

## Chapter 7

MIA

I woke up with a start. My eyes scanned around to see where we were.

We were still in the car, and the radio played softly in the background.

Moving up in my seat, I shake the dreaded feeling I had. I had a nightmare. I dreamt I was trapped in a burning building. I felt the heat, making my body boil.

“You ok, Mia? You were having a nightmare,” Sasha says, her voice filling the car. I look over at her as she stares at me and then back at the road.

Clearing my throat, I try to get comfy in my seat. “I’m okay. How much further is it to the pack?” I ask, trying to switch the subject of talking over. She doesn’t say anything for a moment. “Another two hours.”

I groan as I look at the clock on the dash. We have been in the car for over three hours. Where the hell was this pack to?

Sensing my unease, Sasha spoke again. “We will have to get out and stretch our legs soon,” she says. “I know a cafe that is only five minutes away from here. We can have an hour to walk around, eat, and freshen up.”

That sounds like a plan. I nod.

We carry along the journey in silence until five minutes later; a cafe appears, one of the small ones in the middle of nowhere in the movies.

I look at it. It was small and had loads of glass around it. I could make out two people working and one man in a booth as we approached. Sasha pulled the car into the car park as the man from the booth left the cafe.

We both climb out of the car once she knocks the engine off. I was as he looked at Sasha and smiled before climbing into his car and leaving.

“They know each other,” Lyla mumbles in my head.

Lyla had been quiet for most of the journey. She fell asleep when I did.

I said nothing but looked at Sasha, who smiled.

“Do you know him?” I ask her, and she blushes at me. “Yeah, I do. He is one of my brother’s friends.” She looks at me. “I will introduce you to everyone once you have settled in the pack.”

I said nothing as we headed into the cafe. We open the door and walk over to a booth. I slid in opposite Sasha and grabbed the menus.

I looked through the menu when an older woman came with a smile. She stares at me for a moment but looks between us. “What can I get you?” she asked. After a few seconds, we decided on burgers with fries and two coffees.

The woman takes the menus and leaves. I look forward and catch Sasha looking at me. “How are you feeling now?” she asked, looking concerned.

“I’m fine,” I muttered and looked around. There was no one else around. I looked back at her and gave her a small smile. “My leg doesn’t hurt much now.”

Sasha nodded and smiled. “That’s good to hear,” she said. “Maybe Lyla healed you.”

Lyla moved in my head and sighed. “I’m trying,” she murmured. “But it is very deep. I don’t think I can heal it all. It will leave a scar.”

“It doesn’t matter,” I tell her, feeling her guilt slip through. “I’m used to having scars. What’s another one going to do?”

Anya said nothing. I felt her plop down.

My eyes went to Sasha. “She’s trying,” I muttered as I leaned back.

Sasha nodded.

There was an awkward silence between us. My eyes went to the photos on the cafe walls. There were many scenery photos and many forests, but all at different times of the day. I like the snow one. The whiteness of the snow made the whole place look magical somehow.

“Could you tell me what happened?” Sasha blurts out.

My eyes widen as I stare at her, stunned.

“What do you mean?” I ask, playing with my fingers in my lap but keeping my eyes on her.

Sasha leans back and sighs. “The injuries that you got,” she asks. “I saw many scars when I undressed you. They look like they are from separate incidents.”

I stayed quiet for a while. But she opened her mouth again and spoke. “I know you don’t know me and may think I’m being nosy, but like I said at the motel, I want to be your friend, Mia, if you let me. I will protect you and Lyla, too,” she says.

I don’t say anything at first, but as I open my mouth, the older lady approaches us with our coffees. I close my mouth as she places the mugs before us and leaves shortly afterward.

My eyes follow the woman until she goes behind the counter and into the back.

I look back at Sasha, trying to figure out if I should tell her everything. I have never had anyone look out for me, not even rescue me as she and her friend did. I owe them everything as they saved my life.

“Tell her,” Lyla whispers. “She may be able to help us.”

I ignore Lyla and move my head to the side, taking in Sasha. Her eyes linger on me for a moment but softened. “I didn’t mean to—” she says, but I shake my head.

“It’s okay,” I mutter. “I will tell you. But I am trying to think where to begin.”

Sasha nodded. “Start at the beginning or wherever you want,” she says as she sips her coffee. I place my hands around mine and stare into it. I keep my eyes down as I don’t want to look at Sasha because I feel ashamed.

“Well, I was attacked by some people from school,” I mutter. “They lied to someone, resulting in my father hurting me.”

I feel tears prick in my eyes, which makes me close my eyes as a lone one escapes. “You know what the worst thing is? The people that hurt me in school were my friends once,” I say, opening my eyes and looking at Sasha. Her face was blank. “It all started when this new girl came to the pack. I was even her boyfriend’s girlfriend.”

I leaned back as I felt my heart shatter slightly at the mere mention of Aidain, but I continued. “She started spreading lies about me, and everyone turned against me, including my friends,” I say. “All of them hated me, but it was all because of her.”

A low growl erupted from Sasha, making me tense. I watched as she closed her eyes and took deep breaths.

Lyla looked through my eyes and stared at her. “She’s angry,” she muttered. “So is her wolf.” I say nothing.

Once Sasha calms down, she opens her eyes and looks at me. “Sorry,” she muttered. “Continue.”

I open my mouth to speak, but I hear footsteps behind the counter. I close my mouth and see the older woman walking over with our plates on a tray.