

Chapter 3

ELENA

The rising sun doesn't always come with renewed joy. It is a new day, yet the pain from hearing and seeing Drake pick Liam over Halo ushers me through the slow morning as I steadily pack Halo's bag for the doctor's appointment. Halo has a rubric cube in his hand, his fingers moving expertly over a cube he has solved over and over again. My heart utters with bitter-sweetness as I watch that beautiful smile spread across his face.

Goddess, I never want that smile to leave for anything.

"Let's go, baby. We don't want to be late," I stretch and he glides into my open hand, clutching my hands as we move out of the room into the car.

I sigh, trying the connection for the third time since we began the journey. I feel a tingle in the back of my head as it combs through the entire pack and eventually reaches Drake once more, but this time, it connects.

I may not be able to ever meet or shift into my wolf but I got lucky to still be able to use her mindlinking abilities.

"Thank the goddess. I want to remind you about the appointment with the doctor today. I'm already on my way with Halo, and he needs you to be there this time. You know you have already missed three of the appointments," I speak through the mind link.

It feels like I am speaking to a brick wall as he doesn't say anything, but I know he can hear me. Suddenly, the link severs and I feel the emptiness of being alone in my head. I sigh once again. Maybe I should text him instead? I rip my phone from my bag, casting a comforting smile at Halo.

I punch the texts and wait for his response. Almost immediately, I see his chat bubble zzzing, and a reply comes: a quick, one-word reply to my sentences.

[Busy.]

The punctuation at the end of the text feels like a nudge, a warning not to text him again. I swallow and push the phone back into my bag.

"Mummy? Will Daddy be joining us today? He hasn't been here for a while," Halo says softly, but I can feel the longing, a child yearning for his father's affection. But how can I tell him that his father is once again too busy to come check on him in the hospital?

How can I turn a son against his father?

"My love, Daddy will come later, okay? He has some urgent business to attend to but he'll try his best to meet us there."

Halo nods and casts his eyes toward his hands, his thumbs twiddling against one another. How many times will I have to lie to him?

"Do you want us to play a game to cheer you up?" I ask. I hate to see him so gloomy; it hurts to even see him shed a tear or wear a frown because of Drake. He perks, a soft smile spreading across his innocent face, before his head bobs quickly.

"Okay, bring your hands."

He stretches his hands, and we play till the car spills into the hospital parking lot. I grab his hand and usher him into the hospital, toward Levi, the doctor who has become a regular face since Halo's birth.

"Halo, how do you feel today?" Dr. Levi cheers as soon as he sees us walking into the hallway leading to his office.

"Fine," Halo returns cheerily, walking through the door left open by Dr. Levi.

"You feel ne? That's great, that means this won't take long, in fact, you can check me too when I am done with you," he smiles, and Halo chuckles, nodding sheepishly. I love how Dr. Levi always makes Halo feel comfortable, even though he knows that he is quite different from every other heir to the Alpha.

He isn't as bold or ravenous as the rest, the strength they brag about is where his brain came in to substitute, but Dr. Levi always finds a way to make him feel comfortable.

"Okay, let's see what we have here. Hold this for me," he places a ball in Halo's hand to test his grip strength, and he squeezes it almost immediately. Levi checks the monitors and nods, jotting some things on his pad.

It is almost like choreography now, an endless dance that we do once in a while. A series of tests that he passes through while I harbour the hope that some day, there will be a genuine smile on Dr. Levi's face after the test and give me the comforting news that my son will be okay.

"Wow, you are one strong boy, I'm almost afraid that one day, you will throw me off this chair," Halo ushes and shakes his head negatively, beaming from ear to ear.

"Mummy, did you hear him? He says I am getting better!" Halo choruses, and I smile.

My eyes skitter back to Levi, whose smile drains as soon as Halo looks away from me, and with the grim expression now present, I realize that this is a new dance move we have never rehearsed. He mindlinks me, and I grudgingly connect, preparing my heart for the worst.

"Luna, there is no easy way to say this. I am afraid he is getting worse."

I stifle the gasp, maintaining composure. My eyes immediately prickle as my vision becomes blurry. I clutch the side of the chair, driving my nails into the leather as the blood rushes past my ears.

"How worse?" I ask, struggling to speak calmly.

It's my fault Halo is sick even if I cannot really blame myself, I am still his wolfless mother who's lack of a wolf made her son come to the world with defects in his organ and muscular development.

