

Athena blushed, waving to him as she walked down to the door marked *Employee's Only*. She raised her hand and knocked as hard as she could several times, waiting to see what would happen. It opened and a woman in a skin tight red gown looked down at her.

"Did you order a frumpy girl, dear? It seems we have one at the door." The woman wore a smug grin on her face, refusing to budge.

"Let her in, Amelia. This is the one Darrell sent me." A man's voice came from farther in the room.

The woman, Amelia, frowned and moved back, huffing slightly. She seemed upset to be brushed aside so easily by whoever this man was. Athena shuddered, dropping her eyes to avoid Amelia's as she walked past the taller woman.

"Welcome to the club," the man spoke again, drawing her gaze upward. A man in a grey suit sat in a chair with a tall back behind a desk. A matching fedora covered his head and shaded his green eyes. "What is your name?"

"I'm Athena, Athena Forsythe, sir."

The man laughed. "No one calls me sir, Athena. Nor do they call me Mr. Lanzit. I am simply Lysander to my associates and friends."

"Oh, uh... Nice to meet you Mr. – err, Lysander." Athena bobbed her head as the tall woman came to lounge on the arm of Lysander's chair.

Lysander ignored his associate as he leaned forwards, steepling his fingers and smiling gently at the young woman before him. "Darrell tells me you're new to this whole were-side of yourself. Why don't you tell me what you know and I'll fill in any blank spots."

Athena blinked a few times, not entirely sure if this man was pulling her leg or not. He seemed honestly interested in what she knew, so, with a shrug, she began,

"I was born in December to a woman who utterly despised me. I don't know my father, but I can only assume I got my – uh, likeness from him. My mother was a raging alcoholic and refused to even speak of him," Athena sighed, "I assume it was a one night stand from the way she cursed his name and blamed her status on me. From the time I could understand that I was different, I began wearing baggy clothing and hoodies to hide my 'uniqueness' from those who would call me names. Not that it helped..."

She trailed off and shuddered. The horrible calls tonight still echoed in her mind. Wrapping her arms around her body, she continued,

"After a while she kicked me out, so I wander the streets, looking for food, work, and a place to stay. But, no one wants a furred weirdo, so I wander..."

"Oh, the poor dear," Amelia rolled her amber eyes as her tail twitched. "Such a hard life, I wonder how you survive."

Athena frowned. The woman was so annoying. Didn't she have anything else to do beside make rude comments and practically lay on top of Lysander? Athena snorted. Amelia was probably one to marry for money and be a trophy wife any man would be jealous to have.

Lysander seemed to be impervious to her comments and charm. "Seriously?" he asked, true surprise and worry on his face. "You have no ideal, do you? About any of this?"

Athena blinked at him again. Was this man dense or just that surprised? "None. If I hadn't ducked down the alley, I would probably still be on the streets." She shrugged, tugging her hoodie down out of habit, "My next step, if I hadn't found work in a month or so, would probably to get surgery."

Lysander slammed his hands on the desk, snarling as he stood. Athena jumped and Amelia rolled her eyes again. A glance from the security guard in front of the desk brought Lysander's anger back down.

"Pardon my anger, Athena," Lysander said through clenched teeth. "I am not upset with you. If anything, I'm more upset with the woman you name *mother*. She should have given you to one of the communities..."

He trailed off, pinching the bridge of his nose. "Ross, find someone who can sponsor this young lady until she can get on her feet."

The guard frowned. "Boss, you know everyone is busy with the pups right now. They can't afford to spare time or effort for..." He trailed off, looking at me, "For someone like her."

Athena frowned, uncertain whether or not she should feel offended by his remark. Lysander groaned, sitting back down and tossing his hat on the desk. White tiger ears lay flat against his stark black hair. He ran a hand through his hair, muttering to himself.

"Pity," Amelia crooned. "You'll be back out on the street so soon, dearie. Sorry to hear that."

"No," Lysander glared at the vixen. "There has to be someone who can take her in, and we will find them. I will not let..." He was interrupted by a knock at the door.