

Chapter 13 Death Comes Knocking

ELIANA.

Grief came in the morning.

The sun was barely out and gloom hung above like clouds of darkness.

The air was humid with a little moisture in the atmosphere from last night's rain. I leaned against the car, praying and hoping it was all a dream but alas, it wasn't.

It happened.

Holding Adam's lifeless body in my hands, or what was left of it—that happened. The bloody gore, the million thoughts racing through my mind.

"You have to call for help, Denver!" I remembered chanting and my voice echoed back to me the next morning like a hangover. "Call someone!"

"It's over, he's gone." Denver had replied as the rain beat into us, carrying the flood that flowed from Adam's mauled body down the road. I had never seen anything quite like it. My first initial thought was that an animal did it but the bites into his neck narrowed it down to a wolf.

But from the looks of it, it was not an ordinary wolf. That image kept on replaying in my head over and over through the night. I hadn't slept, my eyelids were charged open so much I doubted they could close now. The winds swept through my hair as I folded my arms.

The chirping of the morning birds was what drifted me out of my thoughts. I wish it were a normal morning, I wish the air wasn't so thick with grief and the strong scent of death. My eyes were so sore and so was the back of my throat.

The sirens of both the police and ambulance cars blared in the background and soon, Denver walked up to me.

"Here." My eyes fell to the bottle of water he held out in his hands.

"Have something to drink." He urged. I lifted my gaze to him and it was quite unbelievable.

"Have something to drink?" I echoed. "Adams is dead, Denver. And whatever killed him is still out there" I muttered.

"So no, I won't have something to fucking drink, not unless I have some answers—" "Ma'am, can you calm down?" A uniformed police officer echoed from behind and I darted him a cold glare.

"What you won't do is tell me to calm down" I shook my head but Denver held me back with his hand. "We're doing the best we can" The officer added. "You can leave now," Denver ordered him.

"I can handle it from here" His voice was deep and his tone was authoritative. Without wasting a second, the officer pulled away. There were several of them, half even coming from the town.

The thing was Adam's body was found on Tombsdale grounds, barely meters away from the bordering line between Oakland and Tombsdale in the forest. So by law, the officers had to be called especially when it was something as serious as a murder. Or even worse, dismemberment.

Each time the image flashed behind my eyes, I would jerk forward and close them. Like it did in that moment but tears started to fall down my cheeks instead. Denver didn't let go of my hands.

"You have to drink something" He insisted. I shook my head.

"You don't understand" There was a crack in my voice. "Adams and I came here together" I whispered. "He was supposed to be in his car, he was supposed to wait for me and take me back home. We were together, we came together, Denver and now, not only was he killed but his whole body..." I paused, breaking down into tears.

"It doesn't even look like him anymore." I cried.

"The Police are doing everything they can—" "It's a waste of time because it was clearly not a human that did that to him. I'm not even sure it's a wolf. The marks, the wounds were like that of a beast Denver"

"Look Sheriff Lance is the one handling the case," Denver lowered his voice. "He's a close friend of mine and he knows just as much as you do about werewolves and all that shit. If someone can get to the root of this, I'm certain that it's him" He muttered.

And I wasn't even surprised, there were many more humans in Tombsdale than there were in Oakland. I had heard something of a century-old truce between the Police and Blood Moon Pack who had been here since the beginning of time. Even the force had some shifters, their superhuman strength and speed were something that always came in handy.

But only a few of them knew about us, never the civilians though.

It had been forged into the depths of our minds since the day we were born never to disclose our secret. The last something like that happened, it resulted in the Cold War, a ghastly tragedy that ended up taking so many lives.

It was one of the reasons I kept my identity a secret in Tuscany.

Which on some days was harder than I thought. But it was a price I paid for being the way I was.

"I don't know, Denver" Terror broke my voice as he hung his jacket around my shoulders. I leaned against him, a few more tears streaming down my cheeks and his hands smothered along my back.

"It's going to be okay." He assured, although that was clearly a lie. My gut feeling had ruptured—because whatever did this to Adam, it wouldn't take long until it found another victim.

"Denver..." Lance called him and he had to pull away. For a moment, he was flustered with the officers until he walked back to me. I stepped forward, clutching my bag underneath my arms.

"I need to get back home" I muttered. "Oh my Grandma, what do I tell her?" Panic subdued my eyes when Denver roped me back. "What do I tell the rest of the Pack? I mean I have to warm them..."

"Eliana." Denver interrupted and he held firm to my hands. "I don't think it's a good idea that you go home now" He added and I furrowed my brows. "Excuse me?" Letting go of his hands, I asked.

