

The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 15

ADIRA

The darkness hovered in front of me, swaying back and forth. They reminded me of the tendrils Theron used against me in the fight, but they seemed different somehow. I couldn't point out the difference if someone asked, but the feeling I got when around these ones hit me differently.

I lifted my hand, creating an energy ball to prepare for an attack. I knew I should just attack first, but something was holding me back. It didn't feel like it was a threat to me, even though I could feel the darkness swirling inside of it. It stopped Haley from attacking me too.

I glanced at Cain to see if he was the one controlling this dark magic, but he looked even more concerned than me. I didn't see anyone else around us, so I couldn't understand where this was coming from.

"What do you want?" I asked, controlling my breathing to make sure I was preparing to use my magic.

The end of the tendril moved, as if it was tilting its head to give me a confused look. It started to shrink in size, but then it shifted forward. I moved to throw the energy ball, but a purple bolt of lighting flung past me and into the tendril. The force of the explosion sent me flying back. A loud screeching sound emanated from the magic as it snapped back. It disappeared into the ground.

Cain stepped towards me once everything was quiet again. "Are you okay?"

My heart was racing as I stared at Haley's lifeless body, trying to process everything that had just happened. I thought about my dream and the warning Ginger had given me. This had to be the greater darkness I was meant to face, but if that was the case, I didn't understand why it saved me from Haley.

"You should go," I finally said. "Thank you for your help, but I'm not going with you, so you should leave now."

Cain's jaw clenched. "Did you not see that thing that just tried to attack you? Between that and the council, I'm more convinced than ever that you need to come with me. I can protect you from all of this."

I stood up and looked him in the eye. "I don't need you. I have survived my life without you so far. I'll be fine without you for the rest of it."

Cain started moving towards me, but a white wolf ran between us, snarling at Cain. I was relieved to see Mark and his wolf safe, and as much as I didn't want anything to do with Cain, I didn't want Mark to hurt him. I moved between Mark and Cain, holding my hands up to Mark.

"Wait. He saved me," I told Mark.

Mark stopped snarling, but he was still tense and giving Cain a death look. He didn't shift back to his human form either, and I knew it was because he was strongest as a wolf.

I turned to Cain again. "Go. Now." My voice was firm, and I was not messing around this time.

Cain hesitated to leave, looking between Mark and myself. "Fine. But this won't be the last time we'll see each other."

He shifted after, leaving Mark and me alone with Haley's dead body. My breath was shallow, and my body suddenly felt very tired now that I had a moment to breathe after all of the chaos. It was one thing after another, and my head was spinning from it all.

Mark changed back into his human form and quickly wrapped his arms around my body. "Thank god you're okay. When I couldn't link with you, I was terrified something serious had happened to you."

I held Mark back, resting my head against his chest. I breathed in his familiar scent and let my mind calm in his presence.

"I didn't even realize I couldn't link," I said. I could only imagine what was going through Mark in that moment.

"What happened?" Mark pulled away, looking me over from head to toe. "You look pretty battered."

"I'll be okay. It's all surface wounds. I was nicked by one of the hunter's knives, and it probably had some wolfsbane on it," I explained.

Mark still looked worried as he looked over me. I was sure I looked worse than I felt right now, but I was also pumped full of adrenaline. As soon as that wore off, I was sure I would feel all of the aches and pains.

"I'm just glad you are still alive." Mark pulled me into a deep kiss, holding my waist tightly.

"Is the fight still going on?" I asked. As much as I enjoyed just standing there with Mark, if people still needed help, I wanted to make sure we were there to help.

"It's over now," Mark said. "They were no match for all of us."

"Does anyone need any healing?" I asked. "I can help people until Doctor Zayla can take a look at them."

"We'll go help with the aftermath in a moment. I just need to be here with you a little longer."

Mark pulled me back into his body, and the calming effects instantly started working, although there was still too much on my mind to fully relax. There was too much to process and to do.

"Is that Haley?" Mark asked, suddenly stiffening. He stepped in front of me protectively.

"She was the one behind this whole attack," I explained. "She wanted revenge for Theron's death."

