

## Alpha Reid chapter 12 -

12 Serena " Fuck , " I mutter as I trip over a tree root protruding from the earth , coming down hard on a knee . I catch my upper body with both hands , skinning my palms as they slide across the hard – packed dirt of the forest floor . I'm tired and sweaty and exhausted , tears of frustration springing to my eyes as I struggle back to my feet . I've been out here for hours , trying my damndest to figure out where Reid and I first ran into each other the other night .. Trying to retrace my steps , though at this point that exercise seems pretty fucking useless . It doesn't help that I don't know this terrain at all .

I tried my best to study the of the six – pack territory in Reid's map office last night , but I didn't want to linger in there too long and risk getting caught- and it's a lot different looking at something on paper than it is actually trying to navigate it on foot . The territory borders are fairly easy to pick out , as they're framed on this side by a treeline opposite a clearing . Even so , there's a lot o f ground to cover when you have no idea how to get to where you're trying to go .

I hiss and wince as I scrub my palms together to rub the dirt out of them , though it only seems to rub it further into my skinned flesh . Damn it , I can't stay out here much longer without arousing suspicion . I've already been gone for too long . Maybe I'm not having any luck because someone already found it- I was supposed to retrieve the package first thing this morning , but I foolishly accepted Reid's breakfast invitation instead . Not that I had much choice in the matter . I t was pretty clear that he wasn't taking no for an answer , and how could I say no after he put all that effort into cooking ? The food smelled amazing , and when I started to come downstairs and spotted that big sexy man holding a carton of orange juice and dancing like nobody was watching , I couldn't help but want to stay for breakfast . He wasn't embarrassed at all when I caught him , either- he just flashed me that irresistible smile of his and launched into conversation . Like this . was all part of our normal morning routine . Like we're just a normal , happy couple .

Part of me wants that There's a part of m e that looks at Reid and sees all the possibility , but I have to silence that part o f myself because deep down , I know better . I know better than to think I can have that with anyone ; I know better than to get attached . I know better than to think Reid could save me- and even if he could , it would only be a matter of time before he figured out that I'm not someone worth saving . By next full moon , the mate bond will dissolve away and he'll be free . Free to find someone else , free to b e happy . I want that for him . As for me ? I'll never be free . When you make a deal with the devil , there's no getting out of it . Your fate is sealed whether you like it or not .

Reid was the one thing I never expected ; the wildcard in this whole scenario . He's making it difficult to stay the course and d o what I have to do because I'm hard wired to want to be with him . All my instincts are screaming at me to give into the bond between us , not to mention my wolf , who has already firmly decided that he's ours and we're his

. The bond is so strong , it's painful to constantly fight against it . Reid smells like heaven and he looks even better and somehow that's all topped off by the fact that he's the nicest guy ever . He's basically perfect in every way- which , coincidentally , is also the reason that things could never actually work between us ; because I'm far from perfect .

He's an angel sent from heaven , and I've purchased a one – way ticket to hell . I've been floundering since I arrived here and the mate bond snapped into place , but that phone call I made last night gave me some much – needed clarity . I'm here for a purpose and I have to remain on target . I can't allow Reid or our bond to distract me from my objective . Now isn't the time to be selfish . I heave a sigh , following the treeline at the border of the territory , squinting as I look out across the clearing to the trees on the other side . Looking for what I'm here to find while actively trying to force thoughts of Reid out of my head . As I scan the trees in the distance , I'm trying to not think about how cute he looked when I caught him dancing to Bruce Springsteen , or how sweet it was for him to go through the effort to make me breakfast , or how kind he was when he held my hands and comforted me about the loss of my family . Or how fucking good it felt when he put his hands on me last night

The way my body came alive beneath his strong , capable hands . Mmm ... That's when I spot it- a yellow ribbon tied to a tree across the clearing . I was told to look for a yellow ribbon . My breath catches in my throat and my blood runs cold . That has to be it , and if it is ... that means I really have to go through with this . I feel sick . There's no time to second guess things ; no turning back now . I draw a deep breath , looking around one last time to ensure the coast is clear . Then I make a run for it . My heart races as my feet pound the earth in my new Nike running shoes , my eyes focused on the bright yellow ribbon moving gently with the breeze . I'm sure I've tripped the border alarm by crossing it , but if I move quickly enough , I can get back over before anyone finds me . I skid . into the treeline on the other side of the clearing , grabbing for the ribbon .

