

## Chapter 13

\*Calvin\*

We've been driving for a bit. Peter said we'd make it there tonight, after dinner, thankfully.

"It took you much longer than this to return to Lunar Falls," I comment.

"Yes," he confirms. "I went through Crescent Moon. I didn't want anyone to find out about Dorothy."

"But now we're coming from a different direction."

He laughs a little. "Yes. I'm planning to tell him I'd left something at Lunar Falls, and Robert met us halfway if he mentions it."

It makes sense, I guess. It's believable enough. I sigh as I stare out the window. I hate all of this.

"Listen," Peter says, pulling my attention from the thick pine trees that are increasing in number as we continue. "I understand how difficult this is for you. Feeling your mate before meeting is rare and happens from extreme pain or fear. I need you to understand how important it is to keep this quiet and make the right moves so no one knows we're searching for her.

"They are hurting her already, and if they find out, it

will likely become worse for her. I know that isn't what you want to hear, but until we find out where she is, you can't storm in anywhere. You have to act like you're searching. You have to smile and dance with pretty girls and sniff around every room."

"I understand," I say quietly. "How am I supposed to go to balls and eat fancy food when she's being hurt?"

"Because it's the best path to get to her," he tries to reassure me. "And the quickest. If we storm into a pack and she isn't there, word will spread, and we'll probably never find her."

I nod. I know he's right, but I hate it.

"Someday," he continues. "You'll have her beside you and won't let anything hurt her again."

"If she's smart, she'll reject me."

"What?" he asks, shocked at my words.

I shrug. "She's young," I tell him. "She's so young."

"She's nineteen," he says, as if that's an acceptable age.

"I know," I say, shaking my head. "I'm so old now."

She smiles sadly. "I doubt she's going to care about that, Calvin. Come on, let's go in."

I take a deep breath and open the door, staring at the packhouse. Instead of oversized, opulent packhouses like I've seen so far, this one is a log cabin. Still, it's enormous and very nice, but there's something more... comfortable here.

"Good to see you, Peter," says an older man, probably around his age, as he walks up to him with his hand outstretched and a smile on his face.

"You, too," he tells him, shaking his hand and pulling him into a hug. "This is Calvin, Queen Molly's brother."

"Good to meet you," he says, releasing Peter and shaking my hand, pulling me into a hug I don't return. "Not a hugger. I got it. Come on in. Daisy is finishing up the rooms for you guys."

We follow him in as a couple of kids, who appear to be teenagers, unloading our luggage. "Sorry. We didn't expect you till tomorrow, so we're a little behind."

"It's fine," Peter tells him, waving off his worries. "I left something in Lunar Falls and had to head back. Just glad the Alpha met us halfway."

"Ahh, that makes more sense."

The inside of the packhouse is just as nice as the outside but still rustic and, well, normal. It feels like a home rather than a museum. I like it more

than any place we've been.

The Alpha leads us up a staircase and into a room where a woman is placing pillows on the bed. She's older, too, and smiles as she sees us.

"King Peter!" she says, walking over to hug him. "It's so good to have you here again."

"It's just Peter, now," he tells her gently. "And it's good to be here."

Peter introduces me, and she hugs me, though I'm expecting it this time, and I return the hug with one arm. "You look just like your father at this age."

I step back, looking at her nervously. "Yeah, I'm being told that quite a bit."

"It's astonishing," she says, patting my cheek. "So very handsome. I do hope your mate is here. I'll show you around tomorrow after breakfast."

"Thank you," I tell her with a nod.

Peter laughs a little. "This isn't a pack that's going to throw a ball," he tells me, and my shoulders sag with relief.

"Not a dancer?" Daisy asks.

"No, ma'am," I tell her. "I've, uhh, lived in the Rogue land for so long that I'm not real good with the fancy stuff."

She smiles and pats my arm. "We'll we don't do that here. The pack is well off, but we don't have to flaunt it."

"That's great to hear," I tell her.

"Here, I'll show you to your room," she says, tugging my arm.

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She leads me to the room next door, almost a mirror image. "The Bathroom is through that door, and the other is the closet. If you need anything, just find me. We don't keep a large staff, and I handle it all."

"I'm sure I have everything I need," I tell her

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politely, glancing at my bags waiting to the side.

"You sure did pack a lot," she says with a light laugh.

"Mrs. Audrey packed for me," I say sheepishly.

"Mrs.?" she says, leaning up and kissing my cheek.

"You are just precious. It makes me wish I had a daughter to introduce you to."

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I wake with a start. It's happening again. I glance at the clock. 2:45. Did they wake her to hurt her, or is it a different time there?

I find the bond between us and push my aura to her. "I'm here. I'm here."

I inspect the feel of the bond, almost like a link that's blocked. Can everyone feel their mate if they search? Is this just because I can feel her?

"I'm searching for you, Ada, I swear. It will take some time, but I will find you."

The feeling passes, and I push my hair back in frustration. I think the worst is not knowing what is happening to her. Are they beating her?

Breaking bones to let her wolf heal them just to break them again? Are they forcing themselves on her? I have no idea what they're doing to her, and it's causing my imagination to run wild with fear.

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+10 Points

If I can feel her, can she feel me? I try to remove any thoughts of what is happening to her and replace them with thoughts of what I intend to do to whoever is hurting her. I'll tie them to a chair and pull their nails out. I'll pry the teeth out of their skull. I'll watch them bleed out on the ground while I hold my mate and get her to safety. I push this at the blocked bond. I have no clue if the thoughts will make it to her, but I'm trying- for her.

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Peter knocks on the door, and it wakes me. "Sorry," I mutter as he enters. "I felt it again."

"In the night?" he asks, clearly shocked.

"2:45," I tell him. "They either woke her to torture her, or they are in another time zone."

"The territory doesn't stretch across that big of a difference. They likely woke her."

I jump in the shower and dress quickly, towel-drying my hair. Peter is wearing jeans and a sweater, so I assume something similar is allowed. I tie my boots and stand, following him to the dining room.

It's a small room, seating no more than thirty, and my surprise must show on my face.

"If the entire pack needs to eat together, then we can do it outside," Luna Daisy tells me. There's no

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sense in eating in a half-empty room 98% of the year. Come, take a seat," she says as she pats the chair beside her.

"She's talking to you," Peter clarifies, whispering in my ear.

I nod and join her. She's reaching across and filling my plate for me before I even completely sit. "So, how is your father? We were all shocked to learn his Luna wasn't his fated mate, and he had a daughter!"

I pause, looking up at Peter. "You can tell her whatever you want. Nothing is classified."

She looks at me surprised but waits for my answer. "He's alright, I guess. He's had a rough few months."

"It must have been stressful with his kids being in such danger."

I shrug. "He rejected his mate to kill her."

"What?"

"She was helping the man who was trying to kill Molly and the kids. It had to be done."

She blinks at me a few times, then at Peter, who laughs loudly.

"Calvin has a way with words," Peter tells them. "But that is, basically, what happened. Seth is

+10 Points

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working on the briefing for the Alphas now that they're back at the palace, but we can tell you the whole story now."



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