

The Howling Heart's Forgiveness

Chapter 5

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“You did the right thing Son.” My father, Alpha Valor, claps me on the shoulder as I watch my Uncle Gale carry Brynlee – my Brynlee – away. My face burns from her claw marks, the pain reminding me that I hurt her all because I was forced to. Judging from how the blood continues to drip down my face, I know these marks will leave a scar. A scar that will match the pain in my heart forever.

The pack begins to disperse now that the show is over, some whispering about how the pack will change when my Aunt and Uncle leave. Aunt Asteria was furious when she learned what we had just done to Brynlee before denouncing her role in the pack and breaking all ties with us. She told me I will regret losing Brynlee and will realize that mindlessly listening to my father will lead me to a life of misery. I asked her if Brynlee had a Mate Beater’s mark like me, but she told me that Brynlee attacked me after I rejected her and there for will not bear the make before she left chasing after Uncle Gale. She is my father’s older sister and should have been the rightful Alpha, but pack law states only males can ascend as Alpha. My Aunt chose Brynlee over my father and I, and I can’t blame her. She is Brynlee’s Godmother.

Brynlee. She is my Goddess given Mate and I hurt her. I rejected her like my father ordered me to do while he secretly sent Tanya and her goons to attack Brynlee that still slept in my room. It was a set-up, one he made and kept me out of the loop knowing I would protest right away.

I thought he would be happy I found my Mate when I burst into his office as soon as I woke up at eight in the morning. I wanted to watch her sleep. Wanted to hold my Brynlee close and tell her I love her. Instead I got up, got dressed as quiet as I could, then made my way to my father’s office to talk to him like I promised her. To convince my father to break the betrothal and let me be with Brynlee. He was in the middle of talking to Tanya and I sent her out. I did not want her to know Brynlee was my mate just yet.

When she left the room, I explained why I disappeared last night. That Brynlee and I had found out we were Mates and that I wanted to end the arranged marriage that was made ten years ago. But my father was still set on me marrying Tanya. He told me to hit Brynlee if - when - she brings up us being Mates during her interrogation in front of the pack. I was shocked and asked what interrogation when my father told me he just told Tanya to attack Brynlee.

I stood from my seat, ready to run and protect my mate when my father gave an Alpha command and forced me to sit down. I begged and pleaded with my father to let Brynlee go. That she did not deserved to be hurt after her parents gave their lives to protect us, but he reminded me of that stupid marriage arrangement. That if I did not marry Tanya, everyone in Pine Moon would die - including Brynlee.

“I am going to my room.” I mumble out, shrugging my father’s hand off of me. I can’t be near him right now. I can feel the anger and hate I have for this man coursing through my blood. If I stay near him any longer, I will attack him and I know I will end up losing as I have yet to match his strength.

“You did what you had to do, Rune. Had you ended things between Tanya and you, her father would make good on his promise to destroy Pine Moon and take our land all because I killed his mate.” My father states. It is a warning to me. Reminding me that the reason why I am being forced to marry Tanya is because he killed her mother. Giving a final glare to my father, I make my way inside the pack house and move towards the stairs. I need to get away from everyone and calm the rage and pain inside me before I attack a pack member unprovoked.

“Rune.” A sickly sweet voice calls out to me as I begin to climb the stairs of the pack house. Turning to look over my shoulder, I see Tanya standing in the doorway of the sitting room, a smirk on her bright red lips. The bruise on her face is gone, fully healed. It is clear that Brynlee did not hit her. Had she hit Tanya, Tanya would be in the infirmary recuperating.

Brynlee on the other hand had been covered in wounds that stunk of wolfsbane and the clothes I set out for her had been torn. Even while my father accused her of hurting Tanya, her wounds still leaked blood while Tanya goaded on the trial. I can feel my anger rising again as I look at the whore that ruined my life. Everything is always her fault when it comes to something bad happening.

