

Chapter 9

Tess

Being with Cody is easy and natural. We've spent every moment together for the past week, except for when my dad is here sparring with him. He's a fast learner and has become much stronger and faster over the week. I started teaching him how to use throwing knives, you know, just for fun. Dad is as impressed with him as I am and he admitted he actually likes the human. Cody still hasn't won against my dad, but he's about Beta Morris' level now. I think he could beat Silas, Parker, and Griffin... in human form. I have no idea how he would fare against a wolf.

My leg is still bandaged and healing, the wolf's bane trick worked, and I'm still not able to run just yet, but I am able to walk. Being able to get around is a good thing because I can help around the cabin, much to Cody's delight. It's easy to say that I'm already in love with my Cody and I can't wait to mate him. I don't know what he's waiting for, but I respect that he wants to wait, and I won't push him. We've come close a few times but he always pulls away.

We got into a tickle fight the other night, but I was able to slip out of his hold. He found my move impressive and asked me to show him how I did it. We worked on the move for two days and he mastered it against me. Now to try it out on someone his size.

It's my turn to cook breakfast which is why I'm up so early. I take a sip of my coffee then I hear Cody stir so I pour a cup for him. Cody eats as much as a wolf so I make a big breakfast packed with protein. His hands

grip my hips from behind and he kisses my neck where he reapplied his mark last night. "Good morning, Darlin'."

I hum and lean into his body. "Good morning. My dad said he's not going to make it today. You're stuck with just me."

"Ah, bummer." He says with pure sarcasm. He smacks my ass then grabs his coffee.

"Hey." I mock offense. He winks then takes a seat at the island. I like that he loves my ass. It's larger than I like, but he says my curves are sexy, so I'm good with it. Actually, he says everything about me is sexy. I love it when he grips my hair to kiss me, which he does quite often.

I lay out breakfast and he waits for me to sit beside him. Once on my seat, he pulls me closer with his hand on my waist, which lives there any time we're next to each other. "Tess, are you able to run with me?"

My face scrunches up. "Probably not. I would hate to tear it open and start all over again." ...again. He gets a bummed look on his face. "I'll try to jog on a treadmill with you once we're in Vegas. We're leaving tomorrow, right?"

He nods. "Right. I'll pack up tonight then we can be on the road after breakfast. Is your dad coming tomorrow? I would like a chance to thank him."

I shrug my shoulders. "I'm not sure, but we'll be coming back, right?"

Cody's body gets stiff. "I live in Washington. I have a job up there. Willow is supposed to start school." I bite my lip. We never really talked about what happens after his fight. "Shit. Tess, I'm sorry. Could you come with me?"

"I can't. I run the resorts and I'm in line to take over the tribe. I need to be back before the elders shove a husband down my throat. What is your job?"

He looks a little bashful. "I'm a PE teacher at an elementary school and a part-time EMT."

I can't help but smile. "You're a walking bleeding heart. When does school start? We need teachers. You could... never mind. We'll see how things go after the fight."

Cody grips my hair to turn my head. "Tess." He whispers my name then kisses me, hard. He pulls away to rest his forehead to mine. "I need you in my life. As of right now, I don't know what to do, but we'll figure it out together. After the fight, I'm driving back home. I have to see my daughter. I would like it if you came with me. I want you to meet her."

I nod. "I want to meet her. Have you told her about me?"

He nods. "I told her I met someone special and that you're also my trainer. I'll explain to her our relationship after she meets you. I promise." I agree with that. It's his daughter, he has all say when it comes to her.

We finish eating then head outside for his training. He kisses me gently then starts his run. I check the time on the phone Dad gave me. I won't be able to link him while I'm away. I get started on my yoga while Cody does his run.

Cody comes rushing into the clearing way before he should be back. "Tess, get inside. There's a wolf after me." I get to my feet just as his pursuer hits the clearing. The wolf stops to survey his surroundings. Cody is facing the wolf with his back to me, blocking me from the wolf. "Get inside, Darlin'. I don't want you to get hurt. It's big and looks angry."

The wolf growls then jumps to attack. I step in front of Cody and punch the asshole right in the snout. "Get the fuck out of here and don't come

back or I'll kick your lily ass." The wolf looks at me. I step forward and ready my fist to strike. He growls but huffs off out of here. "Fucker."

