

Chapter 186 – Beauty and The Beta

I had to give it to Morgan. She stood up to Miles. Not that he seemed to care in the slightest. And now, as he turned to Bailey, we just need her to do the same. . “Seems to be an awful lot of people rushing to protect you Bailey. You been telling lies again?” he said, and his voice held an accusing tone, I can’t say I cared for. “I suppose all of you don’t know how good Bailey is at telling lies, do you? Making people believe things that didn’t really happen. Like, me rejecting her, when in truth it was her rejecting me?” he looked at her with a smirk, one that made me want to knock his head clean right off his shoulders. Did he truly think we would believe that?

I turned to look at Bailey, knowing she must be feeling a pit of emotion right now. She had to want him gone. But as I turned to look at Miles I could see Caleb and Marc were watching him. I’d like to say through narrowed eyes, but they both look confused. They both knew the situation, they should not have been taken in by this dick’s words...

“Oh, so she is a liar is she?” Caleb suddenly spoke up, before I even had an opportunity to defend Bailey. Ultimately, glad my friend had seen through the lies. “Yet out there you admitted to me, you regretted rejecting Bailey. So, you may want to consider getting your stories straight.” He looked at Miles with a small smirk. “Exactly which one of you is it that is lying?”

I held back the smile that was forming. Miles had to know he had nowhere to go with this if that is what had just happened. Though we knew the information we had, we knew his words were all lies. All produced to make him look better, or to get him out of a tight situation. But what bothered me more, was the fact this sick bastard now said he regretted his decision to reject Bailey. That meant he wanted her back, not just in his pack, but as his mate. This could not happen. And it was not going to end well.

“Maybe I was trying to garner pity, so you would allow me into the pack? I needed to speak with Bailey.” Miles said, and Caleb looked at me incredulously. Was this guy for real? His stories seemed to be swirling out of control.

Caleb chuckled. “Your stories seem so far-fetched, I think even you are forgetting the tales you have told. I know I struggle to keep up with them. Perhaps it is time you gave up trying to be an Alpha and considered a career as an author, because you are damn good at making up tales. Maybe it is time you gave up, Miles. We are not your pack, we are not your family, and we won’t be easily swayed by you. Nor are we going to be idol-worshiping you, meaning you easily get away with things like you have been doing in your pack. Here you are held accountable for your actions.”

Miles turned to look at Caleb, like his words meant nothing. “I think you forget, Alpha.” The way he said Alpha was filled with venom. He did not like being put in his place, whether it was by an Alpha more powerful than him or not. “These girls are my pack. Always mine.”

The way in which his last two words were said was intentional. Possessive... causing Zion to push forward aggressively, growling, just as Marc was growling deeply behind me. Neither one liked this man staking claim on our women. "You might want to reconsider that, because Morgan is my mate, wearing my mark, and therefore became a part of my pack." Marc snarled angrily. He was ready to attack...

"Oh, dude, you are welcome to that one." Miles laughed.

I was heavily aware of Bailey's hand upon my arm. It had moved there the moment I had growled, in what I believed was an attempt to calm me. Her big brown eyes rested upon me, looking at me pleadingly. She did not want me to respond. But I could not leave it like this.

"Bailey is not yours. She is entitled to a life. To make choices of her own." I said, trying desperately to remain calm despite the fact I was battling Zion terribly within my mind. He wanted to be let out to defend Bailey. He wanted to take this man down. Destroy him...

"Awww, and you think she would pick you, do you, poor little Beta boy?" Miles jeered, an evil grin upon his face.

"Miles!" Bailey snapped, while Zion pushed further forward and hair began to appear thicker upon my arms...

Miles laughed. "Oh, did you not like that Beta boy? Realizing she would not want you when it came down to it? See, we were always brought up to be loyal to our pack. Bailey has never failed in that. See, she is one of those people who goes above and beyond to do the right thing. Trying to please everyone. Always doing what was expected of her to remain loyal to the pack, so what makes you think she would pick you now over her upcoming Alpha? Over her pack?"

