

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 146: Mistakes with a Mate

Cassie.

Staring at my brother, I was completely pissed by the way he had approached me in the hallway, as if he was my keeper and had a say in everything I did. One, he didn't have a single clue what had happened that night with Silas *or* Lucas, and two, I was an adult. If I wanted to fuck three men in a night-which I didn't-that wasn't his place for him to say I couldn't.

The last thing I had expected as I stood there trying to decide how badly I was going to beat my brother for talking to me the way he was in front of all these people was for Trixie-sweet, kind Trixie-to jump in and defend me.

She stood fiercely in front of me, looking down at Pollux, who lay on the ground, staring up at her in shock, just as

the rest of us were.

Had anyone else done this, he would have shifted and caused all kinds of torment, but with her, he didn't. It took me a minute to process what was going on, but as I

watched him staring at her in utter disbelief with his eyes wide and his mouth parted, it suddenly dawned on me the reason why he hadn't jumped up.

Trixie was mated to my brother, and she had no idea.

Part of me had suspected something was up after the dinner we had with Odin where he quickly backed down once his eyes landed upon Trixie, but I had just cut it to him. not wanting to start shit in Odin's dining hall.

Laughter filled me as Trixie turned, glancing over her shoulder in my direction. "What are you talking about?"

What is karma?"

Quickly knocked from the trance he was in, Pollux jumped to his feet and brushed himself off. "Keep your fucking

hands off me."

His comment was directed towards Trixie, and with wide eyes, I scoffed, shaking my head. "Seriously, brother? Are you not going to tell her?"

Trixie looked between Pollux and me, and he shook his head once more, not saying anything. I couldn't help but laugh. My brother, the man who had been all about mates his entire life, was finally paired with his, and he wasn't going to take the initiative.

"Wow. Are you fucking kidding me? This is what you've waited for forever, and you're not going to say anything?" I was in shock and complete, utter disbelief at how my brother was acting. It honestly didn't make any sense.

Unless it was because she wasn't a shifter.

Considering this thought, I narrowed my gaze at him and was absolutely pissed that he would reject her because she wasn't a shifter. "If you're not accepting because-

"Go fuck yourself, Cassie," he snapped, cutting me off, "keep your fucking mouth closed."

He stormed off, and I watched him disappear from sight. I wanted to chase after him and beat him for how he was acting, for how he was treating Trixie, a girl who was nothing but kind to me-who was nothing but kind to

everyone.

"That fucking asshole." The muttered response from my lips caused confusion to pass over both Sansa and Trixie, who cleared her throat with her arms crossed her chest, waiting

for a response.

"What just happened?"

Here I was with my own issues, and now I had to deal with my brothers. It was absolutely bullshit how he acted, and he knew it. With a groan, I closed my eyes, pinching the bridge of my nose, trying to figure out the best way to address this current situation. "Why is it always me?"

"Why is what always you?" Sansa asked. "Can you tell me

what's going on?"

I hated being looked at to provide answers to something that wasn't really my place, but neither of these girls was going to let this go. Both of them are going to want to know what I knew and why my brother was being an

asshole.

“Okay, I’ll explain,” I sighed, glancing around at all the listening bodies that stood nearby. “But not here.”

Trixie and Sansa both looked at each other before Trixie smiled. “Coffee shop?”

“There’s a coffee shop?” I was stunned once again this place had something as simple as a coffee shop just like they had back home.

“Yeah, I already told you before that this place isn’t much different from the human realm.” Trixie laughed as she looped her arm through mine. “I can’t wait to hear what is going on because, honestly, I could use some good gossip.”

Trixie had no idea what she was asking for because this wasn’t the kind of gossip she wanted. It was far more -complicated, and as much as I wanted to tell her, I was conflicted about how she would take the news.

Part of me thought she would take it well, but then... the

other part worried she would be heartbroken. I wasn’t sure how pixies picked their mates, but I hoped she wouldn’t

take this the wrong way when I told her the truth.

When I said I wanted to go to a coffee shop, I honestly didn’t know what I was expecting. Perhaps it was something similar to the coffee shops I had remembered

going to back home. Coffee shops that had coffee machines, countertops filled with delicious foods, and a variety of different music with high-top tables for you to gather at.

However, a coffee shop in this place was more like walking into an old bookstore that happened to serve coffee and tea cakes. The building had rustic decor and antique pieces lined with cobwebs high up on shelves. The walls were burgundy with white accent trim, and a lady with fiery red hair and golden eyes served steamy cups of addicting coffee at the counter with a smile.

I was intrigued by how people moved in and out of this place. The leather seating seemed to line the walls, and were filled with other students mingling. But as the girls and I collected our drinks and sat down, I couldn’t help but wonder if perhaps I should put off telling them what I was going to tell them at all.

Sipping on *my* coffee, I tried to look anywhere but at Sansa and Trixie. After a moment, though, Sansa cleared her throat, and my eyes gazed up to meet both of theirs.

“Are you going to explain, or are you going to sit there and keep avoiding the situation?”

Sighing, I nodded. “Sorry, I just didn’t think I’d be having to do this shit.”

Trixie gave me a soft gaze of understanding as she nodded her head. “It’s okay if you don’t want to talk about it,

Cassie.”

“It isn’t that, Trixie,” I said with a smile. “It’s just that my brother should be here explaining this, and with everything going on with Lucas right now, I just didn’t expect I’d be the one telling you.”

Opening and closing her mouth, Trixie frowned. “What are you talking about?”

