

Mated To The Beastly Alpha

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Chapter 41

Although he didn't show it, his head was set ablaze with the thought that Nicole may be his mate.

His heart thrashed in his chest because if it was true, he had messed up big time.

He never planned to have a mate. He was a beast, but he also didn't plan to ruin his mate when he found her. And because of him, Nicole was out of her mind.

"Fuck," he hissed, he had treated her badly.

"Fucking hell," he growled.

James gave him a side eye and said nothing.

"Argh," Liam roared out. It wasn't possible. It wasn't.

If she was, he would have known at first glance. That's how it worked. He forced himself to push the thought away and concentrate on his journey back home. Yet thoughts of Nicole sprang into his mind.

How he ached to see her, to sniff her soothing yet sexually provocative scent. He wondered how she was doing, whether she was safe. He longed to hold her in his arms and tell her that everything was going to be okay, he wanted to tell her that he had gotten rid of the bastards that had done shit to her.

Patience. He chided himself. He knew that she needed space right now.

He also thought about his own anger and how it had driven him to seek revenge against the traitors. He knew that he needed to control his emotions if he wanted to lead his pack effectively. He couldn't let his anger cloud his judgment.

"James, I need to speak with Nicole," Liam said suddenly, breaking the silence.

James looked at him skeptically. "I don't think that's a good idea, Alpha. She's not ready to see you yet."

Liam sighed. "I know, but I need to let her know that we're here for her. I need to tell her that she's safe."

That was a blatant lie. He wanted to figure out if anything was pulsing within him for her apart from his mark.

James nodded in understanding. "Alright, I'll take you to her. But be careful, Alpha. She's still afraid of you."

Liam nodded, his heart pounding in his chest. He followed James through the forest, his mind racing with thoughts of Nicole.

As they approached the cabin where Nicole was staying, Liam's heart skipped a beat. He could sense her presence nearby, her fear and pain emanating from the cabin.

It had been Asha's idea to move her away from pack members because she felt threatened for being dormant. Liam didn't want to but had to. It was for her mental sake and more importantly her safety. No one knew where she was.

He walked up to the door and knocked softly. There was no answer. He knocked again, this time more loudly. Still no answer.

Liam's heart sank as he realized that Nicole wasn't ready to see him yet. He turned to James, his eyes filled with regret.

"She's not here, Alpha," James said quietly. "She must have gone for a walk or something."

Liam stared dumbfounded. How come he wasn't able to realize that she wasn't around? It made him angrier if not sadder. His eyes scanned the forest for any sign of Nicole. It was weird that he hadn't felt her absence. He couldn't shake off the feeling that something was wrong.

"Let's split up and search for her," Liam said, his voice urgent. "We have to find her before it's too late."

James nodded, but held his shoulders, "Liam, she's safe. Nothing has or will happen to her here,"

James assured him and they split up, each of them scouring the forest for any sign of Nicole.

Liam's heart pounded in his chest as he searched, his mind racing with thoughts of what might

have happened to her.

His wolf was becoming restless again. Finally, he heard a faint sound in the distance. It sounded like someone crying. He followed the sound, his heart pounding in his chest.

As he got closer, he saw a figure lying on the ground, her body trembling with sobs. It was Nicole.

Liam rushed to her side, his heart breaking at the sight of her. She looked up at him, her eyes filled with fear and pain.

"It's okay, Nicole," Liam said, his voice gentle. "I'm here for you. You're safe now."

Nicole flinched away from him, her eyes wide with terror. "Stay away from me!" she cried.

Liam felt a pang of guilt as he realized how much he had hurt her. He had been so focused on his anger that he had forgotten about her pain.

"I'm sorry, Nicole," he said, his voice filled with regret. "I didn't mean to scare you. I just wanted to let you know that we're here for you. We want to help you."

Nicole looked up at him, her eyes filled with tears. "I don't know if I can trust you," she said softly.

Liam felt a pang of pain in his chest. He had a lot of work to do to regain her trust.

