

::::Chapter 41::::

I see Charles emerging from the study. When he sees me, he walks towards me and hugs me. I too wrap my arms around him. Over his shoulder, I see Alarick coming out of his study. We look at each other. There's no emotion on his face. Even I'm not feeling any emotion towards him. Not even emotions such as anger and hatred.

"It's so good to see you," Charles says while pulling away. "What are you doing here, anyway?"

I look at Charles and Daniel and tell them, "I'm here to invite you both to Christina's seventh birthday party."

I give Charles the invitation card. "What? She's already turning seven?" He asks while looking at the card.

"Yes," I reply.

"She's growing up so fast!" I laugh at Charles' words.

"I know," I tell him. "Please, do come for her birthday party. If you don't, then she's going to kill me first then she'll kill you," I joke. Charles and Daniel laugh.

"You know, I wouldn't miss her birthday party for anything in the world," Charles says with a smile.

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Today is Christina's birthday. She and her friends are in the backyard along with the parents enjoying the birthday party while Matt, Darius, Charles, Daniel, Anne and I are in the living room having a conversation about never growing up. I can't help but notice how Matt is looking at Anne.

"You're acting like a love-sick puppy." I mind-link him. He looks at me and throws daggers in my direction. I chuckle. He shakes his head and resumes staring at his mate.

"I wish we could remain children for our whole lives with no worries and tensions," I say.

"I completely agree with you," Charles says. "There are many stages in life and childhood is the best stage among them." We all nod our heads in agreement. "You know, whenever I look at Christina, I can't help but imagine Chriselda as a kid," he continues. He looks at me and says, "You both look so similar."

Before I can say anything to that, Christina comes running inside the living room. "Charlie and Chris, what are you doing inside? Let's go outside and dance," she says as she starts dragging me and Charles outside.

We are in the backyard now. There are kids dancing to the music playing through the speakers while the adults are watching them with adoration. Christina also starts dancing, urging us to dance along with her. Charles takes my hand and starts spinning me around. Then, I spin him around. Christina laughs at us. I don't blame her. Charles and I are terrible dancers. We're not even going along with the rhythm of the music. We're just shaking our legs, hands and head.

When I look at my friends standing in a distance, I find them laughing at us too. Charles and I rush towards them and make them dance along with us.

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Christina's birthday party was a success. Matt, Darius and I are back at the pack house a er bidding farewell to Charles, Daniel and Anne.

"Thank you so much for inviting Anne today," Matt says to me. "It was really nice to see her a er a long time."

"I just wanted to see you happy," I tell him.

He starts to say, "You know, when you were dancing with Charles today, you looked happy."

"He makes me happy. You can never be sad when he's around. He's a wonderful guy."

"You know what, you both would make a wonderful couple," he says before heading in the direction of his room.

"What?" I'm completely taken aback by his blunt words.

He stops in his tracks. "Chriselda, you've clearly heard me."

"Charles and I as a couple? You must be joking," I say.

"You know that I'm not joking," Matt says seriously. "Chris, it's time for you to move on."

"I am moving on!"

"No, you're not!" He says. "I can see that you're trying to be happy but Chriselda, you cannot be happy when you're lonely! You need someone. You need a companion. And to be honest, I see that companion in Charles. You need him as much as he needs you. A er his mate passed away-"

I interrupt him. "You know about his mate?"

"I'm supposed to know about his mate since he's the Beta of my neighboring pack," he replies. "Chriselda, everyone needs a companion. Even you do. Even Charles does."

"But we don't have feelings for each other."

"You will if you both give a second chance to love."

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Nightshade Venture Pack is organizing The Socials to introduce their new leaders. It is dangerous to keep The Socials when everyone knows that Kurt is roaming around freely. He can hurt any pack when the leaders are away. So, it was decided that only the Alpha and Beta will attend The Socials while the Gamma will stay back with his pack for security purpose. When Matt and I reach the pack house of Nightshade Venture, we find that all the leaders are already present. When Charles sees me, he walks towards me and hugs me. I'm feeling awkward since Matt's words are still roaming inside my head. Charles pulls away when he realizes that I didn't hug him. "What's wrong?" he asks.

I look at him and then I look away. Ever since I had that conversation with Matt, I don't think that I'll be able to look at Charles in the same way. "Nothing," I reply as I try to smile at him. He somehow doesn't look convinced. Before he can ask me any further, the former Alpha of the pack starts introducing the new leaders. A er the introductions, all the leaders head for lunch. Charles decides to sit beside me at the dining table rather than sitting with Alarick. We all start eating.

"Chris, what's wrong?" Charles asks again.

"Nothing is wrong," I assure him. "It's just that Matt said certain things to me a few days ago."

"What did Matt say to you?"

"I'll tell you later. Meet me outside the pack house when you're done with your meal," I tell him. When I'm finished with my meal, I head outside the pack house and wait for Charles. He soon joins me.

"Now, tell me," he says. I look at my surroundings. There are too many people here.

"Let's go somewhere else where people can't hear us," I tell him. Charles and I walk deeper and deeper in the forest until we reach a waterfall. I close my eyes and listen to the water falling. It's soothing to my ears. When I open my eyes, I look around to make sure that there aren't any people around. When I'm really sure that only Charles and I are present here, I face him. "Matt thinks that I'm not moving on with my life," I say. "He thinks that I'll be able to move on only if I have a companion in my life. And you know what the craziest thing is?"

"What?"

"He thinks that you will be the perfect companion for me."

"What?" He laughs.

"I know, right!" I say and laugh along with him. A er the laughter has died down between us, I ask him on a serious note, "Charles, do you feel lonely?"

"Yes, I feel lonely all the time," he replies.

"I've been feeling lonely ever since Alarick broke his bond with me. Do you think that a companion in my life would help me get rid of my loneliness?"

"Chris, we are wolves. We are supposed to have our mate as our companion. Choosing someone else as our companion won't make us happy or help us get rid of our loneliness," he explains.

"So, you don't believe in giving a second chance to love?"

"No, I don't because I know that it's impossible to fall in love with someone who is not your mate."

"Charles, did you ever try to fall in love again?"

"No, I didn't."

I interrupt him, "Then, how can you say that it's impossible to fall in love with someone who is not your mate?"

"You think that falling in love again will help us get rid of our loneliness?"

"Maybe."

"Then, you should fall in love."

"I'll try," I say. "But promise me, you will try too." We look at each other and smile. A er our conversation, we head back to the pack house. When we reach there, we find Matt and Alarick outside.

"Where were you?" Alarick asks sternly.

Author's Note: Just a request, please don't write anything on my message board. Things get clouded over there. If you want to say anything to me then you can do so by commenting on this story. :) Today is kind of a special day for me by celebrating on this day, I published the first chapter of this book. And I'm feeling so proud because of the support I've been getting from you guys. Thank you so much for reading, voting and commenting. :)

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