where are you going?" This can't be my voice, so timid

He keeps looking at me for a few moments, he looks primal. Animalistic.

"Didn't I tell you, Mia Regia?" He says calmly— too calmly "I will never let anyone take you from me."

He holds up my hand and brushes a kiss to my knuckles, his dark gaze never leaving mine.

And he's gone, leaving my mind a jumbling mess.

Even if you don't come back, I will always find you. It was his voice. I hold my head as pain cracks through my

skull, my backsliding against the wall as I sink to the floor.

“Elise,” Mom is by my side “Sweetie, what’s wrong? What’s happening?”

But I can’t speak. I feel like a fish out of water. I clench my eyes shut and look for his face, for that name, for those wild obsidian eyes.

Someone has dropped a bucket of ice water on me.

I’m gasping and freezing and everything is flooding in my head.

Hazel, wake up.

What we always do, find a way out.

My little idealist.

As long as I have breath in my lungs, I will protect you.

I love you.

Don’t give up on us.

“Mom,” I’m gasping, grabbing onto her for support “Mom, Luke is going to kill Ethan.”

I try to stand up but she holds me back “You are not risking your life! I can’t lose you too!”

“He’s my mate!” I stand up, panic rising in my throbbing head “Luke is my mate.”

“What?” Mom breaths out, eyebrows knitted together

“I need to find him,” I’m already rushing ahead, through the broken door

Please. Please. Please.

I see Casper, a breath of relief enters my paralyzed lungs. He's cradling an arm, the fight around the area seems to have ended, everyone is shifting back to human forms, rough spun clothes enchanted on their bodies.

"Luna," he sees me first "What the hell is happening here? Just as Luke and Ethan started the brawl, everyone just—

what's going on?"

"Where's Luke?" I asked, marveling at the steadiness of my voice despite the clamor in my head

A look of panic crosses his face "It's best if you don't ask."

I hold up my chin and level him with my most authoritative glance "I'm your Luna. Where is Luke?"

Casper swallows, then he bobs his head towards the trees ahead.

Right. Just as I step forward, he grabs me by the arms, holding me back.

"Hey, let go!" I glare at him

"Elise, Luna, I've called reinforcements," he's saying "Just please, it's not safe for you to go. Parks has warriors to hold him off, everything—

"I can't wait for reinforcements to stop this when I can!" I try to wrench myself free of his hold

"Elise, stop it!" Casper gives me a shake "You don't understand the gravity of the situation! Luke is not himself right now. He was dangerous

before, but now, when he has the power of the Alpha Supreme, he's lethal! I can't let you go there!"

I hold my head in my hands. On the moon, oh my moon, what have I done?

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Just then, three SUVs skids to a halt in the clearing. Men dressed in black filter out of them and Casper instantly walks towards them. They exchange a few rapid words before all of their march towards the forest, shifting mid-way.

Twelve Lycans against one.

My heart pounds madly in my chest, my fingers clench into fists. No, I refuse to stand here and let them deal with my mate and my problems.

I take a sniff of the air and stride forward. The bushes catch in the soft tulle of the long gown, cursing, I let it tear off, tearing off the remains myself, making it more of a knee-length dress.

Curse these shoes! Why did I decide to wear them?

Loud growls ring in the air and the smell of blood hit me hard. I push past the forestry to have a view of a clearing ahead. My eyes take in the scene in one glance. A few men are s***tered by the outskirts, bleeding and groaning.

A Lycan scr***s against the earth and hits the back of a tree not far from where I'm standing, the tree breaks off and falls with an enormous thud! The Lycan shifts back to the human state.

Loud growls are tearing through the air. I can see four Lycans cornering one notably bigger than them.

In a distance I see men crouching in the bushes, Casper aiming*** them, snipers in their hands. They're going to tranquilize him.

Before I can even blink, several swooshing sounds ring in the air and I see injectors fly towards him and—

A tree blocks them and swings two Lycans towards the shooters, the big oak trunk tearing at the other trees, causing a riot to rise from there.

I caught sight of him, fur ragged, muzzle bloodied and eyes pits of endless rage. He charges at another Lycan, clawing and tearing. Then another Lycan tackles him down, the bloodied Lycan shifts back, bleeding profusely.

The remaining two Lycans look to be a heap of claws, blood, and fur. Then the bigger one knocks off the other, picks him up, and throws him harshly against the earth, his battered body shifts back. To my horror, Ethan backs away from him, breathing harshly, bleeding badly. The beast stalks towards him, growling menacingly.

“Luke!”

Everything stops. The air, the sounds, the fight. Obsidian eyes snap to mine.

I march into the battlefield, swallowing the fear springing inside me, I near the beast. Not a beast. Not to me.