Mark moved over and inspected her body to make sure she was gone for sure. He stood up, shaking his head. "We should have hunted her down. We were fools for thinking that she wouldn't try to take revenge for her mate being killed. I know that's not something I would let go of easily."

I grabbed Mark's arm. "Don't blame yourself for this. I thought she would just move on. We were too ignorant."

"I won't be ignorant of any possible threats to my pack anymore. We need to increase security and make plans ahead of time." Mark's body was tense under my touch.

I pulled him so he was looking at me and cupped his face. "We will do all of that. Let's just focus on the immediate tasks in front of us."

Mark sighed. "You're right. Thanks for keeping me level headed." He kissed me again, lingering more than before.

When we finally broke apart, I had to take a moment to catch my breath. I hoped this intensity never faded with Mark.

"We should help out the others," I said. I was sure there was a lot to do now that the fight was over.

"One more thing. Who was that man who was with you when I showed up?" Mark chewed on his lip, and I could tell he was nervous about the man.

I looked down at the ground. "That was my father. My real father."

"Your father? What did he want?"

"That's a long story. I'll get into it later, after all of this is over." It was still weird to think about the fact that I had actually met my father. It felt surreal with how everything went down.

Mark grabbed my hand. "Are you okay?"

I shrugged. "I will be. Right now I'm not so sure, though."

"I'm here if you need me." Mark squeezed my hand and started leading me forward. "We should get back to the others."

We went back to the hunters' campground, and the c*****e we saw was more than I realized. Bodies torn to pieces were strewn about. People and wolves worked together to get our injured back to the packhouse first so they could get immediate attention. Those who were in worse conditions I attended to in order to make sure they could make it back to Doctor Zayla in time to receive proper help. I was grateful that I had been practicing my magic for healing. Even though I couldn't do much yet, it saved at least three lives today.

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Once all of the injured were taken care of, the warriors started gathering the bodies of the fallen hunters into a pile to be burned. We had to clean up the gruesome scene so some unexpected human didn't stumble upon it and get the police involved. According to Mark, once the tides turned and the hunters were overwhelmed, the rest of them took off, running into the forest. Mark was confident the hunters wouldn't return after the c*****e they faced, but just in case, he planned on setting up patrols to specifically keep an eye out for any future hunters.

By the time all was said and done, the sun was starting to rise above the horizon. We were all exhausted and dirty as we practically crawled back into the packhouse.

"You should let Zay check you over. Then we can shower and head to bed for a little while," Mark suggested. We were the last two wolves to return, since as alpha Mark wanted to be there for every step, and I wasn't about to leave his side, even though he insisted I seek medical attention right away.

Now that we were back at the pack house, I started feeling just how achy my body was. The adrenaline was wearing off, and even though I was still convinced that the wounds were minor and would heal perfectly on their own, I wanted to visit the wolves that ended up in the infirmary.

"You can go shower first, and then I'll head over once I'm Doctor Zayla," I said to Mark as we headed up the stairs.

"Do you honestly think I plan to leave your side right now?" Mark asked, holding my hand tighter.

I smiled, shaking my head. "I didn't think so, but I thought I should try anyway."

As we walked into the infirmary, it was shocking to see how many injured wolves were there. Most of them just had some minor bandages wrapped around various body parts, waiting for Doctor Zayla to give them the clear to go. There were three wolves who were hooked up to heart monitors who were in much worse conditions. I knew they would be okay, since Doctor Zayla was

amazing, but I hated seeing them like this, especially because Haley only attacked them because of me.

“Alpha, Adira,” Doctor Zayla greeted us as we walked in. She had a clipboard she was scribbling notes on.

“Hey Zay. I’m sure you’re busy, but can you take a look at Adira. Her linking hasn’t been working, so I’m concerned,” Mark asked.

“You can just take a look at me when you are finished with everyone else,” I quickly said. “No need to make me a priority.”

Doctor Zayla tilted her head to the side. “You will be the future luna of this pack once you are initiated. Of course you are a priority. Besides, I have already inspected all of these patients, and my assistant can handle them while I make sure both you and Alpha are okay.”