

## Chapter 9: The Moon Shard

Melissa's POV

I couldn't believe what had happened. Even eighteen hours later, and it was all still surreal to me.

Maxim rejected me. He rejected ME! I was the one who was supposed to reject him!

Was it some type of reverse psychology shit? Did he think that it would somehow boost his ego if he did it instead? I despised him so much. So, very much.

Why did he have to be my mate? What have I ever done to deserve to be cursed my entire life? I knew he didn't recognise me. We were only twelve, after all, when it happened. At that time, neither of us had our wolves, so he wouldn't have known that I was his mate, and I wouldn't either. Now, fast forward eleven years later, and I was again face-to-face with him.

I will never forget what he did to me. It was sort of childish trying to hold onto the grudge, but it still hurt. I can't see myself with someone who hurt me that much. Even now, when my wolf was once again upset with me, I still couldn't bring myself to even try and forgive him. My wolf didn't understand human emotions. Her only instinct was to be with our mate, no matter what he did to me.

I wish there was some way I could make it all disappear because, of course, I wanted to be with my mate! It was what I dreamt of. Yet, every time I thought about what he did to me, I broke down in tears. I was a feeble pre-teen,

especially since I was just figuring out life. What he did plunged me into the beginning of my depression and anxiety.

And it was hard-really hard to get over.

However, what bothered me the most was that he didn't even seem to remember. He studied me as if he was trying to remember something, but he simply couldn't. He really hadn't changed. He was the same Maxim then, and he is the same now.

What puzzled me, though, was that the rejection was just so... simple. I've learned that no one would feel the pain if two wolves were willing participants of the rejection. But I had thought that I would've at least felt some sort of uneasiness--. Anything at all! But I didn't.

In fact, I felt more connected to him, and I hated it. Every time he moved, I somehow knew. Every time he spoke, I heard his voice. Every single thing about him was so evident to me, and I hated it.

I hated him.

I haven't eaten or slept.

Lukas checked in on me every now and then last night, but I didn't know if he knew I was awake yet. I had no idea what to do. Should I just go downstairs for breakfast? Do they have cooks like at home? I hoped I could simply request that the food be brought to my room; yet, I didn't know how to speak to them without actually leaving my room. And that was precisely what I was avoiding.

I decided to take a shower instead.

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The water was warm, and it soothed my tensed muscles. However, the muscles in my stomach growled in need of food, and I knew I couldn't keep this up any longer. It was a few minutes after six in the morning, and I wasn't sure if Lukas would be up. I could go to Leonardo for help, but I had no clue where his room was.

I wrapped myself in a robe and proceeded to dry my hair as a knock sounded at my door.

Relief flooded me as I dashed towards it, but I soon realised that it wasn't Lukas's scent that I caught, but a fairly new one. Opening the door, I saw a gorgeous woman standing in front of me.

She was dark-skinned with bright brown eyes. Her hair fell in curly tendrils all the way down her back, and I knew if she straightened it, the length would fall below her bottom. She wore a bright smile, and I noticed she had a tattoo on the base of her neck. I recognised it from yesterday when I met Leonardo. He had the same tattoo.

I instantly knew who she was.

"I'm so glad I didn't wake you," she said with a brighter smile. "I had been so eager to finally meet you, and Leo told me yesterday that I should let you get settled in. I'm Fiona, by the way. Am I talking too much?"

"No, of course not," I told her with a small smile. "Please, come in."

As she moved, I noticed that she had a tiny but evident bump in front of her. I almost gushed at the sight. I've never been around a pregnant wolf before.

"I'm Melissa, by the way," I told her as I closed the door. She made herself comfortable and shuffled on my bed, never letting her eyes fall from me.

"I know. Since the very moment Lukas told us that he was finding himself a woman, I had been elated. You have no idea what living with men alone can be like." She lowered her voice as she moved closer to the edge of the bed. "It can be quite frustrating at times not having a female friend around."

I scoffed. "I have never had a female friend. In fact, I haven't had many people who have liked me very much."

Fiona's face fell in sympathy as she frowned at me. She patted the space beside her on my bed, and I chuckled lightly before joining her.

"Well, we'll be great friends; I can tell," she said, her smile never falling.

"I'm looking forward to it, and I notice you're expecting too." Even though I didn't know Fiona or Leonardo, I couldn't help the excitement I felt for them. It must've been a wonderful feeling.

And indeed, her face only brightened even more. "Oh yes! I can't wait to meet our little one. I already feel the joys of becoming a mother." She sighed contently. "How about you? Do you ever think of-" She paused instantly as her face fell in guilt.

I didn't understand why.

"Oh my gosh, I am so sorry," she mumbled. "Leonardo told me I shouldn't ask anything personal because Lukas isn't

your mate, and you need some adjusting and-"

"It's okay," I cut her off by saying.

"Are you sure? Are you not worried that you might find your mate? Or in this case, he finds you?" she asked, which oddly surprised me. Either Lukas didn't tell his Beta about Maxim, or Leonardo simply didn't tell his mate.

"You don't know?" I asked.

"Know what?"

I chuckled humourlessly as my heart broke for the hundredth time since yesterday at the very thought of Maxim. "My mate is actually Maxim," I told her, and her face lit up in realisation. "But he rejected me," I added, and her expression fell.

"What? I always knew that bimbo wasn't all too excited about having a mate, but--"

"It's okay," I told her, holding her hand. "I was the one who wanted to reject him, but I hesitated and now...."

She sat in confusion for a while.

"Well, that surely explained both our Alphas' moods last night. Lukas didn't even tell Leonardo, and if Leo doesn't know, neither does I." I could already tell that Fiona was a gossip guru. But it was still evident that she had everyone's best interest at heart.

