

## The Hunted Wolf – Chapter 8

CAIN

It had been nearly twenty years since I had stepped foot in this town. It was outside of my designated territory, so there was no need to come here. Frankly, I avoided it as much as possible. It was too close to where I had met her, and it wasn't worth the risk of accidentally running into her. We had spent many memories in this town as well. It was away from prying eyes, so we could be just us without worry.

Now I found myself here after so long, but I could feel the memories as if they were just yesterday. Two young lovers, stupid and naive to the ways of the world. We thought we could make it work, even though we came from completely different worlds. We were fools who didn't see everything come crashing down around us. I did what she thought was best for our daughter. I never agreed with it, but I respected her wishes.

I wandered around the town, not ready to move forward with my plan yet. I knew what I had to do to comply with the wishes of the council, but I wasn't looking forward to it. I knew it would be a lot harder than I even imagined. I wasn't ready to face her yet. I knew nothing about my daughter, and I wasn't sure if I ever would. But no one defied the council.

My stupid son. If he had only come to me, he would still be alive, and I wouldn't be here.

Someone bumped into me, bringing me out of my thoughts.

"Sorry!" the guy muttered, picking up all of the papers he had dropped. He seemed a little scrambled. He also reeked of wolf.

The entire town smelled of werewolves, and I was surprised to run into one so quickly. It would be easier to find her than I thought. I watched him pick up the last item, not bothering to help. He gave me a strange look before running off. He was my key to finding my daughter. I just knew it.

I followed the man, keeping my distance so he wouldn't suspect my presence. He got into his car and drove off. I continued following him until he made it to a large house that was separated from all of the other houses nearby. There was no doubt this was a werewolf pack house. It was perfect. It was large

enough to host several families, and it had plenty of privacy between the space from the other houses and the woods surrounding the property.

The werewolf hurried up to the house and knocked, which surprised me. What was a werewolf doing, knocking at the pack house? Perhaps this was a visitor or there were two werewolf packs in town. That wasn't a custom I was familiar with, but I had been away from any contact with werewolves for a long time. Things could have changed since then.

When the door opened, my focus changed. There was a young girl-no, a young woman who opened the door. Her dark hair was long, and her deep brown eyes looked kind. She looked like an exact replica of her mother, except she had my eyes. She was a beauty, and her smile was also just like her mother's, warm and caring. I knew this was Adira. This was my daughter.

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ADIRA

I opened the door to find Daniel standing outside with his hand full of messy papers. I quickly grabbed some of the things in his arms, afraid he was about to drop everything.

"What happened to all of this stuff?" I asked, leading him inside the pack house.

Daniel set everything down on the coffee table and started organizing it. "I was doing some research when you called. I rushed right over, but I accidentally bumped into someone and dropped everything. It got all out of sorts, but you made it seem like this was urgent."

I helped straighten out some of the papers, although I wasn't sure what order everything was supposed to be in. It looked like gibberish to me, especially with Daniel's messy handwriting.

"It is pretty urgent," I said. "Thank you for coming over so early."

"Of course," he said. He finished organizing the papers and then took a seat across from me. "I'm always happy to see you."

"Me too, but I do wish it was on less official terms," I said.

Ever since we went to Ginger's together, Daniel and I had grown closer. He was definitely the person I was closest to outside of Pack Aphelion, and I appreciated our friendship. He hadn't stopped searching for more information on sorcerer's for me, and he was always willing to analyze my powers and skills to help me in any way he could. I just hoped he could help me in this manner as well.

"What's going on?" Daniel asked. "I'm not used to you sounding so serious."

"We were attacked by hunters. One of the pack members was pretty badly injured," I explained. I sat on the couch next to Daniel. I hated thinking about the members and someone threatening the people in the house.

Daniel visibly tensed. "Hunters? We haven't seen hunters in this area for years. How many were there? Did anyone else get injured?"

"No, thankfully. We know of three, but it's possible there are more. Our warriors chased them off, but they are still out there. I'm sure they will attack again." I chewed on my lip at that thought. I wanted to make sure we struck first this time. I didn't want anyone else hurt.

"Isn't this a matter for an alpha? Why did you call me?" Daniel's eyebrows were furrowed as he processed all of this information.

I let out a sigh, worried this would come up. "We met up with Jori yesterday, and it didn't go so well. He was very aggressive and not cooperative. I'm worried he won't want to help if I ask, but this isn't a matter of safety for our pack."

Daniel nodded. "I see. You're right. I hope Jori won't be so petty as to refuse to help, just because it's you asking, but he hasn't exactly been himself recently."

