

## Alpha's Rejected 41

### Chapter 41 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Sophie POV

It was chaos. That was the only word I would use to describe it. The room had clothes strewn everywhere and Luna Marian was being her usual patronizing self.

"Have you got your makeup on? It's difficult to tell" she said, peering at me.

I try not to roll my eyes. After all, she's going to be my mother In-law after today.

"I have light makeup on, I didn't think it needed to be caked on" I said calmly, turning towards my mother who was currently struggling with her own dress.

"You look lovely dear" my mother objected, finally in her little blue dress, her heels a plain white. She looked stunning, with her golden hair and blue eyes. It really suited her.

Amber was quiet and pensive in the corner of the room and I felt bad that I hadn't really had time to speak to her much today. I did, however, have a surprise for her and I rummaged through the closet, withdrawing a box which I produced for her with a flourish. She looked at me confused. "For you", I said softly, smiling at her.

She takes hold of the box with shaking hands and opens it, letting out a small gasp of shock. I watched her reach in and pull out the dress, a beautiful woodland green color that would go beautifully with her red hair.

"It's gorgeous" she says in wonder, as Luna Marian comes over to take a look, a displeased expression on her face.

"It's certainly lovely, but aren't you worried she'll upstage you" she exclaims, turning to me.

I shook my head. "I want Amber to look beautiful today. She'll only make me look lovely, I'm sure of it. Besides, as the bride, all eyes would be on me. I have nothing to worry about" I say firmly as Amber reaches over and gives me a hug, her eyes sparkling with happiness.

"Thankyou" she breathes, turning away and beginning to put the dress on. It's a lovely gown that gathers on one shoulder and gathers tightly at the bodice before flowing down to her ankles. It also fit perfectly, I noted with some relief, as I had to guess her size.

"You need to get into your dress dear" said Luna Marian.

To be fair, I was still standing in my lacy white underwear and bra, saving getting into my dress until the last possible moment.

Then Luna Marian glances at her watch. "I'm sorry" she exclaims a little wildly "but I have to go and start greeting the guests. There's a lot of Alpha and Luna's attending this wedding" she shrills.

Thank god. I wasn't sure how much more I could take of her company. I heave a big sigh of relief as she reaches over and hugs me, before darting out the door.

"Mother" I asked, "would you mind helping me?"

She smiles and helps me take the dress out of the closet. Amber watches, a broad smile on her face and I feel a fresh wave of guilt. How can she be so forgiving? So compassionate towards me and I didn't feel like I deserved it. I felt butterflies in my stomach. Any minute now and I would be walking down the aisle, towards my future husband. A husband who had forgiven me for the worst lies and transgressions. Another person who was more forgiving than I had expected them to be.

Amber POV

God Sophie was nervous. You could tell just by looking at her. I was so surprised when she handed me the new dress, having prepared myself to wear the terrible pink concoction she had me try on before. But we're becoming a bit closer now as sister's and I appreciate the gesture, loving the dress I was now wearing, which gathered at my shoulder and then my bodice and then flowed down to my ankles. The

color was a beautiful dark emerald woodland green that reminded me of the forest and it made my red hair stand out even more.

I watched in awe as mother helped Sophie into her dress, careful not to wrinkle it. The mermaid-style gown really suited Sophie and it showed off all her curves, not to mention her skin was glowing. I felt happy for her, but a small part of me was jealous and envious that she was marrying the love of her life, my ex-boyfriend to be exact, while I would be marrying a complete stranger. There would be no happy ending for me, but Sophie would get her happily ever after. I also hoped that Darius would take care of my sister and treat her right, despite the lies she had told him. From what I could gather, Sophie had actually come clean to him and Darius had wanted to marry her anyway!

The sounds of music can be heard in the house and mother looks at both of us, thrusting bouquets into our arms. "Hurry" she urges, and we hastily make our way downstairs, standing at the front door which mother opens.

"Goodluck" I whispered to Sophie, adjusting my heels slightly.

She hugs me. "You too" she sniffs.

"Don't cry, you'll ruin your makeup" I teased, and she let out a small giggle.

"Go, Amber, you're up" my mother hissed.

I began to walk down the aisle of seats on the grass, in time to the music, alone, all the way up to the archway of roses, where Darius stood watching me, going to the opposite side of him. I watched his eyes widen and turn to look, to see that Sophie was making her way down the aisle. That wasn't the only thing that caught my eye though. As I looked over at the guests, I noticed HIM and wondered what on earth he was doing here.

Darius POV

I stood there impatiently, waiting for this wedding to begin. The minister was standing there, waffling on as I pretended to listen. Amber was the first to make it out, and I watched the girl that I once thought I was in love with make her way down the aisle, looking absolutely stunning in a green dress that made

her red hair stand out, gleaming in the sunshine. She makes her way alone, looking determined and takes her place opposite me. I mouthed the words 'you look beautiful to her' and saw her give me a small nod and smile of acknowledgement.

I turned around and my eyes widened, my heart pounding wildly in my chest. There's Sophie, looking gorgeous in her white dress, holding onto her father's arm as he walks her down the aisle. I'd never seen her look so beautiful and, to my shock, I felt tears pricking the corners of my eyes. She was mine, I thought suddenly, possessively, as she stopped to give her father a peck on the cheek, before joining us at the altar, so to speak, beneath the archway of roses. I move, to stand beside her, both of us facing the minister, who promptly clears his throat.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today, to witness the union between Darius and Sophie." The minister began in a monotone. I barely listened to his words, too busy staring down at the gorgeous creature besides me, feeling all my breath catch in my chest. I took hold of her hand, noticing that she was trembling, and squeezed it, trying to give her what little comfort I could. I'm rewarded with the most brilliant smile as a result. God, why was this taking so long? I was having trouble paying attention, thinking about Sophie and how our wedding night might go.

Thankfully, nobody objects to the union, although I suspect no one would have the nerve to with my mother glaring at all the guests, daring them to even try. Finally, I hear the word's I've been waiting for.

"You may now kiss the bride."

I gather Sophie gently to me as she tips her face upwards, leaning down and kissing her softly on her pale plush lips, feeling tingles run down my spine. She gives a little moan and my tongue darts inside her mouth, tasting her sweetness, caressing her tongue as the guests watch, feeling myself becoming aroused. She was so delicate, yet strong at the same time, her arms wrapping around my neck and not letting go.

I hear the sound of a throat clearing. "Ahem" says her father loudly, as we reluctantly pull apart "perhaps save that for your wedding night", he says rather pointedly as I grin sheepishly at him.

The guests all laugh while my mother looks like she wants to face palm herself, looking a tad embarrassed by my actions. I grin unrepentantly at her.

"Yes" my mother says calmly, getting up from her seat and addressing the guests, lots of them from other packs. "If you would like to go to the reception, it is further up the grounds in the large marquee. Help yourself to food and drinks and we will join you all shortly" she said pleasantly.

The guests take the hint and begin to get up from their seats, offering congratulations as they pass by. Amber, I notice, stays back where she is, her guard Thomas appearing from no where to stand directly behind her. I scowl at him. I wish there was something I could do to help Amber, but her father was a real piece of work and wouldn't listen to reason. Add the fact my parents disliked her and my hands were tied. Which was a real shame, because she deserved so much better than being treated like this. I really hope that she marries a nice man, but considering her father, even that's not likely. Her father is such a bastard.

"Sophie" exclaims my mother, cooing, "that was a lovely wedding and you look beautiful, my dear."

My father nodded. Her mother and father, I notice with a frown, are standing apart from one another, as though not wanting to be near each other at all.

" Thank you" Sophie says in a quiet voice, holding onto my hand for dear life, "but is there any chance we can have some privacy?" she asks, "we'll join you all at the reception in just a minute."

My mother gives a nod, her eyes sparkling and takes hold of Clarissa's hand, tugging her with her. My father falls into step with Beta Mathew and begins to walk towards the reception slowly.

Amber goes to walk away but stops and hugs Sophie profusely, first and then me. "Congratulations" she whispers, blinking back tears "I'm happy for you both."

God, I feel like a right bastard.

She walks away, her guard following behind in her footsteps.

Sophie and I looked at each other. She lets out a long exhale. "Thank god, I just needed a minute to breathe" she says.

I lean down and capture her lips again, one arm snaking around her waist. She falls against me and I grip her tightly, kissing those sweet lips of hers as though I'm drowning. Her arms go around my neck again and she moans, giving me access to her mouth, which I quickly take, my tongue touching hers and caressing it. God, she tastes so delicious, like honey. I never want to let her go, but I do, reluctantly pulling back.

She looks like she's slightly dazed, touching her lips with a trembling hand, her eyes wide. "Darius I" she begins, and I quickly put up a hand.

"Today is our day, let's not ruin it with regrets", I tell her quietly and she stops, giving me a nod. "You look beautiful, by the way. Like a goddess."

"Thank you."

She gives a small squeal as I bend down and lift her into my arms, wriggling slightly and causing my cock to switch as a result. I inhale sharply. "Don't test me", I growl, and she stops.

"You don't have to carry me" she protests, laughing.

"Oh I do" I told her, "and if you think this is bad, just wait until tonight when we're on our honeymoon."

She looks nervous now. It's adorable.

Chapter 42 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Rowan POV

As the Alpha of my pack, it was my duty to attend the wedding of Sophie Henderson. Part of me didn't want to, but another, much bigger part did. Because I knew instinctively that her sister Amber, my mate, would be attending and I desperately wanted to clap eyes on her again.

"Have a good time" chuckled my Beta as I glared at him.

He knows how much I despise weddings. Most people thought they were cute, but I tended to view it like one would view a hanging noose. With repulsion and fear. Marriage meant you were tied to each other for life, but so did marking your mate. I didn't understand the need for a female to have a dream wedding. Why not just mark each other and be done with it? Marriage was just a piece of paper, after all, wasn't it?

"You could always come as well" I growl at my Beta Laurence, who holds his hands up in surrender and shakes his head adamantly.

"No way, you're on your own for this one" he laughed, "there'll be plenty of single desperate females to fawn all over you" he teased as I shuddered at the thought of it.

He passes me the gift. I have no idea what it is, nor do I care. It was polite to give a gift to the wedding couple and Laurence had organized it, so whatever it was would be perfectly respectable. I had no doubts about that.

"You'll ensure that the pack is taken care of?" I checked. " Don't forget there have been a few sightings of rogues near the territory."

He nods, looking grim. "Of course. You have nothing to worry about, other than getting to the wedding. I know what to do, don't stress."

I sigh and hold the present carefully in my hands, walking out of the study and out the front door, where my baby, a red Ferrari, is waiting. It wasn't exactly something that blended in, but I loved this car and I wanted to drive it.

I hopped in and started the engine, drumming my fingertips on the steering wheel as the stereo came on loudly.

"I'll see you when you get back" yells Laurence over the music.

I gave him a small wave and then pulled out, going along the back paths until I finally reached the main road, heading towards the next pack and to my mate.

I didn't know how to feel about seeing my mate again. I knew the mate bond would pull me in, make me drawn to her and no other women at the ceremony. Would she recognize me? We had only ever seen each other at the bookstore and for a few minutes. I suspected she still hadn't realized we were mates. But would she feel the pull as strongly as I did, when she had no wolf? Others would despise her for being undesirable, but not I. No, my hesitance was because of something else. The idea of hurting her, because I was afraid of commitment, or being too possessive of her, was always in the forefront of my mind. I didn't want her to hate me, and for some reason I was afraid she inevitably would. Not to mention I was older than she was.

I shake my head to clear my thoughts and focus on the drive, pulling in between other cars there for the same reason. Ignoring everyone around me, I hop out and make my way towards the pack house, where a woman and the man beside her are directing guests to their seats. This must be Luna Marian and Alpha John then, I thought to myself, shaking the man's hand. His grip is surprisingly strong and firm. "I'm Alpha John. Welcome to our pack" he says to me, his eyes twinkling.

