

Chapter 16

Tabitha's POV

I hung up the phone and took a taxi to the hospital where Orson was.

Sitting in the backseat, I watched as the view outside the window raced past me. For the first time in ages, I was craving to stay alive.

Not just for Dad but for the Silver Moon Pack too.

Just as I was lost in thought, my phone rang. It was Alvin.

"What's up, Alvin?" I asked calmly.

"Luna, Alpha Derek wants you to come back to the pack immediately," Alvin said respectfully.

"I can't. Got something to do."

"But..." He paused for a second. "Alpha Derek needs you back for the rejection ceremony."

"He can leave me at will but I gotta go when he needs me? What am I, his pet?" I cut him off. "Tell him that I'll come back after I'm done here. Leave me alone before that."

Then I hung up before Alvin could say anything in reply.

A few hours ago, I would've returned to Black Thorn Pack in a heartbeat.

But now, I had more important things to do.

"Orson, I need your help."

Orson sat down on the sofa across from me, eyes full of worry. "Relax, I'll try my best. If I can't fix it, I'll find someone who can."

I exclaimed, "Thanks, Orson. I want you to treat me, whatever it takes. I just don't wanna see my condition get any worse."

"Finally!" Orson stood up at once. "I'll look it up and figure out a treatment plan ASAP."

I didn't know how many days the treatment would last, so I went back to the apartment Gloria had rented for me to pack my bags.

After I finished, I saw a few missed calls from Holly.

After a moment's contemplation, I rang back.

She soon picked up, saying in a worried tone, "Tabitha, why didn't you answer my phone? I've been worried about you these days. How much money do you need? I'll make a transfer now."

Looking around the clean and tidy apartment, I felt much calmer.

I'd been bitter for years after she left, wondering why she left me and Dad.

And finding out she was Daphne's stepmother dealt a heavy blow to me.

Yet no matter how sad I felt, a fact was a fact, and there was nothing I could do about it.

"I'm fine. Don't worry. Derek gave me some money, so you don't need to fret about Dad's medical expenses."

"Where are you? Can we meet? I wanna make it up to you."

Her words, in fact, didn't stir me at all.

"Drop the act, will ya? If you really cared about me as you said, you would've at least given me a call. But you didn't, never. I was an idiot to think that you'd help me. After all, you've remarried now. I get it. Don't worry, I won't make that mistake again."

"How can you say that? Although I've remarried, I'm still your mom. Of course I care about you."

"Let's leave things the way they used to be. I'll take care of Dad, and you just take that I never existed like you used to, okay?"

With that, I ended the call. When I needed her the most, she chose to side with Daphne, who wasn't related to her.

Maybe she got her reasons, but I wouldn't forgive her for it just like that.

A few minutes later, Alvin called again. I ignored it and texted Derek instead.

Then I turned off my phone.

Whatever the truth was, Derek and I were done.

After all this, I went to the hospital to see Orson.

When I stepped into his office, I saw a stack of books on his desk. Hearing my footsteps, he looked up at me and said gently, "Have a seat. I've just found some useful information in the pack's archives."

"So have you found a way to cure me?"

"Not yet," he smiled apologetically. "But there's stuff on when a werewolf can't heal himself. It's just ... I'm afraid you'll have to spend a few days alone deep in the forest. Scared?"

"No." Then I asked curiously, "Can you tell me more about it?"

"Your mate bond is destroyed, and your wound won't heal because of wolfsbane. So, I'll start you on herbs to stop the rot. Then you'll need to find a clearing deep in the forest and shift at night to absorb the moon's energy," Orson said, flipping through the books on his desk. "The moon energy can help you heal, but it's not a permanent cure, of course."

"Got it," I replied nervously.

"Don't worry. I'll go with you," Orson consoled me with a smile. "But after you shift, your wound's definitely gonna hurt. Can you go through with it?"

I gave him a serious nod.

Two days later, Orson got everything prepped. Then we trekked into the woods.

After he took care of my wound, I sent him back to work.

I was left alone, leaning against a tree.

The night fell, moonlight kissing my skin. I desperately called for Crystal in my mind.

Then the shift began.

Lying on the ground all by myself, I felt pain all over. Meanwhile, I was dizzy and nauseous. My abdominal wound was killing me.

When my bones were back in place, I dragged myself up, tilted my head to the moon, and let out a howl.