This piqued my interest, and I found myself looking at Daniel, wondering if I should pry for more details. I imagined it was my fault Jori wasn't acting like himself. I didn't choose him, and I can only imagine what that would feel like. I decided it wasn't really any of my business.

"That's why I thought it would be best to bring this up to someone else. Maybe if one of his pack members brought up hunters threatening his territory, he would take it more seriously." I let out a sigh. "I'm sorry to put you in this

position, but I'm afraid we won't be able to handle this situation on our own. I can't stand the thought of anyone getting hurt, in our pack or yours."

Daniel reached forward and grabbed my hand. "I'm glad you thought to reach out to me. I don't want anyone to get hurt either. I will do what I can from my end with Percy and let you know what's happening."

I squeezed Daniel's hand, grateful for his help. Even if Jori wasn't willing to help us out, I was relieved to know that other Sallow pack members were willing to help us. It gave me hope that we would be able to find peace in town with the other wolf pack one day in the future. I wanted a happy life for everyone, one where we could have parties together and didn't have to worry about people getting into fights.

I stood up and looked around the room. "I really appreciate your help with this matter. Do you want a drink or anything?"

Daniel stood up as well. "No, I should get going. If there are hunters in town, I need to inform everyone as soon as possible, in case they try to attack anyone else."

"Of course."

Daniel grabbed his stuff, and I walked him to the front door. I gave him a hug and thanked him again before opening the door.

"I'll let you know when I have an update for you," Daniel said as he stepped out of the door.

"Of course," he said. He finished organizing the papers and then took a seat across from me. "I'm always happy to see you."

"I appreciate it. Stay safe on your way back," I said.

"I will." Daniel walked to his car, and I watched him drive away.

I was a little worried about Daniel going home by himself. He wasn't trained as a fighter, so if he was attacked while on his own, I wasn't sure if he would be able to handle it. He was driving, though, and I couldn't imagine them trying to attack while he was in the car. I told myself he would be okay on his own, and I made a mental note to message him to make sure he got home safely in a few moments.

I went to shut the front door, but something caught my attention out of the corner of my eye. I snapped my head in that direction, but I didn't see anything out of the ordinary. I wasn't sure what I had seen, but it seemed like some sort of shadow or something. I continued looking in that direction, wondering if I stared longer enough if I could figure out what I thought I had seen.

A hand touched my shoulder, and I screamed, thinking I was alone.

"Hey, hey. It's just me," Mark said.

I turned and looked at him, relieved to see his face. "Sorry, I didn't hear you approach." My heart was still beating in my throat.

"What were you looking at?" Mark asked. He peaked out the door and then looked back at me.

I looked back one more time at the spot I thought I had seen the shadow, but it still looked normal. "I thought I saw something over there. It must've been my imagination. I think I've been on edge since yesterday."

I shook my head and turned back to Mark. He looked much better after getting some sleep. His eyes were brighter, and he had more color to his skin.

"I know what you mean," Mark said. He reached around me to shut the front door. "I keep waiting for something else to happen. I want to get rid of those hunters before they try something else."

"I know." I patted Mark's chest. "I talked to Daniel a few minutes ago. He's going to talk to Jori and let him know the situation, leaving us out of it. Between him and Percy, I'm sure Pack Sallow will take the threat seriously."

Mark smiled, grabbing my hand. "That's such a relief. We should probably figure out a game plan for our people and talk to everyone soon. I'm sure everyone is stressed out right now."

"I agree. Maybe we can make them something special for breakfast to bring up the mood?" I suggested. I knew a tasty meal always brought up my mood.

"You mean I will be cooking something special for everyone. I don't think your cooking would improve anyone's mood." Mark smirked at me.

I glared at him, knowing he was teasing me. "I can cook! Well, some things at least. You liked that pasta I made you."

Mark hesitated with answering.

"Right?" I said.

"Well, the pasta was somehow overcooked and undercooked at the same time, and the sauce was runny," Mark said, looking up at the ceiling.

I playfully hit Mark in the chest. "You said you liked it!"

"I didn't want to hurt your feelings..."

I groaned and pursed my lips, feeling embarrassed. "Fine, I won't ever cook for you again."

Mark smirked. "That's okay with me."

I frowned and playfully hit him again, but this time Mark caught my hand. He pulled me in quickly, pecking my lips. The motion was so fast that it caught me off guard, but I didn't mind it. Just being around him brightened my mood.

"Get a room, you two!" Scythe teased, skipping down the stairs.

I pulled away, my face flushing from embarrassment. "What's got you in such a good mood today?"

Scythe stopped next to us, smiling. "I think I know how we can take care of these hunters."