

# The Unwanted Wolf

## Chapter 8

I lay in bed, feeling completely restless. The pajamas Rie had provided me were softer than any clothes I had ever owned, and the bed was a million times comfier than my own, but it was hard falling asleep in a new place. Every little noise made me twitch. I kept tossing and turning to try to get more comfortable, but nothing seemed to work. It didn't help that I had a lot on my mind.

Why had no one ever told me before that I wasn't a full wolf? If that's the reason I was kicked out at sixteen, that was something! I deserved to know. Also, who was after me? I mostly kept to myself, so I can't imagine what I had done to make someone want to kill me. I had heard stories of hunters going after werewolves because they thought they were an abomination to the world. Growing up, our pack never had that issue, at least not to my knowledge. My father had done an excellent job keeping our true identities a secret.

We had been a small wolf pack compared to others. A century ago, wolf packs were humongous according to the history taught to them. Some had even had control over cities and towns. However, as human society grew in numbers and technology, they started hunting down werewolves and destroying packs. It forced them to go into hiding along with other different magical creatures.

Perhaps a hunter had discovered my true identity, and that's why they wanted to kill me. I couldn't figure out another reason why someone would come after me. I let out a sigh and sat up. I wasn't getting anywhere with sleeping. I got out of bed and tiptoed to the door. I opened it slowly, flinching when the door creaked. I poked my head outside, and when I didn't see anyone, I stepped out. I looked to the stairs and then down the hallway towards Mark's room.

I debated about which way to go. I could go to the kitchen and get a drink of water to see if that would help me calm down. I didn't know where anything was in the kitchen, though, and I didn't want to wake anyone up. I didn't want to wake Mark up either. I was sure he was asleep already, and I didn't want to have to rely on him. He did tell me to wake him if I needed anything.

My feet started moving on their own, my body making the decision for me. I

was at the end of the hallway in front of Mark's door. I went to knock on the door, but before I could touch it, the door opened, making me jump and yelp.

Mark's eyes widened as he stood in front of me. "Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I didn't realize you were right there."

My heart was still pounding. "How could you know?"

"Is everything okay?" Mark looked a little worried.

"I can't sleep," I admitted, shifting on my feet and looking down. "What are you doing awake?"

"I could sense your restlessness." Mark put his hand on the back of his neck. "I was going to check on you, but you beat me to it.

"You could sense my restlessness?" This was a little surprising to me, since we were across the hallway from each other.

Mark nodded. "How much do you know about the mate bond? I imagine it's not quite the same for you since you're not full werewolf."

"My grandmother used to tell me stories about the true mate bond," I said. I looked down the hallway, worried we were being too loud. "Should we go somewhere where we won't wake others up?"

"Do you want to come in?" Mark asked, stepping to the side a little.

I nodded, feeling a little nervous. I walked into his room and was a little surprised with how small it was. Since he was the alpha, it wasn't something large and extravagant, but instead it was simple and clean. There was a queen-sized bed in the middle of the room and a desk in the corner. There was a chess set in the other corner with two chairs.

"Make yourself comfortable," Mark said, shutting the door behind him.

I immediately went over to the chess set in the corner. It was a beautiful glass set that looked well maintained. I picked up one of the pieces, and it had a nice weight to it. "This is amazing."

"Do you play?" Mark approached me and stopped next to me.

"I used to. It's been years since I have had the opportunity to play." I set down the pawn and made sure it was perfectly centered.

"I would love that." I sat down, excited to be able to play. "You can go first. I'm warning you now that I'm rusty though."

"I'll go easy on you then," Mark laughed. He shifted the board so the white pieces were in front of him. He made his move, and then asked, "So tell me more about what your grandmother used to tell you about mates."

I made my move. "She used to tell me that when you find your mate, you instantly know it. Their smell is the only thing you want to smell for the rest

of your life, and when you touch them, it feels like you found the missing piece of yourself. She used to say that not everyone is lucky enough to find their mate, but those who do are stronger for it. She also used to say that on a rare occasion, a pair of werewolves found their true mate. Together they could do things beyond the imagination. Most mates aren't true mates."

"I've heard of true mates before." Mark studied the board carefully before moving a pawn. "I always thought they were fairy tales though."

"I always thought mates were fairy tales," I laughed. "I couldn't wrap my head around the idea of love at first sight. How can you love someone you just met?"

Mark picked up a piece and then hesitated. "Do you still think finding your mate is a fairy tale?"

I looked up into Mark's eyes and studied his expression. He was both worried and hopeful. I didn't want to hurt him, so I treaded carefully with my words. "I haven't fully decided yet. With you, I can't say that I'm instantly in love with you or anything. However, I can't deny this draw I have to you. I don't know much about you, but I feel safe around you, and I want to get to know you more."

