

## His Beta 249

### Chapter 249

Lanie

I'd been trying to read a thick paperback I'd picked up from the used bookstore next to the coffee shop,

but I wasn't making much progress. I couldn't concentrate. I was sipping hot coffee with cream and

sugar and enjoying the sweet treat of a chocolate croissant.

"Katie?"

I looked up at the sound of a familiar voice. Emotion rushed through me at the sight of my friend's

blonde pixie cut and her wide grin.

"Quinn!"

"Goddess, it's been so long!"

Before I knew what was happening, I found myself squeezed so tight I could hardly breathe.

"What's been going on? I haven't seen you in ages. You look fantastic!" Quinn looked me over with

narrowed eyes. "You look different, though. Something's changed."

I wanted to tell her everything. It would've felt so good to unburden myself about all of it. Xander, Zane,

and Mason being my mates. Me being a hybrid...Stella being one, too. Me being the Luna of

Constantine Pack.

Orion's death. All of it.

I even opened my mouth to start telling her, but something stopped me. I didn't want to involve my

friend in anything that could get her hurt-or worse. Quinn knew a lot already, sure, but there was still so

much that

could put her in danger.

She snapped her fingers. "You've taken off the baby weight, for one thing. I mean, I guess it has been

what...six months or so? Stella must be getting so big! She's probably about to have her first doubling

soon,

right?"

"She is," I said, glad for a reason to brag about my daughter and keep the subject on something that

wouldn't lead to any trouble. "I swear she grows from minute to minute."

Wolf pups grew faster than their human counterparts, doubling in size during their first six months and

then a couple of times after that before they'd be full grown. Our pups didn't stay small for long.

"I hear babies do that," she said with a laugh. "Wait a sec, I'm going to grab a coffee and m uffin. Don't

you

go anywhere."

"I won't. I promise."

I'd kept my finger holding my place in the book, and when Quinn returned to the seat across from me,

she tilted her head to look at it. She pursed her lips.

"Huh. I didn't figure you for a history lover."

I looked down at the book. It was History of the Great Wars. So far, the little bits I'd managed to read

1/2

been kept a secret,

"I thought it looked interesting, but it really isn't." I shrugged and put the book away into my bag and

forced a smile. "Tell me about you! How is your mom? And..."

I coughed a little and cleared my throat.

"How's Asher?"

Quinn made a face. "Well, he sure was a pain in the a ss to live with for a little while. A sore loser. Not that I blame you," she added hastily. "How's Mason?"

"Oh..." I frowned. "Their friendship didn't suffer, did it?"

Asher and I had never become more than friends, but there'd been that flirtation there. He'd even taken me out on a date. Once I'd met Mason, though, I'd known at once there was never going to be anything beyond friendship for me with Quinn's brother. Even then, my body had known Mason was meant to be my mate.

"Who knows how men keep their friendships?" She paused, leaning forward and lowering her voice to serious tone. "I should be really furious with you, too. All this time, not even a text? What happened to you, Katie? You and Mason ran off together. There were rumors that you and that Alpha from Constantine Pack were together, too, along with his Beta."

"Rumors? From who?"

Quinn waved a hand. "You know, people talk. Some have asked me where you and Stella went off to. I wasn't really sure what to say. I was worried that something bad had happened to you. You kind of left the way you showed up...without a word."

A few bad things had happened to me, but a few good things had, too. I wanted to share them with my friend, but again, held myself back. This woman had been with me when I gave birth, and I still simply couldn't bring myself to share the truth.

Quinn must've sensed my hesitation because she lifted her coffee mug and waited for me to do the same.

When I did, she tapped hers against mine.

"Cheers," she said quietly. "When you're ready to talk, I'm ready to listen. No matter what it is, I hope you

know that I'm your friend, Katie."

Finally, my walls crumbled down. I put my coffee mug on the table with a thump. Coffee splashed, but neither of us moved to wipe it up. When I drew in a heavy breath, Quinn reached across the table to take my hand.

"Well, first things first," I said at last. "I guess I should start off with the fact that...my name isn't Katie."