

## The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 18

ADIRA

I ran in front of Mark, hoping to keep the two of them separated. I was worried things would get much worse if the two of them got into a physical fight. I held my hands up, trying to slow Jori down.

“Please, let’s just talk about this in a calm manner,” I pleaded.

“Calm? Maybe you should have come to me before sneaking behind my back if you wanted calm.” Jori stopped walking forward, but I could feel his intensity burning. It wouldn’t take much to push him over the edge.

“You have been extremely hostile to work with ever since we got here. There were hunters threatening all of the werewolves here, and we didn’t know what to do. We needed help,” I said.

“Then why didn’t you come to me for help?” Jori snapped. His hands shook with fury.

“Would you have actually helped us? Because the last time we tried to ask for your help, you insulted me and didn’t think it was your problem to deal with,” I snapped back. I understood why Jori was mad. I would be too if my pack members were put at risk without my knowledge, but we needed the help.

Jori didn’t respond. His eyes fell to the ground, and he was grinding his teeth. He knew I was right.

“You still should have asked for my permission. I am the alpha, and I am in charge of my pack. I don’t care if you don’t like my decisions. Leave if you can’t accept how I deal with things,” Jori said. He still wouldn’t make eye contact with me.

“What happened to you?” Mark asked, moving next to me. “You would always talk about how great of an alpha you wanted to be, how you would take care of your pack no matter what. Now you let your personal feelings get in the way of the safety of your pack. Those hunters could have killed your pack members. Fights breaking out between the packs could cause injuries on both sides, not just for us. Is it because your father died so suddenly that you turned out like this?”

Jori glared at Mark. "Don't you dare bring up my father. I'm like this because I was betrayed by my best friend. You tried to stab me in the back."

I could feel something snap in Mark, and when the words poured out of his mouth, they were dripping with years of pent up anger. "I betrayed you? Your family killed my grandfather! Your family is the reason my entire family is dead, and you think I betrayed you?"

"Shut up with those lies," Jori spat back.

"Lies? Your father knew the truth. He threw it in my face. Don't be so damn ignorant." Mark's voice raised, and he was on the edge of shouting.

I had never seen him so angry before. I touched his arm, trying to calm him down, but it didn't seem to work.

"Go to hell," Jori said. He suddenly swung his fist at Mark, hitting him square in the jaw.

Mark didn't hesitate to return the attack. He swung back at him and hit Jori in the stomach. It turned into an all out fist fight, and I didn't know what to do.

"Stop! This isn't helping anything!" I shouted, but my words were unheard in the anger of the moment.

I stepped forward, wanting to try to break them apart, but I couldn't figure out how to separate them by myself without risking injuries to myself.

Jori tackled Mark to the ground, swinging at Mark's face over and over. Mark blocked some of the hits, but I could see blood on his face. I felt helpless just standing there, and I found myself moving forward, trying to pull Jori off of Mark. Jori pushed me back with his elbow, and I fell backwards.

A car door shut, and I looked over to see Percy and Scythe running towards the fight. The two of them were able to pull Mark and Jori off each other after a moment of struggling. Scythe held Mark back and Percy held Jori back.

"Knock it off you two," Percy snapped. "Fighting each other doesn't fix anything."

Jori pushed Percy off of him. "Get away from me."

Percy hovered by Jori, ready to grab him again if he went after Mark. Mark calmed down enough, so Scythe let him go, hovering as well. I crawled to my feet, relieved that Percy and Scythe showed up when they did, but I was still on edge from the situation.

“This can’t keep happening,” I said, completely exasperated. “If we are going to live in the same city, then we need to figure out how to work out our differences without fighting.”

Jori scoffed at this, and I saw his eyes flash dark again. “If everyone would just stop stabbing me in the back, maybe we could live in peace. As is, I don’t trust any of you. Why would I want to pretend like I care enough to settle anything with you?”

“Jori, please,” I begged. “It wasn’t supposed to be like this.”

Jori paused, only looking at me. There was a deep sadness in his eyes. “No, it wasn’t supposed to be like this. You were supposed to be mine.” His eyes lingered on mine for a little longer before he turned to Percy. “Don’t bother coming back to the pack house. You’ve made it clear where your allegiance stands.”

With that, he shifted into wolf form before taking off. We all looked around at each other, a heavy silence hanging in the air.

