

Chapter 1

Alpha Ralph's POV

Pushing the papers away from me at the desk, I sigh and lean back in my chair.

This pack that I have inherited is a complete and utter mess.

It is no surprise that they merged with the Southern Lycans all those months ago to try to gain power and money. They had none of their own. They were desperate.

Without King Cameron's nancial help, this pack would be in bankruptcy.

My ngers tap restlessly against the desk.

We cannot just take money from King Cameron forever though.

My pride won't allow it.

The Silver Moon Pack needs to learn to produce our own income. To thrive on our own two feet, without handouts.

Howl at the Moon, the nightclub that our pack owns, should bring in a decent income, as it is popular in the nearby town, both with humans and werewolves from neighboring packs.

There are also several other investments I have made with what little money the pack I inherited had leftover and what we received from King Cameron.

Those investments seem to be doing well, but will it be enough?

My hope is to eventually do well enough to pay King Cameron back in full, with interest.

I don't like feeling like I 'owe' anyone.

Even though he said it was a gift for the help with the attacks against his territory, I think of it more as a start-up loan that I need to repay in order to prove that I was worthy of taking over this pack, to make it better, stronger than before.

Running my hand through my hair, I look around my new oce, noticing for the rst time that the room is starting to darken in the late hour.

Time sure does y when you stare at boring s**t all day.

Tapping my ngers on the desk, I consider giving Caleb a call. Maybe they will be up for going out tonight.

Even as the newly appointed Alpha of the freshly renamed Silver Moon pack, there isn't much to do around here once ooe hours end, except to train, but a man can only train so many hours of the day.

With the pack being very small, there are not a lot of options in the dating pool either.

This leaves way too much time for me to be alone to ponder why the hell I agreed to take over this ragged pack.

There is a knock on the door, and I know who it is right away. Only my Beta, Chris, knocks that way.

"Come in." I sigh and stay in my seat.

My Lycan Beta Chris, lling the door frame with his nearly 7-foot height and impressively wide shoulders, comes in and closes the door behind him.

He walks over to me and sits in the chair in front of my desk, looking completely miserable like he always does.

"How did training go today?" I ask as I continue to tap my ngers restlessly on the desk.

Chris leans back and crosses his foot over his knee.

"Uneventful, as always." He looks about as bored as I feel right now as he icks at some imaginary fuzz on his shoe. "Coming along decent enough, for werewolves."

Per usual, I feel at a loss of words with Chris. Conversation just doesn't come easy with him. Maybe it has to do with the fact that he still seems more than a little biased towards werewolves, or maybe it is that his crazy ass sister tried to kill us all just a few short months ago.

As a matter of fact, this entire pack tried to kill my previous pack mere months ago.

Well, some of them.

A lot of them.

Now the pack has a new name and a new Alpha, me, and I am trying my best to rebuild it into a better pack, a stronger pack, a wiser pack...but it is not an easy task.

For one thing, our numbers are greatly depleted after all the ghiting, not to mention the ones who decided to ee versus stick around and reform their ways.

Then there was this small issue with its nances, which is that there aren't any nances.

But at least it is improving slightly, nally, after all my hard work these several months.

Another enormous task is that I am trying to entice new members to join the pack to strengthen our numbers, which means I have been inviting rogues, werewolves with no connections to another Alpha or pack, to come join us, with very little success. The few that have joined us haven't exactly been the greatest new additions, nor have they received the warmest of welcome from the current pack members.

Mostly for the same reasons that they became rogues in the rst place, they do not like to follow orders or just at out struggle to get along well with others.

And the members of our pack seem to have mixed feelings regarding my efforts to bring in these rogues, which I understand, if I am truly honest with myself. It is unusual...

Oh, hell, who am I kidding?

There are no mixed feelings.

They at out don't like it at all.

But what can I do?

What happens if we have another attack?

There is strength in numbers and we need more bodies to ght and protect our pack.

We need to rebuild.

"Anything on the agenda tonight?"

I glance over at Chris.

I wish.

I wish there were something, anything, that we could be doing.

Hell, I almost miss the chaos from the territory being under attack all those months ago.

At least it kept me busy...kept my mind busy...distracted...

"Maybe Howl at the Moon?" I suggest, looking out at the darkened sky through the window behind me.

Chris grunts across the desk.

He is not a big fan of the club, as it is packed with humans and werewolves, and he is a Lycan. The only Lycan around. Which he never, ever, lets us forget.

Chris is also unmated, which I think doesn't help his oh-so charming demeanor any.

Although, I would pity the poor girl who ever did mate with him...

He could also be constantly cranky because he had to come be a beta to a werewolf pack's Alpha, instead of beta to the Lycan King Cameron, the position he held before coming here.

Going from the beta of the Northern territory King to a tiny werewolf pack's Alpha is a huge demotion.

I really don't blame him for being perpetually cranky, even if he is a huge pain in my ass.

My phone pings, and I gratefully scoop it up, desperate for a distraction.

Caleb: Hey, want to meet us at Howl tonight?

Me: Oh, yes. Definitely. Get me the f out of here.

