

Chapter 7 Comeback

7-8 minutes

Freya

The taxi ride back to Stone Lake territory felt surreal. My wolf paced restlessly inside me. *We should have ignored his threats. We don't owe him anything.*

"I know," I muttered, earning a curious glance from the driver.

I was mentally rehearsing what to say to Jasper when a sudden jolt threw me forward against my seatbelt. The taxi had been rear-ended, and not lightly.

"Are you okay, miss?" the driver asked, already dialing his insurance company.

"Fine," I replied automatically, though my neck was already stiffening.

After exchanging information with the other driver, I stood on the sidewalk, phone in hand, searching for another ride. Stone Lake territory was still ten minutes away, and I refused to be late. Jasper would take too much satisfaction in that.

A sleek black Maserati purred to a stop beside me, the tinted window sliding down to reveal a pair of amused amber eyes.

"Need a ride, gorgeous?" Alpha Silvano's deep voice sent an involuntary shiver down my spine.

"Stalking me already?" I asked, trying to sound annoyed but unable to suppress my smile.

He flashed a wolfish grin. "I was in the neighborhood. Coincidence, I promise." His gaze swept over me appreciatively. "Although finding you looking like this—" he gestured to my tailored black suit, "—makes me want to drag you back to my bed immediately."

Memories of the previous night flooded my mind—his hands on my skin,his mouth trailing fire down my body,the way he'd claimed me without shame or hesitation. Heat crept into my cheeks.

"I have a meeting," I managed,trying to sound professional despite the hunger in his eyes.

"Where to,then?" Silvano opened the passenger door.

I hesitated only briefly before sliding into the leather seat. "Stone Lake headquarters."

His relaxed demeanor instantly shifted. "Stone Lake Pack? Why the hell are you going there?" His voice dropped to a dangerous growl. "Is this about Alpha Kane?"

"It's complicated," I replied,fastening my seatbelt as Silvano pulled into traffic with more force than necessary.

"Uncomplicate it for me." His knuckles whitened on the steering wheel. "Are you going back to him?"

"No." The firmness in my voice surprised even me. "Never. Jasper threatened to exile me officially if I didn't come in to discuss transition matters."

Silvano's jaw clenched. "That bastard has no right. You resigned properly."

"He's still Alpha of Stone Lake," I reminded him. "And technically,I was born into that pack."

"You could request a formal transfer to Crescent Moon," Silvano suggested,his eyes briefly meeting mine. "As my... special consultant."

I couldn't help but laugh. "Special consultant? Is that what we're calling it?"

The tension in the car dissipated slightly as Silvano's lips quirked upward. "Would you prefer 'Bedroom companion'? 'The she-wolf who makes the mighty Alpha Moretti beg'?"

"Stop it," I giggled,feeling like a teenager again. When was the last time I'd actually giggled? Certainly not around Jasper,where every emotion had to be carefully controlled,measured,appropriate.

Silvano's expression grew more serious as we approached Stone Lake territory. "You know,I'm better than Kane in every way that matters."

I raised an eyebrow. "Is that so?"

"Absolutely." He began counting on his fingers. "My territory is larger. My pack has higher profits. My investment portfolio is more diverse." He shot me a sly grin. "And according to your reaction last night, I'm significantly better in bed."

"Silvano!" I swatted his arm, but couldn't deny the truth in his words.

"My buildings are taller," he continued, warming to his subject. "My cars are faster. My cologne is more expensive."

I pressed my lips together to keep from laughing outright.

"In fact," he concluded with mock seriousness, "I'm struggling to think of even one area where Jasper Kane might surpass me. Perhaps you should have your eyes checked. And possibly your mind."

That broke my composure entirely. I dissolved into laughter, tears forming at the corners of my eyes. "You're ridiculous."

"I'm magnificent," he corrected, his eyes gleaming with satisfaction at having made me laugh. "And I want you, Freya. Not just for last night. Not just for great sex." His voice lowered. "I want all of you."

My laughter faded as I met his intense gaze. "Silvano..."

"I know it's fast," he acknowledged and reached across to take my hand. "But you remember what we promised last night, don't you? Take it, Freya. Alpha Kane never deserved a woman like you."

We were approaching Stone Lake headquarters now, the gleaming glass tower looming ahead. I thought of Jasper's threats on the phone, his possessive anger at the mere suggestion I might be with another Alpha.

"Yes," I heard myself say, a strange blend of defiance and excitement coursing through me. "Yes, I'll marry you."

Silvano's face lit up with triumph and something deeper, more primal. He pulled into the circular drive of Stone Lake HQ, then leaned across the console.

"Seal it with a kiss?" he murmured.

I glanced at the building, knowing Jasper might be watching from his office window. Good. Let him see.

I wound my fingers into Silvano's dark hair and pulled him toward me, claiming his mouth in a kiss that was part promise, part rebellion. He groaned against my lips, his hand sliding to my neck to deepen the kiss.

When we finally broke apart, both breathing heavily, his eyes had darkened to molten gold.

"Come to my apartment when you're done here," he said, his voice rough with desire. "No matter how late. I want to celebrate our engagement properly."

I nodded, smoothing down my suit and checking my lipstick in the mirror. "I won't be long. This isn't a reconciliation—it's a final goodbye."

Silvano's expression hardened as he glanced at the building. "If he gives you any trouble—"

"I can handle Jasper Kane," I assured him, summoning all the confidence of my former Gamma position.

"That's my Luna," he said with fierce pride.

With a final kiss to my palm, Silvano let me go. I strode into the building I had once practically lived in, nodding at familiar faces that registered shock at my return. The whispers followed me to the elevator—the disgraced Gamma, back from exile. I stood taller, chin lifted. Let them talk. I wasn't here for them.