

Chapter 3 ~I Need To Think

Caleb's POV ~

I watched my baby sister walk out the door with a heavy heart. I looked at everyone in that room.. individually.. Then I asked "Is this what we have become, as a pack? Have we forsaken true mates for what we believe a superior choice.. because, if it is.. I find myself reevaluating everything I have ever known us to be!"

My father said "Caleb! You know Aurora is not Luna material! Amelia has been groomed for three years to take her position at Anderson's side! She is the perfect Luna!"

I scoffed "I know no such thing! What I do know is Aurora is a woman of intelligence.. integrity.. strength.. a loving, giving woman who has bent over backwards to be the daughter she is! She has struggled her entire life.. just to be seen by her parents as their child! Someone of value to this pack! But no! What I see is a family determined to hide her in the shadow of her twin! A vapid, shallow.. self-entitled bitch who bullied her.. put her down and made fun of her.. her whole existence! All the while, being encouraged to do all that.. by the very same people who created Aurora!"

Amelia screamed "She wanted to take Anderson away from me! She wanted to steal my happiness! To make me suffer! You're my brother! You're supposed to be on MY side! But instead, you think it's fine for her to steal my mate!"

I look at her.. my eyes wide.. and ask "Do you even hear the bullshit coming out of your mouth, you spoiled little bitch? She can't steal your mate! YOU don't have one! YOU stole HERS! The ego you have is astronomical! I am your brother! But.. I am Aurora's brother, too! Every single one of you have forgotten that! Just like you forgot she is your sister! And you both forgot she was your daughter! She's right! She has always been the throwaway! I am so ashamed of everyone in this room!"

Anderson speaks for the first time "So, where does that leave us, Caleb? You are my best friend! As close as a brother to me, all our lives. I didn't know

Aurora would turn out to be my mate. There was no way I could choose. My wolf wants his mate.. but I want Amelia. I shouldn't have to choose!"

Shaking me head "There shouldn't have been a choice.. Anderson. You should have told Amelia you were going to accept your mate. Amelia should have understood. My parents should have shared a happy and proud moment with their youngest child. Our Alpha and Luna should have encouraged you to be with your Goddess given gift! Those are the only Shoulds that Should have happened! Instead.. we have a chosen mating.. that sees my baby sister banished! And not a fucking one of you seemed concerned at how low we have fallen, as pack! What about you, Luna Bridget? You haven't weighed in at all! I was actually convinced you cared about Aurora. Seems I was wrong about that, as well!"

Alpha John warned "Watch how you speak, boy! I will not be disrespected!" I scoffed "Or what? You'll banish me, too?" Anderson yelled "NO! Enough of this!"

Luna Bridget said "Caleb.. I care deeply for Aurora. I would have been so very proud to see her become Luna of this pack! It is her birthright.. and she would be a hell of a Luna! Oh the changes she would have wrought! But.. in this.. as in all things.. I have to bow to the demands of my Alpha."

Alpha John snapped "Why didn't you speak up then? Here you sit extolling all Aurora's virtues.. while you sat silently, when she was here." She sneered "I was TOLD to keep my mouth shut! Do you not remember?" He, at least, had the decency to look chagrined!

I spoke quietly. "I am not sure how to deal with this! My every instinct tells me to follow my sister out of this pack. My sense of duty holds me in indecision. One thing I do know.. I am so very ashamed of my family. What should have been a happy occasion.. my homecoming.. my ascension to Beta.. pales in comparison to the grief I feel. No matter what happens after this, I lose something very dear to me. I am disgusted.. and as I said, ashamed! I am going to spend time with my sister! You people do what you want!" And I walked out.

I found Aurora in her room.. burning photographs. Only keeping the ones with me in them. Tears rolling down her cheeks. I lifted her and sat down on the chair.. holding her in my lap. My heart broke even further, as her sobs rang out through the room.

I said "I'm not bothering to unpack my suitcases. I am going with you. Wherever you go." Her throat caught on a sob "No, Caleb! Absolutely not! You are a strong man.. an Alpha born Beta! This pack is going to need you... Desperately. Anderson is a weak Alpha.. your strength supercedes his own! You are even stronger than Dad. Without you, Sacred Moon will fall! I know it.. and you know it!"

I shrugged "I don't want to be here, without you. It won't feel the same! It won't be my home!" Again, she shakes her head "I said No! They need you! I will be okay. I emailed the council.. they have already responded. I told them everything.. full disclosure! They have granted me lone wolf status and I will only be forty-five minutes away, at university.. for the next two years. We will FaceTime.. and text.. and you can come see me.. every weekend.. if you want. You are the only family I have, Caleb! I need to know you are following your dreams!"

My little sister.. everyone always comes before her. I replied "Will you watch my ceremony?" She again, shakes her head "I won't be allowed, Bubba! I am no longer part of this pack. The Alpha saw to that. I have no bond! I will watch from the window, though.. I promise!"

As I stood to leave, Mom and Dad walked in.. Bastian growled deep in my chest. I stood protectively, in front of my sister. Dad said "Stand down, boy. We have only come to say our goodbyes."

Aurora laughed "Don't bother. You have never thought of me as your daughter.. saying goodbye is an empty gesture!" Mom snapped "You have always been such an ungrateful child!" And Aurora laughed again.

I asked "What does she have to be grateful for, Mother? When has she ever been treated like anything more than a hired hand? Go! Be with your golden child. I should say.. your only child. Because I have disowned you to wallow in your shame! Just as you have treated my sister.. so shall I treat you." I shoved past them to attend a ceremony that held little meaning for me, anymore!

As I said my oath of the office I would try to uphold.. I listened to my baby sister's screams of agony.. after the marking of Amelia. Looking out at the pack.. I said "Those agonizing screams? That is the pain of a true mate feeling her mate mark an unworthy chosen!" I shifted into Bastian and ran! I need to think!