

## 6. Realizations

\*\*\*Salvador\*\*\*

Javier greets me with a scowl as I arrive at the pack house.

"Where the f\*\*k were you?" he growls, grabbing me by the collar of my shirt. "You were supposed to pick up Celina from class over an hour ago!"

I frown at him and pull his arms off my shirt. He might be alpha but I am a silver wolf. He does not intimidate me nor can he control me. I take orders if I want too and I am in no mood to be bossed around today.

"For the last time, Javi. Celina does not want me around!" I snap, pushing him away from me. "Get it through your thick skull. She doesn't want me as her gamma!"

Javier's body trembles at the challenge in my voice and I mentally prepare myself for a fight. I don't mind though. I am eager to get my aggression out after my encounter with Gwen.

"You got that right," Celina laughs, walking in from the dining room with her arms over her chest. "At least we can both agree I don't need you."

Javier glares at his mate. "It's not about needing him, Celina. It's tradition. Even your sister has a gamma and she's just as strong as you are!"

"Aurora can trust her gamma!" Celina snarls back. "But how do I know Chava won't turn on me like he turned on her!? What guarantee do I have that he will actually have my back?"

My head is pounding with Marcos' whimpers as Gwen's words replay in my head.

I don't want a mate and I certainly don't want one as hot-headed, domineering, and possessive as you!

Seems to me I am the most unwanted wolf on the planet.

Lost in my thoughts, I am in no mood to discuss whether or not I am a trustworthy gamma and I simply back away slowly from them as they begin their argument.

"Where the hell are you going?" Javier snarls as I creep up the stairs.

Fucking hell, I groan.

"To bed!" I sigh. "You two can argue over whether or not I'm good enough to be her gamma. Take away my title, don't take it away. I don't f\*\*\*\*g care anymore." I pant, feeling Marcos just beneath the surface. "But for goddess sakes just f\*\*\*\*g pick already!"

The couple stare at me in silence as I storm up the stairs, slamming my door shut and locking it behind me.

I plop onto the bed and let my mind roam free. Marcos cries as I replay my encounter with Gwen and the cruelty of her words.

She looked so beautiful as she yelled at me, her cheeks flushed with anger as she narrowed her green emeralds at me. Her ery hair seemed to come to life as she growled for me to get away and her scent.... Goddess the scent of her arousal! I wanted to take her right f\*\*\*\*g there. I wanted to feel just how wet she was, have her wrap her legs around my waist as I f\*\*\*\*d her against the wall. I wanted her moans of pleasure. I wanted her. SO. f\*\*\*\*g. BAD.

I never thought I would want a witch in my bed, sleeping comfortably in my arms. I should hate witches for what they did to my family. But Gwen? I can't hate my Gwen.

I never thought I would want to watch her sleep, see the rise and fall of her chest with every breath she took. I never thought I would want to wake to her in the mornings curled up beside me and make her feel safe.

It is almost unbearable to think she lived in fear. I mean I hardly knew Gwen and yet my heart ached to make her happy.

What is she doing to me?

I lay back on my bed and stare at my ceiling, attempting to sleep but it seems an impossible task. As the hours tick by, my body grows restless, unable to remain still as I think about my pretty witch mate.

Outside my bedroom window, rain begins to pour, drenching the earth in much needed water. I listen for a moment, Marcos eager to feel it on his fur..

When it becomes obvious I won't be getting any sleep, I climb out of bed and dress in some basketball shorts before heading downstairs. It is only 3 am so I tiptoe quietly through the pack house. As I pass through the courtyard, a voice calls out to me from the couches under the awning.

"Where are you going?" Celina asks, a hot cup of tea in her hands and a large red text book with notes in her lap.

She isn't wearing her medallion and I find myself bending over to bow in respect.

"T-to let my wolf out," I stammer, gulping slowly.

Celina always makes me nervous and with my anger gone, I find it hard to hold her gaze. Unlike Aurora who has kind, warm honey eyes, Celina has grey eyes of ice with dark clouds swirling within her irises. She does, however, share her sister's inability to hide her emotions. Aurora can force a smile all she wants but you will always know when she is upset. Whether or not she tells you what is upsetting her is a completely different story. She learned well to keep things to herself after what Lluvia Blanca did to her.

But Celina? She does not hide her emotions. She tells you straight out how she feels and does not care if it hurts your feelings. She is an open book and you always know exactly where you stand with her.

She stares intently at me and I fight hard to keep from dreading as I feel her distrust and hatred for me radiating from her cold grey eyes.

"You're hurt," she hums to herself, taking a sip from her tea and leaning back in her chair. Her eyes continue to scrutinize me. "Your aura is dark ... you're heartbroken," she adds coolly. "But not because of what I said..."

I don't even know how to respond so I don't and stand perfectly still.

"Why are you sad?" She asks, setting her tea down.

I'm a bit surprised she even cares but this was simply not something I planned on sharing with anyone.

"With all due respect, I don't really think that's any of your concern," I say quietly.

She shrugs and stares at her book. "Javier is very adamant that you be my gamma... He trusts you... but trust can be dangerous if given to wrong people." She pauses for a second before nally meeting my eyes. "I trust people when I understand how they work... and I don't understand you, Chava. I don't... understand how you could hurt your own sister as you did all those years."

Tears well up in her eyes. "I don't understand you... so I can't trust you."

I don't trust myself either. I am still angry my father is not here anymore. I am angry at Moon Goddess for taking him home so suddenly. I am angry at my mother for what she did to us in his absence. I am angry at myself for what I became.

Who's to say my anger won't poison me again and turn me into the monster I already know lives within me?

"You are right to not trust me," I sigh. "I'm not winning any contests for brother of the year anytime soon..." A sudden realization clicks in my head so I add, "But if you want to understand me, know this: We hurt people when we've been hurt."

