

The Unwanted Wolf

Chapter 17

Another growl emanated from Mark's lips, this one more ferocious. "I said step away from her. She's not your mate." Jori smirked and reached out his hand stroking under my chin. "Why would I lie about that? Just ask her yourself." Mark went to lunge forward, but Rie quickly grabbed his arm.

"Mark, calm down."

Scythe was standing on edge, ready to step in if necessary. "Jori, unless you want a fight to break out, I suggest you take a step back."

"He's right," Percy added. Percy was tense, ready to jump in if a fight broke out, but he looked slightly terrified of that as well.

Jori growled under his breath. He took a step back from me, but my hairs were still on end from his closeness. "Just because she's a part of your new pack, it doesn't mean you can control what happens with her."

"She's not your mate," Mark spat.

I felt completely frozen, unable to move or speak. I felt Mark's presence behind, but I felt Jori's just as strongly in front of me. I didn't understand what was happening. I felt like I was being torn in two directions.

"And how can you be so sure? You can't tell how she or I feel?" Jori's eyes narrowed as he looked at Mark.

"Because she's mine." Mark growled again.

Jori c****d his head, almost amused by Mark's reaction. "She's yours? I don't think she belongs to anyone."

"Adira is Mark's mate," Rie snapped. She still had a firm grip on Mark, not trusting him to do anything stupid. "She can't be your mate since she's Mark's, so you must be lying."

"Alpha Jori wouldn't lie," Percy quickly said. Rie growled in response.

"It would be silly to lie about something like this." Jori said. He was the calmest one in the room. "It would be easy to verify. Just ask Adira."

All eyes moved to me, and I felt like I couldn't breathe. I didn't know what to say. Mark was my mate. I could feel his bond from behind me. I could feel the seething anger he felt towards Jori, and I was drawn to him. But I couldn't say that Jori wasn't my mate. I

didn't understand it, but I felt the same draw to Jori as I had to Mark. My body felt the urge to go to Jori and Mark at the same time, and it left me torn.

"Adira?" Mark said, his voice calmer with me.

"I-I-" I stuttered. I couldn't find the words. My breathing became labored, and I felt the panic starting to set in. No matter what I said in this moment, it wouldn't be what anyone wanted to hear. It would hurt someone or everyone. "I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know?" Rie said, horrified. "It's a simple, 'Mark is mate mate. Jori is full of it.' What's so difficult about that?"

"I'm not lying." Jori said. "That's why she can't deny it."

"Adira?" Mark said again, this time his voice cracking.

I wanted to go to Mark and tell him what he wanted to hear. I wanted to hold him in my arms and tell him he was the only one I ever wanted in my life, but there was another part of me that knew it would be a lie.

"I need to sit down." I plopped into my chair, and the room seemed to be spinning.

"This is very interesting," Daniel finally said, joining in on the discussion for the first time. He moved over to me and knelt on the ground. He grabbed my hands and looked into my eyes. "Adira?"

I looked up, finding his eyes. I felt like most of the air was missing from the room, and no matter how many breaths I took, it didn't feel like enough.

"Try to take a deep breath," Daniel said. "Good. You don't have to speak, but you can just nod. Does that sound okay?"

I nodded in response. I was just trying to focus on my breathing, and I felt a little better.

I hesitated with my response. I didn't have any other explanation. This time I nodded slowly.

"Just keep breathing, okay?" Daniel let go of my hand and stood up. He turned to Mark and then Jori. "You two should be ashamed of yourselves. This poor girl is basically having a panic attack because of the pressure you two put on her just now."

"Daniel, what's going on?" Percy asked. It was the question on everyone's minds.

"I have a theory. Adira is of mixed blood. It's possible that she has two fated mates because of it," Daniel explained.

"I have never heard of that before," Scythe said.

"I told you I wasn't lying," Jori smirked..

Mark growled again. "Let's get out of here." Mark grabbed my hand and started pulling me out of the room. I let him take me, since I felt like I couldn't think at the moment.

"You can't stop this! She'll be back!" Jori called out after us.

Before I knew it, Mark was ushering me into the car. The moment Scythe and Rie were in the car, he pulled out of the driveway. He was silently fuming and his driving was a little terrifying. The longer I was away from Jori's scent, the clearer my head got. I felt terrible for what happened, and I didn't know what to say. After a few minutes of reckless driving, Mark pulled over on the side of the street.

He turned off the car and tossed the keys to Rie. "We will meet you back at the hotel." Mark got out of the car, and I felt myself moving without thinking. Mark had stopped at a park and was power walking away.