I rolled my eyes. His description of Bailey was too close to being accurate, it worried me. Surely she would not be foolish enough to lose her opportunity of freedom because of her ties to her pack? I felt sick at the thought... And this fuckwit was getting on my last nerve now, and as I went to stand to deal with him, Caleb mindlinked. 'Sit. I am dealing with this.' He ordered.

I had no option but to follow his order, and did just that, placing myself next to Bailey on the bed, who looked at me with confusion.

"Right, Miles, you came to speak with Bailey, did you not? Yet all you have done so far is insult my pack members." Caleb said angrily. He sounded like he had had enough now too, not that I can blame him, he likely wanted to get home to Eden by now.

"Well, perhaps if they would all fuck off, and let me speak to her instead of acting like a personal guard, I would have been able to talk to her." He snarled.

“We are not leaving her.” I growled back. “And surely Bailey should have a choice as to whether she even wants to speak with him. Considering everything? She likely wouldn’t want him anywhere near her, and could you blame her?”

Miles rested his angry gaze upon me, his eyes flashing between his own and his wolf’s, telling me he was as equally desperate to fly at me, as I was at him. “She will listen to me. She is from my pack. I am her upcoming Alpha. This is pack business.” Miles said bluntly.

“Fucking pack business?!” I snapped. “No, it is you here in a desperate bid to get her back because you fucked up. Why the hell would she want to listen to you?”

“It is our business. Fuck all to do with you.” Miles snarled. “I have things I need to say to her. Things she needs to listen to.”

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This fucking Beta seemed to have a death wish. But he seemed to also want Bailey. And that was simply not going to work. I did not like the way she was looking at him. I had seen that look from her before, though maybe not quite as intense. And that was to the warrior boy. She had more than a thing for this one... she had best not have given herself to this one. She was mine. Fated to me. My mate. I felt fury rippling through me, as her new “friend” glared at me from her side on the bed.

“Fucking pack business?!” he snapped at me angrily. “No, it is you here in a desperate bid to get her back because you fucked up. Why the hell would she want to listen to you?”

He sure had a fucking nerve. I will give him that much! He knew I was an upcoming Alpha yet spoke down to me like I was a nobody. I would destroy him if given a chance. If it wasn’t for his beefed-up Alpha buddy, I would have kicked his ass by now. I needed the opportunity to speak to Bailey, but that would only come if I behaved. I knew that. This Alpha Caleb had made that more than clear...

“It is our business. Fuck all to do with you.” I snarled. “I have things I need to say to her. Things she needs to listen to.”

“If it is to do with Bailey, it is to do with me...” The Beta began.

“Stop!” Bailey interrupted, and my eyes darted towards her. A smile formed on my face. I think my plan was working... “I want to hear what he has to say.” she added, and at that moment, my heart soared. She was willing to hear me out. I knew mentioning our expected loyalty to pack would make this choice hard for her. It was something all of our pack members are taught, but something her family, especially her father, are extremely dedicated to. It was what made Bailey keep coming back to pack when so many others would have run by now, I was sure of it...

I saw the sheer disappointment upon the Beta boy's face. He looked desolate. Absolutely heartbroken. Haha. I loved it. Every fucking moment. He hoped she would not want to hear me out. He hoped she would tell me to leave and never come back. But the thing was, there would always be a connection between Bailey and me. We had grown up together. Our families were like family. Despite the animosity between us, we had been close until she started doing better than me in school. Then she was simply nothing more than an irritation.

I hated that she could so easily excel while I struggled. And when I turned to her for help she refused, saying I would never learn if I didn't do the work myself. Everyone else in the pack would bend over backward for me, do whatever I asked of them, but this girl, she never did. And I hated her for it. She never saw me as special because of my title. Maybe that was because we were fated and somewhere deep down she knew it, but her lack of respect infuriated me further.

