

The Unwanted Wolf

Chapter 23

After I hung up the phone with Lana, I left my room. Despite it being later in the day, it was still too early to sleep, and I didn't want to hang out in my room by myself. When I went through the game room, it was mostly quiet, except for two teenagers sitting on the couch. I quickly went downstairs, not wanting to interrupt the teens in whatever it was they were doing.

I didn't know where Mark was, and I felt the urge to talk to him. I wanted to ask him about everything that happened to him, and I wanted to talk to him about everything Daniel told me. I hadn't really had a chance to be near him ever since Jori declared I was his mate, and I missed his presence.

I wandered around the pack house, looking for a familiar face. It seemed that some people had retired to their rooms, and overall the house was much quieter than when I first arrived. I made my way to the kitchen, since that's where Percy and Scythe were according to Jori. Maybe Scythe knew where Mark was.

As I approached the kitchen, I heard a sonorous laugh echoing down the hallway. I moved slowly, not wanting to distract whatever happiness was happening. I peaked around the corner and saw Scythe and Percy sitting across from each other at the table. I didn't see Rie, which surprised me, since I thought she was going to be joining them. "No, no, no! There's no way we can pick that as the theme. You're mad," Percy said, shaking his head.

"Please. You know we can pull it off, and it would be so cool!" Scythe was practically glowing as he spoke.

Percy laughed, and it was the deep sound I had heard down the hallway. "You're a madman. Okay, if you really think we can pull it off, we'll give it a shot."

I smiled as Percy and Scythe continued planning. All of the tension between them from before seemed completely gone. I wondered if they had talked to each other about Scythe leaving. I really hoped they worked things out because they seemed perfect for each other as they sat there talking.

"They are pretty adorable together," Rie said, approaching me from behind. She had a teacup in her hand.

"They do," I agreed. "I wouldn't have guessed they were mad at each other earlier today."

"I know. I was going to join them because I was worried that they would be arguing or sitting here in awkward silence, but when I saw them laughing together, I didn't want to interrupt them," Rie explained. "I don't blame you. I was going to ask Scythe if he knew where Mark was at the moment, but I couldn't bring myself to enter the room." I took another look at the couple, and I couldn't help smiling. Their happiness was almost infectious, and it made me long to be that happy.

"Mark went for a run. He wanted to let his wolf out and get out some of his frustration." Rie took a slow sip of her tea,

"Oh." I was a little disappointed. "Do you know when he'll be back?"

"I don't. I'm sorry. He can be gone for hours sometimes. Want me to tell him you were looking for him?" Rie asked.

I shook my head, feeling silly. Mark probably wouldn't want to talk to me about his history right now anyway. He wouldn't tell me earlier today, so I don't know why I thought now would be any different.

"No, it's okay. I'm sure I'll see him later. I think I'm going to do some research." I smiled at Rie and started walking away.

I returned to Daniel's office. I had left the book he gave him in there when all of the commotion began earlier. His door was open, but I knocked on it before entering anyway. I looked inside, and Daniel had his nose deep in a book.

"Oh, Adira, what brings you here?" Daniel asked. "I don't have any updates for you yet. I'm still waiting for my contact to get back to me."

I walked into the room. "I think I left that book you gave me in here."

Daniel closed his book. "Oh yes. I meant to tell you that, but there was a lot going on." He grabbed the small journal and handed it over to me. "I didn't tell you this earlier, but please take all of the information in the book with a grain of salt. It seems to be a diary of some sort, so all of the information in it is from the account of a person. It's best to verify the information in the book with other

I laughed a little at this. Daniel seemed overly concerned about accidentally spreading false information, and I thought it was pretty adorable. "I will make sure to take that into consideration. Thank you, Daniel."

"You're welcome, Adira. Please be sure to share anything you find might be useful. I skimmed through the diary, but some of it was uninteresting to me."

I nodded my head. "Will do. Have a good night." I waved to Daniel and headed back to my room to start reading. If Daniel was right about my twenty-first birthday, I was curious if anything in this journal might give me a clue as to what I was facing. As I made it to the third floor, I saw that the teenagers had vacated the area, and it was completely quiet out here. Instead of hiding in my room, I thought it would be more comfortable out here.

