

Owned by the Alphas |

The Brother

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“What do you mean, ‘missing’?” I demanded.

“He was doing a border check around the Forest village and the wolves lost him. His scent and everything vanished.”

“The vampires?” I panicked, but Derik shook his head.

“No, Lorelai. There was no vamp scent. He attacked them with shadows before vanishing into thin air,” he said somberly, and just like that, I knew my brother had no chance left.

I couldn’t save him. Link or no link, he had fucked everything up.

“He’s the one taking the villagers, isn’t he?” I swallowed, my voice quiet, my eyes filling with tears as I came to the only conclusion that was left.

They were going to kill him.

“We have to go out there,” Kai growled, his claws and fangs growing as I wiped my tears away, pulling on a cloak.

“I’m coming.”

“No!” Derik yelled, but I refused to shrink back despite the terror that filled me at his outburst.

He took a calming breath before speaking again.

“Stay here. The wolves are not going to take kindly to another winter born right now,” he explained, and I understood that, but it was my brother, and I was pretty sure I could find him with my shadows.

“You taught me hide-and-seek with my shadows, now let me use that lesson to help. I know my brother needs to be found and I know what he’s done

means he can't be saved, but if they find him first, I won't even get to say goodbye," I breathed through my tears.

"She's right, Derik. And we don't have time to argue. We have to go," Brax said, then left the wardrobe, heading to the door of my suite.

I followed with Kai and then eventually Derik behind me. I was led down the mansion, running behind them as we rushed outside.

There were four wolves snarling at me when I came out. Derik snarled back and they whimpered, heeling. I clutched Kai, who held me behind him.

The wolves were panting, covered in black ash on their faces and coats. One had blood dripping over its fur.

"My brother did that?" I whispered, and one of them nodded, glaring at me.

I swallowed hard and stepped forward, still holding on to Kai, but mainly because he wouldn't let me go. "I'm sorry. I'll stop him. I promise," I said, and the wolf's eyes widened, then narrowed with a nod.

It grunted at the other three and led them away, stopping at the end of the pathway.

"We're going to run to get there quicker. Can you ride?" Derik asked, and I couldn't help but let the smirk appear.

"You know I can," I teased, and his own smirk played on his lips, his eyes lightening for a second.

"Remind me later."

He winked, then stepped back and burst into his wolf. He was a huge wolf, a brown one with white and black mixed into his coat.

He looked at me and I smiled, stepping forward, running my fingers through the fur. It was softer than it looked, and I gripped it as a growl released from his mouth, one that was anything but anger.

I chuckled as Kai lifted me onto Derik's back. I straddled his spine, sinking into his fur, his back surprisingly comfortable, as the other two shifted.

Brax was a stark white, his eyes white, and he was beautiful, almost elegant, but just as huge as the other two. He came forward and licked my face.

I pet him, giving him a kiss on his snout. He huffed, then stepped back, the front of the pack howling to leave.

“Hold on.” Cain’s voice came from behind them. He passed Brax and rubbed along Kai’s dark coat.

“I’m coming. You might need some help, Mom said,” he said, and climbed on Kai, who let out a grunt.

Brax curled his lip a little, edging closer to Derik and me. I reached over and ran my fingers over him.

“It’s okay, Brax,” I whispered, and he nodded once.

And then we were running. Speeding down the path so fast my hair whipped back.

Everything that passed was a blur, and I grinned. It felt so good, like I was flying. Derik felt so powerful beneath my legs, and I urged him on, clutching his fur.

They led me down the path and out of the city.

We passed the huge sprawling lake area that Brax governed. Then down the path that led through the meadows and farms of my villages. I could see them in the distance and wondered what my mother was doing in that moment.

Probably having tea with my brother’s wife. My mom would like having her there to dote on, and I was glad for it too. It meant she wouldn’t be as lonely.

But did she know about my brother? That he was missing? Did my father? I’m sure I would find out, but not till Sunday. For now, I had to find him and stop him.

I had thought he was redeemable, but now I wasn’t so sure, and I had to be sure.

When we made it to the edge of Forest Territory, Derik slowed. I could hear the bells going off in the nearby villages, indicating the alphas’ arrival.

“Are we going to the villages?” I asked, but Derik shook his head. That was a relief. I didn’t need them to see me on top of a wolf and spread more rumors to my village.

