

Chapter 13

January 27, 2008

Melissa's POV ~at 12-years-old~

It was the day of the Alpha meeting, and I didn't want to go. I didn't want to, but of course, my brother forced me.

He forced me to do everything, and he isn't my mom or dad. I had no idea why he treated me like a piece of crap, but I had been learning how to get used to it.

What I couldn't get used to, however, was the fact that I was coerced to attend all these stupid Alpha meetings just because my uncle was the Alpha. I just wanted to curl up in my bed with my new novel and read the night away about my prince charming.

I knew I was too young to be thinking of my mate. My wolf doesn't come until I'm 16, but since the very day I've learnt about mates, I have fallen in love with the idea. It was then that I became obsessed with fairytales, especially those with princes or knights in shining armour.

If only my prince could save me from tonight's events.

I have been to only one Alpha meeting in my life, and it was awful. The kids always waited in a separate room alone while the grown-ups talked in the conference hall. Every three years or so, there was a meeting just to ensure that each pack was holding up okay.

See? There was no need for me to be there. No need at all.

And since my stupid brother just became Beta, he never stopped rubbing it in my face. It's not like I cared. What does becoming Beta have to do with me? Nothing at all.

But he still made it his duty to use his title against me in every way.

It hurt a lot because I convinced Uncle Lance to let me stay home for this meeting, but my brother refused to leave me alone in the house all by myself because he 'doesn't trust me'.

Anyway, there was nothing more I could do about it, so I had to endure it for the next five hours.

At least the snacks were nice.

"Melissa!" My brother's voice shouted from the door. I resisted the urge to groan as I dragged myself towards it.

"Coming," I whined as I pulled it open. His scrutinising eyes regarded me for a minute. He seemed to disapprove of my attire, but he didn't make it obvious.

I wore a simple jumper dress with an orange blouse beneath it, and on my head sat my black beanie. These past days, it has become my best friend after I cut my hair horribly.

I got in a lot of trouble for it. Even Toya was upset, and she was mostly on my side. I wanted to get rid of the blue streak in the front of my hair, but to my demise, when I had already chopped off all the length from the back of my head, the damn blue streak wouldn't even budge. It was soft and silky like the rest of my hair, holding the same texture and all. But each time I curved a scissor underneath it, the poor tool broke into pieces.

I destroyed twelve scissors that day trying to get rid of the feature that made people see me as a freak, but it only made everything worse because now I looked like a beaver with a long blue leaf stuck in the front of my

head.

"Are you ready?" Logan asked, and I simply nodded.

I followed him through the house to the car outside that was already waiting. We drove in silence to the conference hall, where Alpha Lance and Luna Toya were already at.

My brother didn't give me so much of a glance when we exited the car. He only told me to wait in the kids' room.

At least I wasn't with the babies anymore. I was old enough to be in the big kids and teenagers room. That both excited me and scared me. Teenagers can be really mean, and most of the bullying at school was from people my age. The good thing was, I was the only high-ranking kid in my pack, so none of my pack members would be there to torture me tonight.

This could be my chance to be... cool. The Alphas' kids from all over the country would be in that room tonight, and I could either embarrass myself or make some friends.

I adjusted my beanie on my head and lathered some spit over my eyebrows before pushing the door open. A few heads turned in my direction, and the older kids barely spared me that much of a glance. But as I looked around the room, my heart fell when I saw some familiar faces. That only meant some kids from the pack were there, but only three of them. One was the meanest girl of them all, Abigail.

Luckily, she didn't see me.

The meeting was being held at our pack this year, which meant that some of the wolves from the packhouse would be around to assist, cook and clean for the next five hours. The parents of these three kids must've been a part of the staff.

I held my head down and moved towards the end of the room where the snacks were kept. I grabbed a pretzel and a chocolate bar and nibbled on it as I eyed the room, trying to see what group of kids I should approach. But then, a gentle hand patted my shoulder, sending my chocolate to the ground and my heart in a racing fit.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you," a voice said from behind me, and I whipped around to see a girl around my age. She was beautiful, and she seemed sweet. I smiled and shook my head.

"No, it's okay. Um... I'm Melissa."

She smiled even brighter. "I'm Felicity. I'm from the Brightmoon Pack. And you?"

"Well, this is my home," I told her, and she nodded. It surprised me how energised she appeared. The Brightmoon Pack was on the other side of the country. I'd be exhausted if I were in her shoes.

"I saw when you came in, and I was just wondering if you'd like to play marbles with us." She pointed to a group of kids a few chairs away, already looking at me. My face broke out in the biggest smile as I nodded eagerly.

"Yes, of course."

I tried to tell myself to remain cool and not make a fool of myself because I wanted them to like me.

I curled my feet under my knees as I mimicked their position in which they sat. They seemed nice enough. There were five of them, including Felicity. Some looked interested, some looked bored. But I could tell that they, too, hated being dragged to these meetings.

"Everyone, this is Melissa. Melissa, this is Jack, Amber, Lizzy and Hosea," Felicity introduced as Jack rolled out the marbles. Hosea and Amber waved, but the other two seemed annoyed out of their minds.

