

The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 14

ADIRA

The man swiped his hand, sending Haley flying backwards. She landed with a thud and went limp at the ground. I waited for her to get up, but she didn't move.

"Is she dead?" I asked, staring at her.

"Not yet," the man said.

He looked down at me with those familiar eyes. I had a feeling that there was more to his words. She wasn't dead yet, but she would be soon. I stayed on the ground frozen, a million questions running through my mind. Who was this man standing above me? Why was he so familiar and a complete stranger at the same time?

He held out his hand to me, offering help up, but I didn't take it. I didn't know who he was, and I wasn't about to take any unnecessary risks. I refused his hand, standing on my own. I moved so I could see this man and Haley at the same time. I didn't want either to get the jump on me.

"Are you okay?" the man asked.

I nodded my head slowly. I knew I had some minor wounds, but they were at the back of my mind now.

"Who are you?" I asked. I kept looking back between him and Haley, expecting one of them to attack me at any moment.

The man was silent. I could see the gears turning in his head. I felt uncomfortable waiting for his answer. I shifted back and forth, waiting. Still no response.

"Look, I should probably go." I started taking a few steps backwards, not taking my eyes off this man. "Thanks for saving me." I couldn't imagine he was here to attack me, since he saved me from Haley, but I couldn't ignore the unsettling feeling in my stomach.

"Wait." His voice was gruff and he stepped towards me, reaching out.

I flinched and when he saw me, he stepped back. I couldn't read his expression. His eyes were searching mine for something as I searched his. I looked away, feeling uncomfortable. I glanced at Haley, and she still wasn't moving. As I continued to look around, I noticed something strange about our surroundings. The trees were moving, but they looked like they were in slow motion. The world around me seemed to almost be on pause, and I felt uneasy because of it.

My stomach churned, and I suddenly felt queasy. I lifted my hand in front of my face to see if my movements were affected. I could still move normally, but that made things feel worse.

"What's going on?" I felt my body swaying, and I lost my balance.

The man grabbed my arm to steady me. "It's my magic specialty. It can be nauseating to those who haven't been accustomed to it."

I stared at the ground, trying to regain my balance. "Are you controlling time?"

The man grabbed my other arm to help me stand up straight. "In a way, yes. I can slow things down in controlled areas."

"So the world around us is being slowed?" I wanted to look again, but my stomach still felt queasy.

"It's more like there is a bubble surrounding us and the time around us is slowed. Take a few deep breaths, and it'll help the feeling subside."

I looked up at him, staring at his eyes once again. "Who are you?"

He looked to the ground. "My name is Cain. I came here to give you a message."

I focused on my breathing, and I started to feel more stable. I took a step back from this man, wanting to stand on my own. "A message? What kind of message?"

The man's face seemed to harden at this. "The council of magic wants you dead. They think a half-werewolf and half-sorcerer is much too dangerous to have in the world. You are a threat to all of the sorcerers."

"A threat? How could I be a threat? I don't know anything about sorcerers. I didn't even know there was a council or whatever." I ran my fingers through my hair, trying to process everything. We had just recently dealt with Theron, and then Haley coordinated an attack on us. Now the Council of Magic wanted me dead. I felt like I couldn't catch a break.

"Have you ever heard of the Dark War?" Cain asked.

I shook my head, still too wrapped up in my thoughts to think about a war.

"The Great War was a war among all of the non-humans in this country. Vampires, werewolves, sorcerers, etcetera. It almost wiped out many of the species. The great leaders came together and decided to end the war and divide up the territories among the species. We were to never mingle with those of the other species and keep to our own territory. There were many who didn't agree with this, but everyone complied, knowing it was the only way to rebuild our societies," he explained.

"Why haven't I ever heard of this war?" I asked. I wasn't sure how much of this I could believe. If there was some great Dark War, I was sure this is something we would've been taught at an early age.

"This war happened long before you or I were even born. It was centuries ago, when humans were still trying to figure out their lives. There's a reason we are in the tales of humans as mythical creatures. We went into hiding ever since, and the different species stick to their own. Most have forgotten the reason we all went this way, but most leaders are forced to remember, so history won't repeat itself."