"I understand," he said, his voice gentle. "But please know that I will do everything in my power to keep you safe. I won't let anyone hurt you again." Nicole looked up at him, her eyes searching his face. Finally, she nodded, her body relaxing slightly.

"Okay," she said softly. "I'll try to trust you." Liam felt a sense of relief wash over him. He knew that it would take time to earn her trust back, but he was willing to do whatever it took.

"Come on," he said, offering her his hand. "Let's go back to the cabin. It's not safe out here."

Nicole hesitated for a moment before taking his hand. The moment their hands touched, a surge of electricity spread through him.

Nicole stared wide-eyed as she allowed him to pull her up. The moment she was on her feet she snatched her hand away.

Just then, James found them. Liam's heart pounded in fear and disbelief. It was not possible that she was his mate.

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"It was just a dream. It was just a dream." Nicole muttered under her breath.

She hated it, and she hated that she was like that. Every day was a battle, and she felt like she was drowning in a sea of fear and pain. She missed her wolf, the part of her that was strong and fearless and hated herself for what she had gone through.

She felt like she was some sort of traumatic person who couldn't stand on her own. She hated that she had to be away from the pack to regain her sanity. She hated that she needed caretakers. Standing up, she began rearranging her room again. She had nothing to do until Asha or Maya came to see her. Liam had made it mandatory for every pack member to train, and she couldn't deny Asha or Maya that.

After cleaning, she brought out her laundry basket, poured out its contents, then sat beside the huge pile of clothes, and began rearranging them into the same basket. She needed to do something to keep her mind off her memories and dreams until Asha arrived with Maya.

Although she wasn't keen on opening up to anyone just yet, she was happy to watch them interact.

They were the only ones she was able to accommodate in recent times.

Sure, whenever they came around, Nicole pursed her lips, and her spine automatically stiffened, but they didn't know how much their one-sided conversations were helping her.

It made her want to heal, to let go, to be a bit happy again. But that could only happen when the image of Shane was scrubbed out from her memories, dreams, and even existence.

Shaking her head, she stopped her thoughts from going further. She chose to think of what was good. What was freeing?

Asha had a new crush whom she couldn't stop talking about. Maya, on the other hand, didn't care for crushes. She only believed in mates. So their arguments made an interesting conversation to listen to.

Thankfully, they didn't ask for her opinion most of the time and just kept on with their banter.

Other times, they filled her in on happenings in the pack, giving her information that she wasn't interested in. It was good, at least she had learned to smile and talk again, but it wasn't enough.

Nicole sighed and placed another folded piece of clothing into the basket. She was lonely, yet whenever they came over, her body itched for them to be gone. A lone tear streaked down her eyes. She promised herself that she was done crying, but the tears still came. Why did it have to

be her? Why was she so unfortunate and different? It had been a month, and she still couldn't bring herself to talk about what she had gone through. The memories were too painful, too raw, and she didn't want to relive them by speaking about them. She missed her wolf dearly, the one part of herself that had always felt strong and in control.

Her hatred for herself, for what had happened and for the weakness she had shown by allowing herself to be captured and tortured, grew daily.

The worst part was that although she was captured, none of what she experienced was real. Yet, the mere thought of reliving those moments sent shivers down her spine. Why couldn't the images of Shane touching and fondling her be expunged from her brain? Why did it still feel so real?

Where was her wolf?

A tingling sensation spread through her fingertips, making her drop the clothing in her hand and stare at her hands.

Liam. A voice in her head said as the tingling continued. Closing her eyes, she inhaled deeply and remembered their encounter. It was like something shifted when she touched him. She was still afraid of him, still unsure if she could trust him.

But when their hands touched as he pulled her up in the forest, something shifted inside of her. It

was like a spark ignited, awakening parts of her that she had thought were dead.

In that touch, she felt Liam's pain, his regret, and his longing. She could sense his desire to help her, to protect her, and to make things right. For the first time in a long time, she felt something different. It was like a tiny spark of light in her dark soul. Her body has always wanted him, but this was different.

