

The Unwanted Wolf

Chapter 15 - 16

It was early when Mark woke me up the next morning. When he said we had to leave early to drive to the place the meeting was, hadn't realized he meant the middle of the night. Everything was ready for the trip already, thankfully, so all we had to do was get in the car and go. Scythe and Rie climbed into the back seat automatically, giving me the front seat. I didn't object, partly because I was too tired to and also because I wanted to sit closer to Mark.

"Is Doctor Zayla coming?" I asked after a yawn had escaped my lips.

"No," Mark said. "I thought it was best for her to stay with the pack in case anyone gets injured. I'm already leaving them on their own, so I don't want to leave them without all of their resources."

Mark's face was tight, and it suddenly hit me how torn Mark had been about this decision. He clearly cared for his pack members, and he was prioritizing me and my safety at the moment. That hadn't been easy for him to do. I reached over and grabbed Mark's hand and squeezed. I hoped I could comfort him, even if it was only slightly. He looked over at me and smiled softly. He squeezed my hand back.

Snoring poured in from the back seat, and I glanced behind us to see that Rie and Scythe were already fast asleep. "How can they possibly sleep so fast?"

Mark shook his head. "There's a reason I'm the one driving, and not them. All they have to do is close their eyes, and they are out. They are like children.

"In more ways than one." I quickly shut my mouth, not intending to say that out loud. I carefully looked at Mark to see his reaction.

Mark just laughed. "Yes, those two argue with each other more than I'd like. They both have their set ideas on how things should be done."

"Doesn't that get exhausting?"

Mark shrugged. "I think it's good. They both support the pack in different ways. I don't know what I would do without either of them.

Mark pulled out of the driveway, and the car fell silent after that. I tried to

stay awake for as long as possible to keep Mark company, but it wasn't long before sleep overcame me. I woke up to the sound of a hushed conversation. I didn't open my eyes right away because something piqued my interest.

"Mark, are you sure this is the right thing to do?" Rie asked.

"Rie, we've already discussed this." Mark wasn't harsh in his whispers, just firm.

"I know, but you fought so hard with Jori. You sacrificed so much, and now you are just going to give him the last thing you were able to hold onto." Rie was worried.

"It's not the last thing," Mark said quickly. "I have you guys, and now I have Adira."

This time it was Scythe who replied. "Rie has a point, Alpha. There has to be another way. You can't give Jori what he wants, not after everything that happened."

"That's enough. This is not up for discussion." Mark's voice slipped out of a voice and into his alpha tone.

My eyes snapped open, no longer able to pretend to be asleep. I adjusted in my seat and looked over at Mark.

"Sorry, did I wake you?" Mark asked. He bit his lip, and I wondered if he was nervous if I had heard their conversation.

I shook my head. "No, it's fine. How long was I asleep for?"

"A few hours," Mark said.

I looked at the scenery outside of the car, and I didn't recognize the area. It was flat compared to the mountainous region our city was in. It looked plain and boring, like a long summer day coming to an end.

"Do you want someone to take over driving for a little while? I'm sure you are tired." I felt guilty for falling asleep for so long while

Scythe leaned forward and wrapped his arms around the back of my chair.

"Don't worry. I will be taking over when we stop for gas." Scythe ruffled my hair before sitting back.

I looked outside again, mulling the conversation the three of them were having a few moments ago. What could Mark be giving up for me? I hated the idea that he was sacrificing even more for me, when he didn't even know me that well. I hated that I didn't know what he had already sacrificed either. I hated that I was going into this situation in the dark. I would have to find a time to ask Mark about his history, because I was tired of not knowing. I wanted to respect his privacy, but something told me that he wasn't going to tell me unless I asked.

I deserved to know the truth about him. If this was going to work out between the two of us, I needed to know what we were getting ourselves into with this meeting with his former pack. More than anything, I wanted to know why it was his former pack. Was he kicked out like me, or did he choose to leave?

I closed my eyes for a moment, trying to calm my thoughts. There was no use in wondering about what could have happened. I would just have to ask Mark point blank.

When I opened my eyes, I saw the sun starting to peak over the horizon, and it was breathtaking. I had never seen the sun rise above a flat land with an open sky. It was practically red for the first few seconds. Then it faded to orange and then yellow. It wasn't long before the sun's brightness took over the sky, and I couldn't look at it for any longer. The whole thing had felt so fast, and I had to blink a few times to wipe the flash of yellow out of my eyes.

After a few more minutes, we stopped at a gas station to refresh, grab some snacks and switch drivers. I was going to sit in the back seat with Mark, but Rie insisted I take the front seat still. It wasn't long before we were back on the road. After a few minutes, I glanced back at Mark.

"He's out," Rie said. "He must've been tired."

"I don't think he has slept much recently," I said. I know he had been waking up early with me for work, and I doubted he went back to sleep after. His job as an alpha surely kept him busy.

"He cares about you a lot," Rie said. "Please don't hurt him."

I pulled my lips tight, my chest churning. "I don't want to hurt him."

"Good," Scythe agreed. "We only want positive things for Alpha. We want positive things for you as well."

