

MISHA K

*Offered
to the
Lycan
King*

Offered to the Lycan King by misha k Chapter 1

Chapter 1

River was shocked. She looked at Hector and Victoria incredulously.

On her eighteenth birthday, River had smelled her mate as soon as she entered her school. The mouthwatering smell of her mate made her run in the direction of the main ground of the school.

Excited, she opened the door and realized that her mate was none other than Hector, son of Alpha Maxim. Standing in the middle of the school's ground he looked gorgeous. She was attracted to him like Icarus to the sun.

She started to walk towards him when suddenly she saw that Hector's arms were wrapped around Victoria's waist as he glared at her with furrowed brows and clenched teeth, warning her to come any closer.

Upon seeing her coming closer, Victoria swept her dark hair on the other side, pressed her hand on his chest, and strategically upturned her neck for him.

River halted in her tracks, her stomach getting twisted into knots. All the students had their eyes on Hector and Victoria. Anticipation rippled in the air.

After a few seconds of glaring at her, Hector turned to Victoria and sank his teeth in her neck, marking her as his mate.

Air punched out of River's lungs as excruciating pain blasted in her chest. She sank to the floor, unable to believe what just happened.

Every student broke into applause and started cheering Hector and Victoria. The whole school, including the teachers and headmistress, congratulated

the Alpha's son and Victoria for being the future Alpha and Luna of the pack.

A sob worked its way up, and River's throat choked with emotions associated with the worst kind of betrayal she had ever experienced. River took shaky steps back, receding into the shadows. Eyes burning with tears, she turned and ran outside towards the greenhouse at the end of the school's perimeter.

"This can't be!" River ran through the woods as she rasped. "This is not possible!" She ran as fast as she could,

summoning her wolf, Gia, to come out, but Gia was so stunned by her mate's rejection that she was numb. Frozen inside her.

As compared to Victoria, River was nothing, being an omega's daughter. And Hector was the most handsome boy of the pack. He had alpha blood in him. Tall and muscular, he had features like that of a Greek God. Golden hair and gray eyes. Victoria was the most beautiful and curvaceous she-wolf of the Crescent Pack and Hector's favorite since forever. They were sure they were each other's mates and behaved as such.

Daughter of an omega and a human, River's mother abandoned her after a torrid love affair with her father, Kirk, saying that the child would be a ****in the human world. Little did she know that River would be a ****in the werewolves' world too. Everyone hated her because her wolf was scraggy and weak.

When River was a year old, her father met his mate and married her. After that, River's life took a serious downturn. Her stepmother, Hazel, hated her. Since they couldn't throw her out of the house, Hazel ensured that River did every work of the house like a maid. If she would make a mistake, Hazel and Kirk would beat her up severely.

At school too, she was bullied and harassed by other students. River was waiting to find her mate on her eighteenth birthday, hoping to be relieved of this agony because mates took care of each other, but she was not ready for this.

She ran through the woods towards the greenhouse. When she could no longer do it, she leaned against an oak, wheezing and sobbing, rubbing her hand against her chest to ease her pain. Her shoulders wracked as loud sobs burned the back of

her throat.

She was an abomination that the Moon Goddess had created. Her body was full of black and blue marks that she received from her parents' beating, but the new pain she felt right now paled all other pains in her body. She felt as if her world was falling apart and that someone had wrenched her soul on the inside.

“Why me?” she looked up and asked the Moon Goddess, blaming her for every ****. “What have I done to you?” River dragged her feet inside the greenhouse towards her corner, where she had grown numerous roses. She leaned against a shelf of tools, trying to breathe. She didn't know for how long she stayed there, but suddenly, from behind someone grabbed her throat and squeezed it hard.

“Hector!” she choked as he came in front of her. She grabbed his wrist and tried to wrench it away, but she was no match

to him.

He peeled his lips back and bared his fangs as he towered over her. “If you dare to speak a word to anyone that you're my mate, I'm going to kill you

and then rip your body into so many pieces that your father won't be able to recognize you! You get that?"

River stared at him with wide eyes, as tears continued to roll out. "B- but I am your mate," she reasoned, hoping to see compassion in his eyes. Mates loved each other. Madly.

He scowled as disgust etched all over his face. With his fingers around her throat, he pulled her and then slammed her against another shelf, drawing out a cry from her. Stars burst in her vision, but she managed to look at him through her dazed state.

"Did you think that a scraggy half human half wolf would be my mate?" he scoffed as he glowered at her. "You'll never be my mate. Victoria is the one for me," he snarled.

River whimpered when she felt his dominant aura slipping out of him and affecting her. "Hector-"

Angered, he hurled her towards the pots of roses. She crashed on them, shattering a few in the process.

