

The Alpha and the Mistake

Chapter 1

One more year. Just one more year, I told myself as I dressed. It wasn't even that long; school was only ten months. My stomach tightened at the thought. Ten months was still a hell of a lot of time. With a slow, deep breath, I tried to calm my nerves. The bruises were gone and nothing hurt, but that would change after today. One more year, I repeated. One more year and I would finish high school and leave for California, never to deal with werewolves again.

I practiced my 'I'm totally fine and happy' smile before I left my room. I hurried down the stairs to the kitchen.

Mom was still finishing up breakfast. "Morning Baby," she said, smiling from over her shoulder. "Can you believe it? Senior year!"

This time when I smiled, it was real. "Right?" I sat down and propped my chin on my fists. "Which reminds me. We'll have to talk about this mythical college fund you kept going on about all these years."

She laughed. "Mythical, huh?" Like someone had turned off a light, Mom's expression darkened. Old pain sparkled in her brown eyes. "Your dad," she started, a hand lifted to her throat. "He... he would've been so proud of you, Brook."

My throat closed and for a moment I couldn't breathe. Just like that I was back to that night. I could see the cop standing in the doorway telling Mom, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Dawson, but your husband has passed away tonight." The following months were as bad as that night. I spent my days fearing Mom would follow him. The first few weeks she barely ate and only slept after she exhausted herself from crying. When she did function, it was to go to work then come home, only to go straight to her bedroom.

It wasn't until Mom met Harry did she start to go back to the person I remembered. It was such a relief that when I found out about the whole werewolf thing, I took it in stride along with the move up north. I would've done anything to keep Mom from going back to the shell she'd been before. I even let the alpha's son Mike bully and hit me, if it means she stays with Harry.

Forcing the past back where it belonged, I managed a smile. "I hope he is."

Harry strode into the room. He adjusted his tie saying, "I know he is." He gave Mom a quick kiss before turning back to me. "I am proud of you, so your dad must be." He gave me a wink and filled my plate with food.

My throat tightened again, but I cleared it. "Thanks, Harry, but can we cut out the mush? I swear if I cry and ruin my makeup I'm gonna throw something heavy at you."

He gave me the appropriate expression of horror. "We wouldn't want that now, would we?" He prepared a plate for mom and handed it to her when she sat down.

I smiled again as I watched the way he fussed over her and the way she beamed up at him. It validated my decision to keep Mom in the dark about how the other werewolves saw me.

After breakfast, I followed Harry out. He closed the door and turned to me, keys in hand. His face was blank, though his eyes were a yellowed brown. A color I noticed he only had when something worried him. "The neighboring alpha's son arrived yesterday. It's likely he'll be joining Mike at school."

Just hearing Mike's name made my muscles clench in anticipation. "Great," I replied, flatly.

"Dean has an easy going reputation, being one for jokes and all that, but don't assume he won't join in with Mike. There's always been an unspoken competition between the two families. No doubt Mike will try to drag you into it."

With a sigh, I rolled my eyes. "Of course, nothing says big bad wolf like messing with the pathetic human."

Harry's shoulders tense until they were almost up to his ears. "Just say the word, Brook, and we'll go back inside and tell your mother everything."

"We can't," I replied with a shake of my head. "If she knew, then she would have to choose between you or me. You need your pack and I need Mom happy. End of discussion. I've handled three years of this. One more is a piece of cake."

Harry blew a breath out through his nose before he started to say something, then stopped. "Just... be careful, okay."

I offered him a smile full of a lot more bravado than I felt. "Like I don't do that every day. I totally got this, man."

"Well, be extra careful, then. I'll make sure you have an extra-large double chocolate fudge sundae waiting for you when you get home."

I gasped and placed a hand over my chest. "You sure know the way to a woman's heart."

Harry shrugged with a humble expression and a smile. "I do what I can." He turned serious again. "You better hurry if you're going to get there early enough to beat Mike."

My stomach twisted. "Right, well bye!"

With a quick wave, I hurried the three blocks to school. It was a one story, red brick building. It looked exactly like my old school back in Missouri. I swear every school had the same blueprint. There wasn't much of a crowd, so I hurried inside and straight to my locker. I spun in the combination, putting up the binders and supplies I wouldn't need until the second half of the day. On the inside of the door, I tacked up my schedule to check it quickly until I had it memorized. I still couldn't believe I had math for my first class. Seriously? Math in the morning? That had to be considered as cruel and unusual punishment, which was totally illegal.

I had finished when a fist slammed into the locker next to mine. It made me flinch with a startled cry. I didn't need to turn to see who had made the large dent in the metal to know it was Mike. What the hell was he doing here so early? He never came early. Hell, it was a rare day that he got to school on time.

"You know, I can't figure out why you keep showing up every year," he said. I could hear the sneer in his voice. Trying to swallow the knot that formed in my throat, I stared at my schedule, not really looking at it. "Oh, what's the matter, Missy? Wolf got your tongue?" He laughed a cold, cruel laugh. So it was another year of that stupid nick name? Missy Mistake. Mom was Harry's mate, something that was apparently predestined. That meant my dad and mom should've never married or had me. Thus, I was a mistake of fate. I rolled my eyes, knowing he couldn't see it. My tongue itched with the urge to tell him

something snarky. Last time, I gave into that urge he punched me so hard he cracked a rib.

I gasped as he grabbed the back of my neck. His fingers dug into the skin so hard I knew I'd have bruises by the end of the day. "Don't you dare ignore me," he growled, pulling me from the locker to face him. "Do I need to remind you who's on top of the food chain again? Eh, Missy?"

"No, I got it. Loud and clear," I replied. Some of that snark that was desperate to get out must have done so, because his dark eyes turned a bright yellow. I already doubled over before my body even registered the punch to my gut.

"How about we try that again?" Mike demanded, pulling me back up to my feet.

As I struggled to remind myself how to breathe, a guy emerged from the crowd asking, "What's going on?"

Mike smiled coldly when he saw him. With a jerk, he forced me to face the stranger. "Hey Dean. This is Missy, a little unimportant mistake," he said and again the sneer was unmistakable. "Dean here is a guest of my father's. Why don't you say hi?"

I glanced up for a moment and actually felt myself go weak. He was something straight from a Hollywood fueled day dream, beautiful yet tragic at the same time. There was this primal pull tugging at my soul. How could someone like him exist? Despite knowing the worst thing to do when face to face with a werewolf was to hold their gaze, I couldn't look away from those gray-blue eyes. Heck, I wasn't even sure I remembered how to breathe.

"Well?" Mike demanded, shaking me and breaking me from whatever that was.

I lowered my eyes to the floor and mumbled, "Welcome to Black Mountain pack, Sir."

"No," Mike said in a resolute tone. "That won't do. Get on your knees and say it."

I almost gasped out loud as I glanced at Mike, then at Dean, who now looked at me with disgust. Something inside me wilted seeing him look at me like that. Not this time. This was too much. "No."