

## Chapter 36

I place the dagger back into its sheath and tuck it into my belt. Then I take fifteen steps back from the tallest tree stump. A couple of years ago, Micah and I spent time carving silly faces into all the stumps we use as targets. I halt once I'm far enough away from the stumps and take the two old daggers tucked into the waist of my belt. Then, flourishing them in my hand, I aim and throw them at the tallest target. They spin through the air and hit the target but land an inch off where I had aimed.

'Try it with your new dagger,' Micah says.

'I don't want to damage it, though,'

'You won't,' he laughs, 'Trust me. It's indestructible,' he smirks.

His crooked smile makes me giddy and puts me in a trance. I nod in response.

With my new dagger in hand, I narrow my eyes at the target and throw.

The dagger struck right between the eyes of the target.

'Bullseye!' I squeal.

Micah lifts me and hugs me, 'I knew you could do it,' he says and then walks over to the stump and pulls the daggers out.

'I wonder why I could never get the other daggers to hit the same spot? I didn't do anything differently,' I say.

Micah stands behind me and drapes his arms over my shoulders. 'See here,' he says, holding one of the older daggers. If you look at it from this angle, you can see the blade is slightly bent. This one is also a little warped,' he points out. 'Also, you haven't been taking note of the wind and which direction it's going. Think like an archer. When you release the arrow, the wind can affect where it lands,'

'Oh, you're right. What would I do without you, Micah?' I say playfully and turn around to face him. He pulls me closer, and our lips caress each other's mouths for a few moments before we kiss. We break the kiss, and I step back with a hand on my chest. The thought of not being with Micah sends a horrible ache to my heart.

'What's wrong?' Micah asks with concern.

'I love you so much that it hurts,' I say truthfully.

Micah steps toward me, closing the gap between us and gently holds my chin and tilts my head to look him in the eyes.

'Lylah, you are the best thing that has ever happened to me. We will have the best future together and the most beautiful pups. Everyone will be envious of us,' he smiles.

I blush at the thought of having pups with him and his sweet words.

'Once I'm eighteen and it's confirmed we are fated mates, will I be going straight to Storm Glenn with you, or will we wait until you are made the official Alpha?' I ask.

'I was actually going to talk to my father and see if I can hold off

being an Alpha until I'm nineteen,'

'Why, is something wrong?' I ask in a worried tone.

'No, I was hoping to have you all to myself for at least a year. I figured maybe we could travel? All I want to do is climb mountains with you, swim the oceans and count the stars on the darkest nights with you. I want to do everything with you before we commit ourselves as Alpha and Luna of Storm Glenn,' he says.

'Micah,' I whisper, 'How lucky and blessed I am to have you,'

'You are everything to me, Lylah,' he says, cupping my cheek. He pulls my face closer, and we kiss slowly, absorbing and enjoying the moment.

My stomach grumbles, breaking the kiss.

Micah laughs, 'I guess this means it's dinner time?'

'Yeah, but I don't want to return home just yet. I want to stay here a bit longer,' I say.

'Okay, well, let's hunt a rabbit and make a fire then,' he says.

I nod, take his clothes as he strips, and place them in a neat pile. As soon as he shifts, I climb onto his back. He runs for a few minutes, slows down, and begins sniffing the air. Because I don't have my wolf, I can't smell as well as Micah can. Instead, I climb down from his back and stealthily walk around and listen for any sounds of wildlife. I have my dagger in a firm hold, ready to strike my dinner at any moment.



Half an hour goes by, and there is a rustle in a nearby bush, but before I can throw my dagger, Micah leaps out from the shadows and pounces on his prey. He prances towards me with the rabbit hanging from his mouth and drops it at my feet.

'If you waited for a second, I could have caught it myself, you know?' I smirk at him.

He playfully nudges his head across my chest and almost knocks me over. I pick the rabbit up and climb onto his back.

Once we have returned to our training area, he shifts back and dresses as I collect sticks for the fire.

'Do you want me to skin the rabbit, or do you want to do it?' Micah asks.

'You can get the rabbit ready. I'll get the fire started,' I smile.

He nods, picks up the dead rabbit and swiftly takes a cruddy knife from my boot.

'Hey!' I say.

Micah shrugs, 'Well, I'm not going to skin it with my teeth, am I?'

I laugh, 'Yeah, okay, okay.'

I continue to collect sticks, twigs and dry leaves, then find a couple of old dry small logs. I place them in a pile, collect rocks and place them in a circle to create a ring. Then, looking at the sticks, I choose one with a long groove and pick out another. With my knife, I shave the

tip making it sharp and pointy. Next, I take a pile of dried leaves and place it on the end of the stick with the groove and with the other stick, I begin rubbing it repetitively on the groove. Once the leaves begin to smoke, I tip them onto the sticks with added dry leaves and blow the smoke. The sticks catch fire, and I place the old dried logs on top and smile proudly at myself.

'Nice work, princess,' Micah says as he finishes removing the skin from the rabbit.

I walk over and watch him gut it. I had never prepared a rabbit before, so I preferred to get the fire going. I watch how he prepares it. Micah then pierces a stick through the rabbit and walks to the fire. I follow and sit next to him.

We take turns holding the stick and slowly rotating the rabbit.

'Do you think you will be okay when you turn eighteen and still don't have a wolf or magic?' He asks.

'I hope it doesn't bother me. I've been telling myself I probably won't have a wolf or magic, so I'd like to think I'm mentally prepared for it. I guess I won't know until then. But they would still be the least of my problems. As long as I'm with you and you don't mind that I remain human, then that's all that matters to me.'

'Well, you already know I think you're perfect the way you are,' he smiles.

I lean my head on his shoulder, and we watch the fire in a content silence unless the rabbit is cooked. Micah passes the stick to me so I can eat first. I manage to eat a quarter of it and pass it back to him

to finish.

Micah bites into the flesh, clearly hungry but stops and looks around.

'What is it?' I ask.

He sniffs the air, 'We have company.'

Billy, Amara, Theo and Leo step out into the clearing.

'So this is where you two canoodle?' Amara smiles.

'What are you all doing here?' I say.

'Well, Mum and Dad were becoming worried as it's getting late, and because you don't have a wolf, we couldn't mind-link you to see where you were,' Theo explains.

'I can take care of myself. Mum and Dad know that and know I'm with Micah anyway. So they have nothing to worry about,' I say, clearly annoyed.

'I'll mind-link them now and let them know you are okay,' Leo says.

They all join us and sit around the fire. Billy leans over, takes Micah's stick, and begins eating the rabbit.

'Billy, get your own rabbit,' Micah growls, snatching the stick back and resuming eating.

Once Micah is finished eating, I rest my head on his shoulder. He wraps his arm around my back and pulls me close.