

The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 4

MARK

“I need to get a few things for tonight,” Adira said, running up to our room to grab her purse.

“What do you need?” I asked.

I knew she had plenty of clothes to wear something nice. Rie made sure of that. I swore Adira’s closet doubled in size since she moved in with us. I didn’t understand why they needed so many clothes. There wasn’t enough room in the closet at the old pack house for all of her stuff, so that was one thing I made sure of when we moved. We had to have a bigger closet.

Adira wasn’t the materialistic type, and she usually didn’t go shopping unless Rie was the one begging her to go. But I saw the smile Adira got on her face when she put on a new outfit that she liked. Her entire face would brighten and she would twist back and forth enough to look at the dress from different angles. It made me want to buy her every new piece of clothing just to see her smile like that every day.

Adira ran out of our room with her purse in tow. She gave me a coy smile. “You’ll see.”

Every time I saw her smile, my heart fluttered. It had only gotten worse since we started living together. I didn’t know it was possible to love someone so deeply. I grabbed her before she could run off and pulled her into me, placing a kiss on her forehead.

“Have fun, and don’t be late tonight,” I said.

Adira ran off to do her shopping.

Part of me wanted to go with her. I missed her when she wasn’t around, but it was healthy to give each other space. On top of that, I had some alpha duties I had to attend to. I had to make sure we had patrols watching our territory and plans for emergencies or simple issues that came up.

It was difficult to plan all of this due to the size of our pack. It was one of the most challenging aspects of breaking off from a larger pack to run my own. Before, we had numbers for protection and duties. I was never going to be the

alpha of Pack Sallow, but I was going to be Jori's beta. I was going to help him run everything and take care of the warriors in the pack, so I had trained plenty in my teenage years.

But with Adira joining the pack, we only had a total of fourteen members. There was not a lot of room for error in planning. There were no back-up teams for our warriors if something went wrong. If another wolf pack decided to attack us, we wouldn't be able to defend ourselves properly. With being such a new wolfpack, we didn't have allies, either. After the incident this morning, I didn't think we could count Pack Sallow as allies. We only had a mutual agreement that seemed to be falling apart already.

I was worried I wouldn't be a good enough alpha to take care of my pack properly. At least with Adira by my side, I knew I had a chance.

I changed into some workout clothes and then headed to the backyard. I was hosting a training session today with most of our warriors. Most of them were pretty fresh when it came to fighting. All of the experienced warriors stayed with Pack Sallow, with the exception of Darian. He was my best warrior. Scythe and Rie could hold their own, but the others worried me. If something happened, I wanted them to be able to defend themselves. I didn't want to leave them without all of the skills to protect themselves and the rest of the pack.

When I made it to the backyard, Scythe was already there, leading the stretching session. I glanced at my watch and saw that I was already ten minutes late. I jogged up to him with an apologetic smile.

"Sorry I'm late."

"No worries. It gave me time to teach these guys how to stretch properly. No one seems to know that you need to be limber to fight with all of your strength." Scythe gave a pointed look to Julian.

Hunter was a good guy, and he was dedicated in all of his training sessions, but he definitely had some attitude on occasion. He was only seventeen. I definitely wasn't the poster child at seventeen. I was confident he would grow up to be a fine young man.

"Who's on patrol right now?" I asked to confirm who was missing to make sure they were at the next training session.

“Darian is taking point, and Julian is there to help him out,” Scythe answered.

I nodded, making a mental note. I was grateful to have Scythe by my side through all of this. He was more organized than I was, and I swore he had a memory of an elephant. He was able to keep track of everyone’s schedule, and he seemed to know where everyone was at and when. It was incredible, and I didn’t know what I would do without him.

“Okay, let’s get started everyone,” I said, grabbing everyone’s attention.

I was already late and didn’t want to delay things even more. I had to prep for tonight. I wanted everything to be perfect for Adira, because she deserved the best. I wanted her to feel as special as she was.

“I want to go over some defense techniques to fend off an unexpected attack from an opponent,” I continued. “First we’ll go over techniques in human form, and then we’ll do some in wolf form.” I motioned for Scythe to approach me. “Scythe is going to attack me. Watch how I handle it, and then we’ll go over it in detail.”

I turned my back to Scythe, and he ran at me. He grabbed me by the neck. I quickly reacted by grabbing his arms, bending down, and flipping him onto his back. Scythe ended with a thud, and I felt bad. We had practiced this ahead of time, but I still didn’t like hurting him.

