

Chapter 3

-Vera-

Vera? Vera, is that you? What are you doing here?

...Auntie Eleanor?

Honey, you shouldn't be here. I thought we would never see you again.

I don't... Where is 'here'? I can't see anything.

Don't worry darling, I'll send you back.

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I wake up at the crack of dawn the next day feeling incredibly rested. It is so comfortable underneath the sheets that I dare not even open my eyes. What was I just dreaming about? I seem to have forgotten already.

It's still raining outside and even though I could go to the gym and use a treadmill for my morning run, I really don't want to move. I decide I deserve to sleep after everything that happened yesterday but just as I'm about to doze off,

Vera? Vera get up. We need to talk.

Sofia mind links me, sensing I'm awake. I go radio silent on her.

Girl! If you don't get your ass into my office in the next ten minutes, I'm going in there and dragging you here myself!

I still don't answer.

If I go into labor because of the physical exertion, it's on you.

I'm angry she would play that card on me. I grumble and get up to my bathroom to wash my teeth and face. I won't even bother changing for her, even though it's the same clothes I left the hospital with and the same clothes I slept in. I brush my hair, put on my tennis shoes and head out.

The pack house is deserted this early in the morning. I come across a few omegas who are busying themselves with breakfast, greet them good morning and make my way to the Alpha's office.

I knock softly on the ancient wooden door. Sofia commands me inside and I'm greeted by our Beta, Thomas, her mate, Alex, and the rude lycan from last night. My stoic expression gives nothing away, not even how I'm immediately irritated that he's here. I bow my head in respect at our Alpha and place my hands behind my back, understanding this isn't a social call.

"Vera, I'm sorry to call you in so early, but we have matters to discuss." I wait patiently as she gathers her thoughts. "You were right, something was...off... yesterday, but it wasn't on our side of the border. As the scouts got closer and closer to the border limit, they started smelling blood, lots of it. They merely observed and came back to me. But... ten of them... ten of our wolves hadn't come back and it was getting late. We were about to send a hunting party to search for them until Eric mind linked me, telling me they were coming in hot with hurt wolves and hurt lycans."

The next one to speak is Thomas, who oversees the hunting parties,

"According to Eric and the other wolves, they came across three lycans very close to our territory, fighting ...something..." he glances at the lycan and continues, "whatever it was, it chased them into our territory and as our wolves defended our border from...it...it also started attacking them. As you saw, some were hurt pretty bad, but none were killed -"

"Your wolves saved us, and I am forever grateful for your assistance. I only wish I could be of more help deciphering what the hell was attacking us in the first place." Apparently, the brute can speak and not insult us. We all look at him and Sofia speaks next, breaking the awkward silence that had followed,

"Vera, did the lycan you operate on say anything about this? About what it might've been?" I take a moment to go through the events of last night in my head, thinking hard on anything anyone could've said that could shed light on this.

"No, sorry. He came in unconscious and his two friends collapsed next to his bed."

"But he did whisper something to you, I saw as much." I didn't realize this lycan was also awake when I was treating my patient.

"Nothing that could help us now, really."

"What did he whisper?" Asks Sofia curiously.

"Mate."

Everyone is staring at me in utter confusion and the lycan narrows his eyes. I feel like this is a foot in the mouth moment and frown.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean any offense, did something happen to his mate?” I ask, not understanding their reactions.

“He doesn’t have a mate,” the lycan speaks through gritted teeth. I’m about to reply but Sofia mind links me once again,

Was he referring to you?

How the hell would I know?

Did you feel... anything? When you touched him? When you looked at him?

Realization dawns on me. The only time I touched him, with bare hands, I did feel a current beneath my fingertips. Sofia and I just stare at each other, understanding crossing both of our faces. Alex clears his throat.

“Well, that’s not very useful,” says Sofia, deep in thought. After a few seconds of silence, she gives me a look I know very well, “Vera could you...ask?”

They all stare at her, not understanding what she’s asking of me. The lycan scoffs probably thinking she means for me to ask his friend. I smile gently at her and bow my head, she returns my smile and I take my leave. Sofia is my best friend, and she has seen first-hand how connected I am to nature. She’s asking me to ask the forest.

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The rain has turned into a drizzle as I run towards the edge of the forest. Once I’m about half a mile in, I bare my feet and crouch down; one hand goes into the soil, the other open palm onto the deepest-rooted tree I could find. I breathe in, every hair on my body standing to attention. My nostrils flare once again as I turn my head on the direction the wind is blowing. I start getting flashes, images, emotions, all conveyed through the wind and the soil. I dig deeper, wanting more, wanting answers.

Suddenly, I see it all too clearly. Something invisible, made obvious only through faint shadows and prints on the ground, viciously attacking a big group of lycans; crushing, scratching, biting, gruesomely tearing into flesh, and helpless lycans whimpering in pain. There were many more, but only three made it to us. I see many lycans dead on the ground, and others taking their last breaths without even knowing what happened. The grass is littered with bodies, extremities, and so, so much blood.

I stand up abruptly, not wanting to see more. I had begun to cry through the vision and now I can't stop. I feel their pain as if it was my own. I hug myself, trying to regain some warmth after what I just saw. I'm shaking uncontrollably and my breaths are shallow. What beast could do so much damage? To lycans of all creatures?

After a few minutes, I compose myself enough to concentrate on Sofia,

Sofia

Vera, did you get anything?

Yes, but you're not going to like it.