

CHAPTER 2

It was a long night for the Alpha of the Rwirwe pack. She couldn't get her mind off her mate and how hurt he looked when he stormed out of her bed. For some unknown reason, she felt like he was storming out of her altogether and she didn't like it. 'Tell him the truth,' her wolf insisted. But as usual her stubborn human was quick to disregard her opinion. 'This won't end well,' the wolf warned before retreating to the back of her head. The Alpha wrapped herself tightly with the duvet and exhaled deeply staring at nothingness. She left her mind drift back to her mother. The late luna Catherine Sanders. She was the epitome of what a good woman was. Loving, caring, kind, generous and more importantly wise beyond words. She would have known all the right words to say. Rhey turned with a grunt remembering the cruelty of how she died. Throat torn out by her mother-in-law's mate, Jonathan, before the bastard ripped killed his own mate and her daughter. Rhey shuddered at how bloody the whole scene was. That's the day she knew mate was a no for her. She could never let anyone weaken her like her unsuspecting grandmother. Those thoughts somehow lured her to a troubled sleep.

When she jolted awake next, it was at dawn. She was sweating and her heart pounded erratically in her chest. Her wolf was still gnawing on her skull for hurting their mate. She swung her feet off the bed and grabbed a pair of faded black jeans and the bungee t-shirt she had discarded the night before. After pulling them on, she headed for the closet and took out brown delta boots and a black fur jacket. On her way out she picked her father's scarf from the jacket rack and headed out to the chilly morning.

She had barely taken two steps when she heard shuffling in front of her. She quickly glanced up as a familiar scent assaulted her nostrils. Tommy felt her presence just as quick and turned. "Hey,"

"Hey," Rhey called back hesitantly wondering why Tommy was up that early since he always loved sleeping in. "Couldn't sleep," he offered once she got closer to him.

"Same here," Rhey admitted with a shrug and they fell in step. A perfect silence ooded them.

When the crisp morning air bit Tommy's cheeks, he winced. He only light sweater on him. "Why didn't you carry a jacket? Are you crazy?" Rhey grumbled grabbing Tommy by the hand and halted his steps. She removed her scarf, and wrapped it on his neck, up to his jaw.

Tommy watched as she fussed over him, scolding his careless move of leaving the house without proper warm garments. "I didn't think it will be this cold," he alleged once she was done. "Thank you," he added with a brief smile which Rhey didn't get to see for she had resumed her walk.

They strolled in silence and funny enough it's like their minds knew exactly where they wanted to go. After a while they found themselves staring at a blossoming meadow at the foot of the valley.

Rhey loved the spot for you could see all kinds of natural beauty from the valley's peak. While Tommy's reason was because of the amazing sunrises. It was a spectacular spot to watch as golden rays pierced the morning crowds.

They both sat on the wet ground without a care in the world and just watched nature at its best. It was serene since most jungle creatures were still slumbering only the birds were heard chirping. "Something about this sweet brisk earthy air never fails to soothe my worries away." Tommy broke the silence taking a deep breath and broke into a grin as he exhaled.

Rhey found herself copying the move, "that I can agree." She gave him a toothy grin.

"I am leaving for the mating games today," Tommy offered cautiously.

Rhey's breath hitched and for a moment she felt fear cripple her senses. She had heard from her uncle the previous night about Tommy's possible departure and it irked her beyond imagination. He was going to participate in the mating games in hopes of finding his mate. She felt bad for wasting his time since he wouldn't find his mate there but she couldn't find the courage to tell him she is the one he has been looking for all those years.

She wanted to ask him to stay, but how she could do it without coming out as selfish was still unknown to her.

"How long will you be gone?" She asked instead.

"The games will take four days," Tommy offered.

They fell into silence once again, each with their thoughts. Tommy wished she could ask him to stay, while Rhey hoped he would change his mind and stay. But none got their wish...

Rhey was busy sorting out the monthly finances of the pack when her office door opened to reveal Tommy. He looked ready and excited, "came to say goodbye," he murmured closing the door behind him.

Rhey rose from her chair and walked around the desk meeting Tommy halfway. "Good luck," she inched at her hypocrisy.

"Hopefully the next time you see me I will have a mate on hand." Thomas offered but he didn't seem convinced. Rhey attempted a weak smile but her heart was breaking. She did not doubt that Tommy would come back empty-handed, what she dreaded was his absence.

She hasn't gone more than a day without seeing him since she realized who he was to her. When Tommy pulled her in for a hug she obliged too willingly burying her head on his chest. She took a deep whiff of his mouthwatering scent. "I will miss you," Tommy whispered stepping back to look into her eyes.

Rhey exhaled shakily and without a thought grabbed his face in her slender palms. Tommy's grey eyes widened as he watched her lift her head and their lips connected. They both breathed in relief as their lips glided over each other desperately. Tommy reached for her waist and hoisted her up. Rhey automatically wrapped her legs around his waist as Tommy led them to the nearest wall. Her back hit the cold concrete and she didn't even inch as she ground on him giving as good as she received.