I know he can tell that I'm an Alpha. We can sense each other's aura.

His wife is small and petite, with a large smile on her heavily made-up face. "Welcome, I'm Luna Marian" she says, also shaking my hand politely. She looks like a doll, with a dress on so tight, that she's having trouble actually moving in it. I pretended not to notice. Inwardly though, I rolled my eyes. Why would you not choose comfort over being uncomfortable like this? I didn't get it.

"I'm Alpha Rowan" I grunted out and watched them gasp in shock. Yes, I have quite a reputation. I'm known for being a coldhearted Alpha amongst the other packs. I guess it didn't help that what I did to Stacey had been spread around like gossip.

"Alpha Rowan", Luna Marian, says faintly, "how lovely of you to come to this happy occasion. It's my daughter Sophie who is getting married" she adds unnecessarily.

"Congratulations" I said gruffly. I hand her the gift and watched her place it on a table that is piled high with other presents from different packs.

"Thank you" she tells me, beaming. "if you go this way, the wedding will take place shortly."

She points to her right where there are chairs set up on the grass, an archway of roses at the end of them. I can see the minister standing there, muttering to himself, bible in hand. God, I hope this ceremony doesn't take long.

"Thanks" I murmur and leave them, finding myself a seat in the back, where I hope I won't be seen. Around me, the crowd of people begin to chatter amongst themselves, the Luna's looking around in interest and awe at all the decorations.

I cross my legs and fold my arms, the seats beside me are empty. Other pack members come past, glancing my way and then paling, moving further up in order to find a seat. Laurence would be highly amused by this, I thought to myself smugly. Shame the bastard had refused to come. I would have liked his company, annoying as it was. We could have talked about pack business to pass the time. Oh well. Never mind. I would have to deal with this on my own. It doesn't help though, that every other Alpha that I glance at seems to have a Luna on his arm, and I'm here, sitting without one, looking lonely.

It's a beautiful day outside. The sky is a stunning blue, with the sun shining down warmly on the crowd. There are white clouds lazily floating in the sky and the grass is a vivid and plush green, my shoes sinking into the ground. It was a perfect day for being outdoors and it made sense to me why they had put the ceremony outside. I was also impressed by the largeness of the pack house, which was slightly smaller than my own, but extremely luxurious looking, almost like a mansion. The garden beds outside were carefully tended to, with bright flowers as far as the eye could see. The Luna clearly took pride in taking care of the house and the outside grounds. It was nice to see that they maintained the house and garden, as not all packs did, and would often leave their pack members in poverty without helping them. This clearly, was not such a pack.

I heard the gentle sounds of music beginning. Instantly, the voices chattering stopped, people adjusting themselves in their chairs, everyone's gaze going towards the sound. The groom is standing there, fidgeting with his tie, his eyes widening in disbelief, staring at someone with a wistful expression on his face. I smelled her, before I saw her, the scent so intoxicating it overwhelmed my senses. I took a deep breath and felt the pull, my face turning sideways as she approached. I held back a gasp. She was gorgeous, like a goddess, her beautiful vibrant red hair cascading loosely down her shoulders, a bouquet clutched in her trembling hands. She wore a bright green dress that gathered on one shoulder and then gathered underneath her generous bosom and then flowed down to her ankles. She wore plain white heels underneath the dress and no jewelry of any kind. Not that she needed any. She was stunning, like something out of a fairytale. A princess. No wonder the groom was staring hard at her. I couldn't take my eyes off her as she walked in time to the music, between the pews of chairs, towards the archway of roses.

I wish she would look at me, but her concentration is on the archway and the groom, who gives her a small smile as she finishes her descent, Amber steps to the side, her face going towards where no doubt her sister will appear. For a moment, I see her eyes widen as she sees me in the crowd, before going back to her sister who is now approaching down the aisle. Everyone's eyes are on Sophie and the beautiful dress she is wearing, except for mine. My wolf is close to the surface, wanting to close the gap, wanting me to kiss her in front of the whole crowd and declare her as Luna while I wrestle with him. Now is not the time or place for it, but he doesn't care, pouting that I'm ignoring his wishes.

"We are gathered here today to witness the union between Sophie and Darius" began the minister in a monotone. I barely hear a word he's saying. Instead, I'm entranced by the sunlight on Amber's hair which makes it gleam in the light, the way her head moves as she listens to the ceremony, the smoothness and creaminess of her pale skin. The greenness of her eyes as they sparkle with humor and love. Even the way she moved her feet slightly in discomfort was a marvel to watch. It was like I couldn't tear my eyes away from my mate. She was pure, innocent, and I was a cold-hearted bastard, I thought to myself, forcing myself to stay in my seat as the ceremony seemed to drag on and on.

The ceremony was finally over and I blinked in shock, as the crowd began to cheer and people filed past the bride and groom offering their congratulations. My eyes flit to Amber who is laughing and crying, hugging her sister and the groom, I note with jealousy. The crowd begins to move towards the marquee set up on the grounds, where the reception is no doubt being held. I take a deep breath, glad to be in back and force myself to stand upright, filing past along with the rest of the crowd. I mumble "congratulations" to the bride and groom. Amber is busy speaking with her parents now. Then I see her parents and Amber take off towards the marquee, some strange man tailing my mate. I frown. Is he a guard of some sort? Why did she need a guard? Was she in some sort of danger? Then I remember the burning feeling I felt in my back that time and stiffened. She had been hurt and I had failed to realize it! Was this the reason for her being guarded?

My wolf is going berserk, needing to be close to Amber. He wants to tear the guard from limb to limb and it's a struggle to force him down into the depths of my mind, before he takes control. I walk to the marquee somewhat dazed, walking past Amber's parents who are apparently arguing about something.

"I don't understand why you can't be more compassionate about Amber" her mother is saying, twisting some pearls in her hands.

"Woman, do not push me on this day of all days" snarls the man, Amber's father and the Beta of the pack.

I hesitate. Should I interrupt them? Where was Amber? My desire to find Amber overruns any other decision and before I know it, I'm ducking into the marquee and locating my table. I sit down, glad to see that I'm sitting with another Alpha who looks bored and is busy drinking. He doesn't look like he wants to socialize, which is fine by me. Then I spot her and my heart skips a beat. Amber. She's sitting at a table with the guard, looking uncomfortable, a tear trailing down her cheek. I prepared myself to stand up and go to her, when her parents slipped in and sat down next to her, still arguing loudly. Great. Then the bride and groom come inside and the crowd begins to roar as I sigh. I would have to wait for my chance to talk to my mate and, I thought grimly, to her parents as well. It was time to take my mate home with me.

#### Chapter 43 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

##### Rowan POV

I watched the table like a hawk, waiting for the right moment. Sophie and Darius, the newlyweds, came inside the marquee amid a chorus of cheers, Luna Marian and Alpha John sitting beside them at Amber's table. I saw the look she gave Amber, a disgusted look, like she was repulsed at the fact that they were sitting at the same table. I expected a speech of some sort, but instead caterers began to serve food to everyone. My stomach growled and I dug in, losing sight of the table for a few minutes. It seemed like ages, but then the first dance began and everyone began to file towards the dance floor, except for Amber and, strangely enough, her parents, who were watching their other daughter proudly.

I got up and adjusted my tux, feeling somewhat awkward in the fancy clothes. Amber looked up as I approached the table, her eyes widening as she spotted me, before she bit her lip and looked away, blushing profusely. So the mate bond was having some sort of affect on her, I thought a bit smugly. Her father, Beta Mathew, looked at me thoughtfully.

"Is there something we can do for you?" he asked me, a little harshly.

His wife looked a bit embarrassed. From the smell of it, the man had gotten his hands on a few alcoholic drinks already.

I gestured towards Amber. "I was wondering if I might have the honor of a dance with your beautiful daughter?" I asked evenly, staring the man down.

He looks a bit more cheerful now. "Of course" he says with an exhale, turning towards a reluctant-looking Amber, "go and dance with this man dear. Remember your deal" he added meaningfully.

I wonder what the Beta means by that. It almost sounds like a threat or a warning of some sort.

Amber stands up and looks at me, her green eyes shimmering as she comes around the table. I hold out my hand and she takes it. I can feel her body trembling, but sparks are flying up my arm and my wolf is purring just being able to touch her.

"You look beautiful" I told her sincerely, giving her a gentle smile as we walked to the dance floor.

"Thank you" she mumbles shyly.

We stop and she puts a hand on my shoulder, as I put one on her waist, both of us gently swaying back and forth in time to the romantic music. It's heaven. Pure bliss. There's no other way to describe it. Her skin is so soft and smooth, her lips are curled in a smile, begging to be kissed. It's all I can do to keep my hands to myself, feeling myself growing warm as we dance, her gorgeous dress making her stunning eyes stand right out.

"I missed you" I blurt out feeling like an idiot. "I mean, the bookstore", I added awkwardly.

"I don't work there anymore" she says quietly, looking up at me with a sigh "that's why you haven't seen me."

"What have you been up to then? School must be busy?"

She shakes her head, looking regretful. "I wouldn't know" she murmurs, "I haven't been, in weeks."

She glances over her shoulder and I follow her gaze. Her father is in a deep discussion with a man that looks her age and she scowls. "I bet that's another one" she mutters and I frown.

"Another one?" I asked gently, prodding, both our bodies still moving in sync with each other as I twirled her around, making her laugh.

"Another man that my father probably wants me to marry" she says honestly with a shrug of her shoulders.

My wolf grows loudly in my mind. The thought of another man so much as touching her has him riled up to the point of going berserk. I have to calm him down in my mind, before he takes control and does something stupid.

"I take it you would rather not..." I trailed off as the music stopped. She gives me a sheepish smile and steps back, rubbing her hands together to ward off the sudden chill in the air.

"Thank you for the dance" she says wistfully. "I really enjoyed it."

I watch with a sigh as she makes her way back to the table. Her father glances up at me and then stands up, weaving through the crowd to meet me. His wife follows behind, looking thoroughly put out and miserable to boot. I see the guard is sitting beside Amber who is watching the crowd, her eyes focussing on the bride and groom.

"Beta Mathew" I say calmly as he stops in front of me, a broad grin on his face. "Is there something you want?"

"I think we should have this discussion in private, Alpha Rowan. Don't you?"

I incline my head and then gesture for him to lead the way.

We walked, silently, the three of us, his wife strangely silent and pale, out of the marquee, several guests giving us interested glances, onto the grounds and towards a house, a large one, near the outskirts of the pack. It was a large mansion that screamed luxury and wealth. But it was also cold. There was no other way to describe it.

Beta Mathew scrambled in his pockets, whistling slightly under his breath. He finally produced a key and unlocked the door. "Follow me" he said, slurring his words slightly.

I stepped back and allowed the wife, Clarissa, I believed her name was, to go before me, following politely behind her as her husband made his way directly towards a room at the back of the house, a study no less, I noted as I stepped forward from the doorway.

Already, Beta Mathew was sitting behind his desk, a smug look on his face, while his wife stood next to him, wringing her hands nervously. She would not meet my eyes. I frowned at both of them and sat, opposite him, in one of the armchairs provided, trying to look relaxed and calm.

"So", begins Beta Mathew with a wicked grin "it looks like you've taken a shine to my daughter Amber Alpha Rowan. I saw the way you were looking at her. You want her, I can tell" he said, with an air of satisfaction.

Why was I not surprised by this conversation? I had been planning to approach the man anyway, but he'd just made that a million times easier by approaching me first. For now, I will play along.

"She's a person, not a possession" I growled, my wolf wanting to tear him to shreds.

He laughs. Actually has the audacity to laugh in my face. "She's less than a person" he scoffs, "she's useless. You know that she's an undesirable, don't you? Has no wolf to speak of."

My hands flex as I try not to imagine wrapping them around his neck. Just because she was an undesirable, didn't mean she was any less of a person.

