

## CH 1

Nora

Once again, Nora's body betrayed her to the Mate Bond between her and her Mate, Alpha Jace Remington of the Dark Wilderness Pack. His touch brought out pleasure and desire within her, and she knew she shouldn't let him touch her. That she shouldn't crave the man's touch or kiss. Drown in the pleasure his body could bring to hers.

The day she'd met him and scented him, she'd thought he was the perfect handsome and charming gentleman that he showed to the world. A man that wanted her. He was 130 years old but only looked to be 30, and had never taken a Chosen Mate in all that time. He did not bare a mark of any kind, and she'd thought that he'd patiently waited for her: his Goddess-Gifted Mate, to come along.

Her parents had been so very proud of her, a simple warrior's daughter mated to an Alpha, and he hadn't even hesitated in claiming her. She was only 19 and about to turn 20 and, although he had scented her out at a mating ball and claimed her before all there to see, smiled at her and kissed her lovingly, marked and mated her; done all the things that had made her toes curl as she'd accepted him willingly.

She was young and too naive, it seemed, she'd not even realized until ve weeks of being inside his pack that things weren't right between them. She'd been too wrapped up in her happy love bubble of a Mate bond to know he wasn't who she thought he was. That he was more than happy to have her in his bed every night, that he enjoyed touching her as much as she enjoyed being touched by him; but that was as far as it would ever go.

She'd often seen him with the she-wolf that helped him to run the pack, a woman named Gloria, who had been his acting Luna for six decades, and she'd not thought anything of it at rst. Because, of course, he needed someone to help him run his pack. He was 130 and had been an Alpha for 100 of those years, so why couldn't he train someone up and have her seated to help him, give her a pseudo title, until his Goddess-Gifted came along. She saw the logic in it.

That was even how he had explained Gloria to her, having the title of Acting Luna to his pack, being seated in the Luna's oce and her having a suite up on the Alpha's oor of the packhouse, and not just a suite; She resided inside the Luna Suite itself. Being that she held the title until he found his Goddess-Gifted Mate, he'd felt it was only fair to place her in there so she could get the respect of the pack, as any Luna should.

Nora had accepted all of this from Jace because, honestly, it seemed logical to her, and Gloria had smiled at her and shaken her hand, congratulated her on being Jace's Mate, and him on nding his Goddess-Gifted. She had smiled and stated they'd produce a handsome and good strong heir for the pack.

Jace had told her he'd have Gloria organise Luna Lessons for her after her Luna Ceremony had been attended. She'd smiled at him, and why wouldn't she? He was her Goddess-Gifted and had initiated her into his pack right away, and then he had announced her to the pack as his Goddess-Gifted Mate that very day, all things that were normal.

Nothing had seemed at all out of the ordinary to her. She'd moved into the Alpha Suite, and they'd been insatiable with each other. Her heat had come and gone, and he'd been very attentive to her needs. His own wolf had mated hers many times, more than she and Jace had. It was clear their wolves had bonded fully.

But she'd been blinded by the mate bond and understood all of that now. His wolf loved hers, but Jace did not love Nora. He had another in his heart. She'd found out the truth, and he thought she didn't know. He didn't know that Nora had overheard him when talking to Gloria, the she-wolf that lived in the Luna Suite, and was his Luna to this pack.

She had been sitting at breakfast just ve weeks after coming here, to the Dark Wilderness Pack, smiling and chatting with her new group of friends that she'd made, and had smelled him coming this way. She had smiled and turned in the direction of the corridor she knew he would come into the room from, had tuned her hearing into where he was, only to have her heart shatter and that love bubble burst at hearing his words.

"It's just the Mate Bond Gloria; only my wolf loves her wolf. I don't love Nora, you know I love you and always will. That's why you're the Luna." His words had been softly spoken, and obviously he wasn't expecting her to be in the dining room.

Gloria had then stated words that had smacked her right in the face. "I know that having her here gives you more strength as well, and an heir from a Goddess-Gifted too." she'd sighed, and they'd stopped walking "I just nd it dicult to see you with her, I will be your Luna always I know this."

"You're a perfect Luna. I love you for that, and you, I will keep you in the Luna's oce. I just need one pup from her and then you and I can go back to being together."

Her wolf, Rosa, had whined in pain inside her mind, and Nora had gotten up and left the dining hall before they had come into it. Rushed out of the room, everyone in there would have heard him say it, or maybe they already knew how it was going to be for her here and just left her in the dark.

Her tears had fallen, she'd been so stupid as to think he loved her. Even though she had allowed herself to love him, she had given herself over completely to their Mate Bond and fallen for him in every way; only now it was all a lie. All he wanted was an heir, and then he was either going to get rid of her, or betray her and their mate-bond. She didn't know which it was.

She had returned to their suite, and looked around it. No, this was not their suite, this was the Alpha's suite, his suite, and she wondered why she was even in it, why he had bother to claim her at all. When he was in love with another, why didn't he just Mark and Mate that she-wolf years ago? It would have been better for him, and he could have just told her the truth when scenting her out. That he already had a mate and wanted to keep her, rejected Nora, it would have been so easy, and that was how it was done.

She would have dealt with it, it wouldn't have been very nice, but she'd have understood. Nora knew Gloria, the woman was always nice to her, but now with this news, what was she supposed to do, just produce him an heir and let him trod all over her. Likely take that child, reject her and keep it for himself so that he and Gloria could raise it together as their child. She stood there not really knowing what to do anymore. She wasn't meant to overhear that conversation, and she knew it.

Five weeks she'd been here, the full moon had come and gone, and she'd told her parents the Luna Ceremony hadn't been organized as yet. He was very busy and needed to nd time. It would likely be two more moons away because the next one was a mating ball that was already prearranged to be held. He couldn't put it off, because that was what he'd told her.

She'd just learned right at that very minute, that there was never going to be a Luna Ceremony for her, because Gloria was the Luna to this pack. That it was all a lie, everything was just a lie. He used her body for the pleasure of the mate bond and to try and get an heir from her only. It wasn't just her that was upset. Rosa was too, though they'd heard his wolf loved hers, that didn't change the fact that Nora herself was just something to grow an heir for him and be discarded after it was born.

She'd watched him act as though nothing was wrong that day, that he could come into this suite, climb into their bed and kiss and touch her, made her feel wanted and loved, and she stupidly fell for it, and she tried to convince herself what she'd heard him say wasn't true. That maybe he just needed more time with her to let their mate bond grow and ourish, and she made the decision to try and bring him to her; like his wolf was to hers.

But as the weeks rolled by, it was true: she couldn't keep him by her side. He spent all his time in his oce or with Gloria attending to the pack, and not once had she been asked to go and attend Luna Lessons. Gloria paid her no attention whatsoever. It was almost as though she didn't even exist for him except for in his suite, in his bed. That was all she was here for, to make him stronger, because she was his Goddess-Gifted.