I nodded, feeling uncomfortable. I loved that Mark's pack was so supportive of him, but I got a feeling that if things went wrong, they would blame me in an instant. I understood it, because that's how packs were. I was the outsider who could hurt their alpha. I didn't have anyone on my side. I slunk down in my chair, starting to question everything.

Mark was driving again now, and I was grateful that the end of the trip was near. As we started nearing the city the meeting was in, I started recognizing the city we were going to, which put me on edge. It was near the city I grew up in. I would often come to the city with friends for day trips to experience some of the things we didn't have in our small town.

"I recognize this city," I said quietly, feeling extremely on alert.

"Have you been here before?" Mark asked.

"It's near the town I grew up in." My chest felt tight, thinking about accidentally meeting my family here. It was a big city, so the chances were small, but I hadn't even come near my old town since I was kicked. In case my family's threat was real, it wasn't worth the risk of accidentally meeting up with them.

Mark reached over and placed his hand on my thigh. He could sense my worry. "I'll be by your side while we are here."

"How long has it been since you've been here?" Rie asked.

"Almost four years," I said. I tried to remind myself that I would be fine. The chances would be too small to run into them now of all time.s

"Did you ever plan on coming back here?" Rie asked. I hadn't told anyone else my story, so I didn't blame her for being curious.

"Never," I said, "I don't have a relationship with my family anymore." they found out there were issues with my family.

We took a few turns on surface streets until we pulled into a neighborhood that looked old. All of the buildings were made from red brick and looked like they were at least a hundred years old. They were well maintained, despite their age, and the yards were filled with greenery. The area looked amazing and seemed like it held its own history. After a few more minutes, we pulled up to a house that could have been a museum. It looked quaint, despite its size. Green vines climbed up the front of the building that was several stories tall. A large wooden door held the entrance to the building, like it's own secret that only a select who would be allowed to know. The building thrived with energy, and I could see children running around, happy as can be. If this was where Mark grew up, it seemed like a joyous place. It made it more difficult to imagine what had happened.

I looked over at Mark, and both of his hands were gripping the steering wheel with a death grip.

"It's not too late to turn back," I said.

Mark shook his head and let go of the steering wheel. "We've come this far. There's no turning back now."

"We'll be right by your side, Mark," Rie said.

"Your trusty sidekicks are here to kick butt!" Scythe added.

This made Mark smile. "I don't plan on getting in any fights. We would be at a major disadvantage. But if anything goes wrong, I'm happy you are here with me." He turned to me. "Are you ready?"

Chapter 16

We approached the building with Mark and Scythe leading the way. Mark reached up to the door to knock, but before his fist hit the door, it opened. A young teenage girl opened the door and looked startled. "Oh, can I help you?" She kept the door slightly cracked.

"We are from Pack Aphelion. Jori should be expecting us," Mark answered. "Uh, okay. I will let someone know you are here." The girl shut the door, and we waited outside for a response.

The door opened again, and this time a man with dark brown hair opened the door. "You're early."

Scythe froze on the spot and I heard his voice hitch. "Percy?"

The man in front of us looked at the ground. "I wasn't expecting you to be here, Scythe. You look well."

Scythe didn't take his eyes off the man in front of him. "Percy, I missed."

"Alpha Jori has prepared a meeting room for your pack," Percy said, quickly cutting Scythe off. He was avoiding eye contact with Scythe and looked guilty. "Please follow me."

Mark glanced over at Scythe, picking up on the same weird energy that I was feeling. Now was not the time to question him about it though.

We all followed Percy through the house. It felt even bigger once we were on the inside. He led us down a long hallway and opened a door near the end of the hallway. Inside there was a long table that could fit sixteen people. Percy gestured for us to sit down.

"Please wait here. I'll be back." Percy shut the door behind us, and left us in the room. I could feel the nerves lingering in the room.

"Scythe, are you okay? What was that about?" Mark asked as he sat down at the table.

Rie sat to Mark's left, and I took the seat on the other side of him. Scythe stayed standing, shifting on his feet.

"Don't worry about it. It's of little consequence." Scythe looked down at the ground, and I hadn't seen him with so little hype before.

He looked completely drained.

"Hey pretty boy, you don't need to sacrifice your own feelings. You're important too," Rie said. "Come sit down."

Mark added, "She's right. We are a few minutes, so if there is something bothering you, please tell me."

Scythe sighed and sat down next to Rie. "Okay, if you insist. Before we separated from the pack, I found my mate."

Rie's eyes went wide. "What do you mean? You never mentioned this before."

"It's Percy, isn't it?" I said. The way Scythe had looked at Percy looked like a broken-hearted puppy.

Scythe nodded, but he didn't look at any of us. "Yes."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Mark asked.

Scythe shrugged. "We discovered while everything... was happening. I had to go with you, Alpha, and Percy said he couldn't go. He begged me to stay with him, but I left anyway."

"Why didn't you tell me what was happening?" Mark was distraught at the news.

Scythe finally looked up with a frown carving out his face. "You had so much going on, Alpha. You didn't need anything else to worry about. I was hoping I wouldn't see him here."