"Mathew" scolds his wife, her voice hushed, a worried look on her face "don't talk about our daughter like that."

He stiffens and glares at his wife. "It happens to be the truth" he says hotly, "and you would rather I told the truth now, wouldn't you Clarissa," he snarls.

Their marriage was definitely not a marriage of paradise, I thought idly, watching both of them. If anything, the wife looked afraid of him. It made me wonder if he hurt her, which raised my ire even further. A man should never lay hands on a woman, ever. It was one of my firm beliefs and something everyone in my pack adhered to. I had no patience for abusers in my pack, they were banished without fail if I found out someone was beating their wife behind closed doors.

"Yes" murmurs his wife, letting out an exhale and looking away "my apologies for speaking out of turn" she finishes.

Beta Mathew sits back in his chair and puts his hands together. "Listen here, mate, there is something I want to ask you, but it comes at a cost. My daughter Amber is in need of a husband and you might just be the one."

I'm suspicious and disgusted at the way he's treating his daughter. The man wants something from me, that I can tell. His wife bites her lip and just shakes her head sadly.

"Shouldn't it be up to your daughter who she marries?"

"No. It's either she marries or ends up on the streets" he says coldly. "I don't want an undesirable in my house any longer than I have to."

"What is it you want then? What do you want from me, in order for her hand in marriage?" I asked stiffly, leaning forward and piercing his eyes with mine.

He looks triumphant now, turning to his wife excitedly. "I told you he wanted her" he crows, "didn't I Clarissa?"

She glares back at him.

"Money" he tells me simply, "in exchange for my daughter's hand."

That was odd. They had their own company and plenty of wealth. Why would they want more?

I resolved to get my Beta Laurence to look into their finances once I'm back home. Maybe there is something happening within their company they don't want people to know about.

"Mathew" begs the wife, "you don't have to do this. Please, Amber is our daughter" she says, sniffing.

He turns on her and she recoils " Do I need to teach you another lesson? Or are you going to keep your stupid mouth shut" he demands.

"Enough of that" I boomed out loud and he turned back towards me, startled "I won't have you abusing your wife in front of me, is that clear", I demanded, letting my Alpha tone flow through.

He gulps and nods. His wife looked at me with a grateful expression on her pretty face. She mouths the words 'thank you' from behind him where her husband can't see her.

I slammed my hands on the desk, scaring the man out of his wits. He no longer looks as smug as he did a second ago, instead he's looking uncertain and a bit frightened. Good. I was reminding him that while he might be a Beta, I was an Alpha and I was in charge.

"How much money" I said snidely, "how much money for you to agree to marry your daughter to me?"

He swallows. "A billion", he says evasively, "minimum."

I try not to look incredulous. A billion dollars was a lot of money, but it was more than easy enough for me to deal with. It was a drop in the ocean compared to how much my company made in a year. It was just ludicrous the amount they were wanting. It angered me that he didn't even care about his daughter's feelings on the matter.

"A billion dollars" I repeated softly, dangerously "did I hear you right?"

His eyes began to gleam with greed. "You heard me. A billion dollars or I give her to the next person asking for her, and I don't care if they are nice to her or not", he threatens. "I don't even care that you might beat her, I just want her gone and that's the price I'm asking for her."

God, how I wish I could kill this man in front of me right now, but it was not a good idea to kill someone in someone else's pack. It would cause all sorts of trouble for my own. His wife looked embarrassed still, as well as a little teary.

I have no choice but to concede, or let someone else have my mate. Something neither I nor my wolf are about to let happen.

"A billion dollars, but I want this all in writing" I demanded quickly, "so that you can't demand anymore. I also want her to marry me tomorrow, so make it happen" I hissed, standing up. "I'll come back for my bride in the evening, along with the money."

"You've made an excellent decision" Beta Mathew declared, standing up and shaking my hand. "I hope you enjoy your purchase" he, slurred.

I fought the urge to punch him directly in the face and instead stare at him seething, before turning around and stomping out the front door. My wolf was ecstatic at the thought of marrying Amber, but I knew that my mate was going to hate me for doing this to her, but it had to be done. Maybe, in time, if I was lucky, she might forgive me for this. But I highly doubted it.

Chapter 44 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Clarissa POV

Mathew sat back down and leaned back in his chair, giving a low whistle as Alpha Rowan stormed from the room, looking extremely pleased with himself. "How do you like that then" he murmured beneath his breath, "I got us a billion dollars for Amber. Probably could have gotten more if I had asked" he said with a shake of his head. "The man seems to be taken with her. I don't know why, but it's worked out well for us, hasn't it?"

I try not to look sickened even though my stomach is churning. I can't believe just how disgusting this man is, how horrible. He would give Amber to the highest bidder and there was nothing I could do to stop him. Not unless I wanted to get beaten once again, that was.

"You really want to do this to her" I tried anyway, despite myself, "give her up as though she means nothing to us?"

He laughs, the sound filling the otherwise silent room. "Of course I do. I can't stand that we are affiliated with having an undesirable child as a daughter and you should feel the same. I have no clue where she got that hideous red hair from, but I don't like it and I hate that she doesn't resemble me or you in any way. She's better off anyway, unless you want her on the street?" he threatened.

Of course, I didn't want her on the street, but he had also left out an important piece of information, I realized, staring at him.

"You didn't tell him that she's pregnant" I said lightly. He might not want her if he finds out."

He curls his lips back in a sneer. "He's not going to find out, not until it's too late and the stupid bastard has married her", he says with a scoff and a hard look in his eyes, "and you better not even think about telling him". He says, his eyes staring into mine.

I tried not to give him the satisfaction of seeing me shudder at that warning. I know full well what he's capable of and how much he hurt me every time I spoke up or disobeyed him. My only consolation was that he had never lifted a finger or a hand to the girls when they were younger. Now, though, he didn't hesitate to take his anger out on poor Amber who didn't deserve it.

If only I had a friend or family member to run to, but Mathew had made sure they would never speak to me again and they were just as toxic as him. He'd cut me off from friendships slowly until I was only friends with the Luna and Alpha. It was almost like he had planned the whole thing so that I could never leave him. With no where to run to, I was forced to endure the constant beatings and the emotional abuse he dumped on me, trying to keep the girls unaware of what was going on.

"You have to tell her Mathew, you can't blindside her. Especially since he wants the wedding to take place tomorrow" I said evenly, my chest heaving up and down in indignation.

He looks a little surprised at my annoyance at him. "Of course I'm going to tell her, she needs to know not to warn him about her pregnancy", he adds, and I deflate a little, my shoulders slumping in resignation. He'd thought of everything. His eyes glazed over and I sensed that he must be mind-linking Thomas to bring Amber to the study. His eyes become clear again and he looks at me thoughtfully. "For

heaven's sake will you sit down" he says irritably, "it's annoying having you hovering over my shoulder like that. Geez" he exhales.

I silently did as he asked, sitting in an armchair, leaning back and crossing my ankles. I knew the reception was still going on and part of me longed to go back and to visit Sophie again, before she and Darius left for their honeymoon. From the looks of things, they no longer despised each other and I had high hopes the honeymoon would go well and that there might be forthcoming news of another pregnancy and more grandchildren to love and adore. I was overjoyed with Amber's pregnancy, although I had to work hard not to show it. I couldn't wait to see what her baby would look like, whether it would resemble Darius, who still didn't know and fingers crossed, never would, or if the child would resemble Amber with her fiery red hair and bright vivid green emerald eyes. Either way, the child was sure to be adorable and I desperately wanted to be able to hold them in my arms. Mathew didn't know it, but I'd put myself on birth control after seeing how he reacted to Amber and the steadily rising hatred he had for her. If he could treat his daughter like that, there was no way of knowing how he would have reacted if I'd given birth to another redhead. He most likely would have had me killed or banished from the pack. As it was, I spent each day worrying, hoping he wouldn't find the pills and demand an explanation.

"What the hell is taking so long" growled Mathew, looking irritated.

"It's a little bit of a distance from the reception and she was wearing heels" I pointed out, "which means she's walking slowly Mathew, so just give her a minute to get here."

Not to mention, Amber was probably pissed at being dragged away from the reception and her sister. She and Sophie seemed to finally be forming a relationship and a bond with each other. I was pleased to see. I had always wanted them to be close but Mathew's interference had ensured they had grown up despising each other's existence instead. A shame. But now, they were actually hugging each other and talking civilly and I couldn't be more proud of them.

Finally, after several awkward minutes of silence and Mathew steadily getting more and more annoyed, a dangerous thing since he was also slightly drunk and therefore more aggressive, Amber came walking in with Thomas gripping her gently around the arm as he escorted her. I gave her a small smile. I would have liked to hug her but Mathew would have gotten angry at the show of affection and instead I was forced to remain sitting as a result. Amber looked confused as well as apprehensive as she glanced at her father, probably noticing that he was drunk. She wrinkled her nose and the smell of alcohol wafted off of him and into the room.

"You wanted to see me" Amber said finally as Thomas let go of her arm and stood back in the doorway, with his arms folded.

"You can go Thomas, this is a private discussion" barked Mathew at the man, who merely nodded in acknowledgment and then left, silently as we all watched him go.

"Have a seat dear" I said timidly and Amber glanced at me, then shook her head, looking determined.

"Not until you tell me what this is about" she says heatedly, glaring down at her father.

God, please don't make him angry, I think to myself, because if she does he'll take it out on me.

Her father glares back at her. "Sit down" he growls and sulkily she does, crossing her ankles, looking stunning in that wonderful emerald woodland green dress of hers that Sophie purchased as a surprise.

"Now then, there's no easy way to say this but it looks like you'll be getting married tomorrow" Mathew says decisively, his eyes glinting with humour.

Amber's jaw drops open and she looks stunned, all the blood draining from her face. "Married" she whispers shakily, her whole body trembling "married to who?"

Mathew sneers at her. "Alpha Rowan aka the Beastly or Monstrous Alpha as he's known has asked for your hand in marriage and we have given it to him."

Amber looks slightly panicked now. "I've heard stories about the monstrous alpha" she protests weakly. " He banished his own girlfriend from his pack and killed the man she slept with. You can't possibly have me marry him, please, father, not him." she pleads, slightly hysterical.

I watched her with a pang of sympathy. I wish I could tell her that the Alpha could not possibly be any worse than her father, that in fact he seemed to actually be a kind man, but I dared not speak those words in front of Mathew. All I can do is hope that she makes a go at her marriage and that my instincts about Alpha Rowan are right. I had a feeling he would treat her right. Perhaps even grow to love her. If

she at least gave him a chance. It couldn't be any worse than staying here, with her rough and despicable father.

Mathew chuckles drily. "I can do this. Do you want to end up on the streets, Amber? Because that is your option. Get married tomorrow to the beastly alpha, or go and live on the streets, pregnant and alone."

Amber's head whips up and she stares at her father, biting her lip. "Did you tell him about the pregnancy?" she asks, shaking violently.

Mathew shakes his head. "No" he barks, "and you are not to tell him either, Not until the wedding has taken place and he can't annul it. Which means," he adds with a guffaw, "you're going to have to sleep with him as well."

Do not be sick, do not be sick, I chanted the words in my mind as I stared at Amber's white face. She looked like she was about to vomit any second now. My own stomach was nauseated by his words as well.

"You want me to lie to him" breathes Amber, and then realization strikes her, her eyes accusing as she looks at me and not her father.

"What did he give you" she says bluntly and to the point, "for me. What did he offer you?"

I looked away, unable to answer her. Mathew, on the other hand, has no such compunctions. "A billion dollars" he says triumphantly, "he's giving us a billion dollars for your hand in marriage."

If possible, Amber goes even whiter. "Why would you need so much money" she says in a strangled voice, "you are wealthy enough as it is."

"You can never have too much money" Mathew assured her smugly, a broad grin on his face. " Trust me, it's not like your husband to be does not have plenty of it. He's richer than us, he can afford to give us a billion dollars. Consider how lucky you are to be married to such wealth," he adds.