I think back to Gwen, how her words had sliced through the fibers of my heart. In her eyes, I saw pain, an indescribable agony. She was afraid I would hurt her and so she hurt me before I could get any closer and cause damage. Whoever she was running from, they had hurt her and she was unwilling to fall for it again, even if she craved me.

"Everyone hurts the people they love," I whisper. "Whether we mean to or not. When we're hurt, you just want to inflict it on someone else. It's not an excuse, it's just the truth. You don't feel the pain as badly when you're more focused on hurting someone else."

I steal a glance at Celina and notice she was thinking this over critically.

She had hurt someone too from the looks of it...

Seeing that this is all she wanted from me, I head for the door.

"Good luck on your test," I nod towards her textbook.

She raises an eyebrow at me and I blush.

"Javier made me memorize your class schedule so I would know when to pick you up from school. I have a copy of all your class syllabuses so I know on which dates you can't be late," I shrug. "You have a stats exam next week and English paper due the day after..." She gives me an amused look, "Anyways, I'll be back here in a few hours to take you to class."

She frowns. "I don't need a ride. I can teleport myself there."

I give her a small smile. "I'll be here either way."

I'm out the door before she can respond and run down the driveway towards the trees. Removing my shorts and stung them into a tree, I shift and let Marcos out for a run.

The rain feels good against my thick fur and for a few moments, I feel completely at peace. The pitter patter of the rain dropping from the sky drums against my ears as I rush through the forest. I come across a large puddle in the middle of a clearing, reminding me of a simpler time when Dad would take us to the eld on the opposite side of the territory to play in the rain.

We would roll around in large puddles until the mud seeped through our bones. Mom would sometimes join in on our fun and the four of us would team up on Dad to splash him with mud.

Marcos jumps into the puddle, icking his paws and wagging his tail in freedom. After a bit of play, Marcos continues on his run, crossing through The Ivory Phoenix territory. He runs past several guards who simply acknowledge my presence and let me through.

The perks of being the Queen's older brother.

I run in complete darkness with no destination in mind, the stars in the night sky my only guides. As I run however, a strong scent catches Marcos' attention and he stops dead in his tracks. It is the exquisite smell of damp earth mixed with sweet grass and a hint of strawberries. My heart begins to accelerate and without hesitation, Marco's seeks out its source.

He comes to a complete stop a few feet from an oak tree, the silhouette of a woman illuminated by the moonlight. She is sitting on a patch of grass, staring off at a small stream. Rain falls upon her creamy skin, ery red hair sticking to her body in curled tendrils.

Her back is to me but she knows I am here, her body going perfectly still. I shift, walking slowly towards my mate. She does not move as I settle down beside her, but I can hear her heart begin to race in her chest.

"I-I love the rain," she murmurs, her eyes never once meeting mine. "I love the way the Earth smells after the rain...I've lived all over the world. Different cities, different countries," she adds with a small smile on her lips. "And the Earth always smells the same after a nice rain. It reminds me of home."

"Where is home?" I ask, leaning close enough to make goosebumps appear on her skin..

The smile on her face falls and she shrugs. "I-I don't know anymore," she whispers, nally turning to face me.

Even in the rain, I can see the tears lining her eyes as she looks up at me. She smiles when I reach for her cheek, swiping my thumb to wipe her tears. Tiny sparks ripple from my fingertips and she closes her eyes to enjoy them.

I want to be her home.

She gasps as I pull her onto my lap but breathes as she holds it in. Neither of us speaks. My eyes fall to her lips and I can hear her relax stop as she holds it in. Neither of us speaks, both afraid to break whatever sliver of peace we had created at this moment in time.

I let my eyes travel down her body, taking in every inch of her beauty. She wears a thin white nightgown, the material drenched with water and her pink n\*\*\*\*s pushing against the fabric..

Realizing I am on the verge of losing control, I force my eyes back to her face, afraid I will be unable to hold back my urges. Her green orbs stare back at me and she blushes under my gaze.

So she feels the pull too...

An idea pops into my head and I let my fingers explore her skin, letting them roam along her arms until I find her hands. I bring her hand to my lips, kissing each finger and never once breaking eye contact with her. She stares back as if in a trance, her body shivering against mine.

The scent of her arousal fills the night air and a realization hits me.

Does she think the mate bond is purely s\*\*\*\*? That all I will ever seek from her is s\*x?

Looking back, I can't exactly blame her. The first time she tried to talk to me as her mate, she spent the night under the sheets. After not seeing each other for over two weeks, she stood in front of four male wolves, completely aroused by just the sight of me. Now in this forest, I am completely naked with her nearly undressed on top of me.

Perhaps this is what Patrick was trying to explain to me about not forcing my claim on her.

To test my theory, I trail my fingers down to her abdomen. She snaps out of her daze almost immediately as I get dangerously close to her honey pot.

"Salvador," she whimpers, placing her hand against my chest. "I don't ... "

While it is true werewolves are s\*\*\*\* creatures, we know how to love intensely as well. I will just have to show her all the ways a wolf can love his mate.

I see a faint hint of her blush under the moonlight and decide I can just tease her for now.

"Don't what?" I chuckle, lifting her dress up past her hips to expose a lacy pair of panties.

Her breath hitches as I play with the fabric, tracing the tiny designs with my fingers.

"I-I don't want a mate," she gulps, her heart nearly leaping out of her chest as I lean in and kiss her nose.

If she doesn't want a mate, then I will become whatever it is she needs me to be. No matter how long it takes, I will show her just how perfect we are for each other.

I pull her dress back down over her thighs and slide her off my lap. "Who said anything about mates?"