"Scythe, you don't have to deal with this on your own. I want you to talk to me, even if it seems like I have a lot going on. My problems are not more important than yours." Mark was confident in his words, which showed me he truly cared about his other pack members.

Scythe nodded, but he didn't say anything. He seemed to shut down, not talking like his normal self.

After a few minutes of silence, the door to the meeting room finally opened back up. Percy led the way with another man who was a little shorter and wore glasses. The man had a stack of papers in his hands, and he was wearing a nice white button-up shirt. He did not

The two of them sat across from us, and the blond set down his papers and pushed up his glasses. Percy was the first one to speak.

Alpha Jori is wrapped up in matters at the moment. He will join us once he is done." Percy took a quick glance in Scythe's direction and quickly refocused. If I hadn't been watching him closely, I would have missed the gesture. "Before we begin, do you have it?"

Mark hesitated before answering. He shifted to pull something out of his backpack. "Yes." He put a black case in front of him, but he didn't hand it over yet. "Once you give us the information we need, I will hand it over."

"That wasn't the deal," Percy said, his voice not wavering.

"Percy, please don't make this more difficult," Scythe said, keeping his eyes glued to the table.

Percy hesitated. "Alpha Jori was clear on my instructions. I'm not going to continue the meeting unless you hand it over."

"It's okay," Mark said. He was treading in water, and he knew he didn't

have much control over the situation and didn't want to cause any more issues. He pushed the case across the table, and Percy quickly took it. Percy nodded to the other man sitting next to him.

"Hello, my name is Daniel." The blond was looking directly and held out his hand. "I don't believe the two of us have met before."

I grabbed his hand and shook it. "I'm Adira. It's nice to meet you."

He nodded. "I understand you have some questions for me."

"Thanks for meeting with us, Daniel," Mark said with a familiarity in his voice. "Doctor Zayla sends her regards."

Daniel smiled at the name of Doctor Zayla. "I hope she is well. So please, fill me in with what's been going on."

Mark began telling Daniel and Percy what was going on. He explained that someone had tried to poison me with wolfsbane and how I survived the attack. Then he went over Doctor Zayla's test results and her theory about my mixed heritage. He made sure to add the part that someone was still trying to kill me, but he conveniently left out the fact that I was his mate or how we met. After Mark was done explaining everything, Daniel was silent for a moment.

"I see. I have a few theories about what might be the case," Daniel finally said.

"What are they?" I eagerly asked.

"I would like to do a little more research before I confirm my thoughts," Daniel said. He started flipping through his stack of papers.

"I insist you share your theories now," Mark said firmly. "The deal was you help us and share what information you might have. Not get back to us later."

Daniel sighed and adjusted his glasses again. "The thing that sticks out most to me is the fact that Adira was able to disappear and her glowing eyes. Those are features of sorcerers. Some other races have those abilities as well, though, so I'm not confident that's the case though."

"Sorcerers?" I had repeated. I hadn't heard much about other races, other than vampires growing up. I didn't know what kind of things they were capable of.

Daniel nodded. "That's the most likely answer. I will have to do more research on them to verify it. I think I might have a source that could get us a sample of blood from a sorcerer. Doctor Zayla would then be able to compare her test results with that."

"Do you know what kind of weaknesses sorcerers might have? We want to

make sure we are prepared in case Adira's attacker knows her history." Mark was tense as he spoke.

Daniel continued looking through his papers for a moment, skimming the information on the pages. "Not off the top of my head. I promise I will get you more information with a little bit of time. Mark, I do not plan to betray our deal. I understand there is some bad blood between our packs, but I do not have any ill regards towards you. I am asking for some of your trust."

Mark relaxed a little. "Thanks Daniel. I was just hoping for more concrete information right away, but I understand that is asking for a lot."

Daniel finally paused and looked Mark in the eyes. "I understand the level of importance of this situation, and I'm happy to help if I can." He turned to look at me. "What pack did you say you were from again? I don't remember if you said, and I know you are not a part of Alpha Mark's pack." separated."

Daniel c****d his head at this information. "You were from Pack Lyna? I am familiar with them."

I nodded in response. I didn't feel it was necessary to say that I'm the estranged daughter who they likely pretended didn't exist. I couldn't imagine that was important to figure out what I was or who was trying to kill me.

"Thank you for your help, Daniel," Mark said. "How long will it be until we can expect an answer from you?"

"I should be able to get you some answers tonight, if not by tomorrow morning."

The door opened, and I instantly smelled an overwhelming scent that made me want to take another deep breath. It smelled of pine needles and dirt. My heart pounded against my chest, and I felt nervous as I looked up. I met the eyes of a tall man with dark hair. His eyes were a dark brown color and they pierced my soul. Tingles ran down my spine, and I couldn't break eye contact with this new man. He was staring right back at me.

"Alpha Jori, welcome. I'm glad you were able to meet us," Percy said. "We were just about to wrap up."

Jori didn't respond to Percy. He walked right over to me, and placed his hands on the table in front of me. He leaned forward, so his face was only a few inches from me. "Hello beautiful."

Agrowl escaped Mark's lips and he flung up out of his chair. "Stay away

from her.”

Jori smirked, not breaking eye contact with me. “Why would I step away from my mate?”