

## Chapter 9

NATALIE

The next morning brings me a new kind of nervousness and fear that I have never experienced before.

I get ready and sneak out of my house before anyone sees me and eventually stops me from going out.

Contrary to my expectations, I find Giana and Anne already waiting for me around the street, still dressed in their pajamas. 2

"I told you!" Anne tells Giana as I get near them.

"You can't tell him." Giana folds her arms over her chest.

"He has the right to know." I don't know from where these words are coming.

"Natalie. I knew you will do this when guilt hits you again. We have been waiting here for two hours so we can stop you. So please...listen to us and give up on this stupid idea." Anne insists, gripping my wrist.

"Anne...Enzo has always been good to me. I can't hide this from him anymore. At least not after, I have done this twice. The first time, I could let it slide as a mistake but...I can't anymore. He needs to know what's going on." I get my hand out of her grip.

" He will leave you. " Giana scares me.

Pain jabs my heart. My hands tremble.

" I have to tell him. I can't...live like this. " I whisper weakly.

" He will blame everything on you. " Giana's eyes soften.

" I am the one to blame. He didn't do anything wrong. " I let out.

Giana releases an exasperated breath and turns around, giving me her back.

My gaze switches between Giana's back and Anne's frustrated figure.

" What bothers you two? You want him to leave me anyway. " I say quietly.

" Not like this. " They blurt at once.

" Then like how? " I frown.

Silence follows.

" I have never forced you two to tell me what frustrates you. But...if there is anything I need to know. Please, tell me today. " I whisper lowly.

Giana and Anne refuse to say anything.

I can't begin to tell how much it hurts me. It's like my best friends don't trust me.

" I am telling him. Get out of my way. " I pick my head and speak in a determined voice.

" Don't, Natalie. " Anne warns.

" If you can't tell me what you have been hiding, then you have no right to stop me either. " I push past them both.

" Natalie. Think this through. Don't rush it. " They close the distance between us and appear beside me again.

I ignore their continuous nagging and don't halt.

" Natalie. Listen to us. You know we have your best interest at heart. " Giana tries softly this time.

" Save it. Nothing will work. " I tell her.

I am going straight to the lake beside the training ground which is close to Alpha's house. Enzo goes to that lake after training every morning.

People who pass by me only shoot me looks of contempt. I have learned to ignore them and keep my head high as if I am the only one in the world.

The closer I get to the lake, the more I feel like my life is slipping out of my hands. Everything I have endured, everything I hoped for...Everything is going to shit. And I did this to myself.

" Natalie. " Anne sighs when we cross the training ground.

" We can still turn around. We can go back and have some double chocolate chip muffins. " Giana suggests.

She knows I love those muffins. But nothing is enough to sway me when I make up my mind about something.

In the distance, I can see the great tree of our Pack. It's said to be hundred years old, planted by the first Alpha of this pack. Every time, our pack has a new mate couple, they come here and write their names on the tree so the ancestor spirits of all the Alphas can protect them and their bond from all evil. 1

I have always fantasised about coming here and writing my name with Enzo's.

My feet come to an abrupt halt when I see beyond the old tree. It feels like I can't breath anymore. As if my heart has stopped beating. As if I am already dead. 1

Anne and Giana stop their constant persuading talks.

The imaginary cold water pours down over my body, freezing every emotion of mine. My trembling hands clench into fists while the ground beneath my feet slips away.

" Natalie. " Giana whispers under her breath.

I can...not...bring myself to believe this.

She looks like me – almost like me. Her face, her body, her smile. Everything has always been like me. I have never

hated her for it before.

I expect tears to blur my vision, but nothing happens. Like a soulless body, I watch Emilie and Enzo kissing each other. Their closed eyes, their connected lips, their hazy expressions. This will remain imprinted on my mind. 2

The ground continues to slip from under my feet. I can't stand straight for much longer.

But, all I can focus on is my boyfriend kissing my sister. Right under the tree which has witnessed countless mates declaring their love for each other.

If someone ever asks me if you can hear the sound of your heart breaking...I will say yes. You can hear it. It's loud and clear enough to make your own ears bleed.

"Let's go back." Anne takes my cold hand in hers.

"What...what..." I can't think of the right words. I never think of the right words at the right time.

"Dickhead." Giana grumbles.

"Let's leave from here." Anne tries to drag me again.

But, I can't move.

I watch as Emilie pulls away, giggling. Maybe. Maybe, it's some kind of misunderstanding. Some kind of...

The honest smile which touches Enzo's lips takes away my last straw of hope.

So perfect. So — so perfect, they are together.

“ Why? ” I utter a single word in a trance.

“ Emilie is Enzo’s mate. ” Anne reveals.

The truth knocks over every positive emotion in me. I snap my head at Anne, disbelief clouding my eyes. 1

“ Then...then...who am I? ”

She purses her lips. Her silence tells me everything I need to know.

“ They were playing with you. ” Giana adds fuel to the fire burning my existence. 5

I look at her ever so slowly.

Taking my hand out of Anne’s hand, I take one step back.

Smiling, I place my hand over my lips. I don’t know why...why it’s so funny to me right now.

“ Playing? ” I taste the word over the tip of my tongue.

And then smile wider. My eyes take in the couple before me.

Why...how...when... 1

Did I think someone like Enzo could be my destiny? 2

All the unsaid questions bring a bitter taste to my mouth. It’s poison. It will kill me.

It's all so funny.

Then, why do I find it so hard to breathe?

Tears blur my vision in the end. Every fibre of my being breaks down.

"You two knew." Another betrayal added to the list.

"We wanted to tell you." Anne tries to step closer to me.

I wave my trembling hand in the air.

"St—stay there." I choke on my breath.

And pull the hand back to my mouth to cover it. Tears blur my vision but never break the barrier to flow out of my eyes. The heart—wrenching lump in my throat is the only indication that I am still alive.

"Natalie." Giana calls my name.

I hate it.

"Who else...knew?" I pick my head, asking.

My heart is bleeding.

"Everyone in the...pack knew they were mates." Anne discloses, casting her eyes down. 6

It becomes even harder to breath.

"What did they think when they — they saw me with him?"

" He is the Alpha's son. No one questions him. If he wants to play, he plays. Everyone knew he was messing with you. " Giana mumbles.

The looks of hate, the disgusted stance, the sneaky gossips.

Was it because I was wolf less or because they thought I was a whore who was messing with her sister's mate?

The pain grows in my heart. I place my hand over my chest and look down.

" That's why we didn't want you to know. " Anne tries to reason.

" And you let all those people...laugh at me. All this while...I thought...I thought..." Tears finally roll down my cheeks.

" I thought..." I sob, clenching my hand in fist over my heart. " I thought we were friends. "

Turning around, I break out in a sprint. I need to get away from all of them, all these people.

" Natalie! " They are quick to run behind me.

" Leave me the fuck alone! " I yell at the top of my lungs and run harder.

I grip my hair between my fingers, trying to ease the growing pain in my head while I run away from them.

Every moment, every word that we exchanged, all the

 +5 BONUS

promises...It was all a lie. And everyone was a part of this carefully crafted trap.

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