

## Chapter 2 Whispering Goodbye

I am standing at the back of the crowd with my friends, the only people I consider family. Brooklyn is standing to my left, her arm loosely wrapped around my waist and Florence is to my right. Dakota and Madison are standing behind me, making it almost impossible for anyone to see me.

Their Brothers are standing around the five of us and we all watch as Stella walks out of the Pack-house, her arm around Rufus' waist.

Stella is wearing thigh high boots with a stiletto heel, her skirt barely covers her ass and the top barely covers her breasts. Her brown hair is hanging down her back and she is wearing six layers of make-up as usual.

Stella stops in front of the crowd, in a few minutes it will be her eighteenth birthday. Everyone is curious if Rufus was telling the truth, most hope that it is true and only a handful know for sure it is a lie.

For the past six weeks I have been hoping and waiting for Rufus to finally come to his senses, but tonight that hope will probably get crushed.

Six weeks ago Rufus turned eighteen and at that age we are able to find our fated Mate. If you don't find your Mate on your eighteenth birthday, you have to wait for a Full Moon.

I am not supposed to know that Rufus is my fated Mate, but then again I have never heard of someone getting their other half early. Okay, that isn't completely true. Sometimes it happens that they show up a few days or weeks before someone turns eighteen, but not eighteen months early.

Rebel had growled in my head, when Rufus had announced in front of everyone that Stella was his Mate. Stella couldn't confirm it until tonight, her eighteenth birthday and she will crush my hopes if she announces that Rufus had been right.

"Rufus is my Mate." I hear Stella say and soft growls come from the men and women that are standing around me, the only friends I have in this Pack.

"I am going to bed, Brooklyn. I can't stay." I whisper as I turn around and all my friends follow me back to the house. They know what is going on and none of them are too happy about it, but there isn't much we can do.

I am done, I have had enough. This was the last drop and I know what I have to do.

Despite being exhausted, I toss and turn for a long time and finally I drift off to sleep with the thought of leaving early in the morning.

I wake to a blood curdling scream, a second later a mournful howl is heard through the territory.

For a moment I contemplate on staying where I am, in my warm and comfy bed. Then of course I start to wonder what happened and if I want any answers, lying here in bed won't get me those answers.

The moment I open my door, I see that every door to my left and right are open as well. We all run out of the house to get to the Pack-house as fast as we can.

"Can you believe that Alpha Hank went to see Alpha Lincoln without back-up?" Hayden asks, not directing the question to anyone. We both know that someone will answer and our Pack-members don't disappoint.

At least now I understand the blood curdling scream I heard, the bond with his Mate must have been severed and that only means one thing, we have a new Alpha.

It doesn't take long before the rumors start flying and I keep close to Dakota to find out what is being told through the mind-link. There are only eight Pack-members that know the truth about me and one of those things is why I don't have a link to our Pack.

Normally a Wolf or Lycan get initiated into the Pack the day after they turn sixteen and that allows them to link whoever they need to link. In my case, no one ever bothered with me and that included my initiation into the Pack. It never happened and most of the time I am fine with it, it is moments like this that I hate not having the Pack-bond.

Thanks to my enhanced hearing, I am able to piece together some of the story. Sounds like Alpha Hank decided to visit Alpha Lincoln on his own to broker an alliance, but somewhere during the visit things went south and now we have a new Alpha.

I am surrounded by my friends, when Madison leans closer to me. "Still planning on leaving, Meadow?" She whispers and all I can do is nod my head. This doesn't change my plans, I will be gone before our new Alpha arrives and I will join the Renegades to serve the Elders.

Half an hour later everyone goes back in their rooms in the Pack-house or they head home, this house has been my home since I turned fourteen and it seems that no one is missing me at my birth home. I wait another hour, before opening the door again and I stare at the sky as I close the door to the only real home I have known for years.

I slowly make my way down the stairs and from time to time I stop to listen, but it seems that everyone is fast asleep.

Getting closer to the border, I realize that no one is actually running the borders anymore. They are too busy talking about what could have happened between Alpha Hank and Alpha Lincoln and it suits me just fine.

The moment I see the SUV, I start smiling. Hayden, Brooklyn's Brother, gave it to me six months ago, when he got a new one from his Father and inside is everything I am going to need from here on out.

I look over my shoulder towards the Pack-house, the last sliver of hope I had fades away and I whisper goodbye to my friends, the closest thing to a family I have.