



Alpha's Second Chance (Moonlit Secrets #5)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: I spent ten years pretending to be human.

Hiding my wolf.

Hiding from my past.

And convincing myself that settling for a safe, quiet life was enough.

It wasn't.

I should've known fate wouldn't let me walk away so easily.

Because the moment I tried to marry a man who could never truly know me, he walked in.

Rowan Mercer.

Alpha of the Ironclaw Pack.

Tall, rugged, and radiating the kind of power that makes my instincts scream.

One look, and I knew.

One scent, and my wolf shattered the walls I spent years building.

He's my mate.

The one thing I swore I'd never risk again.

Now, my carefully built life is in ruins. My secret is exposed.

And the man I almost married?

He was never who he claimed to be.

He was a hunter.

And now he's coming for me.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:10 am

The scent of cinnamon and fresh bread lingers in the air as I sit across from Grant on the rooftop patio of The Silver Spoon, our favorite restaurant. The dim glow of the hanging lanterns bathes the space in a warm amber hue, making the night feel deceptively intimate. Below us, Silverbrook hums softly with life—couples strolling along the cobbled streets, laughter spilling from late-night cafés, the occasional honk of a car passing through town.

Everything feels peaceful. But inside, my wolf stirs.

I ignore it. I've gotten good at that.

Grant reaches for my hand across the table, his touch firm but controlled. I used to love that about him—his predictability, his solid presence, his quiet confidence. He's the man who always has an answer, a plan, a vision for the future. And for the longest time, I told myself that was enough.

I take a sip of wine, letting the smooth, dry taste coat my tongue. It should be a night of celebration. Our wedding is just two days away, and I should feel... happy. But instead, unease presses against my ribs like a warning I can't quite place.

"You're quiet tonight," Grant notes, his blue eyes searching for mine.

"Just tired," I lie.

He nods, accepting my answer easily. "I was thinking," he continues, swirling the wine in his glass, "after the wedding, we could start looking for a new house. Something bigger. Maybe with a yard for Theo to play in."

I smile automatically. A bigger house. A perfect life. Stability. The things I thought I wanted. But something about the way he says it—so assured, as if my future is already written in stone—makes my stomach tighten.

"That sounds nice," I murmur, though my voice lacks conviction.

His phone buzzes on the table between us. He glances at it, his expression tightening for a fraction of a second before he snatches it up.

"Work?" I ask, feigning casual curiosity.

"Yeah," he says, already standing. "Just a quick call. Be right back."

He doesn't wait for me to respond before striding toward the edge of the rooftop, pressing the phone to his ear.

I watch him go, my unease growing. It's not like I expect him to tell me every detail of his work, but something about his urgency seems... off.

I brush a hand through my hair, stealing a quick glance at my faint reflection on the screen of my phone—my wavy chestnut hair catching the light, my golden-hazel eyes slightly dimmed with exhaustion. My instincts are warning me of something, but I can't tell what.

Then I hear him.

Grant's voice, low and sharp, just around the corner where he thinks I can't hear.

"You don't need to worry. She's completely in the dark... Yes, I'll make sure she's isolated after the wedding... No, she has no idea what's coming."

A chill skates down my spine.

For a moment, I think I've misheard. But then he speaks again, his tone clipped and businesslike.

"I've been patient long enough. The second she shifts, we'll have everything we need. The tests can start immediately."

My heart slams against my ribs.

He knows.

The blood drains from my face as realization crashes into me like a violent wave. He knows about me. About what I am. And he's been planning something all along.

I press a hand to my stomach, nausea rising. My wolf snarls beneath my skin, clawing to be free, but I force her down. Not now. Not here.

I should leave. I should grab Theo and run. But I can't move, can't breathe, can't do anything but listen as the man I was about to marry calmly discusses my fate like I'm nothing more than an experiment.

"She won't fight," Grant says, a smirk evident in his voice. "She's too afraid of what she is. That's why she's perfect."

A bitter taste fills my mouth. He thinks I'm weak.

My fingers curl into fists, nails digging into my palms. I should have trusted my instincts. Should have listened to the part of me that always felt something wasn't right.

Grant's voice lowers. "Once we have her, the others will follow."

I freeze. The others.

He's not just after me.

I shift in my seat, my pulse quickening.

Who is he working with? How deep does this go?

Then, as if the universe itself is answering my unspoken question, I feel it.

A presence. A shift in the air.

Not Grant. Someone else is watching me.

A shiver runs down my spine as I turn, my breath catching. In the shadows beyond the rooftop, near the entrance to the alley, a man stands completely still. His frame is tall, powerful, exuding raw dominance. His dark hair moves slightly in the evening breeze, and even from this distance, I feel his gaze on me.

The world narrows, my senses sharpening in a way they haven't in years. The scent of pine and musk—wild and untamed—fills my lungs, and my wolf responds immediately, shoving against my control with startling force.