"It won't be such a bad idea if you stayed here...at least until we're sure of whatever is out there and we catch it." He stuttered and I shook my head in disbelief. "I'm not staying here."

"Look, it's not safe" He insisted but I raised my voice.

"I'm not staying here, Denver. I have to go back" I argued and there was a twisted feeling of deja vu that left me gutted.

The past wasn't about to repeat itself—I was going back to my Pack and whatever happened on the way, I'll face it. After everything that happened, I didn't want to spend another second away from Elijah and my Nana. It was like it finally dawned on me how ugly things could get here.

Maybe I had forgotten but Adam's was proof.

I had no idea what I'd walked into but it was too late to turn back around now. "Eliana." Denver stepped in front of me as I was about to leave and a hard lump went down his throat. "At least let me drive you home." He held out his keys and I grudgingly obliged.

I walked back into his car and again, Denver sauntered first to the Police, muttering only God knew what and for a moment, I arched my brows. There was something off about him since last night that I couldn't quite put a finger on. Like he knew something.

I saw it in his face as he walked back into the car.

I mean he was always so enigmatic and mysterious but this time was different. I could almost see through him for a change. He started the car and pulled away. We were set on the highway, a route about half an hour from my Pack now. And most of that time was spent in dreaded silence.

We both had a lot of things that raced through our minds. I, for one had bloodstain and mud across my torn dress and my mind was still blurred from last night's trauma. There were times that I could feel my heart rate suddenly skyrocketing and my palms would go all sweaty.

The image was all I could think about, scarred deep into my memory.

We'd left here together, but I was coming back alone.

"One more thing, Eliana" Denver's voice broke the silence and I threw a look over my shoulder at him. "Can you not tell anyone about what happened—at least, not yet?" He said and a scoff escaped my lips. "You want me to keep it a secret?" I asked.

"The Police are already doing what they can, telling people would draw unnecessary attention to the case—" "It's not about telling people, it's about warning them because whatever did this is still out!" I yelled.

"I know." He muttered.

"No," I shook my head. "No, you don't know. You're the one who lost a Pack Member" I said. "And do you have any idea what's going to happen when your Pack finds out that one of them died on my land?" He asked.

"Is that what this is about?"

"For so long, I've avoided a war between both our Packs, that isn't going to change now." Denver seared through his teeth. "Maybe there should be a war. Maybe we should march through the forest and fish out the creature that did this ourselves. I can't believe you're asking this his of me Denver—"

"I wouldn't be if it wasn't important."

"Well I don't owe you anything." I spat. "Like I said, we aren't friends" I added. Denver looked at me daringly and I could see through his facade.

"Why are you doing this?" He asked. "Why are you making me out to be the enemy?" I blurted out a chuckle "Maybe you are!" All the tension and emotions overwhelmed me in a split second.

"Maybe you're the enemy, Denver. We were the only ones in that part of the forest last night and it was raining heavily. I don't think anyone else left the party at that time" I gritted through my teeth and he was taken aback by my words. "Eliana," There was a crack in his voice.

"Are you trying to say that I did this—that I killed Adams?" He asked.

"I'm trying to find out what exactly it is that you're hiding because I know there's something, Denver. You saw Adams, you saw what happened to him—" "It could've been anyone." He replied but I shook my head.

"Not any fucking wolf can do that!" I screamed at him as my heart raced in my chest. After a moment, my voice went low. "Only one strong and ruthless enough can do that to another," I said and an emotion sliced through his face. Denver's lips parted but he didn't say anything.

The car came to a halt.

Only then did I realize what I'd just accused him of and there was a searing silence in the car between us. I couldn't even look at him and he himself looked away from me. I wiped my tears—it was only getting to me. The memories of last night flooded back into my mind.

He was supposed to wait for me.

Denver's fingers crawled to the locks and he opened the car doors. "I think it's best if we just stay away from each other for now" I muttered beneath my breath, a snuffle running through my nose. "You stay on your end and I stay on mine. We don't ever have to cross paths again." I said.

Of course after everything that happened, there was no use pretending that they didn't anymore. Even though six years was a long time ago from now, some wounds had been reopened, ones that never fully healed.

And I'd only just gotten back into town. This was why I didn't want to see him.

I alighted from the car, slamming the door behind me and Denver didn't say a word. He only zoomed off after a while, leaving me by the side of the road. Luckily, Nana's cabin wasn't so far off from here.

A few more steps and I'd already reached the wooden portico. I climbed my way to the door but before I opened it, I leaned forward and broke down into tears. My heart was heavy with all the grief that I carried. The fresh ones had reshaped the old ones and it had exploded in my chest.

I just couldn't face Denver again, I'm not sure I ever will.