

## CHAPTER 5

Tommy got summoned to the Alpha's ope. Upon his arrival, he met Michael, Logan, Ryan, and his mate wearing disturbing expressions. Even before anyone spoke, he already dreaded the worst. Before he could get a word out, Rhey's eyes found his', and she glared. There was an unmistakable condemnation in her enraged beautiful orbs.

"Thank you for coming so fast," Ryan who had just mind-linked him to join the meeting murmured drawing Tommy's attention from his errant mate.

"Did you nd out anything?" He asked because the urgency in the retired Alpha's tone when he summoned him was palpable.

"She is a spy," Michael rasped, "did you know she can talk to birds?" he asked in an amusing tone making the rest chuckle lightly.

Tommy shook his head warily stepping further into the room. The elders lled him up while his mate kept throwing him hostile glances. It was hard for him to concentrate but he willed himself to, for his pack.

"She wants to complete the mating ritual," Tommy told the elders when they asked about his personal progress. Rhey scoffed at his response and he turned to her, "what?" He asked in irritation.

"I thought you've already done that since her scent is all over you." Rhey spat wincing at the obvious jealousy in her tone and regretted opening her mouth. But she didn't like smelling another wolf on her mate, and her scowl said as much.

"Nothing happened between Amelia and me," Tommy argued passionately missing the amused expressions on the elders. "Not that it's any of your business," he added shortly trying not to sound too concerned.

"You are right..." Rhey began but Logan interrupted before the two stubborn lovers said more than they could take back.

"We need to decide what to do with her,"

"She can lead us to the mastermind behind the whole thing." Rhey suggested, "we should observe her for a few more days before making our move."

Tommy shifted uneasily, he is the one who would be stuck with Amelia and the thought wasn't appealing at all. He didn't know how much longer he could go on pretending to like her because all he wanted was to confront her. "How many days are we talking about?" He asked,

"I say we give her a day," Logan answered, "I hate the idea of the enemy running loose in our territory." Michael and Ryan supported his reasoning but it all came down to Rhey since she was the Alpha. She looked at Tommy but he wouldn't meet her gaze. "What do you think?" She asked through their mind link. He shifted his gaze to her so fast and gauged her expression. "You are the Alpha," he said out loud casually.

"We will go with your idea uncle," she concluded, "today is her last day of freedom." Tommy gave Logan a small grateful smile which Rhey didn't miss. What she wouldn't do for Tommy to smile at her or with her, like old times.

After a little more talk, the elders excused themselves and left.

Tommy rose to his feet but didn't move. He was contemplating what to say but nothing came to mind except...

"Do you want to sever the bond?" He zeroed his eyes on her face.

"No," Rhey countered fast.

"But you don't want a mate," Tommy wondered out loud.

"Our wolves will not survive a rejection," Rhey pointed out.

"So that's why you didn't reject me," Tommy surmised with a bitter scoff. "Stupid me actually hoped that you might feel something for me."

"I do..." Rhey began but Tommy cut her off, "once we are done with this Amelia mess, I will step down as your Beta." Rhey tried to protest but once again he shushed her, "I will relocate to live with my sister and hopefully with time it will hurt less. I will not reject you, you don't have to worry about that." He nished calmly rendering Rhey speechless. "See you around," and that's how he left her, tongue-tied.

It took a while after he left for Rhey to fully absorb his words. She didn't want him to leave, but she didn't want a mate either nor did she want to see him with someone else. In her own way, she did love him, more than she does anyone who isn't family.

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It was Logan on watch when Amelia once again sneaked to the woods. This time Ryan had organized several archers ready to injure the raven. As expected the bird ew straight to Amelia's hand and rested there. The rst arrow missed but luckily the second hit the wing and the bird couldn't y away like it was initially attempting to.

Amelia's shocked gaze fell on Logan who was glaring at her every move. She turned her head sideways and there stood two archers their arrows ready to shoot. With nowhere to run to, Amelia put on a facade, "what's the meaning of this?"

Logan marched past her without a word and took the bird from one of the archers. He scrutinized the little thing wondering how Amelia could communicate with it. Almost immediately his question was answered. Right there in his hands, the bird began to shift and he dropped it to the ground hastily stepping back.

Everyone gathered was shocked to see the small bird morph into a young boy who couldn't be more than ten years. Logan winced remembering how hard he had let the bird fall and quickly dropped to his knees beside the boy. Luckily the boy was okay apart from his arm which was badly bleeding where the arrow had hit. "Get a healer," he ordered no one in particular. While one of the archers ran to retrieve the pack healer, Logan turned his angry eyes to Amelia. "Who is he?"

Amelia swallowed nervously dgeting, as her eyes scanned the many warriors who had started gathering. Tommy came rushing and when she saw him she attempted cheap theatrics. "Tommy, baby, I am glad you are here." She rushed towards him ready to throw her hands around him, but Tommy shocked her by shoving her aside, his gaze on the boy Logan was tending to.

"It's deep," he muttered watching blood trickle from the poor boy's arm.

