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"I have my sources," I bit my lip, and his eyes lingered on it.

"Interesting," he pushed off the wall and motioned for me to follow him. A wave of relief washed over me. At least he wasn't going to kill me right now. "All right, Onyx, I guess we are going to have to check your information when we go to the Moon Goddess Gala together. So, which potion do you need again?"

Oh, crap!

Oh, boy. Didn't he have anyone else to take with him to The Moon Goddess Gala?

"About that—" I squeaked, and Zion's brow went up as if he was daring me to continue.

"What about that?" His voice sounded sweet, too sweet for it not to be a trap.

"That's the thing, the potion I want to ask for... I need the one that would imitate colloidal silver poisoning without harming me," I said, and now he looked surprised, placing his hands in the pockets of his suit.

We stared at each other for a few good minutes, and I tried not to blink.

"What for?" Zion took his blazer off, staying in just a waistcoat, shirt and pants.

"I want to miss the Moon Goddess Gala," I confessed. He'd gure this out either way, and there was no point in hiding it.

"Why?" he demanded, clenching his sts as if I had said something insulting. "Is this because of my invitation?"

Yes.

Partially.

"No, of course not!" I coughed, clearing my throat, lying. I wasn't going to confess the truth. "It's because of my father. It's a long story, and I don't want to bother you. Not to mention that it's personal. But let me assure you, if I could go, I would denitely choose to go with you!"

"Choose to go with me?" He clenched his lips, and I did not like the dangerous glint in his eyes. "Does that mean that you have other options for the Moon Goddess Gala?"

Why was he so surprised? Yes, Onyx was technically a nasty evil girl, but she was also quite popular and beautiful. A lot of people were into that. Why wouldn't she have other options? I was appalled for us both! What kind of question was that?

But being appalled wouldn't help me survive.

"It doesn't really matter since I am not going anyway, right?" I tried to change the subject, although it probably did not sound very subtle.

"Who else invited you?" Zion's voice was grave, and a chill went down my spine once again. Why was this so important to him in the rst place? He did not like anyone until Melody arrived. He had been mourning the loss of the unrequited love he had back in the past, just a couple of hundred years ago. In the book, he and Onyx only had a business relationship for a short period of time, where he practically used her and then discarded her when she did what he needed her to do.

Wait! Was I now ruining his plans? Did he need to use me in some way at the Moon Goddess Gala? I really did not want to nd out!

"Onyx," his voice suddenly became softer again, and I knew that he was at least trying to control himself, "if we're going to work together, you will have to start telling me these things. I need to know who invited you to the Gala. I will nd out either way, so there's no use in trying to hide it from me. But this is necessary for the two of us to build trust. You want me to trust you, right?"

"All right," I breathed out. He was right about this. If he wanted to know something, he would know. Not to mention that his main spy was sitting right behind his back, eyeing me sheepishly. For now, this bird was a useless ally, and I was beginning to regret telling him the truth about me.

"So?" Zion seemed to be impatient about this. As if something depended on my answer.

"I also got an invitation from Ruhn Brynmorr," I admitted and noticed how the warlock's eyes got darker.

"The Crown Prince?" He decided to clarify.

"The one and only," I tried to force a smile, but it faded under his gaze. Zion had the kind of eyes that seemed to pierce through one's soul.

"You said you would choose me instead. Why wouldn't you want to be a plus one for the Alpha and a future Lycan King?"

Good question really, but I couldn't tell him about the book. Something was telling me that it wasn't wise to tell a leader of a criminal organisation and a wizard my story.

"Him and I... we don't click," I said, choosing my words carefully. "We don't belong together. And I don't want any trouble, that's why I prefer to stay as far away from him as possible."

Zion's face did not change, but he rolled up his sleeves slowly and then went to one of the shelves, taking a little dark bottle from it. He opened the lid and sniffed whatever was inside. He then whispered a few words and closed it, returning to me and stretching his hand with the tiny vial.

"Take it and drink it when the time comes. At least twenty-four hours before."

I bit my lip and took the precious potion, still not believing my luck.

"Thank you," I mumbled and couldn't help but smile at Zion, and for a second, his lips curved slightly as well, but he returned to his usual self quickly and walked away back to his desk.

"Don't thank me, Onyx," he cleared his throat and got a folder from one of the drawers, throwing it on top of the desk. "Just sign this."

Uh-oh. I remembered that signing contracts with Zion was a big no. They always somehow worked just in his favour, and it was about the easiest way to get yourself killed. Which was defeating my main goal in the rst place.

"Oh," I chuckled nervously, "That wouldn't be necessary."

"I am afraid I have to insist," Zion did not take his eyes off me. "Don't worry. It's a standard non-disclosure agreement. I need to ensure that you will not tell anyone anything about what you saw here today, about what you told me, and what I have assisted you with."

"Will you sign one too?" I asked, and his brows went up again. I managed to surprise the warlock for the second time today.

"No," he replied darkly and crossed his hands over his chest.

"Can I at least read it?" I pleaded, and he gave me a curt nod, but the whole time my eyes travelled from line to line of the document, he was watching me... as if he was afraid that I would leave any moment now.

Could I leave, though? If I could, I so would!

Surprisingly, there was not much in the contract. And it did look like we were simply supposed to stay quiet about the encounter, which I was going to do anyway. So, after chewing on my lip over and over, I nally took a pen and placed my signature there.