"Well, she has said she will hear you out, Miles. Yet, you stand there not saying a word. Get on with it. It is late, and Bailey needs to rest." Apha Caleb said icily, interrupting my thoughts, and I looked at him as coldly as he had spoken to me. I walked to the edge of her bed, where she looked up at me tentatively. She did not look quite as stunning as she had when she walked into our pack this morning. But despite the injuries, and the wildness of her hair, I could still see the natural beauty that lay beneath. Maybe it had been there all along, and I had just allowed my resentment towards her to make me miss it...

"Bailey, I hope you will give me a chance to explain myself properly." I said quietly, and she nodded.

"Well, that is what you came for, isn't it?" she said, and I had to smile. She may be injured, but her attitude was evidently not hurt. "And I think I am due an explanation, if not an apology."

"I believe so." I nodded, hating all the other curious eyes being upon us, but knowing I likely had no other choice right now. "Look, I owe you an apology, I know that. Hell, I owe you many apologies. I never did treat you the way you deserved. Not since we were young, anyway. You can't deny we had fun growing up?" I looked at her, and she was looking down toward her hands, fiddling with her fingers, which made me wonder if she did not want to think of the memories of us all growing up together. They were good memories, she had to know that.

I sighed. If I could not use good memories to my benefit, then I have to work harder... "I have never been the smartest Bai, you know that. That was why we ended up falling out. I was childish. I resented you. And, I held that against you for longer than I ever should have. I turned to you for help and you walked away. From then on, I was set on revenge, never realizing that you would be the one the moon goddess selected for me. Not that it matters, that was never the way to treat someone..." I looked at her again, and her big brown eyes were looking at me, but she shook her head. I don't think she ever knew my reasons. Well, she did now.

“That was why you treated Bai the way you did?” Morgan asked in shock.

“I am not going into it. But yes.” I admitted, and I saw many disgusted faces. I knew I was in the wrong, I did not need telling. I just needed to convince this girl I could change. “Bai, I realize now I made a mistake. I should never have rejected you. The moon goddess decided you were the one that was meant for me, and I think she was right. I have thought back so many times to how close we used to be growing up, before all this mess...” I faltered, and I could see her face was emotionless, as she looked up at the Beta.

“Why do you look at him?” I asked. “Do you need his input? This is between you and me, is it not? Can they not leave?”

Alpha Caleb shook his head. “We stay. Ensure her safety.”

I rolled my eyes again. I would not hurt her. Not now. I wanted to make her mine. The way fate had intended all along. “Is a guy not able to make mistakes? So long as he can admit them?” I urged her, and her eyes darted to mine. I was shocked at the anger I found there. This was not the mild and weak girl I remembered. She had changed recently. She was certainly more confident. Bolder. Braver...

“Make mistakes?” she questioned. “Miles, you almost killed Harley just so he could not be with me. He left the pack to escape you. Yes, you may have had your reasons within your mind for being a dick with me, all because I refused to help you with your studies, or should I say do all your studies for school to help you pass, but you made my life hell for far too long, and dragged others into that too. They aren’t mistakes, they were choices. Mistakes are one-time things, but these things were happening time and time again.”

“And I am sorry for them, so, so sorry for them. Do you not see that? I requested an annulment from Kaia today because I realized it should have been you. I should never have given up on you. I have been a fool, Bai. Please, give me a chance to prove I can change?” I lied. She did not need to know the circumstances of the situation with Kaia.

“You will never change. You went for treatment and came back worse.” She said coldly. “Whatever went on with Kaia is nothing to do with me. We are not connected anymore.”

My heart ached at the thought. I needed her to want me. Every other she-wolf I tried with wanted me, but the one I needed seemed to resist me so easily... “Bai, come on, darling. You know we could be good together. Luna and Alpha? You and me? Yes, I messed up, and I will spend forever making that up to you.” I put on my best charm, my voice a deep purr. “Think of the pack. What do you say?” I added, hoping that would sway her.

