

CH 2

She wiped away the tears that fell down her face here in the darkness of her room. It was the only place that she allowed them to fall. That moon was going to set every 29 days for the rest of her life, and it was going to just be a reminder of what she would never have. She was going to have to see wolves scenting out each other, hear them growl the word mine and watch them come together. Get to have that perfect moment where a Mate Bond snapped into place, and they were loved and would get to feel complete.

She was never going to be allowed to forget she was mate-less. Just looking at mated wolves would remind her, seeing ligree would remind her, even seeing a rejection would remind her that those very things were not for her. Because she was Mate-less.

She was not going to let the pack see how hurt and devastated she was, only here in the privacy of her home, behind a closed door, inside a sound-proofed room, would she cry and yell and scream about it not being fair.

She would never show then she was weak and hurting, unhappy and demoralised. She would show them she was strong and never tell them she was Mate-less. Only the Matchmaker and the Alpha knew right this minute, and she was hoping it would stay that way. No-one else needed to know, and she was going to make that request as well. For it to stay a secret, she didn't want the pitying looks from those around her, or her friends suddenly stepping back and away from here, when they got their Mates, to try and not show her how happy they were, when she'd never have that.

She got up and made herself eat breakfast when the sun rose, and dressed in jeans and a simple tee-shirt before making her way to the packhouse to see Alpha Franco. She got there before he did and just sat and waited on one of the chairs out in the foyer by his oce door.

She watched as pack members walked about, holding hands with their Mates, smiling all lovingly at each other. She didn't need to see it, didn't really want to see it, but this was something she was going to have to get used to. She managed to smile at the people she knew, as though nothing was wrong. When everything in her world was so very wrong and her life, as she'd known it, had fallen apart and crumbled down and around her.

Alpha Franco walked into the packhouse, and he dismissed his unit, and headed for his oce. "Come on in Ryder." He stated simply, and she followed him inside. It wasn't the rst time she'd been in his oce. No one would think she was in trouble, that it was just him checking in on her was all, like he had done regularly since her dad died.

He closed the door and waved her to a seat in front of his large desk, sat himself down and looked right at her. She knew why she was here; he'd told her already what this meeting was about. "I'm sorry to have heard the news from Amora, Ryder."

She nodded, because so was she. "Maybe Amora got it wrong." She offered.

"I don't think so, she has never gotten it wrong to my knowledge." He sighed heavily himself now. "How are you doing with the news?"

Ryder stared at him for a long moment and then stated, "As well as one could be expected, there is nothing I can do about it." and there wasn't.

"I hear you've been throwing yourself into warrior training," Alpha Franco nodded.

"Yes, I'll make you proud, get to that Elite Warrior status. That you said you thought I would make it too. No distractions to stop me now." She muttered.

"Your life here within the pack is going to change now, Ryder," Alpha Franco stated simply.

"I know, a warrior only."

"Not exactly... I'll be completely honest with you. Unfortunately, you'd be the rst I put on the front line, for every attack." He nodded. "You being Mate-less and having no actual family either. Your death won't affect the pack at all, no loss to be occurred if you're gone, so..." he shrugged. "I understand that no children were ever seen by the matchmaker, either."

Ryder just sat and stared at him. She was still trying to comprehend his previous comment about her death and that it would mean nothing to this pack. Was he implying she was useless to him, and only good to die rst?

"With no Mate, and no children to come from you, Ryder, you won't help this pack grow or become stronger at all. There is, however, a service you can provide for this pack that would be useful for me... my men."

She frowned at him now, though a part of her didn't like hearing those last two words at all. "And that would be?"

"Become a member of the pack's brothel, service the un-mated warrior's s****I needs."

Ryder stared at him now, wide-eyed. Horried at just the thought of that, she'd never once thought that her own Alpha would want her to become a w***e for his pack.

"Your very pretty Ryder, the men will like you. You'd be paid well, likely see a lot of the ranked members, and might even nd yourself on the high-demand list, and get to choose your own lovers after a few years when you become more experienced at serving their needs."

He was talking like it was a done deal, she realised, but this was not what she wanted at all. She had barely let one boy kiss her, and she'd never had s*x before. Now she was to just go off and service his wolves of all ages, meet all their sick and twisted fetishes. Have some random wolf pay her to take her virginity. "No." she gasped out "I'm not doing that."

"Alright, then you have only one other option open to you, seeing as you are of no true value here, to me or this pack anymore, Ryder. You should go and join the king's army. They take the Mate-less as soldiers without issue. There you will have a life of service, meals provided, clothing and a future of some sort. Work hard enough, and you could rank up to the highest of ranks. You are a good, strong warrior. I'm sure you will serve the king well."

"But Alpha, I could be a warrior here." She pleaded. She didn't want to leave the pack and go to the Wolfen Realm. She'd never been there before, and had heard many a horrid tale of the wars that raged there.

"I have no place for the Mate-less here, Ryder. They all go to the brothel, male and female alike. You would know this. The choice is yours, of course; serve the king or become a working member of the pack's brothel. Though Ryder, I would choose carefully. I was not lying when I said you would be in high demand and not likely just from this pack but visiting packs as well."

Ryder did know this; her own father had his favourites, and she'd seen many visiting packs head for the brothel. She did not want that life for herself, she was now just sitting staring at her Alpha completely speechless by the options presented to her.

He was sitting in his chair just watching her, and after several long minutes of silence he stated, "You may go, Ryder. Take some time to make your decision. You have until the day before your 18th birthday to make it. I still expect you to train up until you make your decision, be a valued pack member until you're legally allowed to leave or become a member of the pack brothel."

She left her Alpha's oce more than shocked by this turn of events. She could hardly believe what he'd just said to her. How was it that they were the only options open to her? After all the encouragement he'd given her over the past year and a bit. He'd not even seemed upset by it himself. Just laid it out as if he didn't care at all. She wasn't even 18 yet, and he'd just turned her world completely upside-down and inside-out; she was of no value to him, it was just her body for his un-mated warriors that could be of use. That was all and nothing more.

It was so very wrong. How could he just be a completely different person from the man she'd known over the past year? She didn't understand him. He had told her she'd make for a great warrior, rank right up to elite status, and he, himself, had told her he wanted that for her. But now she was mate-less and useless, because no children had ever been seen either.

So, she was now of no value to him whatsoever. She'd been blindsided by her own Alpha, and kind of walked numbly back to her home and sat there uncomprehending of the situation she now found herself in.