Zion bent over the desk and took the paper from me, studying the signature quickly.

"See?" he let out a dark laugh that made a chill go down my spine. "It wasn't so scary after all, was it?"

"I guess not," I lied. I was still questioning whether any of the clauses could mean that he owned my life now. You never know with these villains. "Thank you," I added meekly and stood up, wishing for nothing more than to leave this place as soon as possible.

I was almost to the door when I heard him say, "Until we meet again, Onyx."

I shuddered, hearing those words. There was absolutely no reason for us to meet again. I was missing this stupid gala, and theoretically speaking, it was supposed to be our last meeting ever.

Hopefully.

"Yeah, sure!" I waved him a weak goodbye and heard a chuckle.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Zion was clearly amused.

"I have the potion right here." Gesturing to my bag, I intended to keep walking.

"Your bird, Onyx," the warlock reminded me. "You forgot your bird."

This was getting to be too much, and for some reason, I nally lost the fear that was freezing me before.

"You know what," I turned on my heels to face him, "I feel like I wouldn't be able to provide him with the care he needs. I am really not a bird person."

"No worries," Zion clicked his ngers, and Filin ew all over the library to land on my shoulder. "Filin is a special bird and doesn't require much care. You will not notice he is there."

No kidding.

"I noticed, though!" I retorted with a smile. "And I see that he is very special indeed. I can't stand to part you two as it seems too cruel! He obviously misses you dearly. I feel like you two should be together forever." I gritted that last word through my teeth, implying to Filin that he has taken one step back to being freed thanks to his betrayal today. The bird let out a resentful sound, and I tried not to sneer at that.

"Sadly, I don't take returns," Zion shrugged, and I could swear a small smile danced on his lips, but he erased it quickly, getting a new bunch of contracts to read and concentrating on that job rather than me.

I decided not to test my luck any further. I nally left the creepy library once, and found myself back in the book shop. Silver was nowhere to be found, and I sighed, thinking that it was possible that Agatha had thrown my friend out in the street. Omegas weren't treated nicely in this world.

The world I created, and now had to live in.

The witch, and something told me that she was a witch, glared at me and hissed as I was passing her.

"It's best if you never come back here, trust me," she warned me.

"You may be surprised, but I have the same opinion," I told her plainly and left her gaping.

"You really know how to make everything worse, don't you?" Filin whispered while still sitting on my shoulder.

"Look who is talking," I snapped at him. "A future poultry sandwich!"

He clucked from my unexpected remark, and just then, I bumped into someone right in the middle of the street.

"Onyx?" Familiar garnet eyes were studying my face as if he considered snapping my neck here and now.

"Ruhn?" I gasped. What were the chances of us meeting like ?? If I remember correctly, in the book, Onyx always complained that she could barely ever meet the Alpha. Just why was I seeing him everywhere now?

"What are you doing here?" He cut to the chase, glowering at me suspiciously. "Did you know that I would be here?"

My lips parted. Was that what he was thinking?! That I was following him like a creepy stalker? For some reason, it made me furious. I noticed that my hand was now slowly stretching to... cup his royal jewels and I caught it hurriedly, ghting back for control with the wolf inside of me. She wasn't doing this to me again!

Ruhn stared at me, waiting for a reply, and maybe it was from the adrenalin after meeting Zion and surviving that encounter, but I felt like I could get away with one more conversation today.

"I had no idea!" I informed him coldly. "This is the capital's main shopping street, didn't you know? A lot of people come here every day for very different reasons."

He wanted to reply with something, but I had already noticed Silver waiting for me next to what looked like a ridiculously expensive boutique.

"Excuse me," I muttered to the prince, not giving him a chance to turn all of this into a dialogue. I had enough for one day. "Someone is waiting for me."

I left the Alpha hole and waved to Silver, who was happy to see me.

"Making friends left and right, I see," Filin hummed into my ear.

"With a helper like you, how could I not?!" I grumbled angrily. "I wonder how owl kebabs taste... Just saying."

He let out that angry noise again, and a smirk spread over my lips at that.

Silver looked guilty when I reached her.

"Are you okay?" she asked sheepishly. "I am sorry it all turned out that way. I had no idea!"

"It's ne," I said. "I got what we came here for, and now we can do something else. I am starving and in the mood for some poultry."

Filing coughed, and the omega eyed him strangely, and then her eyes came back to me.

"Right," she mumbled, and then her focus was back on quickly. "Actually, we have one more errand. Your father made an order for you in this shop. We have to make sure everything ts."

"Gala dresses?" I frowned. "There is no need for that. I am not going."

"Yeah," Silver ran her hand through her pink hair, "but it's best if we act like you are."

"Touché," I admitted and pushed the door to the shop.

Everything inside was made out of white marble that practically glowed in our faces. Mannequins with exquisite gowns were tastefully arranged in every corner, and I couldn't help but admire the work on them. Thousands of glimmering beads, sequins, feathers, and sheer owing fabrics created masterpiece after masterpiece. I couldn't take my eyes off them, and my ngers itched to touch a silver cloud in front of me. It looked like something straight off the red carpet for the Academy Awards. Too beautiful to even be real.

"You can't touch that!" I heard a female voice. "And birds aren't allowed here either!"