

Chapter 7 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

"Is that everything?" I ask her as she dumps a light briefcase at my feet.

"Yes," she gasps. "I've only got a few things."

"Good," I reply and shove the briefcase into the trunk, "Get in the car. We have quite a ride ahead of us."

"I've never been to the capital," Tanya says. "What's it like?"

"You'll see," I reply.

The drive goes on in absolute silence. Though I can sense that she wants to make small talk, she seems unsure of how to begin. Her shyness amuses me. I'm just about to break the silence when I receive a mind link from Oliver.

"What do you want, Oliver?" I sigh.

Oliver is my best friend. We've connected numerous times through mind link that it is so easy for either of us to establish a mind link between us regardless of distance.

"Hey buddy," Oliver laughs. "You missed the party."

"Oliver," I reply. "I thought we already agreed to call first before we establish a mind link."

"I know," he laughs. "But what's the fun in that? Besides, I couldn't find my phone. I went for a run this morning and I heard the juiciest gossip that I just had to share it with you."

I don't need to talk out loud before Oliver can hear me. In fact, I don't even need to move my lips at all. He is in my mind and can hear my thought. I'm also in his mind and hear his thought, so we converse by forming thoughts in our minds for the other person to read. But just like I converse with Manuel, my inner wolf, I often say my thoughts out loud. Tanya stares at me, surprised that I am talking to myself.

"I've been away from the capital for about two weeks," I reply. "What could have happened within that time that you could not wait for me to come back?"

“First off,” Oliver scoffs. “I don’t know when you’d be back. Plus, there’s an upcoming charity auction in the capital in the next couple of days.”

“Surely, Oliver,” I sigh. “You didn’t establish a mind link just to inform me about a random charity auction.”

“Well, it’s not just a random charity auction,” Oliver replies. I can sense a change in his emotions. Whatever the news is, he is apprehensive to tell me.

“What is it?” I say, my voice has suddenly grown cold.

“Lily and Eric are the ones organizing the auction and the headliner is the Marie Gorriete Earrings,” Oliver says. “Your mother’s earrings.”

My hands grip the wheel so tight that I can feel the iron bending under the pressure. I immediately get my emotion in control and ease the pressure on the wheel. There is no point in getting angry. All I need to do is get it back. The Marie Gorriete Earrings are a pair of rare and unique earrings that are crafted with a piece of the rarest stone in the whole world. It is my mother’s family heirloom and the only gift she left for me before her demise. I have given them to Lily as a token of my love, now she is placing them on an auction.

“People are talking, Marco,” Oliver continues. “The Council of Elders is worried about you. They’re scared you’d do something rash because Lily, your fated mate, is engaged to your brother.”

I sneer. I am expecting it. I am the most powerful Lycan in the whole kingdom and most people see me as the biggest obstacle to Eric ascending the throne. No matter how much I keep a low profile, I will always be seen as a threat. I need a long-lasting solution that will let them think that I have nothing against Eric for engaging Lily and I have no plan of harming him. I glance at Tanya as she fiddles with her fingers: she is my plan. I choose to marry her out of compassion and responsibility, but she can also be the perfect person to help prove my goodwill to the newly engaged couple.

“Oliver,” I say. “I’ve already had a solution for that problem and I need you to help me out with something.”

“What’s that?” he asks.

“I want you to immediately prepare a contract... a marriage contract,” I reply.

“What?! A marr....”

I drown out Oliver’s thoughts and cut the mind link.

Tanya's POV

The drive to the capital is uneventful, except when he talks to himself, which I find to be very odd. We park before a very large and exotic clothing store and I am just about to ask what we are doing there when he abruptly gets down from the car and opens the door for me to alight also.

“We have a charity function to attend,” he explains as he leads me towards the store and pushes the door open. “We’re here to get you new clothes.”

“Good evening sir,” a young pretty woman bows as she approaches us. “How can I help you?”

“Help her get something very nice,” Marco glances at my fingers and seems to think of something. “Wait for me when you’re done,” and with that to me, he breezes out of the store just as quickly as he has breezed in.

“I’m the clerk here,” the young woman smiles. “Come, I’ll show you around.”