Amber gave a dry laugh. "I never cared about money. All I want is a man who loves me and cares for me and you've taken that dream away from me. For the sake of money, father. Are you happy with yourself?"

I glanced at her with sympathy in my face. How like me she sounded when I was younger with the exact same dream and instead I was forced to live a nightmare each and every day.

"I can't wait to be rid of you" Mathew says in reply, his lips curled back in an ugly sneer "now be gone. You are getting married tomorrow and that is final" he says, his eyes narrowing.

Amber stands up, her body shaking. "I'll marry this beastly alpha if that's what it takes to get away from you, father. I feel sorry for you, because you are not a happy man and you're full of nothing but hatred and bitterness that will eat away at you. I want more for my child and I will have it, and I will love my baby more than you have ever shown love towards me. You will never get to see your grandchild" promised him, "and I can only be glad of that fact."

"Leave" thunders Mathew and she does, glancing once over her shoulder, before she slams the door to the study closed.

"You leave as well" Mathew said tiredly. "You should go and check on Sophie and then pay the minister to come back tomorrow for Amber's wedding in the evening. Give him whatever he asks for. I don't care how much he wants, for such short notice. I'll come and join you shortly" he added, rifling through his desk drawers and producing a small bottle of bourbon, a smile on his face. I couldn't get out there fast enough, knowing he would get even drunker and that tonight would mean avoiding him and his 'advances' as best I could.

Chapter 45 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

I can't believe it. I'm in a state of shock. I knew that I would be getting married eventually, but for it to happen so soon! I drift back to the reception, feeling stunned. Sophie is the first to notice something is wrong. She pulls me to the side, speaking to me in a hushed whisper.

"What's wrong Amber? You're as pale as a sheet" she exclaimed.

"Mother and father just told me that Alpha Rowan, aka the beastly alpha, has asked for my hand in marriage" I said thickly, tears pricking my eyes "I'm going to be married tomorrow."

Sophie falls silent. "Maybe I can talk to father" she says a little desperately, "get him to see reason."

I shook my head at her "it's your wedding day. Father wants me to be married and I have no choice, unless I want to end up on the streets. I'll be okay Sophie, I'm tough, remember" I said lightly, but my words sounded hollow, even to me.

She looks undecided, but then Darius comes over and I give her a small smile. "Sophie, we need to leave for our honeymoon" he says quietly, glancing at me sheepishly.

"Congratulations to you both" I said, as Thomas came back, giving Sophie a hug first and then Darius. Darius holds me tightly, giving me a kiss on the cheek.

"I'm sorry about everything", Darius offers, but I laugh it off, shaking my head.

"You are both forgiven, now have fun. I hear Australia is beautiful". I tell them a little envious. "I'll see you when you get back."

Or at least I hope I would, it depended on the monstrous, beastly alpha if I was allowed visitors.

Darius leads Sophie away, Sophie glancing over her shoulder once, looking troubled. I maintain my composure, trying to signal strength and courage, but I know it doesn't fool her.

Thomas regards me silently. "I'm going to escort you to your room", he says quietly, "now that you've had a chance to say goodbye."

I thought about resisting, but what would be the point? Instead, I give a small nod and toss my hair over my shoulder.

"Fine" I said evenly, "lead the way, Thomas". I try not to sound bitter.

He raises an eyebrow but leads me out of the marquee which is slowly dispersing of guests, and back to the house, upstairs to my room and locks the door behind me.

I try not to cry but it all becomes too much and I sit on my bed, my head in my hands and let myself sob, feeling sorry for myself. Not only was I getting married, but it was tomorrow evening. Hardly any time at all to get used to the idea. My whole body trembled in fear.

Would he be kind to me or was my life going to be miserable? I had hopes that maybe the beastly alpha was not as bad as the rumors or gossip suggested. But then, he also didn't know that I was pregnant, which meant that my father had deliberately misled him. Would the beastly alpha take out his rage on me? For not telling him before the wedding? I cursed my father for not telling the truth and putting me in this awful situation. No man should be tricked into caring for another's child. They should be given the choice.

Why, oh why, had the beastly alpha picked me? I was nothing special. I was an undesirable for heaven's sake. I had no wolf, so I couldn't help defend the pack in wolf form. I wasn't that pretty. My red hair was so bright it was like a fire hydrant and my green eyes were plain. I had a curvaceous figure rather than the-thin one which was so popular with shifter males. I was short as well, not tall like a super model. Compared to most shifter females, I consider myself to be pretty plain except for my hair. There had certainly been plenty of pretty single shifter women at the reception. Why hadn't he picked on one of those?

A knock sounds on the door. I frowned at it, wiping the tears from my eyes, knowing I must look a mess.

"Come in" I said a bit frostily. It can only be one of my parents.

Sure enough, my mother comes sailing in, looking at me apprehensively. I glared at her, wiping the smile off her face.

"I know this seems unfair" she begins tentatively, as the door slams shut behind her and is relocked, no doubt by Thomas.

"Unfair" I said hoarsely, trying to ignore the urge to scream at her "unfair is a bit of an understatement, don't you think? You guys sold me mother. There's no polite way to put it", I sneered.

She wrings her hands together. "I know it seems that way, but can't you think of this as a positive thing? At the very least it gets you out of the house" she says quietly as I stare.

"That is the only positive thing, I snapped, "because at least then I don't have to be around father anymore. I hate him, mother, and I despise you. You could have stopped this" I added, "could have prevented all this and instead you did what he wanted."

Her face drops. Her shoulders slump. When she speaks next, it's in a whisper, as she looks nervously around the room. "I tried" she whispered, "but he wouldn't listen to me. He never listens to me."

I stared at her incredulously. Was she telling the truth?

"Why are you here mother?" I asked gently.

She looks so defeated now. "I don't know. I guess I just wanted to tell you that I'm sorry for all of this, Amber. I really am. But to be honest, you are far better off away from your father. I met the Alpha and he seemed a lovely man. Kind, sincere. I think you will both get along nicely."

She swallows hard. "Your sister Sophie has left for her honeymoon and you're the only one left now. The wedding will take place tomorrow evening at around 5pm. I had to bribe the minister to come back."

I shudder at the thought of having to go through the ceremony.

"Mother, why is it that you are being so nice to me, when all you've done is show how much you dislike me? What's changed?"

She looks at me with remorse on her face. "I'm being nice, because I love you Amber. I know I haven't been the greatest at showing it. In fact, I've been a terrible mother, but there are reasons for that that you won't understand. I should never have been as horrible as I was to you. I'm sorry" she breathes.

It was a little late, I thought critically, for an apology, but she seemed sincere, even a little sad.

"All my life, you've hated me, or at least that's what it seemed. You always loved Sophie more and I know it's because she resembles you" I said firmly, holding up a hand when she opened her mouth, apparently trying to protest "am I wrong?"

She looks down at the ground. "You're not wrong" she whispers, her mouth trembling as she puts a hand to it, "Sophie does look like me, whereas you" she pauses, trailing off, "look like my own mother" she finishes in a deadpan voice.

Now I'm astounded. I hadn't known I resembled someone in the family and now mother was confessing I looked like her grandmother. "Why have you never told me this?"

My mother looks angry now. "Because I hate my mother for making me marry your father when we were teenagers. I got pregnant, like you Amber, and my parents were the same, old-fashioned, insisting I had to marry so that the family name would not be ruined. I begged them not to make me, but they would not be swayed and they did the same thing to me that your father is doing to you. They told me I could go live on the streets or marry. I chose marriage and I have to live with that, even if it's not exactly a marriage made in heaven", she says bitterly "I haven't spoken to my parents since then. In fact, last I heard they had disowned me for not doing every single thing they wanted."

Man, I was learning all sorts of things today. I thought a bit astounded.

"You haven't tried to reach out to them?" I asked quietly.

She shakes her head.

"Do you hate me for looking like her?"

My mother hesitates. "At first I did, but Amber, you are nothing like my mother" she tells me, determination on her face. " You are brave, you are kind, loving and caring. You're also extremely sassy and brash. Not to mention a hell of a fighter, even if you don't have a wolf. I don't care that you are an undesirable, because it's not the only part of you."

My lips quivered. I can't believe how much the floodgates are opening as tears trail down my cheeks. For the first time ever, I stepped forward, my eyes on hers, giving her a hug. She felt so warm as her arms slowly came around me, the smell of her perfume, a lovely honey and vanilla scent, wafted up my nostrils. She feels so nice and so comforting as I cry on her shoulder. She pats me awkwardly on the back.

"I'm so sorry honey, for everything I've put you through, but your father. . ." she trails off.

I understand. I hug her tightly, holding onto her for what she's worth.

A knock sounds on the door, startling us both as we pull apart. My father's voice comes through the door. "Clarissa, are you in there" he barks.

My mother gave an exasperated sigh. Father is slurring his words and it's clear he's had even more to drink since I saw him in the study.

"Yes I'm in here" she calls out briskly, looking apologetically at me.

"Well, hurry up" he growled, "I want to know whether you have got the minister on board. What are you doing in here anyway?" he adds, sounding highly fed up.

"I just wanted to talk to Amber for a minute" my mother called out. "I'll be out in a minute."

"Good" he snarls and then stomps off while mother adjusts her clothing and grimaces.

"I have to go, she says reluctantly, "but Amber, you got this. I have faith that you'll make the best of this marriage and that your husband is a nice man. Wear the green dress again. It looks perfect on you. It makes your hair stand out and it's lovely. At least you'll get your freedom back" she added, as I nodded quietly.

She knocks on the door and a minute later the key sounds in the lock, the door opening. I see a flash of Thomas's face before mother turns around in the doorway. To my shock, she tells me "I love you."

Then she disappears out the door, the key sounding in the lock as the door is shut behind her and locked again.

I sat on the bed, feeling a little overwhelmed and not sure whether to laugh or cry. I can't believe that mother just spoke to me so honestly. Not only that, but she told me she loved me. Tears trailed down my cheeks but I made no move to wipe them away. Instead, I let them drip down onto my clothes and onto my bedcovers. I can still smell mother's perfume in the room and feel the warmth of her hands and arms as she hugged me tightly to her. I wish I could talk to Sophie but she's gone now. Instead, I turn towards the mirror and narrow my eyes at my reflection. Mother was right. I needed to embrace this wedding and the freedom that would come with it. As she had stated, I got this. The beastly alpha was in for one hell of a surprise.

Chapter 46 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Stacey POV

I've been observing Rowan from a distance, careful not to step foot on his territory, at least for now. He didn't even sense I was there, but I suspected it was because he was busy with something else, or maybe I should say specifically someone else. I had heard the rumors but didn't want to believe them. I told myself it was impossible, that Rowan hadn't replaced me so quickly. But then, someone told me about her and all the pieces of the puzzle came together in my mind. I can't believe his audacity to replace me with someone like her. Someone who is an undesirable, no less. How dare he!

Well he wasn't going to get away with forgetting about me so quickly, I thought to myself smugly, as I eyed myself in the mirror. My hair was now golden with waves cascading down my back and my eyes had changed to a clear, bright blue colour. My skin was a golden honeytone and my figure was much taller, or at least that's how it appeared. My roommate, Celia, appeared, eyeing me critically.

"The glamour is working nicely" she commented with a frown and a cock of her head, "but I wish I'd had more time to perfect it."

I gave a short laugh. "It is perfect Celia. Geez, you spent how many hours on this?" I said, fidgeting with the necklace that held the spell. It was a simple necklace, consisting of a small golden locket in a heart shape. I wore it with my new dress, a beautiful pale blue dress that had spaghetti straps that tightened under my generous bosom and then flowed down to my ankles. My earrings were simple pale silver

studs and I had a silver clutch bag to bring the whole look together. No one looking at me, would question whether I belonged there. Not when there were so many guests as it were.

