

6. Futile Search

Miles pov.

My heart pounded as I waited at the river bank for any news. Our divers were trying their best to find anything related to her. My conscience kept telling me that it was my fault. I pushed the thought away a million times, but still it kept coming back. Was it my fault that she jumped off the cliff? I refused to believe that.

Maybe she didn't jump. Maybe she fell off the cliff. Maybe she decided to get too close to the edge and fell. Yeah. Why should I think the worst? Honestly, I never wanted that to happen. I just didn't want her to be connected to me in any way.

So far, we have got her other shoe, and a red jacket, the one she was wearing that night. But nothing else. Gulping anxiously, I looked at the concerned faces of her family. Mrs Williams had insisted that she come and watch while we searched. Her mate held her close, and both of them eagerly watched the foaming waters of the river. Nolan, too, didn't look away. All three pairs of eyes were glued to the river water, as our skilled team of divers tried their best to find anything related to Cassandra, the human girl.

A deep frown creased my father's forehead. Droplets of perspiration trailed down his cheeks. Though she was a mere human, he saw her as a normal pack member. He never discriminated against any other species, regardless of them belonging to a weaker kind. And from what I had learnt recently, it was against the law to do that. Perhaps that was the reason why the elders treated her like one of us.

I held back a scoff. That didn't matter anyway. I didn't mind treating other species with respect. I just didn't want a weak mate. Especially not a human, who would never have any special powers. Even wizards would have the power to do something, even though they weren't physically strong.

Well, I guess I shouldn't worry about being bound to her anymore. But...where is her body? If she drowned, her body must be around somewhere, right? Our divers had been trying their best for the past three hours with no success. A team of our warriors had gone searching along the river bank, to check if her body had washed on the shore anywhere. Another team led by her best friends had gone searching through the woods, just in case.

Regardless of our efforts, we found nothing. I could see that our wolves were exhausting themselves. I mean, it had been three long hours, yet we had found nothing, except a shoe and a jacket. I looked at my father, wondering if I should suggest calling the search off. It was useless anyway. Our wolves had done their best already.

"Dad?" I called, after some time.

"Hmm?" he answered, not taking his eyes off the water.

"Don't you think they are getting tired?" I asked, pointing to a diver who had just walked up to the shore and slumped onto the sandbank, apparently exhausted from the intense search in the water.

He looked at the diver and then at those who were still in the water and let out a deep sigh.

"They are...." he whispered sadly, his expression drastically changing from pure determination to utter despair. He looked as though he had accepted defeat.

My heart pinched painfully. It was hurtful to see my father accepting failure. A strong, determined alpha, someone I had never seen accept defeat, had suddenly done exactly that. I gulped, feeling a little angry at that human girl.

Why did she have to walk to the cliff just because I rejected her? All of this is because of her weakness.

"I guess I have to call the search off," he murmured under his breath, looking at the setting sun. He walked over to the family who had looked after her as their own. Wanting to know what he was saying, I followed him.

"Jonathan, I'm sorry....." my father trailed off. I guess he was finding it hard to say that he gave up.

I saw how the already gloomy faces of Mr And Mrs Williams wilted. Deep sighs were heard. Silent tears rolled down. I saw how Mrs Williams trembled as she held on to her mate's hand.

"It is okay alpha. We understand," Mr Williams answered in a hushed whisper, barely audible. "The sun has almost set. We have tried," he added.

"How I wish I could have stopped her." Mrs Williams sobbed. Her voice quivered. "How I wish I" she sobbed.

"I thought she wouldn't do it. I wish she told us what hurt her so badly....." more tears wet her face.

"Mom," Nolan croaked. He was completely heartbroken.

Mrs Williams wrapped her arms around him and simply cried on his shoulders.

"I also miss her....real bad." He added, his eyes lowered. His eyes no longer had the mischievous sparkle they always had. Her death had completely changed him.

"Don't ever leave me, Nolan," his mother whispered.

Pausing my lips, I looked at dad. This was just too hard to watch. Why was losing someone, not even their relative, so hard for them? It was a pity that this search was futile, but still.....

"We are calling our search teams to prepare to go back to our pack," Father stated, in a sympathetic, yet professional way.

"Yes, of course, alpha. Honey, let's go home." Nolan's father said, putting his hand on his mate's shoulder.

"Nolan?" she looked at him as if asking if he was coming with her.

