

## Chapter 68

### 43 - Kennedy

There is an apartment above my mom's studio. I have been having it renovated over the last couple years. Even Aunt Beth doesn't know that. She's been trying to find reasons for me not to leave the pack for school since I got here. She thinks I don't know about her plans, but her fear of me leaving has become a bit over the top as we all come into adulthood. I know it's the first place Jer will look, but I'm hoping his loyalty to me is strong enough to keep everyone away for a little while. The studio is thriving and I have been working with Mark for years learning the business and helping it grow. He's another one to worry about since he's one of Jer's pack warriors, but I'm putting a lot of faith in the fact that he understands as much as Jer why I need this. But if an Alpha or Luna command is put on him, he won't be able to go against it like Jer. 2

I pack a couple days worth of clothes, my laptop and a few other small essentials and move toward my door listening. I can hear Bennet breathing on the other side and smell his cologne from the crack under the door. He must be sitting next to the opening again. Stubborn ass. Well, me too. I smile a little at the idea that the Moon Goddess got one thing right. I moved to turn on some music and set the little bluetooth speaker as close to the door as I could without being too obvious and for good measure, I turned on the shower in my bathroom with a bathbomb, letting the strong fragrance mask my scent, before opening my window. There is a small section of roof that juts out from the first floor, I toss my backpack onto it. I have to time this right, I need to leave while the party is still going on and scents are everywhere out here. It will be harder for them to start tracking me. But I need Bennet to believe I showered and went to sleep to buy me as much time as possible. Once I am in the woods I will be able to use some of the tactics Ben's dad has been showing me for hiding my scent on the run. None of the guys or Aunt Beth know I



have been doing this, but after being taken, Beta Daniel and I thought it would be good to know since I'm not as fast as a wolf. I actually understand my limitations being human and just wish that they could all see I'm not as reckless as they think, but it has helped me stay under their radar. I spend more time at the studio than they know and I haven't been targeted since. There have been a couple times when it has helped me avoid rogues camping in the woods, but I'm not telling anyone about those close calls or they would lock me up for sure. 1

I move back to my bathroom, and notice my blonde hair is like a freaking beacon against my black clothes. I braid it and find a stocking cap I wear when I run in the winter, that will have to do. When I'm done I shut the water off and move around as if I were getting ready for bed, then I turn off the light and ruffle the covers around. The memory foam mattress is soundless. I slowly and quietly move to my window and listen. I hear Bennet take a deep breath in and huff it out. I'm not sure if he is frustrated or relieved, I kind of feel bad since I'm disappearing on his watch, but I tried to get him to leave. It's on him now. The music picked up a bit and I took my chance to climb out the window.

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Here goes nothing. I throw my back pack on and climb down the short drop to the ground and listen again for any signs that I have been caught. The party is still going on in the backyard and I can hear the laughter and chatter coming from all the happy partygoers. I should still be there with Jeremiah and Rayna, living it up and celebrating their matebond, but I just can't handle all of the conflicting emotions going on right now and I need my space to get my head on straight. I move toward the forest, tighten the straps of my bag and run.

It takes about 40 minutes to get to the studio if I am jogging at a steady pace. My goal tonight is to get there more quickly, but I also have to be



careful to not leave my scent all over the forest too. I found the nearest cedar tree and started pulling off small ferns and rubbing them between my hands to let off the fragrance. I tie a few in my braid too since those are the two places my scent is the strongest. I then tuck several ferns into the outer pockets of my backpack and in my leggings. I will continue to crush them as I go to mask and lessen my scent. I also have to be careful about where I step. If any of them are good trackers they will be able to see broken branches and freshly moved dirt from my footsteps, even in the dark of night. It's too bad there isn't a stream or any other body of water near here. That would allow me to lose them completely.

About 30 minutes in and I think I am making great time and pace, when I hear it. The unmistakable sound of a howl, and it isn't a happy or playful howl. It's pissed. I try to move more quickly, but I can't just start running in a panic, that will erase all the work I did to stay hidden. Ten more minutes and I finally make it to the clear walking path that leads into the city, where I hope all the smells there will hide my scent and I can run more quickly. It's not much further to my mom's studio. I can do this. I start running, hard. I can almost hear the pounding of paws on the ground in my panic. I know it's my imagination, the blood rushing in my ears from adrenaline. None of them are that fast and I have almost an hour head start. But I don't take any chances and put on a burst of speed I didn't know I had. Just when it starts to feel like my lungs are going to burst and I can't go any further a snarl rips through the air and the ground shakes as a massive black wolf lands in front of me.

"Oh, f\*ck!" It's my good luck wolf statue come to life. And he looks ready to kill.