

# The Unwanted Wolf

## Chapter 28

I stared in the mirror, and I didn't recognize the mirror staring back at me. I had dressed up and done the full makeup when I was still a teenager, but ever since being on my own, I hadn't put nearly as much effort into my looks. The person standing in front of me had dark brown hair that fell over her shoulders in loose curls. Little stair pins hung throughout the curls, adding a little bit of a sparkle. The dress seemed to fit perfectly with the complement of the makeup and curls in my hair. I couldn't decide if I felt more like a princess or a fairy, but I was in love either way. I felt magical, like nothing bad could happen.

"Thank you so much," I whispered without taking my eyes off the mirror. I twisted a few times to watch the bottom of my dress flow around me. I could feel the tears starting to build in my eyes. It was the first time in a while that my tears were from happiness.

"No, no, none of that. We can't ruin your makeup. We don't need to see your diamond tears right now," Rie said.

I took a deep breath and smiled. "Don't worry. These are tears of joy."

"Either way, we don't want them. Come on. We should get going before Scythe storms over to us again." Rie tilted her head towards the stairs.

I ran my hands over my dress again to make sure it was real. I took one last look in the mirror and gasped. My eyes were sparkling as if a thousand stars had invaded my pupils. "Um."

Rie looked at me and her eyes instantly widened. "What's going on?"

My body felt like it was buzzing. "I don't know. Maybe my powers are emerging." I took a deep breath and closed my eyes to see if that would help. When I opened my eyes again, my eyes were back to normal.

"Whoa! That's so cool," Eva shouted.

"Powers?" Cindy narrowed her eyes. "Is that why you don't smell quite like a wolf?"

I nodded slowly. I wasn't really planning on telling anyone without a need to know basis. "I think I'm only half werewolf."

"Oh, so the other half of you makes your eyes glow?" Eva asked.

I laughed. "I guess. I don't really know much about the other part of me, but I'm learning."

"Can you do it again?" Eva was standing right next to me, looking up at me. She was blinking her eyes rapidly.

"I'm sorry. I'm not sure how I'm doing it, if I'm being honest." I still felt like there was an energy running through my body still, even though my eyes were no longer glowing. I glanced in the mirror just to double check.

"Maybe it was because you were happy?" Rie suggested. "You were practically glowing the moment before, and then you were actually going."

I thought about this for a moment. The last time my eyes were glowing was when I was attacked and scared. Maybe Rie was right. Maybe the power was linked to my emotions, which is why it didn't suddenly emerge just because it was my birthday.

"You might be right," I agreed. "We should probably go downstairs before Scythe comes back and drags us back out."

Rie laughed. "I could take him, but you are probably right."

Rie led me downstairs and towards the backyard. I moved slowly as I descended the stairs, terrified of tripping over my dress with my heels on. Cindy and Eva were following behind me. As we walked down the hallway that led to the outside, I felt like I was floating.

Outside of those doors was a party people had spent so much time and effort for me. I didn't even care what everything looked like. I just felt honored that they even wanted to celebrate my birthday, despite my protests.

Rie stopped at the back door. "Ready?"

I nodded, and Rie opened the door for me. I stepped outside, and it felt like I was transported into a completely different world. Fairy lights were hung up over the entire backyard, encasing the party in a world of lights. There were flowers and fountains filling up any spare space in the yard as well. Large heaters were placed throughout the backyard to fight off the chilly night air.

Refreshments were set up to the side, and tables were scattered throughout the edges of the backyard. The center of the grassy field was left open as a dance field. I looked around at everyone standing around, and there were at least fifty people here. I had no idea

At first, no one was looking at me, but one by one, eyes started to turn my way and look at me. It wasn't long before everyone was looking at me. My face flushed with all of the attention on me, but my eyes still scanned the backyard for the familiar faces I knew. Scythe was the first one I saw, but

he was still ordering people around, and it was easy to spot him because of this. My eyes continued searching the crowd, looking for one pair of eyes in particular.

The crowd started to part as a body made its way through. My heart was racing with anticipation. Finally, the man made it to the front of the line, and my heart clenched. I was staring at a familiar pair of dark eyes.