Rowan Mercer.

I don't know how I know his name. But I do.

Our eyes lock. Something deep and ancient clicks inside me, as if I've been walking blind all my life and have just now learned to see. A strange, undeniable force pulls at

me—primal, intoxicating. My heart pounds, my breath hitches, and for a second, everything else fades away.

Then I remember—Grant.

I whip my head back toward him, panic seizing my chest. He's still on the phone, still speaking in that calm, calculated voice. But I know time is running out.

I turn back to the alley.

Rowan is gone.

The connection breaks like a snapped thread, leaving me reeling.

I don't have time to think about what just happened. All I know is that I need to get out. Now.

I throw some cash on the table and push away from my seat, my hands shaking. Grant turns just as I make it to the door, his eyes narrowing slightly.

"Everything okay?" he asks, feigning concern.

I force a smile, my throat tight. "Yeah. I just—I forgot I need to check on Theo."

It's a weak excuse, and I can tell he doesn't quite buy it. His gaze lingers on me for a second too long. Then he nods, offering a small, lingering smile.

"See you soon, love," he murmurs.

I grip the doorknob so hard my knuckles turn white. Then I step through the door leading back into the building, my pulse hammering.

I won't wait. I won't hesitate.

I run.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:10 am

The air inside the church is thick with the scent of roses and candle wax, a manufactured kind of romance that feels suffocating.

I stand at the entrance of the aisle, my hands curled tightly around the bouquet of ivory peonies, my pulse pounding so violently I swear it echoes against the vaulted ceilings. Every guest turns to watch me as I walk slowly down the aisle. Some smile warmly, eyes glistening with emotion, while others exchange knowing glances. A few guests press their hands to their chests, their expressions filled with admiration.

I should want this.

I should be happy doing this.

Grant waits at the altar, his face an unreadable mask of practiced charm. His tailored black suit is perfect, every detail meticulously arranged. The golden glow of the chandeliers reflects in his piercing blue eyes, the same eyes that once made me feel safe. But now, in the wake of last night's revelation, all I see is deception.

"She's completely in the dark... Yes, I'll make sure she's isolated after the wedding... No, she has no idea what's coming."

His words from the phone call still crawl beneath my skin like venom. My stomach churns violently as my mind races with the weight of it all. My fiancé—the man I trusted, the man I was about to marry—has been working against me from the very start.

For years, I convinced myself I could build something normal. That I could be a

woman first, a mother second, and never a wolf again. But I was wrong.

My wolf stirs beneath the surface, pacing inside me, snarling. She knows the truth now. I can't ignore her anymore.

Then I smell it as I move close to Grant at the altar.

A scent so raw, so primal it nearly sends me to my knees. Earthy pine, crisp mountain air, something wild and untamed. My heart clenches violently as my gaze flickers across the pews, seeking out the source.

And then I see him.

He stands at the back of the church, half in shadow, his tall, broad frame still as stone. Dark hair, tousled as if the wind has just played through it. Deep blue eyes that burn through the crowd, locking onto mine.

The moment our eyes meet, the world tilts.

It's like being struck by lightning, like the first gasp of air after drowning. A deep pull in my bones, my blood, my very being. My breath catches in my throat. My wolf goes deathly silent, then surges forward so violently I have to grip the back of a pew to steady myself.

Mate.

The word slams into me, an unshakable truth written into my DNA.

No. No, no, no.

This can't be happening. Not now. Not here.

My fingers tremble around the bouquet, and the blood drains from my face. I take a shaky step back, my vision narrowing to just him, to the way he watches me—intense, unreadable, waiting.

Something inside me splinters, a crack in the walls I spent years fortifying.

I can't do this.

I can't marry Grant.

I can't stay here.

And suddenly, I ran.

I don't make it three steps before I hear Grant's voice behind me, sharp and commanding.

"Celeste!"

But I don't stop.

Gasps ripple through the church as I shove past startled guests, the heavy train of my lace wedding gown tangling around my legs. My breath is ragged, my heart slamming against my ribs.

The doors loom ahead—heavy, wooden, but they might as well be salvation.

Just as I reach them, a hand clamps around my wrist.

Grant.

His grip is tight, bruising. "What the hell are you doing?" he hisses, his breath hot against my cheek. His fingers dig into my skin, his voice low and urgent. "You can't leave."

Panic claws at my throat. He knows. He knows what I heard.

"Let me go," I whisper, my voice shaking.

His expression flickers, a split-second of something dark. "You're making a mistake."

I yank back with everything I have, shoving him away so hard he stumbles. Shock flashes across his face, but I don't wait for his response—I tear through the doors and into the night.

Cool air rushes over my overheated skin, but I barely feel it. The forest stretches beyond the church, dark and endless. I kick off my heels, lift the heavy layers of my gown, and run.

My instincts scream shift, shift, shift, but I can't—not here, not now, not with human eyes still trailing after me.

