

Banished With His Heir

Chapter 3: Alpha Duties

I could sense him. I could sense River nearby, probably right outside my door, which woke me up immediately.

I didn't even bother to see how stupid I looked after falling asleep crying. I got up off the bed and began to sprint towards it, the thought of seeing River and being able to talk to him again fueled everything inside of me.

"You're a fucking idiot, River!"

I froze when I heard someone else scream at him. It was Zane. I know his voice, and I know that he was extremely frustrated at him.

"Don't talk to me like that. I'm still your Alpha." River spoke and his voice sent shivers all over my body.

It's only been a few hours and it was as if my body was already having withdrawals. Just hearing his voice triggered something in me and I needed to pull myself together if I didn't want to break down again.

"I'm talking to you not as your Beta, but as your best friend. Don't leave Keira hanging like this. Don't treat her like this." Zane spoke again, a sense of determination and slight plea in his voice.

They were talking about me, and I remembered that it was because Zane said he would try to knock some sense in River's head. They were arguing because of me.

"I don't know what else to do, man. My mate's here and she's everything I've ever wanted. You know how long I've been waiting for her."

My heart shattered at his words. Just when I thought there was no way River could emotionally hurt me more, I was wrong.

She's everything I've ever wanted.

Then what was I? What was I to you, River Colden? Wasn't it you that said you didn't care about a mate? That you only cared about me? What happened to that?

I put a hand over my chest, my heart thumping so loud and so fast I thought it was going to explode any second from now.

"He doesn't love us anymore."

Fuyu. She's here. My wolf comes out taking me by surprise as I thought she would be too heartbroken to speak. I felt her presence earlier, but not long after the heartbreaking revelation, she disappeared again.

"Don't say that, Fuyu. He promised he will always love us."

"He also promised that he would never break our hearts. Now look at us."

She was right. I hate that she was right. That night, he said exactly that. Right now, he didn't just break our hearts. He pulled it out of my chest and stomped on it continuously.

"At least talk to her. You have no idea how much she cried after you abandoned her at the banquet. Imagine how hurt Keira was, your goddamn girlfriend, when she saw you go after another woman in a split second after she was humiliated by the same person." Zane speaks up, the tone of his voice getting stronger with each word being enunciated for emphasis.

He spoke like he knew exactly what I was going through, but I guess, in a way, he somehow does. Zane always knew. He was an empath. He could feel other people's pain and sadness stronger than others.

There was silence on the other side. A much too long silence that hurt me the longer it went on because it meant that River didn't just hear what Zane had to say and agree with him. He had to *think* about the fact that he broke my heart with what he did and think again on what he was supposed to do.

I wanted to yell at him. I wanted to scream my heart out at him, tell him that all I want is for him to hold me again like before. Promise me that even if he's found his mate, I'll still be someone special to him. That he could make all of the pain stop because I didn't deserve this.

I don't expect him to reject his mate. It hurts like hell, yeah, and though I never experienced the mate bond, I know for a fact that it was strong because the bond is special. I can't compete with that nor do I have the right to.

All I want, all I *really* want, is for him to just continue to see me as the girl he grew up with. The woman he made promises to. The one he said he'd always put a smile on her face. The one he said he would protect.

"Don't ever call her my girlfriend again, and that 'other woman' is your Luna. You better address her as such." River spoke up just to defend Ivy, not bothering to acknowledge what I had to go through. Wow.

"But fucking fine. I'll go talk to her." He added and I panicked.

I didn't want him to know I had been listening in on their conversation this whole time. As quickly and as quietly as I could, I ran back to my bed and turned around so he wouldn't see that I was already awake.

I guess a part of me was still hopeful; the stupid part of me at least. I hoped that he would come into the room, sit on the edge of the bed, and wake me up with a kiss like he had always done.

Instead, I get the cold hard reality as he enters the room and slams the door in a way to wake me up.

It was like a slap on the face or a punch in the gut.

“Keira.” He said.

Cold and distant. The absolute opposite of how he used to call me every morning when he woke up, right before he would cuddle with me. He called my name like he needed me. This time, he called my name as if he wanted nothing to do with me.

“I know you’re awake.”

I didn’t move or say anything. I didn’t know what to say anyway.

He sighs as if he’s the one that had been betrayed, that had been humiliated in front of everyone and had been left all alone by his first love.

“Fine, you don’t have to talk anyway. I’m just going to say it straight.” A second pause.

“I’m sorry.”

My heart leapt out of my chest. Did he just... apologize?

