

Chapter 3

Harlow

We all sit quietly for a second as my mind mulls over what I just learned. No wonder Elaine hated me. She believed I killed the one woman who saved her.

"I spent a few years in rotation. Hana used to send me birth control until she introduced me to Charles," she explains.

"And Sophia?" I ask.

"She was in rotation too, until she met her mates," she sighs heavily. "And Harper, we tried to find her. Waylen and Curtis hunted her down for years. We eventually gave up searching for her, knowing it wasn't safe. Curtis was always watching us, following us with every lead we found."

"Curtis? Is he a member of the council?" I ask, not having heard that name before.

Elaine shakes her head. "You never met him? He's the current headmaster of the Omega facility, Curtis Black?" she asks. I blink at her. Mr. Black is this Curtis person?

"Waylen Black was his father. Curtis took over after he died," Elaine tells me.

"So, Mr. Black was looking for her?"

She sits back in her chair, staring at the bracelet in her hand.

"After Hana, Harper was the next to be put up for auction, but she was pulled suddenly. We didn't understand at first, until we overheard Curtis talking to his father; he wanted her. Her levels were off the charts, and being the headmaster's son and an Alpha, he was technically allowed to bid. Yet Curtis knew he would easily be outbid by other parties. He didn't have that kind of money then. Instead, they swept it under the rug and pulled her, falsifying her records at the facility. When Hana came back for us, she learned of his intentions. So, with help from one of the guards, they snuck Harper out. She ran off with the guard."

"The guard took her?"

"Yes. They were in love, and they had been secretly seeing each other every chance they could get because he wasn't allowed to bid on her."

"Because he was a guard, and Curtis wanted her?" I ask, trying to understand the story Elaine is telling me. She shakes her head.

"No, because he was an Omega himself," she tells me.

Male Omegas are rare. They are also the only ones who can produce more Omegas or Alphas with an Alpha female. Betas mostly produce more Betas, though on the rare occasion they can also have Omega children. Two Omegas will almost always produce a pure Omega, which is classed as an Omega with pheromone levels at 80% or higher.

Pure Omegas are rare, not just because of a lack of Omega males, but because it is seen as wasteful when an Omega female can belong to an entire pack. So, two Omegas being together is mostly forbidden, which never made sense to me. It is also why Zara and my pheromone levels are so high. Both of our parents were Omega. My mother was born from an Alpha and Omega; my father was born from two Omegas.

"We never located either of them. It's better off that way. Curtis would have used her and sold her off when he was done with her. He was always a bastard. He knew his older brother would inherit everything, except that one facility, when his father died. We always believed his intention was to find an Omega to produce an heir in the hopes his father would change his mind."

"Or use her genes to blackmail his brother into allowing him to join his pack," Charles adds, and Elaine nods her head.

"Or that," she says.

"So, Curtis isn't the only heir to his father's disgusting legacy?" I ask.

"No, his older brother, Alpha Corbin, was set to inherit everything. The Black family adopted Curtis. Waylen planned on leaving everything to his biological son, and he did. Corbin owns most of the facilities in the country. Curtis was given that one facility, and Corbin inherited the rest."

"Alpha Corbin, why does that name sound so familiar?" I ask. I can't place it, yet I am certain I have heard it somewhere before.

"The Mountain Pack. Alpha Corbin is the head of the other Alpha pack in this state, besides mine and Jake's," Thane answers. I chew the inside of my lip, knowing I nearly ran right into their arms at Talon's. Glancing over my shoulder, I can tell Thane is also thinking about that night. His jaw clenches, but he says nothing of it.

We chat some more about random topics before saying our goodbyes. Elaine wants to take me baby shopping, to which I agree. Raidon and Rhen say they will come with us, which I am grateful for. Despite getting along with Elaine tonight, I barely know the woman. Though I feel I have a better understanding of her now.

After cleaning up from dessert, we settle in on the couch to watch a movie. It starts to get late, and I am struggling to keep my eyes open by the time I eventually crawl into bed. Yet, when my head hits the pillow, I find myself wide awake.

Leon is snoring beside me, which isn't helping, and the more I lie here, the harder it is to switch my mind off. It annoys me that lately, no matter how exhausted my body is, it seems the moment I lie down for sleep, my mind will suddenly switch on. It will begin conjuring up every conversation I had that day, every little detail playing over in my head. Or, it will conjure memories of the past, or intentions for the next day.

Stupid brain.

Cursing, I climb over Leon and head downstairs. Having lain awake for so long, I am now thirsty. Walking down the hall, I notice Rhen and Raidon's doors are shut and wonder if they are in Thane's room. I've caught them sleeping in there a couple of times, as if they miss him. Glancing back at Leon's room, I sigh. Even I am finding it harder to sleep in there—my bond tugging for my mates—yet we can't all fit in Leon's bed.

Walking downstairs, I move toward the kitchen and grab the apple juice from the fridge. I pour myself a glass and put the bottle back. I shut the door and grab my glass, only to nearly jump out of my skin when I see Raidon standing there.

"I thought I felt that you were awake," he chuckles.

"You nearly gave me a heart attack," I hiss at him, before noticing that the door to the Den is open behind him. My eyes ick to it. Raidon glances over his shoulder at it. He scratches the back of his neck awkwardly as Thane comes out of the Den with only his boxers on. He stops when he notices me, his eyes moving to Raidon briefly, as if they've been caught doing something they shouldn't.

Seconds later, Rhen emerges from the Den, walking directly into Thane's back. We all kind of stand there awkwardly, no one speaking. I reach for my juice. This explains why both of their doors are shut. They usually leave them open, and sometimes I will wander between rooms, trying to find somewhere comfortable to sleep.

"Well, this is awkward," Rhen mutters, stating the obvious.

"We're mates, Low. You're not the only one who struggles to sleep without us. I hear you walking around most nights," Thane tells me.

"I didn't say anything," I tell him.

His brows furrow, and Rhen steps beside him. He opens his mouth to say something, but Raidon sighs before speaking.

"You're wondering why our doors were closed," he exhales.

"I thought you were in Thane's room," I admit. "I'm not angry. We just can't all fit in Leon's bed." I curse myself for sounding so needy, but it is the main reason I struggle to sleep most nights, the bond forever pulling and pushing for my mates. And now that Thane and I are finally talking, it seems to tug even harder, like it is searching for them.

"I'll wake up Leon. We can sleep in Thane's room," Rhen says, walking off. Thane watches him go. I finish my drink and set my glass in the sink before following Raidon down the hall when I stop.

"Are you coming?" I ask Thane. He seems taken aback, yet I can tell he wants to follow us.

"I'm allowed?" he asks, glancing at the door to the Den.

"Well, I'm not sleeping down there, so —" My eyes dart to the Den door. Just the thought of stepping down there makes my heart race faster before I shove the feelings aside.

"Come to bed, Thane," I tell him before walking off and up the stairs. I am halfway up the stairs when I hear him follow.