

Alpha's Rejected 18

Chapter 18 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

The hunting trip was ruined. After Darius confronted me and the anxious night I slept, keeping an ear out in case he came back, I was dead tired the next day and slept until early afternoon. What a waste! So much for the alone time that I had been craving. I got up and munched annoyed, on a granola bar, reluctantly putting the tent away in my backpack. I wish I could spend another night out here, it still beats being at the house, but I had school tomorrow and work. It was a miracle I hadn't ended up with work at all this weekend, but the bookstore hadn't been busy of late and Leo had insisted I have a break. With everything going on, I didn't have the heart or the inclination to argue with him.

The forest was quiet. Butterflies chased each other as I watched, birds chirping from their nests as I walked beneath them. It was tranquil and the perfect sanctuary. I have always loved the outdoors, maybe because I can't stand to be near my family for too long, but the forest had always felt like home to me. It called to me, in ways that nobody else would understand. I walked slowly, every footstep one step closer to home, feeling my heart thudding painfully in my chest. Would I be allowed to sneak into my room without interruption, or were Sophie and my parents home? I vehemently hoped they were all out but I doubted I would be that lucky.

I was close to the pack boundary when I smelt it, my nose wrinkling in disgust, my heart beginning to pound away madly in my chest. The smell was repugnant, reminiscent of rotten meat and eggs and my whole body began to feel paralyzed with fear. I knew instantly what that scent meant, everybody who was a shifter did. I willed myself to turn around and met the red, glowing eyes of a rogue who was watching me intently, its head cocked to the side as it sniffed me.

Do not panic, I chanted to myself, slowly lowering the backpack to the ground. But my body was tensing, prepared for a fight, I was most likely to lose. Even if I could get my bow and arrow out, it would take too long and the rogue would rip me to shreds in the meantime. I have no wolf so I can't mind-link the pack for help and if I screamed, the rogue would be startled into fighting, not to mention I had my doubts anybody would actually give a damn and come to my rescue.

I begin to slowly back away, my eyes on the mangy mutt in front of me. It lowers its head and then begins to race right towards me, its paws hitting the ground with large thuds. I bolt, running away, darting between the trees. I can hear the rogue right behind me. I dodge and then duck just in time for the rogue to go flying overhead. I grab hold of a large branch nearby, brandishing it haphazardly, biting my lip in determination. I would be damned if I died this way. The rogue leaps and I whack it hard against its back with the branch, dodging to the side and backing away slowly. It gives a loud yelp and

then a low ferocious growl, as it glares right at me. It pulls back it slips and snarls at me. I wave the branch at it.

"Go away" I shout "before it's too late for you."

The rogue lets out a huff that sounds like laughter. Fuck, it can sense I have no wolf and it's not going anywhere. Not when it has a meal right in front of him.

It runs towards me and I whirl to the side, smacking it over the head with the branch and effectively breaking the branch in two. I could almost cry in frustration. The two pieces are no good to me now and I fling them over my head and throw them at the rogue if only to slow it down for a minute or two.

It snaps its jaws at me and I flinch, backing away until my back hits the trunk of a nearby tree, causing me to cry out. Its eyes are gleaming with what looks like triumph now and I tense, waiting for the final attack. Instead, to my shock, a large black wolf comes crashing through the trees and hits the rogue head-on, sending it flying back a few feet into the nearest tree. The rogue growls, and I stare in stunned silence, as the black wolf looks over at me, as though trying to determine if I'm alright. I hesitate, peering at it closely. Could it possibly be Darius's wolf? I had yet to see it but he wasn't an Alpha yet and this wolf was large, easily larger than myself and it looked experienced. It was so dark, like a shadow, and its eyes were piercing as it looked at me.

The rogue jumped and the black wolf leaped to meet it in mid-air, swiping and clawing furiously. They fell to the ground, in a tangle, each of them biting, swiping, clawing, and growling. My heart skipped a beat, hoping fervently that my rescuer would be okay. The black wolf leaps to its feet and backs up, its eyes never leaving the rogue who is beginning to look the worse for wear. I can see blood on both of them and feel sorry for the black wolf, even as I'm profusely grateful towards my rescuer, whoever they are. It definitely isn't Darius's father either, so maybe an Alpha from a neighboring pack? But why would they have been so close to our territory anyway? Were they perhaps a visitor? It's impossible to tell and extremely frustrating.

The black wolf races towards the rogue, sending it careening into a tree, its' body hitting the tree with a large thump, the rogue's body sliding to the floor. I watch, my heart in my throat, as the black wolf bends down and without ceremony, bites down on the rogue's neck, twisting it so that with a sickening crack, it breaks and the rogue's body slumps, no longer alive. The black wolf lets out a ferocious growl and then turns its head towards me, hesitating before walking to me. I reach out a trembling hand and slowly touch its fur. It's soft and silky, despite the blood staining some of it, and I feel tears form in the corner of my eyes. This wolf had gotten hurt saving me. I was in disbelief and in shock. sliding to the ground as the wolf sniffed my hair.

