

## Chapter 5

AIDAN

I stared at the woman, who looked startled. She shakes her head.

"Sorry young Alpha," she says. "What's going on? I have just seen the re as I pulled up here. It is horrendous. I hope no one's hurt."

My heart sinks at the possibility that Mia may be in there.

Clearing my throat, I spoke to her. "It's our Beta's cabin that he lives in with his daughter. I am heading here to see if she made it safely."

The woman stills and looks saddened by my words. "If she were in there, she wouldn't be alive. I am sorry, young Alpha."

My heart sank.

I gave her a small smile and turned to leave when I realized I had never introduced myself to her. "Sorry for being rude; my name is Aidan," I said.

"I'm Gwen," she says with a smile. "I'm the representative for the Dark Forest Pack."

I nodded and smiled. "It's nice to meet you, Gwen."

My eyes took her in. She would be around my mother's age. She didn't look like she was dressed for the party.

"Gwen?" I asked, looking toward Lee and Darren, who were frowning at me. I looked back at her. "I have to ask, where have you been? I didn't see you around the party earlier."

Gwen gave me a sheepish look and held up her duffel bag. "I left this in my car," she mumbles. "But my car had a flat earlier. So, I had to put it in the garage a few miles away. I had a lift to the place and came back here."

I looked at her and smiled. "That's ok. Why don't you rest?" I said. "I must go to the re to ensure it doesn't spread."

Gwen nods and heads through the pack house.

I turned and walked up to the boys.

My eyes went to the sky, where the thickest black smoke bellowed. We shift into my wolves and head straight to Beta David's cabin. We ran as fast as we could go to get to the cabin.

The re was bad as we approached and had spread to most of the trees nearby. I could see most of the pack members trying to put out the re with what water they could find.

The boys and I shift back into our human forms. Darren hands all of us shorts to put on.

I looked at the cabin. We all used to go here when we were younger, when David made it for his mate and Mia.

My alpha part kicked in, and I barked orders to everyone. We needed to control the re.

"GET THE HELICOPTER FROM THE FIELD!" I shouted to a few men. They nod and take off running. As a pack, my father bought a few things we might need, and a helicopter was one of them.

"COLLECT SOME WATER FROM THE LAKE," I shouted again over a group of men nearby. I watched as they ran toward the lake.

As a pack, we are the second largest pack with a few things we can pay for, but this is not the first time a re has caught in the forest. There have been a few wildfires made, but nothing this big.

Over the next several hours, as the sun was slowly coming up, they finally put the re out. It took many people to get it out, but as a pack, we did.

I look at where the cabin used to stand. Nothing was left, only a few wooden pieces stood on the ground. I approached the cabin and surveyed the remains. There was nobody left. Even if Mia was there, there was definitely no sign of her now.

"WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?" a voice roars from behind me. I looked over my shoulder and saw David standing with my father. The horror on his face made him look ill, but it could be the hangover from the drink.

"There was an explosion here, David," I tell him, even if we don't know for certain. I had to tell him something. "We got it under control, but it spread to parts of the forest."

David looked at me with a blank expression.

"Where is my daughter?" he mumbled as his eyes moved to where the cabin stood.

"We don't know," I mumbled, staring at him. "If she was in here, there is no sign of her now."

David looks blankly, but he falls to the ground. "What have I done?" he whispers, with tears in his eyes.

"It's not your fault, my friend," my father muttered.

Pain filled the air. You could feel it coming from people around me. It was smothering.

My father places his hand on Beta David's shoulder.

My eyes go to the grieving man. Beta David keeps repeating the same words repeatedly. He was a mess. My father motioned for a guard to come over to help him.

The guard helped my father to get David up to his feet. I watch as my father tells the guard to take him. The guard nods and helps David back through the trees.

My father watched his best friend leave. He sighs and looks at me. "He will live in the pack house with us. Whatever he needs, we will support him," he says. His eyes scanned the scene. I could tell at that moment that my father's heart was shattered. After a moment, he leaves to follow his friend back to the pack house.

My eyes looked around. Pack members were packing up to leave and heading back. I looked at Darren and Lee, sitting on the side of the clearing on a tree trunk.

I walked over and joined them. "Can't believe this happened," says Lee, as I sat down next to him. His eyes were on the empty charcoal wood.

My heart hurt.

"We shouldn't have followed or listened to Chloe," Darren blurts out, guilt riddling him. "Mia was our friend before her, yet we all accepted what she said. Even you, Aidan."

I looked at my friend, who glared at me. "You started a relationship with her, even when you were with Mia."

Anger filled me while my wolf growled. There was something up with him as he placed a block on me. He never liked the way we all treated Mia. He would go back further into my head when something was happening.

I kept quiet, as words would only fuel the anger and guilt.

My mind raced over the last few years with Mia and how it got to where we had been.

Mia changed dramatically over the last few years, especially when her mother left. Everyone blamed her, especially David.

Mia changed her appearance completely after that. She loved showing her legs off and wearing the most gorgeous dresses to school or parties. She was cute, but she became a different person when she changed, especially when she didn't shift.

Everyone shunned her the day she didn't get her wolf. She changed her appearance, wearing more baggy clothes, things that would cover her up. Her brown hair was messy, and she always wore the same thing, as if she slept in them.

Shaking my thoughts away, I sighed and looked at my friends. "Let's go home and sleep. It's been a long night," I said. Lee nodded, but Darren looked at the cabin once more. "What do you think happened in there?" He said. "I wonder if she got out."

I wondered the same, but Mia seemed weak.

I know we all bullied her, but more must have been going on. I looked back at my friend. "I hope she did, but there is no point in thinking about it."

I got up and looked back at him. "We should all get some sleep," I said with a smile. Tonight, Darren found his mate. "By the way, dude, you have a mate now."

Darren looks at me with a small smile. "Hot Evie is my mate," he says, making me laugh a little.

"Yeah, dude, she is all yours," I said as we stepped away and headed back through the forest and to the pack house.