

## Chapter Eleven

Alpha Nate

My mother wrapped her arms around me when Thea was consoling Ayla. I knew she blamed herself for a lot of things and I did as well. I let my mate get hurt. She was in the grips of not one but two monsters and I was unable to protect her from either of them.

“Are you okay, son?” My mother mumbled, holding me tight.

“No. But we can talk later.” I told her.

“Nate, I’m going to go nd my dad,” Ayla said as I pulled out of my mother’s embrace.

“Do you want me to come with you?” I asked her. She shook her head before I pulled her against my chest, wrapping my arms around her.

“I’ll be here. If you need me, mind-link.” I leaned down and pecked her lips before she left. I watched until she was out of sight, my anxiety returning. I was still having a hard time with her being out of my sight.

“You okay, son?” My father clasped me on the shoulder, pulling my attention from the door.

“Some days are better than others,” I shrugged, taking my seat again.

“Nate, I understand that being mated to a special wolf can be dicult. But I know Ayla loves you. I could see it when she was rst here and she didn’t understand what she was feeling.” Luna Thea told me as she went behind the bar. She was now standing in front of me.

“But how can I accept that she has another mate?” I mumbled, my heart twisting painfully. I never told them about Xander and her claiming him.

“Another mate?” My mother gasped, sitting beside me, my father on the other side.

“Her wolf claimed Xander after we were fully marked and mated,” I admitted, leaning my elbows on the bar top.

“Would it be a bad thing?” My father questioned. My mother and Luna Thea gasped as I turned to glare at my father.

“What the f\*\*k, Dad?” I growled, smashing my sts against the bar.

“Will, how can you even say that?” My mother scolded him.

“Ayla isn’t just a wolf. She is also a mermaid. And what if her claiming Xander was a way for her to always be protected? I’m not saying you have to be involved with him, not that it matters to us. I’m just saying that having a mate bond with another mermaid could keep her safe.” He defended.

“So, I’m just supposed to accept that she needs another mate because I can’t protect her,” I yelled, now pacing the length of the room.

“Nate, I know this can’t be easy for either one of you, but her destiny was planned before any of you were born. This has nothing to do with how much she loves you or how much you love her. There are just some things you both need to accept,” Luna Thea said. I stopped pacing and looked at her.

“And would you share your mate?” I demanded.

“I met Atlas before he ever claimed me. I knew he was with someone else, even though he would avoid the conversation like the plague. I didn’t know if this person would ever come back into his life, but I wasn’t willing to let him go.” She confessed.

“You would have shared him?” I questioned and she shrugged.

“I don’t know. But I do know that I never would have let him go. Wolves don’t share, but I was more like his second chance than his mate. And if I wanted to keep him, I would have to deal with his past.” She explained. I let out a breath, closed my eyes, and leaned my head back.

“I understand what you are saying, Luna Thea, but I can’t share her. I know that makes me a selsh son of a b\*\*\*h but I can’t watch her be happy with anyone else.”

“Son, it’s been a long day. Let’s get the bags from your truck and get you settled on the beta oor. We can all have breakfast in the morning.” My father said, trying to defuse the situation. I’m not angry with the Luna. I’m angry at the situation the goddesses think is so easy to accept.

“I think that’s a good idea, Nate.” My mother agreed, taking my hand. I stared at her for a moment before nodding my head. I thought talking about it would help me see things from a different perspective, but all it did was make me realize that my mate isn’t all mine. She will always be a part of something bigger than just being my Luna. And how I was fated to her I will never know. I was supposed to be just a beta.

“Nate, babe, are you okay?” Ayla’s soothing voice lled my mind.

“Just taking our bags up to the beta oor,” I informed her.

“I’ll be up soon. I love you.” She said before closing the link. I let out a breath.

“Stop doubting us,” Duke growled.

“And how do you expect me to do that? I can’t protect her in the water and our own goddess doesn’t have faith in me. She gifted her another because I’m not strong enough.” I yelled at him, my emotions bubbling to the surface. I’m an alpha. The strongest wolf in the pack, but this was taking a toll on me.

After saying goodnight to my mother and Luna, I followed my father up the stairs of the pack house to the Beta oor. Being back here felt surreal. This was my home and my pack. All my friends are here. But it doesn’t feel like home anymore.

My father opened the door before we both stepped inside the apartment. The apartment my mother hated.

“Everything will work out, son. But you need to communicate with her. Talk everything through. She can’t help if she doesn’t know there is a problem. I know she loves you.” He hugged me before closing the door behind me.

And I love her, but I don’t know if it’s enough to get us through this. Not that it matters now. I’m fully mated to a mermaid. My fate is sealed. But what if I’m not good enough? How would I ever live with myself if something happened to her all because I was selsh? And what would happen to our world if the Black pearl mermaid was no longer there to protect it?