They only tore their lips from each other just to catch a breath and they went back to dry humping. "F*ck," Tommy swore and all he wanted more than anything was to f*ck the woman in his arms. If not for the untimely knock on the door, Tommy would have probably ended up canceling his impending trip.

Rhey groaned xing her blouse with shaky fingers. "Let me," Tommy buttoned back her blouse before kissing her forehead and exited the office. Rhey watched sadly as his figure disappeared from view fighting hard not to damn the aftermath and go after him.

"Alpha..." the head elder who had just disrupted them called standing by the door tentatively. He couldn't help but notice his Alpha openly ogling her beta. Rhey gestured for him to enter. His knowing smile grew when he stepped further in and smelt the pheromones in the air. And from the Alpha's swollen lips, it was clear she had just been kissed, thoroughly. But he didn't dare comment on it. Rhey turned to him begrudgingly cursing his timing inwardly. "How can I help you?" She asked sinking on her leather seat.

"People are concerned about the future of the pack." He began cautiously.

"Where is this leading to?" She asked harshly not intending to beat around the bush. Her raging hormones didn't warrant such luxury. She wanted the man gone so she could finish what Tommy had began. Stroke herself to completion.

"We are worried you haven't found your mate." The elder blurted in a hurry. Rhey wasn't surprised, she had heard of the same thing many times before, especially around the time of the mating games. "Tell the people the same thing I told you last year. I am not planning on getting a mate."

"But..."

"Are you questioning my decision?" She bellowed making the elder take a step back with a slight bow.

"I wouldn't dare my queen,"

"Good." She straightened her back gracefully. "The safety and future of this pack is of utmost priority. But I will not have my own subordinates push me into mating. Have them know that." The elder nodded, "you can leave now." She dismissed.

After the elder closed the door behind him Rhey sagged back on her chair sighing helplessly. She was no longer horny. Somehow, all the mate talk had dampen her excitement. She groaned running her hand over her face, down to her jaw and let it linger there. Things were getting complicated, she admitted.

What if Tommy got tired of waiting and looking for his mate? Maybe he will choose someone to settle with and Rhey didn't know if she could bear the thought. "Why did you have to die?" She asked out loud as if her dead mother will miraculously hear her. It so happened that Logan was on his way to see her and heard it.

"Hey," her eyes snapped to her uncle for she hadn't heard him open the door, and nor did she scent him. Her frown told Logan just that and he smiled, "I masked my scent today for the exercise I was conducting with the new warriors."

"Doesn't matter, I should have heard you." She shot back. Logan walked in and sat on the same chair the elder had just vacated.

"You could have told him," Logan asserted knowing why his niece was in a bad mood. She had let it slip out during one of their talks two years ago that Tommy was her mate. Though he didn't approve of keeping it a secret he did it anyway. And he has never told a soul, not even his mate Michael whom he is sure will murder him once the truth comes out.

"I will never tell him, uncle." She replied stubbornly. Logan shook his head in frustration regarding her skepticism. "So you are okay if he comes back with someone else?"

Rhey scowled thoughtfully but said nothing. "I hope you know what you are doing, babe. I don't want to see you hurt."

"Too late for that," she grumbled. Logan stretched his hand over the desk and took hers. "Why are you so stubborn?" He complained making Rhey smile despite the situation.

"I take after Mama," she retorted.

"Ooh, no." Logan shot back with a mock. "Cate was an angel on earth, but you take after your old man. Stubborn as fuck." Rhey laughed heartily knowing her uncle was right, apart from her slender figure and the angelic face, the rest she took from Ryan. "That's why we make the Alphas," she boasted,

"I can't argue with that," Logan conceded. He withdrew his hands and leaned back on the comfortable leather seat, "you know Tommy will not wait for his 'mate' forever." He air quoted the mate making Rhey nod.

"It will hurt to see him with someone else but the alternative is something..." She trailed with a shudder.

"Jonathan was an asshole," Logan tried hoping she would stop comparing mating with what Jonathan had done. The bastard was her grandmother's mate.

Logan's and Ryan's father who was the alpha back then took his best friend as a companion when his mate died and the latter couldn't find hers. It was unfortunate that Jonathan visited the pack years later looking for his mate only to find out she was already with someone else and had borne him two sons.

He had left in anger only to come back twelve years later after his rival had died. He fooled all of them, 'I didn't want to come between your family' bullshit.

They later found out all he was after was the Alpha throne. And once he realized he was never getting it, his ugly side showed.

Rhey was only five at the time and she witnessed her grandmother's mate bring immense bloodshed to their family. Ever since then she is wary of love and everything else that comes with it. Logan wished with all his heart he could go back in time and shield her from everything but it's impossible.

"I loved that asshole," Rhey recalled the numerous moments she had spent with Jonathan, and hated herself for not realizing something was wrong with him.

"I will forever be ashamed of that myself," Logan agreed to mean every word. If he wasn't eager to let his mother have her happiness nally, maybe Cate and her sister would still be alive.

Which explains his reluctance with Lily. What if she turns out to be another disaster?