

CH 7

She'd arrived home well after dark to what appeared to be an annoyed Alpha, and she looked at him and asked "What?" as she went to walk on by him, why he was annoyed with her. She didn't know, she'd not seen him today, not even had breakfast with him.

"You just vanish from the pack and don't tell anyone where you're going. That is very irresponsible of you," he grated out, grabbing her by the arm to stop her from walking past him, uncaring of his annoyance.

"Is it, were you worried about me?" she asked right back and looked right at him with a surprised expression. He'd spent the day in the city himself, likely if he'd cared about her at all. He'd have actually been able to feel that she herself was in the city. But he'd clearly not pulled on his tether to her even once during the course of the day.

"Of course I was. What Mate wouldn't be worried when their Mate just leaves the pack and is gone for a whole day and half the bloody night?" he grated out.

Nora moved her eyes past him to where she could see Gloria was leaning up against a wall just outside of the Alpha's oce, watching the two of them, watching as Jace rounded on her in full view of the pack, a ght between the Alpha and his Mate for all to see.

She saw Gloria's mouth twitch up in one corner and knew that she-wolf had mentioned it to him and that was the only reason he knew that she'd been gone all day long. Gloria was, she thought, trying to instigate a real ght between them, but Nora didn't care to argue with her Mate, didn't actually see a need to. Gloria, however, enjoyed watching the way Jace treated her so poorly.

Took pleasure from it, is what Nora was seeing right at that minute. She could wipe that smug smile off that b***h's face, with offering to f**k him for all to hear, by way of an apology, but it was her birthday, and she didn't want to ruin it for herself.

Her eyes moved back to Jace, and she looked up at him. This frown on his face now, that she was, was almost a constant now when he looked at her. She was not what he wanted, and dealing with her was not something he wanted either, she supposed, but maybe he thought he needed to pull her into line, and remind her who was in control of her, that being he as her Alpha.

She frowned right back at him, "I don't understand why you say you were worried," she shook her head, sounding confused, and then pulled her phone out. There were many pack members staring at the scene that was unfolding before them, in the foyer of the packhouse. Nearly two dozen of them, she clicked through her phone and frowned even deeper.

Then she looked back at him, a full frown of confusion on her face for all to see. "You never called me to ask where I was. In fact the only call I got today was from my mother," she told him, and turned that screen to face him, showing her call log. "You didn't call, your unit didn't call, Gloria didn't call me either." She looked right at him questioningly "If you were worried about me? Then why didn't you call me?" she asked, putting him on the spot for all here to hear.

She saw him turn and look at Gloria and frown at her now. Oh, so Gloria had claimed to have called her out of concern about her whereabouts had she. Dumb b***h didn't think Nora had the balls to call her out. All she'd seen was Nora being submissive and staying out of sight of all that was going on, that she had hidden herself away, a scared, lonely girl that didn't know what to do with all that was going on around her, where her mate was concerned.

She had this pack believing she was just going to put up with everything their Alpha did to her, had Gloria believing it as well it seemed, that was good for Nora. She tapped his arm when he didn't answer her question. "Jace?" she asked. "Why are you so mad at me, yelling at me in front of the pack, when you yourself weren't all that concerned about my whereabouts? Because if you were, you'd have called me yourself, would you not?" she offered up for all here to hear.

His eyes moved back to her. "Where were you?" he asked, though in a much more calmer manner, she noted, he'd reined in his temper, seeing as she'd called him out, and he knew she was right, but he'd ignored her question altogether, because he couldn't answer it and she knew it.

"You were busy today, all day. You had morning training and then had breakfast with your unit and Gloria, and then headed into the city for work, I suppose." She laid out his schedule as she'd seen it. Making sure that he and the pack knew that she knew what his day was lled with, she knew where her Mate was.

"So, I took myself out for the day. I had coffee and cake by myself, and then wandered about the botanical gardens, had dinner there at the restaurant by myself, because I heard you tell Gloria you had a dinner meeting, and would be back late, when she walked you to your car this morning." She told him simply honestly, it was what she'd seen.

She saw his frown deepen at her words and her long explanation of what not only he'd done, but she'd done with herself all day today. He couldn't understand why she was telling him everything. She could, however, see he was thinking about her very words, trying to gure out why, and she saw Matt look right at her, and held up her hand to stop him when she saw it dawn on him, what she was feeling.

Pissed off was how she felt, and she was thinking about it being her birthday. That was all he was getting from her and nothing more. She'd learned to guard her thoughts over the months, so for him this was all about her having to spend her birthday by herself. That her own Mate didn't even know it was her birthday. 'Leave it alone Matt.' She shot down the mind-link to Jace's Gamma, 'It's none of your concern.'

She saw Matt frown now and Jace turned to see who she was mind-linking to, and looked right back at her. He'd not missed the more than angry look she'd shot at Matt by way of warning him to stay out of it.

"What is going on?" Jace snapped at her.

She half laughed. "Hmm, that is a very good question now, isn't it?" she nodded and turned and walked away from him. Why should she tell him anything when he didn't care at all?

"Nora," he grated out, "You may be my Mate, but you still have to explain yourself to me."

She stopped walking at the foot of the stairs and turned to look right at him, knowing the pack members were still watching them. "Fine, do you really want to know?" she asked him pointedly and saw something icker across his face, didn't exactly know what it was, had stopped trying to understand him months ago "I took myself out for my birthday." She stated for all to hear "I turned 20 today, took myself out for cake and dinner. Because you..." she murmured and actually heard the hitch in her voice as a part of her resolve cracked with what she was about to state for all to hear.

She saw his facial expression change now as he realized why she'd said everything and the way she had said it, because he'd not cared at all, and she wanted them to know it. "Were too busy, have yet to even say happy birthday to me." she told him, and felt a single tear burn down her face, wiped it away and turned and walked up the stairs away from him.

She heard many gasps coming from the pack members. They all knew Mates liked to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. It gave them a chance to spoil their Mate. What she'd done was tell everyone that he didn't care to even know when her birthday was. That he had, in fact, spent the day, and she knew it with his unit and Gloria and then in the city away from her.

That he had, in fact, left her alone all day and then had the hide to ask where she was? Then yell at her in front of everyone, and for what? her wanting to celebrate her birthday. She'd seen all her life just how her Alpha back in her home pack had treated his Luna on her birthday. There were owers and gifts, a whole day of just the two of them together. He would wine and dine her and the entire pack would wish her a happy birthday as they came across them out in the pack.

She'd gotten none of that, and although she had not expected anything of the kind from him, and she even knew Gloria's birthday party was being organized already, it was going to be grand from all she'd heard. Lots of owers and music, dancing, a big party just for the Luna in the ballroom. The whole pack was invited to come and dance the night away.

She ignored him, calling out to her. It was too late, he couldn't even say he was going to surprise her with a gift or anything. She'd made sure that he understood, that she knew he didn't know when her birthday was. That he didn't care. Hell, the man didn't even know or sense that Rosa was buried deep down inside of her on a daily basis. That she was practically non-existent when inside this pack. She might as well be considered wolf-less inside this pack, not that he'd noticed.