

Taming The Alpha's Daughter

Chapter 13

Their screams did nothing to abate my fury at finally finding her. Killing them a thousand times over would not be enough for the torture they put her through, yet as the last cabin burned to the ground, and the cabins crumbled in a pile of ash I knew I could not sit here for much longer. Casen drops onto the steps beside me, pulling his smokes from his pocket. He offers me the packet and I take it, staring at what is left. Now, what do I do with myself? For years I have chased the phantom, for years I chased her ghost and now I have found her all I can think of is my mother's words so long ago.

"Some people can't be fixed," My mother told me that her aura resembled that of someone going insane. After years of feeling her, I knew what she said was true. Temperance is more animal than human. That I am certain of.

Casen pats himself down and curses pulling the smoke from between his lips. "Got a lighter?" he asks as I stare ahead. I hoped finding her and seeking revenge would fill this hollow void inside me, yet all it's done is made it larger, more infinite, and more consuming because now am no longer chasing, I have no reason to not go home. No more excuses to not take my place as Alpha. No, now I have to see if any part of her is salvageable, if not I'll spend the rest of my life caring for her, keeping her safe.

Holding up my finger, Casen puts his smoke

between his lips, then presses the tip of it to my finger which glows red with heat. Smoke wafts in my face and he sits back drawing back on the

smoke.

"I never get used to your ability to manipulate light," he says exhaling and I light my own.

"So now what?" Casen asks me. And I lean back making sure the surrounding forest doesn't burn as the embers burn out. It starts to sprinkle rain, like mist coating everything and extinguishing what remains.

"No idea. I might stop in and see Marabella before heading home."

"Can you drop me at your uncle's on the way?" he asks and I nod my head.

"Going back to see Rose?" I ask him and he sighs.

"If she'll see me. Although, I am nervous. I haven't spoken to her in years." I purse my lips, because I feel the same. I was nervous to go back home as well, nervous to see my fathers, but more importantly nervous to take Temperance home with me. Casen and I sit out on the porch and finish our smokes when I glance at the front over my shoulder.

"She's still asleep. I wouldn't have come out if she was awake." Casen tells me. Nodding, I get up and walk inside the packhouse. Her scent is strong in the living room where she is sleeping on the old checkered green and white couch; an old dirty blanket is chucked over her and the fire is going out in the old fireplace. An old box TV sits in one corner, the screen door shuts with a bang when Casen walks in. Glancing at him, he nods toward the hall and I cast a glance at her one last time before following him. Besides the living room, I cannot smell her scent here until we stop at a door.

"Did you go down there?" I ask him, staring at the old brass door handle, the wooden frame its on is covered with multiple locks.

"No, I don't want to know what is down there. I've watched you sleep for years, that is enough for my imagination, I don't want to see the things you scream about!" Casen tells me and I swallow and Casen wanders off back to Temperance. Twisting the locks and pulling on the handle I open it. The stench down here is putrid and steals my breath, a cold shiver runs through me as the icy stagnant air rushes over me. I run my hands down the wall looking for a light, but don't find one. It is pitch black down here and I take the first step.

My eyes adapt and my vision turns luminescent as Malachi comes forward giving me his sight. The stairs creak as I take them, some feel like they would give way any moment. My footsteps are loud and I remember her fear as if it was mine every time she would hear those locks twist, every time she would hear the stairs creak. Reaching the bottom, I peer around the dark empty space, my eyes first land on the dog crate in the corner of the room.

It reeks of her blood, reeks of death down here and I find it when I turn my head to spot the skeleton laying discarded in the dirt. I could tell this person had been dead for quite some time, his clothes all moth-eaten, and moldy. Not a scrape of decaying flesh, and the bones looked old. Walking toward the cage, I touch it, my eyes closing as I remember the way she would stick her fingers through the mesh.

Shadow is her friend in the dark she used to call for. And Nova, her wolf, would tell her stories, or tell her to be quiet, to hide in the shadows of her mind, no longer split but shared between them. Nova was no longer just a wolf but a human counterpart and Temperance spent the vast majority in her head, she became her wolf's alter ego, and she became the wolf while Nova turned into the vessel. Looking toward the spot she would stare, I turned around with a gasp, instead of finding a second cage, I found a mirror. It is fractured, cracked, and stained from years of rotting down here, yet the reflection is foggy but almost clear. Looking at the mirror it reminds me of my mate, she too is fractured, waiting in the dark, searching for the next reflection. Waiting for a new image to appear.

"Where is Shadow's cage?" Malachi asks me confused, despite being in my head he still hadn't figured it out.

"Here," I tell him, grabbing the mesh of her cage, my fingers sticking between bars like hers did so many times..

"Eziah?" Malachi whimpers in my head as clarity washes over me, she truly was broken, truly was insane like my mother claimed. Yet as I spoke the words I remember how she morphed from a beautiful white wolf into a magnificent black one.

"Shadow never existed outside of her cage, Malachi." I tell him.

"She existed within her reflection." I whisper, looking at the mirror that sat across from her.

"She was talking to herself?" Malachi questions. But I shake my head.

"No, Malachi. She was talking to her wolf."

"Nova is her wolf, mother told us this." Malachi states, in denial about what we saw. He is convinced it was a trick of the light but there is no mistaking that she indeed changed, that she

became something else. "And so is Shadow, she isn't a vessel for one Malachi, she's a vessel for two." As I speak the words aloud I can feel the truth behind them. Taste the rightfulness of what I claim.

"How is that possible?" Malachi questions and I shake my head.

"I have no idea, but--"

"Ah, Eziah!" Casen sings out and my head turns toward the stairs. My eyes widen when I hear a feral growl emanate from upstairs and I run up the stairs, taking them two at a time and burst into the hall. My feet skid on along the floor when I rush to the living room. Temperance is standing on the couch, claws extended from her fingertips and canines protruding.

Thold my hands up in what should be a placating gesture when her eyes go to me, that odd combination, one pink and one blue. Yet one glows brighter than the other.

The pink eye burned brightly back at me.

"Temperance, I need you to calm down," I tell her softly and her chest rises and falls heavily.

"L won't go back down there! You'll have to kill me first! I'm done rotting like his corpse! I won't watch her suffer anymore. I will put her out of her misery before I watch that again!" she screams, spittle flies from her lips as she snarls and fur grows up her arms. Only it isn't white but black.

"That's not Temperance," Malachi tells me just as I figure it out myself.

"Nova?" I whisper and she growls. Her lips pull back over her teeth which are dripping with venom.

"Do you not recognize me, Nova?" I whisper. She tilts her head to the side watching me. Yet the moment I mention her name her other eye glows, and flickers for a second, the same way Casen's does when Zyan comes forward before being suppressed by Casen.

"You're not Nova are you?" I ask her and she sniffs the air.

"Come closer and find out." She challenges and her eyes glaze over taking on a sadistic gleam.

I inhale putting myself between her and Casen. "Hello, Shadow," I whisper and her eyes flash, her lips tugging up wickedly.