The thorns and shards of ceramic bruised her skin.

He snarled at her and then stomped out. As she watched him disappear in the woods, she felt her vision faltering. Now, she remembered as to why Victoria would often mess with her. She would simply bump into her or corner her and bash her for the slightest mistake, and Hector would do nothing but laugh at her.

She didn't know for how long she lay in the greenhouse surrounded by the roses she had so lovingly grown, but when she saw a star peeping out of the sky through the trees above, she heard her friend Lena shouting her name. "River! River!"

Lena was her only friend at the school. A daughter of a gamma, she was the only one River could lean on.

“Hector is my mate...” River whispered.

“I’m so sorry,” Lena whispered as she lifted River in her arms and cradled her head in her lap. “That Hector is a ****!” She understood the situation and couldn’t help but pity River.

After River had again cried in Lena’s arms, she got up. Along with Lena, she walked back to her home, knowing she would be beaten all over again.

However, when she reached home, a surprise was waiting for her.

Chapter 2

Hazel, Kirk and her stepsister, Brianna, were sitting with Alpha Maxim. They were having a hushed conversation. As soon as River entered with Lena, the two bowed to him. All of them became quiet the moment they saw River, River glanced at her half-sister, Brianna, who smirked at her, jealousy written all over her face.

River was surprised the Alpha would actually come to her house. If he wanted, he would have called her parents to his place.

“Go inside!” Hazel said in a harsh voice, snapping her out of her reverie. “And don’t come out unless allowed!”

River was sure Alpha had come to negotiate terms with them so that the word didn’t leak out that she was Hector’s mate. River lowered her head and along with Lena went inside her bedroom wondering how much would her parents ask for. She didn’t know what her worth was in terms of money, but she was sure that, as Hector’s mate, her worth increased quite a lot.

“Oh, River!” Lena said and wrapped her arms around her shoulders when they were in her tiny bedroom. “Now what will happen?”

River leaned her head on Lena’s shoulder and said, “What if I escape?”

Shocked, Lena pulled away. “Are you *****?” she scolded her. “If you are going to run away, you will be termed as a rogue. Do you know what they do when they catch hold of rogues?”

River bit her lip and trudged to her bed. She was feeling both ****and physically exhausted. "I know..."

she said in a hoarse voice. "They are put down if found, and the packs find them without fail."

"If you know, why are you even thinking of escaping?" Lena chided her. "It's better for them to decide your fate, River."

"I know what they do to the rogues!" River cried. "They are going to ***me in a day or two and make it look like an accident!" She plopped on her back on the bed. "If I escape, at least I will have one chance of survival. I will go to the human world and find my mother."

Lena came to sit on the edge of the bed. "Only if it was so easy to leave the pack, River..."

The door of her room opened, and Brianna entered. Brianna was two years younger than River and left no stone unturned to make her miserable in the house. She was half of River's problems.

River had to clean her room, iron her clothes, make dinner for them and sometimes, when Brianna would be tired, she even had to massage her legs. If Brianna wasn't happy with her work, she would complain about it to her mother and then the beatings would start. It was a normal scenario in their house because Brianna was never happy. At school too, she ridiculed River openly..

Brianna leaned on the door and crossed her arms across her chest. She sneered at River.

"I'm amazed at the Moon Goddess. She didn't do her job well this time. How could a scraggy and a

“****wolf like you. could be mated to Alpha’s son?” She waved her hand at River in repugnance.

“****has asked you to stay inside, so don’t even think of stepping out of the house. Alpha Maxim has decided that tomorrow, you will be offered to those in the Veil. They are coming here for you.”

“What?” Lena said, her eyes going wide with fear. “How do you know about the Veil?”

“Didn’t I just say that Alpha told us about it, ****?” Brianna snapped.

No one knew about the Veil. It was a guarded secret that only few knew about. And those who knew, never talked about it. “There must be a mistake, Brianna! How can they offer River to the Veil? It’s practically ****her! In fact, it’s better you ****her here rather than offering her to those ruthless ****.”

Brianna laughed, feeling excited. She scoffed, “There isn’t a mistake. And you better get out of our house as soon as possible, Lena. ****and Dad don’t like that you are here with her.” She turned to walk out of the door. She flicked her hair, saying, “You deserve it, ****!” and then swayed away, closing the door behind her.

River was confused and terrified.

“What does it mean?” she asked Lena. She had never heard of the offerings. No one had ever

mentioned her about the offerings or the Veil.

Lena grabbed her shoulders. She was looking so panicky that her anxiety affected River.

She said, “By the Moon Goddess! River, you should escape!”

“But why?” River asked, her gaze darting between Lena’s gray eyes.

