

## Chapter 0006

Dane

She didn't trust me. Not a single inch of her which only made me question her history more. I wanted to know everything. I wanted to know her inside and out. I wanted to know who it was that had turned her life upside down all those years ago and why they had chosen to pin it on a child.

While she was being seen by Raven, I put in a call to my Beta, Eric, he was keeping an eye on the Moonshine pack and I wanted to know if there was anything that he had found out of place.

So far, the answer was nothing, which only made me wonder how much they were keeping hidden from the world. How deep did their secrets run? Because until Trey reached out to me, I had never heard of the Moonshine Pack. A pack that lived less than fifty miles from us. I wondered if Neah knew that.

I told him to head back, the pack run is tonight and he needed to be here for that.

I couldn't help but notice how Neah hadn't smiled once since I had met her. Not once did her strange scent change to show that she was even a little happier. Something that I would need to change, especially if she is to be my mate.

Running my hand across her stomach, she holds her breath and keeps her eyes off of me, finding anything else to look at.

"Are you afraid of me?" I ask directly as she lets her sweatshirt fall down.

'Of course she is, just look at her.' Aero mutters as he paces in my mind.

I see how she bites the inside of her cheek as she thinks of something to say. "Everyone is." She mutters breathlessly.

I cock an eyebrow at her.

"You have the biggest pack. You've gone to war and absorbed other packs. You have killed multiple Alphas. People ask for your help, you don't ask for theirs. It would be stupid to not fear you."

I smile and I could feel Aero's joy too, we had worked hard to become the Alpha that we are.

Neah was smarter than what her brother made her out to be. "That's not what I meant. I know my position in the world. I'm talking about you. Are you, Neah, afraid of me?"

Quickly, her eyes fall to the ground. I wish she wouldn't do that. I could stare into them all day.

"I am not them." I announce when her silence continues. I would never stoop as low as them. I would never beat a woman for my own benefit.

"Were there others like you?" Normally where there was one, there were multiples, hidden away from sight.

She shakes her head. "Only me."

It made it a hundred times worse knowing that they only hurt her. That everyone else was considered to be above her when she carried Alpha blood.

"You are one person who never needs to fear me. I want you to know that."

She pulls the sleeves of the sweatshirt down over her hands. Hiding more of herself from me.

By nightfall, she still hadn't spoken first. Every conversation came from me and always ended with her just nodding or shaking her head. She was almost impossible to read, but I loved a challenge.

"You need to sleep." I mutter, guiding her towards the stairs. She had no Wolf and would not be able to join us for a pack run.

Her blue eyes move to the large clock hanging on the wall, still she keeps her mouth closed, keeping her thoughts to herself.

She follows me through the house back to my bedroom. Allowing me to put the cream on her stomach again. Just like before, she holds her breath, only this time, she doesn't seem as afraid as she was earlier and watches me instead of closing her eyes.

"Goodnight." I mutter. As I lean in to kiss her on the cheek, she tenses up as her heart races. I was expecting her to run, but she stays rooted to the spot, her eyes squeezed tightly shut.

She lets out a little gasp as I walk back to the door. "You're leaving?" she whispers, surprised

"It's a full moon tonight. I lead the pack run. I will be back in a few hours but you will most likely be asleep."

"Pack run?" she mumbles, her brow knitting together

"You know, when the pack goes on a big hunt altogether." Her eyes grow wider the more I talk. "Moonshine don't do a pack run?" As far as I was aware, everyone did it.

She shakes her head.

I give her a reassuring smile. "You will get used to them. Get some sleep. Because when you have your Wolf back, you will be joining us."

As I start to close the door, she still remains in the same spot, staring at me, confused.

Downstairs, I find Eric and Jenson waiting for me.

"How's it going with the new girl?" Jenson asks, unbuttoning his shirt.

"Neah is staying and Moonshine doesn't do pack runs." I mutter, mulling over Neah's words

"Are you serious?" Eric questions. "I thought that was standard everywhere. All Wolves are empowered on the night of a full moon, and it's the best time to hunt."

I frown at Eric, "You sure you didn't see anything unusual?"

"From my position, they acted just like everyone else. Some went to work, some stayed and trained, others harvested their crops" He cocks a brow at me. "Why, what do you think they are hiding?"

"For starters, who really killed Neah's parents."

"Trey?" Eric suggests

"I don't think Trey is smart enough to do that. The idiot didn't even bother to read the contract." Jenson mutters

"I think we should pay them a visit tomorrow." Jenson suggests

"Surprise them?" I mutter

"Sometimes, it's better when they don't know we are coming!"

"True. Trey was pissed about my arrival."

When the hunt is over, I confirm with Eric and Jenson what time we will be heading out before making my way upstairs for a shower.

Slipping quietly through the bedroom door, I was glad to see Neah fast asleep in the bed. I half expected her to have ran. To have used the opportunity to escape. Instead, she's curled up in a small ball, hugging a pillow, still in the sweats I had given her earlier.

She doesn't wake while I shower, she doesn't even stir when I flick the light on. Almost like she was used to sleeping in a confined space, at any time of the day.

Drying off, I climb into bed with her. Pulling her tiny, weak frame against me. She makes a few funny noises as she starts to wake, but quickly falls back to sleep.

Waking before her, I couldn't help but watch her sleep. At some point during the night, she had rolled herself over, facing me. In the early morning light, you could see a faint splattering of freckles across her nose.

She gasps, suddenly sitting upright and rubbing her eyes. "Where am I?"

"Neah, you are in my pack, remember."

Her blue eyes lock on mine before they drift downwards, to my bare chest and then to the sheet that was barely covering me.

"Are you... Are you naked?!" There's a rosiness to her cheeks that didn't make her look so fragile.

"I prefer it that way, especially in my own bed." I smirk at her

She pats herself down, checking that she was still wearing clothes and lets out a sigh of relief as she realises she is still fully dressed.

'We could strip her.' Aero mutters. 'We could show her what we really want.'

'We need to take it slower.' I mutter back. 'She isn't like any of the others.'

Aero sulks at my comment, slinking off to the back of my mind. Thankfully, as I had gotten older, I had become better at keeping him under control.

Neah crosses the room, shutting herself in the small room with the toilet. I could hear her muttering to herself about keeping it together.

"When you are done," I call out, "we need to put your cream on."

Ten minutes pass before she makes an appearance. She eyeballs me as I pull on a black tee.

"Eric, Jenson and I have an errand to run. You will be staying here." I grab the pot of cream and gesture for her to lift her top.

"Alone?" she asks, her voice quivers as she rolls her top up.

"Alone." I confirm. "Well, there will be others here, so not completely alone." My hand hovers on her stomach a little longer.

'She's right here.' Aero growls

Dropping my hand, Aero sulks. He wanted to prove a point. To claim her as ours, to finally put a silence to the rumours surrounding us.