"I don't understand. What does being half-sorcerer and half-werewolf have to do with this war? If this all happened centuries ago, what does it matter if one girl is of mixed-blood? Surely there are others like me." I hadn't heard of any other mixed-bloods out there, but I was sure there were some somewhere in the world.

"You are the only known mixed-blooded being out there. That means you have the potential to be the most powerful being alive. Not only do you have the powers of a sorcerer, but you have the abilities of a werewolf. If you wanted to, you could take revenge on the Council of Magic," Cain said. His voice almost seemed sad at the thought.

"But I don't want to. I'm not even that strong. I'm not a threat to anyone. I haven't given them any reason to think I'm a threat, except for breathing." The pitch of my voice was starting to rise as my frustration set in.

"I agree, which is why I convinced the council not to kill you," Cain said.

My eyes snapped towards Cain. "So you're not here to kill me?"

"No, I couldn't bring myself to kill my own daughter." His eyes were steady as he said this.

It made sense. That's why he seemed so familiar and like a complete stranger all at one. He had my eyes, or rather I had his eyes. A million questions flowed through my brain, but I didn't even know where to begin. This was all too much.

"I need to sit down," I said. I looked around, but there wasn't a great place to sit here. Haley was also still lying on the ground, her chest rising up and down, telling me she was still alive. I couldn't sit down with her right there. If she woke up, I would be too vulnerable.

Cain stepped towards me, trying to grab my arm to stabilize me, but I stepped back, out of his reach. I didn't want his help.

"Why now?" I said, my breath feeling ragged as I stared at the face of my father. "You abandoned me. I didn't even know you existed until my half brother tried to kill me. Did you know what Theron was trying to do?"

Cain looked at the ground. "No, I didn't know. I didn't know until the council called me in to tell me that they knew about your existence. I'm here because I want to protect you."

Cain looked at the ground. "No, I didn't know. I didn't know until the council called me in to tell me that they knew about your existence. I'm here because I want to protect you."

"Protect me? You don't even know me." I never thought about how I would feel if I met my real father. I didn't even think about it being a possibility, but as I looked at his face, I was filled with bitterness. He abandoned me before I could even know who he was.

"No, I don't," Cain agreed. "But I refuse to let the council kill you for existing. This is my mistake, and you shouldn't be punished for it."

My throat went dry. "I'm a mistake."

"That's not what I meant. Adira, please listen for a moment." Cain's voice cracked, and I knew he was getting flustered with the conversation.

"I don't owe you anything." My voice was firm as I spoke. "And you don't owe me. I don't need you in my life."

"But you do. The council will kill you otherwise. I convinced them to spare your life if you give up your life with these werewolves and come with me," he said.

I laughed at the ridiculousness of his statement. "So you want me to give up my life with my mate because you decided to show up in my life for the first time, claiming that you are trying to protect me? No thanks. I don't need or want your help."

"Adira, please just listen for a moment. I know you don't understand, but all of my decisions around you have been to protect you. You will be killed if you don't come with me." Desperation leaked through Cain's voice, but it didn't make me feel sorry for him.

"It's time for you to leave," I said firmly.

"Adira—"

"No!" I snapped. This was too much. "You don't get to waltz back into my life like this and just expect me to do whatever you want me to. I was fine before ever knowing you, and I don't need you in my life anymore."

I turned to walk away, no longer wanting to deal with this conversation. I needed to get back to Mark and the others and help in any way that I could. That was what was important right now.

As I walked away, Cain released the time bubble around us, and the world seemed to move at a normal pace once again. I could feel the breeze on my cheek, and I could hear the rustling of leaves once again. Suddenly, a chill overcame my body, making me freeze. Something was wrong.

I turned around, trying to figure out what I was feeling. Cain was still standing there, watching me, but there was something else there. I looked to where Haley had been lying, but she was now gone. My chest tightened, and the hairs on my arm rose. I looked around for her, but didn't see her.

I felt her before I could see her. She appeared out of thin air, flinging herself towards me with the blade in her hand. Cain moved to stop her, and I raised my hand, preparing to counterattack, but before any of us could make a move, a black tendril appeared out of nowhere. It jabbed right through Haley's chest, freezing her in midair. Blood started pouring out of her body, and she went limp in the tendril's grasp.

It released its grip on her, and she fell to the ground with a thud. The black tendrils then turned their attention to me, and I could feel the darkness surrounding me.