

Bad Love An Alpha's Regret by Elise Sinclair Chapter 11

Chapter 11

LEAH

I'm not going to lie, I feel a little happy.

Please don't judge. I get it. I'm THAT girl.

The dumb one. The oh-you-got-your-heart-broke-again one.

The one who sits home waiting for him to call.

But what most people don't know is that Aaron was the one to sit up with me when I had nightmares. He was the one to insist I learn to trade and to obtain my Series 7 license so I'd have a career. Aaron is the one to stare me in the eyes everytime he joins his body to mine.

And, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know it's just sex.

But it's not.

It's more than that.

I know it. I believe it.

And deep down, I love him.

As rough and cold as he can be, I know there's more to him than he lets the world see.

2/5

I head into the kitchen and grab an apple from the giant bowl in the middle of the prep table. It's ripe and red and sweet.

"What the hell are you smiling about?"

It's Jessica.

Her long, blond hair is down today and it glows beautifully, flowing behind her like some goddamn shampoo commercial. Ugh. This wolf.

She'll probably dance on my grave.

The thought saddens me.

"You don't have to be mean, Jessica. I didn't ask to be Aaron's wife. But I am. And I have been for a long time now. You don't have to keep making things so hard for us."

She snorts and then snatches the apple from my hand. She tosses it into the compost bin.

"You're trash. You'll always be trash. And if I had my way, we wouldn't just bleed you once a month, it'd be every day.

Because there is no world in which your pack can absolve its sins."

I try once more to reason with her. "I was a child when those sins were committed, Jessica."

"BOTH of my parents are dead. And my eldest brother."

“My mother is dead. I’ve lost cousins and kin too. War is awful that way.”

She huffs.

“What do you know of it? You’re a human. For the life of me, I don’t know why he even bothers to keep you around. You’re of no use to this pack. No use to Aaron.”

That hurts.

She isn’t ashamed or apologetic for her actions, trying to steal my husband. If I’m being fair, he was hers to begin with. But there needs to be some sanctity for our relationship. Even if we aren’t mated. We are married.

That has to count for something.

“What you’re doing, Jessica... it isn’t good for either of us.”

She shakes her head at me. “I don’t care about you, Leah. I

never have. No one here does. And if you think that Aaron cares, then you’re even dumber than you look.”

I’m finished with being nice to her. “You’re jealous.”

Her eyes flash and it’s the only warning I get.

Her claws scratch down my arms as she grabs me and hurls me across the kitchen.

I slam into the pantry door and stay there on the ground, wheezing.

“Weak, pathetic human.”

Blood drips from her fingertips.

“He’ll never love you,” she screams. “He’ll never mate you.”

“You don’t know that.”

“He’ll always belong to me! Just do us all a favor and die already!”

I’ve thought about dying. It’s all I’ve thought about. But I won’t give her the satisfaction.

I push to my feet and square off with her. I’m done feeling

sorry for myself. I’m done cowering.

Bad Love: An Alpha’s Regret

I’ve been hit with several revelations this week, and they all

leave me reeling.

This last one...

It just might be the secret that breaks me.

A baby.

It’s everything I wanted.

A child.

Family.

Home.

My hands shake and I shove them in my pockets to stop the shivering. Unable to bear my own thoughts anymore, I slip out of the kitchen and onto the back patio. From here, it's a

quarter mile to the edge of the woods and then there are miles and miles of packlands to explore. The perimeter guards on patrol don't normally hassle me.

I see three of them, two males and a female at the edge of the

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perimeter. Everyone in this pack from the Alpha down to the lowest pack member must take a turn at patrolling

the property. We're in an isolated area and his pack owns hundreds of square miles of property with the whole western.

side flanking a state park, but we can never be too sure.

Humans are everywhere.

And so are enemy wolves.

I can't shift and run the way the rest of the wolves here do, but I know the game trails well enough.

The fresh air fills my lungs carrying the scent of spring and fresh rain and lilacs. Those were my mother's favorites, and I

planted them all around the main house.

Before I cut onto the southern trail, I turn back to the mansion.

It sits like a behemoth on the hillside, and in the distance are rows and rows of neat little houses and cabins. Some two hundred families live and work in this area and the surrounding countryside. I wasn't born here, but it feels like home.

Most of the time.

Maybe.

I glance at my cell phone. My dad hasn't called. Not to say thank you or to inquire after me. I turned over every dollar I've

made and saved in my lifetime.

And I just got a confirmation of receipt.

My stomach sinks.

I really need to stop feeling sorry for myself.

