

## Ch 12

Jack

They'd been out all-night hunting in wolf form, knew the moon was going to set just prior to 2am. Headed back to the packhouse just in case any wolves paired up inside their pack. Though he and Rafe doubted it, they had no newly turned 18-year-olds in the past month. So, it was very unlikely.

But still it was their responsibility to be around just in case, and they did have one 18-year-old they didn't know that well, inside the pack. Young Luci had just turned 18 recently. This could be where she neds her Mate. So, they needed to be back at the packhouse just in case someone in their pack scented her and headed for her room.

Orien wasn't going to be happy if some strange wolf went barreling into his daughters' room to Mark and Mate her on the spot. It was obvious, the man had rules around the girl. So, best if they were standing around close by, they'd hear if she or one of their own were up and hunting out a Mate.

Some wolves were not quiet on that front, roared and howled and raced off at full wolfen speed to claim what was theirs. While others stopped and stared, assessed carefully what was their Goddess Gifted Mate, not all had good pasts and so were cautious in that department. Neither he nor Rafe had any idea of how Luci would react. Most of their wolves would actively hunt out what was theirs. Claim and accept them.

Their pack was good and healthy, strong and friendly, all the omegas were treated well and, as highly valuable to the pack, got two days a week off, days of their choosing. It was nice to see when one of them turned 18 and a ranked member or highly ranked warrior hunted them out.

Usually went down a treat, most of the female omegas around their pack were tiny, pretty little things with dark hair and dark eyes. Though some were absolutely stunning, they had a few that out-shined Alpha females.

Watching them be claimed was fun, the warrior or ranked member found themselves faced with, on average, a 5-foot 2-inch Mate. They got all puffed up and stood tall, wanted to look like they could be a big strong protector. It was really cute.

He also found it funny when the little omega stopped and stared up at her Mate, a good foot or more taller than her, eyed him right off. Had seen more than one or two, fold their arms and, state. "What do you want?" all sternly up at them, put that Mate right off their game, seemed they liked challenging their Mates; thought it was funny, their way of playing with one so big and strong, he guessed.

Jack had seen a few of those ranked members run off and bring back owers or chocolates, in an attempt to please their new Mate, not realising they were being toyed with. Everyone got a chuckle those days, as the omega looked around and shook her head with a big smile. Some ran off and hid in the woods to have their Mate come back and only to have to go and hunt them.

Finding a Mate within the pack had kind of turned into a big game of sorts with the Omegas, and he'd overheard a few of them planning on how to toy with their new Mate's once. He'd leaned in a doorway to listen, cleared his throat at one point and gotten everyone in that room's attention. Had seen all their eyes go wide and a little bit of a guilty expression crossed some of their faces.

Only to have him smile, state, "Sound's like fun to me." He chuckled and strolled out, "Good luck ladies." He'd commented and heard them all giggling. Rafe had also thought it was funny when he'd told him what he'd heard.

They'd seen one highly ranked warrior point right down at his Mate and state. "You're Mine now, you might want to run." Feint at his mate who'd shrieked and bolted off, but she'd had a smile on her lovely face, likely wanted to be hunted by her Mate. The warrior had roared with laughter and given her a full minute's head start, though his eyes had been glazed over most of that time, likely taunting her while she ran off, and then gone after her to claim her.

It was always good fun to watch their own pair up, though they were a large pack, everyone knew everyone here. The socialisation of the pack was good. They held monthly barbecues not on the full moon, so everyone could attend, and the omegas didn't work that day.

They strolled into the mudroom and showered, pulled on slacks and headed for the dining room to get something to eat. They were both hungry. His hearing picked up someone moving about on the rst oor, though no tether could be felt, that was odd. "Not a pack member," Rafe commented. He had also picked it up.

"Ah, could it be young Luci?" Jack grinned right at him.

"Stop it." Rafe shoved him a little, "Let it go, Jack."

He'd laughed, there were only 4 inside the pack that they couldn't tether to, so it had to be one of them. His hearing was tuned into the sound. As they came down the hallway to the dining room, he could see Rafe was also focused on it, which just made Jack smile. The footfall coming down the stairs was light, but then he heard a thud and nothing for a moment, before they continued on, he wondered if that person had fallen over and had to pick themselves up. He was willing to bet it was Luci. Sneaking out against her father's wishes. Amused him more than a little to think about it.

"Come on, let's go see." Rafe stated, and they took their sandwiches and headed to the front of the packhouse.

