CHAPTER NINE

“What?”

I look towards Lucas who doesn’t look very surprised by this piece of news.

“Why does Hunter want Lucas dead?” I demand, a sudden anger rising in me.

My father gazes at me and then studies Lucas, “Because Lucas is the product of a true mate couple. He’s more powerful than Hunter. That’s why Hunter’s father made him the pack hunter. He never encouraged Lucas to be part of the pack in a more deeper context. Alphas can be challenged and Dawson, the previous Alpha, wanted his own son to inherit the position.”

“He took me in when I was a teenager,” Lucas says. “I was young enough not to be considered a dangerous rouge so when he saw that I might be a threat to Hunter’s position, he couldn’t kill me so he made me into the pack hunter.”

“I never agreed with that decision,” My father says, tightly. “You had just lost your entire pack.. It had just been a few months. You should have been taken in and given care and affection to assimilate you into the new pack. Instead, Ralph took advantage of your grief and wariness and isolated you even more.”

When Lucas doesn’t deny any of this, my heart breaks but this time for an entirely different reason.

“I’m so sorry,” I curl my hands around his forearm which is wrapped around my waist.

He looks down at me and gives me a small smile. It’s a rare one since I’ve not seen it before.

“It was a long time ago.”

I feel something cold move in my chest, along with a slow warmth.

“Pack politics are difficult to navigate,” My father murmurs. “But if I were to choose a mate for you, I would want someone strong enough to protect you from any threat. If I had a choice, I would have chosen Lucas for you.”

His words make me tighten my hand on Lucas’s forearm.

“You keep my daughter safe, got it?”

Lucas doesn’t seem to be the type to take orders from anybody but he just nods, “I will.”

I look between the two of them and then I ask, “But Dad, the mating mark, it’s done during the –“

My cheeks flush and I feel Lucas’s eyes on me. For some reason, the intensity in his eyes feel different and I refuse to meet his gaze and then he says, his voice is deep, “I won’t give you a mating mark till you have completely gotten over the Alpha pup. I’m not going to share you with him.”

My heart nearly skips a beat at the dark possessiveness in his voice and the heat emitting from his body suddenly feels different.

And then something occurs to me, “Why do you call him Alpha pup? You aren’t much older than him, right?”

My father gives me a frowning look, “Lucas is eight years older than Hunter.”

My stomach nearly drops as I realize the age difference between me and this handsome wolf shifter. A decade.

“How are you ten years older than me and yet you look like this?” I blink, shocked.

Lucas seems pleased by my comment and he nuzzles the top of my head in an oddly affectionate manner, “Genetics.”

I let out a deep breath and then look at my father, “So I have to go back?”

“Not yet,” My father shakes his head. “First go to the old archives room we found. Do some research there. You two need to work on your relationship first. Both of you are now each other’s weakness. You will be targeted at every side. Hunter is watching me because of the fight we had. I managed to slip away today. But it won’t be easy next time. I’ll tell you when it’s the right time to return.”

My heart feels heavy at his words and when he leaves an hour later, I feel a sadness settle over me.

“It’ll be okay,” Lucas puts his hands on my shoulders, making me look at him. “Let’s look for the archives room.”

I stop him as he’s about to head inside, and my voice is a little nervous, “I wanted to say something.”

He gives me a questioning look.

“I -Thank you for being so understanding despite everything. And for being kind to me.”

He scoffs and then grabs my jaw, forcing me to meet his gaze, “I’m not threatened by your feelings for that pup. After what he’s done to you, your feelings will catch up soon. And then you’ll look at me. I’m a patient man, Sarah. That’s what makes me such a good hunter.“

For some reason, I shiver at his words.

“Besides, do you think I was just going to let what they did to you slide?” His voice is pleasant but cold in a way that’s terrifying. “I’m not being kind. I’m taking revenge for my mate.”

I stare at him and he lifts a hand and caresses my cheek, his voice still icy, “You still don’t know what it means to be true mates. Let me offer you the simplest explanation. I will set this world on fire if you so desire it.”

My knees feel weak and I stare after him as he walks inside.

I spend that night, curled around Lucas’s form. The skin contact helps keeping me sane and his presence and touch soothes the pain that is still swirling inside of me.

However, the next morning, what I had thought would be an uneventful start to our trip, isn’t so simple.

I’ve packed a few things for the trip while Lucas waits for me at the front door. Before I can reach it, he goes still and sniffs the air.

His eyes turn hard.

“Get inside,” Lucas says, coldly. “And don’t come out till I say so.”

I hurry inside and just as I close the door to the bedroom, I hear Lucas growl, “What the hell are you doing on my property, Hunter?”