I had to half run after him. "Mark!" I called out, but he didn't respond. I had to run a little faster. "Mark!" I was desperate for his attention. I finally caught up to him and grabbed his arm. "Mark."

He yanked his arm out of my hand, but he finally stopped moving. He ran his fingers through his hair. Quietly he asked, "Why?"

I took a moment to catch my breath. Mark was still facing away from me. "I wish I could tell you. I don't understand it myself."

"He has taken everything away from me, and now you?" Mark's voice was defeated.

"He hasn't taken me away from you." My heart was pounding. I knew Mark more, and I liked Mark. I couldn't imagine being without him, but there was something about Jori that drew me to him, that made me a little more hesitant with Mark."

Mark finally turned to me. "Then reject him. Say you'll choose me."

I chewed my lip and looked at the ground. "This is too much too fast. I can't just make a declaration like that. I don't even know what's happening."

"Do you want to be with me or not?" Mark asked.

My chest tightened, knowing my answer wouldn't be what Mark wanted. "I like you. I want you, but there's so much happening to me right now. Someone is trying to call me for crying out loud."

"If you can't definitively say you want to be with me, then how is this supposed to work?" Mark's voice was starting to rise.

"I don't even know you!" I snapped. Mark was putting too much pressure on me, and I was starting to lose my composure. "I don't know why you left

Jori's pack. I don't know anything about your history. On top of that, someone is trying to kill me. How can you expect me to just make a decision in an instant without even having a chance to think things through?"

"I don't want to lose you, especially not to Jori. Not after everything I have lost because of him." Mark's voice was softer again.

"Then talk to me. What happened between you two?" I hated seeing Mark like this, but I couldn't give him what he wanted just to make him happy. It would be a disservice to myself.

Mark was silent. It felt like forever before he spoke. "I can't. Not right now."

"Fine." My anger had dissipated at this point, and I just felt sad. "If you can't trust me enough with this information, then how can you sit here and expect me to just drop everything and choose you. You have become important to me in such a short amount of time, but I can't risk getting hurt."

Tears threatened my eyes. I waited for a moment for Mark to say something, and when he didn't have any kind of defense, I turn and walked away. Part of me hoped Mark would come after me and apologize, but part of me wanted a minute alone. I needed a moment to breathe and think about everything that had happened and wrap my mind around everything.

It was the moment that Mark wouldn't choose me. I understand that he wanted more from me, but he said he would be patient. I guess there was a reason to give up on me.

Silent tears streamed down my face. Why was I here in this strange city all by myself? What did it matter that I was mixed blood anyway? Someone was trying to kill me, and now I was by myself with no one to count on. I felt stupid for trusting Mark so easily. I thought this time would be different, but it never was. The more other wolves learned about me, the less desirable I was.

None of this was working out the way I wanted it to.

"Hey," a familiar voice called out to me.

I looked over and saw a car driving next to me. It was hard to see the driver, so I stopped and squinted. "Jori? What are you doing here?"

"Why are you by yourself?" Jori returned. He stopped the car next to me. I paused, not answering him. He avoided my question. "How did you know where I was?"

"Get in the car, and I'll tell you." Jori leaned over and opened the passenger side of the car.

I stood frozen, unable to decide if I should go. Mark would be upset if I went with Jori, but Mark also hadn't come after me. I didn't want to be alone, either. I started walking towards Jori's car and got into the passenger seat.

"Okay, are you going to tell me now?" looked at Jori expectantly. I didn't know much about him.

"Mark and I used to come to this park all the time when we were growing up. I had a feeling he would take you here, since he was upset," Jori explained.

"You and Mark grew up together?" I had never imagined they used to be friends.

"Mark didn't tell you?" Jori scoffed at this. "Typical. We used to be best friends."

"If you used to be best friends, what happened between you two?" I asked. I was eager for any information I could get.

"Has Mark told you anything about what happened?" Jori asked. He was looking at me carefully now.

I shook my head. "No, he hasn't told me much at all."

"Yet he acts so defensively about you being his mate," Jori said, shaking his head. "He doesn't deserve you."

"That's not fair," I instantly said, feeling defensive. Even though I was upset with Mark, I didn't like the way Jori had said something like that. "Mark has been really helpful to me recently."

"Then why were you alone?" Jori asked.

The question stabbed my heart, and I didn't have a response. "I'm not sure."

"Tell you what, why don't I take you back to the packhouse, and I tell you what happened between Mark and myself? Maybe we can even get to know each other a little better."

I looked at Jori carefully. Something told me this was a stupid decision that would cause more issues, but I found myself saying, "Okay."