

Chapter 7

Nicola's POV

I walk into the training building and jog lightly up the stairs as I head to into work for the day. The building is extremely busy right now, shouts and bodies falling to the ground echoing off the walls from the men training down below. I watch them briefly as I climb the stairs, but my attention quickly shifts to Kane who's waiting outside my office door.

"Hello Beta" I bow slightly to him.

"Hey Nicola. I need to talk to you for a few minutes this morning about the new project."

"Of course." I say as I take out my keys and unlock the door. We both walk inside and he sits down in the chair across from my desk.

"We need it in two months." he says.

Two months?! That's how he's going to start this conversation?

"Two months....?" I say as a question, praying that he's talking about something else and not my new deadline.

"Yes, the Alpha wants the first prototype in two months. It's really important to him that we meet this timeframe."

"The Alpha?" I stutter, not believing he's actually talking to me about him. "Of course I understand he want this as quickly as possible, and I'm very happy you picked me to for the project, but that's not nearly enough time. Even if this was the only project the team was working on, with the few guys I have who normally work with me, this would take at least a year until a prototype was ready."

"Whatever resources you need to get this done in two months, it's yours."

My mind spins as I try to think about what all it would take to

accomplish something like this. It's not going to be easy.

"Well, I'll need at least two more scientists, a machinist, three more engineers, and a few warriors I can call on to help size the armor, but even with that I-."

"Just give me a list of names." He waves his hand like he's some magic genie in a fucking bottle who can just grant wishes.

All I do is nod.

"This project takes priority." He says as he stands up to leave. "Drop all other tasks until this is complete, along with the rest of your crew."

"Um, Beta, is everything okay?" I ask. He's always usually a straight forward guy, but even this seems a bit much, like the pack is suddenly in danger.

"Of course." He replies casually before heading towards the door, but it's the way his jaw ticks when he talks that makes me think otherwise.

Later that day I give Kane a list of names for people I've selected to be on the team and, within an hour, every person on my list was sitting in the same room ready to work.

Yeah, well this doesn't scream importance or anything. No pressure Nicola.

Everyone in the room looks at me expectantly along with Kane, who's in the back corner waiting for me to begin speaking as well.

"Hi everyone and welcome to the team. As you can all guess based on this mandatory meeting, the project we're about to start is very important. We've been asked to come up with a complete product shift in our defense sector. Our job is to create new armor for our ECHO warriors that will shift with their bodies so they can wear in either form they choose to fight in." As I continue to explain I get a lot of wide eyes and raised eyebrows, no doubt majority finding this to be a challenging task.

"We only have two months to get our first prototype completed so we

don't have a lot of time to waste."

One of the scientists starts to protest about the impossibly tight deadline but a growl from Kane quickly shuts him up.

"So everyone, ready to get started?" I ask and get a room full of hesitant nods in return. I fake a smile as I look at the team and pray to the goddess we can pull this off in time, because I don't want to find out what happens if we can't.

The next few days are mostly brainstorming and it seems we have narrowed down a few styles for the armor. I've asked Cameron to come over so that we can measure him and his wolf to get a good idea for size and material adjustability.

"You could have just said you wanted your hands all over my body Nic." He smirks at me but I'm too focused at the task at hand to pay him much mind. "You didn't have to come up with this lame 'I need to measure you for the project' excuse just so you can- ouch!" Cameron flinches and looks down at me.

"Whoops" I say as I 'accidentally' stick him with a needle to get him to shut up. "My hand slipped."

"Hand slipped my ass. I've seen you shoot Nicola, your hands are steady." He huffs while giving me the side eye and one of the engineers on the teams coughs out a laugh behind me.

I just grin as I continue to take measurements of him and my eyes trail over his body, taking notice of how well defined his muscles are. He really is an attractive guy but I can't help but feel disappointed about how comfortable I am around him. I've been told that sparks fly and your heart races when you meet your mate. That it's hard to breath, hard to think straight that first time you look into their eyes. I want that feeling so badly and I think that's why I've been holding out to find my mate.

"Hey Cameron" I ask him while continuing my task at hand.

"Yeah?"

"What was it like when you met your mate?" I look up at him to see a

hurt expression cross his face.

"I'm sorry..." I say in a whisper. "I was just wondering how it would feel, how'd I'd know. Will I be comfortable around them or nervous, what it would be like."

He lets out a long sigh and begins to talk.

"I met her two years before I met you, I was 21." He says to me while looking straight ahead, obviously reliving the memory. "It was my first mission and our group was sent to the Crescent Pack to deal with a protest against the alpha. I met her when I got there and she was so pretty it took my breath away. My whole body felt like fireworks were going off the first time I kissed her." He smiles as he continues to talk.

"I spent every moment I wasn't working with her and was planning on taking her back with me after the mission and marking her. Her father was one of the protestors and when he found out that his daughter was the mate to one of the warriors brought in to stop them, he lost it. He ordered her to never see me again and when that didn't work, he tried to keep her locked up. He ended up killing her when he caught her trying to escape and run away with me. I went absolutely crazy that day, it was the worst day of my life." He says as a tear rolls down his face.

"I'm so sorry Cam." I say in his ear as I wrap my arms around him, trying to comfort him from the pain of the old memory.

I've heard a lot of wolves go rogue after losing a mate, most not able to handle the pain and heart ache that comes with it. I guess I never realized just how strong Cameron really was until now.

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