

Chapter 4

Zander's POV

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It's been a few days since I've first seen her. My Beta, Kane, was giving me the run down on the new guns and the training that took place to test them out. There was a scent in the air that was driving me crazy and we talked as I casually followed it. I usually didn't go to that building unless it was at night to work out, but Kane really wanted to show me the new weapons. We continued down the stairs and stopped by the training mats as I glanced at two warriors fighting. At least I thought they were warriors, until I quickly realized that the one was a female.

She was captivating and my wolf perked up for the first time in a long time. I watched while she continued to fight, albeit not all that great, and fell to the ground as she hit her head. I'm not sure what was wrong with me but I had the immediate urge to rush over to her and make sure she was okay. Just as I was about to take a step towards her, she jumps up and nails the guy square in the jaw, shocking both of us with the move.

"She's amazing." Liam, my wolf, says to me

"She is." I respond back and continue to listen to Kane speak.

When Liam suddenly started to growl in my head, I peered up to see the warrior on top of her, pinning her down as leans over to kiss her cheek. I never wanted to rip someone away more than I did at that moment and it confuses the hell out of me. What the fuck is wrong with me? As if she could hear my thoughts, she instantly looked over in my direction and my breath caught as our eyes meet. I stared back at her momentarily but quickly turned around and marched out the building before I could do something completely out of character.

Liam was desperate to be free but I knew I had to keep him contained, though he was struggling hard against me. I needed to get my head back in order and my emotions under control before I risk anyone finding out about me. I try not to keep myself locked in that damn castle

24/7, but it's times like these I wonder if I should.

More than 80 years ago werewolves were at the mercy of the fae. I had to do something and bring our people together if there was ever going to be a chance for our species to survive. Killing the fae king, Jullian, was the only option and I know his son Rand is waiting for the chance to strike me down. He desperately wants revenge and to enslave the wolves again, but in order to do that he needs me out of the picture. The problem for him is that he doesn't know who I am or where I am, being that he wasn't on the battle field when I killed his father. I'm sure he's heard of ECHO by now, but most wolves aren't even convinced I'm actually alive and here. Even the ones in my pack.

Rand isn't a dumb man either. He knows his father was twice the fighter he is and I slaughtered him like he was a newborn calf. He won't risk starting a war and going into a battle blind, not knowing who he's truly fighting or to look out for. He knows I'll be watching him from the shadows, waiting for my chance to strike the minute he steps foot on pack soil. Then it will be all over for them, the last of their royal bloodline dead and no one left to lead.

I know it seems like a cowardly thing, to hide for all these years, but I don't do it because I'm scared. I do it because of the thousands of lives we lost during the last war. It caused the werewolf numbers drop so drastically that we were practically on the verge of going extinct. We lost so many packs during that time, I don't want our people to go through that again. There was so much death and pain, and if I can prevent another war, I will.

That's why I've remained hidden, leaving my Beta and Gamma to be the face of our kingdom. Well, hidden for the most part. I try to blend in as though I'm just another one of the warriors and technically I am. I train and fight alongside them almost every day, though I tend to keep my head down and mouth shut.

Remaining "hidden" has gotten easier over the years. My strong Lycan bloodlines have allowed me to control every aspect of my body, from my muscles and mind, to my aura and scent. It's taken YEARS to master my control, yet just seeing her once today almost caused my walls to fall in seconds. I've never felt so jealous and I had to get out of that room before I lost it. The need to make sure she was okay, to touch her,

to kiss her, and- wait what? Where are these thoughts coming from?

Just thinking about her now has my heart beating fast and my wolf on edge. I drive my fists into the punching bag, not slowing down or caring about the fire in my chest. Then I catch that familiar scent that's a mix of wildflowers and a fresh spring. It's HER. My body reacts immediately and I turn around to see her watching me.

Goddess she is so beautiful and for a moment I can't do anything but smile at her. How can she make me feel like this?

Part of me hopes what the answer might be, but I feel like that's no longer possible. Not after all this time.

She looks embarrassed by the fact that I just catch her staring at me and it's the cutest thing I've ever witnessed. I know I need to turn around and just continue training, or better yet, run like hell.

I go back to punching the bag but I can still feel her eyes on me.

"Ask her to come down here!" Liam barks in my head

I ignore him and let out a frustrated breath as I sense her leave.

I grab my bag and run out of the training room towards the woods. I need to let Liam run and get rid of some of this built-up frustration I've accumulated over the last few days.

About a mile into the woods I shift and barrel deeper and farther into the greenery. As my paws pound the ground, I feel begin to feel the tension slowly leaving my muscles. We finally slow down as we approach the river and Liam stops at the edge of the water to get a drink. Once our thirst is satisfied, he lays down and stares down into the water, gazing at our reflection.

I'm a large, charcoal grey wolf with the same green eyes, just a few shades darker. I'm slightly larger than the other wolfs because of my how much Lycan is in my blood, but it's not a drastic difference. My father was only half Lycan and was murdered by Jullian trying to protect my mother and I. My mother was a pure bred and the last of our kind. She also died at the hands of Jullian that day and it still haunts me in my dreams at night. I was just a pup then, unable to protect my mother once my father got killed, and she died so that I could escape and live. I

wanted so badly to fight but she forced me to run and hide while she fought him. After fighting him myself, I'm convinced he had the help of black magic that day. She told me she would come find me later but that obviously didn't happen. I remember the tears rolling down my face as I felt the connection between my mother and I sever. I vowed that day that I would kill Jullian and that's exactly what I did. I ripped his fucking throat out.

My wolf whimpers as he lays his head between his paws. Sometimes I feel so alone but today my wolf is feeling it too, right now more than ever. I often question if this life is worth it, but seeing so many packs alive and thriving, I know that it is.

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