“Is that bitch gone?” She asks, her smirk growing as she tries to look seductive in front of me. All I feel is disgust and rage at the disrespect she shows to my Mate. Within seconds I am in front of her, my hand squeezing her throat as I glare at her with hatred. She has always hated Brynlee. Always found ways to antagonize her all because I was her friend. The worst part is other than in the training ring, Brynlee could not fight back against Tanya without facing unjust punishment from my father.

The only reason I have to worry about Tanya’s father attacking Pine Moon is because of Tanya herself. When she was nine and I was eleven, my father and I visited Blood Claws to sign a treaty of alliance. We would have become each other’s allies and helped in times of war. But Tanya saw me at the welcome dinner and became obsessed with me. As the only daughter to the strongest pack, Tanya was spoiled to the point that if she wanted something, she got it.

She told her mother she wanted to keep me as her playmate and make me fall in love with her and her mother said she would make it happen. That night I was kidnapped by the Luna of Blood Claws and taken to an abandoned shack. My father came to realize I was missing and tracked my scent where he attacked those holding me hostage, including Tanya’s mother.

She died just as Alpha Jonnah Cross rushed into the shack with his daughter in hand. They watched my father kill her mother and that is when Alpha Jonnah gave the ultimatum. Force me to marry his daughter Tanya at age twenty-one when I became Alpha of Pine Moon or watch everyone in Pine Moon die. My father said he would take what happened to the council, but Alpha Jonnah laughed. He pointed out that we were on his land. That we only had an additional

ten people and they were at the pack house. No one would believe my father that Alpha Jonnah's Mate kidnapped me. But with her dead body and my father's scent on her wounds, they would believe my father attacked and killed her for no reason if Alpha Jonnah stated so. Everything happened because of this bitch I want to strangle to death.

"She is gone no thanks to you." I growl out, my face inches from Tanya's as I think about the event that led us here. She always got her way since she arrived at Pine Moon ten years ago. What ever she wanted, my father would give her without hesitation because the threat of Pine Moon being destroyed loomed over us. The only people to appose Tanya over the years are either dead or leaving by tonight.

"We may be engaged because of my father killing your mother but remember this, it was your fault she died." I remind the bitch as she struggles to breath. I can feel the rage wanting to take control, feel the need to destroy the object ruining my chance of being with my Mate. But I can't allow this to happen. I need to get away from her before I accidentally kill Tanya and Blood Claws comes for revenge.

"I will not tolerate your disrespect to my Goddess given Mate no matter what." I snarl out, allowing her to feel the rage fueling my blood and relishing as her face turns a ghostly white out of fear.

"I am only marrying you to prevent your father from attacking Pine Moon. Now behave yourself or I will kill you personally." With this warning, I throw Tanya to the floor, enjoying in her sorry state as she coughs and gasps for breath. She crossed a line today and she knows it by attacking my Brynlee. If she takes one more step out of line, I will kill her without a moments notice.

"You will behave as my Luna or else. Understood Tanya." I state, watching her closely.

"Yes Lu-" I cut her off with a growl. The days of her using my name is gone. She harmed Brynlee. She has caused every bad thing in my life. My father says I have to marry her and I will. But I will not treat her with respect from here on out.

"Yes Alpha." Tanya grinds out and I scoff in satisfaction. With Tanya put in her place, I march up the stairs to my room. I need space and time alone.

Slamming the door open, I am finally able to calm down the rage that is simmering inside me. Only a select few are allowed in my room and I am thankful for that. My eyes instantly zero in on the still messy bed, Brynlee's scent lingering in the air mixed with a bit of Tanya's and her friends. I hate that her scent has encroached on my space. Hate that it mixes with my Brynlee's. She knows she is not allowed in here and neither are her friends but I can't do anything to them. My father ordered her to provoke Brynlee.

