

A Mother Before A Mate By Summer Richards Chapter 1

Chapter I Bang Bang*

I hear someone knocking at the door, and I know it's Grace. She's been my best friend since we were 10 years old, and she comes to get me out of bed every morning for the last six weeks. Six weeks ago my whole life was turned upside down. My parents, my brother Lev, and I were all sitting around the table eating pancakes with fruit and whipped cream for breakfast; my Mom's Saturday specialty.

We were talking and enjoying each other's company like any other Saturday morning when everything changed. My Dad said that Alpha wanted him to evaluate a breach at the eastern border. My Mom, being a doctor, wanted to go with my Dad to make sure all of the pack members were okay.

My Dad was a Gamma, 3rd in command at Cold

Moon. Cold Moon is one of the strongest packs around. My Dad was so strong, I still can't believe he is gone. I can't believe they're both gone. Alpha had gotten word that rogues were penetrating the eastern border of our pack lands.

First, he had sent a dozen warriors, and when Alpha thought the very minor threat was taken care of, he sent his Gamma to get the details about what had happened and report back. My father thought everything was over, and he was just questioning our warriors and any

prisoners, so when my mother asked to go with him, he agreed.

My father never would have let her go had he known.

When my parents got to the border, everything was calm. While my Dad was questioning everyone the border was breached again; this time with 60 rogues. The 15 warriors with my parents were soon overcome. That day we lost 25 pack members, and many families feel the loss from that day.

My brother Lev is 20 and he was thrust into the Gamma position to replace my father. He didn't have the option to stay in bed and mourn and feel everything like I did. He has people counting on him, people that depend on him. He was going to get the Gamma position in a few years when my Dad retired. This was always his destiny, it just happened sooner than we all thought it would. His Gamma training is very time-consuming, and it makes this house seem empty and lonely.

Finally, I hear my bedroom door open. Grace walks in, drops her bag, kicks off her sandals, and flops herself on top of my bed, wrapping her arms around me. She knows if I don't answer the door, it's because I'm crying.

"Did Lev let you in?" I whisper because I'm afraid my voice will crack.

"Uh-huh," she mumbles.

After a minute of silence, I'm able to compose myself a little, "I'm sorry, for being a mess, and not answering the door, and that you're always here picking up the pieces of my life," I admit.

"Lexi, this is where I want to be. I love you. You're my best friend, and I hate that you're hurting. I want to be

here for you, to help pick up the pieces. Stop feeling bad about me being here for you," Grace demands.

I look at her, and the look in her eyes and the authority in her voice tells me she means what she says.

I'm so lucky to have her as my best friend. I don't know where I would be through all of this if I didn't have her.

"Let's go. Get up. We're going to shift and go for a run today. Burning some energy will do you good, and you need to get out of this house," Grace orders me.

I wipe the tears away and force myself up. As I'm brushing my teeth, I take in the sight before me. My long black loose curls are dull, frizzy and tangled, my skin is paler than it usually is. My blue eyes don't stand out like they used, and I have dark circles under my eyes, and they're all puffy from all the crying. I've also lost some weight too, and it doesn't look nice.

When I walk back into my bedroom, I see Grace is sitting on my bed, on her phone. She is so beautiful, not just on the inside, but on the outside. She's a few inches taller than me, at 5'8", and she has long dark brown straight hair.

She has soft features, with big honey-coloured eyes. She turned 18, seven months ago, and she found out that her long-time crush was actually her mate. She always had a crush on Jett, the Alpha's son. Jett will be the next Alpha of our pack too, making Grace our future Luna. She is meant for the job too. She's strong and kind and she loves our pack. I turned 18 five months ago, and I have yet to

find my mate.

We walk towards the forest, within our borders. We undress, and fold our clothes, and then shift. When Grace shifts, she shifts into a large multi-coloured grey and black wolf with black eyes. My wolf is pure black, and I have even brighter blue eyes than my human form. Grace and I run through the forest, the earth crushing beneath our paws, with the warm sunshine shining on us, and it actually feels nice. I'm really glad she made me do this. After

running for about half hour, Grace mind links me.

just mind-linked me, he has something really important he needs to talk to me about. I have to go. Let's go, I'll run with you back home.-

-I think I'm going to stay out and run a little longer. It feels good to be out. You go ahead, I'll catch up with you later." – I assure her.

Grace starts to run back, and I continue. After a little while, I realize I have reached the ends of the pack border: just as I am about to turn around, I hear the faint sound of a baby crying. The guard at the border can't hear it, but he's keeping guard in his human form.