Lena’s lips quivered. She removed a lock of red hair from River’s forehead and said, “Lycans live in the Veil. They come every ten years out of the Veil to take away she-wolves who are then used as their breeders because Lycan females are unable to give birth to pups.”

As if her miseries weren’t over, another shockwave rippled through her. River stared at Lena as blood drenched from her face.

Lena continued, “Every ten years, an offering is made to the Alphas of the Veil in which a girl from the werewolves pack is offered to them. It is mandatory for every pack to make that offering. This time it’s Crescent pack’s turn. However, from what I know, this time a Lycan will be coming out of the Veil after a gap of fifty years. The last time an offering was made from the Crescent pack was two hundred years back.”

“How do you know so much about it?” River asked.

Lena sighed. “One of my aunts was offered to a Lycan more than sixty years back. No one saw her after that. It’s a well kept secret of our family.” Lena held River’s hand as sympathy washed over her for her best friend.

She continued, “Lycans are even more powerful than werewolves. A Lycan can take over and ***a dozen werewolves. easily. They live deep in the forest in a place called Veil. No one dares to go there. A thousand years back, the Lycans. would raid the werewolf packs and take away the most eligible she-wolves to mate with them. After mating with them and having pups, it was said they threw the girls into dungeons to spend the rest of their lives inside.

“Werewolves were no match against the Lycans in protecting their she-wolves. In order to stop the mindless kidnappings, a treaty was drawn between Lycans and werewolves in which every ten years the werewolves offered a girl to the Lycans. And because the process was nicely streamlined, it resulted in a growth in the healthy population of the Lycans. They had stopped coming, but-” Lena looked at River.

“They are coming again. For you.”

Chapter 3

River pressed her hand against her ****to stifle a shriek. A chill of dread seeped into her bones. A knot formed in her throat. So this was how Alpha Maxim was going to get rid of her. Offer her to the Lycan and remove her from his son's life. He would **two birds with a stone.

“I need to escape,” River said, her voice low. Dread pumped inside her, alive and crushing. She dragged her hand on her tangled red hair. “You have to help me,

Lena.”

Lena threw her arms around River. If she helped her escape, and if they were found, she was sure not only River, even she would be ***. Her family would be disgraced and become a center of humiliation.

Alpha Maxim would snatch away her little brother to make him a gamma warrior and ***her parents.

But her brother would forever live in guilt and stigma for he would be related to someone who helped escape the Alpha's mate.

Her name would be tainted forever and so would her parents. Her father was very loyal to the Alpha. He was one of the respected warriors in the Crescent Moon pack. She just didn't know how she would be able to help River without coming into the eyes of the Alpha. A shaky breath left her lips.

“I will try, River,” she said. “But I won't promise.”

River removed herself from Lena. “I can understand.”

“I have some money stashed in my piggy bank,” Lena said. “I will break it and give you whatever money I have. Take that and run away.”

She received that piggy bank as a gift from her mother on her tenth birthday. It had grown in size with each birthday. She was going to break it after eight years.

They heard heavy footfalls outside the door.

From her memory of her father’s documents, Lena added quickly, “I will come tonight. Keep your window open. You have to head to the north of the pack. From there, turn north-east after you see a dilapidated building. Keep-”

The door opened and Hazel stepped in.

“What are you doing here?” she yelled at Lena. “Go away!”

Lena gave one last knowing glance to River before picking up her satchel and heading out.

“Alpha will be sending you to the Veil,” Hazel said with a glimmer in her eyes as soon as Lena was out of earshot. “Pack whatever you have. Tomorrow, we will take you to Alpha’s mansion where you will be handed over to the Lycans.” Hazel scoffed and then looked her up and down. She left, closing the door behind her. River heard the click of the lock, River was... exhausted. She slumped on the bed, hating her life, hating her mother and hating her father. But what she hated most was Hector, her mate.

Weren’t the mates supposed to give each other the much needed emotional and physical protection?

Was Hector so consumed with his fake prestige that he shunned her in a second? He didn't even give her one chance. His betrayal was what hurt her the most.

She stayed in that position for a long time until her stomach grumbled. She got up and saw that it was midnight. Still feeling ***on the inside, River dragged herself to the bathroom. She washed her face and came back. She was going to escape, no matter what.

She packed the last set of clothes and tied her bag *****. She looked around wondering if she had left anything behind. She didn't have too many possessions. Her bag was half empty. She never had too many things because her father would smash her stuff in his fits of rage. She kept most of her documents on her phone anyway.

River had a half-eaten apple left in her satchel. She took that out, ate the fruit, and then waited for Lena.

