

**Chapter 71**

45- Ryker

"Hey, man. I'm sorry. This mate thing has me f\*cked in the head. Is she okay?"

He shrugs. "I just hope I'm not this stupid about my mate when she finally shows up. I do not have time for the bullsh\*t you and your wolf are up to. Especially right now, since I am on twenty four seven Luna duty for the foreseeable future since she thinks you are an asshole."

"She said that?"

"Not in words, but I figure it's a common thought amongst us and she's pretty smart so she's probably on board with the idea based on the way you keep treating her."

"Again, f\*ck you. I never wanted a mate. You know this. I have too many enemies that will try to use her against me. After everything my parents went through, I thought everyone understood. I thought maybe the Goddess agreed with me, but no. She made me wait until after my sister found hers and then just for fun decided to give me a weak ass human. She can't shift or protect herself. What the hell am I supposed to do with that?"

"Start by talking to her d\*ckhead. Maybe she feels the same way and you two could work something out. This isn't all about just you. But fixing this... that's on you. Until then, I'm going to sit here and listen to her angry chick music and not sleep until another warrior can take my place for a couple hours." He points a thumb at the door. I hear the music too, but nothing else. "And might I remind you that she can fight back. Or did you forget she submitted your ass at training?"

I ignore the jab. "How long have you guys been up here?"

He looks at his watch. "A little over an hour. She threw a couple things around, turned on her music, then got in the shower. After that I heard her get into bed. Why?" He's on his feet now, sensing my apprehension.

"I can't smell her or hear her breathing."

"What do you mean? I smell her all over this floor. And whatever bodywash she uses is strong as hell."

"Her scent is faint, older. It's not the constant strength it would be if she was in the room. Open the door."

"She locked it."

"I don't give a f\*ck." I stepped past him and kicked it in with a grunt, hoping to have my suspicions wrong and her yelling at me. But I was right, she's not here.

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He ran past me into the bathroom and then the closet while I just stood frozen looking at the open window. I took a deep breath in and it shuddered out. Where is she? Bennet came to a stop by me to see what I was staring at.

"F\*CK!" He yelled. That shout next to my ear has me springing into action. I shift as I jump out the window, tearing through my suit. Bennet right behind me.

"Josh, Danny! Let Jeremiah and Rayna know Kennedy is gone. We don't know if she left or was taken. I need information NOW!!! If she left, where would she go? Do they have enemies that would take her?"

"Oh sh\*t!"

"On it, bossman." Are the only replies I get or need.

My wolf and Bennet's focus on the treeline which would be the obvious place to go. We have to catch her scent to track her. I was already worried about her ability to 'get lost' in the pack. She's clearly good at disappearing and based on the lack of a second scent, she left on her own, which might actually be worse considering my fears with Claude and others who want to take me down. She's out here, alone, without any idea that she's a target or in danger. I can only hope that she hasn't gotten far.

"Bennet, we have to find her, there is no telling what rogues will do to her if they get to her first. Or Claude, if his guys followed us here."

"I know that now is not the time to say it, but she probably should have been told that a dangerous sociopath was gunning for you and to stay close to us. You may want to tell Jeremiah and Rayna too, just in case she contacts them before we find her."

"You're right, now is not the time. Have you caught her scent yet?" Both our wolves are sniffing at everything on the forest's edge.

"No! It f\*cking just stops at the treeline. How does a human turn off their scent?" I don't think I have ever heard him sound panicky before. He is actually afraid.

Then I caught it, crushed pine needles. There's my smart girl. She's going to have to try a little harder to hide from me next time. Goddess knows there will probably be a next time. "She was here. She covered her scent with cedar. Don't look for her scent, look for unnaturally strong cedar. She's masking."

"F\*ck. Jason was right. He said she was crazy smart and a whole lot of trouble when she wanted to be and would keep me on my toes. He told me to strap in and get ready for a ride." He sounds impressed as we take off.

I couldn't help but laugh. At least she did this to her own pack, not just me. She's at least learned to adapt to some of our wolf senses. F\*ck. Now I sound impressed.

"I told you she was made for us. You need to give her more credit and the Goddess too. She wouldn't pair us with someone who couldn't handle it." My wolf's pride in our mate is palpable, but I still don't agree. She's human and fragile, easily harmed, even if she has picked up a few tricks along the way.

We continued running in silence, or I was silent, Bennet was praising her ability to leave very little if anything to track and not moving in a linear pattern. She is making him work for it and he is one of my best trackers. He's giving a running commentary to Josh and Danny who aren't far behind us in the truck and just as impressed with her efforts. This f\*cker is just as far gone on her as my own wolf. If I didn't know it was admiration for his Luna I would be jealous.

A decent distance into the woods, I did catch another scent that was unfamiliar, running parallel to Kennedy's and my heart jolted. Bennet caught it too and veered off to check it out, while I stayed on Kennedy's trail. No one was going to get to her before us. I put on a burst of speed. I'm not winded or tired at all, but I am impressed at how far she got in such a short time and with so little evidence left behind. Then I heard the menacing growl. A wolf was after her. Whether that is due to her connection with me or just being a human girl in the forest in the middle of the night, I don't care. 'My girl' is all I kept thinking as adrenaline

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+20 Bonus

coursed through my veins and my wolf's anger at anyone threatening our mate urged me even faster. 3

Miss L Author

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