

Owned by the Alphas |

The Gossip

"I'm going," I said to the alphas as they stood in front of my door.

I fixed my dress into place, then glared as Derik folded his arms. Kai leaned against the wall, and Brax put his hands in his pockets.

"It's not safe."

"And I don't care. If there are people going missing from my village then I am going to check on my family," I snapped as Derik deepened his scowl.

"We'll go check it out first, and you can come afterwards, if it's clear."

"No, I'm coming with you. Either you take me or I go myself, but I want to know if my family are okay."

"They are," Brax said. "They were the first people the wolves checked on."

"So who was taken then?" I demanded.

"The girl you shared a carriage with was one of the missing," Kai explained, and that had my jaw dropping.

"Portia?" I asked, my eyes wide, my heart clenching.

Perfect Portia was a bitch who thrived on the hive mind of my village, but she didn't deserve to be taken. None of the people did.

"We'll come back soon for you," Derik finished, and if he thought that was the end of the conversation, then he was so wrong.

"It's Sunday," I snapped, and all three of them turned to stare at me, pausing on their turn out the door. "Every Sunday of the month. You promised, you can't break your word."

I pulled out the ace card I had been hoping I wasn't going to have to use.

Kai just laughed, but it royally pissed Derik off.

Brax rolled his eyes. "I knew that was going to bite us in the ass. She's right, Derik, we can't break the word we gave."

"I'm going to punish you for that later," Derik warned, and my ass tingled in anticipation.

"I'm looking forward to it. Now can we go?"

I didn't wait for an answer and strode past them, not caring that I was heading to my mother's without my hair braided and in a dress she would never approve of in the village. Especially unmarried.

I still hadn't put dressings on my feet either, but none of that was anywhere near the top of my priority list.

I had to see her, make sure she was protected.

Derik had already sent wolves out to protect the village and get a scent, but it didn't stop the rapid heartbeat in my chest. I needed to see it for myself.

My brother had said he was taking them for a bigger purpose, but it was terrifying to think what that meant, and now he was targeting those from my village? From the widows' village technically, but I still knew the women from there.

We got in the carriage that was already waiting and headed to my village. It was a quiet, tense ride, but only because Derik was sulking.

I knew he wanted to protect me and was trying to stop me from getting hurt, but I had to go. It was my brother doing this. It was me he wanted, and now people were going missing because of it. I had to be there.

We pulled up to my village, the bell going off. The mayors were there to meet the alphas in the center courtyard between the villages, and I went to get out, but Derik stopped me.

"I'm going to the men's village to organize protection with the human army and the wolves. The villages are to be watched at all times. A curfew is going to be put in place also.

“Kai, I need you to placate the mayors and reassure their fragile little minds that we’ll get this sorted before they shrivel up on the spot. Give them a message for the village people about curfew.

“Brax, head out to the widows’ village. See if you can get a scent.”

Then he turned to me, and I knew what my orders were going to be. Something along the lines of sit and stay. He should know me better than that.

“I’m going to make sure my mother is okay,” I said first.

“And you are not to leave your mother’s hut. Stay there and we will come get you when we have investigated what happened,” he ordered, and I nodded.

“Okay, and if I do decide to ignore you, what exactly are you planning to do to me?” I wondered, letting him know I had no intention of sitting this out.

I needed to check on my mother, but I wanted to see the widows’ village too.

“We are trying to keep you safe,” he said, exasperated.

I smiled, leaning over to kiss him. He grabbed my face, pulling me onto his lap, deepening the kiss. I stroked his tongue with mine before pulling back and running my fingers through his shorter hair.

“I know. And I appreciate it. But I need to go where my brother went. I might be able to sense something. I’ll be with Brax and perfectly safe,” I promised, and he growled in annoyance.

“Fine. Brax will take you to see your mother first, then go to the widows’ village. Don’t leave his side, beautiful.”

Derik caved, and I kissed him again. He held my mouth with his for a few more moments, long enough to tease my core into thinking it was going to get something more from the alpha, before he slowly let me off his lap.

I pouted, and he smirked.

“You know we’ll have you later,” he promised, and I did know.

They were insatiable, and it was making me the same way. I wanted them all the time, even when it should be physically impossible to keep going. It made no sense, but I didn’t care whether it did or not anymore.

I wanted them and they wanted me; it's all that I needed.

I followed the wolves from the carriage. Brax grabbed my hand, ignoring the mayor's greeting as he led me toward my mother's hut.

Derik separated as Kai went to acknowledge the humans.

