

## Chapter 12: SPY ON XADEN

"W-what?" I asked in disbelief. "You've become deaf too?" Luna Maria hissed at me. I closed my mouth and looked down at my hands. "He will take you with him to his pack." My father told me that his expression was strict. "In a different country. You will spy on him and send word to me about his plans to attack me with the next new moon." I gasped. Spying was a criminal offense in any country, and the punishment was death. Instant death. "But it's a death sentence." I managed to tell him. "If you're smart, you won't get caught." My father told me. I swallow uncomfortably. What he was asking me to do. "Are you contemplating that I, your Alpha, am the one who gave you life's decision?" He demanded of me. "Are you thinking of betraying me?" I shook my head quickly, and my forehead was sweating profusely. "No, Alpha Bale," I said. He snorted at me, and then he turned to Luna Maria. An old woman, whom I had never seen before, came into the room. "Turn around, girl." She crooked at me. Confused but weak, I did as she told me, and then I felt a sharp pain in my shoulder. I cried in pain. And then it was gone in an instant. I looked over my shoulder to see what it was. It was a tiny tattoo, almost impossible to see. "Because you have not shifted," Alpha Bale told me. "You would have been able to communicate with me directly, but you aren't. You're just an outcast and a latent wolf. Nothing more. Useless. So better make yourself useful." "The mark is an owl speaker." The old woman said, "You now have an owl designated for you. You can send it information, and it will bring it back here." I had heard of such stores but assumed they were only a myth. "All you need to do is call its name, and it will fly to you after three days." She told me. "It will find you wherever you are during sunset. You will give it your message, and it will fly away." "What's its name?" I asked. Then I was scared to speak because I was worried that they would snap at me. "Eqiana." She said. I nodded. Then I remembered that I didn't know how to read or write. I had been a complete slave in the pack; there was no reason for me to learn how to be literate. It was considered irrelevant. If I told Alpha Bale that I was illiterate, he might kill me on the spot out of anger. He was right; I was useless. "You better bring us information." He told me. "If we fall, it's in your hands. And Xaden will kill you." I nodded quickly, well scared of my father. He took a deep breath. "The scars on your back—did Xaden see them?" He asked me. "I hope he didn't. Because if you let him see them, then you've ruined us all, and our blood will be at your hands." I swallowed. Had Xaden seen my back? The marks? Then it dawned on me that if he had, then that meant he would be suspicious of the fact that I was not his true daughter. Why would an Alpha's daughter have marks on her back? "Tell me you, you creature! Did he see the marks on your back?!" My father snapped in a rage of fury.