

CH 6 - Kyle

KYLE POV

Three years.

Three goddamn years, and still nothing.

No pull. No scent. No spark.

Just one pack after another, the same hopeful stares, the same polite rejection in my chest.

Nothing.

My sts slammed into the punching bag again, the impact loud in the empty gym, echoing back at me like it was mocking me. Sweat dripped down my temples, sliding along my jawline and soaking into my shirt, but I didn't stop. Couldn't.

The sound of skin hitting leather rang out like gunre. One, two—pause—then a brutal uppercut that sent the bag swinging wildly on its chain.

"You're gonna rip that thing off the ceiling."

I didn't stop punching.

"You say that like it's a bad thing," I muttered through clenched teeth, jabbing again, then following with a cross that rattled the hook.

Heavy footsteps approached across the padded mat oor, and I didn't have to look to know who it was. Same gait. Same weight. Same wolf signature in my head.

Keegan.

The second born twin. My brother. My storm.

"You in the mood to hit something that hits back?" he asked, voice low and tired, but not without that familiar challenge buried underneath. It was the only thing that ever managed to pull me out of my own damn head.

I stopped the bag with both hands and nally turned to face him.

He already had gloves in hand, a faint bruise on his jaw, probably from training with Kingsley earlier. His black tank top clung to his torso, and his expression mirrored mine—worn out, fed up, barely containing the burn beneath the skin.

"Yeah," I said, cracking my neck. "I am."

No need for warm-ups. We were always ready when it came to each other.

We moved to the center mat without another word. The rest of the pack house gym was quiet, most wolves off on night patrol or asleep. Only the low hum of the overhead lights kept us company.

Keegan tossed me a pair of MMA gloves, and I caught them mid-air.

The moment the velcro snapped shut around my wrists, I felt it. The shift in the air. The tension. The anticipation of pain that didn't scare me anymore.

Pain was predictable. Reliable. Almost comforting. Unlike the fated bullshit we'd been chasing for years.

"You call Kendrick back from that outpost?" I asked, bouncing on the balls of my feet as Keegan started circling me.

"Yeah. Still no luck on his end."

Figures.

We circled each other in silence for a few beats, the air thick with unsaid words and mutual frustration.

Then Keegan moved.

Fast. A jab toward my face that I blocked easily, but he followed with a quick leg sweep that almost knocked me off balance. Almost.

I grinned.

"There he is."

I retaliated with a low hook to his ribs, but he shifted just enough to take the hit without losing momentum. He came at me harder, more aggressive than usual, which told me exactly what I needed to know.

He was just as pissed off as I was.

We locked into a rhythm, one only brothers like us could know. The kind born from years of training together, ghting beside one another, bleeding on the same ground. Each blow was precise, controlled chaos. Our footwork echoed across the gym mats, breaths heavy, muscles burning.

He caught me with a right to the shoulder, and I used the momentum to spin, landing a sharp elbow to his side. He grunted, but didn't back off.

Good.

I needed this.

I needed to forget how it felt to walk into pack after pack and leave with that hollow silence inside me. I needed to stop hearing Mom's hopeful voice every time we returned, trying to hide the disappointment in her eyes.

Our parents had known each other since they were pups. Grew up side by side. Fought together. Loved each other in that raw, destined way we were all supposed to nd.

Hell, they'd been with ve pups by the time our mom hit her twenty-second birthday.

And now here we were—Kyle, Keegan, Kendrick, and Kingsley—the four Alphas of the Savage Pack... and still unmated. Still untethered.

And I was the rst born. The one who was supposed to lead by example.

Keegan lunged again, and I ducked low, driving a hard uppercut into his ribs. He hissed in pain, but it twisted into a grin.

"You've been holding back all week," he said, catching his breath as we stepped back and reset.

"I've been holding back for three years," I snapped. "I'm tired of this. Tired of chasing shadows."

Keegan didn't answer right away. He bounced in place, shaking out his arms.

"You think I'm not?"

We went at it again, this time with more fury. The next exchange was messy, wild, less about form and more about release. He got me good with a left hook to the jaw, and stars burst behind my eyes.

I spit blood to the side, wiped my mouth with the back of my glove, and grinned.

"Still hit like a Delta."

"You wish."

I charged him this time, slamming my shoulder into his chest and tackling him to the mat. We grappled, twisting, each trying to get the upper hand. My knee dug into his thigh, his elbow pressed into my throat. We rolled, muscles straining, sweat slicking our skin.

Finally, I pinned him, forearm across his collarbone, both of us breathing hard.

"You done?" I asked.

"Not even close."

He surged up, throwing me off, and we were back on our feet.

The ght continued for another ten minutes, maybe twenty—I didn't know. Time blurred in the heat of adrenaline and the weight of unspoken fury. When we nally collapsed side by side on the mats, it wasn't because either of us had won.

It was because neither of us could stand anymore.

We stared at the ceiling, chests heaving. The overhead lights buzzed quietly, casting our shadows long and jagged across the gym.

"I hate this," Keegan muttered. "The waiting. The hoping. It's like... we're built for war, and all they want us to do is feel something."

I exhaled through my nose. "We were raised on the idea of a fated bond. They made it sound like it would x everything."

He nodded slowly. "But no one told us what it would feel like to not nd her."

Silence stretched between us.

"I don't know how much longer I can keep doing this, man," I admitted. "Every time I think I'm numb, it hits worse the next time."

Keegan turned his head to look at me. "You think she's still out there?"

I didn't answer right away.

Because the truth was... I didn't know.

And that terried me.

Keegan must've seen something in my eyes, because his expression darkened.

"You're not thinking about a chosen mate, are you?" he asked, voice sharp with warning. "Come on, Kyle. Mom would never forgive us. And Dad—s**t, we'd probably get a beating just for thinking about it."

I let out a bitter laugh. "I'm not. I swear. But... sometimes it's hard not to wonder if the Moon Goddess just skipped us."