Glancing quickly at Sansa, her eyes widened as she gasped in shock. “Oh my god. OH MY GOD, are you FUCKING KIDDING ME?!”

“Nope,” I replied, popping the ‘p’. “It would seem that fate has deemed it so.”

Again, Trixie didn’t seem to understand what Sansa and I were talking about, and rolling her eyes, she sighed in a very dramatic fashion that caught both Sansa’s and my attention. “I have no clue what you’re talking about.”

“Trixie, how does the mate thing work with your kind? Do you guys have mate bonds, or do you like pick who you want to be with?”

It was probably better to understand more about her people before just spilling the tea, so to speak. I mean, there was nothing like confusing the girl by blurting out that my asshole brother was her mate without her first understanding what the hell that actually meant.

Puzzled by my question, she laughed, shaking her head. “What the heck does that have to do with anything?”

“Just humor me,” I pleaded, rolling my eyes. “Please?”

She pondered over what I said and nodded. “Well, we don’t have mates like you guys do. We do bond ourselves with who we choose, but there is usually a long courtship, and we choose to tie ourselves to our mate, as you call it.”

I had kind of suspected what she said, just simply through stories my mother had told me as a child. Of course, I thought they were just fairytales, but I soon learned that all stories came from the truth at one point in time.

“Okay, so you don’t feel any kind of way or anything before you mate with these people?” I questioned, hoping to lead her in a direction she might understand.

Laughter escaped her as she shook her head. “No, that’s silly-oh, I mean...” She seemed embarrassed by what she said, realizing it was how we detected our mates.

I couldn’t help but smile and laugh at her comment, though. I could see why some people might find it odd or out of sorts to detect the person you’re supposed to love like that, but we all had our own way, and it was refreshing to learn a bit about ours.

“Well, when Pollux and I turned eighteen, I quickly found out Lucas was my mate. I honestly never wanted one-that was more my brother’s desire. However, when I found my mate, and he didn’t find his, he became so angry at me.”

Trixie gasped softly with sorrow-filled eyes. “How could he be angry? That isn’t your fault or his. Doesn’t he know fate makes things happen for a reason?”

Shrugging my shoulders, I thought of Lucas, and how I had treated him. “I guess in the end, we both didn’t. The

problem was that when we got to this place, he gave up hope of finding her. He used to proclaim she would be the perfect shifter mate.”

The three of us giggled over the notion of him saying that, and as I thought more about it, I couldn’t get Lucas out of my mind. It actually upset me. I hadn’t seen him all day when I had started growing used to seeing him every day.

“You and Lucas will fix things, Cassie,” Sansa said softly as she placed her hand upon mine. “Everything will work out. You just have to give it time.”

With a soft scoff, I shook my head, trying to push past the idea of Lucas and I ever being normal. “That’s wishful

thinking, but back to my brother-”

“Oh yes, please continue. I do love stories,” Trixie replied cheerfully as she sipped on her drink. “This is getting so good.”

“It sure it is,” I muttered with a grin. “As I was saying, Pollux did find his mate when he got here. I wasn’t sure the first night I saw the look he gave her, but after today...”

Trixie hesitated, staring in confusion before looking at Sansa. "How was I standing there and completely missed seeing him looking at his mate?"

As Sansa's eyes met mine, she laughed, shaking her head. "Girl, if you don't tell her already, I'm going to because this

is just too good."

She was right. I couldn't just keep dragging this out. It was better to rip the bandaid off and get over with it because, honestly, the longer I held off, the worse I felt about the situation.

"Trixie, you're my brother's mate." I watched as shock registered on her face.

"What the fuck?!"

Chapter 147: Denying the Bond

Cassie.

Trixie's outburst caught both mine and Sansa's attention. She jumped to her feet, huffing and puffing, and I could have sworn her eyes turned brighter than usual. It was as if a flip switched in her, and she was slowly spiraling from it. The guilt that filled me over her looking upset, tore at my heart. I had never meant to hurt her, and biting my bottom lip, the confidence I usually felt slowly dissipated.

"Trixie, I'm so sorry. Please don't be upset."

"Upset?!" She scoffed with laughter. "I'm not upset because I'm his mate."

"What? Then what's wrong?" Confused beyond belief, I tried to understand what was going on. Why was she acting like this if he wasn't upset by the news?

Shaking her head, she paced around the little seating area we were in with her hands on her hips. "I never wanted a mate, Cassie. As surprising as that may seem, in my world, when you take your mate, it means you start popping out babies, and just because my older sister wants to do that doesn't mean I want to."

Trixie's confession was slightly unexpected. She was

usually so sweet and bubbly, and right now, she was acting completely different. "Trixie—"

"No, Cassie," she sighed, snapping her gaze at me. "Let me

finish.”

I gestured with my hand for her to continue. After all, who was I to honestly stop her? It was obvious the girl was on a mission, and as she ranted about how people always treated her like she was stupid and how her mother wanted her to settle down, I couldn't help but think of how similar we actually were.

“If your brother thinks for one minute he can disregard me, regardless of me not wanting to mate anything, well, he has another thing coming.”

“Whoa—what?” I gasped, coming back to reality at her words.

What the hell was she talking about?

“You heard me, Cassie,” she replied with a triumphant smirk on her face. “I'm going to take a chapter out of your book.”

Sansa kicked my shin, causing me to gasp as I sent a daggered glare in her direction. “What the hell was that for?!”

