

## Chapter 5

"What did your father say to you?"

Startled out of his thoughts by the abrupt question, Jake looked up to find his mother already waiting for him in his room, or rather pacing impatiently in his room.

"Nothing." He tried to think of a much more believable answer that wasn't the truth because he had no intention of telling her what his father had just told him, so he said the first thing that he thought of. "Just men's stu , you know, alpha stu ."

His mother snorted. "Alpha stu , of course. You don't have to lie to me. Just tell me you don't want me to know."

"Okay. I don't want you to know." Jake shrugged.

"Why? You always tell me everything? Or was it about the blind girl?"

Jake felt that was one question he could answer truthfully, since his dad never spoke about Ciara. "No, we didn't even talk about Ciara."

"Ciara?" His mother pronounced the name as though the letters themselves were enough to poison her tongue. "When did you start calling the blind girl Ciara?"

Jake sighed, wishing he could avoid telling his mother the truth about Ciara being his true mate, but he knew she was the only one who could advise him on what to do with his best interests at heart. He knew that if he asked his father, his answer would be the same any time any day. He would advise that, regardless of the consequences, Jake should hold fast to his true mate.

Jake couldn't hold in his second sigh as he decided to just bite the bullet and ask his mother for advice. "Mum, I don't want you to freak out or anything, but I have something important to ask you."

"What is it? Is it something you and your dad spoke about?" His mother was watching him just like he suspected a mother eagle would watch her only chick.

"How would you feel if I told you I found my true mate?"

"That would be fantastic...though it depends..."

Jake perked up and hope sparked in his heart. "On what?"

"On her pack, her status in the pack, and all that..."

If Jake's hope was a balloon, it immediately deflated. His mother was talking about status and pack when Ciara was just an ordinary human.

"You don't think I'll approve of her?" His mother stared at him with narrowed eyes.

"I know you'll never approve of her," Jake mumbled.

"Well, if it's that Vanessa girl, you can certainly do a lot better. Serena, on the other hand, would be a great—"

"Mum...my true mate is Ciara."

"What?!" If the situation was different, Jake would have laughed at how low his mother's jaw dropped.

She suddenly started shaking her head and laughing. "No...you're kidding, right?"

Jake didn't bother replying to her rhetorical question rather, he allowed his silence to speak for itself.

"Ciara...the blind human is your true mate? Jacob, I think lust has gone to your head, but I won't let you make such a mistake. If you want to sleep with the blind girl, go ahead, but it'll be a er I'm dead and buried that you will mate with that creature."

"Mother! It's not just me, okay...sure, I think she's beautiful, but it's beyond that. Her scent is heavenly and I feel my wolf connect with me like never before when I'm near her."

"Well, you can start disconnecting again because nothing on this earth will ever allow me to permit you to mate with that blind bat." His mother whispered, fury glinting in her eyes.

Jake couldn't stop his wolf from growling at his mother. "Mum! Stop insulting her!"

His mother stepped back, looking hurt as she turned away from him. "So you meet a beautiful girl and suddenly, you're growling at your mother?"

"Mum, I didn't mean it that way...that wasn't me; it was my wolf."

"Listen to me, Jake. Do you remember the Brandit Pack? They dissolved because their alpha mated with a human and other packs started attacking them from far and near...Do you want that to happen to this pack?"

"No, but—"

His mother interrupted him, "No buts Jacob. Listen, this is what you're going to do. You're going to mate in the next conference meeting that the blind...that Ciara is given as the human sacrifice—"

"No way, mum...I can't do that."

"Look at it this way. The Moon Goddess has blessed you with a way out. The vampires requested for a human sacrifice just when you discovered that you have a human mate...that can't be coincidence, right?"

"But the same Moon Goddess gave her to me as my true mate—"

"She made a mistake...no one is perfect. Don't ruin your life and don't ruin the pack. Jake...this is the only way out."

"But—"

Jake's mother shushed him and then enclosed him in an embrace. "I know how you feel, son, but this is the best way...the only way."

Jake's eyes reddened as he withdrew from his mother's embrace.

Knowing that his mother was right, Jake eventually had to agree, even though he could feel that his wolf was unhappy with his decision. "You're right, mum. It's the only way. But how are we going to get the other Council Members to agree?"

"As long as you raise your hands this time, the council members are easy to deal with. Leave everything to me...rest a little, yeah?"

With those parting words, Jake's mother walked out of his room, humming. Jake flung himself to his bed and although he knew his mother's advice was right, he felt really hollow, as though he was about to be empty forever. His eyes were sore and his head ached the more he thought about it. How had the fates made such a mistake as to give him a beautiful, blind, true mate?

After experiencing the wonder of finding his true mate and the unbelievable connection with his wolf, he had to let it all go just because he was given a defective mate. If she had been a powerful werewolf, he could have loved her. He could have tried to be a faithful Alpha like his father, but now he had been robbed of the opportunity because his mate was just not good enough.

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"All in favor of offering the blind girl as the human sacrifice to the vampires, please raise your hand."