I sat on the couch and pulled my knees to my chest. I opened the book to the first page and saw a tagline that read, "This Journal Belongs to: Finnegan Stronghold." Something about the name tugged at a memory from long ago, but I couldn't think of where it actually came from. I let it go and started reading.

January 1, 2000

It's the beginning of the new millennium and a new year, and I can already tell this is the beginning of a new life for me. I met this amazing woman today by chance, and I think I'm in love. She was wild and lovely, and she was a... Sorceress. I know this is wild to say, because it is forbidden for a werewolf to mingle with a sorceress, but after meeting her, I know I have to spend the rest of my life getting to know her.

Before I could get her name, she disappeared before my eyes, but I know I have to find her. I have to talk to her and get to know her.

This is my promise to myself for the year. I will find the woman who stole my heart, and I will find a way to have her show me hers.

January 28, 2000

I still haven't found her, but today I got close. I found a man who spoke of a woman with silky black hair with unworldly powers. He told me where he had seen her. When I went to that spot, I didn't see her, but I found a strand of black hair. I have a feeling that if I keep coming here, I will find her.

February 6, 2000

I spoke to her today! Her voice was even more melodic than I had imagined. Her name is Sonora. She told me it was too dangerous to speak here, but she agreed to meet me at the waterfall in the forest tomorrow night. I'm counting the seconds until/see her face again. This is it. This is the beginning of everything. I can feel it deep in my bones.

February 8, 2000

She was there! Just where she said she would be last night. We ended up spending the entire night together, and I know she is my

mate. I don't know how to explain it, because werewolves are supposed to be mated to only other werewolves, but even my wolf agrees. She is my mate. She told me her familiar felt the bond to me as well, which is why she agreed to meet with me, even though I was just a filthy mut.

Sonora is absolutely incredible. She showed me some of the things she could do, and it was much different than everything my mother had told me growing up. My mother said that sorcerers were wretched things who sucked the life out of innocence and used it to power their gifts, but it was nothing like that. Sonora brought life into the world, not the other way around.

I could feel my eyes start to grow heavy, so I closed the journal, despite wanting to read more. I would just rest my eyes for a moment before reading more.

The sounds of growls jolted me from my sleep, but when I opened my eyes, I wasn't in the pack house. I was in the familiar place where I had been talking to Shadow. There were no walls anywhere to be seen or anything else for that, except a fog that swirled around me. When I looked a little closer, half of the fog was white and the other half was black. In the middle where I was standing, it swirled together, turning gray.

Another growl drew my attention, but I still couldn't see where it came from. When the growl turned into a whimper, I found myself running

"Shadow!" I called, but the whimpers continued. "Where are you Shadow?" I froze when I saw Shadow lying on the ground in front of me. I could hardly see anything, but the outline of her body with all of the fog. I squinted my eyes, but it didn't help much. I approached slowly, scared of the fact that I didn't hear any noise. When I got closer, I realized there was a second body shaped like a cat. The cat was all white and almost glowed in the fog. It was standing over Shadow's body.

I released my breath when I saw Shadow's chest moving up and down with breaths. "What did you do to her?" I tried to demand, but my voice was shaky.

The cat looked up at me, and its eyes were glowing. "Don't worry, Adira. Shadow is just fine. I just need a moment to talk to you without her interrupting."

I recognized the voice as the one from before. "Who are you?" I had yet to receive a concrete answer to this question, despite asking

it several times.

"You know who I am, Adira. We met years ago." The cat stood up and slowly walked over to me.

I opened my mouth to reject her statement, then it came to me. "You're my familiar, aren't you?"

"Yes." She looked up at me and purred.

"But I don't remember meeting you before this week," I said. I didn't know her voice until I heard it in my dreams.

The cat reached up and licked her paw. "I'm not surprised you don't remember me. I came to you on your sixteenth birthday. That's when familiars are supposed to appear. But because your father rejected you, I couldn't get through to you. You were so overcome with grief that you suppressed me. I stopped trying after a while, too weak to get your attention."