“Look what you did!” she groaned, gesturing to Trixie, who pulled out her phone and seemed to look at herself in her reflection. “She has lost it!”

Mouth parted and eyes wide, I shrugged as if to ask her what she wanted me to do. It wasn't like I asked for all of this shit. “Trixie, what are you planning?”

When I spoke, my eyes spotted a figure walking past the store I had wanted to see all day. Lucas walked casually down the sidewalk in the same dark jeans and t-shirt I had seen him in the other day, which confused me more than anything.

It meant that he hadn't been home or anything.

“Guys, I have to go.” Standing to my feet, Sansa called after me as I bolted from the cafe and out the door, looking in both directions for which way he had gone. The thought of finding him was the only thing pushing me forward as I turned left and headed up the street in the direction I saw his figure disappear.

My eyes searched the area for any sign of him, and when I thought I'd never find him, a firm arm reached out from within the shadows of an alley and pulled me in, the seductive, sultry scent I had grown used to wrapping around my body.

Pushed against the wall, I stared up into Lucas' dark steely eyes. My heart was racing at the feeling of his body

pressed against mine as his breath fanned across my cheek.

"Why are you following me?" he snarled through a narrowed gaze.

"What—what do you mean why am I following you? I have been looking for you all day."

The comment seemed to shock him as his gaze fell, and he let up on how tight he was holding my wrist. For a moment, I hoped this moment might turn sweet, no matter how much my affection for him confused me, but that didn't happen.

Instead, he scoffed and stepped back from me, running his hand through his dark hair as he always did when he was going to be a sarcastic asshole

"I don't know why you are, Cassie. It's not like we have anything to talk about." His words were hurtful, and as the hollow pit in my stomach opened, trying to swallow my heart, I refused to believe him.

Did I care for him more than I thought? Maybe I didn't know.

Curling

my lip, I glared, trying to understand what the hell changed his mood so quickly. He seemed different today as if something had happened, and he no longer cared about me being his mate. "Maybe because I wanted to talk to you about—"

"Stop," he snapped, baring his fangs. "We have nothing to talk about."

"Nothing to talk about?" I gasped in disbelief, "we have a lot to talk about."

Lucas had nothing but amusement in his eyes as he stared at me with a smile on his face. I wasn't sure what the hell his problem

was, considering he literally had fucked me stupid last night, and now he was acting as if I was the last person on the planet he wanted to see.

“Cassie, you and I both know this won’t work, so stop pretending and move on to some other poor, unsuspecting soul who has time for your shit.”

“Excuse me?!” I exclaimed. “What the fuck is your problem?”

Shaking his head, Lucas turned and started making his way out of the alley like he hadn’t heard what I just said, but I had no plan of letting him go. Grabbing his wrist, I stopped him in his tracks, and as he turned, I reared back my hand, slapping him across the face. “Go fuck yourself, Lucas.”

Without

warning, Lucas snatched me by my hair and pressed me back against the brick building he had pinned me against before. His fangs bared and with lips only inches above mine, a low growl echoed from his throat.

“Don’t ever do that again-”

“Or what?” I quickly said, cutting him off. “What the fuck are you going to do?”

With haste, his lips crashed against mine, and as they did, our movements turned into hungry, frenzied motions of wandering hands and heated passion. I wanted him right now, and no matter how much he denied me any other

time, he couldn’t in this moment.

Grazing my hip with his fingers, he slid his hand beneath my leggings and cupped my aching core that throbbed with the desire to have more of him. I was wet, so fucking wet, and when Lucas realized that, a low growl of

satisfaction left him.

“Is this what you wanted, Cassie?” He all but purred in my ear as a smile graced his lips, highlighting the glint of amusement that lay at the forefront of his gaze. “You wanted to be my good girl again?”

“Good girl?” I giggled as I nipped at his bottom lip. “Who said anything about being good?”

Kissing me once more, he brought me closer to the edge as his thumb rubbed circles around my clit. He made me ride out my orgasm with his hand. The euphoric bliss of his actions had me begging for more, but when I reached for his belt, he pulled back.

The empty space now between us had me whining for the

loss of comfort he had created. I wasn't sure what made

him stop, but as he licked his fingers clean, he shook his head with a grin. "I think I've had enough fun for the day, Cassie. Perhaps find someone to finish you off. I heard there are quite a few men who have been trying."

"Are you serious right now?" I breathed out in shock as my mouth dropped open.

He didn't hesitate to respond as he shrugged his shoulders and fixed himself. "Why would I not be? The woman who was supposed to be my mate turned out not to be mate material, after all."

His words were the metaphorical slap to my face I had been waiting for. Last night we had been so happy, entangled in each other's arms, and then with one simple phrase, he turned into the devil's son who sought to taunt me with my emotions.

"You don't mean that, Lucas. I know you don't."

Laughing loudly, his smile grew wider as he shook his head.

"You have no clue."

"Then why don't you enlighten me?" The words left my lips, without thinking, and for a moment, I really thought he was considering what I said. But then, as if he had remembered something, the amusement turned to disgust.

"I'm not telling you anything, Cassie. Just do me a favor and stay away from me. I don't have time for your shit anymore."

It was the comment I had waited so long for him to say. A rejection without a rejection, and one that, as much as I thought I wouldn't care, I did.

Tears filled my eyes the moment he disappeared from the alley. The overwhelming emotions of how he made me feel and how he broke my heart filled my mind. I had wanted him not to want this, and then when I actually connected

with him, I lost him.