Felicity was actually really nice. She engaged the small group in conversation until I noticed that I was actually having...fun. Soon, Lizzy and Jack started smiling too, and it felt like the night would be perfect. Even if I didn't have any friends in my pack, it was nice to find new friends, even if they lived miles away from me.

But then, the door opened again. And a tall, slim boy who looked like he had just started puberty entered the room. All heads turned to him, even boys.

He definitely commanded power, and I could even feel myself getting butterflies just looking at him. It was weird, considering I saw cute boys all the time.

"Who is that?" Felicity asked, taking the question right from my lips.

"That's my ex," Amber boldly declared in a bored tone. She picked on her nails as all our heads turned to her.

"You dated him?" I asked in shock. I didn't even know that wolves our age were allowed to date!

She shrugged. "Yea, for five hours at the last Alpha meeting. He's a dick, though," she provided, and Felicity playfully slapped her hand and scolded her for her language.

"Well, he's hot if you ask me," Hosea said, and we all laughed, considering this was coming from a boy.

We weren't the only ones to notice that he was hot, though. Abigail flung her thin, blonde hair over her shoulder and strutted towards him, leaving the other two kids from our pack by themselves. I watched as she talked to him in a flirty way. I didn't even know where a thirteen-year-old learned to flirt like that. Finally, She did the trick when he eventually smiled back.

As if feeling my eyes on him, he suddenly snapped his head in my direction, and I quickly turned mine too. My heart slammed against my chest. I could literally feel him staring at me.

"What's his name?" Felicity asked Amber, and it was then that it occurred to me that he was probably staring at Amber and not me.

I'm not half as pretty as her.

"His name shall not be spoken," she mumbled in genuine distaste. It made me wonder what he did to her.

For curiosity's sake, I heightened my hearing to listen in on his conversation with Abigail. I was ten when I first realised I could do this without having my wolf. But it usually gave me a hell of a headache.

"...who is she? She's a little hot," he said. His voice cracked in the most attractive way, and my heart slammed against my chest at the possibility that he was talking about me.

"Who? She?" Abigail scoffed. "She's only the freak of the pack and a total loser. You don't want her."

My heart broke. Of course, she would tell him that.

"Oh, yea? How so?"

I heard Abigail giggling until there was no more talking. I shifted my head just a little bit to see that she was whispering in his ear.

I sighed. Well, it was nice to dream for once.

"Melissa? Did you hear me?" Felicity asked, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"I'm sorry, what?"

"It's your turn." She gestured to the marbles in front of us. I nodded quickly as I took them up with shaky hands.

"Are you okay?" Hosea asked after seeing my trembling fingers. I had no idea why what Abigail said upset me that much, but I felt like I couldn't breathe.

My head was spinning. "Actually, no. I think I need some air." I scrambled to my shaky feet, and so did Felicity.

"I'll come with you," she offered, and I nodded with gratitude overflowing in my heart. So, this was what friendship felt like.

But as I spun around, I knocked right into someone, and I inclined my head to see the same boy who had my breath going crazy.

"Hi there," he said in an enhanced, deep voice with a smirk on his face. My heart sank. Was he talking to me?

"H-h-hi," I managed to say through breaths.

"A friend of mine asked me to do something, and I really liked the idea." He used his warm hands to cup my cheek, and I felt my nerves suddenly going away and being replaced with butterflies.

His deep, grey eyes bore into mine as he trailed his thumb down the side of my cheek and towards my neck. Soon, everyone was watching.

My stupid ass thought he was about to kiss me when he trailed his hand to the back of my neck and tilted my head upwards until he did the one thing that I dreaded this entire night.

He pulled the beanie from my head.

I screamed and tried desperately to cover my head as the entire room erupted in laughter, especially Abigail. He laughed too, and held the beanie high up in the air as I tried to reach for it.

"Give it back!" I sobbed desperately, and he only laughed harder.

"No can do, little freak. She was right. This is so funny." He flung his head back and laughed even harder, and soon everything got blurry from the tears in my eyes.

I glanced around the room. Jack, Lizzy and Amber stood far off, seeming embarrassed to have been seen with me. Felicity was trying to hug me, and Hosea was staring at the devilish boy in anger.

All I could see were fingers being pointed and people laughing, until the entire room started to spin. But as if it wasn't bad enough, he got onto the table, pointed at me and started chanting 'freak, freak, freak', until the entire room joined in.

I dashed for the door right then, and even though Felicity was running after me, I hid from her.

I was embarrassed, humiliated and my heart felt tortured.

I will never forget what he did to me. I will never forget his face. Because even though Abigail and the kids from school mocked me all the time, it was nothing as scarring as this. He, whoever he is, ruined my heart forever.

.... Present....

My tears fell in my lap as I ended my story. Lukas was silent, but I didn't lift my head to look at him.

I didn't want to see his reaction. Just reliving the memory was so painful.

"My brother did that?" he asked in a whisper, but I knew the question wasn't directed at me.

"I know it was a long time ago, and we were just kids, you know? Kids do stupid, foolish things for ~~clout all the~~ time. We were all immature pre-teens and teenagers, and holding onto a grudge would seem foolish. But that