I was glad I wasn't being made to do that. I really didn't want to engage in small talk and pretend I gave a shit what feast they had decided to prepare in honor of the wolves joining.

It seemed tasteless to do when there were humans missing, probably dead.

It urged me on faster, and Brax held my hand tighter. I stopped outside my mother's hut, the usually bright flowers in the gardens looking sad and solemn in the overcast day that grew darker by the second.

I quickly tidied myself up, patting down my white dress that I hadn't put a corset or layers of skirts with. I finger-brushed my wild waves of hair, then bit down on my lips to pinken them.

"You're worried about how you look seeing your mother?" Brax asked, genuine intrigue lacing his features.

I grinned and nodded, remembering last time and my mother's reaction to how I showed up with Kai.

"My mother was very upset last time about the way I looked after spending time with the wolves," I said, then blew out a breath, going to step forward, when Brax grabbed my hand and stopped me, kissing me lightly.

"You're very lucky to have a mother who cares about such things," he whispered, before kissing me again.

I kissed back, trying not to deepen the kiss or I'd never make it in the door. But Brax did it anyway, pushing me against the door, kissing, nibbling, stroking his tongue on mine.

I wrapped my arms around him, sighing against the way his mouth made me feel, forgetting everything around me.

"You know how much I care about you though, right? And if you keep coming with me on Sundays, my mother will surely scold you too for being scruffy," I

insisted, and he smiled, his hand running down my body, holding my hips against his.

“Care is too tame of a word for what binds all of us together, Spitfire.”

He kissed me again, my heart melting at his words. Brax always knew how to make that happen. I was the one deepening the kiss this time, my stomach tightening as I grew hot beneath his touch.

And then there was a gasp.

“Lorelai! Get inside before the ladies see you!” My mother’s voice came from the window.

I turned to it, seeing her beautiful frowning face through the shutters. I grinned, and Brax stepped away. I turned just as the door opened. My mother looked over me, rolling her eyes before pulling me in for a hug.

“Do the wolves not have gossip in the city?” she asked, pulling back, then looking over Brax as he closed the door. “Surely they understand the consequences of wearing your nightgown into the village?”

I smiled at Mother, who was still just as beautiful in one of her nicer dresses, a white underlay with a royal blue corset layer over top.

It was simple, but made her look so elegant. Not anything like my own plain white one with a few ruffles.

At least this one had sleeves.

“Nobody cares what I wear there.” I shrugged, and she sighed.

“That is obvious. Never mind, you are here now, that’s all that matters. Are you hungry?” she asked.

I was starving, but I didn’t want to linger there when there was a widows’ village to investigate.

“I’ll eat later. I just wanted to check in on you,” I said, and her features softened.

She held my chin with a soft smile. "I am safe. Although I might just need to make my special stew for dinner to comfort us all after the recent gossip floating around the village." She saddened, turning to put on some tea.

I spent the next fifteen minutes with Mother, letting her vent about what had happened while Brax waited patiently. There was no new information through the gossip grapevine, so eventually I sighed and stood from the table.

"I'm glad you are safe, Mom, but I really do have to go to the other village," I interrupted.

She looked like she wanted to argue, but instead her eyes went to Brax, then she nodded.

"I'll give you a minute then." Brax took the hint and left.

I smiled at how intuitive he was, then hugged Mom.

"You'll be back for dinner?" she asked.

I nodded. "Yeah, I'll be an hour tops," I said. "I just have to stay with Brax."

She smiled, looking over my face like she saw something else there. "They keep you safe? You are happy?"

I smiled and nodded. "I've never been more so."

"Well then, I'll make enough for us all. I would like to be more in the know when it comes to the relationship with them."

She blushed, and I chuckled. "I love you, but you probably don't want the details."

"Well, a few wouldn't hurt."

She grinned, and I laughed, hugging her again. "Sure, we'll gossip when I get back."

"Perfect. I would like to understand this whole thing a little more though, not just gossip. We will be talking marriage and babies, so forewarn them they're getting the mother talk over dinner. Then I'll know if they are good enough for my daughter."

She winked, and I raised a brow. “How will you know?”

“Because they’ll still show up.” She smiled wide, then went to the kitchen, humming as she went about making the only stew that I’d ever enjoyed. Probably because she loved making it so much.

I grinned and left Mother’s hut, resenting my dad even more.

Brax smiled at me and grabbed my hand. “We’ll still show up.”

He winked, and I laughed, leading him down the path toward the widows’ village.