Perhaps the situation wouldn't be as rough had I actually known what it was that I did wrong. Was I a bitch to him before? Yeah, but I wanted to change for him.

Trying to be the person he wanted to be with, considering I was his mate.

Yet, that wasn't good enough. Nope, instead, he wanted to pretend I never existed, just like every other man who I had ever tried to bare my heart toward.

They were all good at coming in and taking what they wanted, but the moment you tell them it's okay, and you're interested, they run away.

Debating on going home or back to the coffee shop, I hesitated and then exited the alley, turning left.

I wanted to be alone, able to process all of this myself. Yet, as soon as I got closer to the building I stayed in, a familiar voice came from behind me. "Cassie?"

Turning, my gaze landed into that of Silas, and without saying a word, he quickly wrapped his arms around me, embracing me into a hug. I didn't want to seem weak being here, but everything that had happened since the day I turned eighteen seemed to flood me, all at once breaking the dam that held back my emotions.

For the first time in a long time, I cried hard, and there to comfort me wasn't the person I wanted. But instead, the one person I would never have expected.

Chapter 148: Words with Silas

Cassie.

I hadn't expected to run into Silas on the way home, but now that I was faced with him, I was actually pleased. I had allowed myself to face a moment of weakness by letting my heart play tricks on my mind. To think the mate thing was actually possible with Lucas was a stupid decision to begin

with.

Pulling from Silas, I quickly wiped away my tears and pushed a smile on my face.

"God, I feel completely stupid," I whispered as I gazed up

into his hazel eyes, "uh—so how are you?"

Silas gazed down at me, giving a small chuckle as he 'reached up, rubbing the back of his neck as if hesitant to speak. "I'm okay. I actually was coming to see you, but I can see that whatever I had to say can wait... what's going on? Why are you crying?"

He was coming to see me? The thought was sweet, but I wasn't sure why he would have been going out of his way to see me. "Uh, nothing. I'm not sad, more angry than anything."

“Angry about what?”

Shrugging my shoulders, I turned and made my way toward a small bench that sat off the edge of the sidewalk. “Men— in more precise measures, Lucas. It’s all stupid and not important, honestly.”

Silas followed my movements as he came to sit next to me. He didn’t bother to push for more information and instead nudged my shoulder with his own, causing me to smile.

“Well, the topic of men was the reason why I was coming to see you. I wasn’t sure if your brother had spoken with you yet, but I wanted to explain myself.”

Confusion filled me as I furrowed my brow, staring at him, trying to figure out what exactly he was talking about. Taking a moment, I thought back to when my brother

confronted me in the hallway at the school, and suddenly what he had said dawned on me.

that was

“So when he said the guys were talking about me, you?” The sheepish grin that crossed Silas’s face at my question let me know it was exactly what he was talking about.

Obviously, my brother had overheard a conversation between him and somebody else, which caused the entire scene in the hallway. Not only that, but the word had

gotten out, leading to Lucas hearing what he had heard.

Words seemed to travel very quickly around this place, and that was something I did not like.

“It wasn’t what you thought. I don’t know what your brother told you, but I promise... No thing was bad,” Silas said

quickly, causing me to halt and what I was going to say

next.

Taking a deep breath, I closed my eyes and allowed myself to think very thoroughly through all of this. Silas didn’t

come across as the kind of guy who would just say shit for no reason. And, in fact, if he was the Playboy kind of guy. Why would he even bother to come here and try to explain himself and then also comfort me when I was at my

weakest moment?

“What exactly was said?” I asked him as I opened my eyes and stared back into the bluish-green haziness of his own.

Rubbing the back of his neck, his eyes darted around before they finally met mine once again. “A few of the guys saw us talking the other night, and because of it, they assumed that we were hooking up, which of course, we didn’t. And then, they saw Lucas act the way he did toward me. Guys are going to make assumptions.”

Whatever his words as he spoke, and nodding my head, I

followed along the best I could, trying to understand his point of view. However, if these guys have made

assumptions, why had he not corrected them? Because obviously, they were letting people believe that more happened than actually did.

“Ok. And did you correct them to prevent them from spreading these ridiculous rumors over something that didn’t even happen?” Silas gave me a meek smile, and that smile let me know he hadn’t entirely told them the truth, which pissed me off even more.

Not only did I have to deal with the shit Lucas and my brother were putting me through, but on top of that, I had to deal with everything else in my life constantly spiraling

out of control. And now this issues with Silas because

people seem to think I’m a girl who likes to sleep around.

This place was supposed to be about growing into the person we were meant to be, and instead, it reminded me so much of high school, so much of the drama, I was glad to get rid of when I graduated.

Standing to my feet, I shook my head and quickly turned, heading back down the path toward the building we stayed in. The last thing I wanted to do was say something mean to Silas and cause even more drama.

My mom always told me if I didn’t have anything nice to

say, it was best not to say anything at all. So that was what I was going to do.

However, Silas had other plans because as soon as I started

heading down the sidewalk, he was on his feet rushing after me, his hand gripping my upper arm as he stopped me in my tracks and turned me to face him.

“Please don’t walk away from me. I want to talk to you about this. In fact, there’s a lot that I want to talk to you about,” he said softly.

There was nothing but sincerity in his gaze, and as much as I wanted to tell him to go fuck himself and never put his hands on me again, part of me couldn’t help but want to give him that chance to explain and fix things.

“How do you expect to fix what has already happened, Silas? What else is there that we need to discuss? You made it very clear the guys here, and probably a lot of the girls, are assuming I’m somebody I’m not.”