Her chest was still constricted from all the pain, but there was something new, like a freeing outlet. Was it his mark? Maybe it was the strength in his eyes or the kindness in his voice.

Or maybe it was the way he seemed to understand her without her even having to speak. All she knew was that she wanted to be close to him, to feel the safety and comfort that he seemed to offer.

But even as she felt drawn to him, she couldn't shake the fear that lingered at the back of her mind. She didn't want to be hurt again. She didn't want to be vulnerable in front of anyone. Yet, something about Liam made her want to let down her guard, to open up to him, and to let him in. When they walked back to the cabin, she couldn't help but feel a sense of uncertainty. She didn't know what the future held, and neither did she know if she would ever fully heal from the trauma

she had experienced. But for the first time in a long time, she felt like she had someone to lean on, someone who would be there for her come what may.

And maybe, just maybe, that is enough for now. After idling around in the house, Nicole wandered into the woods surrounding her cabin. She was out for a walk in the woods, trying to clear her head. This time around, she dared to walk close to the pack dwellings, listening to the sounds of the animals in the forest, mixed with the ringing out laughter, grunts, whispers, and conversations of pack members. She allowed the chattering and chirping to lead her farther than she'd walked in a while.

She had been lost in the woods and her thoughts until she heard the sounds of the water. It was peaceful, and it called her soul. Curious, she followed the sounds until she could smell the water and everything about it.

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Her eyes fluttered close, and she inhaled deeply. As the sweet smell of nature, water, and the wet

humus soil at its shore caressed her being, she felt one of the obstructions that had kept her indifferent for a long time dislodge. It felt so good to feel.

She allowed her feet to lead her through the pathway until she stumbled upon Garrett, sitting on a fallen tree trunk, staring off into the distance. Nicole noticed the sadness in his eyes and could sense the pain he was feeling.

Startled, she stood frozen for a while. She had heard what happened when a mate was lost. It was even worse if the surviving mate was male. He could go on a killing rampage after going rogue.

She had heard from Asha that Garrett's silence kept everyone at the edge of their seats. They knew it wouldn't be long before he finally exploded, and no one wanted to be around him when he finally let grief and anger eat him.

Wide-eyed and heart-slapping in her chest, she stepped forward. Garrett was so lost that he didn't even sense the movement of her feet.

She would have called out to him, but she was terrified of making him snap. So she threaded silently.

Garrett's head snapped up, and her breath hitched. She couldn't read him, and it terrified her. He slowly got to his feet, his expression stoic and set in stone.

"Hey, Garrett," she said softly.

Garrett managed a weak smile. And before she knew it, she fell into his arms. He felt like kin, like a kin spirit in grief and unending pain. Like a true friend. She hadn't realized how much she missed him until she was in his arms. In many ways, Garrett had been there for him.

"Hey, Nicole. What brings you out here?" He croaked, his voice filled with sorrow.

"Just taking a walk," she replied, "What about you?"

"Just needed some fresh air," he said, his voice filled with sadness.

They swayed in silence for a few moments, both lost in their own thoughts. Then Nicole spoke up. "I heard about what happened to your mate. I'm so sorry, Garrett."

Garrett looked away, tears filling his eyes. "I don't know how to go on without her," he said softly.

Nicole felt a pang of sadness for him. She knew what it was like to lose someone one loved. "I know it's hard," she said gently. "But you have to keep going. For her. She would want you to be happy."

Garrett's arms went limp, and he broke the hug. Without a word, he guided her to the trunk. They were both silent again. The tension and fear rippled through the air.

Finally, Garrett spoke.

"I don't know how to go on without her," he repeated, his voice trembling with emotion. "She was everything to me, and now she's gone."

Nicole's heart broke. She couldn't imagine what he was feeling, but it was similar to the unending pain she was in. Her mouth was stuck together as she tried to put forth something encouraging.