There's a tiny white envelope tied to one end of it , but I don't have time to look at what's inside . I have to move fast if I'm going to pull this off . I tear the ribbon from the tree , immediately sinking into a crouch to conceal myself as I untie the little envelope and shove it into my sports bra . I frantically start digging at the dirt below the trunk with my fingers , creating a little hole to hide the ribbon . I drop it in and dirt back over it to cover it up , scoop looking wildly through the brush toward the other side of the clearing , toward the border of the six – pack territory .

The coast is clear , so again , I make a run for it , sprinting as fast as my legs will carry me toward the treeline . My throat is burning when I reach it , but I don't stop I keep going , full steam ahead . The thick foliage of the forest tears at the fabric of my clothes , branches whip me in the face and tug at my hair . I don't stop . But something stops me . I hear a snarl , and before it can even register , a tawny wolf leaps at me from the side , tackling me to the ground . I eat dirt as I hit the forest floor so hard that it knocks the wind out of me , sputtering as

my body skids to a stop , the weight of the wolf on top of me . I'm gasping for air as it slinks off of me , taking a couple of steps before the air starts to shimmer around the wolf and I hear the familiar sounds that accompany a shift – bones snapping and rearranging . A few seconds later , someone's crouching where the wolf stood . It's someone I recognize . " Fallon ? " I croak , rolling onto my side and pushing myself up on an arm .

My whole body is screaming in pain from the impact with the earth . She rises to her feet across from me , and fucking hell that girl is stunning . Her lithe body is bare , covered in toned , lean muscle beneath her beautifully tanned skin . Her long blonde hair hangs loose around her shoulders , her blue eyes still sparkling with the silver of her wolf . . " What were you doing off territory ? " Fallon demands , narrowing her eyes on me . " L ... what ? " I stutter , trying to think fast . I struggle to my feet and bring a hand up to

my cheek , wincing when my fingers come into contact with a cut on my cheekbone . Was I off territory ? " Fallon doesn't look amused by my theatrics . She folds her arms , her lips set in a tight line . " I don't know my way around here yet , " I groan , brushing dirt off of my clothes . " I've been lost for the last hour ... "

33 Fallon arches a skeptical brow . " Then why didn't you call for help ? " " Uh , no phone , " I say , holding up my hands to illustrate my point . " I was out for a run . I should've stuck to the path , but I wanted to explore a little bit ... guess i t backfired , right ? " I chuckle softly , trying to play it cool- though on the inside , I'm panicking . " Hm , " she muses , still looking unconvinced . This fucking girl , man . I thought Astrid would be the one I had to worry about , but Fallon seems to have had me pegged from the start , always casting suspicious glances in my direction . And for her to be the one to find me out here ... it just

fucking figures , doesn't it ? A tense silence stretches between us as I shift my weight uncomfortably , gnawing on the inside of my cheek . Fallon's eyes are still narrowed on me like she doesn't buy my story . I don't blame her- I've never been a great liar . Though I'm getting better at it . " C'mon , " she sighs after what seems like an eternity , giving a little flick of her head . " Shift , I'll take you back . " 11 " What ? " I blurt , my eyes flying wide and my hand instinctively flying to the top left corner of my sports – bra where the little envelope is hidden . I nearly sigh in relief when I feel the bump underneath the fabric that tells me it's still there . Her eyes narrow again . " What's wrong ? " Shit . Think fast , Serena . Like your life depends on it . I look down at myself , then back u p . at Fallon . " Reid just got me all this stuff . I. don't want to shift and leave it behind .....

