

## Chapter 7

The house was empty when I woke up the next morning. Ezra would be at school by now and my stepfather would be at work. I made myself a coffee and wandered around the house in my pyjamas as I drank it.

Nothing much had changed in the year that I had been away. My stepfather was still a workaholic who balanced his pack and his work responsibilities without even trying to delegate anything. My brother was seeing a new girl but I am sure that it was only as serious as with all the others that he had dated. The house even looked exactly the same as when I left.

I ran my hand over the books in the study as I sipped my coffee. Most of them were stories from when I was younger. I remember sitting with my mom in this room for hours drinking hot chocolate and reading stories together. As I got older I spent less and less time with my mom. I regret that deeply now. I should have appreciated her more before she was taken from me.

'I wonder if any of these books have information about lycan and werewolf hybrids.' Scarlett said.

I thought about it. There was nothing in our bookcase, most of our books were fiction and the rest were on pack history. I had read them all before but the local library might have something on the subject.

I downed the rest of my coffee and ran upstairs to get washed and changed. I slung on a pair of dark jeans and a striped t-shirt. I put my old library cards in one of my pockets and headed out of the door. Half an hour later I was looking at the non-fiction shelves of the local library.

The library had a huge section on werewolves. There were books on history, mythology and biology. There was even a book on how to please your mate in bed but there were no books on lycans. I picked out a few books on werewolf biology and history in the hope that hybrids might be mentioned in them.

'Get that book on pleasing your mate.' Jade suggested.

Did she think that I needed help in that department?

'Not help, but there might be some things you haven't thought of yet.' Jade suggested.

'Maybe it would encourage you to try something a bit more adventurous.' Scarlett said. She showed me an image of me tied to a bed.

'I think I would prefer to tie our mate up.' Jade purred.

Oh my goddess. You both need to shut up, you are giving me a headache.

'No we aren't you are just getting turned on. You can't lie to us, we are in your head.' Scarlett teased.

I could feel myself blushing. They might be right but I wasn't going to pick that book up and read it here. The library might be quiet but it wasn't that quiet. I took the books that I had selected and sat down at one of the tables in the corner of the library to study them.

I sighed. I had been looking at these books for hours and I had learnt nothing about what I was. There was a lot of information about hybrids but it focused solely on when a werewolf has a child with a human before turning them.

I closed the books and looked at my watch. It was almost 4pm. I had been here for most of the day and all I had to eat were some digestive biscuits that I grabbed on the way out of the house. I needed to get back so I could eat something before we had to leave for the party.

When I got home my stepfather was in the kitchen making dinner. He was distracted so I managed to sneak past without him noticing. Moved past the kitchen and dining room into the living room.

Ezra was sitting on the sofa with some girl that I vaguely recognised from the pack. I think she was one of the popular girls from a few years below me. She was beautiful, she had long golden blonde hair and perfect curves.

"Oh Ezzy, why won't you come shopping with me this weekend?" The girl complained.

"Well firstly I don't like shopping and secondly I don't like your friends." Ezra said.

"Sometimes you can be a complete d.ck." The girl said. She stood up from the sofa and stormed out. She didn't even acknowledge me as she walked past.

"You know, women tend not to like it much when you insult their friends." I said.

Ezra shrugged.

"I don't care, it's not like she is my mate." He replied.

"How would you know, you aren't even eighteen yet. Can you imagine how awkward it would be if one of the women you upset turned out to be your mate?" I laughed. Now that really would be karma.

"I don't feel drawn to anyone in the pack so I don't think my mate will be from this pack." He said.

"You never know." I said.

I had heard other people say that they felt drawn to their mate before they turned eighteen but I wasn't sure how much I believed them. Werewolves weren't exactly rational when it came to describing their mates. Besides it wasn't as though everyone instantly got along with their mate the moment they recognised each other.

"Dad got you a dress for tonight." Ezra said.

"He didn't need to, I brought my own." I replied. I blushed, the last thing I had expected was him to buy things for me while I was here.

"Don't be silly." He said. He walked over to the sofa and picked up a see through garment bag. Inside there was a knee length dress. It was dark teal and had a silver coloured waistband.

"Pack colours? Really?" I said, making my annoyance clear.

"Yes, dad bought me a new suit with a shirt and tie in the pack colours." Ezra said. He seemed to be proud to represent the pack in this way.

"Is there any way I can get out of this?" I asked.

"Not a chance, dad is really insistent about this." He said.

I sighed. It was not for them but I would look like I was trying desperately to get the future alpha's attention. I haven't been to one of these parties for a while but from what I remember there was always one of two women who would wear the pack colours and spend the night trying to get the future alpha to look at them.

I don't even know why they would think it would make a difference to how he sees them anyway. As though he would not notice them but then suddenly, he would see them in the pack colours and instantly fall in love.

I didn't like the idea of people thinking I was like that but I guess it didn't matter too much. In a few days I won't be here. I am sure that the girls who used to be my friend would gossip about me plenty then.

"Fine." I said.