But instead her eyes fell on the Beta, tears beginning to build. And he suddenly enveloped her in an embrace. Angry eyes were upon me from all directions as I began to realize my plan was failing miserably. I was about to speak again, try desperately to win Bailey over, when I saw her whispering to the Beta. And then I saw a smile spread upon his face as he

looked at her adoringly as she offered him her neck. Before I could move, his canines had elongated and his teeth sunk into her neck... he had marked her!

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Being ordered to sit and allow this dick to have his say had been bad enough. But what broke me was the fact that Bailey had said she wanted to hear him out. She wanted to hear what he had to say. Zion whimpered the moment those words had left her mouth. Terror had filled every part of me. He had played on her loyalty to her pack. Even I could see that. Manipulating her emotions, I just hope she could see it too.

Bailey was loyal to a fault. And I would never criticize her for that, but it worried me that it meant she would find herself in a position she did not want to be. That it could mean we find one another apart...

But, her hand remained upon my arm as Miles tried his hardest to convince her, and the expression upon her face barely changed. She looked down at her hands fiddling with her fingers. I barely took my eyes from her, and I think I saw her look at Miles a matter of a few times, and there was no fear there. She was not scared of him, and she was standing up to him.

His excuses were the most pathetic I think I have ever heard. It seemed to come across to me, that he had chosen to make her life a living hell, and turn the kids of their ages against her all because she refused to do his school work for him? All because she was more intelligent than him? Please visit [J o b n I b . c o m](http://Jobnib.com) and search the book title to read the entire book for free. He needed her help to pass his school grades and she refused him. He was so used to everyone doing things for him, trying hard to please him, that when someone suddenly didn't, he hadn't known how to handle it; and he took revenge.

Even Morgan was shocked, and she will have been one of his minions, one of the ones following him and doing as he did in a desperate attempt to fit in with him...

I heard him apologize, and I saw no reaction from Bailey. Her eyes were cold. Emotionless. I wished we could mindlink right now so I could determine if she was okay. I needed to know what she was thinking. Her emotions and her face were so hard to read at the best of times, but in this moment they were near on impossible, and it seemed Miles was struggling too, as he almost begged her to forgive his mistakes. But Bailey fought back. She gave him shit, and I sat there a hidden smile in proudness for her. She was stronger than she ever gave herself credit for.

Seeing the pain upon the upcoming Alpha's face as Bailey told him they shared no connection shocked me. He looked genuinely hurt, and I could not help but wonder if he held genuine feelings for her, or if it was the fact he knew she would be his last hope at a title that he so desperately craved. But he blurted out some shit about proving himself to

her. His voice had changed, a bid to charm her, it seemed, while mentioning the pack once more to manipulate her. And at the mention of the pack I saw tears in Bailey's eyes.

He was a dick. Bailey's eyes fell on me, full of questions. Full of doubt. I knew she was scared right now, even I could sense that. I hated seeing her like that, and all I wanted was to reassure her. I wanted to be there for her. I could not care that this fuckwit was here bringing what appeared to be his pathetic attempt at charming her, I needed to hold her... be there for her...

I leaned forward, wrapping my arms around her, needing to feel her in my arms. I so desperately did not want to lose her, but I had to let her make her choice. If her loyalty to her family and her pack was what had to come first, I had to respect that. I felt tears filling my eyes, as Zion whimpered, obviously picking up on my emotions right now. I felt Bailey tilt her head slightly, so her mouth was tickling my ear.

"Ash?" she whispered, taking me by surprise as the warmth of her breath sent a shiver down my spine. I nodded gently in response. "I know this is out of the blue, and so not how we would have wanted this, but if we do this now, he can do no more. I will be yours. I will belong to you. To your pack..." her voice faltered a little and my heart raced as I realized where I thought this was going, as she continued. "Will you mark me?" she added, and I could not hold back the smile spreading across my face as I pulled back slightly to look down at her. Damn, I loved this girl... and I did not need asking twice!

