



David Noapte had a hard life; his father had forced him to enlist when he was only eighteen and he served two tours before coming back when his father had been killed. With no choice but to pick up the reigns of the pack, David became Alpha. Over time, the mental barrier that he had created while in the military doubled from the violence and he added a barrier around his heart as well. He had finally begun to give up on the prospect of having a mate when Anabla Inger stumbled upon his land.

Anabla Inger had never been a trouble-maker. She had her opinions and she wasn't afraid to voice them, but she followed the rules and respected authority. She was passionate about music and enjoyed walking in the woods to clear her head. When the subject of walking in the woods alone was brought up, she only heard one thing, "Don't go far.". However, one night, in a fit of grief and anger, she went further than she had been before and found her way to David's land.

*"When I can't find the words
To say how much it hurts
You are the healing in my heart
When all that I can see
Are broken memories
You are the light that's in the dark"*
-Colton Dixon, You Are

Prologue

I tried to calm my heartbeat as I looked at my surroundings. The only things that I noticed were trees.

A labored breath escaped my lips as I crossed my arms in front of me. Now I regretted not listening to my parents.

Tears blurred my vision at the thought of them but I fisted my hands and tried to hold them back in an attempt to get a grip on my emotions.

I closed my eyes and took deep breaths.

I would get out of this.

The sound of a branch snapping made me doubt myself.

I slowly turned in a circle, trying to pin-point where the sound came from.

Then I saw something I never expected: a man. He was intimidating to say the least; he stood at at least 6'4" and was in nothing but athletic shorts. My eyes traveled up his chest, marveling at the black tattoo that seemed to slink along his arm, then down his chest. I could feel my cheeks redden slightly, as I met his eyes. They were a piercing green color that demanded attention. His face itself was nearly perfect. Angular cheek bones adorned it, which led to a nose that looked like it had been broken a few times.

I wasn't able to continue my oogling though, because I was drawn closer to him by his own arms. I was too preoccupied in him that I hadn't noticed when he began walking towards me.

His arms wound around my waist and he bent his head into my neck, breathing in deeply.

Hot breath fanned my cheek and neck as he pulled me impossibly closer to him.

He pulled back slightly and opened his eyes, breathing out one word, "Mine."

was silent for a moment. Here I was, standing deep in the woods God knows where, in the arms of a man whom I met not a minute ago. This wasn't how my walk was supposed to end.

Chapter One

Chapter One:

"You have no idea how long I've been waiting."

My breath catches in my throat, and I have to clear it before speaking. "For what?"

He cocks his head to the side in a strangely animalistic gesture, as if telling me to ask the question again.

"Who are you waiting for?" I re-word the question, my mind still not wrapping around the fact that he is actually in front of me. Right now, this deep in the woods, anything could happen.

As if my body were finally realizing this, my breath became faster and sharper as I looked at the stranger with wide eyes. My eyes darted around the empty spot in the woods where we stood, becoming frantic for a way out of this situation.

Something touched my cheek, making me snap my head towards the source. He was looking at me with concerned eyes, and momentarily, everything faded away as I was caught in his gaze. Then he blinked and the panic rose to the surface again.

"C-can you let go?" I looked away from him as I cursed my stuttering. Right now I had to be strong, and I wasn't portraying that very well.

I could feel his gaze on me, and then a sudden and sharp breath came from him as he whispered, "Oh," and released me before backing away slowly.

I looked up slowly, looking at him through my lashes before getting a burst of something -adrenaline, I suspected- and looked at him head-on, my gaze as unwavering as his.

"I'm sorry, *amor*." he says, his lips twitching slightly at the sight of my confident gaze. "I didn't realize." he added it as an afterthought, though I suspected he hadn't meant to say it aloud at all.

"What do you mean?"

"What?"

My eyes narrowed. Either this man was usually clueless, or he was an amazing actor. "You said, and I quote, "I didn't realize.". Didn't realize what?" My arms crossed over my chest, but I managed to snag my long brown hair in my hands and winced as pain erupted in my scalp and I brushed my hair away so it fell down my back. After that, I looked at the man, who seemed to hope I had forgotten the question I had asked only moments ago.

"Well?"

I could see that any hope he had was crushed. "I just meant that I didn't think you were...uncomfortable."

I would have believed him had it not been for the short pause at the end of his sentence. I fought an inner-battle with myself momentarily before deciding that it was best that I left it alone. After all, I didn't even know this guy.