"I spent a few hours" Celia said evasively, before switching the subject. For some reason, it was a sore point for her to have to take so long perfecting spells. As a half witch, half shifter, she felt they should come more easily to her.

"What are you going to do when you see him?" she asked with curiosity as I picked up a small vial of perfume and sprayed myself with it. I placed it in the clutch bag, the vial of perfume still full.

"I don't know" I murmured, turning to her, her big green eyes full of concern and worry, "I just want to see him, Celia. Be near him and see what he's up to. I won't let slip that I'm her, or that I'm using glamour", I promised thickly.

She tossed her long brown hair over her shoulder, biting her lip "just remember that the spell runs out at midnight. Sort of like Cinderella" she told me firmly.

"I'll remember" I said. After all, Cinderella was my favorite fairy tale, so it was pretty difficult to forget the golden rule of changing back at midnight.

I picked up my clutch bag and gave her a peck on the cheek. Celia was such an awkward thing, no older than seventeen and in desperate need of a roommate when I met her. I suspected she had run away from home, but I didn't want to pry into her history or background. I was thankful she would even agree to perform spells for me. It hadn't been easy to convince her, but I'd managed to.

"Midnight" Celia repeated, watching me go.

"Midnight" I agreed, looking over my shoulder at her once more, before descending the stairs and going out to the car, a taxi specifically for shifters.

The driver eyed me appreciatively with a low whistle that I ignored. He wasn't bad looking, but he was nothing in comparison to him. To Rowan.

"Where to miss?" he asked cheerfully, as I slid into the passenger seat and buckled myself in.

"The Silver Wolves' Pack and if you could be quick about it," I said delicately.

He nodded, buckling himself in and starting the taxi, his eyes focussing on the road, thank goodness, although I caught him occasionally glancing at me and my long legs as well.

It was a bit of a long trip, but I didn't mind. It gave me time to think and to breathe. It had been so long since I had been near Rowan and I wondered if he smelt the same, if he had the same temperament as when I'd known him. I also wondered what she looked like, the rumors stating her hair was like fire, it was so bright and vivid.

I tap my fingers on the dashboard, as we pull into the pack territory, amongst a sea of cars. As I'd suspected, there was a sea of people milling around, making their way towards the ceremony and I blended in easily, sitting towards the back, my eyes scanning the place for a sign of him. I almost stopped breathing when he sat, almost right behind me, his scent drifting towards me. He smelt of apples and cinammon, something to do with the body spray he used. It was heavenly and made me reminisce about all the good times we had had. I wanted to turn around in my chair and say something, if only to hear his voice, but then the music started and all eyes were on the aisle, waiting for the bride and bridesmaids to make an appearance.

I was waiting to see the girl, the one that I had heard through the rumor mill, that Rowan was obsessed with. Not that the girl knew it, of course, he had kept himself out of sight, but I had heard how much he was falling for her and that it wouldn't be long until he claimed her. I couldn't have that. The girl, Amber, her name was, came out and I sucked in a breath. She was a lot lovelier than I had initially thought, her hair aflame in the sunlight, her green dress making her eyes pop out. She was stunning and I scowled angrily at her. Rowan, I noticed, miserably, couldn't keep his eyes off of her. In fact, even as the bride came down the aisle, his eyes stayed forward, gazing at Amber without noticing the bride at all.

I snuck glances at Rowan whenever I could, taking in his chiseled jaw, his heavily muscled body even underneath the tuxedo. God, he was gorgeous. It was like time had stood still for him. I was more than glad when the ceremony was finished and everyone started making their way towards the large marquee set up on the grounds. I joined in, at the back of the crowd, watching Rowan like a hawk, watching enviously as he sat down at a table and I was forced to sit at another one. Amber sat with what seemed to be her parents, at another table and Rowan watched, his eyes narrowed, his expression brooding as he stared at the girl. I can tell he wants her, his expression is easy to read. Bastard.

Then he danced with her! My heart was thudding painfully in my chest as I watched him touch her. Anyone could tell they had chemistry just by looking at them. I wanted so badly to go over there and rip her hair out of her head, drag her away kicking and screaming and instead, I was forced to sit at my table, smiling along with everyone else. I saw my chance when the parents approached him and followed, standing well behind, eavesdropping unashamedly as they shut the door in the study.

I missed the first bit, but then I began to hear some of the conversation and it stopped me, cold, in my tracks.

"Shouldn't it be up to your daughter who she marries?" Rowan's voice.

"No. It's either she marries or ends up on the streets", The Beta's voice presumably. "I don't want an undesirable in my house any longer than I have to."

Well, isn't he just a darling father?

"What is it you want then? What do you want from me, in order for her hand in marriage?" Rowan's voice was asking in an angry tone of voice.

"I told you he wanted her", The Beta's voice. "didn't I, Clarissa?"

Then even my mouth dropped when I heard what it was the beta wanted in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. A billion dollars! Jesus Christ that was a shit ton of money. I willed Rowan to tell the man to go to hell, that there was no way he would pay that, but he agreed! He actually agreed to pay the money for this bitch Amber's hand in marriage. I felt so incredibly hurt as I slunk away, quietly leaving and heading upstairs where I could find the girls room. According to the gossip mill, Amber's room was upstairs to the right. I thought I might have trouble finding it, but then I saw the lock on the door and the slit and knew it had to be hers. I knew she was now under guard until she got married and I grabbed hold of the lock, muttering the words that Celia had taught me.

"Ventilorl, ahandsha, metriel."

The lock glowed a bright yellow color and I glanced over my shoulder nervously but saw no one. I heaved a big sigh of relief as the lock unlocked itself and I pushed the door to the room open. I wished I

could have taken the time to view it properly, heck maybe even find her journal or something, but I didn't have time. Instead, I made myself walk over to the desk, grabbing a piece of paper and scribbling away on it. I knew Amber would be suspicious of a random gift, so I ensured that it was signed by a name that would make her more willing to accept it.

A present to make you feel better about your own upcoming nuptials. I wish I could be there for you.

Spray whenever you feel down for a pick me up! I hope you love it.

Lots of love

From your sister Sophie.

I dug around in my clutch bag and grabbed the vial of perfume, placing it on top of the note. Now all Amber had to do was look at it and use it. It had been spelled to remind Rowan of himself whenever he smelt it and, with luck, he would remember all the love he had for me and put off this ridiculous wedding. I hummed lightly under my breath as I calmly, quietly, left the room, remembering to relock the padlock, before heading downstairs. I arrived just in time to see Rowan storming off out of the beta's house, looking pissed off and more than a little angry. Had something gone sour? I should have kept eavesdropping, I thought to myself cursing, but then shrugged. It was no biggie. I managed to avoid bumping into anyone as I made my way back outside to the grounds.

I had completed my small mission. While I could have revealed myself to Rowan, it was highly likely that he would have made me leave the wedding ceremony. He wasn't quite ready to have me back yet, but I could be patient for a little longer. The perfume would work its magic, it just needed time. If this didn't call the wedding off, then I would have to start planning something far more sinister for the young girl. Something that would tear the two of them apart. I just needed to think of what it was. I grab my cellphone from my bag and call Celia.

"It's done" I say evenly when she answers "the perfume is in her room."

"All it takes is one spray and it will evoke a memory of you". she assures me "now what are you doing?"

"I'm coming back, there's nothing left for me to do. But what if this doesn't work? Then what should I do?"

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it" Celia said drily.

"Okay. See you soon."

I hung up and then called for a taxi, more than ready to go home. Part of me is full of glee. I wonder what memory the perfume will evoke in Rowan and just how strongly it will affect him.

Chapter 47 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

Sophie was gone and there was no one else I could express my misery to. I hoped, fervently, that she was having a nice honeymoon and that she and Darius were having a good time together, but another selfish part of me, wished she could be here for me and my own so-called wedding, to the beastly or monstrous alpha. My whole body was trembling in fear as I glanced over at the closet, seeing my green bridesmaid dress cleaned and pressed, ready for me to put on. I glared at it, wanting nothing more than to tear it to shreds and fling it in the bin and burn it to a crisp.

I put a shaking hand to my stomach, feeling fearful for my unborn child. "Don't worry little one, I'm going to take care of you" I whispered, feeling the tiniest swell of my stomach. It was too soon to be noticeable, but a month or so and my stomach was going to be a lot bigger and there would be no hiding the pregnancy. God, why couldn't my mother and father have been truthful to the Monstrous Alpha and told him I was pregnant? Then he wouldn't have wanted me and I would have been safe. I cursed them silently in my mind, my mother especially, blaming her for this whole fiasco.

A knock sounded on my door. "Amber, are you in there" came my mother's muffled voice as I scowled at the door.

"Yes" I said a little heatedly.

"Listen, I know you don't want to, but eventually you'll see this is for the best", mother whispers, "you'll see. Now are you getting ready? It won't be long until the ceremony begins."

I wanted to scream at her, rail about the injustice I was about to endure, but what good would it do? It wouldn't change what was about to happen. If anything, it would make my father angry and he would force me to dress whether I liked it or not. Or he would have me punished and I shuddered at the thought of being whipped again by him. Just the mere memory of it, was enough to make me sick to my stomach.

"I'm getting ready" I lied, glancing back over at my dress and floating towards it, as though I was in a nightmare or trapped in a bad dream, staring at it and willing it to disappear. No such luck though.

"Good, because your father is going to check on you shortly" warns my mother in a hushed voice.

Great, because that's the last thing I need. I clenched my hands into fists and sighed, grimacing at the door where mother stood. "I'm getting dressed so he'll have to wait a few minutes" I hissed.

"I'll tell him" she promises, and then I hear footsteps as she leaves, descending the stairs until I can't hear her anymore, even with my sensitive hearing.

I take a shower, letting the water cascade over me and relax me slightly. I'm quick though, aware that time is passing by quicker than I had anticipated. Clad in a towel with slightly damp hair, I walked back into the bedroom and grabbed hold of the dress. I shimmy back into it and grab some underwear, going braless as my breasts were tender. The dress skims my curves and flows down to my long ankles. I peer at my reflection and sigh. There are dark circles under my eyes and I do the best I can to hide them with makeup. If I was going to face the monstrous Alpha, then I was going to face him looking my absolute best, I thought to myself grimly.

I eyed myself critically, seeing how the dress enhanced my curves and my generous bosom. I swear, my breasts have gotten larger lately. The dress is tight underneath my breasts but not so tight that it hurts me. My skin seems to be glowing, even looking a little tanned from some of the time I have spent outdoors, especially yesterday. My hair is wavy and long, down to my bottom, and I wonder what I should do with it. Should I put it in a ponytail? A bun? Or leave it loose? I debated with myself internally. If I put it in a ponytail it would look like I hadn't made much effort, whereas a bun would be too severe for my face and make me look more serious and older. In the end, I brushed it, leaving it loose and wavy, preferring it that way.

Something catches my eye and I stop in my tracks, turning around slowly to look over at it. I frowned, puzzled as to why there was a perfume bottle in my bedroom. It was the first time I had seen it, but it looked like it was a gift of some sort. But who would have left me such a thing? I didn't tend to wear perfume, mainly because it was difficult to find ones I actually liked the smell of. I reached out a hand and grabbed hold of the perfume, seeing a note underneath it, written in scrolled writing.

A present to make you feel better about your own upcoming nuptials. I wish I could be there for you.

Spray whenever you feel down for a pick me up! I hope you love it.

Lots of love

From your sister Sophie.