Suddenly, the hopeful part of me flourishes and I feel Fuyu flutter too. All it took were two words said emotionlessly and we both were wrapped around River’s finger again.

Just as I was turning around to look at him, to get up and walk over to him in the hopes of being able to hold him again, he spoke up again.

“But we can’t do this anymore. I can’t be with you, Keira. Not like before. I’m really sorry it happened like this, but a part of us knew it was going to happen sometime, didn’t we?”

No, River. You’re wrong. I didn’t think that. I thought it was us in the long run. I thought we were endgame.

I wanted to tell him that, but I kept my mouth shut. Instead, my fist continues to tighten, so much so that any second now my nails would rip through my skin and blood would start to come out.

He exhales deeply and I know he pushes his hair back – his soft and silver hair that I used to run my fingers through – because his scent magnifies in my sense of smell. My whole body shudders at the sensation.

“Things change and my mate is my mate. I can’t change that and I love her, Keira. I love Ivy and she is our Luna and I want you to respect that. I want you to respect her and...”

River’s words fade into the background like a static noise. All I could hear in my mind was the name Ivy.

Her name repeating in my head like a whisper, taunting me, mocking me and making me feel inferior.

Ivy. Silver blonde hair up to her thighs, each strand straightened to perfection. Gray eyes that shined with a light blue color in the middle. Skin as white as snow.

She was perfect. Perfect for the White Howlers Pack, perfect for their Alpha. I’m sure River’s parents are over the moon happy ever since she arrived. Why wouldn’t they be? It’s their son’s mate they’ve wanted for him this whole time.

Syvne and Roman loved me like their own daughter and though they were also somewhat supportive of mine and River’s relationship because they saw how happy we were, they still remained skeptical and guarded about it.

“Keira? Keira!”

I shake my head back to the present, just realizing that I had zoned out far too long than I wanted to.

I cleared my throat, feeling embarrassed. Gone are the days River used to just laugh at me when I get lost in my own thoughts. Now he was looking at me like I was wasting his time.

“Did you hear what I said?” He asked with a bitter tone.

“She’s our Luna and I should... respect... her...” I said to him, barely audible as I was too ashamed to even say anything and I didn’t agree with the words I was saying either. I just wanted to run and hide, bury myself six feet underground.

“Yes. Thank you. I know this is all a bit... unusual, but I just want you to know that this is still your home, Keira.” River breathes out, pushing his hair back and my heart skips a beat.

I didn’t want it to do that, for my stomach to flutter, but it does because it’s like my body has conditioned it to fall for every action he does. That was my mistake.

He walks forward and my body stiffens. The closer he gets, the crazier my heart beats.

When he reaches the edge of my bed, he stops. He looks at me and I feel my cheeks burn both from embarrassment at how horrid I must look and hurt that he was looking at me like that.

“You’re a part of this Pack, Keira. What we had, we can just think of it as the past and move on. Ivy, I think she’ll be a great Luna, but you can still help like you do now. We can all make White Howlers a better and stronger Pack together. Yeah?”

I wanted to scream at him to just stop talking. I hated every word that came out of his mouth. Hell, I hated the hopeful look in those blue eyes that I fell madly in love with.

But most of all, I hated that as much as he kept hurting me, I couldn’t find it in me to actually hate *him*.

I nodded my head and I felt Fuyu retreat further in me as if she could no longer take being a part of this.

“Thank you, Kei. I really appreciate it.” He gives me a smile and butterflies run rampant in my stomach at the name and that charming look on his face.

My eyes see his hand on my bed and my instinct was to pull my hand out and hold him. I’ve always held his hand. When we were kids, when we became teenagers, and then as adults.

All of a sudden, just as my finger reaches the top of his hand, he pulls away. He moves back from the bed as if I had just committed treason for even thinking of touching him.

I felt my heart break a thousand pieces more.

I had no idea that a few days ago before Ivy arrived, that it would be the last time I would ever be able to touch him.

River recomposes himself, straightening his back and softly clearing his throat. “I, uh, I should go. Alpha duties.”

Alpha duties, he said. Back then he said the same thing to others in the Pack, but in truth, he meant he wanted to spend alone time with me.

The sword in my heart is pushed deeper.

He was going to spend time with her.

As I watched River walk away, the man who both gave light to my life and subsequently took it all away leaving me in the darkness, there was still a part of me, something very infinitesimal, that held onto the hope that he would stop walking, turn around, and take it all back.

Three steps away from the door.

Two steps.

One step.

He turns the door knob and pulls the door open, walks out without another glance back.

And then, he was gone.

Just as every last hope I had left for our relationship was, too.