



Series

The Millennium Wolves



Book 6 - Chapter 15

SIENNA

The light was too bright. Too cold.



As we left through the French doors to the back terrace, Aiden, Josh, Rhys, and Dad carried the casket as pallbearers.

The media, restrained from entering the house during the funeral service, chased us as we exited.

A procession to the small, stately cemetery on the southeastern side of the estate, we passed through the Italian garden, where I had found Selene's body.

I heard shouting and looked beyond the cameras and reporters.

Protesters, holding signs and calling out.

“No beta Alphas!”

“Respect tradition!”



Chapters



Display



Unmute



Comment



React



Four people held an enormous banner that said, “Our pack must be saved!”

Somewhat separate from the rest, some men and one woman held signs saying, “Selene Gibbs’s death is a sign of our times!”



“This murder is a judgment!”

“Challenge Alpha Norwood!”

I stumbled and Nelson was at my side, his chocolate-colored hand under my elbow.

We made it into the cemetery, which, mercifully, had a high stone wall around it.

Our group surrounded the grave as Nelson took Aiden’s place with the casket, and Aiden placed himself at the head of the grave.

Reporters appeared at the top of the walls.

I blinked at the flashes.

Michelle broke from our group and marched over to the densest crowd of them.

“Now, fellas, take a couple of pictures but then kindly drop back down. We need a

moment of peace, you understand!”

I hated the conciliatory tone she used. And she looked so self-important.

She turned and glanced over her shoulder as she came back over, pleased to be photographed.

This was a nightmare. I couldn't wait for it to be over.

And that upset me more.

Selene, my heart ached.

This is my chance to say good-bye to you.

And they are ruining it.

JOSH

We took care positioning the casket over the lined hole.

I felt, rather than saw, the flashes of the cameras.

I knew Michelle liked the presence of the press, but this was one time I didn't agree



with her.

All those lenses, trained on us as we carried out this awful duty. It made me feel sick.

As it was, I felt exhausted, and my hands shook as I held my part of the burden, then passed the strap hand under hand to lower the casket.

It felt impossibly heavy.



At last the casket settled, and I released the strap, allowing Nelson to pull it through and out.

I stepped back, feeling off balance.

To think that one of *us* was inside that box, deep in that hole.

My face and hands felt icy.

“I don’t like it.”

I flinched and turned at the small voice.

It was Rowan, standing a few feet to my left.

“Aunt Sellie doesn’t like it either,” he said.



He was backing away from the grave, his large green eyes wide.

The ginger-haired nanny was trying to talk to him, but it was clear he wasn't hearing her.

I looked around—Aiden was at the head of the grave, starting a speech, and Sienna was wiping her eyes on the other side. Neither seemed aware of Rowan's distress.



SIENNA

Aiden nodded to me as he finished his eulogy.

For a moment, I froze.

My voice wouldn't work.

I have to do this. For Selene.

“Selene, daughter, mother, friend and my sister, I will miss you terribly.

“I wasn't ready for you to go!

“We were just sitting together at the river, watching our children play together.



“I can’t imagine watching them grow up without you.”

My voice broke, and water lapped at my eyes.

I cleared my throat and blinked the tears away.

“Everyone who knew Selene, knew she was the kind of friend, and sister, who would always say, ‘Let me know if you need anything. Love you!’”



My voice broke again, but I powered on, “And you knew in your heart that she meant it!”

I saw people nodding in the crowd as I met the eyes of Mia and Erica. And at last, I spotted Michelle.

And in that moment any resentment was swept away, because Michelle had tears in her eyes, too.

“When Selene died—when someone *took* her from us, we lost a beautiful person, someone with so much love and inspiration to share.

“Selene had plans. She wanted to expand her

business, opening shops in other cities.

“She had started teaching classes at Southern Mahiganote University, and she told me she loved it. She wanted to encourage young designers to follow their dreams.

“She was such a force for *good* in this world.

“Selene, I will miss you—”



For the third time, my voice broke, and this time, I couldn't get it back to normal.

I spoke anyway, my words cracked and crushed by grief.

“Selene, I will miss you. Every. Day. I know I—”

“She doesn't like it!” Rowan exclaimed, running into a woman who stood behind him.

Moving fast, Josh went to his side.

“Hey, Rowan, it's okay,” he said, crouching to his level.

“No!” Rowan cried, flinching away from me. “I want to go with Aunt Sellie!”

“Rowan,” Josh soothed. “It’s okay, big guy. I know this is all weird and upsetting, but there’s nothing to be afraid of.”

“Aunt Sellie! Aunt Sellie!” Rowan shouted in his high voice.

I headed over, but Rowan fled from Josh, repeating “Aunt Sellie.” People muttered and gasped as he pushed through them.



Finally, I caught him, wrapping him in my arms.

AIDEN

Waiting for Sienna to finish her speech seemed futile in light of the disruption Rowan had caused.

I went to Robert’s side and whispered, “Better start the flowers.”

He gave me a nod and guided Melissa to the baskets of white roses we had prepared. They each took one, and walked to the side of the grave, stopping for a moment to toss the flower in.

Others saw and got in line. Order was restored.

Moving to Sienna and Rowan, I saw that she'd managed to calm him.

“Hey, buddy, want to give Aunt Sellie a pretty rose?” I asked.



Rowan stared up at me and gave me a slow nod.

The three of us joined the line; together, we took our roses and stopped at the side of the grave.

With all my Alpha responsibilities, I hadn't had a chance to focus on saying good-bye to Selene myself. I took this moment to do so, composing my thoughts.

You were always kind, and a great sister to Sienna, I thought to her, as I dropped the white rose.

I will miss your laugh, your support, and your bright mind.