This was unexpected. When had Sophie had time to swing past and leave me the present? It must have been sitting there for some time before I actually spotted it. What a shame! I never got a chance to thank her for it. I would have to remember to do it later or even send her a letter, letting her know all about what was happening. I peered at the small bottle with curiosity. The vial is a pale purple color and made of glass. It has a dropper inside and I unscrew the perfume carefully, sniffing at it. It smells like a rose mixed with honeysuckle, not my usual taste, but then it was a gift from my sister who had many different tastes to my own. Something about it seemed strange, like the scent was off a bit, but not being into perfume I guess I couldn't tell for sure.

thank you Sophie, I thought to myself a little forlorn as I stared at the dropper. It meant a lot to me that she had stopped by to leave me a little present and it had done a lot to make me feel much more cheerful. With a smile, I let a drop of the perfume fall onto my hand and blink. Was it my imagination or had the perfume glowed slightly before it had been absorbed into my skin? But when I peered at it closely, it wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary and I chalked it up to nerves about my upcoming wedding.

This time there was no knock on the bedroom door as I bent down to retrieve my shoes, instead just the sound of a key turning in the lock. My father sidled through, Thomas behind him. He looks me up and down with a sneer. "You look somewhat decent", he acknowledges with a frown, "but not like a bride should look like."

"Thank you so much father" I told him, sarcasm in my voice. "that means a lot coming from you. As for the dress, it's one of the nicer ones I have. Mother didn't exactly have time to go and get me a wedding dress" I added darkly.

My father scowls at me. "Don't give me an attitude, missy. I won't hesitate to whip you before the ceremony if it comes to that."

I just laughed. "You wouldn't dare, not unless you wanted to explain to Alpha Rowan, the monstrous Alpha, why you put your hands on his future wife and marked her skin. Do you think he would be pleased with you?"

My father stills. His face pales and I chuckle drily. For once, I had the upper hand.

Then the most overwhelming feeling of dizziness consumed me and I stumbled, Thomas reaching out his arms to steady me.

"Steady now" he murmured, gripping me gently and leading me to the bed, where I promptly sat down.

"Amber, are you alright" exclaims my mother from the doorway, her eyes wide when she sees me.

"She's fine" my father snaps "she's just putting it on."

"No I'm not" I said weakly " I do feel really dizzy."

My mother shakes her head. "It's most likely the pregnancy" she explains quietly, "it can make you dizzy and lightheaded at times. Do you think you can stand?" she asks.

I gave a firm nod, Thomas helping me back up and keeping a firm grip on my arm.

"I don't want you to fall" he explains kindly while my father snorts in the background.

"Can we hurry this up already" my father exclaims, looking pointedly at his watch. "the Alpha is bound to be here for her any minute."

My mother rolls her eyes and takes hold of my arm, Thomas letting go reluctantly as she glares at him. "Come with me Amber" she says, softly tugging me out of the room.

Every step my heart beat a little faster and my hands shook, feeling clammy all of a sudden. I felt numb, like I was watching from a distance as I walked next to mother, down the stairs and outside where the marquee still sat. "I thought we would just reuse this" my mother says evenly, our heels sinking into the grass as we walked. "the minister is inside waiting."

"Is he here yet?" I managed to stammer out.

My mother instantly knows who I am talking about. She gave me a kind smile. "Not yet. So you have some time to calm down before he gets here."

My father and Thomas are talking to each other in the background but mother ignores them, ushering me into the marquee.

"Your perfume" my mother murmurs as she walks me to the minister, who shakes her hand and looks at me curiously "is that new? I don't think I've come across that scent before."

"Sophie left it for me" I said softly, "as a gift."

"It's nice" my mother says as father stands right outside the marquee waiting impatiently for the groom to turn up "but a little odd at the same time", she says, sniffing. She shakes her head.

I shrug. I happened to like the smell, it was slowly growing on me.

"He's coming" my father yelled out over his shoulder. "better get yourself ready minister."

My mother squeezes my hand as I stare at the doorway of the marquee, my expression troubled. Would the monstrous alpha be as fearful as I imagined? Or was it all rumors?

My father reaches out to shake the guy's hand, before withdrawing into the marquee, a briefcase clutched securely in his hands. I stare at it.

"Is that. . ." I trailed off, still glancing uncertainly towards the entrance.

"The money we sold you for" my father abruptly said. "what else would it be?"

I fall silent, miserable to the depths of my soul. My hand unconsciously goes towards my stomach and mother yanks it away, chastising me with a look. "You might give it away if you're not careful", she admonishes.

I swallow hard and then see a man appear in the doorway, the sunlight flooding in, blinding me momentarily. I blink rapidly and then take his features in, my eyes widening when I see his face. I can't believe it. It's the man from the bookstore and the man that I danced with at the wedding. The one I'd had naughty dreams about after we first met and who caused me to have tingles every time I saw him. What was he doing here? Surely he could not be, I realized with dawning recognition, the Monstrous Alpha? Could he? I felt myself falling and darkness claim me.

Chapter 48 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Rowan POV

"Here's the cash you requested" Laurence said, pushing the briefcase over to me. I frowned at him and opened it, scowling at the vast amount of cash inside of it. The billion dollars that had been requested. It was nauseating to look at. Surprising that it fit inside a briefcase, but to be fair, I had only a million dollars inside of it. The rest had been transferred to that bastard, Beta Mathew's bank account.

"Are you sure you want to go through with this?" asked my own Beta, stretching out in the armchair and folding his arms as he gazed steadily at me with those big brown eyes of his.

"I don't really have a choice" I countered, "I've already paid the majority of the money and she is my mate, Laurence. I can't just abandon her to that family of hers. She'll end up married to someone else if I don't go through with it and she deserves better than that." She deserved better than to be with me, I thought to myself.

Laurence gave me a smug smile. "She deserves you, you know. If you stopped being so temperamental all the time, then people would think you were a nice person."

I glared at him. "Well I'm not", I said tetchily, "and maybe its good that she knows that. Then she won't be so disappointed in me."

Laurence gave me a dark look. "You are a great man, she'll come to realize that. If you just let her in a little, instead of putting your walls up all the time."

"Like I let in Stacey" I said, my voice heavy with sarcasm. "look how well that turned out. She cheated on me in this house for crying out loud."

I closed the briefcase as Laurence sighed heavily. "Stacey wasn't right for you. I saw that, your father saw that. You just didn't want to see it. But this girl, Amber, seems to be a really nice person. Sweet, even. Not the usual type of girl you would go for and that's a good thing. Besides, the mate bond isn't something to take lightly. You should cherish it," he added, a little forlorn.

I felt bad for him. I knew how badly Laurence wanted to find his own mate and had yet to find her. It was why he was always so happy to visit other packs on my behalf, in the hopes his mate might be there. But he was young still and had plenty of time.

I glanced down at my watch. It was almost time. "I have to go", I told Laurence. "Remember to keep a careful watch out for those rogues and make sure everything is ready for when I get back."

"Are you sure you want to do this? I mean, she might be expecting to share a room with you" he asks.

I gave him a dirty look. "She's being forced to marry me. I think the last thing she's going to want is to share a bed with me and I'm not about to put her in that situation." I could at least be a gentleman,

considering the strange situation I was in. Besides, it wasn't my nature to force a woman to do anything she didn't want to do and I certainly didn't condone it.

He shrugs. "Suit yourself" he mutters underneath his breath.

I grabbed the suitcase and headed out of the study, casting him one last searching look over my shoulder. Then it was onwards, stopping at my car. This one was a large SUV, built for comfort rather than style. I wanted my new bride to be comfortable in her seat and have plenty of room for her bags. I turned the stereo on and glanced up, seeing Laurence's face in the study window as he gave me a small smile and wave. I ignored him and pulled out of the driveway, going along the main roads towards the Silver Wolves' Pack, able to remember the route from memory alone. My mind drifted towards my mate and how she must be feeling.

I hoped that Amber was alright and not too distraught. I can't imagine being told that she was marrying me had gone down too well. I frowned suddenly as a thought came to me. I don't think I ever told her my name, not even when we were dancing. My heart sinks a little. That can only mean that she knows me by my reputation, something that is most likely frightening her to death. Way to go, Rowan, I thought to myself sourly, could you have been more of an idiot? She was going to hate me, I was certain of it. That made even my wolf a little sad, whining a little in my mind. It couldn't be helped though, this was the only way to make sure that she wasn't married off to another man, until I decided whether to fully accept her or not.

Even now, getting married, didn't mean that I wouldn't reject her. If she hated me or couldn't stand the sight of me, or demanded a rejection, there was every reason I was most likely to give it to her. As it was, I felt like a coward, marrying her in this way, instead of the traditional way. Her parents were a real piece of work, that was for sure. My hands clenched on the steering wheel as I remembered the smug look on Beta Mathew's face as he offered me his daughter in exchange for the billion dollars. It hadn't phased him at all that I'd been angry at him, as though he instinctively knew that I would give it to him. I must not have hidden my emotions properly when it came to dancing with Amber or he had sensed the attraction between us and used it to his advantage. How I wish I could strangle that man to death, but that would only anger the elders and incite a war, something that I did not want to do, for it would mean innocent lives would be lost. I had no doubt that I would win the war, but it would come at far too great a cost.

The Silver Wolf's Pack is up ahead and I pull in, my heart thudding wildly in my chest. This was it. The big moment. There was no coming back from what I was about to do. My wolf encouraged me to continue, eager to see our mate again. But my hands shook slightly as they gripped the briefcase, my eyes darting each and every direction as I began to walk, towards the large marquee at the back of the grounds. Pack members shot me a curious look, but no one tried to intervene. It was almost laughable,

the security they had. Sure, the patrol knew to expect me, but I would have expected more people to be on their guard. Especially other pack members. Then again, how many of them liked Beta Mathew?

Beta Mathew is standing outside the marquee, looking casual, his hands in his pockets. I struggled not to show my distaste for the man as I handed him the briefcase, a broad smile appearing on his face. He actually has the nerve to open it and check the money in front of me. "I received your transfer already" he purrs, "thank you for that. Just so you know, if you change your mind, there are no refunds if you decide you don't want her anymore" he says slyly.

Something sinister must have appeared on my face because he hurriedly shut the briefcase again and motioned towards the marquee. "She's just in there, waiting for you" he said thickly, holding tightly to the briefcase and waiting for me to go inside.

I push my way past him and go inside, making my way towards the figures in the back, seeing that her mother is with her. I breathe in deeply, smelling the weirdest scent in my life. It smells familiar to me though, like honeysuckle and roses mixed in, but it seems off somehow, like the two scents are not meant to be mixed in together. My eyes widen as the scent drifts towards me and my feet plant themselves on the ground, as a memory, unbidden, comes to me.

I'm coming home from a long day at work, and Stacey is standing by the front door, waiting for me, her arms folded across her chest, a wicked grin on her face. I'm tired, drained, wanting nothing more than to eat and go to bed, but she takes hold of my arm and leans up, kissing me on the lips passionately and I respond, kissing her back roughly, gripping her tightly to me. I feel tingles running down my arms.

"Turn around" she murmurs and I hesitate, looking deep into her eyes and then sighing, turning so that my back is faced towards her. I trusted her completely, enough to put myself in such a vulnerable position.

I felt a scrap of fabric against my face, blinding me. Stacey's hands turn me back towards the front door and her smooth hand grabs hold of mine, squeezing them. I can smell her perfume, feel her hands on mine. My senses are on overload.

"Follow me" she said excitedly, leading me inside the pack house and towards the back. Judging by the footsteps, she's aiming for the kitchen.

I wonder what on earth she is doing. But she says nothing, making me sit down at the table. I can smell her perfume as she leans over, a sickly sweet overpowering scent that seems to overwhelm the room a little bit. I sense her moving around the table and wait, the blindfold still over my eyes.

"You can take it off now" she whispers from behind me and I rip the blindfold off in one smooth movement, looking up into her beaming eyes before I glance down at the table, my mouth watering. All my favorite dishes were there. Cashew chicken, stirfried rice and vegetables and even a large meat pie. She must have gotten the cook to make them all while I was working. My mouth curls into a large smile.

She had gone into a huge effort, with a large white tablecloth covering the table, flowers in the center of it in a vase and candles all over it. It was romantic and very thoughtful. She sits down beside me and grins.

"What do you want to eat, Rowan?" she asks, beginning to push some of the dishes beside me.

