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Caleb's Point of View

I can not let her see how angry I am right now. How much I want to tear her old pack apart. When Daphne stopped and could not take a step towards the front door, rage hot blinding rage exploded within me. The only thing stopping me from turning this ball into a massacre is the fact that I know that my mate needs to have faith, and trust in me. I do not know how Daphne will react if she sees the monster I can truly become. Instead of pulling her, or trying to coax her towards the front door, I simply swoop her up in my arms. Cradling her in my arms, I almost turn around and took her back upstairs. Simply touching her makes my pants fit tighter. She is light, too light as if she has not been fed properly. My heartbeat is racing, it is taking all my restraint not to kiss her. I carry her right through the front door. It is important to me that she knows that when times get hard, I will not abandon her. I will help her through everything in this life. <

I take her hand and lead her down the steps, walking towards the meeting hall. I know that my mate enjoys being outside as much as I do. The silence is comfortable between us, almost as if we have made this walk many times before. Absently I noticed that I have been rubbing my thumb back and forth over her palm. Daphne is even more beautiful in the moon light. The soft moon glow cascades down her hair giving her an ethereal effect. I could simply stare at her for hours and never get bored.

Too soon the music gets louder and people can be seen. Daphne is worried about her dancing skills. I am not worried at all because I know how to dance, and I can teach her. I am happy about it; I will get to show my mate a lot of new things in this world. My heart is light knowing that she will experience some first times solely with me.

As we get closer to the doors of the hall, I can feel her nervousness flowing from her. I try to remember if Hannah was this nervous when Theo and I brought her home. Hannah's situation was different, we brought her back to our pack house immediately. Daphne on the other hand is about to attend a ball with her old tormentors in attendance. Once again, I feel the rage building up and I must stomp it back down. Nothing matters more to me than ensuring that my mate feels protected, and I need to be clear headed because I want her to have a great time.

"Are you ready to go in my dear?" Daphne tuns and nods her head at me. I can tell that she is unsure. Hoping to comfort her I move and put my arm at her waist and pull her snug against my side. Plus, I want everyone in that room to recognize that she is mine and mine alone. I know that I have not marked her yet, but Daphne is my mate. :

We walk in and I turn to look at Daphne's face. She has never been to a Mabon ball before and I want to experience it through her eyes. Even though she is nervous my mate can not stop looking around. Her eyes are darting all around the room. As her eyes land on the buffet I can hear her stomach growl. :

"Sweetheart would you like to eat before I show you how to dance?" I know that she is hungry, I can hear it. I am kicking myself for not getting her some food earlier. °

"Yes, I think that would be nice." Her voice is quiet as if she does not want anyone else to hear her. I lead her over closer to the buffet line. As we are standing in line I can see Marcus is heading our way. I am pleased to see him, and I can not wait to introduce him to Daphne. Marcus and I have not seen each other for some time, and I have heard that he has also found his mate. "Caleb it is so good to see you, and who is this stunning woman on your arm?" Marcus wastes no time asking about Daphne as he comes and shakes my hand. Daphne shrinks in closer to my side, with her eyes averted towards the ground.

"Marcus it has been too long old friend. I would like to introduce you to my mate Daphne." Daphne's eyes whip up to look at me as I introduce her. "Daphne this old dog is my good friend Marcus, he is the Alpha of the Crest Line pack. They are very close friends of our pack."

"Daphne it is a pleasure to meet the woman that has made my friend smile. Welcome to the family darling." Marcus takes Daphne's hand and places a kiss on her knuckles. Without meaning to I growl softly. Marcus lets out a little laugh but takes a step back. "Ah! I can see that you two must have found each other very recently, as my friend is very possessive."

I apologize to Marcus and he assures me that it is ok. "I understand fully Caleb. I do not know if you have heard or not, but I have also met my mate" Marcus explains.

"I had heard a rumor about it. Is she here tonight?" I am hoping that she is here, I would love to meet her. I am also hoping that if there is another woman in the conversation that Daphne will relax a little.

"Yes, she is currently in the powder room, how about you and your lovely mate get some food and meet us at our table? We are right there" Marcus says pointing to a table towards the back. "Sounds like a plan, we will be along soon." As Marcus walks away, I look down at Daphne. Her eyes are no longer on the floor, but she is still very nervous. "See my love that was not so bad right?"

