

CH 6

Nick POV

The ve-hour drive to Half Moon Pack was too long, and put him in a bad mood. His six-foot-ten inch frame never really t into any vehicle comfortably, he always felt cramped. Even in his personal Hummer. He still felt cramped. They were arriving in a 6 car convoy, leaving room to bring extra wolves home with him.

Braidy had selected 10 males and 10 females to come, and tried to make it as fair as possible. Some were in their mid 20s and others younger. He'd spent the last 7 days being hounded by the un-mated wolves in the pack. Seeing as this was the rst time they were allowed to attend a mating ball in the ve years since Nick had taken over.

Nick hadn't been able to believe all the excitement throughout his pack, while Braidy was trying to sort out who was going. He'd never actually seen anything like it. Perhaps he was not being the best Alpha, keeping them from mating balls. He'd see how this one went, and make a decision on it afterwards.

He and Jeremy were the only ones in his car. It was all black, just like his wolf, and the number plate BlueMR1. So everyone would know it was his; the Alpha to Blue Moon Rising Pack's vehicle.

Alpha Corey and Luna Lindy were waiting for him on the packhouse steps. It was a nice clean looking building, painted in a light green, 'hmm, same as the envelope,' he thought. It had a waist-high hedge all the way along the front, and what appeared to be a fully covered wraparound veranda.

'Cute,' he thought. Could that be the Luna's inuence? Odd. The building itself stood three stories high, but was a good 100 meters long. About half the size of his packhouse, but then his pack was nearly 2000 strong and this one was only 800 or so.

Nick introduced himself, his Beta, Jeremy, and his 20 un-mated wolves, polite formalities. He'd seen the way Luna Lindy's mouth had twitched up in the left corner, in what he could only describe as amusement. He recalled her scent from the invitation, so this was the Luna that thought she could force his hand to be here.

She was a short woman of ve-foot-two, sporting a blond pixie cut which suited her quite well, she had light green eyes, very pale. He'd never seen that shade before, nearly white almost, but denitely green, and her rather plump lips were showing her amusement at his having to be here. She was very tiny. But pretty. Her arm was casually looped through her Mates, she appeared very secure in her position. He could tell, but how she could hold an air of authority was beyond him.

Every pack around would know he did not attend these things, and she probably felt somewhat superior in getting him here. Well, it would be the last time someone tricked him into a mating ball.

They had been shown to their accommodation. He and Jeremy had rooms on the rst oor of the packhouse. Had been told the western side of the rst oor was for guests, the eastern side held the Luna's oce, the packs' libraries and a conference room for Alpha meetings. A Luna having an oce? He shook his head, why he couldn't fathom.

The Alpha's oce, he noted, was on the ground oor directly across from the packhouse front doors. The same place as his, Nick liked being able to access the front door quickly if there was an attack, so it was the best place for it, or so he liked to think.

His un-mated wolves were seen to a long building off the western side of the packhouse, kind of like university dorm-style rooms, but it was just for two days. His wolves would survive the accommodation. They all had reversed cycle air conditioning, a large bed, a small wardrobe and an en-suite bathroom. The room also contained a mini-bar fridge with snacks and drinks in them, though no alcohol his wolves noted.

He'd been outside with Jeremy getting his luggage from his vehicle when Jeremy had cleared his throat, nudged him and said "Hey Nick, look over there."

Nick was still feeling annoyed from the drive here, and the way the Luna had looked at him, but he had moved his eyes off in the direction Jeremy was indicating, and low and behold, there she was "the mutt" he had murmured. He'd come here to get a rematch from, was walking towards a playground. He'd been about to head off after her when he realized she was heading right toward the girls playing in the playground, twins, he noted.

She was still fully kitted out, black combat boots, black tights, knives strapped to each thigh, she was wearing a black leather, under-bust corset with more knives slotted into it, a black skin-tight long-sleeve top. 'Nice sized beasts, probably t in his hands nicely,' he thought absently, and a smile touched his lips, they were pushed up quite perkily by that corset.

Her hood was down and the high collar of her shirt was up, the only parts of her visible were her eyes and her hands, though he couldn't see what colour her eyes were from here; she wasn't facing him. Her bow and quiver were strapped to her back. A very athletic creature, he watched as she vaulted one-handed over the one-meter-high fence around the playground. The bow and quiver didn't hinder her at all, she probably trained with it on. Then she was all over the twin girls in the playground.