"I don't believe that man is my father." Even thinking about the father I knew growing up made me feel spiteful. Even if I wasn't his daughter, we had had that kind of relationship for years. That's not something you throw away just because you are not blood related

"I suppose you're right on that account. I'm Moon by the way."

Chapter 24

"Moon," I repeated, soaking in the information. If Moon was my familiar, it meant there was no doubt about my heritage. "Why are you able to reach me now if you haven't been successful for years?"

"Your powers are growing stronger, even though you've been suppressing them," Moon explained. "If you let them emerge, there will be more you'll be able to do than ever before."

"But how do I do that? I didn't even know I had powers. I don't know how to control them." I thought about when I shifted when being attacked. I hadn't even known what happened.

"Unfortunately, I can't help you with that. I can't get your powers to emerge, or else we would have been speaking years ago. That mut has been keeping me at bay, trying to protect you." Moon glanced over at Shadow. I moved over to Shadow and knelt next to her. She was still unconscious. "Shadow is not a mut," I said defensively. Shadow had been there for me ever since she emerged. I stroked her head. "Shadow, wake up."

"She's okay," Moon assured. She sauntered over to us and sat on the other side of Shadow. "I just needed a chance to speak with

you one on one. Besides, she doesn't know what she is talking about, trying to say Mark is our mate."

"Mark is our mate," I said quickly. "And wasn't this a little overboard?"

"Jori is our soul mate," Moon said. "And you have suppressed me for too long. It required drastic measures. You need me now more than ever. Your life is in danger, and you won't get out of this alive without me."

"Do you know who is trying to kill me?"

"Adira? Adira? Wake up."

I heard Mark's voice and looked around, but I didn't see him. "Mark?"

Moon purred and started rubbing against my leg. "The one trying to kill us is the one who stands to lose the most."

I looked back to Moon. "What do you mean by that? Can't you stop being cryptic for once?"

Moon stopped and looked at me. "I can't tell you what we don't already know." She pressed her head against my hand. "Please pick Jori. For my sake."

I opened my mouth to say something, but Moon and Shadow disappeared. Everything went dark again, and this time when I opened my eyes, I was back in the game room. I felt pretty disoriented. It didn't feel like I was waking up from sleep. It was more like being transported from a different location.

"Adira? Are you okay?"

I blinked a few times and then rubbed my eyes. I sat up, and Mark was sitting next to me with his eyebrows furrowed. There was no one else in the room, and the lights were dimmed.

"How long have you been here?" I stretched my neck, feeling a little sore from falling asleep on the couch. Mark smiled sheepishly. "A little while. I was heading back to my room when I saw you sleeping here. I didn't want to leave you by

yourself like that. I was just going to let you sleep, but then you seemed distressed. I can go if you."

My eyes widened with realization. "It all makes sense now. The pull in different directions. Feeling like an internal battle going on."

"What are you talking about?" Mark c****d his head.

I turned to face Mark directly. "I'm part sorceress. Sorcerers have familiars, similar to how werewolves have their wolves. Werewolves have mates, but sorcerers have soul mates. That's why I have two. Moon said that Jori is our soul mate, but you're my mate."

Mark seemed uneasy with the conversation. "Who is Moon?"

“My familiar,” I said. I stopped, looking at the confused look on Mark’s face. Was I just spouting nonsense? “Sorry. I just had a weird... dream? Maybe. I’m not sure if it was a dream really. But things make more sense now. At least to me. I don’t know if I’m confusing you more. Sorry.”

When Mark said my name, it made me freeze. Something about his deep voice saying my name churned something deep inside of me. I took a deep breath and felt a little better,

“Good. I will admit that I don’t fully understand everything you were saying, but if you feel better about it, I’m glad.” Mark smiled at me, but then his smile slowly faded. “I should probably leave you be.”

My hand grabbed Mark’s arm before I could even think. “You don’t have to go.”

“Until we figure out who is trying to kill you, I think it’s best if I stay back. I don’t want to cause you any more turmoil than I already have.” Mark tried to stand up, but I kept my grip on him firmly.

