

Chapter 2: Speak Up Now, Little One.

ELIANA.

It was well into the dead of the night. Darkness circled me around as I carried on along the streets of Oakland.

My feet were bleeding and numb, my whole body ached. There was no stopping until I got out of here completely. Even as I was sure I'd lost Jaxon, I still unconsciously threw my head over my shoulders. I was breathless from my lips, nally coming to a halt beneath a shady tree.

Across from me was the bordering signs of Oakland and Tombsdale. I couldn't believe how far I'd gotten on foot. But I knew well enough than to cross over into that town. The wind coming from Tombsdale was cold and eerily quiet, driving a chill up my spine.

I could hear the howling of hungry wolves from a distance who I was sure couldn't wait to devour me. Unlike everyone else, my wolf was still yet to rise to the surface, so I didn't stand a chance being rogue. Turning back around was an idea that ashed in my head but alas, I continued further.

I'd rather die in this cold forest than by the hands of Jaxon.

However when my feet crossed in Tombsdale, I perceived a dark presence lurk suddenly around me. I'd heard a lot of his dark town, so many things that people had to say preceding a warning to never step foot in it. It was ruled mercilessly by one of the most ruthless Alphas, Denver who was also a sworn enemy of my father.

I came to a sharp halt, seeing a shadow form right behind me. A bolt of panic impaled shock through my body and there was a slight rumble in the skies. I could tell a wolf was close but this was unlike anything I had ever scented.

Was this it?

Was this the end of my life?

The rst things I noticed in the darkness was a pair of silver eyes glowing back at me before a huge creature strutted from the behind the trees. My heart lumped in the back of my throat as I faced him. Dark, long hair tied up in a bun. Sharp, sculpted features like his jaw. Rock hard stones for muscles with a brooding shoulder.

Alpha Denver was nothing short of what they described, his surmounting presence alone lled me with fear and dread. "What are you doing here, little one?" His voice was deep and decadent, slicing through me with an intense gaze but I couldn't dare to speak.

Behind him lunged forward an entire army of wolves growling with impatience to rip my body apart. Without much thought, I picked up my pace away from them. Maybe this was a terrible idea.

Breathing heavily from my lips, I launched myself forward as I pushed harshly through the leaves. I didn't care that I was injured, I just kept running with the primal desire to survive.

Was this my whole life now, always running from something?

I threw myself into the opposite direction but I wasn't so far off that I heard the Alpha's voice thunder behind me. "Bring her to me!" He ordered his guard of betas. My heart was pounding heavily in my chest as I ran towards the nearest place of safety.

Everywhere was pitch black ahead of me, the only time I could see somewhere was when the lightning struck but with the lightning, came the rain that immediately started to drench my entire body. I didn't stop running until I was forced to. My legs hooked behind a branch and I fell with a thud to the ground.

When i looked up, I saw him but only for a split second before my world went dark.

The next time I opened my eyes, I was in someplace warmer with a candle burning at a distance from me. I jolted up from what seemed to be a bed but I had no idea who it belonged to. I thought I was alone in the room until I heard the sound of his voice again.

"You thought you could run away from me?" Denver's words were laced in a threatening tone as he crept forward into the light. His hands were tied behind him and across his lips was a dark grimace. His mere presence lled me with so much anxiety that I backed myself into the corner.

Clutching my knees to my chest, I cowered my gaze. As much I'd heard those stories about Tombsdale, I had heard even worse about their Alpha. A blood-thirsty, war-seeking Alpha that he was, leading an army of the most dangerous troupes. Denver killed anyone that got in his way without wasting a second but he was quite patient with me.

"I'm not going to hurt you" He whispered but I jerked backwards when his arms stretched out. "I can read through your mind, you're scared. You also have no where else to go!" He said. I pushed a hard lump down my throat as he groped my sore ankles.

His hands were just as callous yet they were warm. I could feel him inside my chest, a glow rooting from the chambers of my heart. My skin sizzled where he touched and there was a chill which went up my spine.

What was this overwhelming feeling each time I looked into his eyes?

It was as though my heart was no longer pounding and was suddenly at peace. Like I trusted him or I was supposed to, even through I didn't want to. Like he was my mate...no, I shook my head off these repulsive thoughts. Denver was as monstrous as they came.

