

## FOUR

My head smacked to the side from the heavy blow my father dealt me. His eyes darkened with anger as he glared down at me.

“Where did you think you were going?” He spat with his eyes red and his hands crossed. “Did you plan to disgrace me on such an important day?” He grabbed me by my collar and shook me until my teeth chattered.

“I am old enough to leave today.” I gritted out, spitting out blood from the injury his blow caused. “Or did you forget your own child’s birthday!?” I sneered at him. My tone earned me another resounding smack that had me wobbling on my feet.

“You are no child of mine,” he spat at me. “No child of mine would put me through all you have put me through!” He snarled.

From his words, one would think he had been the one to suffer the abuse of an entire pack. A passerby hearing his words would think I used to beat him, waking him up with a belt on his back in the middle of the night. Someone who did not know our family would think I was the one who used to call him names. They would think I called him a monster, good for nothing, bitch, nonentity, and other unsavoury words.

“Yes, I resigned myself to being fatherless years ago.” I closed my eyes and sank to my knees which were unable to hold me up for much longer.

I spent all these years trying to please my father, to make him look at me and see someone worth loving, to smile at me even once. All my life, I wanted a father. I would have been happy with a smile. One kind word would have lifted my spirits but my father was kind to everyone except me.

“If I am not your daughter, how can I bring disgrace to you?” My heart bled as I looked down at my shaky hands. Tears stung my eyes but I refused to cave into my emotions to cry. Exhaustion swarmed me all of a sudden, overwhelming me.

“Don’t you dare talk back at me.” He pointed a threatening finger at my face. “I have lost so much for you and your existence is still costing me!” He screamed. His red face would frighten me any other day but at that point, with dawn upon us, I could not muster any more emotions.

Leaving Silver Moon had been my consolation for the past eighteen months. Every slap I endured, every kick, every insult and every spit on my face, I reminded myself that it would not be for long. The only consolation I had in this wretched pack was the thought of the freedom that awaited me at the end of the borders.

An hour ago, two men pointed guns at me. I heard the sounds of the guns cocking as they aimed at my head. Throughout my life, I faced death a number of times but today was the first time I stared in the face of death and he stared right back with the face of a gun. Terror chilled my blood and a cold sweat broke out on my skin.

I could do nothing as they approached me and put me in handcuffs like a fugitive, leading me back to the pack house.

Kade, that bastard!

Leaving a pack was not a crime as long as the wolf was old enough. At twenty-one, I was old enough to decide to leave these people! Why did he have to make me a criminal for doing something everyone had the right to?

Goddess, why was I faced with such a cruel life? Did I have to suffer all these till I dropped dead? Would I be tied down in this pack forever or would I manage to escape only to wake up one day with my face plastered on various doors as a wanted criminal of the Silver Moon pack?

“I wish you were never born.” My father spat those words and turned to leave me behind. In the dungeons. For the simple act of exercising my right as a wolf shifter.

“I wish I was never born too.” At that moment, not existing would be so much better than existing in these conditions.

“You have no right to say that when my mate died birthing your useless ass.” My father pulled me from the floor by my collar, my dress ripping a bit as he raised me. “Who taught you to be ungrateful?” He hissed in my face. His putrid breath made me hold my breath.

Happy birthday to you, Sihana.

I fell back to the floor like a bag of rotten potatoes when my father let me go.

I could not have a mate and I could not reject said mate. My existence was worthless but I could not admit that. This pack did not need me but I could not leave this pack. My life was a constant paradox, absurd and contradictory at every phase.

When my father left, I was able to breathe freely again. Of all the people who used me, beat me and abused me, my father was one of the few that could make breathing difficult for me as fear suffocated me. He could look in my face from a distance and my breath would stop while my feet froze to the ground.

“Did I not warn you?” Kade entered after my father exited. “Did I not tell you there is no escaping?” His presence filled the room and his anger sucked out the air. Asena whimpered at the waves of anger rolling off her alpha.

“I am old enough to leave!” I cried without meaning to. “You all are crazy, cruel bastards for keeping me here against my will!” I pressed the pad of my palms into my eye sockets as tears fell freely from my eyes.

“I told you not to leave but you dared disobey me.” He stepped further into the room, pushing his hair out of his face. The dark circles around his eyes put me aback for a second but I shook my head. That was his business.

“You have no rights over me anymore. I have a right to leave if I please,” I snapped.

“Last night was awful for me.” He eyed me up and down. I wished every day, every night and every minute of his life was awful. “But since you rejected me and had the time to run off, I am thinking it was not for you.”

“We broke the mate bond. Why do you think I would go into heat for you?” A bit of satisfaction lightened the weight on my chest when I felt his unease despite his face remaining blank.

A small part of me broke when I realized I was to be mated to someone as distasteful as Kade and the rejection crushed my heart. Sometimes, it hurt seeing him with Avalon or the other girls he cheated on her with. He never seemed to experience any pain after the severance of our mate bond but looking at his face now, I knew better.

I never thought I wanted him broken for what he did to me but looking at him then, I felt satisfaction knowing he suffered because of what he did to me, even though his suffering was small and incomparable to my suffering.

“You are lying,” he said to me, his inflated ego unable to handle the truth. I did not want him. No part of me did. “I don’t care what you say but I know you are lying. For now, I have a handing over to attend. Until then, I expect you to do your duty to this pack as the worthless slave that you are. Clean, cook, and serve. That is the only thing you are good for. If you even think –“ He stepped closer to me. “If it even crosses your mind to run away from this pack ever again, I will make sure you know misery as you have never known.” He stared at me, his darkening eyes filled with hatred. He let me see what he would do to me, to see he was not in any way joking.

Goddess, I hated the whole of Silver Moon but I had a special place in my heart for hating this man, right next to the corner I kept for my father.

“One day, you will look back on how you treated me and you will regret it but by then, it will be too late,” I vowed, feeling a foreign heat tightening my chest.

“What am I supposed to regret? Helping an omega learn her place or providing a slave for my pack?” He snorted. “How will you make me regret anything? You are just a worthless omega with a scrawny wolf.”

I looked down at my hands as he left.

You will regret this!