

Mistake - 39

"Hey, you okay?" Ryder asked when he found me sitting on the patio of the back porch with concern plastered all over his face.

"Yeah, I'm okay," I replied and when it was obvious, he didn't believe me I added, "Look, I get everyone means well, but I'm not used to all of this... attention." Ryder laughed, and I glared at him. "Dude, I am serious. Today I had six people come up to me, ask how I was, and tell me if I needed anything. They were here for me. Six people, Ryder, six people who I have never seen in my life! It's weird and makes me claustrophobic just a tad."

Though, he still had a smile on his Ryder as he sat next to me. "Okay, yeah, I guess that would be weird."

"That's werewolves for ya," I said, returning his smile.

"Then I guess that makes you weird now too."

At first, I was confused, then remembered I was one too now. It had been almost a week since I woke up and found out I was one of them, but most of the day, I felt normal. "Right, I guess so, and before you ask - yes, I am fine with it and no, I am not mad that your dad turned me. Don't worry so much, Ryder."

He looked surprised, then let out a breath with a laugh. "Okay, good."

That was another weird thing. Now, I somehow always knew what Ryder was feeling. Without him saying or doing anything just now, I knew he was worried about me. Weird with a capital 'W'. "Though, I would like to you to tell me," I told him. It was the one question no one had answered, or they didn't want to. "What's going to happen to Mike?"

Ryder's whole demeanor changed. He tensed up, and his expression went blank. "I don't know," he replied.

While it didn't feel like a lie, my new wolfie senses told me he had a pretty good idea. "Ryder," I said, keeping my tone flat. "Come on, tell me. What is going to happen to him?"

"I really don't know, Brook," he said. "And I don't think Dad is too sure either. He has said nothing to me, but you shouldn't think about him. He isn't worth your time. Whatever happens to Mike is well deserved."

I said nothing in reply, but pulled my knees to my chest and rested my chin on top of them. Everyone said that – Mom, Harry, everyone. I shouldn't worry, and Mike was going to get what he deserved, but I wasn't convinced. Mike wasn't a good guy by any means of the word, but I saw what his father was capable of first hand. Instead of speaking my mind, I nodded. "If you say so."

"Everything is going to be okay now," Ryder insisted. "Want to go find the others?"

"Sure." I dropped my feet to the floor and followed him back into the house, a plan already forming in my mind. It seemed if I wanted something done, the only way was to do it myself.

Early the next morning, I crept as silently as I could through the house and to the holding cells. I paused every so often to listen for people. I had to admit these super senses were awesome.

The hold areas were in the pack house basement. My heart raced as I walked down the steps. Memories of a time in Mike's basement flashed through my mind. Halfway down, I had to stop and take several deep breaths to keep the panic from taking over.

At the bottom of the stairs was a long, bland gray hallway. On each side were cells, bars allowing for people on the outside to look in. Swallowing, I walked down the hallway until I reached the very end where Mike was.

He sat on the cement floor, his knees up to his chest, and his arms resting on his knees. His head bowed, but he lifted it as soon as he heard me. "Missy? Still alive and kicking."

"Brook," I said, lifting my chin. "My name is Brook, not missy. I will never be Missy again."

He gave me a long, intense stare before nodding with a scoff. "Okay, then Brook. What do you want? Laugh, gloat, tell me how I am an unwanted mistake, now my family is all dead?"

"Of course not and you still have Beth."

He scoffed. "That bitch? Beth is a traitor. She sold out her family for a better one."

"Did she? And can you blame her, Mike? She just wanted to live without being afraid of your dad."

Mike scowled before he turned his head to the side, looking anywhere but at me.

I sighed. I didn't want to fight with him. This wasn't why I was here. "I'm sorry about your mom. You loved her a lot, I know that." I took a step towards his cell and grabbed the bars, only to jump back a second later with a yell. My hands burned and when I looked down at them, they were red and blistered. Oh right, I'd forgotten about the silver thing. Mike laughed, his cold, hard laugh tinged with genuine humor. Irritation flooded through me. "Oh, shut up, Mike. I came here to help you, you big

dumb idiot."

"You? Help me?" Mike scoffed again. "Why would you do that when you hate me?"

Was everything so black and white with werewolves? "I don't hate you, Mike. You were doing what your dad told you to do because if you didn't, you or, worse yet, your mother, would pay for it. If I had to say I hate someone, it wouldn't be you."

"Anna," he said with a smirk, knowing me almost as well as Ryder.

I didn't even want to think about what that might mean. "Yeah, her, she is a traitor and I don't care what Black Mountain does with her, but that's neither here nor there." I tossed a large orange letter-sized envelope, rolled shut at the top, at him.

He flinched, then looked confused. "What's this?"

I leaned against the wall near the bars, but made sure not to touch them this time. "Your fresh start. It's not a lot, fifty thousand, but it'll be enough to start over. Harry gave it to me to run away, but I don't want to go to California anymore."

"You expect me to believe you're going to give me a bunch of money and what? Let me walk out of here?"

"Believe it or not, but yes, that's what I'm doing."

"Why?" Suspicion and wariness colored his expression.

"You lost her because of me," I said with a pang guilty. "Also, you have done nothing so bad you need to die for it and fear is never a good decision-maker. Now, don't get me wrong. You're a big bullying asshole,

and I never want to see you again after today, but Beth is getting her second chance, so why shouldn't you? Go far away from here and be Mike, not Mike Alpha Ryan's evil son."

"My uncle will never let me walk out of here."

"Probably not, but the way is clear. So decide, a fresh start or die as the bad guy?" I unlocked his cell.

Mike scrambled to his feet, the envelope in hand, and ran out of the door. I smirked as I closed the cell door, making sure not to touch the bars. I walked upstairs, leaving the keys, pleased with myself. 

"So Mike's gone then?" Ryder's dad said from behind me.

I paled, debating if I wanted to turn around or not. I turned on my heel to face the alpha. "Uh... Alpha, I can explain," I said, getting in touch with my kid caught red-handed in the cookie jar vibe.

"I know. There are cameras down there," he said, and I cringed. "I've been arguing with my council since his capture for this very result. They all are too afraid he'll become his father and return for revenge."

"We'd be no better than Ryan if we treated Mike like them," I replied, glad Alpha Brent didn't seem angry.

"Right, so let's go tell the others your decision to Mike's fate and remind them no one has more say than you."

"You're not angry?"

"No, I was trying to do just this without having to deal with the council breathing down my neck," he replies. "So I should thank you."