I am too dazed to talk and I just follow her. The more we walk round the store and try new clothes the more I believe I am dreaming. What in the world am I doing in a store with incredibly beautiful clothes? Even Alina’s clothes feel like rags as compared to these clothes. Because of the state of my clothes, I feel like a primitive, mad woman who has bumped into an advanced civilization. The lady keeps heaping different exquisite clothes on a trolley and tells me we will try them all.

We spend the next couple of hours trying different clothes. Even though all the clothes look extremely good on me, the clerk is not satisfied. She bundles all the clothes to a corner and calls a young man to come to clear them up.

“Those clothes are missing something,” she says and leads me back to the store. “Let’s try something else.”

I meekly follow her back to the store. We are admiring a pretty dress when the peaceful silence in the store is broken by the shrill laughter of two young ladies. They saunter into the store as though they own it and everyone’s attention turns towards them. The beautiful dress on their body and the expensive accessory coupled with their extreme arrogance clearly show they are noble ladies.

“We’re here to shop for clothes for the auction,” one of them giggles. “And I want to try that dress,” she points to the dress that the clerk is showing me. “This pauper can try it later if I don’t like it; and if I do, she’ll pick something else.”

“But...” the clerk stutters.

“I am the princess of this kingdom and you want to disobey me for this beggar that comes from the filthiest dump of the capital?” the girl says and steps closer to the clerk. “Besides, do you

honestly think this filthy beggar can afford this dress? Bring the cloth to the fitting room now, I won't repeat it again."

"But she was brought by Prin..."

"It's okay," I whisper to the clerk, smiling slightly to show her I'm not angry. "I'll check round for other clothes."

Though I'm not surprised by the princess's words, I'm really hurt. Even here in the capital, I'm still treated like a slave. Though I'm not angry, I'm very sad. I shrug off my sadness and continue looking round the store. The clerk soon joins me, apologizing for what happened earlier.

"It's okay," I reply. "These clothes are pretty," I say, pointing to some neatly arranged dresses. "You think they'll fit?"

"They will," she smiles mysteriously. "But I suddenly remember there's a special dress in our store that I want you to try."

"A special dress?" I ask, surprised by the excited look on the clerk's face. "Aren't these dresses pretty?"

"They are," she keeps smiling. "But I don't think these dresses are good enough to showcase your beauty. Beneath these shabby clothes, I see a unique beauty that very few people have. Come try this dress."

She points to a bright, brilliant green gown that seems to glow in the transparent mirror where it is kept. The gown has brilliant intricate designs that are carefully embroidered on the cloth. It is an armless gown with a frill, colorful design at the hemming. I've never seen any dress as beautiful and exquisite as it. It is so beautiful that it feels magical.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" the clerk asks.

"Beautiful is an understatement," I reply. "It's magical."

"It is the masterpiece of this store's owner," the clerk explains. "She has designed many exquisite dresses, but rumor has it that this dress is the best she could ever come up with it. The dress is perfect and it requires a lady whose beauty is perfect to properly wear it. Many have tried, but none could ever properly wear it. It's called the Treasure of the Store, the most valuable dress of this store's designer, and she hangs it here, patiently waiting for a woman with a perfect beauty to wear it."

"Are you sure I can try it?" I ask, awed by the story behind the dress.

"Are you sure she can try it?" the rude princess laughs.

She is dressed in the same clothes that the clerk has given to her earlier. She and her friend are laughing very hard and pointing at me, attracting the attention of the other customers to me.

“This pauper wants to try on this dress,” her friend laughs. “Even Lunas couldn’t fit into this dress, what makes you think you can properly wear it, beggar?”

The other customers start laughing and I can hear them mocking me, whispering hurtful words and pointing fingers at me. Shame and embarrassment overwhelm me and tears slowly trickle down my eyes.

“Someone should please do us a favor and drag this beggar out of here,” the princess chuckles and fresh rounds of laughter fill the store.

I turn to run away but the clerk stops me, “I’ve been working in this store for a long time and I think you’re perfect.”

“What if I’m not?” I ask.

“You are,” she replies, smiling gently. I watch in disbelief as she pulls the dress from the glass and gives it to me, “Go try it on.”

I sigh deeply and slowly march to the fitting room amidst the mocking laughter and embarrassment.

“Let’s watch this beggar embarrass herself,” the princess’s friend says as I step into the fitting room and close the curtain. A couple of minutes later, I am ready and slowly pull the curtain apart, facing the small crowd that has gathered to watch me try on the Treasure of the Store.