33 I should've guessed that clothes would speak to someone like Fallon . Her expression softens and her lips spread into a grin . " Hey girl , I get it , " she chuckles . " I don't really feel like streaking , so how about ! shift and you just try to keep up on two legs ? " " Sure , " I agree , flashing her a smile of my own . She rolls her shoulders , stretching . " You're lucky I was close by when the call came out for someone to check

the alert at the border . ” She turns to me , tossing me a wink . ” Or else you might’ve had to leave that stuff behind and let your wolf lead you back . ” ” For sure , ” ” I nod . She gives me another smile , and my heart’s still pounding as Fallon shifts into her wolf form again , shaking out her fur . As she turns tail and starts to jog ahead , I finally breathe a sigh of relief .c Fuck . That was a close one .

REID I look up from the open refrigerator as I hear the front door of the packhouse swing open , my wolf instantly perking up as Serena breezes through . ” Hi ! ” she greets brightly , her delicious scent practically slapping me in the face as she pushes the door closed behind her . She’s wearing leggings and another one of those cropped hoodies that shows a tantalizing strip of her flat stomach- this one is light blue , the same hue as her eyes . Her hair is pulled back in two French braids , and I can’t help but crack a smile as I recall a joke that Theo used to crack about pigtails being used as ‘ handlebars ‘ .

” Hey , ” I call back to her , reaching for a bowl in the fridge filled with fruit . I select a juicy looking red apple and step back , the refrigerator door swinging closed as I step over to the sink to rinse the piece of fruit . ” How’d it go ? ” I had some pack business to tend to this morning , so I asked Cy to bring Serena over to the complex for the morning training session since she seemed to enjoy working out with the squad so much the other day . While playing chauffeur for the pack’s future Luna doesn’t exactly fall within Cy’s job description as Beta ,

he was all too eager to help out- he’s been chomping at the bit to learn more about my mate . Though knowing what little I do about Serena , I doubt she divulged much personal information on the ride over . I was going to go pick her up myself after practice , but Gray called to let me know that Fallon actually offered to give her a lift back here instead . I was glad to hear it , thrilled that my friends ‘ mates seem to be warming up to Serena , but then Gray mentioned something else that Fallon responded to an alarm at the border yesterday and discovered that it was Serena who tripped it ; she wandered off territory during her run . While Gray didn’t outwardly accuse Serena of anything , I could pick up the subtle hint of suspicion in his tone . I know it shouldn’t , but it irritated me- so I ended the call and asked Cy to cover for me here this afternoon , determined to spend more time with my mate and continue my efforts to knock her walls down . I figure that the sooner I know I can trust her , the sooner my friends will have

to come around too ... right ? ” Training was great ! ” Serena replies , practically glowing . I’m not sure what has her in such a great mood probably the endorphins from her morning workout but I’ll take it . Her smile is gorgeous , it lights up her whole face . And once again , I’m captivated and can’t look . away . I smile back at her , turning off the tap and flicking water droplets off of the piece of fruit . ” Glad to hear it . You hungry at all ? ” Serena gives a little shake of her head as she starts to make her way toward me . Nah , I ate lunch at the complex . ” ( C 33 I lean against the kitchen counter with one arm , bringing the apple to my mouth with the other . ” I heard you were off territory yesterday , ” I comment , sinking my teeth into the fruit . I bite off a piece , crunching , carefully watching Serena’s reaction . She stops in her tracks , looking a bit like a deer

in the headlights . It's only for a moment , though her demeanor quickly shifts . " I got lost , " she says nonchalantly , shrugging a shoulder .

Damn it's hard to get a read on her . swallow down the bite of apple , smirking . " Always getting lost , little wolf . " A faint blush spreads across Serena's cheeks as she peers back at me , and I'm amazed at the way her expression can simultaneously convey both wide – eyed innocence and devious sin .