I had never claimed to be this badass girl people thought I was. I was 18 years old, trying to figure out my life and where I wanted to go.

Did I have a rebellious nature? Absolutely.

But that didn’t mean I was ready to stand toe to toe with

the world as if I had my shit together. What I wanted was to

be able to come here and heal from everything that had happened, including losing Melissa, the woman I had loved all through high school.

I had pushed the thoughts of losing her to the back of my mind, not trying to dwell on it what had happened because it was a situation I couldn’t fix. However, this place turned out not to be the solace I was looking for, and instead, had become just as much a nightmare as where I had lived before.

I took a moment to think about what I had asked him, and he opened and closed his mouth as if he wanted to say something but wasn’t sure. “Will you please just have dinner with me? I can explain everything then.”

I’d be a **fool** to agree to have dinner with him, but I was

curious to know exactly what it was

he was going to do to fix things. Taking him up on this offer was not going to make anything

better between Lucas and me. But honestly, after the way Lucas had treated me today, regardless of what he assumed to be true... I had no reason to say no.

Nodding my head slowly, I shrugged my shoulders, gesturing with my hand that yes, I would. A bright white smile crept across Silas's face at my acknowledgment to go to dinner with him. He was pleased, and honestly, I wasn't surprised he was.

He was a very strange man in a way. There was something dark and mysterious about him that pulled me in, but I couldn't help but feel he didn't just look at me like a person but as a prized possession to own, which was a little

unsettling.

He hadn't actually done anything to make me feel that way. It was simply the gaze he gave me was as if I was a piece of gold littered with jewels he wanted to have.

Which perhaps was normal because he was a dragon, and they were known to be very materialistic.

"Great. I'll come by and pick you up at 7. I promise you won't regret this." He quickly turned, not giving me a moment to decline or say anything else, and disappeared from my sight. And once again, I was left alone to ponder my thoughts.

I, of course, instantly regretted I had agreed to go to dinner with him because it would only add fuel to an already blazing fire. I sagged my shoulders and continued walking down the path in the direction I was headed.

The only thing I wanted to do was curl up in my bed and take a nap. The day had been long and draining. I was still slightly hungover, and with everything that had taken place, I didn't know what to do with myself.

It was the first time in a very long time I had wished my

mother was present. That I could go to her for advice, **have** her bring me a hot cup of tea, and sit on the bed and talk to

1. me.

My mother and I hadn't been close in years, and once upon a time, we had been. When I was little, I was everything to her, just as Pollux was, and she was everything to me. But then, of course, as I grew, we grew apart, and it became more complicated than we would have liked.

Our relationship was strained, and it became more strained the day I turned eighteen.

She may have fought for me to try to get me and Pollux to

stay, not wanting to have us leave, but honestly, I believed a part of her was relieved I was going because, for once, she could try to live normally without worrying who I was going to hurt if I got upset.

The moment I stepped into my room and closed the door, tears began to flow down my face. Everywhere I went, everything I did, I caused problems. I had to figure out how to fix myself, and perhaps it was time I changed slightly

who I was.

Instead of being the girl who stood out among the masses, perhaps it was time I tried to blend in. At least then, if I blended in, I wouldn't stick out with everybody wanting to

have a piece of me or something to say **about** me.

Because the girl I was, was not a girl she would want to be proud of.

Chapter 149: Date with a Dragon

When I agreed to go to dinner with Silas, the last thing I had expected was for him to go completely all out. The moment I stepped out of the white-pillared building I stayed in under Oden's watchful eye, I was met with Silas's smiling face.

He wasn't dressed casually like I would have assumed, but instead was dressed in black slacks, a dark purple button-up shirt rolled up to his sleeves, and even dress shoes. His entire outfit screamed money, and from the glimmer of lust hidden beneath his gaze, I felt completely underdressed in my blue sundress.

Stepping slowly down the stone staircase, my hand gently sliding against the railing, I stared at him with hesitation and uncertainty.

"Uh I thought you said that we were going to dinner. Why are you so dressed up?"

Laughter escaped him as he spun in a small circle holding his hands out as if to give me a better look. "Well, I wanted to impress you, Cassie. Did it work?"

Impress me? Why the hell would he want to do that?

The guy barely knew me at all.

As laughter escaped me unexpectedly, I nodded, shrugging my shoulders. "You can say that. You look like you're ready to go somewhere fancy. Is that what we're doing?"

Asking him where we were going only led to an even bigger smile. I honestly didn't see how his lips could spread that wide across his face, but he did look absolutely ravishing when he smiled like that. "I can't spoil the surprise, Cassie. You're going to have to trust me."

Trust. That wasn't something easily given, but deciding to try and take my own advice, I ignored my head telling me to cancel the whole thing because it was wrong and instead went with my gut urging me forward.

The night was cool, and the clear skies above made for a perfect evening. The realm didn't have cars or any form of motor transportation like the human realm. Everyone seemed to walk here, which allowed for tons of conversation.

To which Silas never ran out of. "So, tell me a bit about yourself."

Glancing to my left, I let a small breath escape me as I tried to figure out what to tell him. It wasn't like I was comfortable when it came to speaking about myself, but if I was going to try and be more 'trying' if you want to call it that, then I would have to be.

"Well, there is a lot to know-can you be more specific?"

"Sure." He chuckled as we passed building after building, heading down the cobbled street. The only dim

lighting around were the fire-lit street lamps that stood along the road. "Why don't you tell me what your old school was like? I take it you just graduated."

