

Chapter 4

Dylan

I stayed at the packhouse that night, wanting to be near Violet when I turned eighteen. Garrett glanced at me every so often, probably wondering why I was so agitated. My leg was bouncing up and down like crazy and my hands were slightly shaking. I was both nervous and excited. At quarter past eleven, Garrett was passed out sideways on his bed, the controller hanging limply in his hand. I took it and placed it on the floor, checking the time. Again.

What would it feel like? Mom and Dad told me there was nothing else like it, nothing in the world, to see your mate for the first time. I'll admit it, I was already in love with Violet. I had been for as long as I could remember. Would it feel more powerful than that, more powerful than the love I already carried for her? I was eager to find out. The problem was, would she accept me? I replayed her words over and over in my head from school; No, she will feel it too. The bond will help bring us together, help us move past my indiscretions.

I don't know how long I sat on the floor, staring into space and thinking about the girl down the hall, but when I checked the time again, it was five minutes to twelve. I jumped up, clutching my phone in my hand. I stared at it unblinkingly, watching the minutes tick down. Four minutes.

Three.

Two.

One.

I held my breath, waiting. When it hit midnight, my head swung around to the door. My heart started beating faster with anticipation; My hands felt clammy. I glanced back at my phone. Twelve oh three. Huh?

"Hello Dylan."

"Whoa!" I jumped two feet and looked around wildly. Laughter sounded, and it took me a stupid amount of time to figure out it was coming from in my head. It was my wolf!

"Hey. You're my wolf, right?" I thought to him.

"The one and only."

"Nice to finally meet you. What's your name?"

"Uhni."

"Uhni? That's odd."

"I did not choose my name, but I am proud to bear it."

"Oh. Well, it's nice to have you around. Finally. Hey, I have a question."

"What's that?"

"Why can't I feel the bond yet with Violet?"

"Hmm. Have you considered the possibility that Violet is not our mate?"

No, that couldn't be right. Vie and I were perfect for each other. I looked at the door again, half expecting her to walk through. My eyes widened as I realized my mistake. I had to see her! Quietly crossing the room, I slipped out the door and headed to Violets. She was only three doors down. My heart picked up with every step again, and Uhni was quiet in my head, waiting. I stood outside her door, my hand poised to knock. But something inside me held me back. Why couldn't I feel anything? I was close enough, for sure. Shouldn't I be able to scent her? According to my mom, your mate's scent was the most attractive thing in the world to you. But all I could smell was the same scents I'd always associated with Violet.

Her favorite laundry detergent, a faint whiff of those damn incenses she liked to burn, and the pizza we had earlier. Pepperoni and bacon, and extra cheese. These scents did not overwhelm me though, didn't make me want to break down the door and take her in my arms. I lowered my hand, suddenly unsure. As it swung down by my hip, the door opened.

"Hey. I've been waiting for you."

Violet stood in front of me, wearing blue silk pajama shorts and a matching top. Her hair was let loose, mussed from lying in bed. Her face was passive, but nervous. She bit her lip, the little action that I loved so much. I looked into her unique, one-of-a-kind blue-green eyes and I felt.... nothing. Nothing like what was described to me. The disappointment that followed was crushing.

Violet wasn't my mate.

I reached out and caught the door jamb to steady myself. I had been so sure...

"I'm sorry Dylan." Vie reached out and patted my shoulder. The absence of sparks was another blow. "It just wasn't meant to be for us, I guess. But you do have a mate out there."

"I wanted it to be you." I said lowly.

"I know." She took a breath through her nose. "But that's not what the Goddess wants. She has someone else in mind for you."

I didn't know what to say. Vie smiled at me kindly.

"Did you meet your wolf?" She asked.

I nodded.

"What's his name?"

"Uhni."

"I can't wait to see what he looks like." She smiled again, her eyes wandering around the hall. "Well... I should go to bed. I'm sorry, again. Maybe you'll meet your mate tomorrow, at school."

"Yeah, maybe." I mumbled. "Night."

"Night."

She closed the door and I dejectedly walked back to Garretts room. To my dismay, he was awake when I entered.