I hold the apple up to take another bite , extending a finger to point toward her . " I've got a solution for that . " I bite down and chew , tossing her a wink . Serena lifts a brow , waiting for me to go on . Impatiently waiting- she starts to fidget as she watches me chew the fruit . " Well are you gonna tell me ? " she finally asks , unable to hold it in . I smirk . She's a feisty little thing sometimes . Swallowing the bite of apple , I take a step toward her , then another . Invading her space until our bodies are mere inches apart , dropping my head beside her ear and my voice low . " Careful with that attitude , Red , or I'll have to take you over my knee . " " 1 She gulps as I pull back to look at her , the blush on her cheeks deepening . " I ... "

I swear I can feel the heat coming off of her body , my own body heat ratcheting up like it's absorbing hers . Still clutching the apple in one hand , I reach up with the other , sliding my index finger underneath her chin and tipping her face up toward mine . " You'd like that , wouldn't you ? " I growl out , searching her eyes . Something flickers in them in response to my question . Something dark , dangerous , intertwined with the silver swirl indicative of her wolf rising to the surface .

Her tongue darts out to wet her lips and my eyes track the movement . My own wolf pushes forward as the scent of her arousal hits my nose , a low growl rumbling in my chest . I drop my hand from her chin , snaking it around to trail down her spine until it lands on her ass . Giving her ass cheek a demanding squeeze , I yank her closer . Serena's plush pink lips part and she lets out a little puff of air . I nearly shudder when I feel her touch me , her fingertips dancing across my abs . " I ... " she breathes again , like she can't get her thoughts together .

I don't blame her . This proximity has my own head scrambled , and there's only one thing on my brain right now- bending her over the kitchen counter and yanking her leggings down to her ankles . I need to get it the fuck together , so I release my grip on her ass and take an abrupt step backwards , putting some space between us so we can both think clearly . " C'mon , " I say with a nod of my head , taking two more big bites of my apple before turning to toss the core in the trash . " I've got a little surprise for you . " " 11 " What kind of surprise ? " Serena asks skeptically , but I can hear the excitement in her tone .

I don't answer her , just toss her another wink and start for the door to the back patio of the packhouse . I draw deep breaths to calm my erratic pulse , my heart pounding in time to Serena's quick footsteps on the hardwood floor behind me as she catches up . I hope she's into this . I know she likes being out in nature and she seems to be the thrill

– seeker type , so it should be right up her alley . I pull open the back door of the packhouse and Serena follows me outside , around to where a large storage shed sits behind the garage . The door is standing open and two matching ATV's are parked outside of the shed with helmets perched on the seat of each . I hear Serena draw a breath . " Up for a ride ? " I ask , swinging around to take in her reaction .

Oh yeah , I nailed this . Serena is grinning from ear to ear as she stares at the four wheelers , her excitement palpable . " Figured this would be a fun way to show you around the territory , " I continue , smiling smugly as I watch Serena advance toward the ATV's , wide – eyed and eager . " Yeah , let's go ! " she exclaims , reaching out to touch the handlebar of the nearest one . She whips her head around to dart me a glance over her shoulder , and I'm not sure if she means for her : gaze to convey so much sexual energy , but damn . There goes my pulse again . I clear my throat , stepping up beside her and moving the helmet off the seat to reveal a black bandana underneath . " Have you ever done this before ? " I ask .

She shakes her head , buzzing with anticipation . " This , " I breathe , picking up the bandana , folding it lengthwise , and bringing it up to tie around her head , " is so you aren't inhaling dirt the whole time . " I secure the bandana so that it's covering her nose and mouth , tying it off . Then I rock back on a heel , smiling to myself as she looks back at me with the bandana in place like the cutest little bandit I've ever seen . I turn to grab the helmet next , unbuckling the strap . " Do I have to wear a helmet ? " Serena protests , eyeing it as I lift it up over her head . " Safety first , little wolf , " I murmur , bringing it down over the crown of her head . I make sure it's snug , tightening the strap and then placing my palms on either side to ensure it doesn't wiggle too much . " All set . " 33 She turns to mount the ATV and I deliver a swift slap to her ass as she does , unable to restrain myself . Serena lets out a little

yelp and I chuckle , walking around to my own ATV . I tie a black bandana around my face and yank a helmet on over my head , tightening the chin strap . I know most other shifters would forgo a helmet , but given what happened to my mom , I figure you can never be too careful . I give Serena a little crash course in how to ride the four – wheeler , pointing out where the key rests in the ignition and explaining how to turn it on and where the throttle and brakes are located . She's practically jumping out of her skin the whole time , raring to go , but she waits until I give the go – ahead to fire up the motor and give it a little gas , lurching forward .