I feel a twinge of excitement as she leans back over towards me and murmurs in my ear "if you're good, then there's dessert after, but that's for the bedroom" she whispers, my cock twitching at the seductive look she gives me.

I reached over and began to help myself to the food, serving her plates up first. Every look, every glance, sets my body on fire.

That night was very memorable and involved a lot of sex with whipped cream.

I came crashing back down to earth. For a moment, as I stared at Amber I got confused, seeing Stacey's face instead of hers. Then, just as quickly, it's gone and I see Amber's green eyes widen for a moment before her body begins to sway. I react, throwing myself forward as she begins to fall down towards the ground. I catch her in mid air, taking in her pale pallor as her mother lets out a strangled cry, looking shocked.

"Oh dear" her mother cried out, fanning her hands over Amber's face as she lay there limply in my arms, cradled against my chest.

"What on earth" shouts her father, coming up from the back, "wake up Amber for heaven's sake. If you think this ploy is going to work, you have another thing coming." He looks down at her with anger in his eyes. His voice is loud and reverberates through the marquee.

God, my hands are itching to throw a punch at this despicable man. Amber's eyelids begin to flutter though and she lets out a small gasp as she looks up at me.

"How are you feeling?" I asked, feeling protective with her in my arms. I don't want to let her go.

Why is her face changing to Stacey's whenever I look at her? Why now? Why am I even thinking of the woman who betrayed me? I was over her. But my mind was telling me otherwise. My body feels aflame where I'm holding Amber, and when she wriggles slightly, my cock twitches. I try to hold back a groan as she tries to shimmy down my arms and get herself back on her feet.

"I'm so sorry" she whispers apologetically, her lower lip trembling, as I reluctantly let go of her "I fainted from the excitement, that's all."

"You've ruined the ceremony" snarls her father, unmoved by the tears forming in the corner of his daughter's eyes.

I glance down at her pale face and the dark circles under her eyes. Though she still looks beautiful, there's an edge of frailty around her. She looks absolutely terrified as she stares at her father, who's hands are clenched into fists. I glanced at him and then back at her, making a quick and hasty decision. I addressed the father, as Amber went as pale as a sheet "there will not be a ceremony today. I will take her back to the pack, but we will not be getting married." Not like this, I thought to myself grimly.

Her father's jaw drops open and the mother sways on her feet, a hand to her mouth. Amber looks like she's about to faint again and I move to be right beside her, taking hold of her hand and smiling gently at her. "Don't worry, I won't make you marry me today, you're not ready."

She blinks back tears, her whole body trembling as she stares over at her father.

Her father moved in front of me and folded his arms. "We had an agreement", he blurted out and I shook my head at him, feeling enraged.

"Look at her" I said evenly, indicating poor Amber "she's pale, tired and just fainted. She matters more than a ceremony at the end of the day."

He looks unimpressed. "I can't have you just take her without marriage. What will people think? We have our reputation to worry about," he snarls.

"You weren't thinking about your reputation when you asked for a billion dollars for her hand in marriage" I growled lowly, "but if it matters that much to you, then how about another billion dollars? I expect it in writing though and signed by you and a lawyer as witness."

His eyes gleam as he stares greedily at Amber, who swallows hard. "Another billion dollars" he exclaims, and turns to his wife, who looks positively ashen and a little stricken. "Can you believe it? She's good for something after all" he scoffs.

Wham. My hand shoots out and hits him and he falls to the floor, unconscious.

The minister wisely decides to remain where he's standing and not utter a sound.

Chapter 49 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

I was stunned by Alpha Rowan's declaration that we wouldn't be getting married today. But that wasn't the only thing that had my jaw dropping open. He also hit my father right in the jaw and sent him to the ground completely unconscious.

"Oh my god" my mother moaned, kneeling beside my father, her eyes slightly panicked "he's completely out."

Good, I thought a tad bit bitterly to myself. I can't say I was sorry to see him in such a state.

Alpha Rowan tucked his hands into his pockets. "I couldn't stand to hear the venom coming out of his mouth for another minute" he declared, glaring down at my father.

The minister coughed politely in the background, looking highly amused by the situation.

I put a hand to my mouth to stifle my giggles, still feeling quite woozy and light-headed.

"What do we do now?" I asked my mother who was fanning my father's face.

"We will leave before I do anything else, I regret" Alpha Rowan growled, taking hold of my hand.

My eyes sought out my mother, who was nodding at me.

"Yes, that will be for the best" she said calmly.

Alpha Rowan turned to me, glancing over his shoulder at the prone figure of my father. "I'll transfer the money" he said bluntly to my mother, who blushed and looked embarrassed, "tell him that when he wakes up."

"I will" my mother whispered, looking at me apologetically, "but you really should go before he wakes up and gets angry at you all."

"It's not his anger I'm worried about" Alpha Rowan said tightly. "It's killing him that concerns me more."

He tugged me slowly towards him, taking hold of my hand and pulling me so that I fell into step beside him.

"Where are your bags?" he asked calmly as we began to walk side by side.

"They are in my room" I said, confused, and he nodded, taking out his phone.

"Let's get those then before we leave" he muttered. I led the way back towards the house and opened the door, letting it crash open, as Alpha Rowan followed me upstairs.

I had a suitcase full of clothes and my new perfume waiting for me as well as a backpack. To my surprise, as I stepped towards them, Alpha Rowan stopped me in my tracks with his hand. He swung the backpack over his broad shoulder and grabbed hold of the suitcase, looking around the room. I had already packed any mementos I wanted, such as photos or small knick knacks and everything being left behind was stuff not sentimental to me. He looked a little stunned at how little I was taking.

"Is that all there is?" he asked incredulously, glancing around the room.

My cheeks burned with humiliation. "I don't really wear a lot of different clothes", I confessed, albeit a bit shakily. "I wear my favorites all the time."

He chuckled and shook his head. "I'm just surprised, that's all" he confessed "I expected half a dozen suitcases or more. This is light as a feather" he joked, lifting the suitcase.

I like the way he laughs and the way he moves, his muscles rippling as he holds the suitcase. I feel a bit flustered, wanting to stare at him and conscious of the way he keeps looking at me. He sniffs me, a strange look on his face.

"That's a strange perfume" he commented, as we walked back through the doorway "what scent is it?"

"I'm not sure" I answered, "it smells like honeysuckle and roses to me. My sister, Sophie, left it for me as a gift", I added truthfully.

The strange expression remained on his face. "It reminds me of someone", he muttered, and left it at that, walking me out of the house.

We heard a shout and turned to see my father striding towards me, my mother trailing behind him looking morose and miserable.

"You son of a bitch" my father hissed as Rowan stopped in his tracks. "How dare you hit me like that" he snapped, his hand going to his jaw.

"The way you spoke about your own daughter was out of line" Rowan growled, not looking in the least bit contrite.

"I'll speak about her how I want to" my father snarled, glaring at both of us.

My mother tried to intervene. "Mathew, let's just leave them alone. They are leaving after all."

"Clarissa" my father scolded, "shut your mouth and keep it closed. I insist that you pay for the injury and humiliation you caused me" he sneers, Rowan remaining where he's standing, his feet planted firmly on the ground.

"I've paid more than enough for your daughter" Rowan said evenly, tilting his head and regarding his father with annoyance, "or is it a fight you want? Because I'll be damned if I give you any more money."

It stung to be spoken about so casually like that. That I had been bought and sold for my hand in marriage, not that I was getting married anymore. My father hesitated. He might be powerful, being a beta, but he was no match for an Alpha and he knew it. He was going to have to tread lightly and I viewed him with amusement on my face as he struggled to think of what to do now.

"Fine" he finally snaps "take her out of my sight and don't come back here" he hissed "because you won't be welcome."

"Mathew" objects my mother, her eyes seeking to look into mine "you promised, , , " she began thickly but he shoved her out of the way and stomped off. Rowan helped my mother to stand back upright, looking even angrier and about to kill my father, who was now out of sight.

"Thank you" my mother said timidly, dusting herself off.

I sighed. I wish she would leave dad, I really do. He's such a bastard. "You're welcome in my pack anytime" Rowan tells her, shooting a dark look in my father's general direction. "All you have to do is say the word and we'll take you with us now if you want."

My mother hesitates while I rejoice internally. Come on mother, I urge her in my mind, please do this. Do this for yourself and get out from underneath that tyrant I have to call my father.

I deflate when she slowly shakes her head. "Thank you for the offer" she tells Rowan quietly "but it's not that simple. I just want to wish you both luck" she whispers, turning and hugging me tightly "and that I'll come and see you when I get the chance. I'm going to miss you."

I blink back tears from my eyes and hug my mother tightly, unsure if this will be the last time I see her. Reluctantly, mother pulls back and gives me a small smile. "Good luck" she whispers once more and then turns and walks away, glancing one last time over her shoulder at me before she disappears.

"Come on" Rowan says gruffly, turning around and walking in the opposite direction "let's go home" he added.

Home. It was such a simple word but one that evoked a lot of feelings in me. Where was home? It wasn't here, but would it be Rowan's pack? I followed, lost in thought. Would his pack members even accept me, an undesirable, or would I be locked up in a room, out of sight and out of mind? What did Rowan want from me? My eyes widen as I wonder if he wants me to be his mistress, rather than his wife. Well, I'll be damned if I let that happen. My hands clench tightly into fists and release over and over again in my anxiety.

"Faster, if you please" Rowan calls out and I scowl, realising he's way ahead of me. I hurry the pace up, startled when he stops at his car, a large SUV and places my bags carefully inside of it.

"I thought you might have more stuff" he explains at the look on my face. Most Alpha's tended to be arrogant and drive Ferrari's so I was wondering why he had brought such a basic vehicle. But if he thought I had a lot of stuff, that explained it.

He opens the passenger door for me and I climb in, buckling myself up as he shuts the door in my face and comes to the driver's side, opening the door and climbing inside. He starts the car.

"I won't be your mistress" I say quickly, feeling dumb as he raises his eyebrows at me.

"I never said you were going to be" he comments, starting to pull out, "what made you think I wanted that?" He sounds disgusted at the mere thought of it.

"Well" I stammer "it's just that you don't want to get married and you've paid a lot of money for me so , , " I trail off.

He just sighs. "Look at the moment you're not ready for marriage and neither am I. I paid the money to get you out of that pack and away from that toxic father of yours. I'm not saying we won't ever get married, but for now it's on hiatus" he explains frowning and pulling onto the main road.

"Then what am I supposed to do?"

"You'll live in the pack house, in a separate room. You can do whatever you want, but you're to remain on pack grounds for now. That means no going into town for now. Not until I know I can trust you" he explains.

I suppose I can live with that. I settle back against the chair and cross my ankles, my hand reaching out for the stereo.

"I must warn you that I can't stand heavy metal music" he says lightly and I nod, putting the station onto a country radio one.

"Ha" he says "I never took you for the country music type."

I laugh. "There's all sorts of things about me you don't know. I happen to love country music" I said with another giggle. The further we got away from my pack, the lighter and happier I felt. It was like a giant weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

We head into the forest and I know it's not long until we'll reach the pack house now. I survey the scenery with interest, taking in the brightness of the trees and the lack of debris and fallen branches. He must have an awesome patrol who took care of the trees, I thought idly to myself. At the very least they

got rid of the large branches that would impede a run. Then we stop in front of the pack house and my eyes widened in disbelief. It was beautiful, that was my first thought. I was in awe. Unlike the house I had just left, this one was made of wood and was two story's high. It was majestic and the roof was a beautiful dark grey colour that blended in with the surrounding forest. It felt comforting and the exact sort of house, I had always imagined living in. I couldn't wait to see what the inside of it was like. Something told me that it wasn't cold, like home had felt like all the time.

Alpha Rowan looked pleased at my reaction. He opened the passenger door for me and I got out, surveying the house and the land with fascination. "This way" he said calmly, grabbing my bags.