"So?" He asked.

I shook my head. "It's not her."

His face mirrored my feelings. "Sorry man."

"Thanks."

He rearranged his pillow. "But once you meet your true mate, you won't feel like this over my sister anymore."

"Yeah."

"It would have been cool though. Having you as a brother-in-law."

I gave a half chuckle. "I'm still your brother man."

Garrett grinned at me as he lay back down. "I know. Get some sleep, we have school."

"Kay."

I pulled out his day bed, not bothering to grab blankets or a pillow. Uhni talked to me until I fell asleep. It was nice, having someone to talk to privately. And he had a wicked sense of humor too. I guess it wasn't all bad; I got an awesome wolf. Before I knew it, Garrett was shaking me awake, ordering me to get moving. I rubbed my eyes and groaned.

"Come on Dylan! We both slept in, and we're going to be late!" He was rushing around the room like a chicken with its head cut off. I briefly

noticed he'd put on two different socks, and one side of his shirt was tucked in while the other hung loose. I shook my head.

"Dylan!"

"I'm up, relax!" Swinging my legs over the edge, I stood up, stretching. That wasn't the bed I'd hoped to stay in last night.

The thought made me remember, and with that came back my gloomy mood. I dressed quickly, borrowing some of Garretts clothes. I let him pull me downstairs to the kitchens where he rushed through a bowl of cereal and I grabbed an apple. On our way out the door, we ran into Luna Lily. She looked at me expectantly, but she must have guessed rather quickly from my face because she placed her hand on my shoulder and gave me a sympathetic smile.

"Have a good day at school. I hope you find her." And she walked away.

"We have a great Luna." Uhni thought.

"Yeah, she's pretty amazing."

It felt like everyone was in attendance to witness my bad mood. We ran into Celia, one of the girls who worked in the pack house, who hugged me and told me not to worry about it. We ran into Isa in the driveway, who had already finished school a couple years before. She kindly reminded me that if I didn't meet my mate, she was currently back on the market. That had me blushing and stuttering, while Garrett laughed behind me. Awkwardly I thanked her, and got in the car. Thank Goddess Aunt Clara wasn't around to hear that!

Garrett yammered on the whole way to school. I didn't hear most of it honestly. I was still trying to figure out why the Goddess would bless me with someone like Violet, only to make her someone else's. Her face appeared in my mind, and I spent the rest of the drive thinking about the girl who would never be mine.

"Can I ask you something?" I interrupted Garrett.

"Sure."

"Would I even know? Doesn't Violet have to be eighteen too?"

He sighed as he parked the car. Huh. When did we get to school?

"You know that's not how it works Dylan." He side-eyed me. "She wouldn't feel as strong until she was eighteen, but she would know." He grabbed his backpack from the back seat. "So, you guys aren't mates. You can still be best friends."

"What if that's not enough? What if I don't meet my mate? Your parents are prime examples. Your Dad didn't meet your mom when he was eighteen..."

"Our pack has grown a lot since then." He placed his hand on my shoulder. "I know how badly you wanted it to be Violet. But you have to let it go. She's going to end up with someone else, and so are you. Maybe not right now, but someday. That's just the way it is Dylan."

"He's right. We cannot pine over someone who is not ours."

"I love her though."

"I can see that. But the love you will have for our mate will be stronger."

I got out of the car, the wind blowing across my face. With it came an impossibly strong scent, one that nearly brought me to my knees. Pineapples, strawberries and a hint of lavender. Immediately, my feet starting working while my nose tracked the smell. Garrett rushed to keep up with me, asking what was happening. Uhni was going absolutely insane in my head. The scent became stronger, and now I was running.

"Dylan!"

I left Garrett behind in my pursuit. Everything in me was trained on this one scent, and my mission to find the source. Part of me, a huge part, hoped desperately that the Goddess had given me another chance. That the impossibly delicious smell was Violets after all. Her face played in my

mind as I ran. I turned left, right, left again. Skidding around the corner of the building, I halted as my eyes found what my soul was searching for.

"Mate." I breathed.