"I'll go with Miles," he replied, and the two went on their way.

We stood at the riverbank, side by side, until father managed to gather all the wolves who had gone to search for her. He had sent them a mind link so that they would know that it was time for them to come back.

"I wish I had gone with her." Nolan suddenly stated, still staring into the water. I snapped my head at him.

"Huh?"

"I swear I had convinced her that we loved her and wanted her around when she tried to leave a few years back. I am damn sure that something must have happened to her to suddenly jump off the cliff. I wonder what happened." Nolan frowned as he shook his head and looked at me. His eyes burnt with rage as he looked right into my eyes. I felt my heart palpitate in my chest. Every beat was like a warning to me.

"She was so happy and looking forward to the bonfire this year. She was perfectly fine. I promise myself, that if I ever find out who hurt her, I will kill that person myself!" he growled, his sadness suddenly replaced with pure anger.

A shiver ran down my spine as I scrutinized his face. I shuddered as goosebumps crawled on my skin. Oh good lord! I hope he never finds out what has happened. I took a deep breath. He wouldn't know. I told myself. How could he find out? There was no way that he would.

"Miles!"

My father's voice caught our attention. The troops had already started their journey.

"Let's go," he called, and we followed him.

As we walked forward, my heart kept racing and beating hysterically. I don't want to lose a great friend like Nolan. Besides, I was hoping that he would accept my offer to be my beta when I was appointed as the alpha. He was the best recruit I knew and the one who got along with me the best. Other than Castor, that is. He would be my Gamma. I had always thought that we made the best team. However, this sudden situation had made me reluctant to make that suggestion to them.

When I found out that my father was going to hand over the position to me, Cassandra had pulled out this stunt. So now wouldn't be the right time for that. I will have to wait and be patient.

"Miles," my father called.

"Yes. Dad?"

"I was going to hand over the alpha position to you this weekend. But do you think we should wait a bit? Nolan and his family are going through a hard time," he implored.

I glanced at him. His lips were pulled together in a thin line.

"I think we should wait," I stated.

"No."

Nolan's sudden statement surprised me a bit. "Go on with it. It's fine. I mean....life goes on, right? I'll always remember her as my sister and I'll always remember her in my prayers. Postponing the ceremony wouldn't bring her back anyway. I'm sure mom and dad also wouldn't want you to postpone it." He stated, avoiding eye contact with anyone. He kept looking at his feet as we walked forward.

"Are you sure, Nolan? We can wait a week or two," my father asked in a soft voice.

"Yes alpha." He confirmed softly, still looking at the dirt on the ground.

"But I want you as my beta. I also want you to be ready," I said.

Closing his eyes, he exhaled deeply.

"I kind of had a hunch you would say that, Miles. And Castor as your Gamma?" he asked and I nodded. Once again he breathed shakily. I doubt that he will be able to do anything during this weekend.

"I..... I...."

"It is okay Nolan. We can wait for a week or two. Maybe then you will be ready," father told him.

"I guess." A tear rolled out of his eye. "I just wish that Cassy was here to see that. She would have been so proud of me." He added in a mere whisper. He sounded so affected by her death.

"She will be Nolan, even now. She is in a better place now. And she would be smiling down at you from the heavens." My father told him.

Pausing my lips, I chose to say nothing. It was getting irritating to hear them talk about her over and over again. Why can't we talk about something else?

"So you accept to be my beta?" I asked, deviating from the topic.

"Yes." He replied, offering the slightest smile. "And thank you for everything. The time and effort to look for her. It means a lot to me." He stated and gave me a brotherly hug before walking away to go to his house.

A week passed and Nolan's family seemed to have somehow conquered their grief. Perhaps they were simply good at hiding it. We prepared the alpha ceremony where the whole pack gathered to witness the big event.

I stood in the middle of the circle, where my parents stood holding their hands together. They took the ceremonial dagger and held it high at the moon. The dagger will be handed over to me when the moon is at its peak. When they handed me the dagger, I focused my eyes on its blade and cut the palm of my wrist, so that my blood would be on the blade. It has the blood of all the alphas of this pack, if I am not mistaken.

I then shifted to my midnight black wolf and howled to the moon. Nolan and Castor followed my suite and then the rest of the pack members. Smiling internally, I looked around at the numerous wolves that surrounded me. They were my people. My pack. And now I am their alpha.