

Chapter Nine

Luna Ayla

After my not-so-helpful chat with the moon goddess, we headed back to the pack for a few days. Nate still has a responsibility to be alpha. One he probably wouldn't have had if I hadn't been kidnapped. But for me, it's just another thing I have to worry about. I know my mother was trying to spare all of this for me, but I wish she would have prepared me, instead. Because right now I feel like a complete failure. Nothing I did seems to have made a difference. I killed one threat and the kingdoms were able to clean out all the men involved. But I don't think they needed me to accomplish that. All they had to do was work together and they would have gured it out long before I came along.

I sighed as I watched out the window of the passenger seat. Nate and I were traveling to see my father. I needed to tell him about my mother. And I also want to meet my siblings, but it's going to be hard to see babies right now. My mother didn't get the chance to hold my sister and the thought twisted my heart painfully in my chest.

"Baby?" Nate squeezed the hand he was holding as he held the wheel with the other one. I looked over at him, giving him a small smile. I know he is worried about me.

"I'm okay, Nate," I reassured him, squeezing his hand.

"Ayla, you don't have to do this. I can tell him or we can wait to tell him." he offered, but I shook my head.

"Matt would like to show off his baby girl to his family and he can't do that until I tell my father the truth. And I need to be the one to tell him." I explained. He let out a sigh. All of this has been taking a toll on both of us and our relationship. I know he can feel my emotions, but sometimes I don't know how to put them into words.

One minute I think I'm okay and then I am hit with overwhelming sadness. My body is achy and I feel tired, but sleep doesn't come easily as my mind races with different scenarios. I just want to keep everyone I love safe and I feel hopeless. I couldn't protect my mother. I let Xander get hurt. My bond with Nate was almost destroyed. And nothing I seem to have done made a difference in the end. All it did was open up another chapter of some unknown threat.

The closer we drove to the pack, the more my stomach twisted painfully. My father and I were just starting to have a relationship. Will he blame me for her death? She should have been seeking medical attention, not warning me. Why couldn't she have saved herself rst and then come nd me? I wish I could piece this together.

"Baby, I know this is hard, but you aren't doing this alone," Nate said, pulling me from my thoughts.

"I'm scared. I'm scared that my father will hate me. I'm scared that something awful will happen to his family and pack. I'm scared of losing you. I'm just so scared and I don't know what to do," I cried, covering my face.

"Ayla, look at me," Nate demanded. He had pulled over to the side of the road and threw the vehicle in park.

"You are not in this alone. I will do everything in my power to keep your father and family safe. I know you didn't grow up in this world, but I will always help you. We are in this together. And your father would never blame you for what happened to your mother. Her choices were not your fault and you saved your sister. You made sure she was safe and loved. Even though you were hurting, you made sure she had the family she deserved." He leaned over, gripping the nape of my neck, resting his forehead against mine.

"I just want to be happy with you. I could handle being a wolf and a mermaid, but it's the deadly unknowns that have me scared to death. I can't lose you, Nate. I won't be able to survive without you." I broke into sobs. The thought of anything happening to my mate twists my heart painfully.

"You will never lose me, Baby. I will always be by your side, protecting you. The day I locked eyes with you in the woods, that was it for me. You were always going to be mine. Human, wolf, mermaid. It doesn't matter as long as we are together. And I know this is hard for you, but I'm here to always reassure you. To make sure you always know that you deserve me. This may not be the life you were expecting, but this is just the rst few chapters in our life together. And when this is all over, we will have each other, our pack, and hopefully a baby." I let out a chuckle, even though the thought of childbirth terried me.

"I love you so much, Nate. I know you never asked for any of this but I'm so thankful you stayed." I told him, looking in his deep blue eyes.

"I will always be here, Baby, no matter what happens. You will always have me." I nodded as his lips brushed against mine. His lips were soft against mine.

"Now, let's go see our family." He mumbled.

'Okay," I whispered, feeling better. He put the truck in drive before taking my hand in his again. He pulled back onto the highway. I squeezed his hand, knowing all I needed was him.