

Chapter 9

Casen

My hands tremble as Eziah drives back up the mountain. I refused to drive him, insisting he ring his mother to deal with this situation because, with his temper this bad, he'd wipe out their entire pack, even those who are innocent.

I have never seen him so angry before, and I have seen him angry, but this, this is something else. Glancing in the back seat, I see his mate is passed out with a woolen blanket covering her naked body. She looks like she's hanging on by a thread.

I still can't wrap my head around the fact we found her. What's more, I can't believe I ran her over and I am still alive! Leave it to me to nearly kill the girl after years of searching for her. As Eziah navigates the windy roads, I grab my phone and turn the screen on. I open up my call log and dial Rose's number.

It rings in my ear before going to voicemail, and I sigh, tossing it back on the floor between my feet. Her voicemail is the only time I hear her voice. It has been that way for the last four years, and not having any link to her anymore, not even via the pack link, makes me lonely.

"Fuck!" Eziah growls. "Grab her!" he orders me. I move to do as he asks, on impulse under his command. I growl at him. I hate when he commands me. It feels unnatural given that I'm rogue. Commands were reserved for Betas and Gammas. I know it shouldn't affect me at all, but since he is part Demi-God, thanks to his mother, he can technically order anyone.

That has caused some issues for Kat, especially when we first started looking for his mate. He would command packs, and it started wars until she ordered him not to do it. Though no one can resist his commands, when it came to meeting packs, he had to rely on other gifts.

“What’s wrong?” I ask, trying to hold her and not expose the poor girl.

“I drove past the turnoff; I need to find somewhere to turn around.”

“Where? You’ll have to go to the top,” I tell him. The road is far too narrow for two passing cars, so it would be risky to do a u-turn with all these blind corners.

“There!” Eziah says, and I glance over my shoulder. “What?” my voice comes out a squeak. *He’s going to fucking kill us.* Eziah nearly loses control of the wheel as he points to the sharp corner coming up.

“It has a barrier,” he says.

“And a sheer fucking drop!” I screech at him when he suddenly speeds up. “And that is not a barrier! That is chicken mesh! That won’t stop the car!”

“It’ll be fine!” he snaps, and I see his eyes flicker while mine widen in horror. My wolf presses against my skin. “We’re going to die! Glad it’s you, not me!”

“We are the same person, dimwit!”

“Yeah, but you will be the one crushed into a pretzel while I’m safe in your head!” Zyan, my wolf, snarls at me. I shake my head.

“Hold her!” Eziah yells at me as if I wasn’t already. He rips the handbrake up, and I scream like a banshee as I am tossed into him sideways.

The tires screech, making my teeth hurt as he rips the steering wheel to the side. I pray that was just a fart when all I see is the night sky out the rear window before the car slams against the side of the mountain with a loud crash.

“See plenty of room!” Eziah says before I am tossed into the dash.

Meanwhile, he hits the accelerator. “I said to hold her!” he growls.

I scramble forward, my legs caught awkwardly in the seat belt. Reaching over, I grab her limp body that is leaning over and push her dangling body back onto the seat, the seatbelt the only thing stopping her from falling into the foot well.

“Fuck! Did you fart?”

“I hope that’s all it was!” I tell him.

“Filthy bastard!” he snarls like I didn’t just have the millionth near-death experience since being on this trip with him. Turning back to the front, my heart is still racing in my chest when Eziah turns onto the dirt road. His aura is menacing as he drives up the long road, dust and dirt flying everywhere when he starts to slow down.

“Eziah, this is a bad idea!” I tell him, and he growls at me. He stops the car and tosses the door open.

“Wait here. If she wakes, mindlink me, and I will leave my link to you open!” He slams the door, and I glance in the back.

“Eziah!” I snarl, tossing my door open. However, when I climb out, he is already pulling his clothes off, dumping them on the ground as he walks. I curse, shaking my head when I see him toss the last article of clothing he has left, his shirt. He shifts, darting into the trees.

“This isn’t going to end well,” Zyan tells me, and I have to agree, there won’t be anything left of this pack. His mother is going to kill him if he wipes the lot of them out.

