

The Unwanted Wolf

Chapter 11

“You look... wow.” Mark seemed to have trouble finding his words, tucked a piece of my hair behind my ear, “I hope I’m not too overdressed or anything.” I looked at the ground, feeling shy with Mark’s eyes on me.

“You look amazing. It’s perfect. You’re perfect.” Mark bit his lip and looked at the ground.

Scythe brushed his hands together as if wiping something off them. “Well, my work is done here. Have fun kids!” He skipped out of the apartment, slipping past Mark and myself.

“Do you want to come in for a moment? I still have to put on some shoes,” I asked, stepping aside to give Mark space to go through the door.

Mark nodded and stepped in. I could feel his eyes on me, even though I was looking in a different direction. I went to my closet and put on a pair of black strappy sandals. I grabbed a cardigan as well, just in case I got cold. I turned back to Mark, and sure enough his eyes were on me.

“So what’s the plan for tonight?” I asked.

Mark smirked. “It’s a surprise.”

I raised my eyebrows in response. “You’re not planning on murdering me, now, are you?” Mark put his hands up. “Oh no. You got me. My big plan was to save your life just so I could trick you into going on a date with me so I

could kill you myself.”

I chuckled in response. “And here I am, still willing to go with you. Your eyes must be mesmerizing me.”

“I’m thrilled to have such an effect on you.” Mark grabbed my hand before I could respond. “Come on. Let’s go.”

He led me out of my apartment and to his car. We buckled up, and he started driving. I looked out the window, trying to figure out where we were going, but we were driving towards a part of town I wasn’t as familiar with. When he finally stopped his car, we were in front of a restaurant that looked fancier than anything I had ever been to. The sun was just starting to set, but there were lights strung up

outside already twinkling. There were red curtains hung up on the awnings and men in red and gold vests standing outside.

Mark got out of the car first and rushed around to open the door for me.

Normally, I didn't wait for someone to open a car door for me, but I was frozen in place. Mark held out his hand to me, and I hesitantly grabbed it. This was too much. I was terrified to see the prices. I got out of the car and waited as Mark handed the valet his keys. Then he turned to me and held out his arm. I grabbed his elbow as we walked in.

The inside of the restaurant was even fancier than the outside. Large crystal chandeliers adorned the ceilings and white table cloths were at every table. We walked up to the hostess, and Mark gave her his name. She instantly started leading us to a table. She lit the candle on the table while Mark pulled out my chair for me.

"My name is Mandy. Your server will be here momentarily, but if you need anything at all, don't be afraid to ask." She placed her hand on Mark's arm and gave him a smile. My chest tightened at her gesture. Mark smiled politely. "Thank you." Mandy hesitated for a moment before handing us the menus and excusing herself. Mark's full attention was on me now. "Have you ever been here before?"

I shook my head. "I don't usually go out to eat, especially not somewhere like here." I looked at the menu to see what they had, and I started to panic a little. The cheapest thing on the menu was a salad for thirty-five dollars. I swallowed hard. That was most of my grocery budget.

Mark watched me closely. "Are you okay?"

I nodded, not wanting to admit the truth. I wasn't sure if Mark was going to offer to pay or not. He seemed like the type to pay for the first date, but I didn't like guys paying for me on the first date. It came with too many expectations. Plus, I wanted to prove that I didn't have to depend on anyone else. I looked up from the menu, and Mark was frowning.

My heart broke looking at his face. I shook my head. "It's not you. It's just this place. It's so nice and so fancy. I don't feel like I belong, and it's out of my budget." I broke eye contact and looked down at my hands in my lap. I felt embarrassed.

Mark reached over the table and held out his hand. "I don't expect you to pay for anything, and you look like you belong here more than I do. Please try not to worry about that."

I gingerly took his hand. "I appreciate that, but I'm used to paying for myself. I know you were just trying to be nice, but I'm not used

to it. I'm sorry for messing things up." My chest was tight with frustration. This was supposed to be fun.

Mark squeezed my hand. "You haven't ruined anything. I'm sorry for not thinking about your circumstances. I just wanted the best for you and wanted to spoil you a little. I probably did too much too soon. Let's make a deal."

I finally looked back into Mark's eyes. He didn't look upset at all. His eyes were kind and his smile was soft. "A deal?"

"I'll pay for dinner and we'll go somewhere of your choosing and you can pay for dessert. How does that sound?"