Caleb: Meet you there in an hour.

I lean my head back and give a grateful groan for my new plans.

Chris makes a face at me.

"I am going to Howl at the Moon in an hour. Feel free to join."

He makes another face.

"Or stay here."

I stand up and place my phone in the pocket of my shorts.

It doesn't matter to me whether or not Chris goes.

In fact, I kind of prefer it if he doesn't go.

I try my best to be polite, almost to the point of being friendly with him, since he is my Beta and supposed to be my right-hand man who always has my back, but hell, can he be a freaking buzzkill.

Not to mention, Lily doesn't like it when I bring him along, and since she will be there tonight...

My stomach gives the familiar dull ache at the thought of Lily.

The ache is weaker than it used to be, but it's still there.

I really am happy that her and her mate, Caleb, worked it out.

Truly.

So freaking happy.

They are mates, they belong together. Obviously.

Bonded by fate and all that s**t.

It doesn't mean that it hurt any less when we stopped seeing each other when Alpha Caleb nally decided to mark her and fully commit to his mate instead of pining over his ex-girlfriend. His ex-girlfriend who mated to the Lycan King Cameron himself.

But I deserve that hurt, don't I?

I never should have gotten involved with someone who already had a mate, especially one who was mated to my Alpha, and my best friend...even if he was being a bad mate to her at rst...

Chris gives a small, but purposeful cough to bring me out of my thoughts and I clear my throat before making my way around the desk.

"I'm going to go get ready." I mumble.

I'm nearly to the door when Chris calls after me in a bored, exasperated kind of way.

"Fine. I'll go too. Nothing else to do here."

I look over my shoulder to see him lazily standing up and raise my hand in acknowledgment, holding back the retort right there on the tip of my tongue.

It probably won't help the situation if I sarcastically thank him for gracing us with his oh so wonderful Lycan presence.

Turning to leave, I can't help but think that I got my punishment from that affair.

I am living in it right now.

Everyone ended up with who they were meant to be with, happy as can be, while I am still alone.

And not only do I have to watch from afar as Caleb and Lily live happily ever after, but I am basically exiled from everything I knew, leading a pack of werewolves with a cranky and entitled Lycan for my Beta, with no good looking ladies anywhere in sight.

Hell, I haven't even hooked up with a single one since Lily.

Not that I haven't had an opportunity... plenty of the pack women are eager and willing to be intimate with an Alpha. Especially one who helped ght alongside the Lycan King, and not to brag, but I am not ugly either.

But, unfortunately, there aren't any pack members nearly as attractive as Lily.

And sleeping around with packed members just seems messy.

Just look at what happened with Alpha Caleb's ex-girlfriend when he found his mate, who happened to be his ex-girlfriend's own twin sister.

It all worked out in the end, but it was messy.

A lot of drama and hurt went around and I don't need that on top of everything else I have to deal with as a new Alpha.

So, nah.

Not worth it.

I'll nd some rando at the club tonight.

She doesn't have to be as good looking as Lily.

Plenty of neighboring werewolves come to our club, I am bound to nd someone suitable enough for one night.

Maybe my mate?

I quickly dismiss the thought.

I can't let myself think that way, because when I do, I open myself up to the inevitable disappointment that comes when I don't.

There might not even be a mate for me out there.

Maybe fate is punishing me for Lily...

My phone pings in my pocket when I reach my bedroom door.

Caleb: Lily changed her mind, not feeling well and she wants to stay in. Raincheck?

I throw my head back in a groan of disappointment.

Dammit.

Me: No problem.

Running my hand through my longer than usual hair, I stand inside my room debating what to do next.

Stay in and feel sorry for myself?

That's not very Alpha-like of me.

It has been awhile since I went out, it could do my pack some good to see me out there letting loose with them, socializing with them.

My mind made up, I nod rmly to myself.

Time to get back out there.

Time for this Alpha to have some fun.

The club is pulsing with excitement as I step inside and look around, Chris stopping behind my shoulder.

Most of my pack, including all of the unmated ones, are already here, and they look ready to let loose, eager to nd their mate, or just someone, anyone, to take home for the night, as they grip tightly to the partners on the danceoor, drinks in their hands.

It has been a long, and very tough week of training. I don't blame them.

That is my goal tonight too.

To nd someone to take home tonight.

Preferably, someone attractive.

Taking a step towards the bar, everyone easily parts for me to make a clear path as I greet pack members with a wave or a nod on my way over.

Gotta say, this being Alpha thing does have its perks.

Like when the moment I step up to the bar, the bartender, Dan, slides my favorite beer to me with a nod before he looks behind me to Chris, who steps up to the counter beside me to get his order.

Grinning slightly to myself, I turn to lean casually against the bar and take in the crowd.

The club is really thriving tonight, which is great, since it means that it'll be a big money night, which we really need...

I shake my head and swig my beer.

Nope. Not thinking about that tonight.

Even Alpha's have got to let loose sometimes.

A beer in his hand and a disgruntled look on his face, Chris turns around to face the crowd beside me.

This night won't be much fun with Chris beside me the entire time.