My face continues to throb from the wounds still oozing blood and I make a detour to my bathroom. I do not want to get blood on the bed that smells like my sweet Brynlee. I wince when the light turns on, my eyes adjusting from my dark bedroom to the bright fluorescent light of the

bathroom. I know the wounds Brynlee left are well deserved as I begin to clean the jagged skin. I slapped her and sent her sprawling to the cold ground. Listened to her scream from the pain of being injured because of me, her Mate, broke my heart. I know my father says this is for the good of the pack but looking at the dark burgundy mark of a Mate Beater on my neck makes me wonder if I did the right thing. Brynlee is a Beta wolf with Alpha blood. A wolf of strong blood that the Goddess chose for me for a reason.

Growling with frustration I decide to give up on trying to clean the wounds and take a shower to calm down. The warm water can flow over the claw marks and clean them better than I can with a cloth.

Stepping into my shower, I notice Brynlee's scent from when I made love to her in here. Her sweet moans echo inside my mind as if she was still here in my arms. I close my eyes as the water runs over me, letting the memories of taking her first in here. I had accidentally tackled her in the mud when the Mate Bond clicked into place and tried to make amends by letting her clean up in the shower but I needed to feel her around me. She begged me to wait until we were clean but I wanted her, needed her, right then and there. She was so tight and pure, a virgin unlike myself, and I relished knowing I could claim her as mine first and forever.

The water begins to run cold and I realize I stood in my shower fantasising about my Mate without cleaning myself properly. Letting out a groan, I quickly scrub my skin and step out of the shower, wrapping a towel around my waist. I know that until I have to mark and mate Tanya that my mind will wander to my night with Brynlee. I will have to make Tanya mine in a few months time and I fight every instinct that tells me to go run and beg Brynlee to take me back.

Taking a deep breath, I turn and face my reflection in the mirror once more. The wounds have stopped bleeding and have started to slowly scab over, but they are not started healing. I accept this, knowing this is my punishment for what I did to Brynlee for the good of the pack.

With a resolve to not regret my decision, I exit my bathroom only to be blind sided when a fist connects to my face, sending me sprawling onto the floor. Feeling the rage bubble inside me once more at the notion a pack mate would attack me, their future Alpha, I stand to my feet, fist raised as I am ready to take my anger on my attacker but stop mid swing. Before me is Caspian Kane, mine and Brynlee's best friend. I already hurt Brynlee, I can't hurt Caspian.

"I get off of fucking patrol only to find out Brynlee is your Mate and that you rejected her!" He screams in my face, his rage boiling over. My fist lowers as I take in his accusation and spot the pieces of paper in his other hand. They smell like Brynlee.

"What are those?" I ask through clenched teeth, glaring at the wolf before me. I know he only punched me because I hurt her, but I am still pissed off. I am his future Alpha and he has no right attacking me even if I deserved the punch.

"None of your God damned business Rune. Just know that Brynlee wrote everything in here, including the fact your fucking father banished her as a Rogue." I growl at his disrespect but he growls back, the walls of the room shaking from our anger. Caspian - like Brynlee - is a Beta

wolf with Alpha Blood mixed in. In terms of power, he is my equal just like Brynlee is. Caspian is the only other wolf that can keep me in check and will now become my future Beta with Brynlee gone.

“You are a moron for listening to your father and rejecting the woman that could have made our pack strong. You know this.” He continues, his words stinging.

“What did you expect me to do? Refuse to marry Tanya and allow her father to attack our pack?” I ask back, watching Caspian stare at me with disappointment. This look, the disappointment my friend has for me, hurts more than his punch did.

“Yes.” Caspian finally answers sadly.

“Brynlee would have trained and protected our pack from Alpha Jonnah Cross.” His voice is quiet but his words are filled with honesty.

“You don’t know that. I did what I have to do.” I scoff back, crossing my arms over my chest.

“No Rune. You did what your father told you to do and I hope you don’t regret that.” With his final words said, Caspian turns on his heels and marches out of my room, slamming the door when he leaves.

Left alone in my room with Brynlee’s scent invading me, I crumble onto my bed and pull the pillow she slept on into my arms.

I won’t regret what I did to her. It had to be done to protect Pine Moon. So why does my heart feel so broken.