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Mark sat on the edge of the bathtub as I dabbed his swollen lip with a cold wash cloth. Neither of us had said anything to each other since Jori left. Neither of us knew what to say after all of that. As much as I was frustrated with Jori, a part of me knew what we did was wrong. Going behind another alpha’s back would have been much worse with any other pack. It was breaking a code. It felt necessary at the time, but now I wondered if there was a better way for us to handle it.

I knew Mark was frustrated with Jori and himself. He was not the violent type unless he was forced into the position, but I knew his anger got the best of him when it came to Jori. There was so much history and so much hurt that anyone would have a difficult time acting rational in that situation.

I dabbed Mark’s lip again, and he hissed in pain.

“Sorry,” I muttered, making my movements more gentle. I wanted to comfort him, but I didn’t know if anything I could say would make him feel better in this moment.

When I was done cleaning up the blood, I set the washcloth on the bathroom counter and then leaned against it so I could look at Mark. He had a black eye, and his lip was swollen. His knuckles were also covered in small wounds. It was all minor injuries that would heal in a couple of hours, but it was rough seeing Mark like that.

“What do you need me to do right now?” I asked, curling my fingers on the edge of the counter.

His eyes stayed on the ground as he spoke. “I’m sorry. You deserve better behavior from me than that.”

My chest tightened at his words. He seemed beyond defeated, and I wanted to do anything and everything to make him feel better. I pushed myself off the counter and got on my knees in front of him so I could look up into his eyes. I grabbed his hands and held them tightly.

“Listen to me. You don’t need to apologize. Not everyone is perfect, and I know all of this hasn’t been easy for you, especially with what happened to your family. None of this makes me love you any less, got it?” I squeezed his hands tighter, trying to emphasize how much I cared.

“I thought I was getting over all of this. With you by my side, I have been beyond happy. The pain of all of that was almost nonexistent,” he said. “I feel like I took ten steps back today.”

I knew how he felt. When it came to my family, there were days that I felt like I was over it all, but then other days something would trigger me, and all of the anger and hurt came flooding back.

“I know. That can’t be easy, but I’m here for you in whatever way you need me. If you want to talk, if you want a distraction, or if you just need some space. Just say the word.”

Mark finally looked at me, an intensity burning in his eyes. “I just need you.”

He leaned forward, cupping my face and kissing my lips with just as much intensity as his eyes held. This was very different from how he normally kissed

me. Typically, he started with soft kisses that slowly grew in passion, but I felt all of his passion and then some in this one kiss. His tongue slipped into my mouth, tasting every bit of it he could. My core was burning, and I only had one thing on my mind.

Mark slid his hands under my thighs and stood up, lifting me in the process. I wrapped my legs around his waist instinctively. He carried me out of the bathroom and into our bedroom. He dropped me onto the bed before stripping off his shirt. His mouth was on me again while his hands searched my body.

He pushed my shirt up, and I assisted him the rest of the way. My bra was off in an instant. Mark nipped and sucked on my skin, causing moans to pour out of my mouth. He was more aggressive than usual, but I didn't mind it. Heat pooled between my legs, and I didn't want him to stop. I needed him to fill me up. Too much had happened in the past forty-eight hours, and I wanted the comfort and pleasure that came from Mark, and I knew he needed it as well.

He continued stripping me down until there was nothing left. He didn't hesitate to push inside of me, causing a gasp to escape my mouth. He caught my mouth with his lips and he pumped in and out of me at an ungodly speed. It was too much for my body to handle, and it wasn't long before he pushed me over my edge.

He didn't stop moving, sucking on my neck as waves of pleasure wracked my body. He suddenly flipped us over, so I was on top of him. He dug his fingers into my hips as he thrust, hitting me in just the right spot. Grunts flew out of his mouth and he moved faster and faster until another wave of pleasure flowed throughout my body.

With a few more thrusts and groans, Mark hit his own high. I collapsed on top of him, no energy left in my body. Sweat covered the two of us, but I couldn't bring myself to move. Mark slipped his arms around my back and kissed the top of my head.

"Can we just stay like this for a while?" he asked. His fingers stroked my back up and down slowly, sending goosebumps all over my skin.

I nodded my head against his chest and hummed in agreement. I was too tired to speak, and I was perfectly happy staying in Mark's arms for as long as he needed me.