

Broken 281

Chapter 281

The blast threw everyone into the air and off their feet. When I get my senses back, I realize two things. Angel is unconscious on

top of me, and I hear a keening sound in the distance that makes my heart hurt.

I sit up, holding Angel in my arms, looking around. There are fae warriors and werewolves around me, shaking their heads trying

to figure out what happened, just like I am. I follow the sound of the keening and realize it's Cara. She's holding her father's

lifeless body in her arms, rocking him back and forth.

Oh no. Please tell me Clint isn't dead. I see Rik, picking himself up off the ground, going to Cara. He pulls her into his arms and

begins rocking her, trying to comfort her. I know the sound a person makes when they lose someone they love. That's the sound

that Cara is making now. It's the sound of your heart breaking into a million pieces. I know that Clint is dead, and Cara's heart is

broken. What I thought was a bomb going off must have been a power surge from Cara, her emotions too strong to contain when

she realized Clint was gone.

I look down at my sweet Angel. She must have felt it before anyone else and she jumped in front of me. She protected me, even

though I asked her not to. Her back is in shreds, but she's alive and I know I need to get her to the pack hospital.

I look around. It feels like the entire canyon was on fire with all the ash in the air. Cara's power wiped out the remaining

vampires. As I look around, many warriors on our side are getting up but on the other side, where Angel wasn't able to block

Cara's aura, many wolves are unconscious. I'm hoping because they are part of Cara's pack, that there is some level of

protection offered them.

As I watch, I see Anders walking over to Clint's body. He falls to his knees beside his lifelong friend, pulling his dead body to his

chest. I can see his body convulsing with his grief from here.

I stand, holding Angel in my arms. I look at Rik and he makes eye contact with me. The battle is won, but our mates need us. I

nod and turn, running back to my pack lands.

As I go, I holler at my pack members, telling them to help each other and get back to our pack lands. I'll be sending help and

medical assistance as soon as I can, but Angel is my first priority. I know as Alpha the pack should come first, but I am nothing

without my mate, and I can't help anyone if she dies.

As I run back into my pack lands, I see what looks like the remains of a fight near- the packhouse. I'm glad I left some warriors

here to protect our weaker pack

members. I send a mind link that the battle is over and every able-bodied pack member is needed in the hospital and on the

battle field to help those that are injured.

I'm aware that not every person in the safe rooms will be 'able bodied'. Anyone who lost a mate will be devastated, trying to hold

on to life if there is something, or someone keeping them here, or praying to the Moon Goddess for death to be with their mates.

Werewolves, as a species, are not able to survive when we lose the person that completes us. Someone like Clint only lasted

this long because of Cara. My father was the same, only he never had anything left to give to me, his son.

I get Angel to the pack hospital. It's already bustling with activity. "I need help NOW!" I shout as I walk in.

One of the doctors runs over, looking at Angel. "This way Alpha." He says and I follow him into a room where I gently lay Angel

on her stomach.

I stand back as they begin hooking her up to all sorts of equipment. Her heart rate is slow, her blood pressure is low and they

give her oxygen to help her breath. Someone gives me a pair of sweatpants and I put them on, but I refuse to leave my mate.

Eventually, they have her stable, they've bandaged her back and have her laying on her back now. "Why isn't she healing?" I ask

the doctor for the hundredth time.

"We don't know yet Alpha. We have to run more tests, but right now, sure."

we're not

Sarah comes in at some point. She puts her hand on my shoulder. "Liam. Go get showered, I will stay with her." I begin shaking

my head.

"I won't leave her, not even for a moment, but you are covered in blood and even I can tell that you stink of vampire."

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I turn my head to her. I smell bad enough that a human can smell me? But then I see it. Dustin's mark on her neck.

"Congratulations." I say, but nothing about how I say it sounds celebratory.

"Thank you. Now go. You know what she means to me. I won't leave her." She says. I sigh and agree.

I jog back to the packhouse, planning to quickly shower, change and get back to Angel. After I shower, I run into Dustin.