Footsteps thunder behind me.

"Mom!"

I spin toward the sound of my son's voice.

Theo stands at the church entrance, his small figure silhouetted by the golden glow inside. His golden-hazel eyes—my eyes—are wide with confusion, his face pale.

"Come here, baby," I pleaded. "We have to go."

Hesitation flickers across his face, but something in my tone snaps him into action. He bolts toward me.

As he reaches me, I grab him by the wrist, ready to run as fast as I can, then a deep, commanding voice cuts through the chaos.

"Celeste."

It's him.

The man from the church.

I whirl to find him stepping out of the shadows. He moves with effortless grace, his presence an unshakable force, like the night itself. The way his gaze locks onto mine sends another sharp jolt through me.

The mate bond pulls between us, strong and undeniable.

But I don't trust it.

I don't trust him.

And I sure as hell don't trust myself.

"Stay away," I snap, stepping back protectively in front of Theo.

He stops a few feet away, his hands at his sides, but he doesn't back down. His gaze flickers over me—my disheveled gown, my bare feet, the wild panic in my eyes—before settling on Theo.

His jaw tightens.

"You need to come with me," he says, his voice a low rumble.

I shake my head violently. "I don't know you."

"You don't have to," he says simply. "But if you stay here, you'll die."

The words slam into me like a punch to the gut.

And then I hear it—more footsteps.

Grant's voice, sharp and furious. "Stop them! Don't forget to use the silver bullets."

A group of armed men in black suits burst from the church, moving fast, their intent clear.

I don't have time to process, don't have time to think.

Rowan moves first.

He lunges toward me, faster than any human should be. Instinctively, I stagger back, but instead of attacking, his arm snaps around my waist—strong, unyielding.

"You need to trust me please, there's no time to explain, we need to move." he growls.

And before I can fight, before I can scream, before I can do anything—He grabs Theo, pushes him onto his back and then, he shifts.

One second, he's a man. The next, a massive jet-black wolf stands in his place, Theo gripping onto his thick fur.

I freeze.

My wolf roars inside me.

Theo gasps, but I don't have time to reassure him.

Because the men chasing us are closing in on us.

Rowan's massive form is already moving, his growl vibrating through the night. He's fighting for us.

And I realize something, something terrifying and undeniable.

Grant isn't just chasing me.

He's hunting me.

And unless I start fighting back, I won't survive.

This isn't just a wedding gone wrong.

This is war.

And I have no choice but to finally become the wolf I was always meant to be.

In split seconds, the murmurs of the onlookers fade, their awe-struck whispers nothing but a distant hum beneath the pounding in my ears. My knees buckle, and I drop to all fours, my fingers clawing at the dirt as a new, foreign strength pulses through my limbs. My skin prickles—then burns—as it gives way to thick fur, gleaming under the moonlight. The shift isn't just pain; it's power, raw and untamed, surging through me like a current that refuses to be stopped.

A gasp ripples through the crowd. I lift my head, my vision sharpening, colors and scents exploding into clarity I've never known before. My heartbeat steadies, strong and sure, as I plant my paws—my paws—firmly into the ground. The weight of my human form is gone, replaced by something sleek, powerful, and undeniably wild and I quickly move ahead catching up with Rowan and Theo, leaving the chaos behind us.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:10 am

As we walk through the forest towards the mountains, now in our human form, going farther and farther away from civilization, I have only one goal at the moment; to take my mate and her son to safety—to my pack where there is plenty of our kind to protect them.

I watch Celeste as she walks in front of me, holding on to Theo's hands like her life depends on it, the scent of her fear is sharp on the wind, mingling with the damp earth and pine. It's a raw, desperate thing, laced with adrenaline and the instinct to flee. At some point, she started running. Fast, sometimes slower, continuously dragging Theo with her. But she doesn't understand that I'm not hunting her—I'm following, tracking her movements with the patience of a wolf that knows its prey has nowhere left to go.

I move through the dense undergrowth with ease, my wolf pacing just beneath my skin, restless and eager. I caught her scent the moment she shifted at the wedding, the moment her control broke. Even in the chaos of the transformation, with the horrified gasps of humans and the sick stench of fear, I knew.

She is mine.

Fate made sure of it.

The forest is thick here, the trees pressing in on all sides. Moonlight cuts through the gaps in the canopy, painting silver paths on the ground, but Celeste doesn't follow them. She takes the hardest route possible, paying no attention to her own tired feet, nor to Theo's tired expressions, pushing through dense brambles, leaping over fallen logs, moving deeper into the mountains as though the wild will save her.

It won't.

It belongs to me.

I stay behind her, not rushing, not closing in too soon. She's burning through energy at a reckless pace, and exhaustion will catch up to her before I do. She's running on fear, not instinct. And she's human enough to think she can fight fate.

I let her go, for now.

**

Please continue following ???????; the other chapters will be updated soon.