

Chapter 7

ABBIE

My mind reels with the fact Gannon drove all the way here. I've missed him, but I know it's wrong to have feelings for someone else when you have a mate. It feels like a betrayal to the Moon Goddess to refuse the gift she has bestowed on me.

Honestly, I've never considered myself worthy of a mate, someone to love me unconditionally, until I met Kade. I miss him and wonder if being apart hurts him as much as it does me. Nevertheless, as I unpack the groceries Gannon has brought and left on my doorstep, I am unable to refrain from thinking about him.

I can't wipe the goofy smile off my face as I chew on a strawberry cloud; he always gave me candy at the castle. Him remembering that these are my favorite has me smiling like an idiot, but then guilt sets in. I shouldn't be thinking about Gannon, I have a mate, and I scold myself for my reckless thoughts.

However, it feels strange seeing the cupboards with food in them. Kade brings a couple of bags every few days, but nothing like this. I'm always rationing everything, and even then, it still isn't enough to last

before he returns. Days have passed since I last saw him, and I haven't eaten anything since the bird eggs two days ago.

It upsets me that Kade never stays long, only a few minutes before saying he has to get back to work. This place is quiet— too quiet for my troubled mind. It makes me miss Ivy and Clarice more. The walls feel like they are closing in more each day. The nights feel colder and the longing to go home back to the castle grows worse every day.

After packing away the last of the groceries, I decide to go bring the washing in. I only have these pants and the shirt, plus the clothes I came here wearing. Handwashing them every day in the sink is becoming tiresome. I have asked Kade for clothes, even fresh linens. He promises but never delivers.

Stepping outside, I shield my eyes from the sun that is slowly going down behind the trees. I've split some sticks to make my pegs, since none have been provided, and only half the clothesline still has wires. I can't wait to finally go to the packhouse. Kade has told me all about it and how beautiful it is. I just need to be patient, and soon I will be free to be with my mate and not be at threat of the pack war he is currently stuck in.

Checking the clothes, I see the hems are still wet, so I flip them on the clothesline and hang them up the other way. Another half an hour and they will surely be dry, and I can iron them for tomorrow. Going back inside, I stop when I hear tires on gravel. My heart leaps with excitement, hoping it's Kade. But when I turn around, I see the mysterious black Mustang parked at the end of the driveway again. I

stare at it, wondering why they come here every day but never introduce themselves or get out.

However, today is different when I see the car door swing open and a woman gets out of the car. She's gorgeous, with long curly blonde hair half pulled up. She wears sunglasses covering her eyes and everything about her screams luxury and money. The woman strides around to the front of the car, her knee-high black boots crunching on the gravel as she leans on the hood. She's wearing a white cami and blue jeans, her lips stained bright red from her lipstick.

The mystery woman sits on the hood of the car, and I wave to her, wondering if she's a pack member and if I should say hello. But Kade told me not to talk to anyone out here, so I stay where I am. She doesn't wave back, but instead only stares at me.

With one last glance over my shoulder, I rush inside, closing and locking the door. Not that it would do much; the door's hinges are loose, and the bottom of the door is waterlogged, making it challenging to shut and leaving a gap that the mosquitoes like to come in from at night.

I peer out the window at her, staying far enough back, hoping she can't see me. She sits there for a while, then eventually flicks her cigarette and leaves, making me wonder why she stops here. Once she finally leaves, I let out a breath of relief and return to what I'm doing. My afternoon is like clockwork so it's not hard to get back on track.

I nap before bringing the clothes in, then hang them up along the window curtain on a coat hanger. I make my bed before grabbing the

comic book Gannon got me. The pictures tell a story about a cat with stripes. If only I could read, the images might make more sense to me, but I am thankful nonetheless.

Feeling a bit hungry, I wander into the kitchen. The sun is down now, and the day has turned to night. The nights are the longest, so cold and empty, and that's usually when the most pain comes. That horrible, heart-breaking pain that restricts my chest. My anxiety always peaks around this time, waiting for it to arrive. Next time I speak with Kade, I will ask him to take me to the pack doctor. Something must be wrong, or it wouldn't be so frequent.