His rst instinct had been to stalk over there and tear strips off that she-wolf for their last encounter, but the way she had B-lined those children in the park, had stopped him. From what he was seeing, she was likely their mother. The way he heard her chastise them and watched her play with them, it was likely. He'd have to get her alone.

She moved off down the side of the packhouse, probably lived in it from the way she ran off in that direction with the children. He wondered if she was a ranked member of the pack. That could make things more dicult.

He'd headed off inside hoping to catch a glimpse of what she actually looked like, but he didn't see her. Wherever they had gone, it had not been to the front of the packhouse. He would never allow any of his pack members to stroll through the pack, or into his packhouse dressed like that; kitted out in a fully weaponized manner, as was her retrieval gear. But he guessed not his pack, a different set of rules. A tad disrespectful, he thought to the Alpha of the pack.

He was standing thinking about how she had strolled right into the packhouse like that, the comments from that day, how proud that Beta had seemed, perhaps she was his Mate. Perhaps that was why she was allowed to stroll around kitted out. Though he wouldn't allow Jeremy's Mate to do that, when he found his Mate, that was.

Seeing the she-wolf in the light of day, his men weren't wrong. She was indeed a tiny she-wolf, but their estimate of her height was off. Those boots of hers added a good two inches of height to her small frame, should couldn't be more than ve-six. He was going to tower over the top of her, when they came face to face.

She would fear him instantly. He smiled to himself, he was six-ten and muscled up to the hilt, his shoulders so wide he only just t through a standard-sized doorway. Nick worked out a lot, and aimed to look imposing and threatening, even when he was just standing around, doing nothing. His black hair was a little on the long side but easily swept back with some hair gel, as it was now.

All the she-wolves walking past him were smiling, and batting their lashes at him. He knew he was considered devilishly handsome, with his straight nose, square jaw line and apparently kissable lips. Not too thin, not too fat, one she-wolf had told him, and she'd spent most of her time kissing him, when they'd spent the night together. He also boasted unnaturally long black eyelashes that she-wolves died for. Clean-shaven or unshaven, un-mated she-wolves ocked to him.

His bed was only empty if he wanted it to be, he was very careful to make sure that no pups had been created between him and his mile-long list of lovers. His lovers were under no illusions that he was after anything more than a good hard f**k, he also made sure they were gone the minute he was done with them.

No she-wolf ever spent the night in the Alpha suite, he didn't need nor want them getting any ideas, he was not looking to mark them or make them his Luna. None of them had actually been in the Alpha suite. He used the empty room across the hall for s*x and that was how it would stay.

Even when he got round to picking the warrior to have his heir, the child would not be conceived in his suite. His child, though, would stay in the Alpha suite. The suite housed four bedrooms other than his. His father had multiple children with multiple women, therefore needed the rooms. His child's mother could have a room down the hall if he couldn't convince her to give it up. Which he was hoping to do.

What he really wanted was just a surrogate to birth him and heir. That child would also not see a string of she-wolves coming and going from his bed. He'd seen that as a child, and had hated it every single time, saw the hurt in his mothers eyes every time too. He would not do that to his child.

Several Marques had been set up in a long line behind the packhouse to house all the visiting wolves to eat meals in. He knew three of the visiting Alpha's, and they were very shocked to see him here at the mating ball. He had just shrugged it off and said it was about time. That he was doing it for his pack members. He did not admit to being tricked into it.

His Alpha enhanced senses already smelled arousal from all the un-mated wolves, and several had peeled off to have some fun. He'd had words with his own un-mated wolves, about the etiquette he expected them to display.

There would be no frivolous s*x prior to the ball. He expected them all to wait until after the mating ball. If they did not nd their mate, then they could nd an un-mated partner, to enjoy time with for the last night, but tonight it was expected that they would all behave themselves, and show pride towards their pack.

He himself was constantly bumped into by un-mated she-wolves, and a very irty "Oh, I'm sorry" had followed along with a hand that lingered somewhere on his body, usually his abdomen, and dinner hadn't even started yet. This was just pre-dinner drinks.