I blinked at him a couple of times, mulling over his proposition. I knew the deal wouldn't make things even, but it would make me

feel better. And it would allow the evening to go on. "Okay. I can do that."

"And don't just order the cheapest item on the menu." Mark raised his eyebrows at me. It

was like he read my mind.

"Fine, but don't hold back for dessert." I let go of Mark's hand, feeling a million times better. Mark chuckled in return. "Be careful what you ask for."

The waitress finally came by with water and some bread. We asked her for a few more minutes to look over the menu. I did my best to ignore the price of the meals, but it was a little difficult to do. Part of me really wanted to order the steak, but that was the most expensive thing on the menu. I settled for a shrimp scampi pasta. Mark did end up ordering the steak, which made me think I should

have, but I was satisfied with my decision.

While waiting for the food to come out, the hostess stopped by our table again. She had her body completely turned towards Mark, ignoring me. I felt frustrated at her actions. Couldn't she see we were on a date?

"How is everything so far?" Mandy asked. I swore her voice was too high pitched to be her normal voice.

"Things are fine, thank you." Mark glanced at her, but he barely made eye contact.

She reached down and touched his arm again. "Well, I would be happy to make your night even better in any way."

My jaw clenched. She was clearly implying that Mark would have a better time with her. I took a deep breath, trying to get myself out of control.

"Thank you. I will be sure to tell you if we need anything." Mark was looking at me as I watched her.

Mandy took her hand back and smiled brighter. "You know where to find me." She walked away, her hips swaying an unusual amount.

I finally looked away from the woman and looked back at Mark, who was watching me carefully. "I think she likes you."

Mark laughed. "Are you jealous?"

I pulled my lips tight. "No." I wasn't even convincing to myself.

"Don't worry. I would never be interested in someone like her. The audacity to flirt with someone while they are clearly on a date."

"I know!" I quickly shut my mouth, realizing I was seeping jealousy.

"You're cute when you're jealous. I promise there is nothing to worry about."

"But you are so pretty." I studied his face. He was beyond the conventional handsome standards. His blue eyes were practically sparkling and his lips were so inviting. His shoulders were broad and his torso long. I felt myself on the verge of drooling. I had always thought he was attractive, but staring at him now felt different. I felt like I couldn't look at another man when he was around.

Mark tilted his head. "There's no way I'm as pretty as you."

Before I could respond, our food came. It was the perfect distraction. The food was better than I could have imagined, and it made me understand why it was so expensive. The rest of the dinner went by smoothly, and luckily we didn't have any other distractions from the hostess. When the waitress brought the check over at the end of the night, Mark quickly grabbed it, making sure I didn't have a chance to look at his.

We left the table, and Mark intertwined his fingers with mine. "So where to for dessert?"

"Let's get frozen yogurt! There's a place near my apartment."

"Perfect."

Mark drove us to the frozen yogurt place. We entered and I grabbed a bowl for each of us. I instantly started filling mine up, but when I looked at Mark, he was staring helplessly at all of the choices.

"Need help?" I asked, standing in front of him.

His eyes were wide as he looked at all of the flavors. "How do you choose just one?"

"You don't have to choose just one. You can put as many as you want. I usually stick to two or three. Have you ever been to a frozen yogurt place before?"

Mark shook his head. "We didn't have one in the town I lived in before this."

I fake gasped in response. "You have been robbed of a delight! Come on. I'll help you pick the flavors."

I told Mark my favorite flavors and some would recommend. He ended up getting ube, cake batter, and chocolate. I led him over to the topping bar and explained how that worked.

"You can put as many toppings on as you want?" Mark asked.

"Yes. Just remember it's pay by weight, so the more you put on, the more expensive it is." I went over and put some gummy worms on top of my yogurt.

Mark smirked. "It's a good thing you are paying for dessert then." He started loading his cup up with every possible topping. It was practically overflowing with how much he piled up.

"Mark!" I scolded. His cup was filled almost twice as full as mine.

Mark giggled. "I told you to be careful."

Trolled my eyes in response. "I wasn't expecting you to be such a sugar addict. Are you actually going to finish that?"

"Every last bite." Mark licked his lips, looking down at his frozen yogurt.

"I'll hold you to that." We went over to the cash register, and I paid for the dessert as agreed upon. "So where do you want to eat?"

"Well, I have one last surprise for you. I was thinking we could take the dessert there to eat it." Mark looked at the ground, looking sheepish. It made me wonder what he had up his sleeve.