

Chapter 3

Drake POV

Staring out of the car window as we pass what seems like endless forest, I'm reminded of how I hate traveling to the Americas. Decaying woodland, dusty towns and destitute packs who look at me and my pack and can't decide whether to fear me or suck up to me in the hopes that I will bestow favour, or moon goddess forbid, mate with one of their pack whores. Just the prospect of being with anyone but my mate makes my skin crawl, my wolf Xavier, clawing at my insides for even thinking the words.

"Settle down! I will never touch a shewolf and you know it! No matter how long we must wait for her" I reminded him.

"You better not, we are getting closer, I can feel it"

"I hope you are right, X, these dreams we keep having must mean she is near. The moon goddess wouldn't be cruel enough to dangle such a gift only to take it away"

Sitting back in my seat, I block out Xavier, and remember last night's dream.

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Dreaming

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I'm in wolf form, running and running but always in the same woods. Woods I'm not familiar with.

Eventually coming to a break in trees.

I'm at the edge of a lake, ethereal haze coating the top, with dawn's light peeking past the towering mountain ridge. A mountain I do not know.

Bowing my head, I drink heartily.

An enticing smell surrounds me, cinnamon and apples. It is so tantalising that I can practically taste it. Looking up, desperately trying to find the source.

There! on the other side of the lake, a stunning blonde wolf, drinking from the lake as well. She looks up and my breath disappears. Such stunning green eyes. I know it, deep inside me, she's my mate.

I have to get to her, she is so far away, but I have to. I take off running, as fast as I can, running and running around the lake. Trying desperately to catch up to her. I've searching so long for her, but she is right there. Breaking from the tree line, she stands before me. So close..

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I'm jolted awake, like always, disappointment and pain grips my chest. Night after night, I get closer and closer but I can never reach her.

"Sorry to disturb you Alpha, we are entering the pack lands" my driver hesitates.

"Very well" I grumble, It's taking everything in me to hold back X from clawing out his throat, that was the closest we had ever been to meeting our mate.

Hoping it's an indication that she is going to be at this mind numbing event, I sit up, straightening out my clothes and my hair. Perhaps I should have shaved before coming here. I'll have to clean up better for the ball tomorrow night. I often hear people describe me as a beast, and at 6ft 9 with long dark chestnut hair in a bun and 250kg of pure muscle, it's not much of a stretch to guess why. That's not what I want my mate to see and think though. That settles it, I have to look my best for my mate.

Moon goddess, please let her be here.

The darkness of the forest suddenly opens up with blinding light revealing a large clearing. Small cottages in a poor state of repair dotted around the land, I suspect those are where the mated wolves live. The road improves the further into the pack lands we go, yet no escort has arrived. Strange.

We continue on, approaching a small settlement, of maybe twenty small structures together. It's not until we are in the middle of it that I realise it's their town centre with a handful of shops and cafes.

I mind link my beta, Jacob, who is in the car behind mine. I thought the Moon Rises pack were the second largest pack in the Americas?. He is quick to reply. So did I, Alpha. Something is not right here, this is a pack with a long heritage but it seems to be in decline.

Nodding my head, I agree, while we are here do some investigating, quietly, I want to know the state of play before the Alpha summit on Monday.

Yes Alpha. The mind link ends. Jacob has been my closest ally and best friend since we were pups. There was no doubt when I became Alpha that he would be my second. After twenty years together, we of those as Alpha/beta, you find yourself on the same wavelength.

Driving past the high street, we enter more woodland. We seem to be driving endlessly, why would the pack house be so far away from the town?

Two hours later the woodland cover breaks and a large grey block scars the landscape. It must be ten stories high, but seems slightly more taken of than the rest of the pack lands. There could be over a hundred wolves living here. Why are there so many unmated wolves at this pack?

Oh how I long for home. I quickly mind link Jacob; after this, we are having an extended stay at home. No invites, no touring, no travel. I need some time in my own space.

I feel him sigh through the link, we are only doing this to find your mate Drake. However, I agree, our pack would benefit from some time with their Alpha and Beta at home. I will arrange it, Alpha.

Good. The mind link closes just as we pull up in front of the block. Elders and I'm guessing the Alpha and Luna are gathered on the front steps, they look nervous. Idiots, they should be scared. I have no time for idiots.

My driver, Nikolai, opens my door once the rest of my entourage has assembled. I step out into the shadows, a sneer on my face. Let's get this over with.

"Greetings Alpha Hendrix and Beta Morgan of the Dark Night Pack, I am Alpha Gregory and my Luna Margot. Welcome to the Moon Rises Pack."

Kiss ass.

"Greetings, Alpha, Luna. Thank you for hosting this year's Mating Ball."

"Please come in, let us show you to your suites, after such a long drive, you should rest while the other Alphas arrive" Alpha Gregory guides us inside to a large entry, with a large oak staircase leading up through the building to all the doors.

"Your rooms are on the 9th floor, the elevator is just back here" the Alpha leads on, surely this is an omega job or at most the gammas.

"Nonsense! We are wolves, not kittens. The stairs will be fine" I remark, turning my back on them all, taking the stairs three at a time, like my warriors around me. I catch the look on Gregory's face, shock and resignation, as he and his Luna follow behind us.

We reach the 9th floor, noting the others seem to be many floors behind us and moving slowly. Do they not train? Does the pack not train or just them? How ludicrous. How do they hope to survive an attack?!?

We come across an omega on the floor, bowing her head respectfully, she quickly guides us to our rooms, and enquires if we need anything else. Jacob requests some refreshments and our luggage to be brought up, then she dashes away. Ideal, really, someone who acts accordingly. I enter my room, expecting to be disappointed, but hoping to get a shower and clean up before the welcome luncheon this afternoon.