Zion wasted no time in helping out, in pushing forward to allow my canines to elongate, as Bailey smiled up at me, nothing more but happiness in her eyes as she offered me her neck. No, this may not be the way we would like to do this, in a hectic room, but we could always mark one another again. This made her mine. It meant she was safe...

I leaned a little further forward as I sunk my teeth into the soft skin of Bailey's neck. In the spot where her collar bone met her neck, and I felt the shudder rush through my body as the matebond snapped into place... and a sense of contentment flooded me too. Tears filled my eyes as I realized, I felt whole again... I had been withdrawn and alone for so long. Broken and isolated after losing Isla... and Bailey had fixed me.

The metallic taste of her blood filled my mouth, before I ran my tongue along her mark to help it heal and clean up any blood. A rush of pleasure and happiness flooded through me in that moment as I pulled away to look at Bailey, who was looking up at me with wide eyes. That sense of completeness so strong. Who knew Bailey could be the one to bring that for me?

'Hey you.' she mindlinked, with a little wink, and I smiled.

"Well, I think you have your answer, don't you?" I heard Caleb say to Miles, and I had to hold back the threatening laugh. My friend was definitely being to the point today...

“No. Bailey, you are making a mistake. You know that, right?” Miles tried, and Bailey shook her head.

“No. You were the mistake, Miles. A mistake from the moon goddess when she fated me to you. Because that never made sense. I would never come back to you. Or that pack.” Bailey said confidently, as she held onto my hand tightly. “This is where I belong.”

And hearing her declare that to him, to the world sounded so good. I don’t think I had heard better words...

Miles shook his head, somewhere between disgust and shock. “Clearly you made your choice. I do not want another man’s sloppy seconds. I will be leaving now.” He began to turn away, though I swear there was a hint of pain in his voice, perhaps even a tear in his eyes.

“I am afraid that isn’t happening.” Caleb said icily, as the doctor walked into the room unexpectedly with a nod toward our Alpha. “You have said what you came to say, allowed Bailey to gain her closure, and had somewhat of a pathetic attempt at an apology. Now, you will come to the cells. The Council are on their way for you.”

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I was never going to take the words of Miles as the truth. He never did speak the truth. I knew that. I saw the hurt upon Asher’s face as I said I wanted to hear what Miles had to say, but, I wanted to hear what he had to say. I wanted to see if he would apologize to me. I felt I deserved an apology after everything over the years. And, I wanted an explanation. Over the years I had tried so hard to work out what it was that made Miles turn on me, and had never been able to fathom it. Hearing him say it was because I had refused to do his school work to help him gain his grades made me see that I had been right all along.

His reasons were not valid. Not in my mind. He said he could change. I knew he couldn’t. Or he would have done as he grew up. He would have seen the error of his ways, and if anything, over time, he had got worse. No. I knew what I needed to do. He just made it harder when he kept mentioning the pack. He was right, we were brought up to be loyal to our pack, and that was what kept me coming back to the pack. So many times during my time away studying I had been tempted to go AWOL. To never return. I had told myself I was sure I wouldn’t be missed, my parents’ focus was always on my brother, with him being the heir to the Beta title. Or my younger sister. I easily faded into the background.

But, no, the commitment to our pack that we had ingrained within us would play upon my mind and always bring me back. That and a loyalty to my family. But this time it was competing with love. Love for Asher. And, I knew now I had my Dad’s permission. He had said he was happy for me to be here. But, deep down, I knew even if he hadn’t, I would be leaving. I wanted Asher. I wanted to leave and be here. Autumn Valley Pack was all I wanted – the job, the community, and, of course, the mean, mysterious and moody Beta

that had etched his place within my heart. I wanted all of that. I needed Asher. He had changed my view of life. Of myself. I couldn't imagine my life without him now; and I was not ready to let him go.

