

Chapter 13 - Subtle but fascinating turn...

Nicolas POV

This was big—very big.

However, I could not comprehend Alpha Noah's motivation for going to such great lengths to mate with Zara.

"On what grounds?" Beta Ronan growled loudly beside me, filling the room with silence.

"He claims to be the rightful next-in-line Alpha of the Silverado Pack," the Elder said. "He will take matters into his own hands if the future Luna does not submit to him by the next moon."

"That will be the day!" Ray roared from the back of my mind. "Let me have him! I'll show him where he can shove those threats of his!"

Zara tensed up beside me, and I could hear her heart thumping like a bouncing ball against her rib cage.

She found that idea offensive. So did I.

"But Luna Zara is mated," Ronan stated. "Just a few days ago, my Alpha and I attended the ceremony. The majority of the wolves present here today saw the ceremony firsthand."

"That is correct," the Elder replied, appearing a little uneasy. "However, Alpha Noah claims that he is her fated mate; thus, by principle, he is entitled."

"By principle?" Ronan interrupted the Elder. "He has no claim on her if she is marked. That is the law of the wolf, enforced by the goddess herself. No wolf is allowed to take a mate from another wolf. You cannot violate these laws!"

Tensions among the wolves increased because Ronan, who was well-versed in our laws, would not stop arguing with the Elder.

Zara's complexion paled and her lower lip started to quiver as the arguments continued.

"She looks frightened," Ray commented worryingly.

"She certainly does," I replied, sensing her shiver next to me.

"Then let them show us all here that she and Beta Levi are in fact marked," the Elder remarked.

Ray snarled in my head, igniting a surge of rage within me. That was a ridiculous request. The council was taking this too far!

Nobody ever had to provide evidence of being marked after a mating ceremony.

"Alpha Noah rejected her in favor of a chosen mate. He was not interested in her," Beta Levi roared out of his chair. His eyes were shifting to black, and his face turned murderous. "He has no claim to the Silverado Pack, Luna!"

My heart skipped a beat, and my eyes grew wide. I felt a chill go down my spine. Even though I knew Zara was suffering, Beta Levi's words affected me, and I furrowed my brows in response.

Why did he say "the pack Luna" rather than "my mate" or "my Luna"?

Did any other person notice the words he used?

Despite his intense overprotectiveness toward Zara, I was certain that they were not mated.

"Order! Order!" The assembly was called to order by the Elder.

The cold rejection of a Silver Wolf infuriated the wolves, and they agreed with Beta Levi that Alpha Noah no longer had any claim to her.

Zara flew to her feet, and the room fell silent.

"If I present you with my mate mark," she uttered, her face turning red out of anger. "Will you let me and Beta Levi be?"

Her boldness startled me, and I unintentionally winced. It appeared as though she was returning to her old self.

"Her old self?" I internally chuckled at my selected words.

I have hardly had time to spend more than a few minutes with her, and even so, here I am, pretending to know her.

What the hell is wrong with me? Has the bond already made me a slave to her scent and beauty?

Would I be able to resist the bond for much longer?

"Is resisting the bond really what you want?" Ray asked casually. "She is perfect, even more than Isabella was."

I could not bear to think of Isabella; it only made me feel guilty and sad. But for the first time in the last couple of years, I realized that thinking about her did not hurt as much as it used to.

Was my heart mending? Was it because of Zara?

The Elder nodded, interrupting my train of thought.

Zara closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. Reaching out, she took the white chiffon scarf that hung around her neck, untied it, and gave it to Beta Levi. Her fingers were trembling when she pulled the shoulder panel of her blue dress out of the way, exposing her slender neck and briefly displaying a mate mark.

"Are you happy now?" Alpha Rico roared and leaped to his feet. Alpha Rico had been tense throughout the meeting. I was surprised that he had managed to keep his cool for this long. He was known for losing his temper the quickest among the Alphas.

The elder looked back at the council members seated behind him. They all gave a nod of agreement.

"Yes, you have pleased the council with the evidence," the elder said, and Beta Levi hurried to stand up, covering Zara.

The wolves behind us were restless and eager to destroy the council. I felt like that too.

"May the council allow us to take a quick break?" Ronan asked.

The meeting room quickly cleared out when the elder gave his approval.

My gaze followed Zara up the stairs, trailing behind her father and Beta. The she-wolf never ceased to amaze me.

