

:::::Chapter 25:::::

Just as I'm about to say something, I see Alarick walking towards us. When he reaches us, he greets Matt and Darius and vice-versa. The atmosphere has suddenly become tense. The fact that Alarick hasn't greeted me and I have not greeted him doesn't go unnoticed.

"Hello, Beta Chriselda," Alarick finally greets me.

"Hello, Alpha Alarick," I say in a very formal tone.

"I thought that I'll never see you again but here we are," he says, clearing showing his dislike of seeing me here. He is adding fuel to the already blazing fire.

Somehow, I manage to stay calm. "By now, you must have come to know that Fate has a twisted sense of humor. Why don't we toast to that?" I ask as I raise my glass. He doesn't say anything and just walks away from us. I take a sip of my champagne and I too walk away. I go towards a corner, wanting to be alone for a while.

"Are you alright?" Matt mind-links me.

"Yes. I just need to be alone right now." I mind-link him back.

I watch people talking to each other while I stand alone. Suddenly, the new Alpha of this pack approaches me. "Hello. I'm Alpha Brent Johnson," he introduces himself as he smiles at me.

"Hello. I'm Beta Chriselda Turner," I introduce myself and congratulate him on becoming the Alpha.

"Thank you," he says with a smile. "If you don't mind me asking, why are you standing here all alone?" He asks curiously.

"I wanted to be alone for a while," I tell him.

"Why? Aren't you enjoying yourself here at The Socials?"

"No, it's nothing like that. I'm enjoying myself. It's just that it was overcrowded there so I came here," I lie easily.

"Okay," he says. "I just came here as it is the responsibility of the Alpha to look after his guests."

"It's good to know that you've taken up the responsibilities already," I say to him.

"Well, I had too. Dad got drunk and now he's sleeping soundly at his house," he says and we both chuckle. "So, is Beta Charles your mate?" He asks all of a sudden. My eyebrows rise in surprise.

"Beta Charles? As in Beta Charles Lewis?" I ask him in clarification.

"Yeah."

"What makes you think that he is my mate?" I ask.

"I saw you both hugging a while ago," he answers. "So, I assumed..." He trails off.

"So, you assumed the usual," I state. He nods. "Beta Charles and I are not mates. We are friends who are meeting after a long time and that's the reason why we hugged."

"Okay," he says. "So, have you found your mate yet?" He asks.

Alarick's face comes to my mind. I shake my head to shake away the thought. "No and I'm not in a hurry to find him," I say. "What about you? Have you found your mate?"

"No but I'm in a hurry to find her. I want to meet her and spend the rest of my life with her," he says.

"It seems as if you're already in love with her even though you've not met her," I say, feeling a little bit amused by his love-stricken face.

He just laughs. Then, he extends his hand for me to shake. "It was nice meeting you," he says.

I shake his hand and say, "It was nice meeting you too."

He takes my leave. Suddenly, I find Alarick standing beside me. I ignore him as I look the other way and silently sip my champagne. He starts saying, "You know, I was thinking about what you said earlier about Fate. After hearing Alpha Brent, I have realized that instead of pairing you up with Charles, Fate paired you up with me, a heartless Alpha. Now, that's what you call Fate's twisted sense of humor. Let's drink a toast to that." He raises his champagne glass. "Cheers," he says. To his surprise, I clink my glass with his and say "Cheers" before drinking the whole champagne and walking away. On the way, I place the empty glass on a table and head straight to my room.

After getting inside my room, I go to the bathroom to change into comfortable clothes. When I come out, I find Matt and Darius along with Charles and Daniel in the room. I look at Charles and Daniel and ask them, "What are you both doing here?"

"We just came to make sure that you are alright," Charles says. They must've seen Alarick and me talking.

"I'm perfectly alright," I tell them as I put my suit back in the suitcase.

"So, you're not going to have dinner?" Matt asks me.

"No. My stomach is full," I say as I sit on my bed. "You guys go ahead and have dinner without me." They all look at each other and then leave the room. I lie on my bed and think about how The Socials could've been much better without Alarick's presence. I don't know how much time passes by when Matt and Darius return back to the room. When I get up from the bed, I also find Charles and Daniel in the room. I look at them in confusion. When Matt sits beside me, I realize that he is holding a plate full of various food items. "You didn't have dinner?" I ask him as I glance at the plate.

"This is not for me, it's for you," he tells me as he puts the plate in front of me.

"But I told you, my stomach is full," I try to make an excuse.

