

Chapter 17

Calvin

Night has already fallen when Peter pulls over to a wooded area. He climbs out and grabs the tent but waves me off.

"Take the route I showed you," he tells me, beginning to set up camp. "I can't cross, he'll feel me. Since you're rogue, you're the only one who can."

I nod, pulling my shoes and clothes off before shifting. I head North as discussed, but he calls after me.

"If it seems dangerous at all, come straight back. Don't be a hero for them. Ada needs you more."

Ada. I haven't felt her again, which I think is good. I hope it is. She's in pain and scared, and I can't get to her. I feel helpless, and it's frustrating. Hopefully, she can find some clues and speak to me again, but she's only been able to when her pain connects us. I sigh. I don't want her to be in pain just to give us clues.

I reach the top of the border and cross into the rogue land before making my way west and crossing the border back into Silver Moon Pack territory. There's a worn path, so I move to the

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+10 Points

side and follow it, where I come upon a village of houses. It wreaks of Rogues, but even more confusing is that they're shifted into human form.

There are women outside the homes, cooking over a fire, but there are also children around. I can't make out what they're saying because I don't want to give myself away by getting closer.

I notice that I don't see any men here- at all. None. I sit and wait for what feels like a few hours, but still, no men appear.

Quietly, I leave the territory and return to Peter, who I find seated on a log beside a fire as I approach our camp.

"Anything?" he asks.

I shift back to human form and tug my clothes back on. "There's a village, but it's all women. I never passed another adult male wolf. Not a single one."

"What?" he asks, sitting up.

I shrug as he hands me a plate with dinner on it. "I've never seen anything like it. There were lots of women in human form and children. They were just... existing. They were cooking on a fire outside, but I didn't see anything strange."

"And no one tracked you down for crossing?"

I shake my head. "No. I didn't see anyone."

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Peter pinches the bridge of his nose in a way I've seen Seth do so many times. "That doesn't make any sense. I was going to email him tomorrow when we arrive, but I think it may be better to link him tonight."

I nod, finishing my food and cleaning up around

Ad

Ads-free >

the fire while he links the king. It's the strangest thing I have ever seen. I climb into the tent and pull my clothes off, laying down to sleep. Peter joins me after a while and does the same.

"He's going to have to send someone out," he tells me, our backs turned toward each other.

"I assumed he would."

"He's going to call to talk to you tomorrow," he says, almost like I'm in trouble. "I've not told him about Ada- not completely. He knows we found Dorothy and took her to Rob, but I didn't tell him about Ada being your mate. He'd tell Molly, and I didn't want her to worry."

"I'm not going to tell her," I reassure him. "They just got home. There's nothing she can do to help right now, anyway."

He sighs. "That's not entirely true. Seth can try to link her, but if she's closed the link to the king, and many do..."

"I need to think about it."

I wake before Peter and pull my clothes on before sneaking out of the tent. It's chilly, so I grab a sweatshirt from the car and start a fire. Once it's going, I grab the grate out of the car and get the coffee started. Peter joins me just as it's ready, so I pour a cup for him, too.

"Thanks, man," he says. "Sure you want to keep camping? It's pretty chilly."

"I slept fine," I say with a shrug, tossing some sausage into the hot pan.

He chuckles. "Alright. But if it snows, we're

staying in the packhouse. That's where I draw the line."

"Fine," I mutter. I watch the sausage, flipping it and listening to it sizzle as the wind winds through the trees. "I'm going to have Seth try to reach Ada."

He nods once. "I suspected you may. I need you to understand that it's not likely he can reach her. Most keep those links closed."

"I know," I tell him. "I just... I have to try."

"And you're prepared to deal with your sister?"

I smile sadly. "I am. There's nothing else she can do besides trying to link her, which I assume was done when they went missing."

"It was," he confirms, and my heart sinks a little more. I'd tried to hold out hope.

"If I'm able to speak to her through the link again, I'm going to tell her to open it," I tell him.

He takes a sip of his coffee, sitting on a long. "That's a wise choice. With any luck, she can find something to help us find her."

We eat, break down camp, and pack the car. Peter looks at me and hands me the keys. "You drive."

"What?" I ask, yanking my hand back before he can release the keys.

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"You've got this," he says. "What if we find her, and you need to drive her away quickly?"

I take a deep breath and slowly reach out to take the keys. He smiles and hops into the passenger seat, watching me as I start the car. "Follow this path until it gets to the road, and then you'll take that the whole way to the packhouse."

"How fast should I go?" I ask, feeling a little overwhelmed.

"Faster than this," he laughs. "There's no speed limit in the kingdom. Just don't do anything stupid."

I drive a little faster, though only a little once we finally reach the road. "Turn left, and for the love of the goddess, drive faster."

I take a deep breath before turning the car carefully, straightening it onto the road, and finally driving faster.

"Relax."

Easy for him to say.

"Calvin, have you ever been relaxed in your life?" he asks with a laugh.

"No," I growl. "When I was a kid, a madman hunted my family and killed my brothers. I grew up alone in a magical bubble, afraid I'd be killed if I ever left it. Then my sister found me, but

someone was trying to kill her. No, Peter. I've never had the luxury of being relaxed."

I hear him swallow hard. "I'm sorry."

It's a few more minutes of awkward silence before a packhouse comes into view. I'm not sure I've ever been more thankful to see some oversized house in my life. I stop the car, a little jerky, but it stops and put it in park before turning the key and handing it to Peter.

He takes it from me, looking me in the eyes. "Truly, Calvin, I am very sorry."

I climb out, not responding to him. What's there to say? I'm uptight and awkward. I know this, but it's not like I can change it now. I'm in my thirties, for f***s sake.

"Welcome," a man says as he walks down the stairs. He's younger than me, with brown wavy hair cut short, and for some reason, it makes me uncomfortable. A beautiful woman with tan skin and dark hair follows down the stairs behind him."

"It's good to see you, Alpha Stanley," Peter says, reaching out to shake his hand.

The Alpha pauses, looking at him strangely. "I'm sorry. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to call you now."

"Just Peter, now," he tells him reassuringly. "This

must be your new Luna."

"Yes," Stanley all but gushes. "This is my Luna, Krista."

"It's lovely to meet you," Peter says. "And this is Calvin, Queen Molly's brother."

Stanley steps toward me with his hand outstretched. I shake it, trying not to squeeze too tightly as instructed and holding my aura back. He doesn't look scared, so I must have done it right.

"It's good to meet you," he tells me as he releases my hand. "Krista is very excited you're here. I marked her only a month ago, so she's not had a chance to arrange a ball yet."

"A ball?" I ask, looking at the packhouse behind them. It's not a dump or anything, but it's not huge. I thought I'd lucked out.

"Yes, though we'll hold it outside," she tells me with a smile. "The packhouse doesn't have a ballroom."

"No sense in wasting the space," Alpha Stanley shrugs.

"I agree completely. When is this ball?"

"Tomorrow," the Luna tells me with an excited smile.

