

Chapter 144

River POV

"Weren't you too harsh on Lena?" Hunter said as we drove back to the Dark Moon pack. This time instead of going by helicopter, we chose to go by road. I had strapped both the kids in their car seats as Hunter drove and I sat on the passenger seat. Rest of our team was driving behind us while one warrior group was in the car in front of us.

I didn't reply to him and started looking out. Hunter added, "Lena was the one who shot Canna's hand in order to take control. It was a moment of quick decision. Had she not taken that chance, things would have been different now."

I still didn't reply and took a deep breath in. So Hunter carried on, "Lena is a fierce Beta. I know that sometimes she becomes fiercely loyal to her pack members, but she's been your childhood friend."

"I don't want to talk about her, Hunter!" I snapped. "She was the one who wanted me to send Hawk to stay at Crescent pack at the age of five. She was not just the mouthpiece of the Elders she too wanted it! I am too angry with my childhood friend who used to think about me, but now her thinking has changed a lot. Maybe I don't need her as my Beta if she won't think about my benefits."

Hunter took out a rough exhale. "River, I know that you are very upset about it but—"

"Upset?" I scoffed. "Try saying shocked, numbed, dazed. I couldn't think of anything else other than my child those past three days. I was numb! I wonder if you know how that feels?" I looked back at Hawk who was sleeping. My gaze went to Arthur who was looking outside at something intensely. When I turned to look there, I saw a lion running along the jungles, meandering his way through the hills and the plains as if trying to keep his pace with us.

Hunter's words brought me back. "But whatever happened, happened when Hawk was less than five. It was a regular visit for us. For god's sake what is wrong with you, River?"

"Everything is wrong, Hunter!" I pointed out. "Can't you see that there were lapses in the security of the pack. Lena was too hung up on the fact that Hawk should be there with the Crescent pack rather than keeping a close vigil on the pack's activities? How is it possible that an omega nurse, whose parents

worked in my mansion, was able to help Hector in something as big as kidnapping my son? Hawk is no ordinary child. He is the son of two Alphas! He would be a powerful wolf when he grows up and look what happened to him? Why did Lena not check on the security of the pack? What are her duties as the Beta? What are her duties when I am away from the pack? Can you explain?"

Hunter snapped his mouth shut. This was where he couldn't speak a word. Lena's lack of providing security to our son was something even he couldn't refute. How could a woman as petite as Mink carry such a ghastly act right under our noses. Before I left, I had ordered her execution. And not just an ordinary one. I ordered her to be hanged by the tallest tree outside the pack. I wanted everyone to see her and take a lesson never to repeat what she did. Though her parents begged that they didn't know what their daughter had done, it remained to be investigated. I had thrown them in my dungeons. They would never see the light of the day unless they were thoroughly investigated.

We drove in silence for the next four hours. It's not that I didn't want to speak and reach out to him. I was craving for his touch. It was just that both of us were reserved about our opinions. Hunter always thought of my well-being and I knew that by talking about Lena, he was only interested in my well-being. But right now nothing was more important than Hawk. So when she asked about a month's holiday, I granted her. Maybe by then I would cool down.

"Would you like to get down, River?" Hunter asked me. "There's a great hotel with a restaurant just a mile from here and we can have food there. The restaurant owner is a human and a very good friend."

I was surprised. "You never told me earlier about it?"

He chuckled. "It must have slipped my mind. Besides, you always traveled by road. Shawn is a nice man and has a daughter from his girlfriend. He met his girlfriend when she was in college. He fell in love with her. They were going strong for two years when all of a sudden, she said, she wanted to break. But by that time they had their baby. Shawn tried to stop her but she was too ambitious and left him. With their daughter. Shawn hasn't married after that. His daughter is ten months old now."

"So how did he come to have a hotel in the shifter world?" I asked, curiosity killing me.

"He was heartbroken and we were already looking for someone to build a restaurant on that highway. Many shifters use this route to reach their packs. I

offered him the opportunity and he lapped it up instantly. I guess he wanted to get away from everything that reminded him of his girlfriend!"

"Oh, poor man," I said with a sigh and shaking my head. "But I hope that he adjusts to the shifter world. And what about his daughter? Who looks after her?"

Hunter shrugged. "I don't know. I think he must have employed a shifter nanny only."

"It will be quite interesting to see how he manages all the shifters around him. I mean they are stronger than him and can threaten to kill him easily!"

Hunter laughed. "No they won't. The main reason is that he is under my protection and the other reason is that his hotel is making good money. Everyone loves money. There's hardly a day when his hotel is not fully occupied."

This was really interesting. I didn't know how many people Hunter helped, but it was overwhelming to know that he did what he could. No wonder he had so many friends across the world. "I won't mind..." I replied. I was tired of sitting for so long and I was sure that pups needed a break too. They were already whining and shifting in the seat.

He drove to the hotel and as soon as we parked, his team surrounded us. The hotel was beautifully nestled in a thicket of trees. It was a five-story building with a glass façade. A lush garden was wrapped around it with flowers blooming everywhere. As soon as we entered, I was astonished to see the lobby. Dappled in yellow light, the place had beautiful wall-to-wall carpets. There was a big marble round table in the center on which sat a vase full of white roses and hydrangea. As soon as the receptionist saw us, he came running to us.

"Alpha Hunter!" he rasped and bowed to us. "It's a pleasure to have you with us." Then he signaled to his assistant who bowed to us and disappeared somewhere inside.

Hawk was in my lap, while Arthur was in Hunter's. "Can you guide us to the restaurant?" Hunter asked him. "My wife is very hungry!"

I bit my bottom lip to stop myself from laughing. As if he wasn't hungry.

"Sure, Alpha," the man said and took us to the restaurant that was located in the east wing.

I was again surprised to see that it was pretty occupied. Everyone looked at us and they stood up to bow to us. Those who didn't bow to us were definitely

from other packs. It was nice to know that people from other packs also flocked to this place.

The receptionist, a Lycan from Dark Moon pack, guided us through the tables towards a private sitting room. As soon as we settled, two warriors stood guard at the entrance. My pups were very hungry and I knew it was time to feed them. I went to the nursing room and started to feed my pups. However, the moment I started, the door of the min room banged open and I heard cheers.

"Hunter!"

"Shawn!"

I heard them exchanging pleasantries. The men talked to each other as if they picked up right from where they started. I fed both of them and gave them to Faria who took them out for a short walk so that the two burped.

When I came out, Hunter introduced me to a tall blond man with amber eyes. "Shawn, this is my wife, River. River, this is Shawn."

I smiled at him as we shook hands. He looked... kind.

"Your wife is beautiful!" Shawn said and my cheeks pinkened. It was nice to have someone who didn't understand or went by the shifter rules.

Hunter grasped me by my upper arm and tucked me beside him in a territorial way. "Yes, she is," he growled. "And she is mine."

Shawn jerked his head back and then burst out laughing. "Oh, I am sorry. I always forget how territorial wolves are."

The lunch was served to us while Hunter and Shawn talked to each other. Twenty minutes later, Faria came in and made the pups on the baby dining table and chairs. She smiled at Shawn and left. As Hunter introduced my pups to Shawn, a girl entered the room with a cute, blond baby in her lap whose eyes were just like her father's.

"And this is my daughter, Lia," Shawn said proudly, holding her in his lap.

Lia's eyes went to my pups who had both stopped babbling as their gazes fixed on her.