"Chris, that's not a convincing lie, you know," Darius says as he comes closer. "And just by drinking champagne doesn't make one's stomach full," he says in a matter-of-factly way.

"So, are you willing to eat on your own or do I have to spoon-feed you?" Matt asks me.

"Matt..." I start to protest.

"Chris, it's not good to sleep with an empty stomach," he says.

"C'mon, eat."

I reluctantly take the plate and start eating. After chewing down some of the meal, I look at Charles and Daniel and ask them, "What are you guys doing here again?"

"Well, Matthew said that he might need our help to forcefully feed you if you didn't eat on your own," Charles answers.

"Matt!" I complain.

"Chris, you are really strong. Different scenarios were playing in my head like you might push or kick the plate away when I try to forcefully feed you and I needed people to hold you steady for that," Matt says in his defense.

"Wow, Matt. You have just indirectly called me violent," I say playfully. They chuckle. They all sit on the empty beds and continue to talk.

"Chriselda, I was wondering, don't you feel weird being the only women among men in such official gatherings?" Charles asks.

"To be honest, I feel very weird," I reply. "I totally feel out of place. Attending such gatherings makes me feel as if I've made a mistake by coming..." We continue to talk for another hour before Charles and Daniel retire to their room. When Matt and Darius change into comfortable clothes and sit on their beds, I tell them, "I'm going to be back within a minute." I'm out of the room before they can ask me questions.

After roaming in the pack house, I finally find Charles and Daniel's room. I knock on the door and the door is opened by Daniel. "What are you doing here?" He asks, feeling surprised.

"Can I come in?" I ask politely. He welcomes me inside his room. When I look around, I find Charles sitting against the headboard of his bed. I'm really glad that Alarick is nowhere to be seen.

When Charles' gaze falls on me, he's surprised. "What are you doing here?" He asks as he stands up and approaches me. Daniel closes the door and stands beside Charles.

"I'm here to thank you guys," I tell them.

They both look at me confusingly. "Why? What did we do?" Charles asks.

"You both came to my room along with Matt and Darius to check up on me. It means a lot," I say. "Also, earlier, I had rejected your friendship when I said that we shouldn't be in touch with each other because I wanted to forget about Alarick. But today I've realized that I'll not be able to forget him since I'll be seeing him in such official gatherings. I don't want to lose your friendship because of him. So, I'm here to extend my hand of friendship. Can I be your friend?" I ask both of them.

"Chriselda, you have always considered you our friend. Our friendship started the day you came to live in our pack house," Charles says sincerely which makes me smile.

"It's already late, guys. We'll talk tomorrow, okay?" I say to them as I want to get out of this room before Alarick comes in.

"Okay," they say together.

"Goodnight," I say.

"Goodnight."

Before I can open the door, Charles suddenly says, "Wait! I want to talk to you!"

I turn around and look at him in confusion. "What do you want to talk about?" I ask.

"First, I need you to sit down," he says.

"Okay." Then, I look at the three beds in the room. I decide to sit on the middle bed while Charles and Daniel sit on the bed beside it.

"So, how are you?" Charles asks.

"I'm fine," I say as I give him a confused look.

"Do you miss Alarick?" He asks. I can't help but roll my eyes.

"No," I reply. "Not even a bit."

He looks at me for a while. "How can you not miss your mate?" He asks.

"Because my mate is cold-hearted," I answer in a matter-of-factly way.

"Are you happy without him?"

"I'm on cloud nine!" I exclaim cheerfully. Charles doesn't say anything for a while. By the look on his face, it seems as if he's in deep thought.

"I hope you're telling the truth," he says. "I just want you to be happy. I don't want you to be miserable like me."

"Like you?" I ask confusingly. "I don't seem to understand..."

"I'm miserable without my mate," he says.

I raise my eyebrows in surprise. "You have a mate?" I ask him. Why didn't he tell me that he has a mate?

"I had a mate."

"What do you mean you had a mate?" I ask.

"My mate is dead."

Author's Note: THIS IS GOING TO BE A LONG NOTE BUT IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ IT.

I read all the comments on the previous chapter and I got a little emotional because you guys really don't know me but still you wished me good luck for my exams. And also, you people called my story amazing and told me that you support this story. That means a lot to me. It's because of your support that this story was ranked at #146 in the Werewolf genre.

If you have any questions or doubts regarding this story then feel free to ask me through your comments.

I want to thank all the people for voting! :)

á