"Alpha, I'm working on the casualty list and the list of injured." He stops, not making eye contact.

"I already know about Clint." I tell him, thinking that is who he is referring to.

He nods. "We lost Jackson, too." He says quietly.

I stop. Jackson, my Gamma. He was in charge of the warriors protecting the packhouse.

"What happened?"

"Some vampires got in and were breaking into the bunker. He jumped in and tried to fight them off but he was killed before he

could kill them all. They ended up breaking down the door to the bunker."

I close my eyes. I can't stomach the thought of having lost pregnant mothers and pups to those leeches.

"How many?"

"None. Sarah was able to stab them with wood that they had for a fire. Sebastian came after her and she killed him."

“Well, then, I guess it’s a good thing that she’s accepted her position in this pack as your mate.”

His smile is bright, even if it only lasts for a moment. “Yes. At least something good came from this. She agreed to be mine.”

“I’m happy for you. I have to get back. Is there anything else? I need you to run things for me while Angel is recovering. I don’t plan to leave her side.”

“When I have a full report, I’ll bring it to you at the hospital. She’ll be fine Liam, She’s strong.”

Two days later

“Why isn’t she waking up doctor? It’s been two days. She’s a Guardian. She has advanced healing for goddess’s sake! Why isn’t

she healing? Why is she still unconscious?” I rant at the doctor, my patience at an all-time low. My mate isn’t getting better. It’s

almost like she’s healing at human speed and the doctors can’t” tell me why.

“We’ll run some more tests, Alpha.”

“What tests? You’ve run every test already! Why isn’t she getting better?” I’m yelling at the end and it’s Sarah that comes in and

calms me down so the doctors. can go and run whatever tests they run on people who are unconscious and not waking up.

I sit, my head in my hands. My hair is longer again, so I’m sure that it’s going in all directions with my hands running through it at

lightning speed over and over again. I wish it was long enough to grab ahold of and pull on. I seriously need to punch something,

but I won’t leave to go work off all this excess energy. I don’t want to leave my mate in case she finally wakes up.

I had expected her to be out for a couple of hours, not days. The longer she’s unconscious, the more worried and anxious I’ve

become. What if she doesn’t wake up? What if she leaves me alone in the world.

I crawl onto the bed, carefully curling myself around her as much as possible. Sarah takes her leave and it’s just me and Angel.

“You promised. You promised that you would never leave me little angel. I’m holding you to that promise. Don’t you dare leave

me. You come back to me, and you live this life with me.

I start talking to her as if she’s awake. “You know, it’s not just me that needs you. I understand that Cara is having a really hard

time too. She lost her father, and now Rik says that she nearly miscarried their baby. She’s on bedrest and may stay that way for

the rest of her pregnancy. She could really use you there with her, to help support her.”

I’m running my fingers through her hair, talking to her when the doctors come back in.

“Alpha. I think we know why Angel isn’t healing like she should be.”

I gently remove myself from the bed.

“Well?”

“We believe that Alessia is directing her strength elsewhere, rather than healing our Luna.” He says, handing me a piece of

paper. I read it and read it again.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes Alpha. Luna is pregnant and we think Alessia is using her strength to protect the pup, which is why she is taking so long to

heal.”

Angel is pregnant. I’m going to be a father!

Chapter 283

When I wake, it’s in a dream state. I’m walking in a forest. I can hear small animals moving around, but nothing else. It’s very

quiet here. Beautiful, but lonely. Where is everyone?

“Hello? Liam? Alessia?” I call out loud.

‘I’m here.’ Says an exhausted sounding Alessia.

“Where are we?”

In my head, she lifts her head off the ground, looking around. ‘I know this place.’”

“Where is it? Are we near the pack lands?”

‘No.’ she says, just as Clint steps out of the trees in front of me.

“Clint!” I run to him, throwing my arms around him. “I thought you were dead!”

“I am sweetheart. It was my time. But why are you here? It’s not your time.”

I look around me again. “I don’t know why I’m here. I woke up here.” I turn to look at him, horrified.

“Am I dead? Where is Liam?!”