Ethan makes his death wish by says;

“Elise, go back. You—

Luke's gaze snaps to him again, his lips pull back to give a glance at the blooded canines.

Then time itself seems to stop. I see Ethan's eyes widen, Luke's claws lunging for his throat. My feet are moving, my mind is not. My heart is working, my lungs are not. My arms are open, my eyes are not.

Silence.

Absolute, utter, suffocating silence.

Slowly, my eyes open. Two clawed hands bare centimeters away from me.

Obsidian eyes stare at me, livid that I should protect another man. They would thank me later.

"Luke?" I carefully move past his clawed hands, closer to him

He gives me no response. He's still. Like a predator about to pounce.

"Wolfie?"

His ears twitch, just once. Slowly, cautiously, I close the distance between us. Despite the heels, I have to stand on my

toes to reach his bloodied muzzle.

"I'm sorry," Little Words, so heavy

Carefully, I wrap my arms around his thick neck. Seconds come and go, he stays still in my hold, finally, he lowers himself so I can hug him properly. I almost smile.

“I’m sorry I took so long,” I say in his ear “But I remember now. I remember the man I love, I remember. Please come back to me.”

Slowly, I feel his form shrinking, the coarse hair disappearing to give way to smooth, burning skin.

Two very familiar hands cradle my face in a careful hold.

“72 hours,” Luke puts his forehead against mine “I leave you alone for 72 hours and you almost get married.”

“What can I say, Winters?” I exhale a laugh “I like to keep you on your toes.”

I glance sideways as two vans near the place, healers quickly start their work, the sun is rising, its b***ery glow lights up the sky.

I turn to Luke again, reach into my hair and tug off the heavy veil, holding it up for him.

“But for now,” I grin, “Let’s think about getting some clothes enchanted on you.”

Alpha’s Hunt by Starlight Epilogue

Epilogue

“A little higher!”

“Yes Luna Supreme,” Mr. Thomas says, holding the bundle of flowers a little higher

“No, a little to the left!” I say from below the ladder

“Here?” He moves it to the right

I facepalm myself “Come down, I will do that myself.”

He climbs down, holding the flowers out to me. I grab them and quickly climb up the ladder we set up near the stage, above which a flower archway has been made.

I hold the white and pink roses up but damn my short height, I can’t reach it!

“A little more,” I stand on my toes, then one foot “Almost there... almost— and done!”

In my happiness at my success, I lose my footing and before I have the chance to hold anything for support, I tip backward and down, right towards the hard stone stage.

I clench my eyes shut, bracing myself for the impact.

Then the wind is knocked out of my lungs, my eyes fly open to see a stormy blue one, ever intense and slightly mocking.

“You want to break you back today, Hazel?” Luke puts me to my feet, keeping his arms around me for support

“It would’ve healed in like what? Ten minutes?” I huff but place a quick kiss on his cheek. It would’ve hurt like hell though.

“Are you done bossing everyone around?” Luke asks, looking around the altar, the seats, the stage

“Well, I have to be bossy for once,” I grin “Angelina’s wedding needs to be perfect!”

“I expect to see similar enthusiasm when we plan our wedding,” he says, I have to laugh at his serious face

“Don’t worry, love,” I say, an underlying promise in my words “When our wedding takes place, it won’t take just a month to plan.”

“Good thing Angelina is a simple girl then,” I look sideways to see Casper walking towards us “Gloria has been driving me insane by all the shopping trips.”

“That is a sentence I can use for blackmailing,” I say, c***ing my head to a side

Casper laughs nervously, before looking back to see if his mate is anywhere close. He looks at me again, uncertainty in his eyes.

“You know she will throw me out of the room, Luna.” He says, a hint of real terror in his eyes

“You better help me with my a**ignments then,” I grin at him mischievously

Its been almost seven months since Luke, mom, and I moved to the New York HQ. True to his promise, Luke got me admission to a political science major. And Angelina, being the sweetheart she is, held her wedding during my semester break.

“By the way, where is she?” I ask

“In the bride room with Angelina,” Casper says, seemingly glad to have a change in the topic “They were wondering when you’re coming so I came to check.”

“I think I’m done here,” I look at the avenue with skeptical eyes

“Give it a break, Mia Regia,” Luke says “The bridal room probably has some imperfections for you to fix.”

“Hmm,” I glance around once again “Yeah, I’ll go check.”

I quickly descend the stairs and start towards the large summer home where all the guests are staying. On my way, I

grab a jug of orange juice and a stack of disposable cups.

I know there wont to be a flaw in Angelina’s look. Gloria is better than any makeup artist I know, even though she’s a warrior.

Besides something cool will do my overly paranoid friend some good.

I reach the bridal room and slide inside.

