

## Chapter Three

When I reached the cave I wasn't expecting the scent of another Lycan to be present. I frowned at the scent and slowly made my way inside the cave. I knew whoever stopped by must have used what was left there. My bed was tossed around and the blankets that covered it were now on the oor. I searched the entire cave and when it was all clear I settled into bed. I knew that whoever trespassed here could be back. They could have been on the run, they could have just been curious. But I know that their scent will not be mistaken in the future. I would recognize them if they came back before they realized I was here.

I programed Kayla's number into my phone and sent her a text that consisted of a smiley face emoji and my name. She responded within the hour with a "Sorry I left you early this morning. I didn't want to wake you up, but I had somewhere I had to be. Thanks for last night!"

I smiled at my phone and replied to her. "It's all good. No worries. If I am ever in town again in the future, we should have dinner next time."

She responded immediately, "If we are both single, I would love that."

I texted back, "Cool, talk to you soon."

I turned my phone screen off and lay there in silence. I closed my eyes and began to doze off. When I woke back up it was dusk. I walked out of the cave and looked at the moon rising in the sky through the trees. "Full moon." I said out loud. I felt my Lycan perk up at the mention of the full moon.

"Come on, let's go." I told him as I walked out of the mouth of the cave.

"Really?" He asked excitedly.

"Yes." I gave him full control and let him shift. "Just stay in our usual areas."

"You got it." As soon as he was shifted he was running full force through the forest.

As he was running, I gave myself this time to genuinely relax. I drifted into the back of our mind and thought of everything from this past year. I had heard, through the chatter among those in the city that had ties to the Kingdom, that Everest and Avalynn had a son. I was happy for them and truly wished nothing but the best for them.

My attention was brought back when I heard growling and felt a wave of pain rip through us. What the hell was going on? When I pushed forward and looked through my Lycan's eyes, he was ghting rogues. Three of them, to be exact. He killed two of them and the third took off before he could turn around.

"Let him go." I told him and he stopped running after him.

"He attacked us, he deserves to die." He countered.

"He was young. I noticed he didn't even step up to us and let the other two do the work. He looked frightened. Maybe this is what he needed to get back on the right track. Let's get back." I told him.

When he got back to the cave he shifted. I stood at the opening. I looked around and something just felt off. I inhaled, smelling the scents of the surrounding air. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. I walked inside the cave and made my way back to my spot. I lay on my bed and fell asleep.

### The Following Day

Today has been a blah and just an uninteresting day compared to yesterday. I trained and worked out most of the morning and early afternoon. I found myself lying back on the boulder soaking in the sun. When I heard someone clear their throat, I opened my eyes.

"What do you want?" I asked, annoyed that a human was in my presence. I eyed him and noticed that he was tall, had an athletic build, and had a dark look in his eyes.

"Nothing. Come here often?" His voice was deep.

"None of your business." I gritted through my teeth.

"Woah, buddy. No need to be defensive. I was just wondering what someone who looked like you was doing out here in the middle of nowhere on a Tuesday?" I watched as he put his hands in his pockets. "Running from something perhaps?" His brow raised.

"No. I like to live off the grid. Now, if you would excuse me," I laid back.

"No, what you do not understand is you are trespassing on my land." His tone was more serious, and I felt my Lycan push forward, ready for a ght.

"Look, dude. I don't really care. I am just here, lying down on this big ass rock, trying to have a peaceful day. I don't need someone telling me some bullshit when I know that no one owns these lands." My jaw clenched.

I heard the gravel crackle as it shifted under his feet as he walked back and forth. "So you say you like to live off the grid? Are you passing through or just living in a tent nearby?"

I laughed and just shook my head, "A tent? No."

"Well, anyway. I will offer you some money. Do you need money for supplies?" He asked me.

This was a weird jumpy conversation. I didn't like this guy and couldn't gure out what his deal was. I felt as though his intentions were not good.

"What is up with this guy? Something is up. Something is not right." My Lycan told me and I agreed with him.

"I'm good. I don't need anything from anyone," I told him.

"Not even a good time?" He asked me.

"Dude, no. When I say I am good, I mean that I don't need s\*\*t from anyone. So either get lost and stop beating around the bush." I sat back up and looked over at him. I could tell by the way he was standing he was nervous.

"Well, okay. I will get to the point." He started. "Firstly, I'm Lucius. I run an under the table operation and employ many men who want for nothing under my protection. They're like you, lost souls wandering the earth. I have a card I can give you." I watched as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a business card and sat it on a large stone with a smaller stone on top of it so it wouldn't blow away. "If you ever need anything. Please come and see me. I may have side gigs that need to be done. I honestly believe that you would be a perfect t." He said.

"Is it illegal?" I asked him.

"It is if you get caught. Think about it. The offer is on the table. I look forward to speaking with you." He turned and walked away.

"Well, that was weird." My Lycan spoke to me. "Are you interested in what he is offering?"

"Well, I don't really know. I would never be caught. Even if I was, they could never hold me. We could be free in minutes."

"This is true. We should have some fun in our banishment. If we destroy some human lives along the way, who cares." My Lycan let out a laugh.

"What are we going to tell Kayla though? If we go out in public more, the more likely we are to run into her." I pondered.

"You could always say your work has brought you here if you do. Write her a text and forget to send it." My Lycan instructed.

"Seems wrong but whatever. I need to think about it." I told him.