“Are you sad, Garoo?” Rowan asked me, and my heart lurched at his use of the nickname he'd given me, two years before, when he learned the French word for “werewolf” was “loup-garoux.”

“I'm very sad, buddy,” I said, my voice soft.

“I’m going to miss Aunt Sellie. But I’ll be okay, son.”

As we moved away from the grave, I looked for Lexa, but she was gone. Instead, I saw my parents.

It was the first I’d noticed them, but for once, I was glad to see them.



Sienna grimaced and blinked, fighting tears, to be strong for Rowan, but I could tell she needed to just be in her grief right now.

With an encouraging smile at my mate, I took Rowan’s hand and walked him over to my mother and father.

“Mom,” I said, trying, by not calling her “Mother,” to start us off in a warmer way.

She and Dad turned to me, and she kissed me on my cheek.

Dad and I exchanged a brief hug.

Rowan watched all this, and I noted that they said nothing to him.

He had, no doubt, embarrassed them with his outburst.



I tamped down the irritation this provoked.

“Mom, I was thinking,” I said. “Maybe you could take Rowan for the afternoon? It would do him good to have a change of scenery.”

Sienna watched, dabbing her eyes, a few feet away.

“Take Rowan?” Mother said. “Oh no, Aiden, I simply couldn’t.”

I frowned. “Why not?”

Can't you see how hard this is?



Can't you do this one thing, to help us?

“Your father and I have plans,” she said, peering down at Rowan like he was an insect.

“What the hell, Mother?” I snapped.

She blinked at me. “*Really*, Aiden, you aren’t going to make a scene?!”

“I can’t believe you! Rowan is your grandson! What is the matter with you?”



Dad shook his head. “Now, Aiden...”

“Aiden, this really isn’t the time for this conversation,” Mother said, overlapping him.

I clenched my jaw, swallowing a petulant retort.

“Honestly,” Mother said, sighing and looking to the sky as if asking for strength. “You insist on this delusion, Aiden, but I will not tolerate it, not after that grotesque display—”



“He’s just a kid, Mother! He’s upset—we’re *all* upset—”

“He has no sense of decorum,” Mother said, her gaze intense. She reached out and grabbed my arm, her grip like iron. “I’m not surprised. Raised by that unmannered bitch you call a mate.”

Jesus, Mother...tell me how you really feel.

Her harshness was such a shock, I was stunned speechless.

Her next words made it clear that her temper had been simmering.

“This entire funeral is a *travesty*.
Chrysanthemums? That *awful* poem.
Burying that girl *here*—and then the
scene Rowan made. It’s all too vulgar. It’s
obscene.”

“He’s your grandson!” I barked.

“He is *not*.”

I stared at her.

I could feel Rowan’s hand in mine.



I felt paralyzed.

I should walk away. Right now.

But my legs were stone.

“What did you say?” My voice was a
menacing whisper.

“He is *not* my grandson. And he is *not* your
son. And he never will be. He will never be
blood.”

SIENNA

I charged over and yanked Rowan away

from Aiden, picking him up even though he was too big to be carried.

I hurried away from them, holding him tight against me. His body was loose, as if he'd passed out.

Rage pumped through me.

I wasn't sure whether I was angrier at Charlotte and Daniel or at Aiden, for exposing Rowan to their hatred.



Making sure plenty of people stood between the Norwoods and us, with care, I set him down.

I pulled away from him, but took both of his hands in mine, meeting his eyes.

"I'm sorry you heard all that," I said, giving him an earnest look. "Grandma Charlotte was very mean."

"Why did she say those things, Mama? She said I'm not Daddy's son."

"Well, it isn't true," I asserted with as much force as I dared—I didn't want to scare him. "Not one bit. She's being very mean."

"Why, Mama?"



I shot the little group of them a glare.

“Funerals upset people. Sometimes, getting upset makes people mean.”

I let his hands go, gave him a hug, and then smoothed the shoulders of the blazer he wore.



“Come on then, sweetheart. Let’s get out of here.”

Most of the mourners were already leaving, and we joined the crowd as it passed through the gate of the cemetery.

I held Rowan’s hand.

But as we passed beyond the gate, I spotted Monica Birch in the crowd of reporters.

ROWAN

Mama’s hand got tight on mine and it scared me.

I looked around, trying to see why she did it.

Usually, it means there’s a car, or something else dangerous.

All I saw were people everywhere.

Mama pulled me through some of them. She pulled kind of hard.

We got out of the crowd. Then she started yelling.



“You *dare* show your face here? You *dare*?”

I tried to see—she was pointing at someone. Shaking her finger at them, like they’d been naughty.

Mama’s face looked strange.

There were all of these people, too far away. I couldn’t see them real good.

A lot of them had cameras.

Bright lights on the cameras flashed over and over. It made spots in my eyes.

Mama was real mad at the people with the cameras, and they all started yelling at her.

She let go of my hand, making fists at them.

She was shouting, “You’re vultures! You’re



all vultures!”

And they wouldn't stop yelling at her.

They were being so mean!

My heart was beating real hard, and the ringing started in my ears.



And that made me scared.

I hated the ringing.

And this time, it got louder and louder.

And then *it* happened.

The wolf came.

And people saw it.

I could tell.

My wolf—I'd seen him once or twice before in my dreams. But no one else ever saw him. Until today.

My wolf is real big. He's bluish and white, but you can see through him.



My wolf is real big. He's bluish and white,
but you can see through him.

He's so big and so strong.

He roared out of me and roared at the
people.



I was so scared. When my wolf comes out I
can't move.

It's like my body goes to sleep, except I'm
still standing up.

I hate it.

My wolf roared again, and this time, he
pushed the people.

He knocked a lot of them down.

I couldn't stop him.

I'm going to get in real big trouble for this.

Next Chapter