Daphne giggles a little over my words. "No, your friend seems very nice. Why did you growl when he kissed my hand though?" I was hoping that she would not remember that part of the conversation, but it turns out my mate is very quick witted. Grabbing some plates, I begin to explain to Daphne what I was feeling. "

Daphne usually when mates find each other, they mark each other. The mark is a bite, closer to the collar bone that releases some of your scent into your mate. This shows that the pair have accepted that they are mates. Even though I have accepted and am overjoyed that you are my mate, you have not fully accepted me yet. So, I did not mark you earlier even though I wanted to. I want you to take your time, a lot of things changed today in your world, and I want you to feel comfortable. When we mark each other, I do not want there to be any doubt in your mind that you are mine and I am yours. Although I am a patient man, my wolf is a protective beast, so when another man's lips touched your body, my wolf wanted to rip his throat out. I am sorry if I scared you." °

While I was explaining my actions to Daphne, we had been moving through the buffet line. I made sure to fill both plates with a little of everything. I do not know what my mate likes to eat yet, but I know that she is hungry and too shy to fill her own plate. So, I tried to ensure that she had plenty to choose from. Holding both plates, we walk to Marcus's table. «

As I set the plates down, a striking black-haired woman walks up behind Marcus and wraps her arms around his shoulders. He hugs her briefly and then stands up to introduce us.

"Alpha Caleb and Daphne, may I have the pleasure of introducing you two to my mate Lola." Marcus is clearly love struck and is gazing at his mate throughout the introduction.

"Lola it is a pleasure to meet you. This is my mate Daphne." We all settle around the table, and I can still feel that Daphne is nervous. "So please tell me Lola, where did you guys meet?" I am hoping that Daphne will relax if the conversation is flowing.

"Well Marcus had been traveling through Eugene, and I owned a little café there. He and his men stopped in for lunch one day and when our eyes met over the counter, I simply knew that he was meant to be mine. Before I know it this feral creature had hopped over my counter, smashing some of my coffee cups and was trying to tote me out of my own café." Lola is animated, and bubbly a lot like Hannah. She uses her hands to add drama to the story. Lola's words are meant to be in humor, and I can see that Marcus's face has gone a little red from her retelling of the meeting. Even Daphne is giggling at my friend's antics.

"So finally, I convince this brute to set me down, and I gave him a piece of my mind right there on the street." Lola is now laughing, and I am trying to imagine my friend getting yelled at by his mate in the street. "Then to shut me up he simply kissed me. From that moment on we have not been apart. I thank the Moon Goddess everyday for allowing our paths to cross." Now they are staring at each other, and it is easy to see the love flowing freely between them. I am very happy for my friend. Marcus was like me, afraid of turning feral. We had many long conversations about it. So, to see that he has found his mate brings peace to my heart. I like Lola, she seems strong and vibrant an

excellent match for Marcus who can be kind of caveman like. Absently I reach for Daphne's hand, and softly caress the back of her hand. I wonder if these two women realize that they are our savlors?

"Ok, so that's our story. What about you two? How did you guys meet?" Lola directs the question at us.

"Surprisingly, we just met today' I tell her. "Daphne was a member of the Silver Moon pack, and I knew the moment that I seen her that she was my mate. You both will be invited to our mating ceremony; everything has just happened so fast that we have not set a date yet." I left out that Daphne had been a slave. I was not ashamed of the fact; I just did not know if that would embarrass her. '

"Daphne we must get together and have a girl's day when our men are out doing whatever it is men do." Lola reaches across the table and squeezes Daphne's hand. I am eternally grateful that Lola seems genuine and caring. I would like Daphne to make some friends, and to feel comfortable in her new life. Daphne agrees, and we settle into gentle conversation about the ball, the decorations, and everyday life. I notice that Daphne has eaten a good portion of her plate, and I am pleased. I do not want her to want for anything. Lola pulls Marcus away to dance, and Daphne and I have a moment to ourselves.

"So, are you having a little bit of fun my love?"

"Yes, I like them both very much. Lola is so animated." Daphne seems a little more relaxed.

"I am glad that you ate, I am sorry I did not get you food earlier."

"Oh no that's ok, I am just happy that I did not have to eat the leftovers."

Daphne says giggling a little. She does not realize that her words have sparked another bout of rage within me. I want to tear the heads off all her tormentors, particularly her fathers. To know that my mate survived from scraps from other people's plates is unfathomable to me. °

"Daphne you will never have to eat other people's scraps again. I will always ensure that you have a full plate and that you are not hungry. Although my culinary skills are not great, I can make a few meals." I am trying to lighten the mood, hoping that my rage stays in check. *

I notice that Daphne is watching the dance floor. "Would you care to dance my dear?"

She is biting her lower lip as she looks at me, nervous as usual. "I might step on your feet or fall."

“That is a risk I am willing to take, as long as I get to hold you in my arms.” Daphne blushes a little at my words, but she nods letting me know that she would like to dance. Wrapping my arms around her waist I lead her out onto the dance floor.