So when Miles was trying his hardest with his fake-ass pimp voice, that so many of the she-wolves in the pack would swoon over, trying to convince me to imagine us as Alpha and Luna, and adding in the manipulation of thinking of the pack, I found my eyes looking at Asher. I could see the fear in his eyes. He was scared of losing me. Akira was telling me that. She and Zion had to be talking, despite her weakness. I knew then what I needed to do. It would end all questions, and hopefully it would send this dick packing too. I would not risk this anymore...

I felt tears in my eyes, and Asher wrapped his arms around me. I winced in pain as he did, but right now, I didn't care. I knew what I needed to do, whether there were people watching us or not. We could do this again when we were alone. Right now, we needed to do this. Make this official. I rested my mouth next to his ear, and felt him shiver, the way I love when I know I am doing something he likes, before I whispered to him so nobody else could hear, "Ash?" I felt him nodding. I couldn't quite believe I was about to do this. "I know this is out of the blue, and so not how we would have wanted this, but if we do this now, he can do no more. I will be yours. I will belong to you. To your pack..." my voice faltered. What if he didn't want this yet? But I knew I had to ask. "Will you mark me?"

The smile upon his face told me all I needed to know as I offered him my neck. The shock of pain as his teeth broke my skin, was soon followed by an exhilarating pleasure running through me as I felt the matebond begin to form. Oh! wow... we were really doing this! I was going to be Asher's mate! After everything...

Who would have thought when I walked into this place all those weeks ago I would be finding my mate? My mind was a blur as I smiled up at Asher. He was my mate... Akira purred happily in my mind. This was meant to be.

'Hey you.' I couldn't help but link, with a little wink to test out the mindlink, and Asher smiled, his face full of happiness.

"Well, I think you have your answer, don't you?" Alpha Caleb said to Miles, and he most certainly did. I hope our actions have shown him exactly where he stands now. I would never have gone back to the pack, and he was never meant for me.

"No. Bailey, you are making a mistake. You know that right?" Miles said coldly, trying to get my attention. I turned to look at him, shaking my head. He had a fucking nerve. I am making a mistake?

"No. You were the mistake Miles. A mistake from the moon goddess when she fated me to you. Because that never made sense. I would never come back to you. Or that pack." I told

Miles, while squeezing Asher's hand. I knew where I was meant to be. "This is where I belong."

The proudness upon Asher's face told me all I needed to know, while Miles shook his head, with an expression I don't think I had seen upon his face before. Remorse? Guilt? Pity? I honestly didn't know. I think he knew he had lost everything. "Clearly you made your choice. I do not want another man's sloppy seconds. I will be leaving now." He began to turn away, and I was more than happy to allow him to go, so I was surprised to hear Alpha Caleb intervene.

"I am afraid that isn't happening." Alpha Caleb said, his voice full of authority. "You have said what you came to say, allowed Bailey to gain her closure, and had somewhat of a pathetic attempt at an apology. Now, you will come to the cells. The Council are on their way for you."

I was shocked by his words. Somebody had finally reported him to the Werewolf Council? I had been tempted so many times, but Miles had made so many threats to me. I had always backed out, knowing I would have no proof or no back up. Now there was back up, and plenty of it...

Miles's eyes flashed dark, and I knew what that meant, as he roared. "The fucking council?!" He surged forward, his wolf Jet ready to take control, and I knew then we would be in trouble as he was as crazy, if not more so than Miles. But at that instant, Asher, Caleb and Marc were moving. All toward Miles, ready to take him down, and they did. Knocking him to the floor with a sickening thud. Before the doctor, who had slipped into the room at some point, leaned over to where Miles was now layed pinned to the floor by the three strong men of my new pack, and stabbed him in the neck with a syringe, I could only guess with what was likely wolfsbane to sedate him and his wolf...