Jori made his way over to me and held out his hand. "Care for a dance?" I looked around at the party. "There's no music."

"We will fix that," Rie said. She touched my shoulder before slipping past me. She went over to where Scythe was standing. Eva and Cindy disappeared into the crowd as well, probably seeing their friends and family.

Jori still held out his hand. "Come on darling. We don't need music to start dancing."

I looked around once more before grabbing Jori's hand. "Okay."

Jori led me to the center of the dance floor. He didn't hesitate to put one hand on my hip and hold up the other hand in the air. He started swaying me back and forth. I could still feel eyes on me, and I suddenly felt on edge. It must have looked weird with the two of us barely dancing with no music.

I was relieved when stringed instruments started playing music. It was faster paced than what Jori and I were doing, but Jori quickly matched the tempo. I did my best to let him lead me with the dance, but I felt a little clumsy. I had never danced with a man like this before. In high school, my friends and I would have dance parties, but most of it was flailing and jumping around like idiots. This was different.

Noticing my struggle, Jori lifted me up, so my feet were barely touching the ground. This made it easier for him to spin around with me in his arms. We moved all around in different motions, and I could tell Jori was very skilled with dancing. His eyes were glued to mine, but my eyes were still wandering around the crowd. So many people were watching us, and I couldn't help but wonder why we were such a spectacle to watch. I was starting to feel dizzy in Jori's arms.

I was ready to be done dancing and take a moment. That's when I noticed a pair of blue eyes staring at me from the crowd. I found myself trying to stare back at Mark, but Jori started spinning us around once again. I strained my neck to catch sight of Mark, but I could only catch glimpse after glimpse of him. We moved farther away from Mark, making it even more difficult to see him.

“What’s on your mind, darling?” Jori asked, finally drawing my attention back to him.

“Oh nothing.” I felt embarrassed, as if he caught me looking at something I should be. The vibrating in my body had returned, and I felt like I couldn’t catch my breath. “Why are so many people looking at us? Shouldn’t they be dancing as well?”

Jori chuckled. “I think everyone is just nosy and wants to see their alpha dancing with their future Luna.”

My stomach felt like it was in a knot. “I think I need something to drink. I’m parched.”

Jori stopped moving, but he didn’t let go of me. “Would you like me to get you something?” I shook my head. “No, it’s okay. I want to check out the scenery a little bit and thank Scythe and Percy for everything they’ve done.”

“I can come with you.”

I let go of Jori’s hand and placed it on his chest. “It’s okay. I will find you later.”

Jori still had his grip around my waist. I knew he didn’t want to let me go, and I could see the struggle in his eyes. “Okay, but don’t take too long.”

I smiled in response and then started heading to the refreshment table. There were so many different types of food, and the drink selection was incredible. On top of it, there was a chocolate fountain with several items to dip in it. It was incredible that Scythe found someone to cater so last minute for the party. Everything was absolutely incredible.

I grabbed a water bottle and moved off to the side to catch my breath. I think the anxiety of having everyone stare at me in Jori’s arms was making my powers stir, and I didn’t want my eyes to start glowing again.

I turned and saw Scythe coming straight towards me. “Scythe! How on earth did you do all of this in twenty-four hours?”

“I’m magical.” He smiled and gave me a wink. “Not quite as magical as you, though. How are you feeling, by the way?”

“I’m a little on edge. Before we came down, my eyes started glowing again. I feel like something is building inside of me, but I don’t know what it is or how to control it.” I squeezed my water bottle tightly.

Scythe grabbed my hand. “Try not to worry about it for now, and just have fun. Tonight is your night, so try not to worry too much too. Did you see the chocolate fountain?”

