

Chapter 14

Tess

Cody barely touches his dinner as he's lost in his thoughts. "Cody." He turns his head to face me. We decided to stay in the hotel room tonight so we're on the couch eating. "Do you want to call and check on her?" He slightly shakes his head. "They said they would call if anything changes."

I reach out to take his hand. "Is there anything I can do?" I'm so worried about Willow, but I know there's nothing I can do from here. I've never had to take care of a sick child, only tots getting their wolf. Fevers are only the first part of getting a wolf. They usually last anywhere from three to five days before the change begins and the wolf comes out. The younger tots tend to have shorter fevers. I guess none of that is relevant in this case, a child with a fever is a completely different situation.

My fever lasted a whole six days since I was such a late bloomer. I remember my mom placing wet cloths on my head. She had the magic touch and her hands always felt so soothing as she rubbed my back and arms. My dad was there watching over me. He stood in the doorway or paced my room. He always protected me. I wasn't scared because they were with me the whole time. Goddess, Willow needs her daddy right now.

"You're already doing more than you know just by being here for me." He pushes his food away and sits back against the sofa. "I'm going to take a shower then turn in." Cody kisses my cheek then pushes himself off of the sofa. I keep my eyes on him while he grabs his things before disappearing into the bathroom.

Goddess, I feel so helpless. I can only imagine how Cody feels right now. At least I can be here for him and drive while he rests from his fight. I drive like a devil, so I hope to get him to his daughter sooner than if he were to drive.

I clean up our dinner then rummage through my bag. I haven't checked my phone in a while, honestly, I'm not used to having it. I have to plug it in and let it charge for a minute before turning it on. Chimes begin going off one after another. I scroll through my messages and grunt. Indy is dying to know how Vegas is. Silas is wondering if he needs to come get me. Leslie is concerned that I've been away for so long. The only messages I'm really concerned about aren't there. Dad, what the fuck? He promised he would keep me informed about the Griffin situation, but his texts are only advice about training that I already know. I send replies to everyone except Indy. I call her instead. "You dirty twat! Do you have any idea how bored I've been? I get it, it's Vegas and you needed a break, but you could've at least invited me to tag along. I need a damned away too." I roll my eyes. "Listen, cunt face. I'm not about to separate you from your mate for more than a day, I'm not a fucking idiot. Besides I'm not really on vacation. Have you talked to Griffin at all?"

"Why would I talk to that asshole? What do you mean it's not a vacation? You're in Vegas, hello!"

"Has my dad said anything to you?"

"He's been pretty tight-lipped. He hasn't said anything to anyone, even my dad. All he said was the stress of the elders pressing a mating was getting to you, so you decided to blow off some steam in Vegas." Whoa, that's pretty impressive. Indy can usually get my dad to break whenever he's keeping one of my secrets "Well..."

"Oh, damn. There is so much more to this. Isn't there." Indy knows me better than almost anyone. But I know her too. I know that she can't keep a secret for shit, especially one this big. "There is, but I'm not saying

anything right now." Cody opens the bathroom door wearing his shorts. His body is so delicious. I want to run my fingers through his chest hair. "I gotta go." "Hell no! You..." I hang up before she breaks into a tirade, never taking my eyes off my sexy mate.

Cody looks like he needs me right now so I get to my feet and hold him around his waist. "Are you feeling any better?" My cheek caresses the soft hairs of his chest.

He rests his head on my shoulder. "Not really. I'm thinking about just packing up and leaving now instead of tomorrow."

I pull back to look in his face. "What about your fight?"

He pulls me back so he can run his nose up my neck. "Willow is more important. I don't even know why I'm here anyway." He rests his head so his nose is in the crook of my neck and he inhales.

I have one arm resting across his shoulder blades, the other is absentmindedly running my fingernails in his hair. "I'm here for you. Whatever you decide is what we'll do. If you want to leave, well go, but it'll affect your status as a fighter. Sponsors won't want to sign you."

Cody stands straight then runs his hands down his face. "I really don't care about sponsors. I'm under contract with the UFC. This is my last fight. If I back out now, I'm not only out 30 grand, but they can sue me for breach of contract. Fuck, I can't do anything tonight. I'm screwed either way." He lets out a deep breath of resolve. "I guess I have to stay."

"Then we stay and leave tomorrow as planned. I just have to make sure your head is in the right place during the fight so you don't get injured." I grab his phone and put it in his hand. "Call her. Even if there's no change, it'll keep you from worrying as much."

