

The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 20

MARK

“What do you mean he just took her?” I demanded, pacing the room back and forth.

“He knocked on the door, and when Adira saw him, a look of fear overtook her. She told me to get you, and then the man grabbed her and just disappeared,” Scythe explained. “There wasn’t even a moment to react. I’m so sorry Mark.”

I was having a hard time keeping my composure. I tried linking with Adira several times, but our connection was blocked. I was starting to wonder if this was the same reason I couldn’t contact her while we were fighting the hunters.

“What did he look like?” I asked, my tone a little calmer. I couldn’t take my frustration out on Scythe. He had done nothing wrong.

“I didn’t get a great look at him, but he was tall with dark hair and dark eyes. He was wearing all black too. Do you know him?” Scythe asked.

I paused in my pacing. I already had a feeling I knew who it was, but the description confirmed my fears. “I think it was Adira’s father.”

“Like her real father?” Rie asked.

Adira must not have had a chance to catch everyone up since the night of the battle. She had seemed a bit far away, even though she was still smiling. She was still a bit of a mystery to me. I could see the wheels turning in her head about all of the things that had come up recently, but she tried to figure it out on her own. I knew she was used to dealing with things on her own, but I wanted to show her she could rely on me more.

“Yes. He approached her a few days ago.” I felt helpless in this situation. I knew nothing about this man, and I had no way of knowing where he took Adira. Officially, mating with Adira was supposed to fix this type of situation. We were supposed to be able to link, and then she could tell me where she was and if she was in danger.

“I take it this wasn’t a happy reunion,” Rie said cautiously.

I sighed and ran my fingers through my hair. "He told her she needed to leave her life with us and go with him or some magic council would kill her."

"So really not a happy reunion," Rie repeated. She sat down. "Do you think we have another kidnapping situation on our hands?"

I sat down across from Rie and let out a sigh. "I don't know. I really hope not, because I don't know if I can handle that. I don't know how I could find her."

"How did you find her last time with Theron?" Scythe asked.

I thought about this, but I knew I didn't have a great explanation. "It came to me in a dream. It felt like she was reaching out to me. I don't know how or why it happened."

"Maybe she's okay," Rie said. "It is her father. I can't imagine him wanting to hurt her, right?"

"I don't think he'd hurt her, but he still wants to take her away from me." I wanted to kill this man for taking my mate away.

Scythe put his hand on my shoulder and squeezed. "She's strong. She escaped from Theron, and I know Adira. She's not just going to give up, if he did take her. And we won't stop until we find her, too."

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ADIRA

Cain was silent as I processed what he said. It didn't make sense, but it also did. I couldn't quite wrap my head around it. "So you're saying I'm part of a prophecy to destroy the world because I'm half-sorcerer and half-werewolf? Why does it matter? Surely I can't be the only one of this nature."

"As far as I know, you are. Your mother and I feared what that might mean for you, so we agreed it was best to keep you hidden from the world. We went our separate ways, agreeing to never see each other again. Your mother married the future alpha of Pack Lyna, making him think you were his daughter for your own safety. We didn't want anyone to know your true nature, because we didn't want this prophecy to come true."

"After leaving you and your mother, I did years of research, trying to figure out more about this prophecy, to prove your mother and I were wrong, but that doesn't seem to be the case. The more I searched and looked, the more places I found this prophecy, albeit sometimes with minor differences. It always comes down to the same thing. When the two forces combine, they will become an undefeatable force."

"You left to try to protect me?" I asked. Out of all of the scenarios I had thought about, that was never even a remote possibility.

"Yes," Cain said.

Part of me felt like I should forgive Cain for this. His reasons were noble, right? But that didn't change how my life turned out. To have been lied to my entire life, and then kicked out because of my nature. I had spent years wondering why I was so unwanted and trying to figure out what was so wrong with me that no one ever wanted me.

"A lot of good that did. Did you really think you could hide me forever?" I asked. "What about when I came of age and my magic started appearing? Why didn't you reach out to me to see if I was okay or help me figure out how to handle it? Maybe I wouldn't have been so useless if you had taught me how to use my magic. Maybe I would be able to defend myself now that everyone wants me dead."

"It wasn't worth the risk. I wanted to keep your identity hidden from the world," Cain tried to explain.

