

## Chapter 4: Birthday Party

Kennedy

Every time someone asks me to dance, I take the opportunity to look over at Quirin. First, I was surprised by his possessiveness of me and I’m afraid to do something that will make him think that I don’t want him. I do want him. I always have. But second, I’m afraid he’ll run. It’s not that he’s a fearful man, well at least not usually. But I’ve been watching my mate for years and I know that when it comes to emotions, he’s not very good at handling them.

“Luna Kennedy, how do you feel about being mated to my adopted son,” Alpha Harold asks as we dance.

“I’m very happy about it, Alpha,” I tell him truthfully.

“Hmmm, not many women would say that. My son isn’t an easy man to get close to.”

“I’ve never found it that difficult.”

“No, I guess you haven’t. Have you ever been to his pack, Luna?” I love that he keeps calling me Luna. Until Quirin called me mate, I was an Alpha, but now, being a Luna means that I’ve found the man I love. I can’t wait until his mark is on my neck and mine is on his so I can show everyone that he is mine.

“No, I haven’t, Alpha. You have though, right?”

“Yes. I’ll warn you, Kennedy, Quirin’s pack is different. His pack is made up of previous rogues, scrappy individuals who are used to fighting for what they have and what they want. You’re a strong woman, Kennedy. It will take a strong woman to make her way in a pack like that.”

“I’ll do my very best, Alpha,” I tell him.

“I’m sure you will,” he says just before his eyes shift to look over my head. A moment later I feel heat at my back and smell his sandalwood scent.

“Are you going to let me dance with my mate, father?”

“I was just warming her up for you, Quirin. Luna Kennedy, I do hope to see you soon.”

“Thank you, Alpha,” I say to him and then turn to my mate.

He looks at me a moment, his eyebrow going up in the arrogant way that he has. Personally, I’ve always found it extremely sexy.

“I didn’t know you danced, Alpha Quirin,” I say as he takes me in his arms.

“I’ve never had anyone I was interested in dancing with before, Little Pup,” he says. I ignore the ‘pup’ part and revel in the thought that he wants to dance with me.

He begins to expertly move me around the floor. “Where did you learn to dance like this, Alpha?” I ask him.

He looks at me. “Quirin, Kennedy. If we’re going to be mated, we should be more familiar, don’t you think?”

I smile at him and even though he doesn’t smile, I watch his eyes soften.

“Where did you learn to dance, Quirin?”

“My mother, mostly. My father said that Alphas needed to know how to dance so we could play the mate game, searching for our mate, finding her, wooing her, all of that.”

“Since you’ve searched for and found me, is this a game to you?” I ask him. “Or are you wooing me?”

“I was never good at playing games, Little Pup. I am who I am. I don’t have time for frivolous things like playing games,” he says and there’s something in his tone, something that makes me think he’s trying to warn me off of him. It won’t work.

“So, you’re wooing me then?” I ask.

He looks down at me and the intense look in his eyes takes my breath away.

“I’m going to make you mine tonight, Kennedy. There will be no going back, no second chances. After tonight, you will be mine forever. You will belong to me. You should think about that before we leave here tonight. Because once my mark is on you, I will never allow you to leave me.”

“Well, once my mark is on you, I’ll never allow you to leave me either. So perhaps you should be the one thinking about things before we leave tonight,” I say indignantly, my tone expressing my aggravation with his words.

I’m rewarded with one of his rare smiles. “I’ve done nothing BUT think about it since Raif called you our mate.”

“You’re questioning if you want me as a mate?” I ask quietly.

His face becomes more serious. “Do you remember what I said to you that night in the garden on Henry’s eighteenth birthday?”

“You said men like you are no good for little pups like me. But I disagree.”

I can see the surprise on his face. I’m not sure if it’s because I remembered or because I disagree with him.

“And do you remember what you said to me after that?” he asks.

“I said I’m not afraid of you.” I remember that night as if it were yesterday. I’ve relived it a thousand times in my mind and in my dreams.

“And you never have been, have you, Little Pup?”

“No.”

“Why is that? Others are terrified of me. Most people won’t even come close enough to speak to me. But not you. Never you. You always made a point of coming over to talk to me, didn’t you?”

“You don’t scare me. You never did,” I tell him honestly.

I’m not sure what he would have said, but at that moment, my father begins tapping a glass. He calls Connor and I to the front of the room, wishing us a happy birthday and announcing my brother’s Alpha ceremony in one week.

“Alpha Quirin, I do hope that you and Kennedy will be here to see her twin take his place as Alpha of the pack,” my father says.

I know of the animosity between my father and my mate. It’s been there all of my life, and I know why the animosity is there. The only difference is the perspective of the man telling the story. I see Quirin ready to decline, but I refuse to miss such a momentous occasion for my brother.

“Of course we’ll be here, father,” I say before Quirin can decline.

“Excellent,” he says, not giving Quirin a chance to overrule me. “Now, your mother and I have gifts for the two of you.”

He turns and my mother joins him, handing him a box before coming to me and handing me a box.

“Oh mother, you didn’t have to,” I say.

“You’re my daughter. And now, it feels even more important since you’re going to be leaving and starting your own life,” she says, with tears in her eyes.

I hug her, long enough that I hear the ohhs and ahhs from the others gathered around. I’m sure it’s about my brother’s watch. I’ve seen it already and I know it cost a fortune. It’s a rare, very expensive watch that my father felt my brother should have.

“Thank you, father. Thank you, mother,” he says, putting the watch on.

“Your turn, Kennedy,” my father says.

I smile, looking over at Quirin. I see something like regret on his face, but I’m not sure why he’d be regretful of whatever my parents got me.

I open the box and it’s a gorgeous diamond necklace. “Oh, it’s so beautiful!” I say.

“Let me put it on you,” my mother says. “I knew it would go perfectly with your dress,” she says. When it’s clasped, I turn and hug her.

“Thank you!” Then I go to my father and hug him as well. “Thank you!”

“Of course. Let’s have some cake!” he says, tucking me against his side as he announces cake to the room.

“Listen, Kennedy. Before you leave, I wanted to tell you ...” my father begins.

“Kennedy, let’s go have some cake and then we need to think about leaving,” Quirin says, coming up behind me. I can feel the tension between the two men, and I can also tell that my father doesn’t want to let me go. He doesn’t trust Quirin to take care of me.

I pull away from my father. There is no choice for me. Quirin has always been the man I’ve wanted. He is my mate. I’m an Alpha wolf and I love a challenge just like any Alpha. I know that things between me and Quirin won’t always be easy, but I know that there is no one else for me.

“Yes, Quirin, let’s go get some cake.” I take his hand and lead him away from my parents.

It’s only about an hour later, when Quirin tells me that I need to go pack my things. “Since we’re apparently coming back in a week, just bring what you need for now. I’ll make plans to get a truck and we can bring everything else back next week when we’re here.”

“Okay,” I say, starting to get nervous. “I won’t take too long.”

I find my mother, and ask her to help me, before heading upstairs to pack up my life. I’m ready to move and leave this pack and my family behind me, ready to start my new life with Quirin, wherever that may lead.