"We shall take him to the cells, and wait for the Council. He is sedated now. Wolfsbane means he won't be hurting anyone." Caleb said calmly, like he was discussing the weather, rather than having just taken down an absolute psycho. A man who had been making my life hell for far too long. This man was a hero. They all were.

"You two have some time alone. "Congratulations, though." he smiled with a wink, and I could see the big beaming smile upon Asher's face as we watched everyone leave the room, Morgan giving me a sly little wink as she did. Nothing like being indiscreet...

"So, that was unexpected..." Asher looked at me, his eyes filled with so much happiness, I could not help but smile.

"I am sorry for putting you on the spot." I looked up at him awkwardly, hoping he didn't mind what had happened.

But that smile upon his face did not falter, not even for a moment. I think this was the happiest I had seen him since I had arrived. This was most definitely a different side to Asher...

‘You think he has been drinking while we were gone?’ Akira asked with a giggle, making me smile again. ‘Or is he just high on loooooovvvee?!’ she teased. Yeah, I think my wolf would be just fine...

“You do not have to apologize for anything. I would have marked you that first night we spent together...” Asher exclaimed, then he looked down as he seemed to realize what he had admitted, and I giggled.

“Oh, is that right?” I stroked his hand with mine, loving the touch of his skin under mine. I could not wait to be better, so we could be snuggled up together again. “You kept that to yourself didn’t you?!” I teased.

He smiled. “Well, all I can say is I can’t tell you how good it feels to know you are mine, beautiful.” He reached over and gently stroked my face. “I swear Bailey, I could not stop thinking of you since the moment you arrived here. You turned my world upside down without even intending to. I have been terrified the whole time you were away wishing I had told you how I felt for you. Seems I was a little slow on the uptake, scared to admit what I was feeling. But, you were everything I needed and I hadn’t even known it. I love you, Bailey.”

My heart fluttered at his words. He had told me he loved me...

‘Let me at him!’ Akira purred, and I felt her push forward, my canines beginning to elongate, I think she had decided it was time to mark her man...

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I could see Bailey’s eyes watching me as I told her I loved her, they flashed darker for a moment, and I caught sight of her canine teeth, taking me by surprise... was Akira deciding she wanted to mark me too? Was she even well enough? Strong enough after everything?

‘Maybe us marking her did make her stronger?’ Zion suggested. I guess that could be true. The nurse said she couldn’t say for sure if it would, but here she was ready to mark me despite the fact her wolf had to have been weak trying to heal her.

“I love you too, Asher.” Bailey whispered, and those were now the most wonderful words I had heard. Words I hadn’t even realized I had been desperate to hear.

I offered her my neck without a moment’s hesitation. I wanted to have her mark upon me. I wanted this matebond complete. She was the one meant to come into my life and fix me,

I am sure of that. Her arriving in our pack had not been a coincidence. Fate had intervened in a different way... No, I had not been blessed with her as a fated mate, but second-chance mates were rare; yet the connection I felt to Bailey was something else. Like a soulmate. She brought me peace. Contentment. She made me whole again. In a way I never thought could be possible after losing Isla.

And as I felt her teeth sink into my neck, that shudder of pleasure rippled through my body, bringing tears to my eyes as I felt the completed matebond snap into place. Please visit J o b n I b . c o m and search the book title to read the entire book for free. She was mine. Bailey was officially mine. And I was hers. I felt goosebumps spread across my body as she traced her tongue across the new mark I now wore, before I moved back slightly to look at my new mate. I smiled down at her, fighting the tears. "You do not know how happy you have made me." I whispered.

"I think I may have some idea, especially when I feel just as happy." She teased, reaching up to gently stroke where she had just marked me. "I can't believe I have a mate!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"I just wish we hadn't waited so long!" I told her, and she smirked.

"Oh, is that so?" she prodded me playfully, a teasing smile upon her face.