"I'm so sorry," she said softly. "I can't imagine how hard this must be for you."

Garrett looked at her, his eyes filled with tears. "I don't want to go on," he said. "I just want to be with her again."

Nicole reached out and took his hand. "I know how you feel," she said. "But you have to keep going. You have to honor her memory and live the life she would have wanted for you."

Garrett looked at her with a mix of gratitude and sadness. "You're right," he said, his voice barely above a whisper.

They sat in silence for a few more minutes before Garrett spoke up again.

"Would you like to talk about it?" he asked, "I heard you've become some sort of a recluse."

Nicole gasped. Her body began trembling, but she fought it.

"It's okay, Nicole," Garrett said soothingly. "It's difficult."

"I know we haven't talked much, but I feel like we have something in common. We've both been through a lot of pain and trauma. And I think we could help each other." Nicole gritted out.

Garrett looked at her, surprised. "You want to talk about it?"

Nicole nodded. "I don't want to keep it bottled up anymore. And I think you should talk to someone as well."

Garrett hesitated for a moment before nodding.

"Okay. Where do we start?"

They talked for hours, sharing their stories and their pain. Nicole tells Garrett about her abduction and the torture she endured. How she couldn't come to terms with what she went through was induced and unreal.

Garrett shared his memories of his mate and the pain he felt after her death. They cried together, and for the first time in a long time, Nicole felt like she wasn't alone. It did wonders for them mentally.

So she suggested that they meet secretly and continue communicating. They spent more time together, talking and offering each other support. Garrett encouraged Nicole to interact more with the pack, and she slowly started to feel more comfortable around them again.

It proved to be tremendous for both of them. Surprisingly, Garrett's recovery was faster. He soon began to integrate himself into pack matters again. One day, Garrett approached her with an idea. "I know you've been looking for a way out of this mess," he said. "It's also impossible for you to go back to old routines. How about I talk to some of the omegas and see if they need any help? It might be a good way for you to get back into the swing of things."

Nicole smiled, grateful for his kindness. "That sounds great, Garrett. Thank you."

Garrett smiled back. "Of course. Anything for a friend."

Nicole felt a sense of warmth in her chest. She had never had a friend like Garrett before, and she was grateful for his presence in her life. As they walked away, she felt hope alive again; things might finally be getting better.

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As surprising and heart-warming as it was to see Nicole finally venture out of her shell while

helping Garrett get over his grief, Liam was displeased.

He unsuccessfully tried to push away the feelings of jealousy and anger that he felt every time he saw Nicole with Garrett. He had no right to feel that way, especially after trying hard to get rid of his bond with Nicole, but he couldn't help it. Seeing them together made his chest tighten and his heartache.

Worsening his situation was that he was still battling with the thought that she might be his mate. He couldn't confirm it until she had regained full control of herself, and her wolf was released from its dormant state.

So he watched them, knowing how important their relationship was to the pack and each other, while his wolf clawed within him. Most times, he ignored them and busied himself with duties that led him out of the pack.

Just that he couldn't go too far because, even though Garrett was trying to establish himself, he was still a long way from being in charge for long. So Liam kept himself busy, too busy to think or reason.

He occupied every part of his mind with the protection of his pack, walking the grounds with James and the strategy team, making plans, and taking and correcting ideas. Liam made sure to

avoid them.

Every morning, he would do some patrolling before heading off to pack training. On one of the mornings, he stood frozen still as he saw them sitting together on a bench, talking and laughing. He felt a burst of jealousy shoot through him, but he forced himself to keep walking.

As he passed them, he heard Nicole say, "Garrett, you've been a lifesaver for me. I don't know where I would be without you."

Garrett smiled and put his arm around her. "I'm just happy to help, Nicole. You've been through so much, and you deserve all the support you can get." Liam felt a knot form in his stomach as he continued walking. Garrett was right. Nicole needed support and help, and he couldn't provide that for her.