Grabbing his clothes, I turn to walk back to the car when I stop seeing movement inside the car. His mate sits up; I watch her for a second as she stares at her hands, then her head whips from side to side before her eyes widen on me when she peers out the front window. I put my hands up in

surrender as I approach her. Her chest rises and falls heavily as she starts yanking on the doors, trying to get out. I move to the back door when she jumps over the seats into the front.

“I won’t hurt you!” I tell her. But the words are barely out of my mouth when she shifts.

A somewhat small but determined white wolf smashes straight through the window, making it burst and attack me. All I see is white fur when I feel her teeth tear into my shoulder. Zyan snarls, also shifting when she takes off into the woods.

“Eziah! Problem!”

“Fucking busy!”

“She escaped!” I yell through the link when I start to give chase. My shoulder is throbbing, burning violently when Zyan whimpers as pain slivers through me. My vision blurs, and Zyan stumbles as he is forced to shift back, leaving me naked in the dirt.

“Eziah...” I choke as I try to get up. My entire arm feels like it is on fire, and I stagger forward, looking for her white wolf.

“Eziah...” I call through the link.

“On my way!”

“No, I think... I...” I choke, collapsing on my knees as I peer over at my shoulder, which is turning black.

“Casen! What’s going on?”

“She bit me...” my hand clamps over my shoulder, and blue tendrils sliver down my arms. I throw up and struggle to catch my breath.

“Gemini!” I rasp out.

“If she were a Gemini, you’d be dead already.”

“She’s fucking something!” I choke out. *“I’m not healing.”*

*“Hang on!”*Eziah replies, and my surroundings spin violently, and the next thing I see is the ground coming toward my face.

Chapter 10

Eziah

I'm barely three minutes from reaching the packhouse when Casen screams through the mindlink that she escaped. The makeshift town is nearly in view when Malachi stops. His head whips from side to side as he fights with himself whether to go destroy the ones who hurt her or go after our runaway mate. Satish's pack will know I am here by now, and our element of surprise would now be gone.

Yet when I feel the mindlink crackling like static and the forced tether sizzles, panic slivers through us.

"Casen! What's going on?" I demand.

"She bit me..." his voice cuts out, yet he sounds like he is in a tremendous amount of pain.

"Gemini!" he rasps out, and I barely catch it before the link drops again. Malachi takes off back through the forest toward him, and I hear the howls ring out as Satish's pack also darts into the trees, looking for the unwelcome intruder.

"If she were a Gemini, you'd be dead already," I tell him.

"She's fucking something!" Casen panics, his voice growing weaker through the mindlink.

"Malachi faster!" I yell at him.

"I'm not healing," Casen tells me. Yet if she were like Marabella, we wouldn't be having this conversation, and wouldn't I have picked up on it when I found her?

“Hang on!” I tell him, urging Malachi faster. The sounds of paws on dirt and the snapping of twigs tell me Satish is on his way to me, but for now, I need to get to Casen and then find my mate. Malachi won’t lose her again, and I won’t be able to live with myself if I lose her. I didn’t give up for four years. Now that I finally have her, I’ll be damned if I lose her again.

Low branches hit us as we tear up the forest floor, shrubs whipping us when I see the headlights of the car breaking through the trees. Malachi skids along the dirt road as we break out of the woods, claws scratching dirt as we try to slow. Malachi drops his head, nose sniffing for Calen’s scent, and he follows his nose. Her scent is faint, and so is his as we follow it into the woods in the opposite direction from which we were going.

Snarls and fighting rip out into the woods, and Malachi groans. I have to fight him to stop him from going after her. Casen is close. Picking up Casen’s scent, we find him face down, sprawled in the dirt. Blue veins cover his naked flesh, foam comes out of his mouth as he gasps for air, his body twitching.

“What the fuck!” I whisper in horror. Her bite mark on his shoulder is black as coal. He’s right. She is poisonous, but this isn’t a Gemini bite. Those are very distinctive, but she is something else, something I’ve never seen before.

We hear a loud yelp in the distance, Malachi shifts, wanting to get to our mate. I am thrown on top of Casen. My hands grip his face and I snarl, not exactly wanting to pucker up for this big brute.

“Hurry up!” Malachi snarls, and I growl, pressing my lips to Casen’s head.

Whatever she did to him slivers through me, and moves in waves as I take it from him.

