

Chapter 2

Jerry is at the table so I give him a hug. "Elder Morris," I say in greeting. "Luna Denton." He responds patting my back. Technically I'm the Luna since my mom died and my dad never took a second mate, but I'm not actually the Luna according to the Council until my mate takes over the pack. Eye roll. The Council is made up of 15 Elders from across the United States and Canada. Grand Pappy is on that council and spends a lot of time in Montana. So much so, he has a cabin up there and is there most of the time. He's 68 but looks to be in his early 50's. What can I say, werewolves have good genes. He'll be back for the elder's meeting in three weeks. I'm sure he'll have my back too... at least I hope. Grand Pappy loves the hell out of me, but for one thing; I'm not a boy. He's not misogynistic, but he is old-fashioned.

I pull back from Jerry. "Can I get you a plate?"

"Oh hell no. I'm not that old yet." Jerry gets to his feet and pulls me along with him to the food table. "Tell me, Tess. Are you dating anyone?"

I shake my head. "Not really."

He gets a contemplative look. "You should get out more. Maybe visit other packs. You can't just wait for your mate to fall into your lap."

My thoughts return to my conversation with my dad. "You're right he wont. He's definitely not in our pack. The few single males in our pack leave little to choose from. Honestly, though, I don't want to take a choice mate. I would hate for another female to lose out on her true mate."

His knowing eyes look over me and he smirks. "I agree. Choice mates are never as strong of a match anyway. Being an alpha pair, you finding your true mate would be best."

I smile at him then kiss his cheek. "An excellent point." We load our plates then I find Indy and Justin while Jerry goes back to his seat. After dinner, we clean up then head out.

I leave my SUV with Dad and Justin drives us to the resort where we normally congregate when someone needs to get plastered. Tonight it's me. Silas and Parker are already here with Avery. Avery is looking hot in a cute dress and heels. Silas is eyeing her pretty hard until he spots me. "Hey, killer." He says and pulls me in for a hug and a sneaky kiss just behind my ear. He knows that spot makes me shudder. Silas is hot. His broad shoulders and perfect face would make any girl want to ride it. His blond hair is soft and kind of shaggy, but combed to the right with the sides short.

"Silas, not tonight. I'm not playing sloppy seconds to Mavis." I pull out of his embrace. His growl rumbles softly, but I can hear it. He throws his head back and grunts.

Prentis waves to me from the other side of the bar. He's here with some of his friends and his face is still a little bruised. "Is that your handiwork?" Silas points with his beer. I know Prentis can hear us, even over the thumping music. Prentis is Silas' brother. I like the kid, he's a really hard worker.

I steal Silas' bottle and take a drink. "Sure is. He's getting better though." I give Prentis a wink then hand Silas back his beer. "Are you upset with me?"

He downs the rest of the beer then pulls me onto the dance floor. "Never. I'm mad at myself. I never should've been with her. You and Indy both warned me away countless times. I was an idiot."

"I would say so. Indy said you didn't fight Griffin?" I cock my brow.

Silas shrugs his shoulder. "It wasn't worth it. Griffin knows I can take him and I'm sure Indy told you why I was with her to begin with."

"It didn't work," I tell him bluntly. "You of all people know perfectly well that I want to find my mate."

"It was worth a shot. You know you're the only one worth giving up a true mate for."

I roll my eyes and shake my head at his stupidity. "I'm through playing around. No matter how good you are with your mouth. It's time I focus on finding my mate."

Indy and Avery join us on the dance floor with Justin and Parker, ending any more conversation regarding "us." I dance between Silas, Parker, and Indy. Silas gets hold of my waist. "You want to get some air with me? We need to talk about this." He says just loud enough to hear.

I lean into him. "I just got here and I'm having fun. Besides, I'm in need of way more alcohol."

Silas laughs then grabs my hand to drag me to the bar. "Six shots." He orders and we go shot for shot before ordering more and a beer chaser.

I peer out over the dance floor and catch Avery eyeing Silas and I barely keep my jaw from dropping. Huh. Avery actually wants Silas? I never would've guessed. The music changes up and the gang joins us at the bar. I order more shots then lean in to whisper. "I'm not the one that's going home with you tonight. Maybe take Avery for a spin. That would really piss off Mavis."

Silas groans from being shot down. "I don't care about getting back at Mavis."

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"Whatever, but Avery has eyes for you tonight," I whisper so only he can hear.

