

Chapter 12

Damon

I'm torn away from the sight of the little wolf, helpless and splayed across my bed wearing my clothes, by a sudden mind-link from Joshua. "Damon. *Oliver James* is outside your office. *He's* demanding to *see his sister.*"

My wolf growls at the disruption to our little moment.

Demanding? Who the hell does he think he is? I'm the alpha here. If anyone is doing any demanding, it'll be me.

When I reach my office, Oliver James is standing outside. When he sees me walking toward the office door, he comes striding toward me. "I want to **see** my sis..."

I cut him off as I grab him by the throat and pin him against the wood-paneled wall.

"You don't get to demand anything, you worthless piece of shit," I growl, "not after what you did."

I release my grip, and he drops to the floor. I didn't even use **my** alpha voice, and he's already baring his neck in submission. "Please," he begs, "you don't understand..."

I'm still fuming as I glare at him. "What don't I understand? That you knocked Ember down without a thought for her well-being? That despite her fragile state of mind, you didn't even give her a second glance once you smelled your mate?"

Oliver looks down at the floor and shakes his head. I watch as he swallows. I'm not sure if it's because he's nervous or because I've damaged his throat, but it looks labored.

"Ember's different...special," he whispers. He looks up, his eyes glistening. Perhaps he is sorry for **what** he did after **all**.

"*Not* sorry enough," my wolf growls.

Oliver doesn't avert his eyes this time. "Please, promise me you won't hurt her. She can't heal herself. Not like a normal wolf can."

I frown. Oliver doesn't know that his sister's wolf is suppressed by wolfsbane. He's not talking about that. He's talking as though her wolf can't heal her at all. How is that possible? "Explain," I growl.

He glances around nervously. He clearly doesn't want to talk about this out in the open.

Walking to my office door, I open it and stand to the side. "In," I growl.

He scrambles to his feet and walks into the office, making sure to keep his head down. I follow him in and close the door behind me.

Before he can say anything. I point at the chair that faces my desk. "Sit and explain."

I walk around the desk, then realize **that** he's waiting for me to sit before he does. At least he is showing me proper respect.

Once we're both sitting, he holds his face in his hands before running his fingers through his hair. "Our mother," he begins, but I interrupt him.

"I don't care about your mother, I just care...want to know about Ember."

He sighs. "I need to explain about our mother...to help you understand about Ember."

He looks up expectantly, so I nod for him to continue.

"Our mother was a rogue. She wandered **into** the Craven Moon Pack's territory and **my** father found her. He realized she was his mate, so the alpha spared her life.

"I was born shortly after they sealed their mate bond. A couple of years later, Ember was born. My mother was a little like Ember. She was different. Small, and weak..."

"How dare he call her weak?" my wolf growls **in** my mind.

I ignore him and instead, pour a glass of water and pass it to Oliver. It's not new information that Ember is small and weak, even if my wolf wants to deny it.

Oliver takes a sip of the water and continues. "My father was the first to notice. How he would never tire when my mother was with him.

"One day, a group of rogues ambushed them. My mother was no fighter, but my father defeated them all with ease. He was strong, but not strong enough to defeat that many rogues single-handedly -until that day.

“He didn’t say anything, but he was suspicious that somehow my mother was involved in his sudden show of strength. He did some research and then confronted my mother. She admitted to him that she was a conduit.”

I raise my eyebrows and stare at him.

I’ve heard of conduits, but they’re incredibly rare—and incredibly sought-after. Conduits are wolves who channel the power of others. It’s both a gift and a curse, because they can only use their power to help others and not themselves.

If this story is going where I think, that means Ember is a conduit as well. But if that **was** the case, then why on earth did Conrad Stone let her go?

“I don’t have to tell you that our old alpha isn’t a good man,” Oliver continues.

“My father tried to keep my mother’s gift a secret, especially after Ember was born. He found out that a conduit is only ever female, and if she passes the gift on, it will only ever be passed to a daughter.”

Oliver sighs and runs his fingers through his hair once again, a nervous tic I’ve noticed him.

“Alpha Stone found out about my mother’s gift, and wanted to use her power to bolster his own strength so he could attack a neighboring pack. When she refused, he killed her and blamed it rogues.”

I stand up, pushing my chair back with a clatter. It takes all of my control to keep my wolf inside. He wants blood. Specifically, Alpha **Conrad** Stone's blood.

Oliver looks up at me and shakes his head, seeming to guess the direction of my thoughts. "He doesn't know about Ember. He would think she was of no use anyway, except perhaps to brood an army of conduits. Her gift is different to my mother's."

I frown and stare at him. "What is her gift? I question through gritted teeth.

He swallows nervously. "She has the gift of healing, which means she can't heal herself, only others That's why I'm asking you...no, begging you, please don't hurt her.

"I know you have a reputation, but you didn't kill her when she challenged you, and you helped her when she collapsed. I just need to know you'll keep her safe..."

I grip the edge of the table. She's upstairs now, not able to heal from the brand I inflicted on her. Even if she had her wolf, she wouldn't be able to heal herself. Why didn't I see this?

"Leave," I growl, "go to your mate."

"You won't..." he begins.

"Your sister is safe," I snap. "Now go."

I watch him as he scuttles to the door. Just as he opens it, he turns to look at me.

"Thank you," he whispers before he literally runs out of the door.

“I told you.” my wolf scowls. *“She’s special, and she belongs to us. She can heal an. Only we can protect her.”*

As much as I hate to admit it. I fear that this time he is probably right. If Ember can heal my wife’s shattered heart, then she does indeed belong to us.