I demand.

“Can you hear Alessia in your head?” He asks me.

“Yes. I can hear her.”

“Then, you’re not dead. How about we look around and try to figure out why you’re here.”

He puts his arm around my shoulders, guiding me to a cliff. When I look down, I can see the carnage of the battle. “We won.” I

state.

“We did, but there are many casualties on our side.

As I watch, I see mates finding their dead partners, dropping to the ground, sobbing.

“Come. This is not where you are meant to be. Let’s head over to your pack lands.”

We do and I see that there was a battle outside the packhouse. I can see pack members rebuilding the doors and windows that

were blown out with the fighting. We continue to walk around, hearing the sounds of weeping and the sounds of pack members

giving orders to fix or repair broken places in the packhouse and surrounding homes of pack members.

“It doesn’t appear that this is where you should be either. Come, let’s head over to your pack hospital.

He guides me to the pack hospital. I’m glad Clint’s here with me. I feel like I’m floating, like I’m not completely here.

When we arrive, I see Sarah and I point her out to Clint. “Look, we should follow Sarah.”

We do and as she enters a hospital room, we follow. When I walk in I stop at the sight in front of me, gasping. I’m on a hospital

bed, machines are attached all over my body. Liam is laying on the bed, wrapped up around me. His voice sounds broken and it

makes my heart hurt.

“Please Angel. Please, I need you to come back to me. I can’t do this without you. You promised me. You promised me.” His

voice breaks. I’m walking to him before I even realize what I’m doing.

“I’m here Liam, I’m right here.” I go to put my hand on his back, but it goes right through him. I turn to Clint.

“What’s happening?”

He watches Liam and me on the bed. “This is where you are supposed to be. You need to return to yourself Angel.”

I turn and look at my body, lying on the bed. “Alessia, do you know how to get us back?”

‘I’m here Angel, it’s you that has to return.’ She tells me.

‘How? I don’t want to leave Liam.’

‘Let yourself feel the pain. You must let yourself feel the pain and grief of the pack. It’s the only way to return. Liam needs you, I

need you and our pup needs you, Angel. Come back.’

Pup?! I turn to Clint. “I have to go back.”

“Yes, you do.” He says and turns to leave.

“WAIT!” I say and he stops, looking at me over his shoulder. I feel tears in my eyes. “Will I ever see you again?”

He smiles softly. “Someday sweet girl, someday you will see me again. Lily and Andra send their love. They are very proud of

how you are carrying on their Guardian spirit. Live your life, Angel. Live your best life, the life you were always meant to have.”

He says before walking out the door.

+15 BONGS

I watch for only a moment longer before laying down where my body lies, closing my eyes and letting the pain flood into my

system. There is so much, so many pack member tethers that are gone, others that are so tenuous that I know they won’t last as

they join their dead mates.

The sudden pain makes me gasp, and I open my eyes again, but this time, I'm in Liam's arms and his eyes fly open.

"Angel!" He begins kissing my face, continuing to pull back to see that my eyes are still open. "Oh Angel, I was so scared that

you were going to leave me." He wraps his arms around me before burying his face in my neck and sobbing. I wrap my arms

around him as best I can, holding him while he releases all his stress and anxiety.

"I'm here Liam, I'm not going to leave you. I promised and I am keeping my promise."

I hold him, my own tears trekking down my face, until his tears subside.

When he finally pulls back, he takes my face in his hands, his forehead against mine. "You and me." He says fiercely.

"And baby makes three." I reply.

The doctors insisted on keeping me for another day to ensure that I was healthy and ready to leave. I felt fine, all things

considered.

Liam caught me up on everything that had happened in the last few days while I was unconscious. I found out that we had lost

nearly 150 pack members. Not all had died in the war, many had died soon after their mates had been killed.

Liam also told me about Cara nearly miscarrying. I knew I needed to see her. She needed to know her father helped me and that

both he and her mother were watching over us. It might help her to recover.