I could tell that she wanted to know more. Why did I want to reject him? Have I ever met him before? I could literally hear the questions budding in her mind. But I appreciated that she didn't push it any further. I wasn't quite ready to

talk about it yet.

"Are you okay?" she finally asked, and I nodded.

"I will be. I just need some adjusting." I felt like I was lying to myself. I felt like I would never adjust to this. But I had to for the sake of my sanity.

Whether I liked it or not, I had to adapt.

"Your eyes," Fiona suddenly said, "they are so pretty. They remind me of a moon shard."

"A moon what?" I asked in confusion. She looked at me as if I had grown another head.

"You don't know what a moon shard is? Your eyes and the streak in your hair are like the exact colour. Where did you get that dye colour?" Her eyes sparkled in interest as she gently rubbed her finger over my hair.

I dropped my eyes to my lap before answering. Here's the part where she laughs at me for being a freak.

"I um... I was born with it. It's sort of a unique feature."

Fiona gasped. Here it comes...

"Oh my gosh, I am envious!" she gushed. Wait, what? "You are so gorgeous, and knowing now that it's natural makes it even sexier... Oops, am I allowed to say sexy?"

I laughed, feeling relieved. "You can say whatever you want," I told her honestly. "And thank you. Thank you so much. No one has ever liked me for my hair before. In my old pack, they despised me."

"They were obviously jealous!" she said, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. I didn't try to correct her.



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My brother's foul tongue got me most of my hate, but I knew I was considered a freak. So far, the wolves at Primal Pak didn't see my hair as a curse. They actually liked it.

Which, for me, was... odd.

"I just can't get over the colour, though," she mumbled to herself as she stared into the depths of my soul. "I have only ever seen that shade of blue in one place, and it was when I saw a moon shard. I remember because I was obsessed."

"What is a moon shard?" I had asked this question earlier, but she didn't quite answer.

She gave me an elementary teacher look as if this was something I should've already known.

"The moon shards are five different pieces of crystal, all from the star of the moon-rock."

"I have heard of the moon rock," I said. The moon rock, in werewolf legacies, was the core of the moon where the moon goddess got her power. It was what made werewolves uniquely us.

"Right. Well, the shards are the five points of the star. The core is still in the moon, but after the Great War of Ouránios, the moon goddess split the star into five shards and sent them to earth to keep them safe from the Sun Dragon."

"Wait, what?" I scoffed. "That's all a myth."

Fiona flung back her head with a laugh. "No, it's not. The Sun Dragon wanted the moon goddess' power, so he raged war against her. That was the birth of the first lunar

eclipse."

"This is crazy," I mumbled. And what was crazier was the fact that I was actually listening to her.

"The moon goddess entrusted five werewolves all over the world with the moon shards, where they have to stay here on earth only until she defeats the dragon. When he learned this, he created his own creatures to hunt down each shard. Legend has it that he successfully stole one, and he is still actively trying to get the others through his evil little abominations."

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. "Let me guess, vampires?"

"No," she scoffed. "Dragons, of course."

"Right because that's so much more believable."

She gave me a pointed look. "We're humans who can shift into large wolves. Is it so hard to believe that there are humans who shift into dragons?"

I pondered for a while, then I realised she had a point. "So what happens if the dragons manage to get all five shards?"

"They deliver them to the Sun Dragon, and he uses them against the moon goddess in hopes of stealing the final piece in the moon's core. If he does that, we will all die. Our life source comes from that crystal star. But the moon goddess would never let him win. Do you know that when there is a solar eclipse, the moon goddess is attacking the Sun Dragon, and-

"-when it's a lunar eclipse, he is attacking her," I concluded.



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She nodded. "That's right. No one knows if this war will ever end or if the shards will ever live in the moon again. But for now, it is what it is, and your eyes..." she trailed as she gazed at them. "Are you sure you aren't the moon goddess?"

This surely made me laugh. "Oh, please. As if I could be so powerful. Maybe it's just a coincidence."

"Hmm. How coincidental is it for a regular she-wolf to have natural eyes and hair of the colour of a moon shard? Perhaps there is more about yourself that you do not know, Melissa. And luckily, you have a new best friend to help you figure it out and, of course, protect you. Because if you are somehow connected to a moon shard, those dirty little dragons will be coming for you."

I gulped as my skin tingled.

What if she's right? I have never really considered my hair and eyes anything special, but could it be?

Growing up, there was a single thing that I didn't understand. I only have one baby picture, and in that picture, my eyes were chocolate-brown. I was probably a few months old by then. But every picture after I was two years old, I had the eyes of the ocean. In other words, ever since my parents died, my eye colour changed.

I didn't say anything to Fiona. She was far too engrossed in analysing my hair and eyes, and now considering all that she and Toya have told me over the span of two days, I couldn't trust anyone until I knew for sure that they weren't 'dragons'. The idea still puzzled me, but I guess I won't see it until I believe it.

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My stomach suddenly made a loud growl like before, breaking Fiona from her assessment. We both giggled as she jumped to her feet and offered me her hand.

"Okay, let's go down for breakfast."

I froze as she said this.

"You mean, where Maxim and Lukas will be?" I wasn't ready to face Maxim. Not yet.

She offered me a small, sympathetic but encouraging smile. "I'll be there with you, I promise. And I don't mean for breakfast only; I mean from now on. Obviously, you have been through a lot and haven't had many friends. Let it start with me. I need a girlfriend too as much as you do."

I couldn't help the smile that lit my face as she said this. It felt good to consider the idea of friendship for once. I liked it.

So, against my better judgment, I followed her through the door and down the stairs to the room where I knew my ex-mate was already waiting.