Our hearing is much stronger in wolf form. After standing at the border for 10 minutes listening to this baby cry, and cry as if there is no one there to comfort them, I can't take it. I need to go and see if this child is okay.

The guard tells me that he isn't allowed to leave his post, and he can't come with me. "I'm going to go alone. I'll be quick," I tell him-

I know after everything that happened a few weeks ago, it seems crazy that I would want to venture into the forest outside of our borders alone,

but the thought of an innocent child out there alone, or hurt overrides all of my logical thinking.

“You shouldn’t go alone,” the guard warns.

“I could mind-like the Alpha, and ask for him to send some warriors to accompany you,” he offers.

“No. Our pack just lost 25 people. Families are still mourning, the last thing I want to do is risk more pack members, this could be a trap. I want to do this alone. I can’t live with the guilt if someone gets hurt because of me,” I explain. This is the strongest I have felt since my parents have died.

I cross our border and run towards the crying baby. Running as fast as I can in my wolf form, it takes me about 2 or 3 minutes. When I get there, part of me is surprised that it’s an actual baby. It wasn’t all in my head, and it wasn’t a trap. There a crying baby lays in a cardboard box, under a shaded tree. The baby looks like a newborn, no more than a week old.

I shift into my human form, and I pick up the baby. The baby instantly soothes a little. The poor little thing is covered in sweat. Even though the baby was placed under a shaded tree, it’s still a warm summer day, and this baby was frantically crying for Moon goddess only knows how long. The baby is in a white onesie, and I have no idea if this baby is a girl or a boy. There is no sign of anyone else around, and I see that the baby’s lips look dry. I’m guessing it must be getting dehydrated, and hungry.

I stay in my human form and speed walk back towards the pack border. When I finally reach the border, the guard quickly removed his t-shirt for me to cover my naked body. I handed him the baby, and slip on his shirt, and quickly took the baby back.

I mind link my brother and tell him what happened and to get baby formula and diapers from another pack member and meet me at the packhouse. When I reach the packhouse, Lev had the baby supplies I requested. Even though baby's diaper is full and smells, I know that our first priority is getting food into that tiny belly. It could be life or death at this point. The baby is sucking on this bottle so vigorously, it's breaking my heart. I don't even want to think about what would have happened if Grace didn't take me for a run this morning.

I am so glad that I went, and didn't just chalk it up to my imagination. When baby is done eating, I change the diaper. It is then that I realize this tiny baby is a girl. My brother and I, along with Alpha Maximus Clarke, and Luna Camilla Clarke, head down to the Infirmary to get her

checked out. Doctor runs some tests, and the baby girl seems to be doing well, aside from being dehydrated so

she must be given an oral rehydration supplement in between feedings.

"So what do we do with her?" Lev asks.

"Maybe we should bring her to the fire station in town? Let the humans take her? She looks weak, she's probably a human baby," Alpha suggests.

"What if she is a werewolf pup? We will be able to tell by the time she's a year old. And who knows where she'd end up?" I question. I'm feeling very protective of this baby girl, even more so after hearing Alpha talk about dumping her off to human strangers.

"Even if she is a wolf, she's no more than an omega. Werewolves are far too possessive and protective to

abandon their baby. If she's not a human, she's an omega. Omega's are so weak, she'd be able to live a normal life as a human, completely unaware she has any wolf in her,"

Alpha says.

He is right. Omega's are the weakest of the werewolf race, and they often struggle to shift. It's something that takes a lot of work, and patience for them to do.

She could have a normal life as an omega in a human family. But who will she go to, I keep asking myself?

"I think you're right, honey. That's the best thing for her," Luna agrees.

"Wait. I've heard horror stories about human foster

care, and that's where she'll end up," I plead.

"If she's a human, she can't be here. It's against werewolf law, Lexi!" Alpha reminds me. He's right. s**t.

"Ok, why don't we have my Beta drop her off at the

fire station in the morning. It'll give us the rest of the day, and night to get her dehydration under control and then he'll drop her off bright and early," Alpha decides and then

comes to grab the baby from my arms. "Where are you taking her?"

"I'll bring her to one of the older women to take care of her until then."

"Wait...I can take care of her until then," I answer, and instinctively turn my body away from him, so he can't take her.

“Are you sure, I figured you wouldn’t be up for it, with everything that’s happened lately,” Alpha questions.

“No, I want to!” I say, as I look down at the sleeping angel in my arms.