"Have you looked at her mating mark closely?" Ronan mind-linked me. "It does not resemble a mating mark at all."

I squinted as I turned to face him.

"What are you trying to say?" I asked. I had not given her mark much thought. The perfectness of Zara's skin took my attention a little too much.

"Luna Zara and Beta Levi are lying about marking each other," he replied.

It made sense, and maybe Ronan was right.

I knew without a doubt that Zara and her beta were never intimate.

With a tiny smile starting to show on the corners of my lips, I rose from my chair. Not only could I smell Zara's delicious arousal driving Ray and me crazy, but she was also acutely aware of my close proximity.

"I agree," I replied, with Zara's averted face aching before my eyes.

"How are you going to address this?" Ronan asked carefully. He knew I was not fond of people who lied, and this was not your typical little white lie.

"I am going to teach my mate a lesson about deceiving hundreds of wolves, including me, not once but twice," I replied, turning to face the exit. "I am going to give her a lesson she will not soon forget. One that will stick in her memory forever."

Ronan's eyes grew wide, but he remained silent. He knew better than to ask questions. I could be very cruel in my techniques.

I wasn't planning to hurt Zara; I was just going to make a point that she would never forget.

It didn't take me long to find Zara. She and her Beta were outside in the garden square having a heated argument.

"That is not going to help, Levi!" Zara yelled, losing her temper. "There is no turning back! We are in too deep!"

"Are you listening to yourself, Zara?" Beta Levi asked, his tone deadly. "This is our home—our pack we are talking about! What about our families, the pups, the wolves who can no longer defend themselves, and any other members of the pack? We are unable to simply."

"So, in order to save the pack, you would rather have me go suck Alpha Noah's d*ck or be thrown to the wolves?" She scoffed, her eyes darkening with a growing rage.

"Her wolf is undoubtedly more hostile than she is toward Alpha Noah," Ray commented. "I wonder why that is."

"Your guess is as good as mine," I casually replied. Even though I am aware that rejection breaks the bond and leaves the wolf bitter and in excruciating pain, this seems a bit excessive.

"And our mate exhibits a short fuse," Ray chuckled.

"And she does not have a very Luna-like attitude," I added. "I wouldn't mind f*cking that potty mouth of hers."

"Oh, and you would enjoy that!" Ray snickered.

"You have no idea," I agreed. I could already imagine Zara being on her knees and taking my whole shaft in her hands.

I internally grunted, feeling my c*ck twitching.

"That's not what I am saying," Beta Levi sighed, defeated, cutting my lustful moment short when he pulled Zara to his chest. "I promise never to force you to do anything against your will."

Zara let out a sigh.

"I am sorry for dragging you into this," she whispered against his chest, tears threatening to escape her eyes. "I swear to you, I will put things right."

"I am sure you will," he said, hugging her.

"It seems like they have a lot of faith in each other," Ray said, c*****g his head to the side.

Was their relationship intriguing to him?

Zara withdrew from Beta Levi and smiled gently.

"You know that I love you," she said, blotting the tears from the side of her face. "Our friendship is something I cherish; you are my best friend."

My heart felt a twinge of jealousy. My mate should not be declaring her love to someone else.

"And I feel the same," Beta Levi replied. "I only hope that our second..."

"There you are, Beta," Alpha Rico called, and Levi's thought faded.

"Alpha, is there a problem?" Beta Levi worriedly inquired.

"No, no, dear Beta," Alpha Rico replied. "I want to introduce you to Alpha Herman and Alpha Samuel. The other two Silver Blessed Pack Alphas."

Levi paused, glancing down at Zara as though he needed permission.

"It's okay. I am all right. Go with my father and meet Alpha Samuel and Alpha Herman," Zara said. "I will see you inside."

"You are not going to stay here alone." Levi snarled protectively under his breath.

"I am not; I am just going to powder my nose before I join you," she said, perching herself up on her tiptoes and planting a kiss on his cheek.

Another wave of jealousy erupted inside me. Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to ignore the wave of jealousy and reminded myself that, on paper, Beta Levi was her mate.

I cursed under my breath when I realized Zara was gone and ran inside, following her scent.

A cunning smile trailed my lips as I noticed how empty and dark the hallways were and waited on the stairs. As soon as Zara came out of the restroom, I grabbed her.

If only I had known that the course of events was about to take a subtle but fascinating turn...