My eyes were still narrowed slightly, but they became light with amusement as I watched the man in front of me squirm uncomfortably at my gaze. With the way he looked, I didn't think anything could make him squirm, let alone me.

Seconds of silence ticked by before he broke the silence.

"I'm David Noapte. What's your name, *mi amor*?"

"Ana." I said quietly.

"Ana what?"

I sighed and dropped my hands from where they were still crossed over my chest.

"My name is Anabla Inger."

A breathtakingly beautiful grin took over his face and it caused me to break out into a smile as well. It didn't seem possible, but it seemed that as soon as he saw my grin, his own smile multiplied.

I was brought out of his gaze by the sound of something skittering along a branch above me. I gazed up to see a set of eerie eyes that belonged to a raccoon staring down at me. My eyebrows furrowed and my smile was replaced by a grimace. Weren't raccoons supposed to be afraid of humans? What was wrong with this one? All of a sudden, his eyes glanced over at David and if anything, the raccoon looked entirely more shady.

I turned to David when I heard a low growl coming from his throat, and looked at him with growing confusion. *Who was he?*

"It's getting late." is all he said. There was no explanation for his sudden show of animalistic dominance. I looked around me, understanding at once why he pointed that out.

It was clearly late judging by the fading sunset above us.

A large grin took over my face as I saw the sunset.

I had always loved the sunset, especially in these woods. The calm breeze, making the vibrantly green leaves rustle in the wind, was tranquil beyond words and I often stood in these woods just for the sunset.

A sudden thought hit me fast and I turned to David.

"Uh, I kinda got lost." I said, looking down at my shuffling feet.

He was silent for a moment. "Where do you live?"

I looked up to catch his gaze, though it wasn't hard; he was already looking at me. "Off of East Kivey Street."

He raised an eyebrow. "You're pretty far from there, sweetheart."

I tried to ignore the unsteady thumping in my chest at the endearment as I inhaled a sharp breath.

"Where *am* I? I couldn't have walked *that* far!"

He laughed and pointed behind me. "East Kivey is about thirty miles that way." he pointed directly to his left as I drew in another sharp breath. "Down that way about three miles or so is the Dark County watertower."

I was takenaback, naturally. "I made it that far? What time is it?" I asked, remembering that in my haste to leave my house, I had left my phone plugged into the wall in my kitchen.

He felt his pockets then grimaced. "Left my phone at home." he said apologetically. "'Round the time I left it was eight or so. I'd say it's about nine now, give or take."

My eyes widened. *I had been walking for five hours.*

"You have?"

I looked up sharply. "What?"

He looked at me strangely. "You've been walking for five hours?"

I cleared my throat. "Uh, yeah. Did I, er, say that out loud?"

He laughed and I could almost feel my heart skip a beat.

"Yeah, you did. That happen a lot?"

I gave him a small smile. "Sometimes. It dependa on how diatracted I am."

He smirked at me, and my heart skipped another beat. I briefly wondered if that was possible before he spoke. "I seem to be a good distraction then, eh?"

My eyes widened as I felt my cheeks heat up. *I never blushed!*

"I'm glad I could make you then."

I shuffled on my feet, realizing that I had said that aloud yet again.

"It's a bad habit." I whispered, still shuffling from foot to foot, my gaze never leaving the tips of my shoes.

"I have a proposition."

At that, my bashfulness nearly vanished completely. "Hmm?"

"Stay with me."

My mind went into overdrive, thoughts of assault and murder consuming me as I took a small step back, not wanting to startle him or make it obvious that I was trying to get away.

He held his hands up in front of him. "Hear me out before you freak, please," When he spoke, I recognised a slight Southern twang that I hadn't even noticed before.

I gulped.

"It's getting late, and by the time you get home, it'll be completely dark. Sweetheart, there are critters out here that you don't want to come face-to-face with." He breathed in and out before speaking again. "You can stay in my guest bedroom. It locks from the inside."

I debated it. Everything he said was completely true. The only thing that worried me was the fact that he was still a stranger. Yet I felt like in a way I've known him forever.

My mouth moved before my brain could catch up with it. "Okay."

Chapter Two

He looked startled.

"What?" I asked, nervously touching my teeth to make sure nothing was stuck in them.

"Really?" his handsome face was covered in disbelief.

It took me only a moment to realize that he was talking about my answer and I smiled.

"I don't know why, but some part of me trusts you, so yes. I meant what I said."