

The Last Spirit Wolf

by Elena Norwood

Chapter 28

-Vera-

“Are you ready?”

I’m vaguely staring out the window of my room. The day is unusually gloomy, like my mood. The clouds in the sky threaten rain, but we can’t wait any longer. We have to leave today.

Someone’s hand on my shoulder brings me back to reality.

It’s Noah.

“Hey, are you ok?” His voice is laced with concern.

The last two days have been hard. I’ve said my goodbyes to everyone in the pack; even people I didn’t really know came to embrace me and wish me safe travels.

I put my hand on his.

“Yeah,” I smile, “let’s go.”

He takes my hand and my duffel bag, swinging it over his shoulder. It’s very early, most of the pack members are still asleep, making my departure a little easier.

We reach the bottom of the stairs and walk to the entrance where Sofia and Alex are waiting with the babies.

I go to them and hug each one tightly, then I k*ss the twins on the forehead.

“Take this, it’s yours.” Sofia says to me and hands me the spear with which I killed the chimera.

She had a sheath made for it so that I could carry it on my back. It fits perfectly.

“Safe travels, sister.” She hugs me tightly one last time, and we head out.

No one is saying a word. Eli, Lucas, and Noah packed light. Only a backpack prepared by Sofia with essentials; food, hygiene, basic meds, etc. Noah was carrying my duffel bag and had decided to put his stuff in there too. The walk would take us about two to three days to complete, depending on the weather.

After walking all morning in silence, we decided to stop for lunch and gauge the weather. There was a small clearing that allowed enough light to seep through so that it didn't feel like night time.

“It's probably going to rain, there's a cave close by, we should settle in for the rest of the day.” I break the silence. All three were unpacking their lunches. In fact, Lucas was already nose deep in his sandwich.

Noah hands me my lunch. He's been extra attentive these past few days, probably perceiving how sad I had become.

“The clouds seem to be clearing. We continue.” Eli said as he took a bite of the sandwich.

I turned to Noah looking for support, but he shrugs his shoulders.

“I'm sorry, Vera. The Council is expecting us. If we delay ourselves any further, it will look questionable.”

I start eating my sandwich without any appetite. They're wrong but I don't even have the emotional capacity right now to fight with them.

When we're done, we resume the walk.

Some six hours later, we reach the end of the forest, the end of wolf territory... the end of my home. My feet feel heavy. My heart feels heavy. I have to fight the urge to cry as I feel myself slipping away from the forest and my family. Noah holds my hand and offers me a reassuring smile. This whole process is easier with him by my side, but it's still one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

As we are about to step beyond the tree line, I feel a gentle drop of rain on my cheek. I extend my hand to make sure I'm not imagining things, and several raindrops fall on my hand. It is starting to rain, just as I predicted.

Eli turns to me, looking at me as if this is my fault. I simply shrug my shoulders, I'm not sure how an 'I told you so' would play out here.

“We're close to the camp, let's wait it out there.”

We soon have to run to the camp, the rain heavily pouring down on us. We make it there and I notice it's the same camp the forest had shown me when the Lycans had just shown up.

"This is where they all died." I whisper. Only Noah catches it but seems to ignore it.

He guides me to a big tent, proudly displaying at its head the Lycan flag. It is a full moon, and a huge Lycan beast howling in the middle of it. We enter and there are bunker beds lined inside. Lucas and Eli each pick one like it's second nature, but Noah isn't following suit.

"Come, this is mine." He says as he guides me to a second tent within the big tent.

What I walk into is more like a master bedroom than a tent. There is a king size bed in the middle, a desk to the left side, and countless books to the right side. There are maps, reports, targets, and what seem to be chess pieces on the large desk.

"I don't understand... why is this yours and Eli and Lucas are out there in the little beds."

He smiles at me.

"Because in here, I'm the boss.

I stare at him baffled.

"I'm the commander of this unit... what's left of it, anyway."

He turns grim at the reality check. We are standing on the grounds where so many of his comrades died.

A long silence follows. I feel the urge to comfort him, but I myself don't feel up for it.

"Let's not dwell," he breaks out of his train of thought, "you must be tired."

He digs into the duffel bag, pulling out one of his t-shirts and hands it to me. My clothes are wet from the rain earlier, which only seems to be getting more severe as time passes. I take the shirt from him and he graciously turns around.

Most mates wouldn't turn around, most mates would feel entitled to me, but Noah doesn't; I can't help but thank the Moon Goddess for that. It's not that I don't want him, it's just that right now, I don't have the energy for anything. It feels like I'm in mourning.

When I'm done, I do the same so that he can change, although something tells me he wouldn't have a problem with me watching him undress.

With my back turned to him, I go to the wall with all the books and browse them.

There is everything from war tactics, to folk tales, to history books. I reach for one that seemed very old and read the cover. It's about Lycan history. Perfect, it will give me something to do.

"Vera," I turn around to face Noah, now in a dry set of clothes, "You're free to anything you find. I have to go talk to Eli and Lucas about what the Council expects from us tomorrow."

I nod my head, already invested in the book I'm going to fall asleep to.

I read the book on the bed for perhaps an hour until the rain has picked up even further and I can't keep my eyes open. I settle in, getting comfortable in the middle of the massive bed, and focus on the sound of the rain.

I can't help but think that such unusually heavy rain is the forest itself, crying for my departure.