"I've never really thought about her, but she is pretty hot."

I laugh it off and grab Parker, Indy, and Justin to dance.

"Did you just turn Silas down?" Indy asks over the music.

"Yeah. Avery has goo-goo eyes for him. Look."

"That's not like you. The two of you have always been back up for each other." Indy peeks toward the bar and hums. "They're cute together."

I nod then sidle up to Parker, he's also pretty hot. Let's be honest, werewolves are fit, there are very few unattractive males. Parker is more moral than the rest of us. He's not one into flings or one-night stands, but that doesn't stop him from gripping my hips and dancing with me. I glance at Silas and Avery. They're chatting it up, leaning into each other's space.

Indy and Parker both load us with shots and pretty soon I'm feeling pretty tipsy. Prentis asks for a dance, then I head back to Indy. I throw my arms around her and pull her out to dance. After a while, she drags me back to the bar for more shots and beer. The bar gets more crowded as the night progresses, thank the Goddess, but most of the patrons are human.

A fight between two humans breaks out just behind me. We ignore them until one shoves into my back and I spill my beer down my top. "Son of a bitch. Seriously?" I set what's left of my beer down and turn to the morons still going at it. I'm not having it so I step between them and grip them both by the front of their shirts and pull them close. "Alright. Who's ass do I need to kick? You made me spill my beer all over the

front of my shirt." I look between the two. They both look over my chest.

The males both laugh, but the bigger, uglier of the two answers. "Sorry sweetheart. You're welcome to just take it off." I let the other guy go and turn to face ugly. With one swing, I connect with his temple and knock his ass out cold. I turn to the other guy. "Do I hear an apology?" He smirks as his eyes lock on my chest again. I cock my brow and swing on him. The fucker goes down and I let the bouncers take it from there.

Indy grabs my hand and drags me into the bathroom. "Here hag, take my shirt." She goes to pull off her top, but I stop her. "I have my flannel, but thanks." I rip my tank top over my head so I'm left in just my black lace bra.

"So why are you getting trashed and letting humans bug you? You said you needed to blow off steam, but you never told me why." She asks as she fixes her hair.

"The elders are going to try to force me to take a choice mate, one that they choose." I throw my top under the water and try to get some of the alcohol smell out of it.

"What! They can't do that. That's fucked up." She faces me with her hand on her hip.

I shrug. "They haven't decided on anything yet, but Brahm is pushing for it. He just wants Griffin to be the next Alpha."

She grunts. "Of course he does, except for one thing; you hate Griffin. Even if you mated him, your bond would be weak, if it exists at all. That's not good for an Alpha pair. They should know that."

"I guess they don't care as long as the Alpha isn't female. Silas and Parker are both in the running. Silas knows I want my mate, and everyone knows Parker wants his." Indy grunts along with me. "I'm done

for tonight. I'm only getting more worked up. This isn't helping and I have to figure out what to do."

"I don't know, if anyone could break Parker, it's definitely you." Indy hates when I leave without her and is just looking for an excuse for me to stay.

"I don't want to corrupt him." I wring out my shirt then snap it out a few times. "You guys have fun."

"You want me to ask Justin to drive you?"

"Nah. I think I'll walk home."

"It'll be sunrise before you get home. Justin and I will take you. It's no trouble, really."

I sling my flannel on then tie it under my breasts. "I know it's not. I'm going to let my wolf out and roam around for a while." I kiss her cheek. "Love ya, babe." I grab one more shot, pay my tab, then sneak out before anyone else notices I'm gone.

Walking home from the bar isn't uncommon for me, I love being in my wolf. The night air is still warm and in my tipsy state feels good on my skin as I strip out of my clothes and shove it all in my sack. I take a deep breath then let it out along with my wolf. In seconds, I'm on all fours with my nose in the air. I grab my sack then scamper through the woods. I'm outside of our territory, which is a big no-no, but I never care. The only scary thing out here is the hunter, but he hasn't been out here in years.

The hunter has a cabin west of our territory. Last time I was there, the place was run down and the hunter's scent was long gone. I actually really like the area. The trees are thick and the ground is soft. There's also a small stream that my wolf loves to play in. My wolf puts on a burst of steam and we rush over to the running water. I drop my sack then jump in and out of the trickling stream. After splashing around, I

get a drink then curl up at the base of a tree. The alcohol has kicked in and I'm too tired to go home now.