He'd had four fully loaded wolfen drinks already. He hated these blasted balls, and the way she-wolves fell all over him, the constant smell of arousal and s*x, of other wolves going at it, drove him mad. Not to mention that his Alpha hearing picked up nearly everything as well. Even Rip was annoyed right now.

He found Jeremy sitting at their table with a red-haired she-wolf in his lap. Clearly, he was not going along with the rules that his Alpha had laid out, the man was obsessed with red-headed women. When he found his Mate, if she wasn't a redhead she might have trouble getting him to Mark and Mate her.

Nick had not seen a single she-wolf come out of his Beta's suite in the last 4 years that was not a redhead. Apparently, it was his favourite colour. This particular she-wolf was sitting very close to him, and he could smell her, and she looked hot and bothered, and although they were sitting here in a very public place, Jeremy's hand was under the girl's skirt.

Nick kicked the back of his chair, and heard the girl suddenly gasp out loud, then a hand clamped over her mouth, 'Oh, for the love of the Goddess.' Nick shot at Jeremy through the mind-link 'get your hand out of there, RULES.' he snapped angrily, the rest of his pack seemed to be obeying but not Jeremy, he just had to push his buttons.

'That was your fault.' Jeremy shot back. 'Startled me and my ngers slipped.' He removed his hand and turned to look at Nick a smirk on his face as he tasted his nger.

Nick was ready to kill him. "Take that s**t to your room." he snarled at his Beta.

Jeremy smiled, and stood grabbing the girl's hand "If you insist, boss," and walked away, taking her with him. Nothing bloody changes with that man.

This was exactly why he hated these things. Wolves were here to see if they could nd their Fated Mate when the full moon rose tomorrow. Yet they were all off getting what they could from strangers, when it was highly possible that they would meet their Mate in just over 24 hours.

This was the one place and time he would not indulge in s*x, not that he expected to nd his mate. But if he did, he didn't want her to smell another woman on him, or have seen him go off to f**k someone, the day before he met her; that is just wrong.

This was also the one time he hated his Alpha senses, and just how heightened they were. Getting any sleep tonight or tomorrow wasn't likely going to happen. He'd probably just roam about and look around the pack, well away from the packhouse.

He was on his 6th drink when he spotted the twin girls from earlier in the evening. They were running across the grassed area, screaming, with what he could only imagine was their nanny in hot pursuit. She looked ushed and exhausted, her dark hair was a mess, and she was covered in, from what his sense of smell could pick up, chocolate sauce. His mouth twitched, they were obviously a handful.

He tracked them across the area behind the packhouse to a short, dark-haired woman. She had an athletic build, she t the description of that mutt. He drained his glass, banged it down on the table and stalked over to her. Stepped right up to her, towering over her in fact, and stood glaring down at her. Her grey eyes widened at his sudden appearance in front of her, and she took a step back, pushed the twins behind her. He took a step forward, he'd drunk enough wolfen loaded scotch to have it effect his judgment. His wolf, Rip, had told him 'not now.' but Nick had waited long enough to have this little wolf apologize for her actions. And apparently, she had been out here the whole time ignoring him. She had to know who he was, he was his Beta, and the Delta. The Gamma was now standing with his arms around the small frightened woman. All their wolves were out ready to take him on.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" Alpha Corey demanded, gravel in his voice to show his wolf was talking with him.

"Getting my damned apology from that mutt, who shot arrows at me and my men," he shot back.

"Who the HELL are you calling a MUTT?" the Gamma yelled at him, stepping forward to size him up.

'He has some guts,' Nick thought.

"Apologize to my Mate this instance, or you and I are going to go toe-to-toe."

"Not till she does rst," Nick replied, he would get his bloody apology.

"Wait, Alpha Nicholas, what are you referring to exactly? Why does Gabby need to apologize to you? Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding here."

"She's the retrieval backup girl, right? I saw those twins with her earlier, when she came back. She owes me an apology."

"Wrong freaking wolf," the Gamma roared at him. He was pissed off.

Maybe he had a right to be, Nick thought. Perhaps drinking hadn't been the best idea. He was frowning now as he looked at the she-wolf, trying to make an assessment of her, from what he'd seen earlier this evening.