He strolled past the rest of the pack to the front as the others sniffed around. We made it deep into the forest, losing the light from the sky beneath the canopy of trees.

We came to a stop in front of three human forms from the pack. They had on linen to cover themselves and looked straight at me, a scowl forming. I sank further into Derik’s fur.

The front woman rolled her eyes and turned away. “C’mon, we lost him by the river.” She sighed like she knew there was no point in arguing.

She led us back to where there was a rocky river, gushing with water that led to the lake in Brax’s area. It flowed through ours too and kept our farms healthy, our livestock hydrated, and us supplied with water.

Derik and Kai sniffed around as Brax waded into the water, taking deep breaths as he connected to it. I watched in fascination, ignoring the fact that they were hunting my brother for a second.

But then I saw something, and it was impossible to ignore. I jumped from Derik’s back and ran through the trees, Derik and Kai growling at me, but I bent down at the base of a tree and picked up what I had found.

A daisy chain.

My brother and I used to write letters, sending them between us with Father, and he had drawn a diagram, showing me how to make a daisy chain because the girls in the village had refused to show me.

He had sent one with my next letter, and then it became our thing.

He had been here, and he had made that daisy chain.

I lifted it up to the wolves. “My brother made this.” I swallowed, turning to my alphas.

Brax had changed into human form, so had Derik, but Kai kept guard as a wolf. The beast.

Brax was soaking wet, and I tried not to let the state of his naked body get to me, especially standing next to Derik, but the desire seeped through my defenses. I licked my lips, raking him up and down as he smirked.

“Focus,” he whispered, and I smiled.

“I am.”

He chuckled at that, then came forward and took the daisy chain from me, breathing in deep, getting a scent or whatever it was the wolves did.

“I think I can use my shadows from here,” I said, ready to try.

He nodded.

“If he was here then they’ll be able to connect to him easier. You tell me where and I’ll send the wolves in that direction,” Brax said, and I nodded as Cain stepped forward.

“You need to go too. I’ll communicate,” he offered, but Brax growled.

“Fuck off,” he bit, and Cain sighed.

“Brax,” Derik warned, and Brax pursed his lips, backing away from me.

“Remember the game, Spitfire,” he said, then turned into his wolf.

Derik eyed me and I nodded. The others waited, changing into their wolves, ready to run.

I took a deep breath and reached inside me for my shadows. It was easy; they were ready, and I knew what I had to do.

I pushed them from me, sending them to hunt down my brother. The shadows knew what I wanted and did as I asked, going down the path, through the trees, latching on to a scent that was barely my brother anymore.

I gulped and pointed down the path. “That way. Start that way,” I murmured, and the wolves took off.

Derik gave me one last look over his shoulder then shifted, and he was gone too. Cain waited, holding the daisy chain before leaning back against the tree.

I ignored him and waited for the shadows I had roaming the forest to find the scent again, indicating a direction for the wolves to follow. It was hard to give directions in a forest though, and everything looked the same.

“I think he’s in the forest, not on the path. Tell them there’s a huge tree coming up, bigger than the others, turn right into the forest there.”

Cain closed his eyes and did that. I peered at him as his eyes turned purple.

“Can you not shift?” I asked, assuming that from the fact that he rode Kai instead of running.

“No. Only partially. I get the cool fangs and claws without the hair.”

He smirked, and I smiled at the charm laced through his words. He was friendly, and my heart warmed around him despite the tattoos and piercings that intimidated and would freak the hell out of my village.

“Why doesn’t Brax like you or your mother?” I asked, and he tensed.

“He’ll tell you the story,” he murmured, and I nodded, even though every fiber of my being wanted to demand an answer.

“Hmm,” I said, hoping he would actually tell me what was wrong. It seemed to be the one answer Brax wouldn’t give me.

I kept my shadows out. They were heading in the same direction when something slammed into me.

I went flying back against the tree as my brother’s shadows panged against mine, entwining around them as I tried to yank them back. They squealed in my head, and I clutched it.

My head spun from where it had hit the tree as Cain rushed forward. I fought my brother’s shadows, but they were so powerful, drenched in darkness.

“Don’t fight me, little sister. It’ll make it worse,” my brother said through the connection he had forced on me.

I yanked on mine, calling them back as Cain alerted the wolves what was happening, but I wasn’t sure what he could tell them.