"Um, yeah. I mean, I'm pretty sure it's no different than your schools... I mean, I don't know which place you came from-

Silas continued laughing, finding amusement in my quickly stuttering response as I tried to redeem myself from sounding any stupider than I already felt. I wasn't sure how all this worked, and even though I was told a little about Asgard, I wasn't told much.

"Cassie." He smirked, nudging me with his shoulder again. "It's okay. I'm not like the others around here. I know you don't understand how it all works."

Hearing him say that made me feel a lot better about my current situation. As much as Silas reminded me of the fuck boys back home, so far, he didn't seem that bad.

Maybe looks really could be deceiving, or I was just being stupid, and he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Either way, I was fucked because the look he kept giving me made me feel like he was seeking more than just friendship.

"Thanks." It was the only thing I could think to say under the awkward circumstances, but before I could open my mouth, I realized we had left the street of the city and ended

up walking down more backroads that led towards a grassy green clearing. "Where are we?"

Letting my eyes gaze around my surroundings, I took in the shadows of the trees and the darkness that hid beneath

the floral bushes. No matter where the darkness looked through, the double moons above let light glisten around the area, shimmering off the lake that lay just beyond the tree's clearings.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" His question caused my gaze to shift in his direction as I quickly closed my gaping mouth.

25 87%

"Yes, it is. But why are we out here? I thought you said we were going to have dinner?"

Taking my hand in his, he led me forward and past the treeline closer to the water. It was then I saw what he had set up, and the breath was slowly taken from me. Upon the ground laid a lush purple blanket with gold pillows and a low sitting table.

The table was piled with different fruits, meats, and cheeses elegantly placed with such precision that if Silas had really done all this himself, it must have taken a lot of time. "This is amazing, you did all of this?"

Turning to face him, he stood behind me with his hands in his pockets as he shrugged his shoulders and smiled. His hair fell softly in front of one eye, causing him to quickly brush it back on top of his head. "I wanted to make you something special. Since the moment you got here, it seems like you haven't found it easy to adjust, so... I wanted to do something nice for you."

No matter the words he said, this definitely wasn't just a friendly dinner.

Walking towards me, he gestured for me to take a seat, and without hesitation, I did. This was one of the nicest things anyone had ever done for me, and the more I spent time with Silas, the more I realized how I had completely misjudged him.

"You're really not like how I expected you to be."

"What, you mean a pretty boy that only cares about himself and wants to get in your pants?" He chuckled, raising a brow at me.

40.62%

A soft blush settled over my cheeks from the embarrass-

ment of my question. I felt foolish to have thought what I did, and then, of course, voiced it. Silas, however, didn't seem bothered at all. In fact, he stared at me with those hazel eyes that held so many questions and yet asked none.

"I'm sorry." Waving his hand, he smiled, picking up his goblet of dark red fluid and drinking it down. I wasn't sure exactly what it was, but from the glass decanter in front of us, I assumed it was wine.

"As I said before, Cassie... I know you're not familiar with things yet. And to answer your comment from earlier, I actually come from your realm. However, my upbringing was much different."

Shock flowed through me upon hearing him. "How? I mean-you came from my world?"

"Yeah." He laughed, shaking his head. "Is that hard to believe?"

"Well, no, but no offense, you don't seem like you did."

It was true, he didn't seem like he came from my realm but nodding his head, I had a feeling he was going to explain. "That's because when I was there, the atmosphere was probably much different from how it is now."

Lips parted, I tried to understand his meaning. "Different?"

"Yeah, let's just say that I'm much older than my boyish good looks."

I knew wolves could live for a long time, but part of me had never considered other creatures could as well. The way Silas said he was much older had me flush, thinking of how

old he really was.

"I see. I take it you come with a lot of experience in life, then." The statement caused me to pause as I instantly thought of how wrong it came out. "That's not what I meant-"

"I'm sure." He grinned with a lust-filled gaze that made a heat rush through me I hadn't expected. It was weird how easily I was able to fall into conversation with him and feel comfortable. Initially, when I met him, I felt drawn, but this was so much different than expected.

Almost as if he and I had known each other in a past life.

Clearing my throat, I turned my gaze away from him and down at the grapes in front of me, quickly picking one off the vine and popping it into my mouth. The sweet flavor of the red seedless grape caused me to moan, and as I did, Silas quickly adjusted where he sat and cleared his throat. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," he replied, catching my gaze again, "so, is there anything you want to ask me?"

"You mean besides how old you are?" I grinned, watching him chuckle at my comment. There was a lot I wanted to know, but I just wasn't sure how to ask.

"Do you really wanna know-"

Shaking my head quickly, I laughed as I picked up the drink in front of me, "no, no... not yet anyways. I'll just keep pretending you're like twenty."

"I definitely haven't been that old in a very long time," he muttered playfully. His eyes gazed up to the clear star-filled

sky above us. "Shall I simply just tell you some things about me?"

His solution sounded way better than any questions I could ask, and nodding my head quickly, he made himself more comfortable laying back on the golden pillows staring up at the sky. "Okay, then let me see where to start."

"Maybe just the basics?" I offered, causing him to glance over at me from where he was lying. The urge to lay against him was strong as he pointed a finger at me and smiled.

"Good idea. Well, as I said, I came from your realm, or Earth, as you call it. However, I come from a much older earth. I came to Asgard with a friend who has since returned to the realm, a place I wasn't keen to go back to. I actually love being here in Asgard, and if you want to know-I have been at the school for a long time."

