

Chapter 3

Sienna

It has been two weeks since my branding and the injuries are completely healed, thank goddess. I seemed to heal exceptionally fast in spite of my malnourishment. Things in the pack house have been very different lately. I'm unsure of why. It seemed like I was being completely left alone and, honestly, it was wonderful. Fear is the prominent aura I was feeling from the household. I could kiss whatever was causing it, it made my life so much easier.

Alpha said we were expecting some guests tonight, so I should make more food and, specifically his favorite, roast beef with carrots and mashed potatoes. He even told me to focus on cleaning just the guest rooms today, not to bother with the 2nd or 3rd oors. Even more shocking, Luna Tammy stopped me today and asked for my clothing measurements, as if I knew. I gave her vague answers and she didn't blow a gasket. Something was up.

"Tammy?" I asked informally.

"Hm?" She grunted in response as she took a tape measure out and began sizing me up.

"What's going on? Everyone is so tense, so fearful." I noted

"King Edwards' mate, Hope, was killed unexpectedly." She responded grimley.

I let in a sharp intake of breath. I had heard of Edward, he was the Lycan King of the northern territories. He took over ruling when I was only 12 years old. My heart ached for him. Loosing your mate was said to be the most painful experience someone could endure.

"He has ordered a search for her murderer." She added "It would be wise of you to keep your head down and mouth closed, she warned. Her eyes searched mine for conrmation. I simply nodded in agreement.

After Tammy left, I got to work on laundry and vacuuming, followed by dusting, dishes, and then began to prep for dinner. There were 3 oors in the pack house, the Alphas family on the top oor, beta and gamma on the second, and the kitchen, living room, dining room, meeting rooms, and oces on the rst oor. I was grateful I was relieved of two thirds of my duties today. It would give me more time to prepare dinner. I worked as quickly as I could, having gured out the quickest process to nish my tasks over the years. I practically had it down to a science at this point, even factoring in time for Heather to pull some stunts. Today, however, she was nowhere to be seen. My day kept getting better and better.

Dinner time came faster than ever, but luckily I had everything under wraps. The doorbell chimed signaling our guests had arrived. I wiped my hands off with my apron and made my way to the front door to greet our guests. But before I could make it to the door, Alpha Carl was already opening it and greeting the men before him with handshakes and offering them drinks.

"What in Goddess' name..." My wolf and I thought in unison.

"Did we nally die in our sleep?" Sienna asked.

"Alpha must be in some deep trouble..." I shook my head, struggling to look away from the phenomenon that was happening before my very eyes. I was surprised the man knew how to use the door, he never lifted a nger.

There were three men before us, one screamed "Alpha", the other was either his Beta or Gamma and the last was very built, but carried no aura. He must be a head warrior or something. The glint their eyes held as they looked my way was unnerving.

"Come with me", Luna Tammy spoke in a hushed tone. Not that it would really matter, we were werewolves, our hearing was immaculate. Our guests probably heard her, but she was too stupid to realize it.

I followed Tammy down the hall to one of the guest rooms. They were beautifully decorated with neutral beige walls, a bed with a dark green comforter sat in the center of the room, a night stand with an adorable little lamp on one side of the bed and a long dresser on the wall kitty corner from the bed. I secretly always hoped I could one day live in a nice room once again and not in a heap on the oor in the basement. On the queen bed there was a duffel bag I don't remember ever seeing.

"Here, go shower and freshen up. There are toiletries on the counter." Tammy said, avoiding eye contact as she threw a garment bag in my direction. I stood there dumbfounded, staring at her.

"Quit wasting time you fool!" Tammy snapped. Yup, that's more like it.

I hesitantly made my way to the bathroom where I found a slew of expensive-looking hair and makeup products, a razor, toothbrush and toothpaste. My showers were currently giving myself a sponge bath from the washtub in the basement. It had been at least 2 years since I had a proper shower, except for one occasion when I snuck a shower, only to get caught and branded for it. My gut told me something was a miss, but I don't get very many luxuries these days, so I took the opportunity that came my way and enjoyed the moment.

The bathroom began to fog up from all the hot water I was gorging myself on. My muscles began to relax for the rst time in forever. I'm not sure how long I spent in the shower, but surprisingly no one rushed me. I scrubbed my hair and body with the expensive products and even shaved my legs. This day kept getting better and better. My hair looked much better than normal, but it still didn't have the same shine it once did. Malnourishment didn't help, stress and anxiety didn't either. My ribs made their appearance in the mirror along with the bags under my eyes. My self-pitting was cut short when I saw all the makeup on the counter. I had never used makeup before. I decided to skip the makeup for now, Tammy could scream about it later. I didn't want to look like a clown after having just cleaned up. Which is exactly what would happen if I tried to do my own makeup. I unzipped the garment bag to reveal a very sexy little red dress, and a matching bra and panty set. I slipped on the new pair of panties. They were black with lace and only covered half of my butt. The equally sexy matching strapless bra pushed my boobs up and together. After adjusting myself a little, I looked back in the mirror to get a full view of myself.

"You look like a meal." Sienna noted.

