

## **Chapter 19 – The Gurerreros**

*“Trust is believing "I will be safe with you". Love is striving to keep the trust.” — Drishti Bablani, Wordions*

### ***Halima***

After a while, the twins left me to rest. We decided to take the tour another time. I napped for a good hour until I woke up from a horrible nightmare with a loud shriek. For a moment, my mind plunged back into the dirty, smelly prison cell with former Alpha Jonathan standing over me with his fists raised. He was beating my small body with the rage of a god before he morphed into an enormous black wolf, golden eyes bleeding bloodlust. All I saw before I woke up was the drooling, sharp jaws of a feral wolf.

To take my mind off the nightmare, I tried on the clothes and pajamas in my closet, overwhelmed by the assorted fabrics. I loved the capri pajama sets the most, the cotton materials were soft, like clouds on a sunny day. They smelled sweet, too! I also tried on the other casual clothes in the closet, ranging from jeans to cardigans to blouses to tunic shirts. All in all, I spent another hour and a half trying on my entire closet.

Only to end up in the capri pajama set because they felt so good.

Walking out my door, I decide to find Lyra and Nikolai to thank them for the room. But after wandering around the hallway, I realized that I don't know where the hell I was going. I don't know where the twins are, and I was not sure where Violet is. Mind-linking wasn't a possibility because I wasn't bonded with the pack. So, I headed back to where I thought the stairs were.

I remembered that Dwayne mentioned the Alpha's room was on the top floor, so maybe if I headed up there...

Before I could reach the stairs, my clumsy ass ended up bumping hard into a brick wall. Or so I thought. The impact pushed me to the ground, landing hard on my bony butt. I groaned softly, rubbing my rear end. "Ow..."

"You're the rogue." My eyes shot up to be met with a very tall man who was a spitting image of Alpha Nikolai, except he had Lyra's brown hair brushing over his eyelids and nape. His sharp jawline made him look dangerous, and his deep amber eyes stared into my soul. It didn't take a rocket scientist to know that this man oozes power.

"Y-Yes I am." I gulped down the mass in my throat. "I'm sorry for bumping into you—!"

The man chuckled, offering his hand to me. I graciously took it, admiring the warmth his hand radiated through my weak body. Slowly and gently, he pulled me to my feet. "No worries. If my mother offered you one of our rooms, you can't be all bad, right?"

I blinked. "Your Mom?"

"Yes. I'm Anthony Guerrero, son of the Alpha and Luna."

Oh shit, I ran into the future Alpha! Alphas were domineering yet nonchalant, but Anthony seems friendly, unlike Neron. Just the thought of my former mate made my heart not only boil in anger but in pain. Refusing to fall into that dark hole, I shake those thoughts out of my head, focusing my attention back on the man in front of me. "Nice to meet you, Anthony. My name is Halima."

"Halima...your name is familiar." Anthony crossed his arms. "Mom talked a bit about you. I was on my way to see you. Good to know that you made my trip shorter. Is your room to your liking?"

“Yes. It’s more than enough.” I rocked on my heels, eyes shifting around the hallway for a focus point. I...I wanted to thank your parents in person.”

“Here,” He offered a hand again. “I’ll show you where the Alpha’s office is.” Before I knew it, we’re heading to the top floor, hand-in-hand. “Tell me about yourself.”

“There isn’t much to talk about,” I admitted, looking down at the carpet. “I don’t have much of a personality. I’m sure you’re much more exciting.”

“Perhaps.” Anthony chuckled. “You should tell that to Alesia. She believes I’m too rigid and in need of loosening up.”

“Alesia?”

“Yes, my mate and future Luna.” He admitted. We reach the hallway of the top floor. In the distance, I could detect Lyra’s peachy scent. “She’s visiting her parents in her old pack, Autumn Moon. She should be back in a few days.”

“Is she nice?”

“To a fault, but she has that fire in her I love. She can be scary, but only when provoked.” I watch Anthony’s smile widen as his eyes hold glittered with the admiration and love in the world for this one woman. “She’s protective, fierce, and powerful. I’m proud to have her as my mate.”

My smile was small, a tad jealous of how Anthony was looking like a love-sick puppy. It was the same way Neron looks at Odessa, day in and day out, for someone who wasn’t his mate. My mate bond was dead, I couldn’t feel anything for him or anyone else, but I was still jealous. With or without a mate bond, I couldn’t help but wonder if anyone

would ever look at me with that love. Not familial love but love that every human and werewolf strived for.

“How about you?” Anthony asked. “Found your mate yet?”

