

## CH 3

Lucinda POV

Thomas had informed her that she had nearly shot and killed an Alpha. She had simply raised an eyebrow and shrugged it off. "Shouldn't have been sneaking up you boys." was all she'd said, it didn't both her at all, more mere amusement.

He'd also told her he'd thought she was a man and had referred to her as a "Mutt." She didn't care that he thought she was a man, but had frowned deeply at the term MUTT. But considering she had clearly pissed him off, what more could she expect? A smile had played on her lips when she thought about his men, informing their Alpha, that the so-called Mutt was actually a teeny tiny girl. Damned near laughed out loud.

It had crossed her mind briefly if his men could tell she now had a wolf, or did she still appear wolf-less to everyone. Ky'ra was currently sleeping and had barely lifted her head during the ghting.

Ky'ra had remained quiet, appeared to be sleeping soundly in her mind, right up until the night of the full moon, when she had stalked around in Lucinda's mind just waiting for the right moment. Lucinda had been sitting with Alpha Corey, Luna Lindy and his Alpha Unit, all the men from her Retrieval Team. They were all curious to see the very late arrival of her wolf.

Ky'ra had ripped out of Lucinda in a fast and aggressive manner, her first shift over in less than two minutes. It usually took longer than that on a first shift. They had explained to her afterwards that it could take up to 30 minutes or more, depending on rank and wolf.

She had been forewarned about how it was going to be quite painful, to just try and accept it and breathe through the pain of it. Painful was an understatement. Lucinda had felt like someone had ayeed her alive, and broken every bone in her body at the same time.

The minute Ky'ra was out, she'd howled up at the moon loud and impressive, and to her surprise, many other wolves in his pack had responded to Ky'ra. She had known right away they were all from the White Lotus Pack. Her wolf had connected to each of them instantly. Her pack, even though long ago destroyed, the remaining members were still connected to her in some small way.

Everyone in the Half Moon Pack was shocked by Ky'ra's size. She was as large as Flicker, Beta Adam's wolf. Ky'ra was also a growly grumpy wolf all the time, or a good ninety percent of the time. Just naturally grumpy, it seemed. She was always icking her tail side to side, and she would snarl at any un-mated male wolf, that came near her with obvious intent. 'Not mate' was all she would snarl on the subject.

Lucinda had tried to explain to Ky'ra that their Mate had died a very long time ago. Eight years in fact, but Ky'ra just snarled at her too. 'We have a mate.'

Ky'ra, however, despite her constant grumpiness, was great on border patrols, a savage beast that took on rogue wolves with relish. She was bigger and stronger than most and knew it, was very proud of it, and let people know they couldn't lord it over her. Alpha Corey was constantly worried Ky'ra would get herself into a situation she couldn't get herself out of, and end up severely injured or worse.

Ky'ra just huffed in annoyance, every time they were hauled in to his ope, for him to reprimand them over Ky'ra's behaviour.

Her appearance was all dark grey, almost black, charcoal grey, Gabby had said to her, very pretty, Ky'ra had bright light green eyes, that attracted a lot of attention from un-mated male wolves.

Her coat was a little bit longer than most wolves, and it was soft and silken to the touch, not rough like most. Not that many had ever touched it. Luna Lindy, Gabby and the twins, of course. Her baby sisters, two people that always made Ky'ra less grumpy. Her wolf didn't much like other wolves; tolerated them mostly, and many had learned to stay away and be respectful.

The retrieval team was the exception. Ky'ra was never annoyed by them, they were all mated off, which helped. But even when on pack runs, Ky'ra would run with them and their mates. Lucinda, even now with a wolf, was still in the position of back-up for the team. She liked using her bow and backing them up, and Ky'ra didn't seem to mind it either, happy it seemed to sit back and watch Lucinda work. She liked that her human was strong and skilled.

When not needed for retrieval, her whole unit was on border patrol, Lucinda always took the night shift, Ky'ra was actually less grumpy and growly during the nighttime, and loved being in full control out there on the border, roaming in her wolf form for six hours a night.

Corey didn't like his wolves patrolling to become fatigued, so they ran four six-hour shifts to cover the pack borders.

Ky'ra never ran about and played or was, in anyway, free spirited, it seemed. Though she did often watch wolves who would run about and play with other wolves. Curious it seemed, though that too turned to annoyance after a while. 'Why are they not working?' she'd asked once.

Lucinda had smiled at her wolf, 'they are just young ones, still in school mostly.'

'They have a wolf, they should be working.' and that was her opinion on the situation.

Currently out on the western border, patrolling the pack territory, protecting it from rogue wolves, made Ky'ra happy. She liked to think of herself as a Protector. She found herself standing right in front of the place where Lucinda had brought the remnants of her pack and had knelt down and begged for sanctuary.

She had never returned to her old pack to see the destruction that cruel, savage Alpha had unleashed on her home. Being wolf-less, she had no hope of creeping through rogue territory, it had always been a no-go zone.

But with Ky'ra, so strong and fast and willing to destroy anything in her path, including rogues at will, no mercy granted by her wolf, they had made the trip a month after she had appeared. Directly after a night patrol the day after a mating ball had been in full swing, there were too many wolves about, and Ky'ra was happy to get away from the pack for a few hours, while the visiting packs were leaving.