He shakes his head. "I'll be worrying until I have her in my arms." He says, but dials anyway.

"Cody, I was just about to call. Willow is awake right now and wants to talk to you. I'll put you on speaker." A sweet matronly voice answers.

"Willow. Your daddy is on the phone." "Daddy?"

"Hi, sunshine." Cody's shoulders visibly relax.

"Daddy, I don't feel good." Her voice sounds soft and tired. My poor baby.

"I know, sweetheart. You get some rest, okay? Your grandma and grandpa will take care of you. I'll be there as soon as I can."

"mhmm."

"She fell asleep, Cody. I think she just wanted to hear your voice. Don't you worry about her, I'll be with her every minute until you get here. You have to keep your head for that fight. You won't be any good to Willow if you're too banged up to see her." She's got a point. I hope he listens.

"Thanks, Naomi. My fight is at 4:15, otherwise don't hesitate to call whenever she asks for me. I'll have my phone on."

"Of course. Good night, Cody. You get your rest too, you hear?" I like this woman.

"Yes, ma'am. Goodnight." Cody reluctantly hangs up then lets out a sigh of relief. "I feel a little better after hearing her voice. She sounds so tired though."

"That's to be expected. But the more rest she gets, the faster she'll recover." Cody softly smiles with a slight nod then sets his phone in the charger. "You rest too. I'm going to take a quick shower, then I'll join you." I tell him.

"I hope it's quick. I won't be able to sleep if I'm not holding you." He gives me a wink as he pulls down the bed covers.

Cody has spoken to Willow twice already, which is good because he's not as distracted. We're in the locker room waiting our turn for the fights. It's loud and chaotic but organized. "He telegraphs. Watch his hips." I point out as we watch "The Piston's" most recent fight on Cody's phone.

"Do I telegraph?" He asks.

"A little, but you've gotten better since working with my dad. We made it a point to clean up your moves when we were working with you. Cody nods but focuses his attention on the screen. Holt whistles at me, grabbing my attention. "I gotta go. Try to stay loose." I kiss his cheek, but he grabs my hand then pulls me to him.

"I'll see you out there. I'll be watching." He holds my cheek to kiss me deeply. He lets me go then smacks my ass as I turn to join Holt. I snap my head back to glare at Cody. He winks at me with that sexy grin on his face. I just shake my head and rush to catch up with Holt.

"So when you going to tell him?" Holt whispers as soon as I reach his side.

He holds out his hands and I begin taping him up. "I have no idea. I'm more concerned with how to tell him."

"You know, I've never heard of a wolf mating a human, but it makes me wonder how many more of our kind haven't found their mate because they were only looking among wolves. I for one am keeping my eyes peeled. I don't care if she's wolf, human, or sasquatch, I'll take whoever the Goddess throws at me." I finish taping him then fit his gloves on.

"That's easy for you to say, you're male. You're the next Alpha. I'm only appeasing the elders by claiming the role of Luna. No one in my pack can best me, but that doesn't matter to them because I'm female. My mate is the next Alpha. They want me to choose one of the males in my pack." I get a glob of Vaseline to smear on his face.

"What? What about James?" Holt is flabbergasted.

I peek over at my mate. He has his phone to his ear and he's smiling his dad's smile. "They don't know about him yet. Only my dad knows. If Cody can win the favor of the pack, I think there might be a chance."

"You're going to have a hell of a time convincing the council to allow a human into your pack, let alone become the Alpha."

"Don't I know it?" Holt's name is called to line up for his entrance. "Stay calm and loose, watch your footing. I'll be in your corner."

"I got this, sweetheart." The announcer calls Holt's name and we walk out to the octagon. It's even louder and more chaotic with the crowd cheering and the music blaring. I almost want to cover my ears, but I refrain. Holt's opponent is called out and I study his movements as he makes his way down to the octagon.

"His ankle is taped." I notice.

"That's his good leg. He does that to psych his opponents out. I've watched every one of his fights. He's a strong hitter, but he's not a grappler. I plan on getting him to submit." I agree that would be the best scenario. I pull Holt's robe away then he enters the cage. He turns to give me a wink, then throws his hands up to get the crowd's attention.

I shake my head "Showboat." Even over the noise in the arena, Holt still hears me. I know because he gives me a smirk. His opponent enters the cage and his focus is on Holt.