His hearing picked up the sound of the front door being tried, it was locked up at this hour, locked for safety reason's with the two of them out of the packhouse, Allen off in the woods with his Mate's, which only left lan and ranked members inside the packhouse for protection. It's just something they'd learned to do from parents who'd always done it as well.

He watched a very hot and sweaty Luci coming down the hall. She did not look so good at all, though she smelled clean like she'd just showered. He could see her brow was already beaded with sweat. He felt Flare assess her as they walked towards her, her heart rate was a little high, and her body temperature was a lot higher than it should be for a wolf-less girl.

'Running a fever.' Rafe sighed down the mind-link to him, neither of them wanted her to get sick, but it did look like she was not feeling well.

Jack watched her come to a complete halt at seeing them, though he smiled when she tilted her head and looked them over, took her sweet time as well. He heard Rafe chuckled down the mind-link, 'might not be feeling well, but still eyeing us off.'

He was not wrong, he watched her shake her head after a moment as if telling herself not to look at them. Trying to shake off her natural instincts to look at something she thought was attractive, he couldn't help himself but ask, "Like what you see?" smirked right at her. How could he not? She was eye f\*\*\*\*g the two of them.

Saw her look him over all slow like, and nearly growled at the girl. If she wasn't running that fever and was feeling better, he would have just shoved her up against the wall and kissed the hell out of her to see what she wanted to do with him.

Though that growl that came right from her gained his undivided attention, she didn't have a wolf, how could she growl like that? And it had been low and wanton at that. He'd not missed it. Something was going on with her that was not normal.

'Not sick, I don't think.' Rafe stated after asking her if she was alright, and hearing her state, she was ne, just hot.

'Not likely, I heard that growl.'

'Shouldn't be able to growl unless she has a wolf.' Rafe commented as they both turned and followed her casually down the hallway to the dining room. She was uncaring of them, looking for a way to get outside that was clear. Had tried the front door and now was trying all the doors in here.

They watched her step outside and take a single breath in, looked like she was enjoying the cold night air, and then she just shifted. It took less than 30 seconds, was the fastest damned shift he had ever seen in his entire life. Not even he or Rafe had shifted that fast on their rst shift.

She was a Pure-blooded Alpha female, that could account for it, didn't however account for the slight glow that came with her shift though. It could have just been the moon reflecting off of her, he guessed, but didn't think so. It was gone as quickly as she shifted, and he watched her wolf just sprint off without a care in the world as to where she was.

"That was bloody fast for a rst shift," Rafe murmured, sounded a bit shocked to Jack's ear.

"What about that glow, or did I imagine that?" Jack asked right back.

"Could have been anything at all, just a reection off something."

"Or something else," Jack murmured.

"We'd better go after her," Rafe commented.

"I'll warn Hannah and her sisters."

"Good thinking, we don't want that girl injured out here, Orien is likely to fume if she is."

Though it didn't seem to bother Luci or her wolf that they were in an unknown pack, just headed north into the woods. He mind-linked right to Hannah, 'Sorry to interrupt, we have a newly shifted non-pack member racing through the northern woods.'

'Alright.' She replied simply and closed out the mind-link to him.

He shook his head, those three were busy with their Mate. He'd not meant to interrupt them, but they had traps all over the northern woods, and needed them to disarm them magically to stop any of them going off, harming Luci's wolf as it ran about for the rst time in their forest.

They gave her a good few minutes' head start, before shifting and going after her. She had to be allowed to enjoy her rst shift and they didn't want to ruin that moment for her. Though it usually would be done with her family right here with her, he was a little surprised that her mother and father weren't out here with her for it.

Though the full moon had just set, and they might well be up in their room waiting to see what would happen. Unaware she'd already left her suite, Luci did have her own door to the hallway. Perhaps they were just waiting for Luci to call to them, or they were so used to her not getting a shift that they no longer checked.

Though Luci had not looked well earlier, and he doubted that Addison had missed it. Orien himself should have picked up on it as well, being an Alpha and knowing that some wolves don't come until the rst full moon after one turns 18.

Surely Addison and Orien would be thinking about that. Orien couldn't be so blind that he'd declared her wolf-less and left it at that. You couldn't really declare one wolf-less until that rst full moon past one's 18th. Even then, he and Rafe were hard-pressed to declare someone wolf-less, they'd had one turn at 21 on a full moon.