

The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 5

ADIRA

The arrow flew towards my heart, and I shifted away just in time. I reappeared just a few feet away, and the hunter froze, completely shocked.

“How the hell did you do that, wolf?” he demanded.

I was in shock too. This had to be a human hunter, but why was he attacking now, in a parking lot in the middle of the day? And how did he find me? I had never come across a werewolf hunter since being alive. There had been an incident in my pack when I was a child, but my father kept the problem contained, and it never became an issue.

“Stay back,” I warned. I was scared to face this man, since I knew very little about hunters and what they were capable of, but I was prepared to do what I needed to in order to get back to Mark safely.

Mark had been training with me ever since the incident with Theron, and I was practicing my magic every day to get better. As long as this human didn't have any tricks up his sleeve, I knew it would be easy to take him down. I wasn't about to get cocky though.

“You think you can take me, girl?” the man said. He started loading another bolt into the crossbow.

I jumped onto my feet and kicked the man in the chest before he could finish loading his weapon again. He fell onto his back, the bolt making a distinct clink! as it hit the ground. I took the moment to grab my phone. I still couldn't link Mark, but I needed to contact him to let him know what was happening just in case. He needed to make sure the pack was safe.

It suddenly hit me that this was the reason for all of the missed calls. There had to have been an incident already. My chest tightened at the idea of another pack member getting injured. Callie was too young to defend herself. If they attacked when she was outside playing.

No, I couldn't think about that right now. I grabbed my phone and froze when my screen was completely cracked and everything was black. I wouldn't be able to call anyone for help. I was on my own.

The hunter was back on his feet faster than I would have hoped. He grabbed another bolt and started loading it. I tried to kick him again, but this time he grabbed my foot, holding it against his chest. I tried to pull away, but his grip was too tight. He held up the crossbow with one hand, pressing it against my chest.

I took a deep breath and shifted away from him before he could pull the trigger. I needed to get into my car and get away fast, but I still wasn't very good at shifting through objects.

"What is this devil magic you're using?" the man grumbled, his eyes wide as he stared at me.

"Maybe you should research your targets better before attacking," I said.

I held out my hand and created a ball of energy. It was small and weak, since the moon wasn't out right now, but it was better than I could do just a few weeks ago. I hated that my magic's strength relied on the energy of the moon. It made it unreliable for emergency situations, just like this.

I was just grateful I had my werewolf genes as well, not that I could shift right now. It was much too public to risk shifting here. I shouldn't even be using magic in case a bystander saw me, but I was backed into a corner. Clearly hunters didn't care about protecting the secrecy of werewolves. They just wanted to eliminate them in any way they could.

I threw the ball of energy at the hunter. He tried to dodge the attack, but he wasn't fast enough. The ball hit him in the shoulder, knocking him in the car next to mine. I used the opportunity to open my car and turn it on. I put the car in drive and hit the gas without even putting on my seatbelt. With how weak my magic was during the day, I couldn't risk sticking around for longer with the hunter.

A sense of relief washed over me the farther away I got from the parking lot. I was safe for now, but I knew this wouldn't be the last time I would have to deal with this hunter. He had to have been following me for a while if he knew I was a werewolf. I hadn't done anything that would have caused suspicion while shopping, so he must've followed me there and attacked when I was by myself.

When I was far enough away from the hunter, I pulled the car over to the side of the street. I took a moment to breathe as the adrenaline wore off. I had to

grip the steering wheel tightly to stop my hands from shaking. Everything had happened so fast, and I was grateful for all of the training I had been doing. I wasn't sure if I would have been able to handle that on my own before I met Mark and discovered I had magic.

After a few moments of deep breathing, I felt calm enough to continue driving. I felt the urgent need to be home and in Mark's arms. I needed to know he was okay, and I knew his touch would make me feel safe again. I buckled my seatbelt before taking off driving.

The pack house was only a ten minute drive from the store, but it felt longer as I drove back. I was still shaken up from the attack, and it made it difficult to focus on the road. It felt much too long before I was pulling into the pack house driveway and running to the house.

As I approached, I felt the shift in energy, and I knew something had happened here as well. As I burst through the door, there was a group of people gathered in the living room, and there was a sense of panic spread on everyone's faces.

Callie was clinging to her mother, Quinn, hanging on for dear life. Rie was going from person to person, calming them down. Murmurs between people echoed through the room, but the moment the door shut behind me, everyone went silent.