It tastes rancid in the back of my throat, like... I can't explain it. It isn't darkness, but it isn't light. It's not anything I have ever felt. It's lukewarm, yet cold and warm. *What in the world?*

Within seconds, Casen jerks upright, clutching his throat. He breathes heavily and wipes his mouth before twisting and throwing up on the ground. Blue liquid gushes from him as he speaks or tries to.

"White wolf, Blue eyes," he rasps, lifting a shaking hand to the side. "She went that way." Malachi doesn't wait to hear more before he shoves forward, forcing the shift and following the sounds of fighting and her addictive scent wafts to us stronger, along with the scent of her blood.

The trees blur into the shadows as we race toward her, sliding under low branches and jumping fallen logs when we run into some clearing on a cliff edge. Wolves surround her as they back her up, her hind legs slipping on the loose rock. She barely claws her way back to safety as seven wolves close in. Yet none are Alpha Satish, that much is clear by their size and nonexistent auras. As I lunge after her, I am suddenly jumped from behind.

Claws rake through our fur, and Malachi pivots as our eyes land on Alpha Satish. My skin burns violently where his claws hooked in. Malachi snarls, and Satish's huge black wolf digs his claws into the earth, his teeth snapping and dripping with blue venom when I hear her whimper behind me, and pain shoots up my ribs.

"What in the fuck!" I hiss at Malachi, confused by what I'm seeing.

His wolf charges at us, and Malachi snarls as we clash, teeth tearing into hard flesh, and claws slashing. Fur goes everywhere when I hear her scream behind me. I know she has shifted, yet my focus is on Satish's *beast* because that is the only word I can conjure. He should be no match for me, yet it feels like fighting a werewolf on steroids, his flesh almost impenetrable when I see gray fur rush past out of the corner of my eye.

Zyan races past just as Satish's wolf tears into our hind leg. Malachi pivots, and I feel the poison flood my bloodstream before it sizzles out. Whatever he is, his bite has a minuscule effect on me, and Malachi tears into him when we are hit from the side. Malachi and I go skidding toward the cliff edge I hadn't seen we were being pushed toward.

Malachi sinks his claws into the rocks, sparks zapping as they carve through the rock. With all his might, he scrambles back to the top. Satish is gone, and all I can see is Casen is fighting three wolves, having taken down two, while I face off with this new sandy-colored one.

Hearing a bloodcurdling scream, I notice the seventh wolf dragging my mate's naked, thrashing body back into the treeline. Malachi sees red and lunges at the wolf's throat, his sharp canines bite through his flesh easily as my magic slips out, and he harnesses it, something he's never been able to do before. His canines grow longer, and he shakes his head, the wolf's bones crunching like chicken bones.

"Malachi, he's dead!" I scream at him, trying to take back control. He's turned savage and rabid. He doesn't stop until the wolf's fur is completely red, his head no longer attached to its body, and the ground beneath our feet drenched in blood turning it into mud. Forcing control, Malachi fights me but surrenders when I remind him of Temperance, his mate, bringing him back to his senses.

Getting to my feet, I see another wolf drop as Casen takes it down.

"Go get your mate. I got these assholes!" he snarls through the link.

"I am!" I growl. I know Casen can hold his own and doesn't need me holding his hand. Zyan charges at the last one while I run for the trees. Her frantic cries echo off the trees, the scent of her blood thick in the air as I frantically search for her. The sound of flesh on flesh makes me stiffen when I hear her whimper, my eyes honing in on the thick brush in the gully below.

My heart nearly stops, only then for it to pump harder, boiling the blood in my veins and turning to lava when I see him slap her again. She tries to crawl out from under him, but he rips her back, pulling her ass into the air.

I don't even recognize my voice as the command leaves me. The sound is ice-cold, detached.

“Freeze!”

The man turns rigid, and my hands fist at my sides, knowing what he had been attempting to do to her. My magic ripples under my skin like a live wire, zapping with energy.

“Stand up!”

He does as I walk down the slope toward him. My mate scrambles away from him, her eyes going to me, yet I'm stuck in this rage-fueled trance. One that not even Malachi can fight. The same trance-like state I was stuck in when I attacked my father. Only it isn't Malachi this time. It is me.

“Remove it!” I snarl. My voice sends a shiver up my spine, and the man blinks, his hands shaking as he grabs the appendage between his legs.

“You won't be needing it where you're going. I said remove it...”