“Um...” I try to plan my words for a suitable response, but my mind was mush. “The mate thing is a very touchy subject. I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Oh...” The Alpha’s son nodded with understanding. “Forgive my overstep.”

“It’s all right.” I gave a small smile. “You didn’t know. It’s no fault of your own.”

“So, let us talk about something else.” We both walked down the long, semi-dark corridor toward the Alpha’s office. “Have you thought about joining Garnet Moon?”

“I...I don’t know.” I murmured, scratching the back of my neck. “I still need some time. I agreed to stay, but I’m not sure about joining.”

“Take the time you need. It’s a big decision.” Soon, we reached the mahogany doors of the Alpha’s office. Anthony knocked twice and opened once he was granted permission. We both walked in to see Nikolai and Lyra in deep conversation but stopped once they saw us. I notice another girl in the room, looking like a mini version of Lyra.

“Halima.” Lyra smiled. “I see you met Anthony. I hope our baby boy wasn’t too much trouble.”

“No, he was great. A proper gentleman.” I commented with a smile.

“I’ll leave you to it. It was nice meeting you, Halima.” Closing the door behind him, I went to take a spare seat next to Lyra.

“I just wanted to thank you both for my room.” I bowed my head politely. “It’s comfortable.”

“I see you are wearing the pajamas I picked out!” The girl next to me gushed with a prideful smile, fists resting on her hips. “Purple looks very cute on you, by the way.”

“O-oh!” Heat rushed to my cheeks. “Thank you, miss...?”

“Lyria is the name.” She extended a hand. “I’m Anthony’s little sister. If you need anything, come to me. Although, we need to take you shopping for undergarments one of these days. That’s if you’re up for it.”

I look at Nikolai and Lyra. “Is that okay with you both? I don’t want you spending so much money on me...”

“Dear, money is not an issue.” Alpha Nikolai replied with a smile. “We want your stay to be as comfortable as possible. And that means getting you clean clothes. You came here with nothing.”

I nodded and remained quiet, looking down at my fidgety fingers. I only looked up when I felt Lyra’s hand rubbing circles on my back. “Have you eaten yet?” She asked me.

“Not yet.” I shake my head. “I’m not sure where the kitchen is to fill up my syringes.”

“Lyria would show you the way.” The Luna smiled as Lyria nodded.

“Do you mind sharing the nutrition plan with the Lead Omega and me so that we can better understand how to take care of you?”

“Lead...Omega?” Violent memories of Cassandra instantly silenced me. Her phantom slaps and brutal insults suddenly were loud in my ear. “I-I don’t want to go.”

“Dear...” Lyra whispered to me. “Cleo has a heart of gold. She’d be more than happy to help you with your feeding tube. What are you scared of?”

“What if she calls me a raccoon?” My eyes fill with unshed tears. Artemis was giving me her comfort to calm my palpitating heart, again. “What if she throws me out of the kitchen? Am I allowed inside?”

Lyra shot a look at her husband and daughter, cradling my hands into hers. “Mija, of course, you’re allowed in the kitchen. No one would throw you out. Is that what your old Lead Omega did?”

“She only allowed me in the k-kitchen to clean the dishes and w-wash the floors,” I answered tearfully, my trauma tossing me back into that ugly kitchen. “She wouldn’t let me eat and laughed when she saw how hungry I was.” Choked sobs erupted from my throat. “She called me a raccoon because I was eating out of the garbage. I was so desperate! I’m...I can’t—!”

“Shh...” Lyra cradled my head into my chest, continuously rubbing circles on my back. “It’s okay. You’re here with us.”

“How could someone be so cruel...?” I hear Lyria whisper. It must be quite a shocker, meeting someone for the first time and you learn how they ate out of the garbage to survive. “Mom...Dad...”

“I know, Lyria.” Nikolai sighed.

After a minute, I stopped crying, wiping away my pitiful tears. “It seems all I do is cry. I’m really sorry.”

“No.” Nikolai shook his head. “I’m not accepting your apology because there is nothing to apologize for. Halima, you are more than welcome in our kitchen. I promise you we are and would be nothing like Zircon Moon, and we’ll do everything we can to make you feel comfortable and safe on our lands.”

I sniffled, taking in a deep breath. Alpha Nikolai was right. My short stay here had proven to me that Garnet Moon was nothing like Zircon Moon. I need to stop comparing the two. Everyone here had treated me with nothing but kindness and compassion, and I couldn't be more grateful for that. I look back to the Alpha family, noticing the concern in their brown eyes of all shades. They're worried about me, but I admit, I was worried about myself.

I have so many demons I need to battle, internally and externally. I just hope that I make it out alive in the end.