

## Chapter 3

"Yea, I'm making dinner," Alyssa said into her phone as she spoke to Parker. "Salad and some grilled sh."

She'd always been big on eating healthy. That was thanks to her father who had always placed importance on her looking perfect. She couldn't look perfect if she didn't take care of what was going into her body. Counting calories and healthy eating options had become second nature to Alyssa by now.

Suddenly, the phone fell from her hands as pain washed over Alyssa's body. The iphone clattered to the oor, it's screen shattering. Gasping for air, Alyssa crawled over to her bag. Her vision was starting to go black. Desperately, she reached into her bag and got out a black injection that looked like some sort of epi-pen. Quickly, she lifted up her white t-shirt and injected it roughly into her side. The injection fell from her hands as she fell back onto the oor on her side and waited for the attack to pass. Her hands were clammy and her eyes uttered closed, praying the medicine still worked. A few moments passed and Alyssa opened her eyes in relief. Her dizziness had subsided, her pain was gone and she could see clearly. Sitting up, Alyssa buried her head in her hands. That had been close.

These attacks were getting worse. Thankfully, she hadn't ever had one in front of Parker. She was usually good at picking up on the signs that one was nearing and was able to get to her injection in time. Alyssa sighed, face still in her hands. This was the price she paid for shunning her wolf. She had initially had attacks of pain that had resulted in her fainting a few times. When she'd gone to a doctor, he had told her it was the side effects of not turning. Her wolf had all but disappeared. She couldn't turn now even if she wanted too. And she didn't want too.

Life as a wolf was something Alyssa wanted to forget altogether. But the doctor had told her she would die eventually if she kept this up. Alyssa didn't care. So the doctor had simply given her medicines to help with the pain and try to keep her alive and well for as long as possible. She'd take what she could get. But the last thing Alyssa ever wanted was to go back to a life with a pack. It brought back to many bad memories. Memories of her being misused by an alpha, memories of her being rejected by Xavier, memories of Dylan and memories of her father who had been a tyrant. Memories of her mother's death....

Alyssa shook her head, trying to push all the ugly thoughts out of her mind.

She nally got up and hobbled over to the kitchen to get herself a glass of cold water. If she was going to die, she'd die on her own terms. She wouldn't die a rejected wolf. She'd rather live and die as a celebrated and accomplished human.

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"So, when are you going to nally pick a Luna?" Xavier asked conversationally.

Xavier was the oldest brother, and alpha of the neighboring Crimson Pheonix Pack. After him was Tony, the beta of Crimson Pheonix Pack. Dylan was third in line and the Alpha of the Silver Creek Pack. After Dylan was Kyle who had opted to be a lone wolf and travel the world. Finally, there was Brad. Brad was gamma of the Crimson Pheonix Pack. Janet was the youngest and only sister of the Sinclair brothers. She was 13 now.

Dylan solemnly set down Xavier's one- year-old son , Xander.

"I guess it's time to pick someone," Dylan admitted.

"You don't have too," Xavier said gently. "You have every right to still try and wait it out for your mate but you're 22 and I think you should consider it."

Dylan simply nodded. How was he supposed to tell Xavier that Xavier's girlfriend of two years was his mate? He'd rejected her, ofcourse. Because it was beyond weird to ever think of accepting someone his brother had been with. It made Dylan sick, even thinking about it. What's more, she'd been aboslutely awful to Xavier's mate, Rose. Rose was the best thing that had ever happened to their entire family. She was like the older sister Dylan had never had.

"We need to have a selection ceremony when it's time," Rose said excitedly. "Remember, we promised the elders you'd consider someone of their choosing?"

"But the lands are separated now. I'm not co-ruling the land of our elders with Xavier, so it shouldn't really bother the elders who I take for a Luna now," Dylan pointed out. "Xavier gave me the Silver Creek Pack."

"Don't say I never did you any favors," Xavier drawled with a grin.

"I think we should take their choice into consideration," Rose said evasively, ignoring Xavier's joke. She scooped up her son and gave him a kiss. "They have the ability to trigger the mate bond...it's complicated...and I don't know how they do it. But they would essentially create a mate bond between you and your luna and possibly bestow the same powers I have on her."

"So she could talk to the spirits of the elders of the land as it pertains to the Silver Creek Pack?" Dylan asked in awe.