Rocks began to weigh in my stomach. This can't be good. I shimmied into the red dress and zipped up the hidden side zipper. Goddess I could clean up nicely. But I needed to get to the bottom of this and fast.

"Tamm-" I started as I opened the bathroom door. To my suprise, she was sitting on the bed waiting for me.

"Come, sit." She gestured to a chair pulled in front of a mirror. I hesitantly took a seat in the wooden chair. She began brushing through my long hair, blow drying it and then curling it. Goddess, it felt so nice to have someone else brush through your hair. I practically had to suppress a moan. She frowned when she saw my face and retreated to the bathroom, bringing back the makeup I purposely left behind. Thank Goddess, I thought I had been caught drooling.

"What are y-"

"Shh. Close your eyes". She cut me off.

I obeyed and closed my eyes. I felt her applying something to my face and then my lips and nally my eyelids. When I opened my eyes, I didn't recognize myself. I looked like a grown woman. I mean, I know I'm 18 and all, but I have never felt like a woman, I have never been treated like one. She did my makeup to look very natural but with a sensual touch to it. The neutral colors made my eyes pop and with the re engine red dress I looked, well, sexy.

"Why?" I turned to face her. She wore a solid poker face.

"You do as your told or you will die. Lets go, Heather." She said with a straight face as she held open the door of the guest room I once found so appealing, now lled with dread.

"Hello gentlemen! Such a pleasure to have you in our home! So sorry for the wait, you know how we ladies are." Tammy said, clearly kissing ass.

"Luna," The visiting Alpha gave a curt nod."and this must be Heather?" He looked towards me expectidly. I could feel Tammy practically boring a hole through me, Alpha Carl too, for that matter.

"U-ugh yeah, hi." I awkwardly greeted.

"She is far more beautiful than you gave her credit for, Carl." The visiting Alpha spoke.

"So do we have a deal then?" Alpha Carl spoke.

"What do you think, Brandon?" He looked at his warrior expectantly. The tension was pliable in the room. Alpha and Luna looked like they had stopped breathing.

Brandon rose from his seat at the table, slowly skulking his way over to me. He looked to be just over 6ft tall and very muscular. His hair was black and trimmed, his jaw had a clean shave, his skin an olive color. Very appealing to the eyes, my wolf even perked up to sneak a peak. He placed his calloused hand on my jaw, his thumb slowly petting my cheek, studying every inch of me, landing on my eyes. His dark brown eyes narrowed for a moment in disapproval before glazing over and then returning to normal. Did he just link with someone?

"I think we have a deal." He smirked and the tension between Alpha and Luna dissipated, but my own anxiety was through the roof, breaking the stratosphere on its mission to Mars.

"Excellent. We'll be on our way then. Brandon, Enjoy your new mate. We will be back in a month to check on progress. Alpha." The guest said as he threw his used napkin on the table with the other used dishes. His Beta stood and followed him out the front door.

"Mate?!" I squeaked out.

"Hold your tongue." Tammy warned.

"Let us show you to your new living quarters." Alpha Carl jumped in. Guiding us through the back door of the packhouse.

My mind was racing as to what had just transpired. Alpha Carl just made a deal with another pack, for what I don't know, but what I do know is that they think I'm Heather, his daughter! The Moon Goddess only gets funnier with time. I think it's her personal mission to make my life hell, because I'm condent I heard them say I was his new mate. Did I want a mate? Of course, it was always my dream as a young and naive girl to have my mate sweep me off my feet and save the day. Once I was marked by this stranger who was certainly not my mate, that dream would die.

Mate bonds were truly that of the goddess, or so ive been told. It's a bond so powerful it connects two people's souls together for eternity. Reject it and it could kill you. If your mate dies, it could kill you. But nding them was worth it all. Their touch would send sparks through you, they could read you like a book, picking up on your emotions even before you at times. Some still choose to take a chosen mate. A fated mate was given by the moon goddess herself, your perfect contrast, your missing puzzle piece. The chosen mate didn't have the same sparks, smell, or connection as your fated. They would never live up to a fated mate. Once a wolf made the choice to take a chosen mate and they sealed it by marking each other, and then that was it. Their fated mate bond would be gone. There was very rarely a second chance mate. When a fated mate dies or rejects his/her intended mate, the moon goddess will sometimes allow a second chance fated mate. Though it's incredibly rare for several reasons. One, chosen mates never get that opportunity. They blatantly disrespected the fated bond. Two, rejected mates typically never get another chance. Most rejections happened due to social status, or other petty reasons. Three, its hard enough to nd your fated mate once, but to nd a second chance mate?! Pretty much unheard of. There have only been a few recorded cases I have ever heard of, all from old folk tales.

"Over here is the training center where you'll be leading the warriors", Alpha continued to babble on.

I kept my head down as I tried to think of 101 ways I could get out of this and my brain couldn't nd one where death wasn't in the equation.

"I expect to have all the warrior les sent to me by morning." Brandon spoke, leaving no room for argument.

