

Chapter 2: Broken Bond

ARDEN

I ran out of the house like a fire was chasing me down. I felt the urge to cry, but I didn't want to give them the satisfaction of showing my tears.

On my way out, I could hear some of our pack members discussing among themselves.

“She finally found out.”

“She’s stupid for not seeing it.”

“I don’t even know why she was born into that family when she’s clearly talentless.”

“Of course, Alpha Jaxon is going to choose Sienna. She, too, had been accepted to Elite Order Academy.”

With their words, I hastened my steps and arrived at our front yard. It was there that I allowed myself to cry. Tears ran down my cheeks as I slumped on the grass. All the kisses, stories, and memories shared were for nothing, huh? He was fooling me for two whole years just because he wanted my body!

Like the skies wanted to mock my feelings further, the rain poured aggressively, soaking me in seconds. However, even then, I couldn't feel anything but the ache inside my chest.

It was only when the door opened and my mother saw my drenched figure that I snapped out of it.

“Arden!” she exclaimed. “What are you doing out there? Hurry inside. If you get sick, no one is going to take care of you!”

Her words hurt, but I had gotten used to it. I picked myself up and entered our house. My mom grimaced when she saw the wet carpet.

“Goodness,” she muttered. “Why are you always causing trouble? Why can’t you be like your brothers? I never had a hard time raising them.”

That was definitely untrue. When my brothers created trouble, she merely brushed it off as ‘boys being boys.’ However, she was never patient with me. A tear fell from my eyes, making her frown.

“You’re crying?” she asked. “What happened? Are you being overdramatic again?”

I pursed my lips and roughly wiped the tears from my eyes. Somehow, somehow, I still wanted to pour out my feelings. Usually, I would talk to Sienna. However, I had lost her too.

“Jaxon cheated on me with Sienna and broke our mate bond,” I said shakily.

I wasn't expecting her to comfort me, but I was expecting her to be shocked, at least. However, her facial expression remained neutral.

“Isn't it obvious?” she asked.

My brows furrowed. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. “What?” I managed to say.

“His family has never been fond of you. I have told you plenty of times that he is too good for you. You were no match for him at all. All you could have done was satisfy him in bed, but you never did that, too.”

How could a mother say these words to her child?

“Besides that,” she continued, tearing me down before I could even pick myself up. “Sienna is going to Elite with him. You better settle on the local academy and find yourself a mateless partner.”

I closed my eyes and felt another tear fall. “So, all this time, you knew? And you never bothered telling your own daughter about it?”

“Oh, come on, Arden,” she exclaimed. “Everyone practically knew. You’re just too blind and delusional to see it.”

Just then, my father came into the room, glancing at me like I was gum at the bottom of his shoe. At that moment, the wet acceptance letter fell from my hand, and his eyes widened when he saw the emblem of Elite Order Academy on top.

“You…”

“I got accepted,” I finally revealed, although I doubted they would be happy about it.

My mom's brows furrowed, and she gently picked up the paper to read its contents. “Oh, this cannot be,” she muttered. “There must be some kind of mistake.”

“There isn't,” I insisted.

My dad crossed his arms in front of his chest. “Did you fake this acceptance letter, Arden? Is that how desperate you are?”

“I did not!” I exclaimed. “I passed! Can't you be happy for me just this once?”

My mom's jaw hardened, and before I knew it, she had torn the acceptance letter into pieces.

“No!”

“Sorry, honey,” she unapologetically said. “There truly must be a mistake. Someone like you wouldn't be able to survive in Elite. It's for the strongest, most influential, and smartest young werewolves of the land.”

“That's true,” my dad backed her up. “And even if they somehow accepted you—Moon Goddess, forbid it, for their standard must be worsening—there is still no way you can attend the school.”

“W-why not?” I stammered, looking at the torn piece of paper like it was the fragments of my broken heart.

“We can't afford it,” he said.

I looked up and glared at the two of them. “Liar,” I said. “You sent Lucian before. Kieran is also studying there right now.”

“Exactly,” my mom said. “Kieran is staying at the Elite Mansions because he cannot live in the dorms. That, in itself, is very expensive. Like I said, we will support you going to the local academy—”

“No,” I said before she could finish her statement.

The two of them halted, disbelief on their faces. I had always agreed to their wicked plans, always the obedient daughter, hoping they would finally love me equally as my brothers. However, it never happened.

I had finally snapped.

“No?” my dad asked. “Young lady, are you hearing yourself?”

I swallowed the lump in my throat. “No,” I repeated. “I'm not going to the local academy.”

“Then, do you want to become a laborer—”

“No,” I cut her off again. Then, I looked into their eyes. “I'm going to Elite.”

“Arden, don't push us,” my mom said, not a hint of joking in her tone.

“No matter what you do or say, I am leaving.”

With that, I turned my back to them, and I could practically feel the rage radiating off their bodies.

“If you choose to leave, then consider yourself not part of this family. You will not gain our support, may it be financially or emotionally. You will be nothing to us,” my mom spat, the words digging into my heart like a blade.

I didn't hesitate this time.

“Then, so be it.”