"I have never seen you in any of the classes, though. You must have gone through them all a hundred times by now." The idea of someone wanting to take classes that much shocked me. There was no way I would do something like that.

Silas chuckled, though, shaking his head, and I quickly re- alized I was wrong.

"I'm no longer a student, Cassie."

"Well, then what are you then? Because I mean, you use the training field and hang out there all the time." My ques- tion was valid and watching Silas open and close his mouth, he hesitated in his next words.

80.31%

“I’m a guardian, Cassie. It’s what dragons are known to do.

My ancestors helped to defend the realms and, in return, were granted immortality.”

I was shocked to hear his admission and would never have expected someone like him to be what he was. He looked so young and well-put together, like a preppy rich kid.

“So, you are a dragon shifter... which means you actually turn into a dragon?”

The question sounded dumb, but I had honestly never seen a dragon, so how was I supposed to know that they were real? Jumping to his feet, he brushed himself off and stepped off the blanket onto the grassy clearing.

“If you want to see a dragon, then I’ll show you a dragon, but if I shift Cassie... you’re going for a ride.”

Chapter 150: Flying for Love

Eyes wide, I stared at Silas in shock. “Ride? What do you mean ride— you mean on you?”

Silas slowly unbuttoned his shirt, and as he did, the laughter that left his lips made me flush even more than I had before. I couldn’t tear my eyes from the curves of his muscles and the rippled way his abs glimmered against the moonlight. Everything about Silas was hypnotizing. Never had I met a man who acted the way he did.

“What are you doing?” I whispered softly, watching him watch me as he undressed.

Something about the moment of him undressing captivated me, making my heart race as the blue— green hue of his eyes took me in as if I was a treasure he desired more than anything.

The moment he removed his pants and stood before me in just his boxers, his eyes flashed a golden red and steam came from his skin. I was nervous and slightly unsure, but with a roar, he shifted, and the beast he became was something I would never forget.

Black and red scales encompassed the massive form of the dragon in front of me. He stood taller than a one—story house with golden scales upon its stomach and flecks of gold scattered down its tail.

Slowly, I stood to my feet, making my way across the blanket we had been sitting on towards the beast that loomed in front of me. Never in my life had I ever thought I’d see a dragon, and now that one was standing before me, I was speechless.

It wasn't just a dragon. It was Silas.

A man sinfully attractive and yet so different than I had expected.

"Holy shit, Silas... you're a dragon!" I exclaimed, stating the obvious as if I hadn't already known what he was. Making a grunting noise that sounded almost like a scoff, he turned his head towards me and bent low before nudging me with his nose.

He had said he wanted me to ride him, but honestly, I wasn't sure if I wanted to. He was a fucking dragon, and I definitely didn't fly. "Silas—I can't..."

I wasn't given another choice when he nudged me again, and gripping the scales of his face, I was hoisted upon his back with a soft scream leaving my throat in the process.

"Silas!"

My words were useless as he climbed higher and higher into the sky. The clouds quickly surrounded us as I clung to him for dear life. The last thing I wanted was to fall off and plummet to my death, even though I was fairly sure he wouldn't let me die. At least, I hoped he wouldn't let me die.

By the time he reached a height he seemed happy with, his flapping became more even, and instead of rising, we soared through the night sky. Asgard loomed below us with dimly lit twinkling lights from the homes where people still lay awake. It was beautiful, and with the wind rushing through my hair and against my skin, I felt free. More free than I ever had, which was a feeling I never wanted to let go of.

As a smile washed over my face, I held out my arms and closed my eyes, trusting Silas would keep me safe. I wasn't sure why I wanted to trust in him, but it felt right, and as we soared through the sky, I couldn't help the satisfied at-home feeling rolling through me.

Perhaps through all the evil that has consumed my life up until this point, this was a place I could call home. A place where I could change things.

I wasn't sure how much time had passed by the time we had landed on the ground, but the moment I slid from Silas and my feet hit the ground, I knew something was wrong. There was something about the space we had once been laughing in was off, and glancing around the area, I peered into the darkness for its source.

Stepping from the shadows, the red-haired figure of a woman caught my gaze, and staring long enough, I realized it was the school's headmistress, Inanna.

"Change back now," she demanded.

A low growl emanated from the dragon behind me as the snapping of bones resonated through the air. I wasn't sure why she was upset, but from the glare on her face, she didn't seem pleased we had a midnight rendezvous in the sky.

"What is the meaning of this?" Silas snarled as he stepped

forth, buttoning his pants, still shirtless and without shoes. He wasn't pleased by her tone, and as he stepped in front of me, her eyes flashed slightly gold.

"What are you doing flying around with her," she snapped in a low tone, "you know that isn't allowed."

Allowed? Were we supposed to have gotten permission?

"If you don't recall, Inanna, you have no authority over me."

It was clear as day that Silas and Inanna didn't like each other, and as her eyes turned to me, she gave me a sickly sweet grin as she raised a brow crossing her arms over her chest. "No, but I do over her."

"Say what-" I muttered softly as Silas held out an arm holding me back to which I clung. Tension was high, and the woman I had seen before around school didn't seem like the

same woman in front of me now.

"She is still a student at our school and, therefore, under my control and protection."

Tired of the drama currently unfolding, I shook my head in disbelief as laughter left my lips. I wasn't trying to be disrespectful, but as both of them turned to me, I planned on making one thing very clear- I took orders from no one.