Heavy footsteps from the stairs filled the silence, and the next moment I saw Mark running towards me. He wrapped me in a hug so tight, I couldn't breathe, but I didn't care. I held him back just as tightly, relieved he was here, holding me.

Finally, he pulled away, holding my shoulders. His face held wrinkles filled with worry, and his eyes were nervous.

"Why weren't you answering your phone? I was so worried you were hurt," Mark said. His grip held all of his concern, and I knew he wouldn't be letting go of me anytime soon.

"I'm sorry. Somehow my phone was on silent. And then when I went to call you back, I was attacked, and my phone broke, so I couldn't call you." The tears started forming in my eyes as I spoke. I was fine. I successfully defended myself, but now that I was safe, my emotions started crashing down on me.

“Are you hurt?” Mark asked.

I shook my head. “I was able to defend myself, but the hunter is still out there, Mark. He’s going to come back.”

“There were two other hunters near the pack house,” Mark said. “That’s why we were calling you.”

I paused, looking around the room. Several members were missing from the gathering. “Is everyone okay? Did anyone get hurt?”

Mark hesitated to answer, which was answer enough. “Julian was shot. Zayla is working on him now.”

I grabbed Mark, my knees feeling weak. “Why are there hunters here, and why are there so many of them?”

Mark pulled me into and stroked my hair. “We will take care of them. Don’t worry. We will discuss this more later.”

I bit my lip, realizing my reaction wasn’t appropriate for a future luna of the pack. Everyone was scared, and I needed to be a source of strength for them. I couldn’t be whimpering in Mark’s arms like this. It would only add to the panic. I took a deep breath and stood back from Mark. I smiled at him and then approached everyone. I knelt down next to Callie.

“Don’t worry. We will make sure everyone is okay. There’s nothing to be scared of,” I said, putting my hand on her shoulder. I was scared myself, but I trusted Mark’s capabilities. We would be able to figure this out and take care of the hunters.

“What about Julian?” Callie asked, tears filling her big blue eyes.

Mark stood next to me and placed a hand on my shoulder. “Doctor Zayla is the best doctor there is. She will be able to make him all better.”

“Promise?” Callie asked.

Mark held out his hand, sticking out his pinky. “Pinky promise.”

Callie took Mark’s pinky with her and shook it. “Pinky promise.”

Mark took my hand and helped me up. He turned to address the entire crowd. "For now, everyone please stay in the pack house until we make sure everything is secure. We will have new protocols in place for safety until this is resolved. We will do everything we can to ensure your safety."

"And if you need anything at all, and I mean anything, please don't hesitate to reach out," I added.

"We have to take care of a few things, but dinner will be served soon and we will have a movie playing in the common room after." Mark gave one last look around the room before turning to leave.

He led me up the stairs away from the eyes of the rest of the pack.

"Is Julian actually going to be okay?" I asked once I was sure that no one else could hear us.

Mark nodded. "Zay was confident he would be okay, especially with his wolf healing abilities. I wouldn't have risked making that promise to Callie otherwise."

I squeezed my hand, knowing that was true. I was still processing everything that happened. "Mark, what are we going to do about this?"

"I don't know yet, but we can figure it out." Mark continued walking, leading me to our room.

The moment we were in our room away from the eyes of everyone else, Mark's demeanor completely changed. He was no longer the strong alpha that was assuring everyone it would be okay. He was scared and frustrated.

In an instant, his hands were cupping my face, and his lips were pressed against mine. He pressed his body into me, and I was being pressed against the door. His tongue begged for entrance into my mouth, and I easily gave into him. He was hungry and desperate in his movements, and I knew he needed me. I needed him too. I need his comfort and his closeness after everything.

"Mark," I gasped, barely able to breathe.

Mark paused, pressing his forehead against mine. His chest was heaving up and down as he tried to catch his breath. His hand moved to my face, cupping it gently.

“I can’t do this anymore,” he whispered, barely audible.

My tightened, jumping to the worst case scenario. “Can’t do what?”

“I was terrified when I couldn’t get a hold of you, Adira. Not being able to link with you, not knowing if you were safe or in danger. Then finding out you were attacked, and I wasn’t there to do anything about it. I can’t do that. I can’t lose you.” Mark’s grip on my cheeks tightened.

I put my hands against his and held his hands. “Then let’s not do this anymore. Mark me. Make me yours.”