River didn't have any money on her. If she escaped, she would be like a beggar when she reaches the human world. So it was important that Lena gave her some cash. She was going to take a bus to the nearest town.

From her memory, she remembered where her mother was from. Her old picture was lying in her bag, at the back of which was written, 'From Ellie to Kirk. With lots of love.'

River waited for an hour, and then another and then another. Lena didn't come. It was 3 AM, and she was growing impatient. She peeked outside her window, scanning the backyard through the glass and trying to pierce her vision to see Lena.

All of a sudden, a wolf attacked her through the window, sending true terror down her spine. River screamed and fell on her back. It was her father. He scratched at the glass of the window with his nails, growling and snarling at her. She scrambled back, suppressing her cries. This was a nightmare. They were keeping a watch on her.

River went to sit on her bed, dazed, scared and completely out of her element as a bolt of fear sent shivers through her. She pulled her knees against her chest and hid her face in between her knees. A wail left her. There was no way she was

going to escape. If Lena tried to come here, she would run away.

The door of the room opened with a loud bang. River jerked her eyes open and bolted to sit upright. Her mother was standing akimbo near her bed.

“Wake up, dimwit!” she cursed her. “It’s time to dress you up and take you to the Alpha’s house.”

River looked around and realized she had slept for a long time because bright rays of sun filtered through her window. It was past morning.

Hazel made her wear a **dress, like a bridal gown.

This has come from the Alpha’s house for you. It’s customary for the offering to wear it,” Hazel informed.

River caught Brianna’s reflection in the mirror, watching her with pure jealousy and hatred. Throughout her life, Hazel had never once touched River except when it was for beating her, but today she was dressing her up in excitement.

“Good riddance!” she muttered.

“Why me?” River asked her as Hazel applied blue shade over her eyelids.

Hazel chuckled. “Because the sacrifice is supposed to be of someone who is pure and willing.”

“But I’m not willing,” River stated, feeling the crawl of anxiety in her chest.

Chapter 4

“It doesn’t matter. You are willing, as it is either this or the dungeons.” Hazel finished and looked at her work. “When the Lycan comes, you have to greet him and accept him. If he refuses you, you will be taken to the dungeons where you will live for the rest of your life.”

Hazel tied jingle bells on her flower corsage. They chimed, singing the song of her doom with each step she took outside her house. She was going to meet the Lycan.

“The drive is going to take about an hour,” said her father as she climbed into the backseat, lifting her long dress up. She was so afraid that she was looking just as pale as her ***dress. Brianna too climbed next to her.

“Do you have your bag ready?” Kirk asked her, his blue eyes meeting hers in the mirror.

She had her father’s eyes, but whenever he looked at her with his, he didn’t see her as his daughter.

Rather he looked at her as an abomination and his biggest mistake..

“I have it,” she replied meekly.

“I hope you have everything in it.” he growled at her.

“Yes,” she said, clutching her bag.

“Good, I hope the Lycan accepts you. If he doesn’t, you won’t come back to us.”

“I just can’t wait for her to get out of our house,” Hazel said in a loud voice.

In a last attempt to save her life, River said, “Daddy, can I go to ****-in the human town? Please?”

In a blur of shock, Kirk grabbed her throat. He shook her wildly as she choked and coughed. Hazel had to force him to remove his hands from her throat.

“What are you doing, Kirk? She is an offering. Alpha won’t like to see marks on her throat. Her looks have to make an impression on the Lycan.”

With a menacing snarl, Kirk removed his hand from her throat. He turned back to the wheels and started the engine. River coughed and *****in a sharp breath of air.

Brianna watched her with a smirk. “Wipe those tears, ***,” she said, rolling her eyes.

As their car rolled through the winding path towards the Alpha’s house, she realized that she would be leaving the Crescent pack forever. If the Lycan refused her, she would never be able to see her pack again because she would be spending her life in the dungeons.

When they closed into the Alpha’s mansion, she practically vibrated with fear. They ***down a small road through dense woods before emerging into a huge clearing.

Her breath was caught in her throat when she saw a large number of shifters there. They were crawling everywhere, right from the roof to the ground, guarding Alpha’s house as if an army was about to invade. She noticed a black tinted sedan parked in the portico, and there were two very handsome and muscular men with dark glasses leaning against it.

Her father **to the driveway and parked the car beneath the portico. As soon as she got down, her gazes locked with Hector on whose arms Vitoria was draped like a viper. She looked at River with an emotion akin to

jealousy. They both watched her from the landing of the staircase with loathe and repulsion.

Hector's gaze heated her insides, and the ***attraction set in. Even though she was full of spite and ***, she couldn't help the delightful shivers that ran down her spine and the craving she had for him.

