

11 A Word of Wisdom

~Liam~

The weekend arrived, and as my father had promised, we set off for Lucland. Everyone else went to the city, except for our grandparents who chose to stay at the estate. We didn't go to our mansion because it wouldn't accommodate all of us. Instead, we went to the Stepanov estate, where Lord Newton and his wife were present, making it a suitable alternative.

I found it difficult to concentrate. My desperate desire was to go East and implore Uncle Leo for his assistance. Since I hadn't received any further communication from Sophia, I could only hope that she was safe.

In order not to dampen the mood, I made it my duty to conceal my feelings and fears throughout the weekend.

Harper could see through my pretence, but she allowed me to keep up the charade. Meanwhile, Charlotte, Gemma, and Jewels were preoccupied with plotting ways to sneak off and explore the Islands when we reached Mountain. The triplets were daring and persistent, and I was grateful that they were taking on those adventures on my behalf.

As the weekend came to a close, my mother took Keith, Joseph, and Eleanor to school. My mother seemed to have a stronger attachment to Keith and Joseph than she did to Harper and me. She was reluctant to let them go, but anyone who was to serve in our world had to attend an academy. I knew my brothers would have a great

time there, and I hoped their experience would be as joyful as my time in Grizlo.

Before we departed for the estate, Lord Newton extended a final invitation for us to have dinner together, and it turned out to be a fantastic evening. Uncle David and Aunt Nicole added a lively spark to the gathering. My uncle seemed to possess an endless supply of jokes and sarcasm, and his wife's laughter filled the room with energy.

I was taken aback when my cousin Justin joined us. I was aware that Aunt Nicole had reservations about his involvement, but she ceased her objections once he embraced the opportunity to be the temporary alpha of Grizlo.

During the dinner, Justin approached me and asked if I'd accompany him for a walk in the garden. Intrigued, I followed him as we slipped away from the crowd, finding solace in the peaceful surroundings.

"So, how have you been holding up? Charlotte filled me in on everything," he inquired, and I sensed that Charlotte played a role in his decision to go to Grizlo.

"Did she manage to convince you?" I questioned with a chuckle.

"Are you kidding me, Liam? We were all waiting for you two to finally admit your feelings. The signs were evident. It's just an unfortunate circumstance. But anything we can do to make it work, count me in," he replied, playfully tousling my hair as he used to when I was younger.

Despite the age gap, being around Justin was effortless. He was like

an older brother to me, even though we were cousins. He was someone I could always depend on, no matter what. I was grateful that he embraced the situation and offered his support.

"When do you think we'll be heading to Grizlo?" I inquired, and Justin came to a halt, his steps matching the pause in conversation.

"As soon as we're finished with Mountain. Aunt Amelia insists that all of us be present, so there's no escaping it. My mother has this notion that my mate is in Mountain. I highly doubt it, but you know how she is. I'll humour her and go along with it. Honestly, I'm not ready to settle down. I'm only twenty-six, and I feel like I still have my whole life ahead of me," he expressed, and I couldn't help but laugh.

Justin's laughter subsided, and he looked at me intently. I could sense that he had something profound to share, something I might not necessarily be receptive to. It was evident in his eyes.

"Go ahead, tell me," I mustered the courage to meet my cousin's gaze, sensing his shift from joy to concern.

He placed a comforting hand on my shoulder and let out a deep sigh.

I could see that he was grappling with finding the right words and approach. But I had learned that in moments like these, there were no perfect words or approaches, only the truth.

No matter how he chose to express it, I knew I would receive his message in the same way he feared I would. Regardless of his choice of words, the conclusion would remain the same.

"Come on, Justin, just spit it out," I exclaimed impatiently, and he



chuckled before nodding in agreement.

"I know you both have feelings for each other, Liam. It's been pretty obvious for a while now. It's just peculiar that you never officially got together. I understand your restraint, though, especially considering the age difference," he remarked, and I nodded in acknowledgement. He hit the nail on the head. If our ages had aligned, I would have pursued a relationship with Sophia without hesitation, despite my doubts. I simply wanted her to reach adulthood before diving into something serious.

If her father hadn't sent her away, I would have expressed my intentions to her, and we would have maintained our friendship until she turned eighteen. Justin's assessment was spot-on, and I came to terms with that reality.

"Well, I hope we find them. But I want to know what you will do if you find your mate and she isn't Sophia," he posed an incredibly challenging question, one that was difficult to even fathom, let alone answer.

"There's a probability that you will encounter your mate, Liam, and it may not be Sophia. What will you do if that happens? You've invested so much time and effort into this quest. You're sacrificing a great deal to find her. Everyone is going beyond boundaries and breaking the rules to support you. But what will occur if you find your mate and we haven't found Sophia? And what if we do find Sophia, but you discover your mate elsewhere? These are crucial questions, Liam. I don't expect you to have an immediate answer, but I want you to contemplate them and prepare your heart for these potential outcomes.



Fate is a complex force, and we've learned from our parents that it can lead us down unexpected paths. Sophia is young, just like you. Two years is a substantial amount of time to wait and discover what destiny holds. What will you do after devoting so much time and energy when you realise she isn't meant for you? And what if you don't find your mate, but she finds hers and decides to embrace that bond? How will you navigate such circumstances, Liam?" He posed the questions, leaving me utterly speechless.

"I want to know because I've taken on the temporary role of Alpha of Grizlo for your sake. Your father expressed his desire not to hold you back and ensured that you had all the support and assistance necessary to find her. If we fail in our efforts, it won't be due to a lack of effort or because we neglected to assist you; it will be because of destiny.

When your father shared this with me, I had to consider your mental well-being and your future, Liam. You are destined to become King one day, and we will all be here to protect and guide you. I don't want to wait until I hold the title of a lord to fulfil my duty.

That's why I'm asking you these questions because even though you may feel certain now, matters of the heart are unpredictable.

That's precisely why I haven't pursued any romantic relationships myself. I don't want to break someone's heart or have mine broken.

The mate bond is not something that can be easily severed. Your parents managed it, and the moon granted them the rare gift of becoming second-chance mates. Alpha Devin and Aunt Susan never had that opportunity. Uncle Leo and Aunt Amelia were also blessed

in that manner. However, they all found happiness together.

Uncle Leo was the first to tell me about the mate bond and his own mistakes, followed by Max and Kyle. It drives you to do irrational things, clouding your judgment. It's as simple as that. That's why I've held back all this time, waiting. I won't choose a mate until I'm thirty and certain that I won't find my fated one," he explained, leaving me speechless as I absorbed his words and their implications.

"So, I implore you, as your brother and your steadfast supporter, to separate your heart and feelings from the equation. I plead with you to keep the possibility and chance of a fated mate who may not be Sophia open.

Search for Sophia as a friend, not solely as someone you hope to spend your life with. Allow fate to unfold naturally, so you don't find yourself fighting against the wind in the future," he expressed, and I remained rooted in place. His words penetrated deep within me, resonating with my very being. I would be dishonest if I said Justin's words didn't make sense—they did, and I felt grateful for his words of wisdom.

Morning arrived, and we embarked on our journey back to Lucland. Throughout the night, I pondered Justin's words, weighing their significance. Ultimately, I decided that I would follow wherever the winds of fate led me, but I wouldn't give up on my search. Whether fated or not, Sophia was my friend, and she needed assistance. Gathering my belongings, I prepared myself for our upcoming trip to Mountain, ready to face whatever lay ahead.