I sharply pulled my legs away from him and a deep scoff escaped his lips.

"I could have hurt you by now if I wanted to, you know" He drew away to the single table in the entire room, only to pour himself a glass of wine. My mind tumultuously ashed back to Jaxon as he took a sip of it.

"You're badly injured, it's why you passed out in the forest. Your entire body is also pumping with as much wolfsbane that I wonder how you're still alive" Denver added, darting me a glare as cold as ice.

Ah, the wolfsbane which Jaxon had been poisoning me with each night over the last seven years. Sometimes, I even think it was the reason I never came into my wolf.

She'd been subdued and starved down my entire life.

I was weak, harmless and the pain ravaging my body was even more severe now. He abandoned his drink, walking back to my bedside. Denver's hands swept through my hair and then across my face.

"What happened?" His gaze thoroughly assessed me like I was nothing more than a thin sheet of paper to him. "Let me go" I nally brought myself to say when I nally gathered the courage but my voice was barely even a faint whisper. "A thank you would suce" Denver scoffed.

"I'm not this very lenient with trespassers" His eyes darkened. "I know you're a Blood Hound, more so I know you're Gerald's daughter. You can't really hide anything from me, can you?" Denver gritted through his teeth.

"However, what I don't know is what you were doing in the forest at that time of the night, severely wounded and on the cusp of breathing your last—" Could I tell him the truth? Could I actually trust him?

Maybe Denver could save me from my step brother's wrath?

"Speak up now, little one!" He commanded, a tone that sent shivers up my spine and I was so much afraid that I couldn't lie. Denver's eyes were harrowing and haunting, he was so powerful that no one dared to ever say no to him. The ones that did were rotting six feet below by now.

"I was lost" I wanted to tell him the truth but for some reason, a lie came out. "Don't lie to me!" Denver sparked with outrage. "I know when you're telling the truth, little one." He warned, running thin on patience.

"I ran away" I sharply blurted out. "I ran away from my family, I no longer belong to them—" I added and my eyes shimmered with tears. His hands slowly drew across my wounded skin with tender. "Did they do this you?" He asked and it was the most emotion I'd seen in his face.

I nodded my head slightly.

"Who?" How could I tell him it was everyone? "Doesn't matter, as long as I don't return back there, I'm safe" I whispered. "Eliana" My name suddenly escaped from his lips and my whole body reverberated. "You're Eliana—the girl whose mother died when she was born." I did say the news spread like wildre but I never expected it to reach Tombsdale.

I never expected the Alpha to ever know who I was.

"I didn't kill my mother, I swear" I suddenly trembled out of the fear that now that he knew who I was, my fate would be no different from what I had to endure back at Blood Hounds. But then, Alpha Denver rested a hand across my shoulders. "I know." He muttered.

As soon as I lifted my eyes to him, our gazes locked.

"Please don't harm me" I pleaded and a dull pain set behind my temples. But Denver reached to hold my little hands and they were nowhere near the size of his. All of a sudden, my heart started to hammer against my rib cage and my stomach started to utter.

I could feel the mate bond, it was something inexplicable and harrowing that I wasn't sure how much longer I could turn away from the truth. It was the moment I knew Denver was my mate, it showed my wolf was not so far gone but alas, I don't think he realized himself.

Some Alphas would've spent their whole life looking for a mate, only to nd one when they aren't looking anymore. But someone like Denver, it was clear that he had no intention to belong to another. His eyes were void of any human emotions and that showed his incapacity to love.

So of course, he didn't know. Although he was tender to me in that moment, I had to remind myself the monster he still was. "I won't harm you" He whispered in a hoarse voice. "Rather, I'll save you. You don't have to return back to your pack, little one."

"If you stay here, I'll be able to protect you from evil" My eyes widened at him. I could already tell there was a catch. "But you will owe me." He whispered. "What could I possibly have to give the Alpha?" I asked.

"Soon enough, you'll nd out." He withdrew his hands to walk out of the room. "You just get better now, you're in safe hands" The door closed behind me and the room was dark and empty, was I truly in safe hands?