However, what surprised her was that her wolf, Gia, wasn't responding. In normal circumstances, Gia should have wagged her tail seeing her mate. The absence of her wolf worried her.

Kirk grasped her upper arm, sinking his fingers in her flesh painfully, and pushed her to move, snapping her out of her reverie. Hazel and Brianna followed them.

River lowered her head as she was dragged inside the house. She could feel the eyes of those two men on her back.

As soon as they were in the main hall, River noticed Alpha Maxim sitting along with five more men, and all of them seemed like they had seen a ghost. They were sitting, tightly wound up in their seats, looking slightly perturbed. Behind Alpha Maxim there were two armed guards.

A tall man with a strong physique was standing by the window with his back towards them, chewing the temple tip of his black goggles. He was wearing blue jeans with a black shirt that fitted perfectly over his shoulders. His longish black hair fell in big curls till his collar.

“Ah, there she is!” Maxim breathed a sigh of relief.

River's heart was pounding against her ribcage so loudly she could feel the blood thrumming in her ears.

Her father rounded the table and came to stand in the center of the room. The Lycan turned to look at her, and River's heart started

beating like the wings of a trapped dove. Her lips parted as a rough exhale left her when her blue eyes locked with his sharp green ones.

He was heart-poundingly sexy. If Hector was a Greek God, this Lycan was The God. He was taller and so handsome that it was criminal. His penetrating gaze fixed her in her place until Kirk nudged her forward.

“This is River, daughter of Kirk Johnson,” Maxim introduced her to him.

And suddenly River felt extremely *****in her bridal dress. Kirk stood there along with her as the Lycan sized her up. as if looking at his cattle.

“And this is Alpha Hunter, the Lycan King of the Veil,” said Alpha Maxim to River as if such details mattered to her.

Hunter closed the gap between them, approaching her like a predator with confidence in his steps. River had thought she was going to meet some barbaric and kind of a caveman, but here he was. So beautiful and standing out. Yet, the Lycant looked like a ruthless, cold killer. Lena was right. River was ready to bolt if the Lycan came anywhere near her. She winced. Goosebumps prickled and danced throughout her skin, sending shivers throughout her body.

No one was brave enough to meet eyes with him or be in his vicinity. Even her father stepped back.

River froze in her spot as Hunter leaned towards her. His scent of cedar and mist surrounded her as she struggled to keep her mind clear.

He said-

Chapter 5

“Get the documents ready. I will sign them,” said Hunter, his eyes assessing her profile, traveling down the length of her body. When his gaze landed on her neck, he saw red imprints of fingers over there. A growl emanated from him. “How did you get those?”

Like a deer caught in the headlights, she looked at him with doe eyes, unable to reply to his question because her father was standing right next to her and she was in no mood to get another beating. She brought her hands to her neck and slightly rubbed her skin over there, glancing at her father. “It is nothing, Sir,” she replied in a low voice.

Hunter narrowed his eyes. “Did someone try to strangle you?”

River’s eyes flung wide open and she looked at her father, terrified. Her father lifted his hand like he was about to strike her, but then checked himself immediately when Hunter whipped his head towards him.

“Watch yourself, Kirk,” he spoke in a low growl. There was so much power in his command that it was vise-like on his mind. Kirk was forced to obey even though Hunter wasn’t his Alpha. It was clear that Lycans had power over the werewolves. But Hunter was the king of Lycans. He had power over all the Alpha werewolves too. Kirk was just a small fly in the community.

Hunter turned to look at Alpha Maxim and said, “I will be leaving now. I will come to collect her by evening. She looks very pale for the journey. Make sure that she has eaten well. We will start for the Veil

by 5PM.”

Alpha Maxim was thrilled. The Lycan had accepted his offering. He was sure that Hunter would reject this ***girl. And in that case, he had his plan B in place. He would have offered Brianna to him. He rubbed his hands with excitement and said, “Sure! I will take good care of her till you come.”

“And make sure that she is unharmed,” Hunter added. “Because if she is, I won’t like it!” Then he muttered, “She is too thin.”

Alpha Maxim was scared that Hunter would reject River, so he quickly said, “If you like you can take Brianna with you.” He pointed at River’s younger sister.

River snapped her gaze at Alpha Maxim and then at Brianna, and for some reason, Brianna seemed...

surprised but willing. Odd. Brianna looked at Hunter with expectant eyes and shifted on her toes under his gaze as a pale blush rose on her cheeks.

Hunter gave her a cursory glance and then reverted his attention back to River. Ignoring Alpha Maxim’s words, he growled, “Just get the papers ready. I will sign them when I am back, and the money will be transferred after that.”

Alpha Maxim winced. “Of course! Please don’t worry.”