He was incapable of providing such things for her, so he had to accept that she was healing with someone else by her side. Yet his claws dug into his flesh as he fought to keep his lid from blowing off.

But his wolf couldn't accept it. It growled low in his chest, and he felt his fangs develop. He wanted to challenge Garrett for Nicole's affection. It was foolish and selfish even. But his wolf was way past reasoning. Images of Garrett's decapitated body were the only things that soothed it

as he forced himself to trudge by.

He didn't stop or branch until he was in his room. He pressed a small remote, and a secret compartment slid out from behind some shelves. With his anger brimming, he punched in the passcode and stepped into his version of a panic room or mostly a containment room.

As soon as it sealed him and he figured he was alone, he released all the anger bubbling inside the reinforced silver and granite walls. Punching and creating dents that bounced back on it. He roared out all his anger, clawing at the walls as his wolf took full charge.

It wanted blood. It wanted Garrett's blood. He roared, clawed, and growled until he released all his pent-up anger. When it passed, he fell to the floor panting. Unable to shake the feeling of emptiness that had settled in his chest. Nicole was an enigma in his head, and he didn't know how to express what he was feeling without scaring her. He hated when she flinched when he was close by. His only consolation was the sparks he felt the last time they touched.

Liam stayed sprawled on the floor with his sweaty body. He was tired. This was the first time he had ever felt so frustrated over a female. He still ached to rip Nicole off Garrett's arms and hold

her until she saw, felt, and understood how she drove him insane. He stayed there until James released him.

James examined him silently as he limped out of the panic room, his feelings and thoughts hidden behind his dark eyes.

"We'll meet at the office," he said, with his arms folded behind his back as he walked away.

Liam showered and returned to studying.

A few minutes later, there was a knock on the door.

Liam sighed and said, "Come in."

James strolled in with a guarded expression and his hands behind his back. "Alpha, there's something you need to see."

Grudgingly, Liam stood up and followed James to the training grounds. As they approached, Liam could see a group of wolves sparring. But something was off; they were fighting too aggressively, and Liam could sense anger and hatred in their movements.

"What's going on here?" Liam demanded.

James looked gloomy, "These are some of the younger wolves. They're upset about the attack on the pack. They're taking out their frustration on each other."

Liam felt a surge of anger. "This is unacceptable. They can't let their emotions cloud their

judgment. We need to remind them that they're part of a pack, and that means looking out for each other."

He walked into the training ring and shouted, "Enough!"

The wolves stopped fighting and looked at him in a distrustful manner.

"I know you're angry. I'm angry, too. But taking it out on each other won't solve anything. We need to stand together and be there for each other. That's what being part of a pack means. We can't let fear and anger tear us apart."

There was a moment of silence, and then one of the younger wolves stepped forward. "But Alpha, what about what happened with Nicole? She was attacked and kidnapped. We need to do something about it. We can't just sit back and wait for it to happen again."

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Liam nodded. "You're right. We do need to take action. But we need to do it as a pack. That is why we came up with a plan and worked together to protect each other. So you don't need to do

this. Trust me, your training sessions do a lot more than strengthen you." He said, authority and mildness flowing out through his voice.

The younger wolf hesitated and then nodded. "Okay, Alpha. We'll stand with you."

Relief washed over Liam. The last thing he needed was an internal rift. Not when they had a witch who could easily feed off negative emotions.

Giving James a nod, he joined them in their training, teaching them for a few hours. They reminded him of when he was younger and started as an alpha.

They helped to occupy his mind, but as he walked back to his office, his thoughts drifted again to Nicole and Garrett. That night, Liam couldn't sleep. His thoughts kept drifting back to Nicole and the bond she seemed to share with Garrett. He tossed and turned, grappling with his emotions. The room felt suffocating, and he needed air.

Leaving his quarters, Liam made his way to the pack's training grounds. The cool night air filled his lungs as he stepped onto the open field.

Moonlight bathed the area, casting a heavenly glow on

the surroundings.