I was released the day after I woke in the hospital. Liam never left my side. I was adamant about leaving because it was the first

day that we were to begin burning those who had died in the war. As their Luna, I needed to be there. Our pyres would burn for

three days as we divided our dead to allow all those who wanted an opportunity to come and show their respect for those we

lost.

Liam stood in front of, the first 50 bodies, laying on top of their pyres, their bodies covered. I stood beside him as he paid his

respects and honored them for their sacrifices. Anyone was welcome to speak about the dead, and it was hours. before we were able to light the pyres.

Liam and I stood hand in hand, watching as the ashes of our pack members drifted into the dark night.

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When the doctor told me that Angel was pregnant, I was concerned that she had kept it from me before the war. I was happy to

learn that she hadn't known until her strange walk with Clint who apparently brought her back to me. I'm not sure what that

means or why it happened, but I'm forever indebted to him for bringing my Angel back.

Dustin had prepared the funerals and pyres for our pack members. He had talked it over with me while Angel was unconscious,

and we had agreed to have three days of funerals. There was so much sadness and pain among the pack members, but each of

them deserved to have their time to say goodbye to their loved ones.

I had spoken to Rik about the loss of his pack members. After Cara's show of power, I wasn't sure how many in his pack had

survived. He lost nearly 100 pack members after losing the mates of those lost in the war. Thankfully, Cara's power surge only

seemed to knock their warriors out, not kill them as it had the vampires.

Her strength was chilling. I've never seen or felt such power. It makes me wonder how much power Angel really has. If

something as emotionally painful as losing Clint would cause her to have an explosion of power like Cara did. Does she just

need to find a way to unlock it? When things settle down, it's definitely something that we should discuss with Ailduin.

After a long week of saying goodbye to pack members, we are headed to Canyon Ridge pack. They are having a special funeral

ceremony for Clint. I know Cara has been in the hospital since the battle and Anders, who was also injured, needed to heal

before they had said this final goodbye. I know Angel is planning to talk to Cara while we are here. She wants her to know that

Clint came to her after his death.

The funeral is attended by everyone in Canyon Ridge pack and some of my pack members as well. In the last month or so,

many of my warriors got to know Clint. He was a good man, a great Guardian and a wonderful father.

After paying his respects and speaking of Clint's life and sacrifices for his family and the pack, Rik opens the floor to anyone who

wants to say something about Clint. Many of the older warriors recount times in their youth when he helped them or times when

he would defeat them in sparring or mock battles. Other warriors talk about meeting him more recently and how much they

learned from him.

I can see Anders in the front row between Cara and Luna Calista. His head is

bowed and I know if I could see his eyes that they would be red-rimmed. The bond they shared was a brotherhood, not quite as

strong as a mate bond, but pretty close.

I'm surprised when Angel gets up and goes to the podium. She hasn't said anything to me about speaking, not that needs to.

"I haven't known Clint very long, at least not as the person I am now. When I got here, I had come from a dark place where I had

been abused for years. I was a broken shell of the person I had been, not even able to access my wolf or my Guardian spirit.

Clint didn't care. He took me under his wing and he pushed me to be a stronger, better version of myself. He helped me to regain

my wolf and the power of my Guardian spirit. He treated me like family and took me in as if I was another daughter to him. He

helped me find my way back to the person I am today."

She stops, regaining her composure before looking at Cara and smiling. "He even found me when I lost my way after the battle."

I see Cara's head shoot up to look at Angel. "I woke up in a strange forest, alone. I had no idea where I was or how to get home.

He found me, told me it wasn't my time yet and helped me find my way back to Liam. As was his way, he didn't leave me until he

knew that I was where I was s

to be and that I would be okay."

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Her voice begins to waver and I watch as she loses the battle against her tears and they start to fall down her cheeks. "Even in

death, he was looking out for me. And I know that he's looking down, watching everyone here today, keeping an eye on this pack

and this family that he loved so much. He may be gone from our daily lives, but he will always be here." She takes her hand and

puts it over her heart. And I'm so thankful that I got to meet such an amazing man in my lifetime, a man who became like a father

to me."