"I will tend to him," Tommy assured Logan peeling off his t-shirt and using it to put pressure on the boy's wound. "Get her out of my sight," he grumbled referring to Amelia who looked scared; as she should, he thought grimly.

Logan rose and signaled for the warriors to close in on her carefully in case she had other surprises for them. She was pinned to the ground and dragged to the dungeon as per Logan's instructions.

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The young boy was tended to fast and Tommy took him to Rhey's ope for interrogation.

"What's your name?" Michael who was doing the questioning asked softly. The boy's eyes darted around as tears welled in them. "I want to go home," he cried.

"I will take you home, sweetheart," Rhey interjected stepping in front of the boy. "But rst I need you to answer questions for us. Is that okay?" The boy nodded,

Rhey stepped aside and let Michael carry on,

"Where is your home?"

"Ankora pack," audible gasps rose in the room. Ankora pack was on good terms with Rwirwe pack, for a long time.

"Who sent you?" Michael asked to clear the doubts,

"The bad man,"

"Alpha Nikolas?" Michael hinted and the others held their breath for it was just two weeks ago when the said Alpha had visited their pack and received nothing but kindness.

"No," the boy shook his head miserably, "the bad man who killed Alpha Nikolas."

There was a tangible silence in the room. Ryan was the rst to break it, "that is impossible, if Nikolas was dead Rhey would have felt it because of the blood oath the two of them took last year."

"Maybe," Rhey argued, "but the boy's heartbeat is steady which means he is telling the truth."

"Are you a shapeshifter?" Michael asked the obvious giving Rhey a chance to study the changes in the heartbeat. The boy nodded and went ahead to tell them that his father was too but was killed for refusing to help the bad man. The only reason the boy agreed to pass messages between Amelia and the bad man was because they had taken his mother and sister. And the bad man was now in charge of the Ankora pack.

The more they questioned the boy, the more confused they got. In the end, two things were clear. One, the Ankora pack had been taken hostage in their own land. Two, the bad man, as the boy called him was now after their pack.

"We can't send him back, he will be killed once they realize what has happened here," Tommy argued when the debate on what to do with the boy broke.

"And if he doesn't go back, they will realize something has gone wrong." Ryan pointed out

"Which means they will accelerate their plans," Rhey added with a smug smile, "and we will be ready and waiting."

Logan smiled loving his niece's way of thinking.

"We are not sending that child back to the lion's den," Rhey conrmed making Tommy smile a genuine one. At that particular moment, he was so proud of his mate, but then again he always was, till...

"Uncle, get him somewhere safe," she addressed Michael who seemed to be smitten by the boy. "The rest, we have an impostor to deal with." She rose and headed for the door but halted shortly,

"Are you okay with this?" She regarded Tommy, "we might do some ugly things to her if she doesn't cooperate."

"You are my mate, " Tommy said simply and Rhey couldn't remember ever being happier. Hearing Tommy call her his mate with no resentment sent her wolf wagging her tail wildly in her head. "Okay," she nodded.

In no time they were in the dungeon Rhey taking the lead. Amelia smelt Tommy and raised her head, "why are you doing this?" Her cheap waterworks theatrics didn't faze anyone.

"Drop the act Amelia, if that's is even your name." Tommy shot back, "I know for a fact you are not my mate." Her face crinkled with worry but she had nothing else to lose so she kept the facade going.

"How can you say that, Tommy? After all, that happened between us?"

Rhey growled, an audible dangerous growl and Tommy couldn't hide his joy. He found his mate's possessiveness sexy. Amelia's gaze snapped to Rhey who stalked the cage she was locked in, "he is not yours." Rhey informed coldly. Amelia wasn't stupid not to have picked on the jealous vibes the Alpha was releasing.

She tilted her head deviously intending to taunt Rhey. If only someone had warned her against the idea...

"Tommy is my mate, and we have done a lot of things to prove it."

One minute Amelia was safely locked in the cage and the next Rhey was dragging her by the hair on the cold oor. She slapped, kicked, and shoved Amelia around in rage. Her wolf was not taking the fact that Amelia had been with Tommy in any way kindly.

Logan, Ryan, and Tommy stood aside and watched as Rhey mangled Amelia not daring to intervene for they all felt her rage. The Alpha wolf was right there and any slight provocation would only worsen the situation.

"Help please," Amelia begged peeking at Tommy.

"Stop looking at my mate b\*\*\*h," Rhey yelled punching her face.

"Tommy please," Amelia begged, another punch.

"He is mine." Rhey declared with a hard kick in the ribs which made Amelia cry out painfully. "Just mine, b\*tch." Ryan had to step in otherwise minutes later they would be nothing left of Amelia to interrogate. They growled in displeasure. "She needs to die," another kick.

"She will," Ryan agreed cautiously. "But rst we need to nd out what she knows," Ryan assured his daughter. He briey glanced at Tommy, who stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Rhey's waist, pulling her back against his chest. All the ght ed out of her body and she was left gasping for air, enjoying the feel of her mate's toned body against hers. With a slight nod from the retired Alpha, Logan took over the interrogation. He rubbed his palms gleefully and Amelia knew she was in trouble...