Not even I knew what was happening. I didn't know where my brother was or how he was attacking my shadows while I was using them.

I couldn't see him, but he was everywhere, his scent filling me.

"Stop, Lucas!" I cried out, holding my head as it swam.

Blood leaked from my nose, from the gash in the back of my head, and then he was there and Cain was being thrown across the forest.

"Little sister. I knew you were eccentric, but I never pegged you as a traitor." He glared, his face pale, dark shadows under his bloodshot eyes. He looked insane and not in a negotiating mood.

He was not the brother who had sent me daisy chains and letters.

A flash of purple streaked the forest, and Lucas spun away from me, but he landed on his feet, facing Cain, who was ready with more purple magic dancing across his fingers, his fangs and eyes glowing.

"You are under arrest, winter born. You are wanted for questioning regarding the disappearances of multiple humans and the murder of at least three pack members."

Lucas scoffed as I used the tree to help me up, my shadows slowly reeling back to me, damaged and raw.

Their power had seeped out, and I had no idea how to give them energy again. They sank back inside me, and I almost collapsed at the heaviness.

"Those humans are serving a higher purpose. They were sacrifices for the greater good," Lucas said, and his voice echoed like it wasn't his own.

I hated hearing him sound like that. I had only heard his voice a handful of times, and it was already being distorted.

"Kneel and put your hands on your head. I really don't want to take you out in front of your sister." Cain sighed, and Lucas laughed maliciously.

"Not to worry, hybrid. No such thing is going to happen," he said, and I saw the shadows at his back, getting ready for an attack—so I launched. I had no idea what for or what I was going to do, but I had to stop him from attacking Cain.

I landed on my brother and knocked him sideways, but he was quick to recover, sending a wave of shadows over Cain, burying him in them, encasing his body, keeping him still beneath them.

I couldn't even see his face anymore, but the cold, sinking feeling in my stomach made me sure he was dying.

"Let him go!" I screamed, and Lucas shook his head.

"You should have stayed with the humans, Lorelai. You would have said yes by now if you had and then we could take over those pathetic wolves together.

"It wouldn't be humans living off scraps anymore, it wouldn't be winter borns getting cast aside like dirt, left to die in the snow. We would be the ones they feared, gave their offerings to. I could love who I wanted," Lucas said, and I shook my head.

"I know they treated us like shit, Lucas, but you can't get revenge like this. The wolves will kill you, and I just got you back," I pleaded, but he wasn't listening.

He snapped his head in the direction of the forest as howls swept through it. My alphas were almost there.

Lucas knew that too because he grabbed me around the waist, the other hand clamping around my mouth as I screamed and kicked and bit to get free.

But then my shadows were bursting out of me, sending Lucas flying. I wasn't sure how I did it, but I had this overwhelming urge to fight, to not be taken by him.

I wanted to stay with my alphas.

He grunted and rolled across the ground, then got up with a visceral glare. And then he narrowed his eyes harder, and before I could stop them or react, his shadows pushed out of him, shoving me back.

I tried to fight, but their hold was too strong.

He kept shoving me back, through the shrubs, grass, wildflowers, past the trees, my dress and my flesh getting torn and scraped, my feet scuffing the ground as he dragged me back, walking forward with a determined smirk.

“You shouldn’t have picked those savages over me. I could have taken care of you. We could have been in this together, but if you are so determined to be together with them...”

He stopped as my foot sank, his shadows holding me over the edge of a cliff.

I gasped, my heart racing, panic clutching me as I fought against the hold, scrambling for my own shadows, trying to find whatever feeling had shocked them out of me before.

I looked back over my shoulder, tears streaming down my face.

“No! Lucas, stop!” I screamed, but he shook his head.

“Say yes.”

I whimpered, shaking my head. “I can’t. I don’t want to hurt the humans or leave my alphas,” I whispered, and that had his grip tightening on my waist, strangling the air from me.

I gasped in breaths as he held me on the edge of the cliff. I couldn’t see what was at the bottom, but I knew I would be dead when I got there. His intent was clear in his eyes.

Roars and howls went off in the distance, and pain shot through me.

I could feel them, the alphas. I could feel their panic as they tried to find me. My scuff marks should be easy to track, but all it would take was one step and I’d be falling.

“You can die together too then,” he said, and then he let go.

The shadows unwrapped from my waist, and just as I sucked in the breath I so desperately craved, he let me fall.