

Chapter 9

Violet

I looked at my phone, checking the time.

"I should get going. It's almost midnight, and I know my parents are waiting up so they can be the first to wish us a Happy Birthday." I rolled my eyes, but I was smiling. They've been doing that ever since I could remember.

"Sure. See you later Violet."

I paused as I got up. Even though this was better than any other time we talked, I didn't think I'd do it again. It wasn't like we were friends now; I just didn't feel the need to be quite as much of a bitch to him anymore. So instead of replying, I simply nodded and started walking away. I could feel his eyes on me as I headed in the direction of the packhouse.

I started running through the forest, jumping over logs and skirting bushes in order to make it back on time. My mind wandered as I ran; Tomorrow I would be running with four legs instead of two. I wondered what I would look like? Garrett had expressed his theory that one of us were Mother Wolves, like Mom, but I doubted it. Something like that happened once in a blue moon, and no blue moon was scheduled anytime soon.

A shiver of fear ran up my spine as I thought about my shift. Mom had described it to me many times, giving me advice on how to handle it in case I didn't have my mate there to help me. She made it sound horrifying, and it probably was. What if I did have to go through it alone? My parents promised they would be there in any case, but that didn't help me. Only a mate could take away the majority of the pain caused by the first shift. There was a lot of guys in our pack, and none had come to me claiming

me as their mate. If they were eighteen or older, they would know before I would. I bit my lip worriedly as I exited the tree line and slowed to a jog.

What if my mate wasn't in this pack? Would he feel it when I started to shift? Would he come for me, help me? I could only hope so. I rounded the side of the packhouse, my eyes finding Garrett walking up the steps.

"Hey." I said. "You were out too?"

"Yeah." He swept the sweat from his brow off. "I needed to go for a run."

"I know what you mean."

Together, we entered the packhouse, only to be greeted by our smiling parents, Uncle Ben and Uncle Luke, and their mates. Even Uncle Killian and Aunt Thara were here.

"Hi guys." Mom stepped forward, ushering us in. "We hoped you'd make it back on time."

"Sorry." Garrett and I said in unison. Mom waved her hand.

"Don't worry, we get it. I was the same way, always restless before my shift."

Together, we walked to the cafeteria. My stomach growled as I took in the plates of food that had been laid out. Sandwiches, cheese and crackers, pickle trays, muffins, fruit bowls, meat trays, and different types of bread rolls. Garrett immediately sat down and started eating, while I nibbled on a cracker. I was hungry, but my stomach protested still. Mom rubbed my shoulder as she sat beside me.

"Just eat as much you can." She said. I gave her a grateful smile.

The others sat down around us, chatting happily. I caught up with Aunt Thara, who I hadn't seen in a while. Being Luna didn't give her much time to come visit, even though she was so close.

"Where's Val?" I asked.

"We had to leave him at home. He's grounded." She shook her head.

"Uh-oh. What'd he do this time?" Luke asked.

Aunt Thara sighed. "We found out he was bullying at school."

"So, he's taking after you then?" Dad asked casually.

"Fuck you Dimitri." Aunt Thara snapped.

"Point in case." Dad smirked and she threw a muffin at him which he neatly dodged. I laughed at their antics.

"Hey, sorry we're late." Aunt Hazel and Uncle Clint entered the room, followed by their son, Damien. We smiled at each other, Aunt Hazel giving me a hug while Uncle Clint walked over to Garrett. "How are you hun?"

"I'm good Aunt Hazel."

"You're not late, there's three minutes to go." Mom said.

My stomach twisted at her words. Everyone got quiet as we waited, eyes glued to the big clock above the doors. Garrett came to my side, and I could tell he was holding his breath just like I was. When the hands struck midnight, Mom jumped up and wrapped us in a tight hug.

"Happy Birthday!" Everyone cheered.

We were hugged by everyone there, being wished all the best and whatnot. My eyes met my brothers, and I could tell he was still just as nervous as I was. Mom left to get our gifts, but as soon as she opened the cafeteria doors, Garrett stiffened. I might have been the only one who noticed, as I was the only one looking at him still. His head whipped around faster than his body, and he nearly ran over Uncle Miguel on his way out the door.

"Garrett?" Aunt Thara called, but he was already gone.