3/4

I enter the forest and the scents change. I can only imagine how it must be to smell the pine and birch, the moist earth and fallen leaves. I always wanted my own wolf so I could sense things better. To see and smell and taste and feel with such a deeper connection to the world around me.

I used to run these trails. I'd run as fast and as far as I could until I was gasping for breath and my muscles shook.

I walk now.

Slowly.

Studying the smaller plants and wildflowers. Looking up at the breaks in the canopy where the sun shines through.

Every living thing around me is a circle of life that is both fleeting and so exquisitely perfect.

I'm maybe a mile from the mansion when I hear the rumble.

It's a heavy, fast beat of something big, pounding the earth.

Bad Love: An Alpha's Regret

The flash of gray is familiar.

Aaron is a huge wolf.

Gray from head to tail with darker tones along his chest and flanks. He runs until he's even with me.

There's a bark and then an inquisitive twist of his head, his wolf's expression of "what's up?"

Part of me wants to rail about Jessica. To demand the truth.

Not that Aaron can answer. And I'm not about to give him an out when all he can do is bark or growl or yip.

His wolf is separate-a soul all its own, wrapped within Aaron.

I'm told it's the other half of one's self, or the primal spirit of a being. Not having a wolf myself, I can't really speak to the

connection between.

We walk side by side for a while.

I'm lost in my thoughts.

My sickness.

Aaron's betrayal.

Jessica's treachery.

A baby...

2/4

I know she flirts with him something awful and he doesn't stop her. But I don't know that he's ever fully crossed that line with

her.

If he has...

Aaron's big wolf brushes along my side, making my hand

run along the length of his shoulder and back. If Aaron is

stubborn, his wolf is ten times as bad.

"Okay, you big brute," I mumble, petting him for real this time and keeping my hand in his fur as we move.

I can't blame the wolf for the man's actions.

There may be a connection and you can't separate the beast from the man, but if a line was crossed, it wasn't by this four-legged creature, it was Aaron. Knowingly and willingly.

His head swings into my hip, a gentle nudge for more attention.

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The wolf has always been nice to me.

3/4

There have been plenty of nights when Aaron will shift and it's this big, ferocious beast that nestles next to me, his head in my lap to sleep.

"I always did like you better," I tell him.

He barks happily.

Gradually the forest lightens, and I aim toward the break in the trees that will bring us to the edge of the ravine.

I'm not sure why Aaron shifted or why he's following me. Maybe he's worried I'll try to leave?

I've been thinking about it, for sure.

But that sort of thing takes a lot of planning and after my last doctor visit venture, the security is especially tight around the main house.

The cliff drops off and below is a long stretch of river. If I stay on the path, several miles south of here, the ground evens off and it's a great spot for swimming and fishing, when the water's warm enough.

It's spring now, and I count the months, wondering if I'll still be

alive when summer's here.

4/4

The wind blows at my back and all of a sudden, Aaron freezes.

The fur beneath my hand rises.

We are not alone.

He growls menacingly.

Write your comment

Gifts

Bad Love: An Alpha's Regret

I hear the wolves before I see them.

They stalk out of the woods. Four of them. Not quite as large as Aaron but still big. Their maws are open and snarling. Long

teeth showing. Dark fur rippling as they move.

Aaron's wolf looks at me.

Then his huge form moves in front of me, physically blocking

me from this threat.

I suck a breath.

There is nowhere to go.

His body morphs until he's part man, part wolf and far more powerful than both.

Aaron doesn't wait. He lunges at the lead wolf, his claws digging into the flesh of the animal before hurling the

creature over our heads and off the cliff.

It happens so fast I hardly believe my eyes.

The three other wolves surround him. Nicks and I punch, slash and bite.

He's strong and fast, but one of the admits defeat as he trips, hampering his movements.

There's a creek near me and I grab a branch to help me bite him.

Shoving his shoulder and he snarls but releases me. The other two wolves let Aaron kick out, and the wolf goes by flying.

Now it's a one-on-two.

Two wolves nestle him to the ground, and the three of them move toward the edge of the cliff, leaping the

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there's a cook near me and I grab a bunch of herbs and eat of
the wolf biting him.

He shakes his shoulder and he snarls but releases Aaron on the
biters for a moment Aaron kick out, and the wolf goes by flying.

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they are responding.

think they took a moment in time.

and two adversaries, and another wolf that he'd 'd I close into the woods,
wounds the wolf, a vicious looking

it me.

I inch back until my heels are at the edge.

I wobble and the wolf lunges.

My arms windmill as I try to hurl myself sideways instead of backwards to what would be a fatal fall. The wolf spins at the last second, his jaws sinking into my ankle.

I scream.

His teeth sink in, scraping against the bone, and then I'm being dragged backwards.

