

Mistake - 18

After the CT scan, I was back in the small exam room, waiting for the results, when the door suddenly opened. "Hey Mom—" a guy said. The lights came on, sending a sharp stab of pain through my eyes.

"Lights off," Kara demanded.

"Well hello, gorgeous."

"Lights off," she repeated and I could practically hear her eyes rolling.

I groaned as I sat up. "Oh, you have company," he said, and I looked at him with squinted eyes. He leaned on the counter, grinning a smug smirk. He looked about my age and height with a broad football player type of build. "So, what should I call you besides beautiful?"

Not sure what to say, I stared at him. Kara laughed. "Really, Dean?"

Dean? This was Ryder's brother Dean? No way.

"Do you honestly think that whole whatever you call it is going to charm the pants off of her?" Kara asked, crossing her arms.

"Well, doesn't have to be pants. Her Shirt is fine by me. I'm not picky," he said, winking at me. I just stared at him, feeling too shocked to be vocal.

Kara sighed and glanced at the ceiling in what looked like a silent prayer. "Save it, Mr. Smooth. This is Brook." I glanced at her, then back to him, surprised by the sudden disappointment on his face.

"Figures," he said, his voice echoing the disappointment in his expression.





I frowned. Was I missing something?

Emily walked back into the room. As soon as she saw Dean, she said, "Save it. That's Brook."

With a sigh, he said, "So I've been told. It's not fair! Ryder leaves nothing for me."

"Excuse me," I said, appalled. I didn't know what they were talking about, but I didn't like it.

"Oh damn," Dean said with a laugh. "He didn't tell her. She has no idea, does she?"

His mom shot him a dark glare. "Hush," she told him with that Mom tone that they only use when either pissed off or had enough of their kids' crap.

"He? He who?" I asked. "I have no idea about what?"

Dean started to say something but his Mom shot him another dark look. She plastered a smile on her face. "This is something you will need to discuss with Ryder."

Looks like I was going to stay confused then. Ryder was still in Black Mountain, so I doubted we were going to be talking soon. Especially since I still wanted to get a lot more distance between me and that pack.

"Now," Emily said, bringing my attention back to her. "I've got good news and bad news. The good news is I didn't see any bruising on your liver, kidneys, and other organs. As bad as it is, it's all muscular."

"Wait, it's that bad?" Dean asked, his expression wavering between shock and anger. The only answer he got was another glare from his



mom.

"Now to the bad news," she continued. "As I'm sure you know, you've got a concussion. I didn't see any swelling or bleeding, which is great news, but I'm still worried about your symptoms. I'm afraid you're in no condition to be on your own."

My stomach sank to my knees. I didn't know why I was hoping for a different response. The other doctor had said as much before. "So what now?" Would she send me back? Emily said she wouldn't, but did she mean it?

"There are a couple of ways we can do this. You can stay here at the hospital for your observation period, but by human law, I must notify your parents and by pack law I will have to notify Alpha Ryan too."

It took me a moment to realize she was speaking about Mike's dad. When Harry or Mom talked about him, he was the alpha. No one usually said his name. "I can't," I told her, unable to hide my fear of the idea of going back. "I can't," I said, a little stronger. Determination replaced my fear. I wouldn't go back. Lifting my chin, I met her eyes purposefully. For some reason, she smiled. It only made me more determined. "I won't go back. I would rather walk out of here right now, die on the side of the road than go back there!"

"Dramatic much," Dean said, and I turned my glare on him, but he seemed unfazed. "Mom wasn't finished. Chillax a bit there."

"Dean, not helping," she told him then focused back on me. "But he is right. I wasn't finished. The other option is you come with us to the pack house, where I can observe you from home. I will inform your parents, but not their alpha."



"See, much better," Dean said, winking at me. His mother sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose.

I wasn't sure if I considered it better. I was trying to get away from werewolves, not be surrounded by them even more, but... "I don't have a choice, do I?"

Dean walked over to me and slung his arm over my shoulder, causing me to flinch. "Of course you do," he said, with yet another wink and smirk. "But staying with me is the only smart one."

"You mean us, right Dean," Emily said, shaking her head. "And will you please behave? You're not helping what I imagine is the already poor view Brook has of us."

"What?" he said, looking upset. "What'd I say? Geez, can't a guy breathe? Can you believe them, Brookie?" Despite the last thing I wanted to do was smile. I found the edge of my mouth tilting upward.

God, I should've followed my gut. This was definitely out of the frying pan and into the fire kind of situation. "I can't go back there so I guess I'm going with you."

"Yes," Dean said, pumping his fist as if his school just won the championship, earning another look of exasperation from his mom. Kara shook her head with muttered curses.

Back in Kara's truck, she drove us to Ryder's house. My foot bounced against the floor of the truck to dispel some of the nervous energy I couldn't get out. As I looked out the window, a scenic small town passed. It looked like something right out of a t.v. show. A few of the people, still in their yards despite it getting dark fast, waved to Kara, who waved back. It all seemed too normal, too friendly, and too unreal.



After about fifteen minutes, a large house appeared over a small hill. It was big enough to be a mansion. "That's their house?" I said, unable to hide my surprise.

"It's good to be the alpha," Kara said with a smirk and a laugh as she turned off the car and got out. More seriously, she said, "It's not just their house. It's the pack house."

"Pack house?" I asked, seeing Emily and her son park behind Kara's truck.

"A place for all the pack to meet, hang out, or stay in times of emergency or need," Kara explained. "I guess I should warn you, there might be a bit of a crowd inside, but they're all good people."

"Yes, they are," Emily said, joining us. "Come on, let's get you settled."

My stomach knotted, and I forced myself to follow them into the house. We stopped at the entrance, which just screamed rich with its white and gold marble... everything. "Dean, go tell your father we're here. Kara, can you find me the number to Brook's parents please?"

"Sure thing," Dean said to his mom, then sent me a smirk. "Catch ya later."

When they both left, Emily led me up the huge curving staircase to the second floor. Kara wasn't kidding. There were werewolves everywhere, and all of them watched as we passed. Some tried to hide it while others didn't. More than a few were whispering as they stared. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but I had a good idea. It seemed even here they heard about Missy Mistake, the girl who never should have been born.

Ryder's mother stopped at one of the doors. "Here is your room," she



said, opening the door and stepping inside. It was a big room. Almost double what I had at home. "There are your things." She pointed to my suitcase and backpack at the foot of the bed, then to a door to my left. "There is the bathroom. I have no doubt you'd like to shower and get some rest. In about an hour, I'll come check up on you."

I nodded, not moving from the door.

"This isn't a prison cell, Brook. You're not our prisoner. The door won't slam shut behind you and lock. You're here for observation and rest." Hesitating for a moment, I took a step inside. Ryder's mom offered me a smile. "This is a safe place. Okay, try to believe me on that one."

Again I nodded, "I'll try."

"That's all I can ask," she said and left, then turned back to me. "Well, that and if you shower, don't use shampoo. Just rinse with water and do not submerge your head underwater, if it's a bath."

"Okay, got it."

"Great, see you in a bit," she said and left me alone.

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