“Hey, guys—

My squeal cuts me off as I duck the flying jewelry, Angelina gasps at the sudden sound, whirling around in her ballgown like a wedding dress. Gloria is still busy tossing around jewelry, finding the perfect piece.

“Got it!”

The tall girl with bronze skin and dark hair holds up an elegant platinum chain with a teardrop pendant. Her dark eyes alight with success.

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“Yes, apology accepted for almost killing me,” I roll my eyes despite my smile

Gloria flashes me a sheepish smile before putting the chain around Angelina’s neck, the perfect finishing touch to her angelic appearance.

“I think I’m fainting!” Angelina says, fumbling with a stray piece of red hair “I can’t handle so much responsibility!”

“Chillax,” I say “I’m a part college student, part Luna Supreme and part betrothed, it’s not that hard.”

“But,” Angelina says “You’re an over-energized, hell stubborn person, and I’m me!”

“Lina, that’s why you’ll do a boatload better than me,” I grin at her “You’re amazing, you dumba**! You’re going to ace this, I know.”

“Yeah,” Gloria snorts “Remember that one time Elise stuck her foot out so Alpha Cole fell down the stairs face first ?

He threw a fit after that.”

“Well, he was being an a**,” I say, pouring juice in a cup and setting the jug aside “Luke would’ve beheaded him for flirting with me like a desperate ape.”

“You should learn how to do that, Lina,” Gloria says to the bride

“Her mate would not let another soul near her, let alone—

Words fall away as I lose my balance, my foot tripping over a chain on the floor and I fall face-first into it, with no

Luke to save my bones this time.

“Ow,” I mumble, rubbing my cheek as I sit up

In the eerie silence, I look up and to my absolute horror, a big orange stain has found its home at the center of

Angelina's flawless white dress.

"f***, f***, f***!" Gloria starts wiping it with tissues

"Oh moon," I run a hand through my hair as the stain stays persistent

"It's ruined," Angelina wails, her eyes br***** with tears "We bought this dress together and now it's ruined!"

My mind runs a million miles per second as I pace around, Gloria ushers Angelina not to cry lest she ruins the makeup and her mood.

Think, Elise! This can't be happening! Not to Angelina, not because of you!

My darting eyes go to the window and I see a certain young couple walking around. Going to the window, I peek out.

"Carlos!"

His head whips up, eyebrows shooting to the sky at my probably worried-sick face.

"The car, it's urgent!" I say, fleetingly watching as he squeezes his mate's hand before rushing to the parking

"Come on," I grab Angelina's hand and start to the door "We don't have much time!"

"The guests are arriving," Angelina moans in despair as I take a sharp turn, away from prying eyes towards the backside of the house "We're headed for certain doom."

I see my bestie waiting by a car, when he sees us coming, he straightens before his eyes land on Angelina's dress and they widen.

"Holy mother of—

"I know," I say, panic leaking in my voice "We need to hurry."

I all but throw myself in the pa**enger seat, Angelina and Gloria stuff themselves in the back seat.

"How did this happen?" Carlos gets in the driver's seat "What are we going to do now?"

"To a dry cleaner," I say, quickly fixing my hair in the rear mirror "The one where we usually get clothes from."

"But what are we going to—

I stop listening to him as Angelina takes a sharp breath, my head snaps back to hers, her forest eyes are wide "He's here."

In the rear mirror, I catch sight of her mate's car.

"What?" Carlos almost yells "But he wasn't supposed to be here for at least another hour!"

The car behind us stops and two men step out, one of them instantly focusing on our car, confusion etched across his face.

Gloria leans forward from her seat and all but yells;

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"Drive, b****, drive!"

And we're racing down the streets, I peek my head out of the window, my hair flying wildly. My eyes find the dumbfounded looks on the groom and his best man's faces.

"Sorry, Ethan! I have to borrow your mate for a while!"

Through the busy streets of a little town near Minneapolis, we race to a dry cleaner. I briefly wonder what we might look like. A distressed bride, two bridesmaids, and a man in a suit, maybe the groom.

I enter the little shop, looking around my eyes land on the woman at the counter.

"Excuse me," I ring the bell there, she lazily looks up from her nails "Hi, we have a little problem."

I gesture at Angelina's dress as she enters with the other two "We need that dry cleaned right now."

"Sorry miss," the worker drawls out "We return clothes after 24 hours."

I hope Angelina hasn't fainted.

I didn't want to do this.

"Maybe you don't understand the gravity of our situation," I growl lowly, letting a bit of authority leak out "We need this done, now."

The young werewolf's eyes widen before her head lowers in submission "L-Luna Supreme! I didn't recognize you, ma'am."

"Now that we've established as much," I say calmly "we don't have much time."