“Don’t back off. I know I said I don’t want to make a decision yet, and that’s still the case, but don’t go. Don’t leave me. Fight for me,” pleaded. “Please.”

I could see the pain in Mark’s eyes as he stared at me. “Adira, do you even know what you’re asking me? If I start fighting for you, won’t be able to stop. Ever.”

I stood up so I could look closer at Mark. “Fight for me.”

That was enough for Mark to break down his barriers. His hand snaked around the back of my head, and he pulled me in, kissing me like he was going to lose me. I could feel his passion and his desperation as his lips moved with mine. I never wanted to let go of that moment, but Mark stopped himself before he went too far.

He pressed his forehead against mine. “I won’t stop fighting for you. I promise you that.”

I pulled back from Mark, my heart racing. I wanted more of him, but there was a small voice in my head, telling me I was betraying Jori. It was Moon’s voice. I couldn’t hear her like I could with Shadow, but I simply knew what she was feeling. I smiled at Mark, longing for this all to be over so I could move on, but something told me it wouldn’t be that simple. Moon was a part of me just as much as Shadow was, and while I hardly knew her at all, she wouldn’t be going anywhere. I wouldn’t let it happen. I wanted to get to know her and every part of myself.

“I promise I will do my best to figure this out. Just give me a little time,” I said, staring into Mark’s eyes. It was easy to get lost

there.

Mark nodded in acknowledgement. "You should get to bed. It's late and you have a big day tomorrow, birthday girl."

I frowned at the thought. "Don't remind me."

"Not a fan of your birthday?" Mark asked.

I shook my head. "Not really."

"That explains why you didn't tell me your birthday was coming up. I could've planned something for you," Mark said.

I chewed on my cheek a little. "I was hoping the topic wouldn't come up. My birthday brings up some negative feelings." I looked at the ground, feeling embarrassed.

Mark grabbed my chin and had me look at him again. "You deserve happy memories on your birthday. I want to change that for you." Mark leaned forward and kissed my forehead, making me blush. "Have a good night, and I'll see you tomorrow."

"Sweet dreams, Mark."

The sun woke me up the next morning, and my body felt completely heavy. I had spent a good portion of the night tossing and turning. It had felt weird sleeping in a bed by myself. I didn't like that feeling. I had only slept in Mark's bed a handful of nights, but it was enough to make me miss the feeling of the warmth of another person.

I got out of bed and stretched before finding an outfit for the day. I felt oddly excited at the idea of a party for me tonight. It had been a long time since I had a party for myself like that, and part of me missed the rush of energy from people dancing and socializing. I wasn't sure how big or extravagant the party would be, especially since I knew very few people at the pack house. I couldn't imagine strangers wanting to join the celebration of me. When I went downstairs, I was shocked at the hustling around the house. People were everywhere, carrying things in and out of the house. I snuck around the people, trying my best not to get in anyone's way or get run over by the large objects being transported. My eyes were wide as I watched the chaotic procession march on. What on earth was happening?

I decided to follow a man who was carrying something that almost looked like a colosseum. He went into the backyard, where!

found even more chaos. There were so many objects and bundled up light strings, and in the center of it all was Scythe, barking orders at people. Percy was by his side, but he was simply checking things on a clipboard.

I weaved in and out of people to make my way over to Scythe. I stood next

to him, and he still hadn't noticed my presence, "What is this chaos?" I asked, a laugh slipping into my voice. "This can't be for my birthday party."

Scythe's eyes widened when he saw me. "No! No! No! The birthday can't be here during the preparations!"

Percy shook his head. "It's all a mess right now anyway. It's going to look nothing like this when we are done."

"Still! It'll ruin the surprise," Scythe whined. "Adira, go back inside and don't come out here again until I specifically give you permission."

"This is too much Scythe. You are going overboard. I would be fine with just a small dinner, or nothing at all." I looked around at the madness of people dropping items off while others were detangling lights or setting things up. There was no going back from this point, and I knew that despite my protests.

"I don't want any complaints from you, missy. Now shoo and let me do my work." Scythe shooed me away with his hands.

I sighed and started going back inside. There was no way this was just going to be a small get-together.