

A Warrior's Second Chance

Chapter 3

FAYE Elder Bennett finally cleared his throat. "Alpha... there's still the matter of Sage's promised mate. What do we do about him?" Alpha Wells rubbed his face, letting out a weary sigh. "Alpha Alexander," he muttered. "This is bad." My stomach dropped, I'd almost forgotten about that. Elder John frowned. "We can't give him Sage anymore. She gave herself to another man right before the mating, and everyone saw it. There's no covering this up." Elder Marcus nodded. "Alpha Alexander was promised a pure mate. Breaking that promise could dishonor us, and worse, anger his pack." "We need this alliance," Elder Bennett added quietly. "Without it, everything we've worked for could fall apart." Alpha Wells turned to Sage with a glare. "Have you seen what you've brought upon us?! This is a disaster!" Sage lifted her chin stubbornly. "It doesn't have to be. Jason wants me, not Faye. And I want him too. Let me stay with him. Faye can take my place with Alpha Alexander." I froze. "What?" Elder John looked at me, almost like he felt sorry. "Faye... if we can't give Sage to Alpha Alexander, then it has to be you." My heart pounded. "No," I said, shaking my head. "You can't do that." Sage stepped closer, her eyes flashing angrily. "Why not, Faye? You always act so noble, but when it's your turn to sacrifice for the pack, you say no?" My fists clenched. "This isn't about being noble, Sage, and you know that. You and Jason made this mess, and now you want me to fix it by marrying a stranger?" Sage let out a bitter laugh. "Oh so now, that's a bad thing? You didn't care that I was promised off to someone I'd never met, as long as you got Jason, Faye. No it's your turn to know what that feels like." "Enough," Alpha Wells cut in, turning to me. "Faye, I know this isn't easy for you, but the alliance matters. If Alpha Alexander is refused a mate, it could start a war." "So you're just selling me instead?" I shot back. His gaze softened slightly. "It's duty, Faye. You've always protected this pack as Delta. Now you must do it again." "No," I whispered. "If Sage can't do it anymore, then send a message and call it off." My father shook his head. "It's too late. He's already here." My breath caught. "What? When?" "He arrived this afternoon," my father

said. "I didn't tell anyone because I didn't want Sage to panic or run. I thought I'd wait until tonight. I'm sorry." My mouth went dry. He was already here? Alpha Wells turned back to Sage. "And you agree to let your sister take your place?" Sage nodded quickly. "Yes, Alpha. Jason and I love each other. This way, everyone wins. The pack keeps the alliance, and I don't have to marry a stranger." Her words cut deeper than any blade. Like it didn't even matter what happened to me. Turning to Jason, Alpha Wells spoke. "And you, Jason? What do you have to say about this?" Jason's voice was cold and emotionless as he answered. "I really don't care who mates who, father. The main thing here is that I'm no longer interested in mating Faye. She no longer what I want." My fists tightened at my sides but I remained quiet. Alpha Wells faced me again. "Faye, this is the only way to save the pack." I opened my mouth, but the words stuck in my throat. Finally, I shook my head. "No. I won't do it." "Yes, you will!" Jason snapped, surprising me. I turned to him. "Excuse me?" "You will mate him, Faye," he gritted out through his teeth. "Refusing this won't make me come back to you. I told you, I'm done. So stop thinking about yourself for once and do what's needed of you." I nodded, taking a step back. "I think we're done here. If you all will excuse me." Before anyone could speak, I turned and headed for the door, my heart pounding so loud I could barely hear them. At the doorway, I threw the ceremonial dagger to the ground. It clattered across the floor. "Faye! Come back here!" Alpha Wells thundered behind me. But I didn't stop. I pushed past everyone, stepping into the cool night air. My chest burned with anger and betrayal. Nova's voice echoed softly in my mind. "Faye—" "Don't," I snapped. "Not now." I walked past the empty training grounds, my thoughts swirling. I wasn't watching where I was going—and I crashed into someone. My shoulder slammed into a hard chest. "I'm so—" I started. "Watch where you're going," a deep voice snapped. I looked up and my breath caught. It was the same man from the training ground. I frowned. "What's your problem? I said sorry." "And sorry won't always fix things, would they," he shot back, glaring at me like I'd insulted him. He wasn't as calm as I remembered from minutes ago. He seemed angry at something, but so was I. My temper flared and I glared at him. "You weren't looking either." His eyes narrowed, and he stepped closer. "Watch your tongue," he warned. "You don't speak

like that to people you don't know." "And you should learn some manners, Mr.," I shot back, stepping closer too. "You act like everyone should bow to you. Who do you think you are?" Something flickered in his stormy eyes, surprise, then anger, then something darker. Suddenly, he moved. He grabbed my wrist and pushed me back until my spine hit a tree. His body blocked out the moonlight, and I could feel the heat rolling off him. "You've got quite a mouth," he murmured in a low voice. "Someone should teach you when to use it, before it gets you in trouble." My heart raced, anger and something else twisting in my chest. His scent—dark, rich, unfamiliar—wrapped around me. "And you've got quite an ego," I shot back, breathlessly. "Someone should knock it down before it gets you killed." We stood there, breathing hard, glaring at each other for a moment, then I shoved at his chest. "Get off me." Surprisingly, he let go immediately. I turned and walked quickly into the woods, my hands still shaking. I didn't stop until I reached the field under the moonlight. I stood there for a couple of minutes, with my chest heaving, fighting the mix of shame, anger, and confusion. "You have to go back," Nova urged softly. "I know," I whispered. Slowly, I turned and walked back toward the pack house. Before I got far, my mother rushed up to me. "Faye! Where have you been?" she scolded. "I've been looking everywhere." "I just needed air," I muttered. "There's no time," she said, grabbing my arm. "Alpha Wells is asking for you in his office. Alpha Alexander is waiting." My stomach twisted. "Now? Looking like this?" I glanced down at my dusty clothes and messy hair. "I know," she fussed, pulling a leaf from my hair. "But we can't keep him waiting." With every step, my chest felt heavier. My own mate had just betrayed me with my sister, and now I was about to meet the man my sister was promised to. My mother opened the office door. "Alpha Wells, she's here." Alpha Wells stood stiffly behind his desk, and my father also looked worried. Then my eyes landed on the man standing beside them, and my heart stopped. It was him. The same man from the training ground. The one who'd just pushed me against a tree. Shock slammed into me so hard I almost forgot to breathe. Alpha Wells spoke. "Faye... meet Alpha Alexander of Blood Crescent. Your father and I spoke with him. We offered for you to take your sister's place." He hesitated. "But... there may be no need for that." he said at last. I stared, confused. "What do

you mean?” Alpha Wells let out a shaky breath. “Alpha Alexander refused the change in the arrangement—” Before he could finish, the man I now knew as Alpha Alexander lifted his hand, cutting him off. The room went silent. He stepped closer, his storm-gray eyes locked on mine. My pulse raced as memories of the tree flashed through my mind. He stopped only a few steps away, and then, in a calm, cold voice, he spoke. “I’ll take her.” The words slammed into me, and my chest tightened so painfully I could hardly breathe. I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t move. All I could do was stare into those eyes, trying to understand what had just happened, and what it meant for me. There goes my only hope.