"It will take a miracle for him to reach his birthday and get his wolf."

My heart thumps slowly, fear and worry sacking it. The melancholic beat of doom. I prayed that this day would never come. I prayed to the goddess so that my faith in the fact that he will be healed will outweigh the realism and the doubt that I had about it.

The only viable solution to his condition is him getting his wolf and his wolf's healing ability healing him up but now he may not even live that long? I can't lose my baby.....

I snie, expertly wiping the stray tear from the side of my face.

"Is there..." I choke on the words, exhaling softly, "is there anything that can be done...even if...it's unorthodox," I almost whisper the last part, afraid that there will be someone to tap into our mindlink to hear the thoughts passing.

He sighs, "Well... I am not supposed to tell you this, and you didn't hear it from me, but...I have heard about the existence of some witches who are famous for healing this kind of illness."

He hands Halo a glucose bar, locking eyes with me, "but that is all there has been...stories. I have never seen them, nor have I met anyone who has, so I cannot testify for a fact whether it is true or not."

I will take it, anything to cling to the faith that my Halo will not die. How can the world exist without the golden drops of the sun every day?

"Thank you, Doctor Levi," I speak audibly to assuage the confusion of silence that must have plagued Halo.

I cast a glance at Halo, his back hunched as we step out of Levi's office, his face contorted in a saddened expression: a pouting lip and sulky countenance.

"What's wrong?"

"Does Dad not love me?"

The question knocks the words from my head and immediately, I feel this awkward chill crawl along my spine. Why will he think that?

"Of course he does, why will you think that?" I reply quickly.

He shrugs, "he doesn't always show up."

"Honey, daddy loves you."

"Do you think it is because I am not as strong as Liam?" His voice breaks, the tiny squeak that hurts me more than the words, as if he is struggling to be as strong.

"I see the way he looks at him; he always has this smile on his face, and all he has for me are mean faces. Does he wish Liam were his son instead? Will that make him happy?"

"No, no, Halo look at me," I fall to my knees, cradling his sullen head in my palms, my heart beaten and bruised. I pause as the tears spill from my eyes, and I quickly wipe them away, hiding them from him. How can Drake be oblivious to this, how much is he hurting his son? Halo sees, he notices a lot, so it must have hurt him badly. I crouch to his level, cradling his chin with my finger.

"Halo, what is the square root of four hundred and ninety thousand?"

"Seven hundred," he replies bluntly. I sigh and pull out my phone and punch in the calculations, and indeed, he is right.

"Did you see that mummy had to use a calculator to check the answer? My love, not even your father can do what you do." I let the thought sink in.

"You may not have the strength of a hundred men, or the muscles of a bear, but your brain and mind are the strongest on this planet I have seen."

He snies and holds my gaze, the tears slowly pooling around his edges. I wipe the side of his eyes, I don't want to ever see him cry.

"Instead of worrying about Liam and what he has, why not lean on what you have? Do you think Liam can solve math puzzles or x a rubric cube in a matter of seconds?"

He shakes his head negatively, and I feel a spark of joy.

"As for your father, he loves you and he isn't disappointed in you, he doesn't want Liam to replace you or anything. He is the Alpha, and you know what that means?"

Halo shakes his head again.

"It means he is everyone's daddy, okay?"

Halo nods but he doesn't quite cheer up.

"Besides, mummy can give you a lot of love," I pull him and attack his face with kisses, causing him to giggle and shriek.

"Mummy stop, people can see us," but he doesn't push me away and for a few minutes, everything the doctor had said fades into irrelevance. Every other emotion away like the skins of shedding animals. I have my Halo now and that is all that matters.

The drive back to the house is filled with the hum of Halo's favourite rhyme and a smile on my face, but as soon as I enter the pack house, the soft thumps from a room pull me in that direction.

I push the door open, and the sound engulfs me before the sight: Drake hoisting Rosa into the air, spinning her like he is a ballet enthusiast. A few feet away from them is Liam, clapping ridiculously and chanting.

"Go daddy, go mummy!"

How many times can a heart shatter till it becomes useless? How can he treat us in this manner? Is this what he had to do? Is this what 'BUSY' meant? Busy dancing? Since when did Liam start addressing him as daddy?

I swallow, the bitter taste of the pill hitching in my dry throat. Drake is replacing us: Halo and I, with Liam and Rosa.