“Of course, make yourselves comfortable.” She nods hurriedly

Angelina is put out of her dress and into a plain pink only twenty minutes later, her dress is given back,

flawless clean.

“Hurry up!” I wave my hands animatedly as Gloria settles Angelina’s veil, still in the dry cleaner’s shop

“Shut up, let me focus!” Gloria says

“Shut up, both of you!” Angelina says “I think I’m having a cardiac arrest!”

“Do you have to?” Carlos says “I didn’t want to leave James to go to the hospital with you three.”

I kick him on the shins, he jumps around on one foot.

“I was kidding!” Carlos pouts at me “How can you be so violent towards me, bestie?”

“Save the act for your mate,” I give him a look “I know you always enjoy last-minute adventures.”

He flashes me his usual crooked grin “Damn right I do.”

“Done!” Gloria says

We stuff into the car again and once again, racing down the road, considerably calmer this time.

“Come on,” Gloria and I grab Angelina and start towards the altar

“Goddess,” Mom rushes over to us “Where have you girls been?”

“Last minute preparations?” I grin sheepishly

“Elise Marie Attwood! What sort of childish behavior is this? To think you’d grow up after finding a mate, a t**le, a

college and here you are—

“Oh give it a break, Juliette,” Morgan laughs, patting my mother’s back

“They’re grown-ups! They can handle themselves.”

Mom sighs “Let’s, exchange daughters.”

Morgan chuckles and presses a kiss to Angelina’s head “I’d rather not.”

“See?” I give my mother an exasperated look “That’s what moms are supposed to say!”

“We’ll discuss that later, dear,” Mom says “You’re already late.”

Carlos leads Angelina down the altar as Gloria and I make our way to our seats.

I slump into my chair next to a piece of handsome granite, finally relaxing.

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“Troubles, Hazel?” Warm callous finger interlock with mine

“Causing and solving,” I flash Luke a grin “But I got everything right in the end.”

“So it was a good decision to send Carlos to the backside, I see.”

“Wait, you knew?” my eyebrows shoot to the sky

“Well, it’s not every day I see you screaming something at someone from a window,” Luke says to me, his face

impassive as ever “It happens once a week, and this week’s entry was already filled when you suddenly remembered you need a matching bridesmaid dress.”

I give him the stink eye “You’re a mean asshole, you know that?”

“Mean asshole that you’re madly in love with.”

I sigh and shake my head “Too late for regrets.”

Angelina and Ethan say their vows and I feel myself smile. After the huge misunderstanding a few months ago was clear, Ethan visited our pack to meet Alpha Jax and, surprise, surprise, he found his dream girl pouring tea for him.

Since that spectacle about my wedding with Ethan raised a lot of questions, we decided to act as if the Alpha’s family and my family already knew Luke and I were mates and kept it secret for the sake of security and that my mother wasn’t present at Ethan’s pack at my wedding and I didn’t have my memory due to my injury.

Luke held a grudge against his parents, Ethan, and a boatload of other people and it took quite some persuasion to make him forgive them.

The crowd erupts into wild cheers as the two adorable mates kiss each other.

Now standing up, I rest my head against Luke’s shoulders, his arm moves to wrap around me.

“I’m not the mean a**hole now, Elise?” he asks

“You still are,” I say softly “But I still love you.”

His lips press against my hair “I know you do, Hazel.”

I grin up at him, about to say something when something hits my head.

“Ow!”

My hand s*****es at it and I realize it’s a bouquet. The one Morgan had given Angelina.

Eyes wide in horror I look up to see everyone’s eyes on us. I caught the bride’s bouquet.

“Seems like our star couple is tying the knot next,” Casper wiggles his brows at us, Gloria on his arm

“We’ve been waiting for that grand event, Alpha, Luna,” Ethan says with a smile

“You better start preparing right now, Elise.” Angelina giggles

I look at Luke for help, but the b***** simply flickers a small smile in my direction before addressing the ma** of people around us.

“That is entirely up to your Luna Supreme,” he says, face impa**ive
“I’m ready to get married right now.”

“What do you say then, Luna?” Gloria says “Should we start shopping?”

I glance at the bouquet in my hands, the man by my side, and the family and friends around me. a smile tugs at my lips.

“That doesn’t sound so bad.”

The change in their demeanors makes a laugh bubbled past my lips, especially because Luke looks like I just told him

I’m about to take over the throne alone.

“Really?” Mom asks “Do you mean it?”

“Maybe,” I shrug with a grin

Everyone groans and gives me looks, some amused, some tired, some exasperated.

“You do like keeping me on my toes, don’t you Hazel?” Luke says in my ear

“Don’t you know, Winters?” I smile innocently “It’s always a good idea to stay unpredictable.”