

## Chapter 9

Rogues surrounded them before they could even notice, giving the rogues the upper hand from the very beginning.

Ka'al's hands tightened around Elise the moment he heard a dark chuckle from one of the males who emerged from the shadows. He had an eye patch on his left eye, and his pale tall build, his grim face stretched into an unsettling smile.

"I knew I smelled a good one," he said as the rest of the four males emerged, their hungry and lustful eyes fixed on Elise. Ka'al gave them a warning snarl to keep them at bay.

There were three betas, with the rest being delta rogues. The mischievous glint in their eyes proved to Ka'al that they wouldn't back off without a fight.

Rogues were meant to steal and take, and now that they found a female so tempting, they would do anything to have her, even kill.

"Do not take another step closer unless you want your heads taken off," Ka'al warned. He wasn't back to full power, but they could feel the intense pressure of his warning pheromones.

"If you don't want this to become a very brutal and bloody fight, I suggest you leave the female, and we will let you pass this lonely backwaters road to whatever destination you want," their leader said.

Elise held onto Ka'al's hand tightly and stayed behind him. Even as the

males tried to peer at her, Ka'al's growl stopped them.

"Judging from your pheromones, you are an alpha, a strong one, but we have tools to stop even the mightiest of wolves, dangerous ones that could leave you dead, so do not try to fight us," they warned.

\*Elise,\* Ka'al said through his carnal psychic powers, \*the minute they charge at me and I shift, I need you to run south; there is a cave before the forest ends; stay there till I'm done,\* he told Elise.

Not a moment later, the wolf attacked, with both betas being shifters turning into their wolves, which were painfully smaller than Ka'al's. But being rogues, they lived to kill and hunt and had skills for a fight. Their delta henchmen had wolf strength but no trace of a shifter in them apart from their claws and canines. They snarled their teeth at Ka'al.

\*Go!\*

 He ordered as he shifted into his mighty black wolf, and the fight began. Ka'al broke through the group's defenses, their plans wild yet coordinated as their claws reached for Ka'al's heel to wound him.

Ka'al's canines bit deep into one of the betas' necks, and in a curdling snarl, the crack of bones echoed through the forest. The two betas left looked shocked by Ka'al's strength.

But Ka'al wasn't done with them yet; one of the deltas was his next victim, killed with a vicious strike and slammed into a tree. The moment he set his eye on the second beta and was battling his way with the beta males, the delta snuck in for an attack.

Ka'al howled in pain from a stab wound from a knife—not just any knife but one covered with Vardnom bane, a wicked drug used to poison wolves and potent enough to weaken them.

He killed the beta, crushing his skull as another beta fell to his attack. Their leader was left, and Ka'al gave him a striking blow to the neck. The beta yelped in pain as he bouldered into a tree.

He shifted back to his human form, eyes filled with pain and pride as he spat out blood. "You're him, aren't you? the dread wolf of the south," the beta called as Ka'al snarled in answer.

"I was reckless; I'd give you that, but you were too," he said to Ka'al, whose wolf's head turned in confusion. "I never told you we were only five; for all we know, they have gotten to her already," he said with an evil grin.

A deadly howl left Ka'al's throat as he pushed his claws into the beta's neck, and blood splashed on the tree bark.

He had no time to waste, but when Elise was in danger, the moment he tried to run, he felt a stabbing pain from the Vardnom. It was going to slow his speed, but Ka'al didn't mind as he raced for Elise, hoping he'd get there in time.

... \* \* \* ...

Elise could hardly keep track of how far she had run, and with the blaring carnal warning from Ka'al, she dared not turn back.