Though Ky'ra, it seemed, was interested in a Mate. She didn't seem to push the agenda or urge Lucinda to attend that mating ball to find a mate either. Lucinda wondered if that was because she, herself, wasn't particularly interested in finding another Mate. It was hard enough finding your Goddess-Gifted Mate, let alone being granted a Second Chance Mate. She didn't hold out much hope or hunt for one. If it was meant to be, he would show up at some point.

She had been gifted a Mate, gentle and kind, and he'd been brutally killed by a savage Alpha. Hell-bent on getting his chosen mate back, even though she had gone rogue; rejected him and his pack. Found her Fated Mate, and nally got to live a happy, quiet life for nearly 20 years before that evil Alpha had found her once more. Found her, and slaughtered her entire pack, Mate and Child, and tried to take her back by force once again. Obviously obsessed with her.

Lucinda still missed her Mate Matthew, all she had left of their Mate Bond was the two small scars that showed where his fangs had been buried into her, marking her. The pretty silver ligree that had once adorned her skin, that had burned away over a few hours after his death.

Even touching the two small scars now, she felt nothing, where once it was sensitive. Sent beautiful ringles through her body, and caused goosebumps to erupt on her skin. It would bring her arousal for her Mate quickly to the surface, and drive her insane with need when he had been teasing her, kissing her there during their mating and love-making afterwards.

Those two days she had been marked by him had been the most exciting time for her. So lled with joy and happiness, excitement and pleasure lled afternoons, nights and mornings. Freshly mated, they had spent a lot of time in the bedroom enjoying each other.

Ky'ra huffed at her, she didn't have any memories of Matthew, or his wolf Colton. She got annoyed that Lucinda could readily bring up memories, and she had no attachment to them at all.

They ran now from pack territory across rogue territory at full speed. Her shift nished and the next patrol there to take over, reaching the border of the White Lotus Pack in just under an hour. Ky'ra was fast and this run across no-man's land allowed Ky'ra to put all her strength and speed into use.

They were home, her actual pack. They walked to where the packhouse would have stood and looked around. There was nothing left, but they knew that it was going to be like this, the last time they'd come here. The whole place had been burnt down. Nothing was left standing.

That Evil man had burned absolutely everything, there wasn't so much as even a single store house left, just that secret passage and the cells, the way she had gotten her women and children out. The entrance to the tunnel was covered by ivy and well hidden, but she had found it and nosed her way through it, strolled down the pitch-black tunnel and found the cells still standing, made from stone. They weren't going anywhere any time soon.

It was rumoured that the place was haunted by the angry spirits of the women and children, talking about how they'd had to pass by the pack and its gates still stood. Closed forever, the pack's lotus symbol still on the gate. No wolves wanted to go there, so tragic and horric an end to a pack, was the story that everyone stayed away.

Today they were headed for the front gate of her pack. It was indeed closed, chained shut at that. She had not done that, it was curious. But not of her concern. The white lotus symbol was still on the gate, as she'd heard from passers-by to see.

Ky'ra shifted them back to human form and Lucinda removed the symbol. It was all that was left. There literally was nothing else. She carried it back to where her packhouse had used to be and just sank down on the grass. Everything was covered in grass, nature had reclaimed it all. She could sit and look around, know where everything had been, could see it in her minds-eye, the homes, the dirt roads, the parks and gardens, the only thing still here.

The natural water reserve lled with white lotus owers. That was what the pack was named after. Off to the eastern edge of the pack, not a place she liked to go, fear crept into her for some reason when she went in that direction, so they just didn't do it at all.

She had been born inside this pack, mated to the future Alpha of this pack, and was technically still the Luna, despite her alpha mate having died. Her rank still valid. Her people still bowed their heads to her when no one was around to see it. They didn't want to be disrespectful to the Alpha and Luna who took them in. But still wanted to show respect to the person who had saved their lives that horrid day.

She spent a few hours just sitting within her old pack's territory and when she felt it was time to go, shifted back to wolfen form, Ky'ra picked up the pack symbol in her mouth and carried it away. It wasn't heavy.

They were summoned to Alpha Corey's ope before their patrol that night to be reprimanded for leaving pack territory and running off to her old pack. Reminded of how dangerous it was to visit the old pack; what if she ran into that Alpha, who'd slaughtered everyone, what if he too had nostalgic moments and visited like she did.

Seeing her there might lead him to believe not everyone was dead. That some people had escaped, just like they actually had. That could bring him here to this pack in search of those who'd escaped his s\*\*\*\*\*r, and if that happened? What if he scented out the twins? Decided he wanted them for himself, and tried to take them as a replacement for their mother.

Lucinda did see the logic of it. But didn't see why she couldn't. It had been 8 long years, it was unlikely that the man was still the alpha of a pack. He'd been older back then, and would be even older now. Surely he'd have passed on the throne to an heir, who wouldn't be obsessed with a dead burnt down piece of land.

Punishment was having to train the juniors, every day for a week, one day, for every hour she had foolishly been gone. A two-hour training session with 14 to 16-year-old teenagers. She could already feel Ky'ra's annoyance. It was her Alpha's way to punish both of them. He knew Ky'ra hated horny teenagers the most, worse than un-mated males.

They had no wolves, and so she couldn't dish out punishment to those stupid enough to think it was okay to tease or make lewd comments. They just had to put up with it, and getting up that early after night patrol meant lack of sleep as well, not to mention no training for themselves every day. That was Lucinda's punishment.