I moved with everyone else, jogging after him as he ran down the hall and threw open the doors that led to the kitchen. His entire body went statue

still, and I heard his breath stop. We stopped behind him, crowding the doorway. Stepping around Uncle Ben, I looked into the room. My heart dropped into my stomach.

Standing by the sink was a pretty blonde, humming to herself. She was cutting up an apple, not paying any mind to the group of us staring at her. Then her face lifted, tilting to the side. Glancing behind her, her eyes went wide and she dropped the knife she was holding. She turned around, facing us, and slowly removed a pair of headphones from her ears. Her eyes landed on each of our faces before finally settling on Garretts. Both of their faces went white as sheets.

"G-Garrett."

"Sophia?"

Anger coursed through me, hot and fiery. How cruel was this? This bitch had broken my brother's heart, and then it turns out she's, his mate?! The Goddess had a sick sense of humor!

"You're... you're my mate." Sophia said. I heard Mom gasp quietly beside me.

A small smile played on Sophias face, but Garrett was shaking his head back and forth slowly.

"Why?" He asked. Sophia brows furrowed in confusion. "Why?!" He shouted, startling everyone but me.

"Garrett..." She took a step towards him and he responded by taking a step back.

"Garrett what is the matter with you?" Mom asked.

"What is going on?" Uncle Luke asked.

Before things got out of hand, I stepped into the room and faced everyone.

"I think Garrett and his mate need some time alone." I said.

Mom and Dad looked from me, to him, to Sophia. Everyone else just looks confused. I met my brother's eyes, asking the silent question. He nodded.

"Stay." He said to me.

"Garrett, this is-" I cut my dad off.

"Ten minutes guys. Please?"

Everyone looked at us before shuffling out the door.

"And no eavesdropping!" I called after them. When the door shut, I pressed my ear against it, listening to their retreating footsteps. Satisfied, I turned to Sophia.

She was staring at Garrett with tears in her eyes. Her bottom lip quivered, and I rolled my eyes heavily.

"Are you..." She sniffed. "Are you going to reject me?" She asked him.

I looked at him. He seemed to be struggling. "I don't know." He finally managed. Sophia's face crumbled at his words.

"Please don't." She begged. "Please."

"Why shouldn't he?" I snapped. "You have no idea how much pain you caused him!"

She lowered her head. "I'm sorry. I know that's stupid to say, now, but I am. I never wanted to hurt you."

"Then why did you?!" He yelled.

"I-I don't know." A single tear left her eye, falling carelessly down her cheek.

"That's a bullshit answer." I said. She looked up at me. "You hurt him because you didn't care about him."

"That's not true!"

"Really? Then how did you end up in bed with another guy?"

She looked from me to Garrett. "You told her?"

He scoffed. "Of course I told her! She's my sister, my twin! I didn't have anyone else to go to! I was... I was destroyed by what you did." He leaned against one of the metal counters, covering his face with his hands. "Why should I accept you as my mate when you've already betrayed me once, in the worst way?"

She didn't answer right away, crossing her arms over her chest. Finally, she looked at him again.

"You shouldn't."

I raised my eyebrows, surprised by her answer. But she wasn't finished.

"What I did was horrible, and there is no excuse for it." She took a deep, shuddering breath. "All I can do is promise not to do anything so horrible again. And ask for a second chance. I loved you, Garrett. I still do, and I never stopped. I don't think I ever will. But if you can't accept me as your mate, I understand. If that's the case, then please reject me now so we can both try to move on."

I watched my brother's face go from anger, to sadness, back to anger, to hope, confusion, and finally uncertainty. He opened his mouth, but nothing came out. He tried again, and again. After a few tense minutes, he simply shook his head and stormed out of the room. I turned back to Sophia, who was crying silently.

"What do I do?" She asked me.

I gave her a hard look. "I don't know what he's thinking." I told her. "But I'm here to tell you that if he does reject you, you better keep your word and move on."

She nodded sadly.

"And if by some miracle he actually accepts you, you better not hurt him again. Because if you do, not only will you be a disgrace to the word

'mate', but you will also be a disgrace to my family, and future Luna of this pack. And I'll make sure everyone knows it." I promised.

She met my eyes, understanding that I wasn't joking. Slowly, she nodded again. I turned to leave. Sophia called out to me as my hand touched the door.

"What?"

"How much did he tell you?" She asked.

I looked at her over my shoulder. "Enough. Enough that you not only have to earn his trust again, but mine as well."