She turns and begins to walk off the podium. I watch as Cara stands, and goes to her and they hug tightly, crying together for the

loss of their father, their friend, their Guardian bond.

We stayed for dinner that night. Angel spent some time talking to Cara and explaining her time with Clint while she was

unconscious. The talk seemed to help Cara and I could tell that Rik breathed a sigh of relief.

I pulled him aside later in the evening. "How are you holding up?" I ask him.

We stay within eyesight of our mates, neither of us wanting them out of our sight.

"I feel better after seeing her with Angel today. I think it went a long way toward helping her to heal. You probably understand the

loss of a parent better than I do, and Angel definitely does."

power surg

We sit and he puts his head in his hands. "We don't know how that of hers may impact the baby. We don't know if the near

miscarriage was from her blast of power or from her despair of losing her father. I can't lose them." He whispers the last part.

I bring my hand down on his shoulder. "You won't. I think one thing that we've learned about our mates is that they are much

stronger than even we knew. They are amazing women. I don't know about our children, obviously you and I are in the same

boat now. But I do know that our mates are the strongest wolves I've ever met in my life."

He smiles, looking over at our girls, hugging each other. "I'll warn you now, if I have a girl and you have a boy, he better keep his

hands off my daughter." Rik tells me.

"Same goes and I think we both know I can be a whole hell of a lot more. intimidating than you." I retort.

He snorts. "That's a matter of opinion."

We sit in silence for another moment just watching our mates. "I can't believe we're both going to be dads in a few months."

"It's amazing, isn't it?"

"It's incredible."

Later than night when we're back home, after reminding my mate how much I love her, how important she is to me and how

much I enjoy her screaming my name in pleasure, I tuck her against me in bed. I kiss the top of her head, smelling her scent of

raspberries and cream now mixed with a headier scent of the forest.

After talking to Rik, I feel pretty confident based on the change in scent from my inate that we're having a boy. Rik said Cara

smells more like vanilla. Angel smells more like the forest, more like what she says that I smell like to her. So, yeah, I'm pretty

confident that we're having a boy.

"You know, we never really talked about whether or not you wanted pups." I say to her. She tilts her head up to me and I look

down at her, kissing her nose. "I mean, it's a little late now and I'm really excited, but we probably should have had a discussion

about it beforehand."

She lifts herself up on her elbow, resting her hand on my chest. "Liam Holstin, I would be thrilled if you gave me enough pups to

fill every room in this packhouse with the evidence of our love."

Her answer is so perfect, so exactly what I want to hear, that I roll over top of her and show her once again how happy I am that

she is my mate.

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Aler

the terrible week of funerals, the pack began the slow process of rebuilding. We had to fix several homes, the back of the

packhouse and the bunker.

Liam refused to let me assist and he also refused to allow me at training, so instead, I started training with Sarah. Since werewolf

pregnancies are much shorter than human pregnancies, five months instead of nine, I only have a couple of months before my

stomach will be too big to do anything.

I went with Sarah to see Dr. Phillips. After letting Dustin mark her immediately after the war, she wanted to know if she could

have his children. She had extensive testing and Dr. Phillips decided that any human would struggle with the shorter gestation of

having a wolf pup. The scar tissue would cause problems. with getting pregnant, during the pregnancy and delivery, but since

she would put Sarah on bedrest anyway, it should be possible.

Sarah had told Dustin that they could have pups but that she would have to be on bedrest during the gestation. He was tentative,

but they started actively trying to get pregnant. Sarah had gotten over her fears of having a sexual relationship and that was a

huge step for them.

I speak to Cara at least once a week. When we got the news very quickly that Donovan's Guardian spirit was found, we were

both surprised and happy. It was good to know that we had found her, not him, which was its own surprise. We haven't met her

yet, but we hope to in the near future.

I've settled into a routine, Sarah as my official Beta female. Liam hired a new assistant at the office with Sarah's input so she's

officially in her capacity as the Beta female in the pack.

It's during one of these regular days that I get a mind link from Liam. "Little Angel. I'm coming to your office. I need you to come

with me to the borders."