"Look, lady, I'm an adult and under no one's control."

Inanna didn't like the fact I spoke to her the way I did as her smile fell, and she narrowed her gaze. Again, I wasn't trying to be disrespectful, but for her to speak about me as she had, as if I was still a child, was uncalled for.

“You obviously don’t understand how things work here-”

“Stop,” I quickly snapped, cutting her off. “I have gotten the gist of it, and honestly, you’re interrupting our date. So do you mind?”

The fact I was speaking to her like this seemed to shock Silas, but with a small smile on his face, he turned his gaze from me back to Inanna and shrugged his shoulders. He wasn’t obviously going to argue with what I said, and with a scowl on her face, it didn’t seem Inanna was either.

“No more flying, Silas. Get her home now.”

Turning on her heels, she flipped her hair over her shoulder and continued back the way she had come. I wasn’t sure why she felt the need to come out here like she had, and from how Silas looked at her when she left, it seemed he may have been confused as well.

“What was that all about?” I asked him, watching his gaze hesitate a little longer on where she had disappeared before turning to me.

“Honestly, I don’t know,” he muttered, turning back to where we had been enjoying ourselves. Reaching down, he picked up his shirt and continued getting dressed, a sense of tension now spiraling between us as he remained silent.

I hated how the wonderful evening we were having was ruined because Inanna had shown up throwing a fit about Silas taking me up in the sky. None of it felt right, and yet as he pulled his shirt on and slowly began to do the buttons, I felt a pull to him I had avoided in the past.

Stepping towards him, I slowly reached up, letting my

hands brush against the muscles of his back, causing him to freeze in his spot before turning slowly to face me. I wasn’t sure what I was doing, but something inside me told me he was more than he let on.

“What is it that you’re not telling me?” I whispered, staring at him for some sort of answer. I was tired of people keeping secrets from me my whole life, and as much as I was growing fond of my conversations with Silas, I didn’t want him to be another person on the list of people who hid shit from me.

“I don’t know what that was about, Cassie. However, I think you may need to dig more into who you are to find out. It seems there are things even I don’t know here.”

His hand brushed strands of my hair from my face before he reached down and kissed the corner of my lips ever so gently. Part of me wanted more, but from the way he pulled back, staring down at me, I knew that wouldn’t be the case.

"Silas-" I whispered again, only for him to shake his head

"It's time to get you home, Cassie. Tonight didn't turn out the way I expected, but under no circumstances will I be like other men. You're a treasure to be loved and not a prize to be won. That was never my intention."

It was gentlemanly for him to say what he did, and he took my hand, pulling me towards the brush and back out onto the cobblestone road. I couldn't help but wonder what would or could have happened had Anna not come and interrupted us.

"I had fun tonight," I admitted glancing at him as we reached the garden by where I was staying. "We should do it again sometime."

Silas chuckled as he nodded his head, pushing his hands into his front pockets. "I'd like that, but perhaps next time, something slightly different for fun."

"Yeah, maybe." I laughed as I swayed from foot to foot, trying to hide the awkwardness I felt. "I will leave it up to you to surprise me, though."

"Me." He chuckled as his eyes went wide. "Do you like my surprises then?"

"I do."

The smile that crossed my face was all he needed before he fidgeted with his hands and then turned, making his way back down the path we had come up, disappearing without another word. He was such a strange man, it turned out, and one with so many stories to tell that completely spun my mind.

Turning, I made my way back inside the building and down the hall toward my room, thinking about everything that had happened. I wished my night wasn't over, but of course, things never went the way I wanted.

"Did you have fun, Cassie?" a cold voice said from beside me as I passed Lucas' door. I was surprised to see him, not having really had a conversation with him since earlier in the day when he decided I was nothing to him.

I wasn't sure what his issue was, but the cold glare he gave me wasn't like anything I had ever seen **before**. He was my mate, and regardless of my friendship with Silas, I knew something was wrong.

72 60%

Stepping forward, I opened my mouth to speak, but as I did, a glare crossed his face I hadn't expected. "What? Can't find anything to say?"

"What is your problem? You wanted me, had me and then didn't want me. What is it you expect from me when you keep acting like this?"

I was confused

in so many different ways, and the emotional rollercoaster Lucas had me on wasn't enjoyable. Granted, I knew I wasn't the easiest person to get a lot with, but something had to give. We at least had to draw clear lines or something.

Laughter escaped him as he shook his head. His hand pressed against the door frame as if something inside him snapped. "My problem? Perhaps you need to look at yourself, princess."

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean?" I snapped at him, cocking an eyebrow.

"It means exactly what I said," he all but spat as he stepped closer to me, "you're all the same."

I had no fucking clue what he was talking about but with a look of disgust, I decided not to play whatever sick fucking game he was looking to enjoy tonight. "Go fuck yourself, Lucas. I don't have time for your shit."

The moment I turned away from him, I was snatched back by my arm and pulled close to his chest. His dark eyes loomed down at me as if he was searching for something he couldn't find. "You leave when I tell you to leave, Cassie. I'm far from over with you."

A sudden rush of fear washed over me as he kept his grip firm on my arm. My heart raced like never before as I struggled to free myself from his grip. "Lucas, let me go."

Concerned and on guard, I stared into his gaze when Lucas broke into maniacal laughter I had never experienced in my entire life. Something was wrong, and I wasn't sure what it was, but from the moment Lucas and I shared the night we did until now... something happened.

Something dark lay inside Lucas, and I had to save him.