He watched as the wolves, guided by their instincts, trained under the moon's watchful gaze. Their

movements were fluid, a display of strength and agility. Liam's gaze shifted from one wolf to another, their forms blending with the shadows. Then his eyes landed on Garrett. The Beta moved with grace and determination, his energy focused and intense. Admiration at his skill and dedication rose within him as he watched him. But alongside the admiration, lingered a hint of envy. Garrett was and had been his closest buddy. But he couldn't stand close to him, firstly because of Nicole and secondly, because his wolf would immediately want to challenge and assess his position as Beta.

So he watched his friend from afar, glad that he hadn't needed to kill or remove him from his position. I'm glad that he was bouncing back when others would have lost their minds, but still angry and scared, because why was it that out of everyone who could possibly help him, he chose Nicole?

He understood it, but he hated it. He wanted Nicole to be his and his alone.

Garrett noticed Liam's presence and approached him. "Alpha Liam, what brings you here at this hour?"

Liam sensed a little fear in his voice.

Liam sighed, his shoulders sagging. "I couldn't sleep," he confessed. "My mind is restless, filled

with thoughts of Nicole and everything that has transpired."

Just then, James slipped out and stood at his other side.

"What can I do for you?" Liam asked James, trying to sound casual.

"We need to talk," James gritted out, looking from Liam to Garrett. "We need to talk about Nicole."

Liam bristled at the mention of her name, but he tried to keep his cool. "What about her?" he asked.

"I think you need to take it slow with her," Garrett sighed, "we can feel your anger," Liam's temper snapped, and he chuckled bitterly. "Oh, I'm slow. I'm mighty slow, Tony, because if I wasn't...." He trailed off.

"You're right, Garrett," James added. But you're not in the position to tell him that. Not when you're bearing the scent of the woman he has marked. The only reason you're still alive is because of the bond you share as brothers. That, and that her wolf is dormant."

Liam looked away, James said the words he had been harbouring.

"And, Alpha, you need to let go. Everyone sees how beneficial their relationship is."

"I know that," Liam snapped. "I'm not stupid. I just can't help the way I feel."

Garrett shook his head and chuckled, "That's the problem, Liam. You never could. You hurt her before because you couldn't control your feelings. Isn't this what you wanted?"

Liam felt a growl building in his throat. He faced Garrett. "Mind your words and watch your tone, Tony," he snarled. "I just never thought I would feel it for someone like her."

Garrett met Liam's glare. "That's the thing, Liam. You don't think you're capable of love, so you never even try. You pushed her away once, you pushed her away several times, and you'll do it again if you don't get a grip on your feelings."

The two werewolves stood nose to nose, growling at each other. Liam's wolf was itching to take control, but he couldn't lose his temper, not when his wolf was on the edge. He took a deep breath and stepped back.

James stepped between them, sensing the tension. "Guys, come on," he said, trying to diffuse the situation. "We're all on the same team here."

Liam gritted his teeth and turned away from Garrett. "Fine," he said, his voice low. "I'll try to take it slow."

Garrett sighed and sat back down, "That's all we're asking, Liam. Just take the time to get to know

her again. She's been through hell. Don't add to it." Liam swallowed, Garrett's words angered him. What right did he have to tell him about his mate?

The rage swelled against his reasoning, and before he could control it, his wolf took over.

He lunged at Garrett, slamming him against the wall.

Garrett tried to fight back, but Liam was too strong. James rushed to separate them, but it took all of his strength to hold Liam back.

"Enough!" James shouted. "Both of you, calm down."

Liam's wolf slowly receded, and he felt himself coming back to his senses. Growling, he stepped away from Garrett.

"I'm sorry," he muttered, his head hung low. "I don't know what came over me."

Garrett straightened his clothes and shook his head.

"It's fine," he said, his voice steady. "We both got carried away."

They stared at each other for a moment. The tension between them heightened. Liam was still fighting his control and hurt. He felt betrayed.