"Thank you" I whisper, hugging the wolf who sits on its haunches, staring down at me curiously. "I thought I was going to die back there" I admitted and it growls, pressing its head against mine, in an attempt to comfort me.

It makes me giggle. "I don't suppose you would shift so that I could thank you in person?" I ask lowly.

The wolf shakes its head.

"You are not Darius are you?" I check and the wolf shakes its head again.

So I was right then. I hug the wolf tightly, running my hands over to check its wounds. "You're hurt," I say sadly, "I'm sorry."

It lets out a huff and puffs its chest out. As if to say it was nothing.

I feel shaky all over as I force myself to my feet. I don't even care that I left my backpack back there, but the wolf looks at me, then trots off. I feel sad, but it comes back a few minutes later and drops the backpack at my feet. I hug the wolf profusely.

"Thanks," I say in a hushed voice, grabbing hold of it.

The wolf swings its head back towards my territory as though pushing me to leave. I take a deep breath. "Whoever you are, I sure as hell owe you a debt. So thank you from the bottom of my heart" I tell him.

The wolf nuzzles me and then begins to turn, running off as I watch with a heavy heart. This time, I know he's not coming back. Something like grief begins to fill me. I wonder why I'm so sad at the thought of never seeing the wolf again. Part of me wishes I could have gone with him.

Instead, I place the backpack back on my shoulders and begin the short journey to the pack grounds, the patrol barely raising an eyebrow despite my disheveled appearance. I shuddered. I had such a close call. It would be a while now before I had the nerve to step foot back in the forest and go hunting, or even

camping again. I, of course, had barely made it to the house, when Sophie came up behind me, beaming with a wide smile. She frowned when she saw my appearance, as I struggled to open the front door.

"What the hell happened to you" she muttered.

I raise an eyebrow. "Do you really care?"

"No," she says promptly.

Then why bother asking?

I get the front door open and stumble in, putting my backpack on the ground. "I have something to tell you" Sophie sings, looking all happy, ignoring the fact I was tired and quite frankly, could care less about what it was.

"Can it wait?" I say with a scowl "I kind of need a shower."

She shakes her head. "I wanted you to be the first to know" she exclaims loudly.

I can see Maria in the corridor, listening in on the conversation. I kindly do not point that out to Sophie who is oblivious to Maria's presence.

"Well then, what's the good news?" I ask her sarcastically. Something tells me whatever it is, I'm not going to like it.

Sure enough, she smirks at me and then moves the hair off her neck, exposing it and showing me the mark of a large black wolf on her shoulder. "Darius marked me" she squealed "so that everyone will know I'm his now."

I feel sick. She was enjoying rubbing this right in my face.

"Congratulations" I mumble, "I'm happy for you. Now can I go?" I say impatiently.

Her eyes narrow and her lips tighten. I guess she didn't quite get the reaction she was after. "Oh but that's not all," she says mysteriously "don't you want the rest of the good news?"

I fidget, restless, wanting nothing more than a damn shower before dinner. "Can you just spit it out Sophie" I snap "in case you haven't noticed, I'm not in the mood for this crap."

She laughs. It grates on my nerves. I'm about ready to lose it when she finally opens her mouth again and stops the laughter.

"You're going to be an Aunty. I'm pregnant Amber, can you believe it? I'm going to be a mother and Darius is going to be a father."

I say nothing, my world collapsing on me once more, but it's something I've gotten used to and I can't give her the satisfaction of seeing the hurt her words have caused me. I've always wanted a family and dreamed that one day Darius and I would have one of our very own. So for Sophie to have the dream, was something that made me want to scream out all my anguish and despair. But instead, I forced myself to straighten up, reaching out a hand and shaking it.

"Congratulations," I say thickly, seeing Maria disappear with a disgusted look on her face "I'm delighted for you. I'm sure mother and father will be very excited at the news."

"Oh, I want to be the one to tell them," Sophie says with a grin "you wouldn't ruin that for me would you?"

I shake my head. "I won't say a word," I say numbly "tell them whenever you want."

"Thanks" Sophie calls out as I make my way upstairs, every footstep feeling like a huge effort on my part.

Finally, I reach the sanctuary of my room and I quietly open the door, locking it behind me. I make it into the shower, sliding down onto the tiled floor and letting the water wash over me. Tears prick my eyes but I rapidly blink them away. I refuse to cry, no matter how much pain I'm in. Instead, I focus on the

wolf who saved me and hope that they weren't injured too much, wishing I was there with them, instead of at home and in misery. I vowed to discover who the wolf was and thank them in person. But how the hell do I find something like that out?