Money? River was aghast. So Alpha Maxim will be receiving money from the Lycan king. And she was thinking that her father would receive the money from him for leaving Hector. The irony was not wasted on her. She was basically sold, masked under an offering.

Weird colors blasted in her vision and her head reeled so fast that her knees gave way. She thought she would fall on the floor when strong arms caught hold of her in a protective embrace and balanced her.

His cedar and mist scent enveloped her and she realized that she couldn't move or didn't have the energy to move. Her head tipped up as his head leaned down. Their gazes locked-his green one with her bright blue ones. Her cheeks blushed. She felt as if she was melting under his gaze. His hands traveled up to her neck where he gently caressed the imprints of fingers. River was taken by surprise, frozen in her spot.

A low growl from somewhere behind made her snap out of her reverie. She straightened herself and took a step back away from his personal space. She sensed Hunter's irritation and instantly lowered her gaze.

Hunter gulped audibly. With a rough exhale, he said, "I will take my leave." Hunter left in a hurry and the werewolves seemed to relax.

As for River, her tension multiplied ten folds. She was being sold by her Alpha to the Lycan king who was considered to be ruthless and who was taking her away only for breeding purposes. Now she didn't know what was the better of the two evils. On one hand, Alpha Maxim would throw her in dungeons if she didn't go with him. In the dungeons her life would become a living ***. And on the other hand, Hunter would also throw her in the dungeons but, after having pups with her.

Her only chance to survive this ordeal was to escape somehow. She needed to call Lena over here and

run away. She looked like a trapped bunny in the midst of wolves, all of whom were staring or glaring at her. Now knowing what to do next, she grabbed the sides of her bridal gown with clammy hands.

"Great!" Alpha Maxim announced. "Now that the sacrifici-" he checked himself. "The offering is accepted, you can take her back to your home! Get her over here before 5PM."

“I don’t think we should let her go from here,” said Hector, staring at River. His hands were closed in tight fists. “If Alpha Hunter comes before 5PM and she is not here, it would become chaotic!”

Victoria was surprised but she didn’t speak a word against Hector. But if looks were daggers, she was throwing them at

River.

Maxim mulled over what Hector just said. “Okay, she can stay here!” he said with a shrug. “But she has to stay in the guest room and Brianna will have to stay here as well with her.” He looked at Kirk and Hazel. “You both can leave. I will wire your money once Hunter transfers it to me.”

River’s ***fell to the floor as she watched her jubilant father and stepmother. They had sold her. Rather they had only gained from this deal.

Her parents left without goodbyes. River was hoping that her father would glance at her now that he would never see her again, but it remained a wishful thinking. They rushed out as if happy to offload their burden. As soon as they left, Hector came to her. He grabbed her upper arm and said, “Come!” He pulled her towards the guest rooms with Brianna and Victoria following them.

“What the ***are you doing?” Victoria snapped at him the moment they were alone in the corridor that led to the guest. wing.

Chapter 6

As soon as they reached the guest wing, Hector pushed River into one of the rooms with Victoria and Brianna following. The moment he was inside, he slammed River into a wall. River winced as pain shot through her head but it quickly faded. He raised his palm to slowly caress her cheeks and down her pulse point. River's body reacted in response to him and shivers ran down her due to the mate bond.

River started telling herself on the inside that his touch was not right. She just couldn't give in so easily.

She turned her face away from him as she bit her lip. He scowled and pinched her chin to make her look back at him. Then he trapped her with both his hands. He leaned over her and whispered over her ear,

“River, listen to me.” His lips brushed her ears. He wedged his thigh between hers.

“Hector!” Victoria snapped. “What the ***are you doing? Stop it!” Her hands were on her heart as she watched Hector near River and her eyes were bloodshot. Her heart was pained as **and she wanted to wrench River

away from Hector. She couldn't believe her eyes. How could he do this to her just because of the *** who was mated to her by the moon goddess?

“Yes Hector, this isn't right,” Brianna added, rife with jealousy. If it had been for her, she would have removed both Victoria and River from that place and surrounded herself with Hector's smell and body.

She desired him madly. Lusted after him. However, right now she couldn't do much but side with Victoria and belittle her ****sister,

Heat traveled all the way up in her body and she clenched her thighs as desire blasted through River.

She hated Hector and wanted to push away from herself, but when she glanced at Victoria, she couldn't help but feel that she had stolen him from her. In order to teach her a lesson, she arched her body and

touched his. Hector growled in approval.

Victoria cringed and cried, “Hector!” She grabbed his collar and tried to pull him, but Hector snapped his face towards her and peeled his lips to bare his fangs.

“Stay away!” he growled a command and Victoria was forced to step back.