I take the lead , steering toward a wide trail and watching in my mirror as Serena follows on her ATV . There are several trails in my territory wide enough to take the four – wheelers on , but I take her on a nice easy one to start with so she can get used to riding . As we advance deeper into the forest , I keep an eye on her in my mirror . The girl seems to be a natural she takes to riding the ATV like she's done it a million times before .

As we approach one of the territory borders on our first trail , I slow to a stop , cutting the engine . Serena picks up on my cue , pulling up beside me and hitting the brakes ,

turning the key in the ignition . " You sure you haven't done this before ? " I ask as I yank the bandana down from my mouth . Serena giggles , reaching up to pull her own bandana down and flashing me a bright smile . " Pretty sure . It's easy , though ! " " That trail was easy , " I admit . " Figured you should get the hang of it before we take on one that's more challenging . You up for it ? " " Definitely ! " she grins , reaching to turn the key and fire up the engine of her ATV again . I grab for her arm , chuckling . " Not so fast , Red . I stopped here for a reason . " 11 Serena looks up at me , equally itchy to keep going and curious as to what I have to say . I turn , gesturing to the treeline . " This is the border of the territory ,

" I point out . Even if you wander off one of the trails , you can tell where the borders are by natural markers , like the dropoff beyond this treeline or the stream on the opposite end of the territory . " She nods , eyes scanning the treeline . " Got it . " She reaches for the key again , clearly eager to continue on , so I pull up my bandana and fire up the engine of my ATV , pulling ahead . Serena follows suit , tailing me as I continue on down the trail . If she wants something more difficult , then I have another trail in mind that's sure to excite her . It takes some time to reach it , but when we near the border of Riverton , I veer off onto a narrower trail and watch in my mirror as Serena follows . This trail is bumpy and winding as compared to the last , but even as we start out onto it , Serena's whipping around tight corners like a pro , fearlessly cruising down sharp inclines at full speed . After a while , I'm checking on her in my mirror less and less , confident that she's got this as I navigate the trail .

As the trail leads to lower ground , the dirt underneath our tires starts to get looser and it's a bit muddy in spots from an overnight rainstorm a couple nights ago . There's one spot in particular where the mud looks particularly thick across the trail and I slow to carefully navigate around it , figuring Serena will follow suit . Of course , that wild redhead either misses or ignores my cue , plowing right into the mud . I hit the brakes , watching over my shoulder as her ATV grinds to a halt , tires spinning and unable to find traction . Great . I heave a sigh , cutting the engine of my own ATV and climbing off , watching as Serena keeps trying to hit the throttle , digging the tires of her four – wheeler deeper into the mud .

" Stop ! " I call out , waving an arm while I the strap of the helmet with the unsnap other , pulling it off overhead . I leave it on the seat of my ATV and yank my bandana down to my neck , striding in Serena's direction as she keeps hitting the gas and digging herself into a deeper hole . " Serena ! " I call , cupping my hands around my mouth . She finally looks up at me , her shoulders slumping . I continue toward her as she pulls off her own helmet and tugs her bandana down , her lips drawn into a frown . " I didn't mean to ... " she starts . defensively , but I just shake my head , holding up a hand . "

Hey , it happens . No big deal . Let's just get you un – stuck , huh ? " Serena sinks her teeth into her lower lip , nodding . I walk around the mud pit she's driven into , surveying the situation as I come up behind the ATV . She got it stuck pretty good- the tires are halfway sunk in . " Alright , " I exhale , my eyes returning to Serena's . " I'm gonna push you out . Give it a little gas , but not until I say so . " 33 She nods , dangling her helmet

off of one of the handlebars and placing her hands securely on them , looking over her shoulder and waiting for my signal . I step forward , placing my hands on the back of the ATV , rocking it forward a few times .