The room was silent as the head of the Council counted the raised hands and wrote the total number in a book that was passed to his father. Jake bowed his head to avoid glancing in his father's direction because he didn't want to see that familiar disappointed look on his father's face.

Everyone in the room waited for his father to announce the results, which were obviously in favor of Ciara being offered as the human sacrifice, but his father didn't say a word for the next few seconds. The palpable silence made Jake look up in his father's direction and he watched as his father, who was glaring at his mother, passed the result to Tyler's father, to announce.

"With a total majority vote of 83% of today's council, Ciara will be offered as the human sacrifice tomorrow evening."

As soon as the meeting ended, Jake walked out of the conference room as fast as he could to avoid his father asking to speak to him alone so he could tell him how disappointed he was.

He felt like seeing Ciara, but he just couldn't bring himself to. He was afraid that the shame of practically selling her to vampires in exchange for peace of mind to mate someone more fit to be luna would be unbearable.

He decided to just go to bed early, but he ended up dreaming of Ciara crying and yelling at him for abandoning her.

The next morning, he woke up from a restless sleep and decided to go for a run in wolf form. After walking a few miles into the forest, he tore off his clothes and changed to his wolf form.

When he came back to himself, he was by the lake, licking the blood of a deer off his paws and staring at the neatly half-eaten carcass with no memory of how or when he caught or ate it.

He stared at the obvious sign of a wolf courting his mate in the way the carcass had been eaten. His wolf had eaten half of the carcass and left the other half to provide for his mate. The weird thing was he had no memory of doing this at all, which meant he had lost control of his wolf for a while.

That had never happened before. Was he losing control of his wolf because he was about to reject Ciara? Or was this happening because he hadn't rejected Ciara yet?

As he was thinking about this, he tumbled into the lake and washed the parts of his fur that were stained with blood, especially his mouth, because he knew that in his human form, the taste of blood and raw meat in his mouth would be unpalatable.

He pulled the leftover carcass in wolf form to the pack's storage building and handed it over to an enforcer he met on the way.

Then he ran back home when he realized it was already early a moon. After taking a shower and changing his clothes, he went straight to the attic room to see Ciara but instead, found one of the pack maids cleaning out the room.

"Where is Ciara?" Jake asked.

"The blind girl? The Luna had her taken to the cells in the basement." The woman answered.

"Wait a minute, did you just say my mother sent her to the cells?"

"Yes." The woman stared at him for a moment, then went back to her cleaning.

Jake didn't stop to thank her as he ran out of the room and down to the basement. What he saw on the way to the basement was enough to make him feel the urge to kill someone.

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When Ciara woke up, she was surprised to feel someone stroking her hair. She held the hand stroking her hair and immediately recognized its owner. "Vanessa?"

"Yes?"

"Why are you stroking my hair?"

"Nothing...I just feel bad...that I never treated you right. I behaved like a spoiled child when taking care of you was my only chore in the pack and others had to take shifts every week to tidy up various parts of the pack...yet I complained and I was sometimes mean to you."

"Huh?" Ciara was shocked by Vanessa's regretful tone. "The same Vanessa who forgot to bring her food most of the time, insulted her any chance she got, pinched her whenever she got angry and punished her by refusing to bring her food?"

What had come over Vanessa?

"I'm sorry...Please tell me you forgive me."

"Um...I forgive you? Now we can become friends and spend lots of time together, right?"

"I wish." Vanessa sighed again. "Come on, it's time to get you ready."

Ciara got more and more confused with every passing minute as Vanessa helped her fill the bath with warm water and brought her a full breakfast of eggs, bacon, and toast without insulting her even once.

"I have to go now...Goodbye Ciara."

Before Ciara could ask why she was saying goodbye in such a mournful tone, Vanessa had already walked out of the room and locked the door behind her.

Ciara didn't know when she fell asleep, but she woke up to feel herself being heaped like a sack of potatoes on someone's shoulders. Her head hit the man's back repeatedly when he started to move.

When she heard the door to her room closing and the man continued to move, Ciara could no longer pretend to be asleep.

"Let me go!" She yelled as she hit the person's back with her fists.

"Goddess, it feels like she's tickling me, Elvis." The kidnapper said, alerting Ciara to the fact that she had more than one kidnapper.

"Why are you kidnapping me? There will be no one to pay my ransom."

"Ransom?" The other kidnapper scoffed.

The two kidnappers burst into laughter as the first one threw the wiggling Ciara onto the floor on her right hip.

Ciara began crawling in the opposite direction of their laughter. Even though she didn't know where she was and where she was going, she wanted to be as far away from them as possible.

"Help!" She yelled repeatedly while crawling until her hands touched the wall in front of her. Then, supporting her weight on the wall, she got up even though her hips hurt from when her kidnapper dropped her. With her hands on the wall, she started walking forward as fast as she could, away from the voice of the two kidnappers laughing at her. She had to find Alpha Donovan.

"Wow, that was funny...like watching a blind rat run around in a cage."

"Yeah...Come here, hussy..." The second kidnapper mocked, making clicking sounds with his hands.

"James? Elvis? What the hell are you doing?!" A voice boomed in the hallway. A voice that belonged to the man who stole Ciara's first kiss.

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