Then he turned his face to look at River and said, “Before you leave for the Lycan King, I have a proposition for you.” Tears came in her eyes and she started crying. Brianna came to her and started stroking her back gently. “She is a wretched ****,” she murmured into Victoria’s ears.

Seeing Victoria’s reaction, River was pleased momentarily. But the next moment his betrayal bit her sharply. She wanted to do nothing with him or his proposition. All she wanted was him to leave with his mate whom he had marked in front of the entire school.

He continued, “If you agree to be my mistress, I will ask my father to stop you from sending to the Veil.”

“What?” River rasped.

Victoria’s eyes bulged out in shock. Covering her ***with her hands, she ran out of the room.

Brianna seethed with more jealousy. She would have happily stepped in Hector’s mistress’ shoes also.

Hector thought that River liked the proposition. He said, “Yes, I can convince my father to cancel the documents with the Lycan King and he can go and find a bride for himself somewhere else.”

Heat crept up her throat and face. She hated the shameful thing that he said right now and caused it.

She felt so humiliated that her self-respect got a ***. Her ***dried that he could actually ask his real mate to be his mistress. She placed her hands on his chest and using all her power, pushed him away from her. “No!” she said. “I will never be your mistress! Tears threatened to burn behind her eyes.

He grabbed her hair and yanked her head back. “You know that I can make you submit to me.”

River winced as she tried to remove herself. Her scalp was burning with pain and tears slipped out of her eyes. “Leave me!”

“Hector!” Alpha Maxim’s voice startled them both. He was standing there, snarling at him.

Hector left River grudgingly as he glared at his father.

“Are you ***mad?” Alpha Maxim spat. “If Hunter comes to know, he is going to **half of us and that would include. you. Just let me ***deal with this problem in peace!”

Throwing one last glare at River, Hector stomped out of the room.

Alpha Maxim turned his attention to River. “Till evening do not come out of this room.” Then he said to Brianna, “If she gets anywhere near Hector, I will skin you alive!”

Brianna started shaking in fear. “I will make sure she is right here, Alpha!” she said hastily.

Alpha Maxim spun and exited the room.

River was so emotionally strung that she sagged on the floor sliding against the wall. She curled her legs up and placed her head on her head on her knee. Fresh bout of tears poured out. Brianna closed the door as soon as Alpha Maxim left and then looked at her older sister. Slowly, she walked to her and said,

“What is your problem? Do you want me to die?

Can’t you just leave without causing trouble?”

“But I-” Before she could complete her sentence, Brianna slapped her hard across the face. River’s face twisted down. Pain seared her skin. She was sure that Brianna’s fingers got imprinted on her cheek.

“Shut up!” Brianna growled. She got up and walked away from her.

All River wanted was to escape from this madness. But how to do it? She just wanted to meet Lena once and then she knew she would sort it out. She heard heavy footsteps that came to a stop on her door.

Guards.

After a long time, when she could no longer cry and when her cries were a dry retch, she rose to her feet shakily. Shel glanced at her sister who was now in the balcony of the room and reading a magazine, totally unconcerned. Picking her bag up, she went to the bathroom and dug her phone out.

River had very few numbers in her contact list. She dialed Lena's number and waited nervously for her to pick up.

"River?" Lena picked up on the last ring.

In a very hushed and hoarse voice, River said, "I need to escape Lena. Can you help me?"

After a long silence, Lena said, "Where exactly are you?"

River explained to her the location of her room.

"I'll see what I can do," said Lena. "Be there in an hour."

With trembling hands, River stashed her phone back in the bag.

Chapter 7

River washed her face as she looked at her gaunt reflection in the mirror. She felt like all her blood had drained from her body. Her red hair framed her face in curls as her blue eyes stared back at her. What had she gotten herself into? Had Hector not been her mate, she would have been leading her life quietly.

Her gaze went to her ***bridal gown that was hanging over her shoulders. She looked like a wraith in it.

She wanted to change her gown but Hazel had said that it was customary for the offering to wear it especially when offered. If she changed it now, she was sure that Brianna would make a lot of hue and cry over it.

River went back to her room and sat on the only bed with a huff. She looked at the clock and realized that only fifteen minutes had gone by. Lena said that she would come in an hour. She plopped back with an exasperated sigh and closed her eyes. A heavy knock on the door made her sit upright. Her eyes darted to the clock and she realized that she had slept. all this time. She got up to open the door but

Brianna nudged her to stop and went ahead to open the door.

“Lena!” Brianna almost squealed in anger. “What the ***are you doing here?”

Lena narrowed her eyes at Brianna. “I have come to meet my friend.”

Brianna folded her arms across her chest and in a cold voice said, “Well, you can’t.”