I look up at Serena , ready to give it a good shove , when she must take my eye contact for a signal to hit the gas – the engine revs , the tires spin , and sticky mud sprays All . Over . Me . I stumble back , gritting my teeth in frustration as I hear Serena draw a gasp . She cuts the engine of the ATV and hops off quickly , bounding toward me . ” Oh my gosh , I’m so sorry ! ” ” Thought I told you to wait to hit the gas until I said so , ” I grumble , wiping a clod my cheek . of dirt from : Serena stares at me , her own cheeks reddening . ” I ... ” Shit , I should be more gentle with her . It clearly wasn’t intentional ; I don’t want to make her feel like ... I freeze as I hear her burst into laughter , watching as she clutches her stomach and bends at the waist . Unbelievable . ” What’s so funny ? ” I demand , folding my arms across my chest . ” I’m sorry , ” she gasps , looking up at me , her eyes trailing over my form . ” You just look so ... you’re covered ! “

I furrow my brow as she loses herself in another fit of giggles . ” It’s not funny , ” I grumble , glancing down at my mud – flecked clothing , ” It’s a little funny , ” she teases , advancing toward me . It’s hard to be mad when she’s smiling like that , and by the time she’s right in front of me and I’m breathing in her light vanilla and tangerine scent , my frustration over the situation has completely dissipated , replaced with raw , lustful attraction . Her chest bounces as she giggles softly , pulling one of her sleeves down over her hand . ” Here , ” she laughs , wiping the mud from my face with the end of her sleeve . Serena’s eyes roam my face as she cleans me up , but mine are completely fixated on hers . When she’s finished , they flicker to lock with my gaze . ” That’s better , ” she breathes , and I’m not sure whether the hammering heartbeat I hear is hers or my own . ” Thanks , ” I rasp , my hands roaming to settle on her hips .

Her eyes drop to my lips and she licks her own , and I’m not sure if she means to or not but her body angles closer to mine , her breathing shallow . I lean toward her slowly , my intentions clear . I’m giving her one last chance to back out if she wants to . She has before , but this time ... she doesn’t . Mine . Serena’s eyes slide closed as I cover her mouth with my own , pleasurable sparks igniting as I press a kiss to her lips . At first it’s tentative , chaste , but as soon as her lips pout to return it I deepen the kiss , sweeping my tongue along the seam of her soft lips . She parts them to allow me entry , my tongue exploring her hot little mouth and stroking against her own . I wrap my arms around Serena , pulling her in , and she melts against me , mewling into my mouth as she returns my kiss with equal fervor .

Suddenly things kick up a notch and it’s frantic her arms snake around my neck , her chest presses against mine . One of her legs kicks up to my waist as I palm her ass , giving it a hard squeeze as she grinds herself against me . The taste of her lips is even better than I imagined- and trust me , I’ve spent a lot of time over the past few days imagining . The feeling of her body in my arms ? Euphoria . Our hands explore , our tongues tangle . A growl rumbles in my chest as her fingernails score the backs of my



shoulders through my shirt . My dick's hard , ready , and she's grinding her body against it like she's in heat , driving me fucking wild .

I'm ready to take her right here , right now . Claim what's mine . Serena drags my lower lip between her teeth as she pulls back , chest heaving as she stares at me with wide , lust – filled eyes . I can see the storm of conflict raging within them- I know she wants this just as badly as I do , yet for some reason , she's holding back . She won't let go . She slides her palms over my shoulders and down to my hard pecs , pushing away to put a few inches of space between our bodies . We just stare at one another wordlessly as we try to catch our breath , try to make sense of this inescapable pull between us forged by the mate bond . I start to drift toward her again to get another taste , but Serena takes a shaky step back , yanking her bandana back up over her nose and mouth .

" I'll , uh ... wait for you to say the word this time , " she stammers , backing away slowly . It takes a minute for me to even comprehend what the hell she's talking about- I feel like I'm intoxicated on Serena fucking Harper . I watch her amble back to the ATV , throwing a long leg over and settling onto the seat . The fog slowly starts to clear from my brain as I step forward , leaning over to grab onto the back of the four – wheeler . Serena fires up the engine and glances at me over her shoulder , waiting for my signal . This time , she hits the gas when I tell her to , and we're able to get the ATV unstuck . Though when it comes to the two of us , I feel like our wheels are still spinning .