I nodded laughing. "I did, but I haven't had a chance to try it yet."  
"Well, don't forget! But make sure there's room for cake. That will be served later." Scythe was beaming in a way I hadn't seen before. He was completely in his element at the party. I saw Percy walking towards us, and I felt a little nervous. Scythe was so happy, and I hoped that things between Percy and Scythe could work out. I didn't know all of the details of what had happened, but when Scythe first arrived, I could see his pain and longing, and I never wanted him to feel that way again.  
"There you are," Percy said, stopping next to Scythe. "One of the children pulled at some of the fairy lights, and now they are not working. I need your help."  
"That's my queue to get back to business," Scythe said. "Happy birthday, Adira. I hope this evening is as special as you are." He wrapped his arms around me and pulled me into a tight hug. He then whispered in my ear. "Your Prince Charming is making your way here now."  
Percy turned to me. "Happy birthday." Then he turned to leave with Scythe by his side. I saw Percy purposely bump into Scythe's arm, and it made me hopeful for the two of them.  
"Happy birthday, Adira," Mark said, his deep voice filling my ears.

## **Chapter 29**

Turning around, I saw Mark standing right behind. A sense of relief filled me as he stood so close.  
"Where have you been?" I asked. Mark was standing only inches away from me, but I didn't want to move away.  
Mark shrugged. "Here and there. I was waiting for my opportunity to snatch you for myself. I didn't want to bother you while you were with Jori."  
"Well, I'm glad you found me when you did."  
Mark held his hand out to me. "Would you like to dance?"  
I looked over at the dance floor, which had finally filled up with other people. The idea of going back out there made me feel queasy. I didn't like the idea of everyone looking at me again, especially after they all saw me dancing with Jori. "I don't want people staring." I looked at the ground, feeling guilty. I wanted to dance with Mark. I wanted his arms around me, but I was scared.  
Mark grabbed my hand and pulled me in the opposite direction. "Let's find a place people won't stare then."  
He led me towards the edge of the backyard. It was still filled with lights

and decorations, but there was a small corner behind an extravagant statue that no one else was occupying. When we were behind the statue, Mark pulled me close into him, placing his hand on my hip.

“Is this okay?” he asked.

I placed my hand on Mark’s shoulder and pressed myself into him. “This is perfect. Just a warning, I’m not a very good dancer.”

“Good thing no one is looking. We can dance however we want.” Mark just swayed us back and forth, not bothering with any fancy moves like Jori had. It was much more of my pace.

I looked up at Mark, and I couldn’t help but admire him. He was so different compared to Jori. He was patient and calm. He didn’t try to do anything spectacular, but his small gestures were still meaningful. I was drawn to both of them, but something felt different with Mark. I didn’t feel nervous with him so close.

“Mark?” He hummed in response to me. “Do you remember going to the Lycan ball?”

Mark tilted his head. “I went to a few of them when I was younger. I didn’t end up going to one when I was of age, though, because of everything that happened. Why do you ask?”

“I think we’ve met before.” I thought about the red-headed boy who had come to the party my parents had hosted many years ago.

“I take it that it was at one of those parties?” Mark asked. He continued swaying us back and forth. I could tell he was searching his brain for the memory.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if you don’t remember. About ten years ago, my family hosted the Lycan ball in the town neighboring this one.” I thought back on that day. “I wasn’t having any fun at the party. I was too young to really participate, and my parents didn’t want me getting in the way. I was bored out of my mind. Then this family with two boys around my age showed up. My mother didn’t want me running around, but I snuck away to see if I could play with them.

“There was one with dark hair and another with red. They didn’t seem interested in playing with me, but I followed them around.

Then the one with dark hair pulled on my hair, making the bun fall out of place. He ran away after, saying to leave him alone because girls were icky.”

Mark’s eyes brightened. “Then the red-headed boy comforted you by offering you a chocolate-covered strawberry. He tried to help



you fix your hair, but he only made it worse because he didn't understand how a girl's hair worked."

"He even got chocolate in my hair," I finished. My cheeks were burning from smiling so much. "You remember?"

Mark smiled. "How could I forget my first crush?"

I narrowed my eyes at him. "Don't lie to me. Why would you have a crush on me?"

"I'm not lying," Mark laughed, "You were so spunky. You didn't let the fact that you were wearing a dress stop you from chasing us to ever see you cry again. I only wanted to see your beautiful smile." Mark reached up and stroked my cheek. "This smile. I can't believe I didn't realize it was you."

