

Chapter five

Cassie's POV

I ran at full speed, faster than I ever had before, faster than I knew any of the other wolves in the pack could run. I was unstoppable and the feeling of relief washed over me as I noticed the others behind me, falling back, not being able to catch up.

‘Oh my god, we did it!’

‘No, Tatiana, that was all you,’ Amara cheered. ‘Now, we need to find shelter somewhere further away. We can’t keep running forever and we can’t run much further as it will drain us completely and leave us vulnerable.’

I realized as she spoke, that I knew nothing about being a wolf. I wasn’t even sure that I had a wolf until this very moment, a moment that, by the way, had scared the s**t out of me.

‘I have so many questions.’

‘I know you do,’ she sighed. ‘And I will answer as many as I can later when we are safe.’

I didn’t slow down until I reached between the far-off mountains where I knew I’d be able to hide and rest at least for the night before I needed to continue my journey. I had to get further away from the pack lands, so far away that I knew that they wouldn’t find me even without my cloaking power. I wouldn’t be able to keep my cloak up while fleeing. It took too much strength, too much power, and energy, the energy I didn’t have much left of.

I walked around the mountain, nally letting my legs rest a bit as I scouted for what could be a cave or a small room between cliffs, and luckily for me, I found one without having to search half of the mountain first.

I quickly did a small search to see if it was safe enough to stay there and to my luck it did.

I was completely drained of all energy; my legs could barely keep me up and my paws hurt.

‘How do I shift back?’ I asked. ‘This is a safe place so I can shift back, right?’

‘It is, and you should. All you need to do is focus and think of yourself as a human. Picture it in your mind and it should happen on its own.’

I did as I was told, but nothing happened. No matter how much I imagined having two legs or how much I focused on it, I stayed a wolf.

‘What is going on?’ I asked, getting worried. ‘Why can’t I shift?’

‘Sometimes when you’ve been through trauma it can happen, but it’s not very common. Maybe you just need some rest?’

‘So, you tell me that you don’t know why I can’t shift back?’

‘I am afraid so.’

So, I was stuck as a wolf and for how long I did not know, and to top it all off I had lost everything within seconds. Everything I had ever believed, every rule I had ever lived by, was a lie and all of that came out all at once. My parents weren’t even my parents, my pack... It wasn’t mine either. I didn’t belong there. I didn’t belong anywhere. I was on my own, for the first time, I really was on my own and despite the fact that I was used to feeling alone, I had never felt more alone than I did at that very moment and that scared me.

‘Amara?’

‘I am here.’

‘How come that you came now and not on my eighteenth birthday as the other wolves did with everyone else?’ I asked.

I had a feeling that I already knew why, considering that my entire life was a lie, then why wouldn’t my birthday be too, but I still had to ask. She was the only one of us who knew of the truth.

‘I did,’ she said and confirmed my suspicion. ‘Today is your birthday, Tatiana.’

My birthday... I was officially eighteen and officially without a pack.

‘Are we what they call rogues?’

‘Both yes and no. We left a pack yes, but not our pack. We have our pack waiting for us.’

‘And you know where this pack is?’

‘No, but we can find it. Together. Now get some sleep. I will answer the rest of your questions to my best abilities tomorrow.’

Together.

I had Amara. No matter how much I just lost, I gained her and that was something better. The only thing I missed already was Kathleen...

Kathleen...

She had begged me to stay, she even tried to hunt me down before the guards and Chad came along. She tried to stop me and yet she let me go. She was way faster than her brother, I knew that, and she knew that, so if anyone were to catch up to me or track me down, it would be her, and yet I was here alone with no other wolf in sight. She knew I had to go, she knew why, and so she let me.

But that didn’t stop me from missing her, my heart feeling empty and my brain memorizing everything about her. All my life she had been there for me no matter what I went through. From my father’s beatings to the bullying from the others and to the lack of a mother figure, she was there through it all helping me, guiding me, and pushing me to push myself out of my shell. Had it not been for her I wouldn’t have had the courage to flee nor to now stand on my own two feet, or four paws, in the middle of nowhere.

If I wished to see one person now, it was her, but I knew that that wouldn’t happen unless I returned or was captured and dragged all the way back.

I laid back on the ground in one of the darkest corners I could possibly find as I looked out through the opening to see the stars that shined ever so bright in the sky.

I hadn’t realized that I had fallen asleep before I was awoken by the sound of a deep rumbling growl echoing through the cave. I was within a split second up on my paws looking around in utter terror, not knowing what, or more like who, I would face. I couldn’t see anything besides a shadow of a figure as it dashed around me, making sure not to stand still long enough for me to see it.

I was still weak and tired, my senses were out of control and my legs still had trouble keeping me up, but I fought the feeling of defeat, knowing well enough that if I showed weakness now, I’d be dead within minutes. The chances of this being another rogue were huge because who else in their right mind would be here at this time of day, and rogues were known not to show mercy. Not to those in packs nor to other rogues like themselves.

Even though my eyes tried their best to keep up with its constant moving around, I lost track of it. I backed up two steps as I scouted the room slowly and just as my eyes darted to the exit, the wolf came ying from above as it charged at me from a part of the cliff that had a few outstanding rocks and knocked me to the ground. The second my body collided with the hard surface underneath us, I blacked out. The last thing I heard was the sound of a fading growl.