

## Chapter 9

Alpha Nicholas

I ran. I saw my mate and I ran. I ran from her, and now I'm currently hiding in my office. I'm a coward and a bastard. What kind of Alpha am I? What kind of man and an Alpha, at that meets his mate and runs? And if that wasn't bad enough, she saw me, and I'm pretty sure she knew who I was. "She did. Her wolf sensed us. She knew we were their mates and you fucking ran!" This is the first time Storm has spoken to me since it happened almost 30 minutes ago. He is furious with me and I get it and I don't blame him for being mad.

"I'm sorry Storm, I am. But I can't... I just can't." Before he can reply, my office door flies open as pissed-looking Will and Shane stomp in. "What the fuck is going on? Is something wrong?" I was about to chew him a new ass for just storming in here, but I quickly realize that he's not only pissed but concerned, both of them are.

I knock back the rest of the top-notch whiskey that I've been nursing this whole time and enjoy the burn as it slides down my throat. I don't drink often, as an alpha, I always have to be on alert, and as much as my brothers are more than capable of running things, I prefer to be on hand at all times. "Well? Is there trouble that we need to be made aware of?" He goes to head for the door, I assume to try and work it out.

"She's here." He turns back around to look at me from my office door with a look of deep confusion. "She's here... What does..." I sit still and watch as realization washes over his face. "Your mate is here, isn't she?" I let out

a loud sigh and nod. "Holy fuck!" Will grunts from his seat in front of my desk. "Yeah, you could say that."

"What are you going to do?" He asks looking honestly torn. As much as he works hard to understand what I want, I know that he wants to find his mate more than anything and can't quite grasp how I feel.

"Boys, what on earth is going on in here?" My mom's voice drags all of our attention to the office door where she is standing. She looks pissed and that's not good. My mom is a beautiful woman inside and out, but fuck, she's the devil's sister when she needs to be. "Elder Stone said he was talking to you, and then you just rudely ended it and walked off. He hadn't even finished talking to you. Since when do you treat elders that way?"

Fuck, she's right I did, but in my defense, smelling the smell of my... of her well, it knocked me through a loop and I couldn't think of anything else other than getting away. Of course, Storm didn't let that happen. No, he dragged our asses off until we saw her, and only then could I get back control and get us away from there.

"Am I talking to myself?" Hearing my mother's sharp tone quickly has me snapping out of my brain fog. "Sorry, ma, Elder Stone was right. I was rude, and I will make sure to apologize." She lets out a huge huff, forcing me to look her way, and hell, does she look pissed. "Is that it? You're hauled up in your office after being rude to an Elder when you should be outside with your guests and that's all you say?"

I know she wants more of an explanation, but what can I say? If I tell her that my mate is here, then it will open up a whole can of worms that I don't

want to deal with. I can't. No, I need to try and keep this from her for as long as possible, or at the very least until after everyone has gone home tomorrow. As it stands now, I don't technically know who my mate is or what pack she is here with so, there's no information I can give my mom. I don't even know her name.

My heart tugs a little at that realization, but I push it down while ignoring Storm's growl of disagreement. "Don't do this, Nick." I hate that this is hurting him, but since the shitstorm with Lottie's mom, he knows where I stand on this subject. I've always made my feelings perfectly known and as much as he hated the idea and my decision, he came to accept it, or so I thought.



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9



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