Mark brightened at my words. "You know how happy I am to hear that. It's your move."

I looked at the board. I hadn't even seen him taking his move. I had been too distracted by his eyes. "What did you mean earlier when you said you sensed that I was restless?"

Mark scratched his chin. "When you're mates with someone, you can typically sense how they are feeling. After marking each other, the bond grows stronger, but sometimes you can feel it even before marking. I wasn't sure exactly if what I was sensing was you or not, which is why I wanted to check on you. When you were at my door, I instantly knew I was sensing your emotions."

"I wish I could feel the things you do. It's a little hard to understand it all." A part of me was a little sad that I didn't feel the same connection as Mark. If things worked out, I was worried that I wouldn't ever be able to meet him at the same level. At the same time, think it helped me keep more of a level head.

"Don't force it," Mark said kindly, taking his turn. "Your feelings will develop naturally, and I will be here waiting for you."

I smiled quietly at his response, knowing it was exactly what I needed to hear. If he had pushed me at all, I knew myself well enough to know I

would have been running away from all of this. I moved one of my chess pieces, focusing on the game again. "Check."

Mark raised his eyebrows. "Rusty, huh? I think I've been hustled."

I smirked. "Maybe you're just not as good at the game as you think?"

"We shall see which one of us comes out on top then." Mark countered my move, easily getting out of check and threatening my queen at the same time.

The game continued on for a bit, each of us taking turns putting the other one in check, but neither of us being able to pull the trigger on checkmate. I yawned, feeling myself finally growing tired. I placed my elbow on the table and rested my head against my hand.

"Maybe we should continue our game at a later time," Mark suggested. I could feel his eyes on me.

I shook my head, struggling to keep my eyes open. "I'm fine." I knew that wasn't the case, but I didn't want to appear weak.

"You're about to fall over," Mark chuckled. "Come on. Let's get you back to your room."

I shook my head again. "I don't want to go back to that room. It feels lonely."

Mark tilted his head. "Why don't you lie down in my bed then?"

"Okay." I didn't have the energy to fight him on this. I stood up, feeling a little unsteady. Mark walked me over to the bed and waited for me to crawl in. He pulled the covers over me as I settled in. His bed smelled like him, which was comforting,

Mark kissed the top of my head. "Sweet dreams." He started walking away, but I quickly grabbed his arm.

"You don't have to leave." I was too tired to fight my brain, and my instincts were kicking in. I just wanted to be near him.

Mark sat on the bed. "I can pull up a chair and sit next to you until you fall asleep."

"Uh-uh." I pulled the blanket down and tugged on Mark's arm. "Lie here with me."

"Are you sure?"

I just pulled on him in response. He gave in and crawled into bed with me. He was careful to not get too close to me, but I could feel the warmth radiating from his body. I felt even more at ease with him so close, and it wasn't long before I fell into a deep sleep.

"You're giving into him," a voice whispered in my ear. I instantly knew the voice as Shadow.

I looked around and recognized the area. I was in this weird dream land again. Standing behind me was the pitch black wolf I knew as Shadow. I was starting to feel more comfortable in this place. It felt like I was dreaming, but part of me knew this was something different.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"The subconscious. It's the only place the three of us can communicate," Shadow spoke, sitting next to me.

"The three of us? Who is the third?" I vaguely remembered a new voice from the last time I was here.

"You two haven't spoken to each other before, but she's been here a while, waiting for you to come to her," Shadow explained.

I looked around, but all I saw was a white room that seemed to go on for ages. "Why haven't I seen her before? Who is she?"

"You should ask her that yourself." Shadow started walking away.

I tried to follow after, but she started running. I tried to keep up with her, but in my human form, I was no match for her. "Shadow!" My wolf ignored me and kept running until I could no longer see her.

I stopped running to catch my breath. There was no point in going anywhere. There were no distinct features to move towards.

"Hello?" My voice echoed in this strange room.

"Hello my dear." I recognized the voice, but I couldn't put a face to it. Her voice sounded wise and calm.

"Who are you? Why don't you come to me?" I looked around, but I still didn't see anyone else with me.

"You have repressed me, deep in your unconscious. I can't emerge yet."

I kept looking around, expecting to see someone or something if I looked hard enough. "How can I release you?"

"Discover the truth of your birth, and you'll release me from my prison."

"How can I do that?" I didn't receive a response. "Are you still there?"

Nothing. I felt alone again, standing in this strange room. I

didn't want to be here anymore. It felt too lonely. I wanted to wake up. I

pinched my arm, but that didn't seem to work. "Hello?" I called

out again, still unanswered.