"That is most definitely so!" I reinforced. "But now you have everything you wanted, beautiful, you have the dream job, you have your new pack, and, I would kind of like to think you have your dream man..." I winked, causing her to giggle.

"Meh, he isn't too bad, I guess. Kind of the tall, dark, and handsome type. A little mean and moody. Brooding. Mysterious..." She joked, making me smile. I would settle for that description, she made me sound quite appealing, in fact.

"Ooooh, he sounds perfect." I winked again, and she smiled, her eyes gazing at me adoringly.

"But I definitely do have everything I wanted, Ash. And something I didn't expect; a mate. It shows just what you can find when you aren't even looking." she said to me with so much emotion in her voice. "And to know that Miles will be dealt with is an added bonus. Maybe we should let my Dad know I am okay? Let him know we are mates now, and let him know Miles is here?"

"I think he was notified Miles was here. But I do think he will want to know you are okay, and I would like to think he might want to know you are now settling down." I agreed, only hoping that her family agreed with her choice of chosen mate. After the whole mess with Miles, I would like to think I would not be too much of a dreadful option.

I passed her my phone, and she scrolled through my contacts to find her Dad's contact. Being a Beta, I had contacts for all the Alphas and Betas within our region, and slightly

further afield too. I saw Bailey look at me with uncertainty as she dialled. Was she nervous about telling her Dad we were mates? I sure hoped not...

“Hello?” Beta Donovan’s voice answered almost immediately, despite sounding sleepy, which was unsurprising given the hour. “Beta Asher, please do not tell me you are calling me to tell me something else has happened. Last update I had Bailey was stable. Has that changed?” he demanded before Bailey was able to even get a word in. I could see nothing had changed with this guy, he always had too much to say...

“Good day to you too, Beta Donovan.” I said sarcastically, earning a dark scowl from my new mate, making me smile in response. “Were you going to give us a moment to talk before jumping to a conclusion?”

As Bailey had the phone on speaker, I could hear everything her father said and did, and heard a loud grunt. “Well, it is far from day, is it, you fucking pile of sunshine? And it is a bit hard not to jump to conclusions when I am worried sick, and you call me at an ungodly hour.”

“So you don’t want to know the news then?” I began with a smile, and Bailey looked at me again with a shake of her head this time. Her Dad was too easy to annoy, and I was too childish to resist...

“Hi Dad.” Bailey interrupted.

“Bailey!” he responded, and I could hear relief just in the way he said her name. “You are awake?!”

Zion chuckled. ‘Well if not, she is doing a bloody good job at pretending to be. That is one hell of a circus trick.’ And I held back a laugh at my wolf.

“Seems that way.” Bailey rolled her eyes at me, evidently thinking much the same way as Zion and me.

“Oh, sweetheart, we have been so worried about you. Uncle Marshall has contacted the Werewolf Council about Miles. Ellis is going to be made Alpha too. Things are going to be changing. I don’t know if Morgan told you? Though I believe your Alpha has too. The two Alphas have spoken. The Council should be on their way to you now. I am so sorry that boy has put you through so much. And that we let you down so badly.” I could hear the pain and regret within his voice, so I could only assume Bailey could too, not that it would change the suffering she had gone through at the hands of Miles, but I hoped it meant she could begin to move forward.

“Yeah, I know the Council are coming. I don’t really want to talk about Miles any more Dad. He is done with. He has done enough damage within my life. And besides, I have bigger and better things to look forward to.” She said, and I could hear pride

dripping from her words, and it made my heart melt. She was talking about us... our future...

“Oh, is that right? You planning to take over the world now?” her Dad teased, making me chuckle.

“Can a Beta’s mate take over the world?” Bailey asked, and I heard a shocked gasp.

“Oh goddess, you and the Lord of grouchiness are mates?” he exclaimed, but I could hear the smile in his words.

“Dad.” Bailey warned.