Besides, I think as I catch sight of a group of human ladies across the room eyeing him nervously, he is really going to put a cramp on my game, being all moody and intimidatingly huge.

I need a plan to shake him off, so I do another quick scan of the room and see my opportunity.

"Hey, there is that same lady over there that you danced with a couple of weeks ago, from the Rushing Tide Pack."

I pat Chris's shoulder encouragingly with the back of my hand.

"You should go talk to her."

Chris scowls over his drink, eyeing the pretty, and extremely tall, Auburn-haired beauty across the room.

I know he doesn't really like werewolves, but she is nearly as tall as a Lycan and very good looking, so maybe it will be enough to distract him for the night...

"Go on. She's looking at you. Let loose a little. Have some fun."

Chris gives me a look that clearly says that is not going to happen, then his shoulders relax in that way that I have come to recognize as resignation and I grin to myself as he grabs another beer and almost begrudgingly makes his way across the bar to make his move.

Who knows, maybe he will actually let loose or have fun.

As long as it gets him off my back for the night.

Feeling triumphant, I turn towards the bar again as I nish my beer and place it on the counter just as the guy to the left of me steps back and I lock eyes with an extremely attractive lady who gives me an enticing grin.

For a second, I almost feel thrown.

Almost off-balance like as I take all of her in.

She is wearing a black mini-dress that is low cut, tting tight against her petite but curvy body, and the material is so thin that it's almost sheer.

It leaves little to the imagination and I am instantly intrigued.

And turned on.

This is the hottest chick I have seen in this bar, ever.

And she is going home with me tonight.

I swig my beer and sniff the air at the same time.

She doesn't have a scent.

She is way too short to be a Lycan.

So... human.

Which means that she is not only not one of my pack members, but there is no chance of recruiting her to my pack.

Perfect.

Casually, I lean against the bar and look down at her with a grin.

She looks back up at me with the most incredibly deep, dark, and seductive blue eyes, completely unintimidated.

The fact that I am an Alpha is lost on her.

Her sleek, black hair falls in big, long loose waves around her shoulders, which she tucks behind her ear as I watch, the innocent, and most likely unconscious, movement somehow sexy as hell.

She really is stunning, especially for a human.

"Hi."

Her voice is soft, sweet and it makes me feel that slightly drawn feeling again.

I glance at her full and very kissable lips, feeling irresistibly drawn to this little human.

"Hey."

I take another swig of beer.

Her smile widens as she looks down at her empty drink on the counter that she is twirling her straw in to make the ice clink against the glass.

"Can I get you another?"

She lifts her exposed shoulder in a casual way, the small gesture making me have a wild desire to pull her in my arms and place my lips against it.

"Sure."

I start to mindlink Dan, not wanting to take my eyes off this mysterious stranger, but then I remember that she is human and isn't used to people using their minds to communicate with each other, so I lean back slightly to look over my shoulder and lift my nger to catch his eye and point down at her cup. He nods in understanding and seconds later her empty glass is replaced with a fresh one of some fruitly looking-concoction with cherries, which she plucks out with the stem and puts into her mouth before dropping the now empty stem back onto the counter beside her glass.

Watching her, I wonder why I nd each of her movements so fascinating.

Almost mesmerizing.

Shaking my head mentally, I watch her take another sip and I point towards the dance oor.

"Dance with me."

Her lips curl up slightly as she pulls her straw away from her mouth by a couple of inches.

"I would love to." Her voice is a sexy purr.

She turns towards the dance oor and I brie y place my hand on her back, the tips of my ngers lightly brushing against the thin material of her dress and making my hands yearn to explore other areas of her perfect body, and lead her towards the middle of the room, everyone parting easily to make room for us.

When we get to the middle, she turns to face me, taking another sip through her straw, her big eyes blinking up at me as she runs her hand lightly down my chest and moves closer.

A jolt goes through me at her touch and I frown slightly as I move my hand down to her waist, wondering why she is making me feel this way when she is clearly not my mate.

She doesn't even have a scent, let alone an enticing one.

Maybe I'm just horny as hell and I've nearly forgotten what it is like to be around a hot woman who clearly isn't off limits.

She turns around to push her backside against me and sways her hips while I place both hands on them, enjoying the way she feels grinding against me and wondering if it's too soon to suggest we get out of here.

Yep. It has been way too long.

A strategy on how to get this sexy, mysterious woman back to my place is already starting to form when she abruptly turns back around, lifts onto her toes, wraps her hand around my waist, presses her very ample cleavage against my torso as she takes the last sip of her drink and grins back up at me.

"I am going to go and get a rell. Be right back." She purrs at me with a wink, gently poking my chest with her nger from the hand holding her drink and then turns to make her way through the crowd without looking back.

I grin as I watch her go, stepping behind a dancing couple to catch her making her way towards the bar before sliding stealthily behind a group of men towards the exit.

Cute.

Very cute.

I laugh in amusement and fold my arms across my chest.

Very cute that she thinks she can get away with that.

Shaking my head, I head to the bar for another beer, deciding to give her a head start before I go after her.