"You didn't have to keep your identity hidden from me. You could have reached out to me, told me about my true nature. Maybe then when I was kicked out of my own home at sixteen, I wouldn't have been so lost and alone." The anger was boiling inside of me. I knew this man thought he was doing what was best for me at the time, but it didn't make it hurt any less. Besides, I didn't know him, blood related or not. I didn't owe him anything.

"I didn't want to disturb your life. I didn't know that happened to you." Cain's stoic expression started to be filled with guilt.

"If you had at least checked in on me, then you would have known." I held up my hand, not wanting to argue the point anymore. "Look, what's done is done at this point. You might think you were doing what was in my best interest at the time, but you messed up. I don't know what you expect from me now."

Cain was quiet for a moment as he studied my face. "I'm trying to make up for my mistake. If you come with me, I can keep you safe from the council. I can keep you safe from the dark magic trying to come after you."

"Train me here. Help me here," I said. "If you want to make up for your mistake, do it here, because I'm not going to leave my mate."

"It's not that simple. The council will only leave you alone if you renounce your life as a werewolf," Cain explained. "The only way to keep you safe is for you to come back to my coven and forget about your werewolf life."

I scoffed at this. "They're scared of me, aren't they? That's why they want me to give up my life as a werewolf. They are scared of me and want to control me. If this prophecy is true, it means I have the potential to become even stronger than them, and they don't like that."

Cain didn't say anything. He looked at the ground, confirming my suspicions.

"Look, I'm not going anywhere. If you really want to help me, you can do it here. If that doesn't work for you, then go home and don't worry about me. You didn't worry about me for the first twenty-one years of my life, so what happens to me shouldn't matter to you," I said. The anger inside of me changed into something else. It was more steady, but it burned brighter than any anger I had felt before.

"You don't understand the extremity of the kind of danger you're in," Cain fumed. "I know you think you're strong and fine, but you and everyone around you will die if you don't do as I say. Those black tendrils you saw, that wasn't normal magic. That dark energy you saw is likely the Son of Blood and Magic, and if that's the case, it won't stop until you are his. Your mate won't be strong enough to stop it, and you'll lose him anyway. I'm stronger. I can protect you."

"No," I said firmly. "This isn't a negotiation. I'm not going to leave Mark. I told you the choices you have. Either you stay here and help me or you leave and forget I exist."

Cain scoffed, shaking his head. "You're just as stubborn as your mother. I shouldn't be surprised. You're practically the spitting image of her. Neither of those options work for me. You don't trust me, and I get that. Do me a favor. Talk to your mother about all of this. Maybe then you'll understand the gravity of the situation. I'm not going to give up on you that easily."

Before I could argue, Cain reached out and touched my arm. The world swirled around me, and once again I was back in the pack house. He shifted away in an instant, leaving me standing in the living room.

Hands were instantly on my arms, and Mark came into my focus. His eyes were wide, but I could see the relief on his face.

"Are you hurt? Where did that bastard take you?" Mark asked. Looked me up and down, making sure there weren't any obvious injuries.

"I'm okay," I said quietly. "He wanted to talk to me to try to make me see his side of things."

"To convince you to leave me," Mark said, anger hovering in his chest.

I nodded slowly. "I'm not going to. I could never leave you, Mark."

I chewed on my lip, worried that Cain might have a valid point. I couldn't stand the thought of leaving Mark, but maybe this threat was more serious than I was currently taking it.

Mark brushed the hair out of my eyes. "Good, because I don't want to lose you."

"I think I need to go see my mother," I said, my words shaking as they came out of my mouth.

I was afraid of going back home, since the last time I was there I was told if I ever returned I would be killed, but I needed to confirm with someone what kind of person Cain was, and if there was any credibility to what he was saying. I knew I was still angry at my mother. She let me get kicked out for something she knew was her fault, but she was the only person who knew Cain. I needed her to give me some answers.

"Are you sure you want to do that? You look really pale just thinking about it," Mark asked. He looked at me closely.

"I think I might be in more trouble than I realized. If what Cain told me is true, I want to be prepared. I need to know what my mother knows." I took a deep breath. "I can handle it."

"Then I'm going with you," Mark said.

I nodded, grateful Mark would be there to support me. I didn't want to face my old life on my own.