

CH 4

Nora smiled at her parents as she walked into the restaurant. They were already there and waiting for her. She raised a hand and waved to them, then she had just hugged them really tight to herself. She was actually really happy to see them, people that loved her and would never treat her terribly. She missed the days of living in a pack surrounded by friends and people she could actually trust.

She'd also felt, for the first time in weeks, that Rosa her wolf had come forward in her mind. It had happened not long after they'd driven out of the pack, and now her wolf was up inside her mind, happy to see their parents as well. Rosa sat inside her mind and watched them the entire time they were having their meal.

It was clear to Nora that Rosa also missed her parents and wanted to see and spend time with them. So not only would they have lunch, but she'd order dessert and coffee. They might go for a long walk as well, spend more time outside the pack and feel normal, she supposed, out of sight for her meant out of mind, and that was her attitude right that minute.

She talked near non-stop about her degree and how well it was going, that she thought she was going to ace one of the classes this semester. There was nothing more she liked than talking to her loving parents about how well she was doing at university. They were also proud of her, and how well she was doing.

She encouraged them to tell her about pack life back home, and heard things were going well for both her parents, and then she was reminded on that casual stroll through a large park that her little sister Nita was turning 16 next week, and that she should come home to be there for Nita's wolf emergence the following full moon.

Nora smiled and nodded. "Of course I will be there; I wouldn't miss it for the world. Does she know anything about her wolf yet?" she'd asked. She had been able to talk to Rosa three weeks prior to getting her.

"No, but we know she'll get her wolf, just like you did." Her mother had smiled.

"Now Nora, will you be bringing Jace with you?" her father had asked her as they'd come to their car, but before getting into it.

She'd managed to keep the conversation off that man for all of their lunch, and their walk, but here it was the question she didn't want to have to deal with. "No, sorry, he'll be off to a mating ball in one of his allied packs." she stated, and he would be, that was good for her, she would get to have three days without having to concern herself with worrying she would wake up to find him touching her.

She'd been able to put him off a few times by telling him she had to study, and just stayed in the pack library, and had actually slept in there a few times, just to avoid going to bed in the Alpha suite, she'd gotten an annoyed look from him on each occasion, but she had turned her eyes away from him and murmured an apology of "I'm sorry I fell asleep while studying." Bowed her head to him like a good little pack member would, though she did know it was something a Luna never had to do to their Alpha Mate.

He'd not told her not to do that to him, likely wanted her to be submissive and bow down to him at all times, showed him that he had control over her, which was what she wanted him to think. So, he thought he was getting everything he wanted, his Mate and his Luna too. Only he no longer had her heart, it was turning cold and filling with bitterness where he was concerned.

This excuse for her not going to bed with him because she'd fallen asleep while studying, it was her saving grace two or three nights a week. A few times she'd outright lied to him, and told him she was hanging out with some girls having a movie night in the packs theatre, not to wait up for her at all.

He just disconnected the mind-link with her each time she'd done that, though she'd felt his annoyance come through that link before it was severed. He couldn't get her pregnant if she wasn't in his bed, and she thought he was annoyed by that very thing. Considering it was all he wanted from her.

Nora also knew that she didn't really have to concern herself with him trying to feel out what it was she was feeling, through the mate bond tether, because he didn't truly care at all about knowing what she felt. She was still having to put up with him touching Gloria, and it reminded her every single time that he didn't care at all. It was on a daily basis now, sometimes more than once, he really was a bastard of a Mate.

She just hoped he had the common sense to not do anything with that she-wolf today. When she was out there with her parents, she couldn't help the hiss of pain at that first moment of him touching Gloria. She never knew when it was going to happen and couldn't help her reaction to it. She could bear it a few seconds later, but she knew her parents would understand exactly what it was, if they heard her hiss in pain for no reason.

His Gamma had stopped and stared at her once, just two weeks ago, as she'd gasped in pain when walking down the hall to the library. He'd been coming down the hallway with a book in his hand himself, his eyes on the page he was interested in, when he'd heard it and his head had snapped up.

She had felt those pains of betrayal sting her lower lip and wondered if Jace had kissed Gloria or run his thumb over her mouth. It had been brief, thankfully, but she'd actually bitten her lip and drawn blood. She had looked at Matt, her so-called Gamma, but really, he was Gloria's, and his sudden and undivided attention was on her.

She'd muttered, "Bit my bloody lip." Which was true she had, could taste the blood, and then she'd moved on away from him hurriedly, before he picked up anything else from her. She didn't need him trying to comfort her when he knew what his own Alpha was doing to her. She didn't want anything to do with any of them and didn't want that Gamma trying to comfort her when he didn't truly care about her either.

Nora saw her father frown right at her answer. He'd been expecting her to say yes, because what Luna traveled alone to her home pack without her Alpha Mate. It was practically unheard of in their world. Alphas were possessive and protective creatures and protecting their Luna was their top priority.

She wondered absently what would happen if the pack was attacked, and she wasn't in the packhouse. Would Gloria just lock it down without her inside it? Likely so, she thought after only a minute. If she didn't exist, Jace would be all hers and that was what Gloria wanted.

"He's just very busy," she half smiled at him. "He is 130 years old and everything inside his pack is pre-planned out for months in advance, so sometimes things can't be helped is all. I understand that," she stated, and managed a proper smile for both her mother and father. "I will tell him where I'm going, and if he has concerns, I'm certain he'll make sure I have a full escort. But I know he won't begrudge me seeing my sister shift for the first time. It's big in all families to see your siblings shift and bond with their wolves."

Her father had stared at her for a moment, and then just nodded slowly. "Alright, you'd tell us if something was wrong, right?" he'd asked.

She smiled and turned herself around. "Do I look unhealthy to you?" she smiled, though she'd lost a few kilos that could be put down to a new and vigorous mate bond, all the bedroom activity that was going on. She'd actually slimmed down a little and her gure that had been fuller when meeting Jace was now more wolfen of trim taught and terrific, though not for the reasons everyone thought.

Both her parents had nodded, she wasn't withering away, regardless of the fact that her Mate didn't love her. No, she was stubbornly holding herself together, she would not fall apart while inside that pack. No, she would wait until it was all over, and she'd left where he could never see that he'd hurt her at all.

She would be strong to the bitter end, and show him even after she was gone that she would have made a formidable Luna, but he'd not cared to love and cherish her. She was going to make him suffer the loss of her on her terms. Then she was going to do something with her life and be a strong, unyielding woman and show him what he had lost. He would have regrets when he saw her years after they were over.

She hugged both her parents goodbye and walked back to her car, sat there and wondered if she should spend the entire afternoon and some of the evening away from the pack. Out here she had Rosa with her, and that was a very nice feeling. She'd not felt her in weeks. Being away from that place was good for her wolf. "Rosa?" she asked.