

The Last Spirit Wolf

by Elena Norwood

Chapter 39

Vera-

It's very early the next morning, I'm awake before the sun is up and cocooned by Noah, who's still very much asleep and passively breathing behind me. His large arm surrounds me, cradling me to him. This has become our usual sleeping position since leaving the Pack House; not that I'm complaining.

I got a chance to talk to all of Noah's friends last night. Most of them were curious to meet me as Lucas had already told to them everything that had gone down at the Pack House. Others were curious just to meet the fated mate of the great warrior that is Noah.

I had underestimated the regard with which Noah is held here. Even in a casual setting like the dinner, all of the men, and even the women, in the group showed an evident level of respect. It made my heart swell with pride.

The only one who wasn't as welcoming was Harriet. I caught her giving me the stink eye a couple of times when I was talking to the group. I wasn't surprised though; I can't expect everyone to accept me. Still, I wonder what her deal is.

I stay like this, contemplating what my life has become, my back to Noah's chest. Despite all the adversities, I have not once regretted my decision to come with him.

I feel Noah shift behind me, a sign that he's waking up. He tightens his hold on me as he stretches out his legs.

"Hmmm...I have a headache," he says, grunting.

I smile at this. For once, I feel some sense of normalcy. We had dinner with friends last night and Noah is waking up hungover. However, I know this will be short-lived.

"When do you leave?" I ask, still without facing him.

He stays silent for a moment.

“I was planning on telling you about that today.”

“Don’t be mad, Lucas told me already.”

I turn to face him, with his arm still around me.

“Why is King Alistair sending you out there, leaving the castle without its best warrior?”

He again stays silent for a while. He’s regarding me with a very serious expression.

“Don’t sugar coat this, Noah.” Everyone here has a bad habit of this.

“I don’t know. But everyone else finds it odd too.”

I can’t help but think the King is trying to get rid of Noah, I just don’t understand why.

“I think he wants to take you out, Noah. The way he looked at you at the trial, there was so much hatred so much... contempt. Did you guys ever have issues before?”

“Never, I’ve only seen that man a few times in my life.”

We stay quiet. Both trying to decipher what his real intentions might be.

“Vera, while I’m gone, you have to be careful. All of the guys last night promised to protect you and accompany you wherever you want. I know this isn’t ideal, and it’s not fair to you, but if he’s after me, he will also be after you.”

I silently nod, but my head is somewhere else. Something here doesn’t add up, and I’m determined to find out what it is. I can’t shake this feeling that Noah is in great danger and the sooner I find out what is really going on, the better.

Noah kisses my forehead and draws me out of my trance.

“I have to get ready; I need to meet with the rest of the scouting party.”

“Can I come with you?”

My question takes him by surprise, but his face softens.

“Of course you can.”

He kisses my forehead again and we begin getting ready.

We enter the training grounds of the castle, a place I hadn't been to before. It's an open courtyard with all kinds of training cycles, weapons, obstacle courses, and fighting matts; it even has a boxing ring in the middle of it.

As we make our way to the scouting party, I'm surprised to find that none of the Lycans turn to look at me, as they have before. Maybe it's because I'm with Noah and no one wants their asses handed to them today.

We reach the table where the scouting party waits for Noah; it isn't made up of Lycans I recognize, meaning it's none of Noah's friends. In fact, they don't even acknowledge me. It's better this way; as they try to ignore me, I can take my time to scrutinize each and every one of them.

The one thing that strikes me first, is that they don't regard Noah with the same level of respect that I have seen from the others. In fact, they look at him almost defiantly, though their words are nothing if not formal.

As Noah begins explaining their route on a map, the five Lycans seem almost dismissive; something that I'm sure doesn't go unnoticed by Noah.

"We will meet in two hours to depart. Make the necessary preparations. You are all dismissed."

He turns to me, noticing the look of worry on my face.

"Come, let's get something to eat before I head out."

"How long will you be gone for?"

"Honestly? It's quite a bit of land we have to scout, I expect it will take us about a week or two."

"Noah, I have a bad feeling about this... I don't know if you've... picked up... on how my intuition works but..."

"You worry too much," he smiles gently at me, "I've known and trained with these guys for years, they're excellent fighters, if we encounter any trouble, we'll be able to take care of it. Come."

He takes my hand and we make our way to the banquet hall. I barely have a stomach for food, and I have a feeling this will last until Noah is comes home safely.

I ponder on this the entire time we are eating. He also seems to be lost in his thoughts...

Then, the time comes for the scouting party to depart.

I'm at the castle's main gates, saying goodbye to Noah. He kisses me lightly on the lips, before once again reassuring me that everything will be ok. I half smile at him.

He jogs over to where the scouting party is waiting for him and turns to me one last time, smiling my way.

What he fails to notice however, is that one of the Lycans accompanying him also turned to look at me one last time, a nasty smirk on his face.