I wanted to say more but I could hear my stepfather plating up the food in the next room. Instead I took the dress to my room and headed to the dining room for the most awkward meal of my life.

Ezra and my stepfather were already seated at the table when I got there. I moved quietly over to my place at the table and sat down.

"What happened to that girl? I thought you said she was going to stay for dinner." My stepfather asked.

"I don't think we are going anywhere. She is too emotional, I can't deal with her overreacting all the time." Ezra said.

"I see. So how did school go?" My step father asked.

Ezra started talking about his day. I zoned out, I concentrated on eating my food and thinking about what I needed to do to get through this evening. I was used to them ignoring my presence during dinner so it didn't even bother me anymore.

"Molly, how are you finding college?" My step father asked.

"Erm, ne." I said.

This was different. He has never shown an interest in my life. Well, at least not in the last few years.

"Have you given up on the idea of leaving the pack?" He asked.

How did he even know about that? I didn't tell anyone that I wasn't planning on coming back. I was sure that they wouldn't have let me leave if they thought that I might not come back. I didn't want to run the risk of having to choose between giving up on my education or going rogue, at least not yet.

"I still plan on nishing my degree." I replied, hedging my bets.

"I see, but what about your mate?" He asked.

"What about him?" I asked. Ezra looked at me with amusement, I could tell that he was dying to make some kind of silly comment.

"You might meet him tonight. Then what will you do?" He asked.

"I haven't really given it much thought." I replied. Why was he giving me such a hard time about this. I think I prefer it when he ignores me.

"You will have to drop out, he will need you by his side." He said. His voice was decisive as though the conversation was over and he had beat me in some kind of argument.

"Or maybe he might support me wanting to get an education." I said. I tried to keep my tone level but I was so angry that it was difficult.

I didn't give my stepfather a chance to respond. I stood up and walked away from the table and back up to my room. I was so angry, I felt as though my father had just brought me back here so that he could try to make me quit my degree.

Inviting me back here and making out it was on the orders of the alpha might seem like a lot of effort to go to just to make me come back. Then again I knew what my step father was like. He liked to play games with people and there was no limit to the lengths he would go to get what he wanted.

I remember a few years back when my mom was still the beta, before the attack. A member of his old pack came into town, there was a history between the two of them. I never really found out what had happened in their past but I knew they hated each other.

He had come to our pack to do some kind of business deal between the respective companies the packs owned. I don't know what my stepfather did because my mom kept the details away from this but he basically systematically destroyed his life. A few months later and this man had lost his job, his mate and his pack.

My stepfather really wasn't the kind of person that you wanted to get on the wrong side of. I had known this for a long time, it was part of the reason that I let him and Ezra get away with treating me the way they did. It was also the reason that I was changing into this darn teal dress right now rather than ripping it into a million shreds.

I knew that it was time for the party before my stepfather called for me. I could hear people giggling and gossiping as they passed my house on their way to the alpha's house. I still didn't go down until he called me though.

I was hoping that if I was quiet enough then maybe they would forget that I was here and leave without me. I was a little overdressed for reading romcoms in my bedroom but it still sounded like a much better way to spend the evening than going to this party.

"Come on Molly, it can't seriously take you this long to make yourself look pretty." Ezra shouted from the bottom of the stairs.

I put my book to one side and got up from my bed. I felt a twinge of anxiety as I walked down the stairs. It was only for a few hours, I repeated in my head over and over again in a desperate bid to relax myself.

"Finally. I can't believe that we will be the last pack members to arrive when we literally live next door." Ezra said with a grunt.

"Calm down, we can head out now." I said.

"Great." My stepfather responded. He started heading towards the door. Me and Ezra followed quickly behind.

"You look good in that dress by the way. Aren't you glad you didn't rip it apart." Ezra joked as we walked together behind my stepfather. How did he know that I had thought about doing that, could people read my mind or something?

'No you just have a terrible poker face.' Scarlett said.

Jade had been quiet this evening. I was starting to get worried about her. I could feel her presence in my head and it felt as though she was anxious about something. I hope that there is nothing wrong with my wolf, I didn't have the slightest clue how to make her feel better.

My step father opened the door to the alpha's house in front of me. I was suddenly hit with a smell that was so delicious it made me stop in my tracks.

"MATE." Jade shouted as she pushed her way forward, momentarily taking control. I pushed her back and took a moment to steady myself.

Ezra and my stepfather were looking at me expectantly. They thought that I would run off in search of my mate but I didn't want that. I had no friends in this pack, there was nobody I wanted to be my mate. I felt like I was frozen in place. I didn't want to go in there. I wanted to go home. I took a step back.

My stepfather stepped up to me. He placed one hand on my back and his other hand gripped my arm. He was holding me much too tightly. I could feel the pain running down my arm as his fingers dug into my flesh.

"I know you are not planning on embarrassing us by running from your mate." My stepfather hissed.

He pulled me forward. I could ght him but what would that get me? It would just be delaying the inevitable.

"MINE."

His voice was deep and commanding, it sent pleasurable shivers down my spine. I looked up and came face to face with Grayson Ward.