I grab at the earth, my nails breaking as I dig my fingers into the ground for purchase. The wolf's over the edge, its weight dragging me down.

"Aaron!" I scream.

His gold eyes meet mine only for an instant, then he roars.

But he's busy mauling and killing the other wolves. They have him pinned. He can't reach me no matter how he fights to be

free.

I close my eyes as I slip.

The earth is wet and the mud gets in my mouth and face as I

thrash and fight to hang on.

My ankle is on fire.

I slide another foot and the added weight of my own body hanging off the face of the cliff makes me sink further.

4/4

My last thoughts are, that for as willing as I've been to die, to refuse treatments and accept my fate... I don't want to let go.

I don't want to die. Not really.

Write your comment

Gifts

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Chapter 15

"Get her up!"

My wrists are snatched and I'm dangling in the air, my body suspended above the mountainside.

Then I'm back on flat land where I sink to my knees.

A dead wolf is tossed next to me. Then the other two.

They pile up and I stare at their lifeless bodies.

"Find the fourth carcass," Aaron orders. "Burn them all."

His gaze rakes over me.

James was the one to save me on the ledge and he grabs my leg now and lifts it in the air. He rips off my shoe to inspect my ankle from all sides. "This will need stitches. The wounds are

deep."

Aaron grunts.

Every part of my body hurts. I start shivering and I hug my

2/7

arms around my waist, some lame attempt to hold myself together.

“She’s going into shock,” James says quietly.

Aaron’s brows draw down. He squats and sniffs the air. “The scent is strong.”

“We can track them.” James looks into the trees.

Aaron rises. He’s furious.

He arches a brow at his beta, and I know exactly what he’s thinking.

You fucked up enough.

It’s broad daylight.

We’re deep into Aaron’s packlands. No enemy should’ve been able to pass the perimeter.

Let alone to get so close as to attack the Alpha.

And his Luna.

Though they don’t honor me with the title, as Aaron’s wife, I am still of value.

If we were properly mated, killing me could kill him.

3/7

“James,” Aaron says in a deadly calm voice. “Bring Leah back to the house and make sure she gets the medical attention she needs. Am I clear?”

The other wolves in the clearing abruptly freeze and look around nervously.

They know James is a dead man walking if something happens to me.

“Yes, Alpha.”

James lifts me up.

Aaron shifts fully into his wolf and races off without a backward glance. Five other wolves run off after him.

Leaving just me and James.

“You’re in the doghouse,” I tell him.

He nods. “Again.”

From his tone, he blames me for this time too.

“Do me a favor,” he says. “Don’t die on me.”

Then he slings his arm beneath my knees and another behind my back. He lifts me up and cradles me like a baby.

It’s a long way back to the main house.

I hold myself away from him, as stiff as I can.

“Relax,” he says gruffly.

He radiates heat like a furnace and I’m shivering with cold. I really am going into shock.

James mutters something then hefts me higher and tighter,

forcing my face into the curve of his neck and my body against his chest.

He's warm and hard and his scent is pleasant.

Huh.

Maybe I wouldn't resent this so much if he was less of a jerk.

But this isn't some enemies-to-lovers relationship. We don't like each other. Not at all.

He walks about a quarter mile before setting me down on a cropping of rocks. The big granite boulder is smooth and cool.

"What are you doing?" I ask.

He drops to a knee in front of me and peels off his shirt.

His chest is ripped and tan and smooth.

Was not expecting that.

5/7

Then he uses the fabric to bind my ankle. He grimaces. "Your arms are bleeding too."

Ah, yes. "Those are actually from your sister." From when she assaulted me in the kitchen.

He shakes his head and swears.

I'd laugh if I wasn't in so much pain.

"Call Adam," I tell him.

"Who?"

"Adam Riordans. He's from my father's pack. He's a physician."

"Our pack doctor can treat you."

“I’m the key to peace between our packs, do you really want to chance me dying on your watch?”

He whips out his phone and dials the main house, barking orders for Dr. Sutherland to be ready for our arrival and for

“See,” I say. “That wasn’t so hard.”

One corner of his mouth tips up.

“What are you smirking about?”

“You,” he says. “If you’re well enough to break my balls, you must be okay.”

I glance at my ankle where I’m already bleeding through the tight shirt wrap. “Uh, I’m not so sure about that.”

He frowns.

“I’m losing a lot of blood, and I don’t feel so good.”

My teeth start chattering and my body convulses.

He picks me up, cradles me close, and starts running.

“N-not really your fault,” I say as my head lulls lifelessly against his throat. “The offering. They bled me twice this week.”

“Sonofabitch!”

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