Lena pushed her aside saying, “This is not your home and you can’t order me around here!”

Shocked, Brianna balanced herself on her feet. Lena had never dared to even touch Brianna and now she pushed her? She lunged at Lena to push her down, but Lena was quicker. She jumped out of Brianna's way and she fell flat on her stomach. The next moment Lena straddled her on her back, twisted her hand back and grabbed her hair. Yanking her head back, she said, "Just because I never touched you, didn't mean that I couldn't. I am older than you and have my wolf. You don't. It means that I am stronger than you. The reason I never tackled you before was that I valued my friendship with River. I knew that if I touched you, your parents would hit River all the more."

Brianna winced in pain. She hissed, "Wait till I tell this to Alpha Maxim, ***!"

Lena pulled her hair more sharply. "Go and tell him. I came right in front of him and he acknowledged my presence when I bowed to him. What will you tell him? Huh?" With a violent shove, she left Brianna's head. Her forehead hit the floor and stars burst in her vision. Lena got up from her back as she kept lying on the floor and cried in pain. "Now that River is out of the equation, I don't fear you!" She had spoken a lie to Brianna. She used her previous knowledge to enter Alpha's house. She couldn't make her presence known to anyone.

Brianna scrambled away from Lena, with her face full of fear. There was a big bump on her forehead.

When she touched it, she cried in pain.

"Stay the heck down, else I will chop you into a thousand pieces and send them flying across the woods," Lena snarled at Brianna which ***her up for a long time. Scared that Lena would hurt her again, Brianna got up and walked back to the balcony. She took her phone out and dialed her mother's number.

Lena looked at River who was watching her with awe. Lena winked at her and chuckled. "I am so happy that I gotta put that piece of ***in her place. More is to come! Muhahaha!" She let out an evil laugh.

Then she picked up her black satchel and gave it to her. “It contains a pair of clothes and my cash. Take it and run.”

“Oh my God! Lena!” River got up with stifling a shriek of happiness and hugged her friend.

Lena laughed softly as the two friends hugged each other tightly. “You look ***in this gown,” Lena joked. “Just go and change!”

“What about you?” she asked, her gaze darting nervously at Brianna who was talking to someone on the phone.

Lena winked again. “I am a ghost, darling. I know how to slip out of here without being detected. I have done this a thousand times. In fact, I have put a map for you. Follow it and you will reach the nearest bus station in an hour. And don’t forget to apply that lotion on your body. It will hide your scent.”

“Thank you, Lena!” River said, her eyes full of gratitude.

Lena hugged her again. “Let’s meet in the human town!”

River giggled. “Yes, let us!”

With one last look at Brianna, Lena left, picking up River’s satchel. She knew that she had scared her enough not to enter the room for at least half an hour. That would be enough for River to escape.

River went to the bathroom. She opened Lena’s satchel and hurriedly took out the ***slacks and black shirt. She removed her bridal gown, applied the oil on her body to hide her smell and changed into the fresh clothes. She wore the jacket over her shirt and pulled the hoodie over. There was a small folded paper at the base with a wallet. When River opened the wallet, she was surprised to find a thousand dollars in it. Her chest squeezed with a warm feeling. Lena had given her a large amount to travel comfortably. “Thank you, Lena,” she murmured in appreciation. “I hope the Moon Goddess give you the best mate ever!”

napter/

Suddenly, gray ***gathered on the outside, startling her. Thunder struck deep into the forest and a heavy deluge followed.

She unfolded the paper. It was the map of Alpha's Maxim's house along with the town. There were red arrows in it that showed her the direction to follow.

River took a deep breath. After memorizing the map, she stashed it all in the bag. She was finally going to escape. She walked to the bathroom window and opened it to jump down Chapter 8

River jumped out of the window. The rain was pounding relentlessly and there was no one patrolling out there. She had to quickly find her way to the tunnel that led to the rear of the mansion towards the north where a dilapidated road surrounded by dense woods, opened. Her road to freedom.

Opening the small, rusted iron gate of an abandoned garden, River splotched her way to a small cabin.

She walked around the perimeter and noticed a hatchet at the base of a wall.

She had to apply some force to open it, but it opened soon enough with a groan, the sound getting washed in the rain. She crawled through the *** and saw a vertical staircase. Without wasting time, she switched on her phone's torchlight and started climbing down. She landed on soft ground at the bottom. She scanned the area. There was a tunnel to her left. Half an hour later, she felt like she was walking forever. Down here, it was so cold,

dark and damp. The path was too narrow and she felt as if the walls were closing in on her. The air smelled of moss and damp earth. She shivered in her wet clothes, hoping that there were no critters down here as she moved ahead.

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