We were met at the door by a man with shaggy blonde hair and brown eyes, a wide smile on his handsome face. He held out his hand for me to shake. "This is my Beta, Laurence" Alpha Rowan said.

"It's a pleasure to finally meet you" breathes Laurence as he lets go of my hand.

Alpha Rowan frowns at him. I wonder what Laurence means by finally meeting me.

"Is her room ready?" asked Rowan gruffly.

Laurence winked at the man. "Of course it is, what do you take me for" he commented drily. He gestured for us to follow him.

The inside of the house was just as I had pictured. Art everywhere, of forests and wolves, stairs made from logs and even the baulstrade was wooden. It was like a cabin, but larger and more refined. It was heaven and it was glorious. I made my way up the stairs, my legs beginning to feel like jelly. Not only that, but a yawn escaped my lips. It had been a long day after all and it was approaching night fast. Alpha Rowan looked concerned. "Hurry up" he hissed to Laurence, who picked up his pace.

My legs moved faster as they walked down a long corridor. Alpha Rowan pointed to the end door. "That is my room and your's is right next to mine" he said softly, pointing to the one on the right.

Laurence opened the door and I gave a small gasp as I stepped inside. There was a large four poster bed, with soft pale green bedcovers, a wooden chest of drawers and a small television. Another door to the room, led to an adjoining bathroom with a bath, shower and vanity. It was simplistic but gorgeous and it

suiting me right down to the ground. Rowan put the bag and my suitcase down with a large thud. "Do you need anything?" he asked me.

Laurence scoffed. "She's probably starving moron. How about I rustle up some dinner" he suggested, darting out the door before Rowan could say another word.

Rowan ran a hand through his black hair and stared at me for a minute, a wistful expression on his face. "For now, you're to remain here" he said "in time you can wander around the grounds as much as you'd like. Do you still train? Even without a wolf?"

"I do" I assured him "and I'd like to keep training."

"Maybe I can get Laurence to train you" he muttered "he has plenty of time on his hands and it means you still get the benefits of training."

"That would be great" I say excitedly before my face drops. Should I even be training while pregnant? There was no way I could ask him, not when he had no idea of the pregnancy. Luckily he doesn't notice the change of expression on my face.

"I'll leave you here then. If you need anything come and find me or Laurence. We'll either be in the study or in my room. Goodnight" he said softly, gazing at me for another moment, before shutting the door and leaving.

I don't wait for Laurence to come back, instead plopping myself on the bed and staring around the room, one hand going to my stomach. I knew I needed to come clean, but I had no way of knowing how Rowan would react to spending so much money on a girl that was pregnant with another man's baby. Until I got to know him, I needed to keep this pregnancy a secret. I would also need to have an ultrasound and began to wonder if there was a hospital on the premises. Surely there would be? My mind was whirling with all sorts of thoughts and ideas and before Laurence could come back with the food, I had passed out on the bed, deeply asleep.

Chapter 50 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Sophie POV

It was getting late. I glanced at the forest and the shadows the trees created with trepidation. Darius on the other hand, looked far too relaxed, one hand on the steering wheel of our SUV, his shoulders loose and relaxed, slumped against the seat. Clearly, the darkening sky was not bothering him in the slightest. While I remained fearful of possible rogues attacking, Darius looked like he was still in holiday mode.

"Darius" my voice quivered, despite my trying not to let it show, "it's getting dark, maybe we should turn back and find a hotel or something for now?"

Part of it was selfishness. I knew once we had returned to the pack, that everything would be back to normal and the little bubble of holiday bliss that Darius and I had created between the two of us would pop in an instant.

Darius glanced at me, looking highly amused. "It's not that dark" he pointed out reasonably "and I'm here to protect you babes if anything does try to attack us" he boasted.

Damnit. He could see right through me. He was right though, a few more minutes and we would be at the pack house and my new place of living. Part of me was excited, part of me was terrified. His mother, the Luna and his father, the Alpha, had no idea their new daughter in law was unable to conceive. How would they react when they finally got told the truth? I also dreaded them finding out that Amber was pregnant with Darius's child for they would try and take custody of it, I just knew it and there was no way I would let that happen to poor Amber. She had already suffered enough at mine and Darius's hands. She need not suffer more.

The pack house comes into view and I sigh with great relief, Darius's hand reaching out to take mine and squeeze it reassuringly.

"I told you we would make it here safely" he chuckled, with a shake of his head "you big fraidy cat."

I scowled at him in response and withdrew my hand as he continued to laugh at me. I opened the car door and slid out, standing upright and staring at the pack house. This was my new home, but it looked so cold, so forbidding. Not like the pack houses we had seen in Australia, which had been homely and the pack members more than welcoming.

"It's not Australia" Darius murmured in my ear, coming up beside me and putting a hand around my waist "but we can make this pack more homely and stronger. We just need time."

It was like he could read my mind. I gave a tight nod and together, we headed up to the pack house, Darius scrambling in his pockets for the key to the front door.

He didn't need it. Before he could find it, the door swung open and we saw Luna Marian's beaming face as she took in her son and me, her arms wide open for a hug. Darius hugged her first, gingerly lifting her off her feet as she giggled at him. Then as he put her down, she walked to me and embraced me tight, not letting go.

"We missed you both so much" she said lightly, reluctantly pulling back and looking at the both of us "you both look very healthy and relaxed. Come" she ordered, turning around and walking away.

We followed, heading towards the lounge room area, where to my shock and delight, my mother was sitting on the sofa, along with Alpha John. My mother's eyes widened in surprise and then the next instant, she was embracing me tightly, sniffing my perfume and sighing contentedly. I could see tears in the corners of her eyes.

"Sophie" she sniffled "I missed you so much. How was your trip?" she asked, cupping my face with her hands.

I grinned, Darius doing the same. While we had travelled to various packs, we hadn't exactly spent the honeymoon doing more than lying in or leaving the bedroom. He had been insatiable throughout the honeymoon and I hadn't exactly protested, wanting him just as badly.

"It was nice, really relaxing" I told her "it was really interesting visiting the packs in Australia."

"They are very different to us" Darius said eagerly "but their homes were so warm and they were very friendly people. We could learn a lot from them."

His father reached over and shook his son's hand. "Welcome home son" he said, his eyes twinkling "but don't get too far ahead of yourself. You're not Alpha yet, you know" he chuckled.

We all laughed as Darius and I sat down, crossing my ankles and leaning back against the comfortable sofa.

"Where's father" I muttered to mother.

She frowned. "He's at home, he's not exactly in the mood for company right now" she explained a little hastily.

I knew what that meant. He had probably had way too much to drink. He liked his alcohol a little more than the average man did. But it would have been nice if he'd been here, along with mother. Then we could have really celebrated my return. Instead it felt like I was deflated on hearing about father.

"What about Amber?" I asked excitedly "I would love to tell her about Australia. Show her some pictures" I added, looking around.

Mother's face dropped and instinctively I knew what she was about to say, before she opened her mouth. "She has been taken to another pack by Alpha Rowan. He wants to marry her" she whispered.

My eyes widened in disbelief. Surely she wasn't talking about the monstrous, beastly, Alpha Rowan? But it looks like she was.

"You would marry her to such a man" I said hoarsely, feeling sympathetic towards my poor sister "how could you mother?"

"I didn't have a choice" she protested "your father made the decision."

"Is it too late to get her back?" asked Darius frowning at his parents who looked at him incredulous.

"We can't interfere with the Alpha of another pack, without inciting a fight or war" Luna Marian said testily "you of all people should know that Darius."

He scowled at both of them, then sighed heavily, admitting defeat. They were right, but it didn't make me feel any better. Instead it was making me feel sick to my stomach. Poor Amber. While I had been out having fun and constantly making love with Darius, she had been taken to another pack and was being forced to marry. It wasn't fair. It wasn't right and there was nothing I could do about it. Tears pricked at the corners of my eyes and I felt like crying, when a minute ago I was so happy. My father, really was a bastard, I thought to myself bitterly.

"I think we just need a few minutes to freshen up" Darius said quietly, taking hold of my arm "and then we'll come back down and rejoin you."

"Of course" Luna Marian agreed quickly, gesturing towards the stairs "I have fresh sheets on the bed for you and have cleaned your room up Darius."

"Thanks mother" he told her sincerely and she glowed from his thanks.

He gently tugged me towards the stairs, upwards, until we reached the relative safety of his bedroom. He reached out and opened the door, leading me inside.

"I just have to use the bathroom" he said quickly, ducking through the adjoining door.

I glanced around the room. It was nice but definitely masculine. It needed a woman's touch. I saw something underneath his bed, the corner of a box poking out and grabbed hold of it, putting it on his bed. I expected to find naughty magazines, or videos. It was a teenage boys room after all, but I was shocked and angry to find that it was a box of momentos. There were photos of Amber along with photos of the both of them. Ribbons and hair ties from her hair supposedly, a bracelet, cards they had written to each other and a dozen other things as well. I sucked in a breath, feeling the tears beginning to trail down my cheeks. I knew he wasn't over Amber and this proved it. Why else would he have kept the box? I felt stupid now. The honeymoon turned sour in my mind. For all I knew he'd been pretending I was Amber the entire time. It would explain his distress for Amber being at another pack now as well. I felt numb, cold, my hands shaking as I stared into the open box.

Darius finally came back out and he glanced at my pale face, before his eyes widened, taking in the open box and my trembling body.

"It's not what you think" he began but I cut him off, my voice shrill.

"Not what I think? It's a box full of stuff about Amber and you want me to believe that it's all innocent? You knew you were getting married and you held onto it Darius. What am I supposed to think?"

Darius sighs. "Look, it's merely a box of memories. Amber and I were dating for a long time and I was in love with her. Maybe I shouldn't have held onto the box, but I couldn't just let it go. It just has so many memories and good times to remind me of."

I grit my teeth. "Are you telling me that you didn't enjoy our honeymoon Darius?"

He looks startled. "Of course I enjoyed the honeymoon Sophie. Did I ever indicate to you that I didn't?"

"Were you" my voice shakes "pretending I was Amber?"

I needed to know. But my god, the answer was going to hurt if he said yes.

He shakes his head adamantly, his eyes becoming darker. "Of course not, what do you take me for. I wanted you Sophie, not Amber. I promised you that we would make this work. I wasn't going back on my promise."

I should have felt relieved. He was being honest, but an indescribable anger was rising inside of me. I gestured towards the box. "Get rid of it then" my voice was cold, my arms were folded.

"Sophie, the box doesn't mean anything" he protested, "it's just a memory box. I can't get rid of it."

"Is that right" I scoff before glaring at him "then I guess this means that I'm sleeping in a separate room until you do it."

"Sophie" he said a little annoyed "you're being unreasonable. The box is nothing but memories and we have our own memories of our time together."

But I was through listening to him. I couldn't see past my rage, even though I knew it was being too demanding. "See you Darius" I said softly, turning on my heel and walking out.

"Sophie, wait" he called out, but I shook my head and walked down the long corridor, finding a guest room and opening it. I no longer cared that my mother was waiting for me to return, along with the Luna and Alpha. All I cared about was that Darius and I had just had our first argument within minutes of returning home from our honeymoon. This had nothing to do with Amber. I wasn't that mean spirited. It was to do with Darius holding onto the past instead of looking to the future. I didn't want to be reminded I had stolen Darius from Amber or that he had a past with her. It was selfish and conceited, but I wanted him to relish our time together, the memories we would make.

I felt like I was second best to Amber again and it wasn't a nice feeling. I locked the door and ignored Darius who pounded on it with his fists, knowing the door would hold.

"Sophie come out and talk to me" he pleaded loudly "please, we only just got back. Let's not fight."

"Are you getting rid of the box?" I asked hoarsely.

There was silence. "I can't" he whispered and I closed my eyes in defeat and resignation.

"Then leave me alone" I whispered back and began to cry as he did just that.