"We have grown up a lot. I didn't recognize you at first either. To think we would end up here so many years later. It doesn't feel real.

Mark let go of my waist and spun me out from him. When he spun me back in, he grabbed my waist and dipped me. I giggled from the shock of it. Mark pulled me back up to him, and somehow he was closer than before. I wrapped both of my arms around his neck. "It feels like a fairytale."

I rested my head on Mark's chest and let him sway me back and forth, I closed my eyes, and I could feel his heart beating against his chest. It was racing, and I couldn't tell if he was nervous or something else.

"This has been the best birthday I have ever had."

"I bet I can make it better." Mark let go of my waist, but he still kept his other hand in mine.

I looked up at Mark, wondering what he was doing. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small blue box. My heart started racing at the thought of what that little box contained. He opened it up, revealing a silver chain with a blue glass heart attached to

"It's beautiful." I felt myself tearing up a little.

Mark took the necklace out of the box and motioned for me to turn around. I pulled my hair to the side as he placed the necklace around me.

"I wanted to give this to you, because I wanted you to know that you will always have my heart. No matter what happens or who you choose, I will be here for you. I don't want you to ever forget that." Mark finished clasping the necklace and then placed a soft kiss on my neck. Goosebumps ran down my body from the simple gesture.

I turned back around, wrapping my arms around Mark. "Thank you. I love this so much."

Mark wrapped his arms around my waist. He leaned forward and brushed

his nose against mine. "I just hope you are happy."

Mark's lips were so close to mine that I could barely resist. I wanted all of him in this moment. His breath was tickling my lips, and I wanted to close the gap between our mouths. A small voice was fighting my urges, which was the only reason I was hesitating. I knew it was Moon. She wanted me to give Jori a proper chance. I understood why. I felt the pull to him, but being here with Mark, it was hard thinking about choosing Jori.

Maybe it was because I was alone with Mark, and the atmosphere was oozing romance. Or maybe it was because I had met Mark first. It could even be because I had a deeper connection with Shadow than Moon. It could have been any of these reasons, or maybe all of them, but I didn't want to wait to pick my mate. I wanted Mark. The way he made me feel compared to Jori was so different, and I just wanted to be around Mark for the rest of my life.

I lifted my toes, closing the distance between Mark. Just before we kissed, the music cut off and a loud speaker echoed throughout the party. I turned away from Mark, turning my attention back to the party.

"Good evening everyone!" Scythe boomed over a microphone. I couldn't see him, but I knew it was him. "I hope you all are having a great time here." Cheers erupted in response. "Excellent. I think it's time for a toast to the birthday girl. Has anyone seen her?"

Mark tightened his grip on me. "I think our time alone is up." I pouted, looking back at Mark. I would rather stay here with Mark than go back to a bunch of people I didn't know. "I suppose you're right."

"Come on. Let's go before Scythe makes a scene. Don't worry, I won't leave your side." Mark let go of my waist and started leading me back to the party.

"Oh there she is!" Scythe said,

Everyone turned their attention to Mark and myself. I saw some confused looks as well as some dirty looks. Mark squeezed my hand in reassurance. I wished we were back in our corner away from prying eyes.

Scythe waved us to the front of the crowd. Mark continued leading me up there, and we stopped next to Scythe. I let go of Mark's arm. Everyone had a glass, Scythe passed me a glass and grabbed the microphone again.

"I'm so happy everyone was able to make it today," Scythe continued. "I'm grateful to see so many of you again, and I hope we can do something like this in the future. We are here because of this lovely lady here." Scythe motioned over to me. "I am grateful to have met Adira, and I know many of



you haven't had a chance to meet her yet. I highly recommend introducing yourself to her if you can. She's quite special, and she's the reason we are all here. Let's raise a glass to Adira. Happy birthday!"

Everyone shouted happy birthday and then took a sip of their drink. I took a small sip of my own as I looked around at all of the people celebrating me.

They all lowered their glasses, giving me a weird look.

Scythe leaned in and whispered in my ear. "Adira, you're glowing, like literally."