Rose nodded.

"It's what they told me. It's their gift to you and your pack," Rose said gently. "And considering that your father is one of those spirits willing to bestow those powers, it doesn't take a genius to gure out this is something they are more than happy to do."

Dylan leaned back, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. The idea had merit.

"So guess who's in town?" Rose nally said after a few moments of silence in which Elena, Rose and Xavier's older daughter, and Xander, their younger son, aimlessly played with toys strewn out on the oor.

Xavier groaned. Dylan looked at Rsoe quizzically.

"I told you, don't involve me," Xavier snapped.

"What is with you? It's just dinner," Rose hissed.

"You are f\*\*\*\*g weird," Xavier muttered.

"What's going on?" Dylan queried.

"Alyssa's in town," Rose explained off-handedly.

Dylan's blood ran cold at the mention of her.

"What's that b\*\*\*h doing here?" Dylan couldn't help bur snarl out.

Xavier looked at Dylan in surprise.

"No cursing infront of the kids!" Rose retorted hotly.

Xavier rolled his eyes. "Calm down it's not like--"

"b\*\*\*h!" Elena squealed.

"See!" Rose pointed to Elena accusingly.

"b\*\*\*h b\*\*\*h b\*\*\*h!" Elena exclaimed in elation, responding positively to the way Rose's attention became entirely xated on making sure Elena stopped saying the word.

"No Elena we do not curse," Rose said in a controlled voice.

"b\*\*\*h!" Elena laughed.

"Elena!" Rose couldn't help but bust out.

Elena gave her mother a toothy grin, enjoying Rose's reactions.

"You're a b\*\*\*h!" Elena laughed louder.

"See what you've done now," Rose scolded Dylan as Elena ran out of the sitting room yelling the word to all the omegas working around the mansion.

"I didn't do anything, It's your fault for mentioning that-" Dylan began but stopped short before he said another curse word.

"b\*\*\*h!" Elena yelled gleefully popping her head back into the room.

Rose groaned. Dylan laughed.

"She took the words right out of my mouth," Dylan chortled.

"For the last time, I won't have anyone disrespecting Alyssa." Rose xed her stare on Xavier. "And you know why."

With that, she turned to run after Elena who was now skipping down the hall cursing. Rose stuck her head back into the room.

"She'll be here tomorrow night for dinner, I already invited her." And with that, Rose was gone.

Xavier groaned again.

"Rose has got to be the only mate that doesn't mind inviting her mate's ex over for dinner," Xavier muttered darkly.

"Why is she inviting her over tomorrow for dinner?" Dylan asked aghast.

"Oh-" Xavier snorted. "They used to meet up for coffee every now and then while Rose was in New York. It's surreal. It's like they're actually....friends now."

"And you don't care?" Dylan asked sharply. "Isn't it awkward?"

"Not really," Xavier admitted, looking down brievely. He looked at Dylan. "Rose had her suspicions but conrmed them later on when she met up with Alyssa in New York. Apparently Alyssa had a huge hand in helping to hide Rose's pregnancy from her crazy dad when he kidnapped Rose. Rose is thankful for Alyssa's help during the entire debacle with Alyssa's father." Xavier shrugged. "Plus, Alyssa did save my life when her dad tried to kill me."

"But it's still weird since you two are exes," Dylan insisted.

Xavier shrugged.

"Honestly, it doesn't bother me all that much. Rose can do what she wants. And whatever I had with Alyssa was a complete joke compared to what I have with Rose." Xavier's face sobered. "I guess I don't think too much about the past. But I denitely don't want to have dinner with her when I could be doing something else. I could care less if Alyssa is in town but Rose is bent on having her over before she leaves to go to New York again." Xavier rolled his eyes. "She's got this crazy idea that Alyssa might actually help us with that case we're ling for our lands. I think it's a long shot."

"Well good luck with dinner tomorrow," Dylan muttered darkly. "Personally, I wouldn't trust her as far as I could throw her. Much less ask her for any help with my pack."

"Are you forgetting that she's the one that got you the antidote to the poison you drank?" Xavier asked with an arched eyebrow. "You owe her one too."

Dylan winced at the reminder, but Xavier was right. Alyssa had helped save his life. But he wouldn't admit it out loud. Whatever she'd done, she'd done to assauge her own guilt. Not out of the kindness of her heart.

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