Alpha Corey sighed and interrupted his thoughts. "Alpha Nicholas, you are mistaken, this is my Gamma's Mate Gabby, and the wolf you would be looking for would be Lucinda White, and I advise you do apologize, and right now, I and my wolf will not tolerate disrespect like that here."

Nick's frown deepened. He did not like having to apologize for anything, he was an Alpha, and it shouldn't be necessary. But by the look of it, he had just scared the hell out of an innocent woman with her twins directly behind her. He'd royally screwed this up, 'no more drinking this trip.' he told himself.

"My apologies" he said gruy, "I was mistaken." Then he turned and strode away, annoyed with himself for making an ass of himself. He should have known that she was rst. Wasn't going to be able to make an alliance with this pack at this rate.

So who was this Lucinda she-wolf? He was standing well away from the packhouse ticked off at himself for not doing his due diligence, and making sure he had the right she-wolf. Something he would normally do. But he guessed six wolfen strength glasses of scotch was enough for him to forget his due diligence.

Perhaps this Lucinda she-wolf was related to the Gammas family, otherwise how could she be so close to the twins? They had run over to her right away, nil hesitation like she was their mother, and she had clearly chastised them as a parent would. Things were weird here, he thought to himself. He stayed out there until his head cleared, and he felt more himself.

Then, taking a deep breath, Nick headed back out to the tented area and walked over to Alpha Corey's table, looked directly at the Gamma's Mate. "I'm truly sorry, I honestly thought you were the she-wolf I was looking for. I did not mean to frighten you."

She nodded "Thank you." Her Mate, however, still looked ticked off.

He turned to Alpha Corey, "Could you point out... Lucinda was it?" he asked. He didn't want to go making another mistake.

"Not here doesn't attend any balls."

"Mated then?" he asked, trying to judge if he was going to piss off any more wolves.

"No, just doesn't like the attention." Alpha Corey replied "I also wouldn't advise you re-act to her, the way you did Gabby here." he said with a smile, that implied Nick would not like the outcome.

Nick smiled right back. "I can hold my own against one tiny she-wolf."

That actually made the whole table laugh, he even saw Gabby giggle behind her hand.

"What? You all think I can't handle a she-wolf?" he was annoyed with them all now. He was an Alpha Wolf and he could handle anything.

"Oh, we're willing to put money on it." Beta Adam stated, then banged his hand on the table. "A hundred bucks she bites him before he knows it."

To Nicks' shock, he watched as they were all betting suddenly, pulling money out and banging it on the table.

"A hundred on her stabbing him." Delta Pete laughed.

"A hundred on her shifting and going him in wolf form." the Gamma roared with laughter.

"I got a hundred on his family jewels, copping a swift kick." Alpha Corey laughed, nearly falling off his chair.

He stood there and frowned at the lot of them. It completely shocked him that even the Alpha threw money down, and on his family jewels at that.

Luna Lindy strolled over, looked at him, looked at all of them and shook her head "What's the bet today?"

Nick answered her, "They all think I, an Alpha, am a joke and won't be able to handle this she-wolf Lucinda."

Her eyes widened. "Why would you need to handle her in the rst place?"

"She owes me an apology, that is why, and I intend to get it before I leave."

"I would ask politely then." Lindy smiled up at him, and dropped into her Mate's lap. Corey's arms slid round her, and she snuggled right into him. "What's the actual bet?"

"That she bites him, stabs him, goes all wolf on him, or he looses his family jewels." Corey smiled down at her.

"Oh, I'll be in on the trying to stab him, or maybe shoot him with one of her arrows." she chuckled.

"That would start a war with me," Nick stated atly and walked away. He could hear them all absolutely laughing it up and talking about wanting to be there when it happened. He heard the Alpha tell them he'd link'em in, to make sure they were all there.

Where the hell was this Lucinda, according here, he could demand her Alpha to make her come and formally apologize, surely she'd have too, but would he agree to it, if they were all placing bets on this confrontation, he didn't think so. It appeared to him, from what he'd heard, she was not likely to apologize, and was likely to retaliate if he approached her angrily; and they all thought it was funny. They couldn't wait for the showdown to happen, all wanted to be there for it.

Who the hell was this Lucinda, and how did she get away with so much. This pack was completely backwards.