"U-ugh yes, of course." Alpha Carl agreed. "Here we are." He led us to a tiny building, like a small house. He unlocked the door and then handed Brandon the key. "Over here is the kitchen and to your right is your oor and across from that is the bedro-" he began.

"Alpha, I think we can manage to nd the bedroom, and all the other rooms just ne. That will be all." Brandon spoke deadpan.

"Right. Okay. We'll get out of your hair then. I'll grab those les for you and have them brought to you tomorrow morning." He said, turning to leave.

"Her things as well" he said, leaving no room for argument.

Alpha Carl gave a quick nod before he and Tammy ew out the door, slamming it shut behind them. I didn't have time to face Brandon before I felt myself being shoved, my head throbbing from being thrown against the wall. Brandon moved as fast as lightning, one hand grabbing a st full of hair, keeping my head in place, his leg between mine keeping my body in place and nally, what I presumed to be a silver knife pressed up against my jugular. My throat burned and adrenaline spiked as I looked at my assailant with glassy eyes.

"I'll only ask once, who are you?" He pressed the top of the knife into my skin, drawing a bead of blood in its wake.

"I-I Im Hea-"

He presses further, allowing more blood to spill from my neck. I could feel my tears owing down my cheek.

"Dont lie." He warned.

"S-Sierra. I'm the packhouse slave." I crocked out. I felt my face aming red, I closed my eyes waiting for the smack.

"Why did they lie?" He asked, his grip on the knife easing up.

"I have no idea. I didn't know what was happening tonight. I was ordered to get cleaned up and the Luna even did my hair and makeup." I spilled my guts to this complete stranger, my tears steadily falling down my face.

"My Alpha made a deal with your Alpha, protection and training for your pack and, as payment, his daughter would become my mate, sealing the bond between our packs." He lowered the knife, still keeping a rm grasp on my hair, his body pinning me to the wall.

"Protection from what?" I asked.

"Do you live under a rock?" He questioned.

"No a basement actually." I let out a shaking breath.

His face fell at my words, his dark brown eyes searching my face for something. I felt very claustrophobic all of a sudden and looked away from him in a vain attempt to hide myself from the shame I felt creeping in.

"Their daughter, Heather, is a monster on a good day. You dodged a bullet." I added, trying to break his penetrating gaze.

"Hm. How fortunate." Brandon stared at me. A moment later, he released me from his grasp, my body betraying me and slumping to the oor. The adrenaline must have worn off or starvation was getting the better of me.

"King Edward is in a frenzy, his mate was killed just over a week ago. He has been sending his goons out to do his dirty work. They are practically mowing down packs. Your Alpha made a deal with my Alpha. Alpha Victor. I would come and train his men as well as offer aid in whatever aspect he needs. In return he was to hand over his daughter and stand with us when we are ready to rise up against King Edward."

"Oh Goddess," I exclaimed.

"Things are going to get ugly soon." He spoke.

"How did you know?" I asked after a moment, my voice just above a whisper.

"Know what?"

"That I wasn't their daughter."

"Your eyes, for one, it's very rare for two brown eyes to have a blue eye. You share zero resemblance to them for two, and three, I have never witnessed anyone giving up their daughter without a shred of guilt or concern. They didn't even say goodbye to you or bring your things." He said, heading to the kitchen. He returned a moment later with a tall glass of water. "Drink" he ordered.

"Thank you" I said, gratefully taking the water and downing it. Brandon relled it and brought me another glass, which I gulped down just as fast. After a long stretch of silence, I decided I couldn't wait any longer to ask the question burning in my head. "So what happens next?"

"We'll talk in the morning."

"Not now?" I yawned out.

"Tomorrow" He said. "You look like you could use a good night's sleep."

My eyes became very heavy and before I knew it, I felt the same calloused hands as earlier picking me up bridal style and walking me into the bedroom. He pulled back the yellow comforter and made quick work of removing my dress, pausing for a moment before moving my hair off my back.

"What happened?" He asked, his eyes searching mine for answers.

"It's nothing" I brushed off, turning away from him, feeling very self-conscious. Not only was I almost naked in front of a strange male, but now was not the time I wanted to talk to him about why I had been branded so many times.

He stared a moment longer before he nished tucking me in and then proceeded to undress himself down to his boxers and climbed in bed next to me.

"Your sleeping here?!" I fussed through my sleepiness.

"Well, I'm not taking the couch or oor, and I'm guessing you don't want to either. The bed is big enough for both of us. Plus, you were given to me as my mate. I don't see the problem."

His muscular arm snaked its way around my stomach and pulled me close to him, spooning, I think it was called. I had never been touched by anyone, not in such a compromising way at that, but his bold advances left me wondering what more would feel like. What would it feel like with my fated mate? I was so naive in all things s****. Luckily for me, I had a gift I learned over the years undictly platonically, from being a hybrid. I could feel people's intentions and his current one was strictly platonic. Thank Goddess. His orders were to make me his mate. Tonight could have gone a lot differently. I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding. But what will tomorrow bring?

"Sleep. We'll talk in the morning." He said as if reading my mind before I drifted off into a blissful sleep.