“See how I grabbed his arms and used his weight against him? I want you all to partner up and take turns practicing this technique.”

As everyone paired off, a voice came into my head.

Mark, we need you here immediately, Darian linked. The urgency in his voice instantly had me on edge.

What’s going on, I linked back.

There are hunters here. Human hunters, and they attack Julian, Darian explained. Please hurry.

I looked to Scythe, who was watching me with concern. I didn’t want everyone to panic, but we had to take action immediately.

“There are hunters here, and Julian might be hurt. Get Doctor Zayla prepared and make sure everyone is safe.” I pointed to three of the warriors practicing. “You three come with me. The rest of you go with Scythe to make sure the rest of the pack is safe.”

I transformed into wolf form and took off running, the others following me closely. When I arrived, Darian was on the ground next to Julian. I saw Julian’s shoulder seeped in blood and an arrow sticking out of him. Julian was still moving, but he was breathing heavily.

“How many were there?” I asked.

“At least two. I injured one of them, but the other one got Julian. I chased after them, but they disappeared before I could get them,” Darian explained.

I knelt down and placed a hand on Julian’s arm. “Hang in there. Doctor Zayla will be on her way soon.”

I turned to the others with me. “Do a patrol of the border, and be careful. Stay together, and keep me updated every five minutes.”

They nodded and ran off. They would be okay on their own. While they were still fresh, all of them were skilled fighters, and I trusted them to have each other’s backs.

I linked Scythe next. Is everyone safe at the pack house?

Yes, except... Scythe hesitated to respond.

Adira. She wasn’t at the pack house. Adira went shopping.

I can’t link her, Scythe said, distressed.

What about her phone? I asked. I was having a hard time focusing, thinking about Adira being in danger. I should have sent Rie to go with her. At least then she’d have someone else with her. What if there were more hunters and one found her? I needed to know she was okay right now.

She’s not answering, Scythe said.

I tried not to let the panic get to me. I had to keep a level head in this situation. Adira was capable of taking care of herself. But so was Julian, and now he

was bleeding on the ground in front of me. I needed to make sure Adira was okay, but I needed to make sure the pack was okay too.

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ADIRA

It was the first time I had gone shopping by myself in a while, and it was more boring without Rie here. With Rie, she had me try on clothes, and we would laugh at how silly I looked, or she would gawk at how something suited me perfectly. I wished I had asked her to come, but I felt a little embarrassed.

I wanted to wear something sexy for Mark tonight. We had been intimate plenty of times now, but something felt different about tonight. We were going to mark each other and take our relationship to the next level. I felt light-headed from the giddiness, excitement, and nerves. I was sure I was putting pressure on and making it a bigger deal than it should be, but I couldn't help myself. Once I marked Mark and he marked me, our relationship would be sealed. He would be mine completely, and I would be his. I wanted that more than I ever thought I would.

I felt like a silly girl for being so excited about it. When I was younger, I never cared about mates or falling in love. Mark changed that though. I understood what the hype was about finding your mate, but I also felt lucky. Mark was the perfect mate in so many ways. I knew I would never regret my decision to pick him over Jori.

I walked to my car with two revealing outfits in my shopping bags. I couldn't decide between the two and figured it wouldn't hurt to have both. I could decide late when I was home what would be the best option to wear for Mark.

As I got to my car, I thought I felt my phone vibrating. I pulled it out and saw ten missed calls from Scythe, five from Rie, and twelve from Mark. How did I not hear my phone for all of those calls? I looked, and apparently my phone had been put to silent mode. I guess my phone wasn't vibrating after all.

I went to call Mark back, worried about the numerous amount of phone calls. It was unlike them to call me so many times. As I hit the green phone symbol to call Mark, I saw something from the corner of my eye. I saw a reflection in the window of my car, and my heart started racing.

There was a man standing behind me with a crossbow pointed at my back. I hadn't heard him approach me. I didn't understand how he could be so silent with my wolf hearing. He pulled the trigger to the crossbow, and I dropped to the floor, my phone falling out of my hand, skidding to the floor. The window to my car was completely shattered.

I looked up and the man had already loaded his crossbow again. He was standing over me.

"Say goodbye, wolf girl." He pulled the trigger, the crossbow pointed at my heart.