Shit, fuck, fuck, shit! Dad, we have a problem. Griffin just chased Cody while he was on his run. Cody got back here in time, but Griffin jumped to attack. I punched him and told him to get out of here.

Cody holds my shoulders to turn me to face him. He has a look of combined awe and fright on his handsome face. "Tess. That was insane. Are you alright?"

Ah, fuck. What the hell is he doing off territory. He was on guard duty this morning. Why is he chasing humans?

"I'm fine. You saw that he didn't hurt me. He was alone, which isn't normal." Dad! Bigger picture. He knows about Cody. He probably smelled me on him. Griffin is a pain in my ass, what kind of trouble is he going to start?

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Cody shakes his head. "You punched a fucking wolf!"

Dad huffs through the link. Don't worry about Griffin, it's his granddad that I'm worried about. I'm on it, Tessie. I'm headed to intercept him now.

I shrug my shoulder. "It's not the first time." Dad. Promise you'll tell me if anything happens.

Cody huffs out a breath. "Although I doubt he understood you, it was pretty funny that you told it you're going to kick its lily ass. I don't know whether to be mortified or turned on." Don't stress yourself out, Tess. Enjoy your trip.

I roll my eyes. this is ridiculous. "I'd go with the latter." Fine. I'll call Indy and find out what's going on.

Dad groans. I'll let you know what happens. With that, he closes the link and I'm left with Cody staring at me still in shock.

"Cody, please let's not make a big deal of it. Your uncle told you there are wolves out here. You can't be that surprised to see one."

He pulls me closer then grips my hair. "Tess, you know damn well that's not what I'm thinking about." His voice is gruff and he definitely went with the latter. His hand slips lower to grip my ass as he kisses me. I can feel him hard against me and my desire ignites like a furnace. I hum into his kiss. I let my hand glide down his body and over his shorts. He grunts then steps back. "I'm sorry, Tess. I lost control."

"Don't be sorry. You're all I want, Cody. I want to give myself to you. You and only you." I reach up on tip toes to kiss him again.

After a minute he pulls back. "Wait, are you telling me you've never had sex before?"

I look in his eyes and nod. "I've done other things, but never full-on sex."

Cody closes his eyes and pulls me against him. He kisses my head. "Tess, I'm honored that you want to give yourself to me. I want it to happen, just not today." Rejection hits me hard. I close my eyes to fight the tears that are trying to escape. "Tessalee. Don't for a minute think that I don't want you. I do. More than you could possibly know.

"What is it then? Every time we're close, you pull away. I can't help but feel..." Cody stops me from talking with a soft kiss on my lips then my cheeks and forehead.

"I made a promise to myself that if I were to find love again, I would make sure Willow approves first. It's not just my life, but hers I have to think about."

"So let me get this straight, you do love me?"

Cody chuckles. "Yes, Tess. I'm in love with you. I've loved you pretty much since the first time you bit my shoulder.

I giggle at the memory. "So you love me, but you have to get permission from your five-year-old daughter before you can sleep with the woman you've already fallen for."

"Yeah, it doesn't sound like it makes much sense when you say it like that. But I'm determined to let her have a say." His words are sincere and respectful of his daughter.

I run my hands over his firm abs up to his pec muscles. "Does that mean no action? Zero? None? Not even a little mouth play?" I tease.

He groans and lets his head fall back. "Tess you're going to be the death of me." He tilts his head forward to look me in the eyes. "I'm sorry, Darlin', but yes, that means none whatsoever. It's only a few more days, do you think you can hold out that long?"

I give in. "Okay, but just so you know, I'm in love with you too. Now let's get your training in. 5 miles, slacker." I shake my head as I escort him back to the starting point. "Running from a wolf." I shake my head. "Don't you know wolves chase you when you run? It's instinctual. Pathetic."

"Can't say I've had much experience with wolves." Cody smacks my ass then pulls me in for a kiss. "Now that I know how you feel it's going to be even harder to keep my sanity when you look at me like you are right now," I smirk and he groans. He kisses my head then starts walking backward toward the trail to begin his workout. "You stay right there, I'll be back, Darlin'." He winks then sprints away.