He's in my office in a couple of minutes. "Liam, what's going on?"

walk downstairs and I see our

"I'm not sure, but I need you to join

"We entire fleet of warriors waiting for us. "Liam?"

He picks me up, carrying me bridal style. "They claimed that they needed to see you or Cara. They have refused to tell Rik and I

what this is about. They've been here all day, just outside our territory insisting that they speak with you, since Cara is still on

bedrest."

When we get to the border, I see that Rik and many of his pack warriors are there

as well. What I see beyond our borders has my blood running cold. I stiffen in his arms.

"Don't worry, I won't let them near you." Liam says, his arms tightening around

1. me.

He sets me down, standing slightly in front of me. "I've brought my mate, the " Guardian you've requested to speak to. Now, what

do you want?" Liam says to the group of vampires.

The leader, who is obviously vampire royalty, lifts his nose in the air. "Custos. Regni." He doesn't say it in the disgusting way that

Keenan did. It's said with respect.

I step forward, Liam putting his arm out, holding me to the spot next to him. I'm the Guardian, my name is Angel. What do you

want?" I ask him.

"I am King Urien, Guardian. I understand that you have had a bad experience. with some of my brethren."

"Those 'brethren' are dead." Liam growls at him.

Urien nods. "I want to express my regret at my fellow vampires' lifestyle. Not all of us live the way that Keenan and Dimitri lived."

He spreads his arms around to include all of the vampires with him. "My coven and I are not like they are, or were. We prefer to

live our lives among humans. There are plenty of humans who are agreeable to being used as feeders that there is no reason to

force them."

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He makes a fist, bringing it up to his heart in a strange show of dedication. "We come to pledge our loyalty, show our respect and

commitment to the Guardians of the Realm. We will live by the covenants of the Guardians. We wanted you to know that you

have nothing to fear nor any need for concern about my coven. When he is done speaking, he and his coven all take a knee,

bowing their heads.

I look at Liam, not knowing what to say. He looks just as lost as I am. I step forward, feeling Liam shift behind me, ready to pull

me behind him if this is a trap.

"Rise King Urien. I appreciate you coming here to let me know of your allegiance. It was never my intention to kill any of your

kind, but when anyone comes for me or mine, they will be destroyed." Alessia has pushed forward and her voice overlays with

mine. I see the vampires' heads snap up at the change in my voice.

"Guardian, if ever you need us, we are here to serve you."

With that, they stand, turn and in the blink of an eye, they are gone.

I turn to look at Liam and Rik. "Well, that was weird. Do you think they mean it?"

Rik looks thoughtful. "They seemed to, but time will tell."

Over the next several months, more groups of supernaturals come to our borders, pledging their allegiance to Cara and I as the

Guardians. We call Ailduin. and Aolis back to chronicle these events and discuss the implications of what it

means.

ave to me

"Your power exceeds that of any other supernatural." King Ailduin one day. "It seems that the vampires have the name correct.

You are Guardians which guard the entire realm of supernaturals, not just the werewolves. Perhaps you were created by the

Moon Goddess specifically for the werewolves, but your power has grown and now exceeds us all. It is a good and bad thing."

"What do you mean?" Liam asks.

"It means, all supernaturals will be looking to the Guardians for assistance when wars between the species occur. The Guardians

will be asked to take sides. I feel like we are on the cusp of a change with the Guardians. Something has changed with the birth

of Cara and the Guardians finally being given access to their fated mates. Whether intentional or not, the role of the Guardians is

and will change in the next generation. We will have to see what happens and how that unfolds."

It was during one of these visits with Ailduin and Aolis that Cara went into labor.

We all stayed, knowing that this pregnancy had been difficult, and the delivery was no less difficult. Cara labored for hours, and it

was not until the baby was in distress that they called me in to see if I could help.

I wasn't sure what to do, but I thought my advanced healing power might help. I put one hand on Cara's stomach, feeling her

little girl and the other hand on Cara's forehead. I closed my eyes and pushed my healing toward both of them. I had to be

careful, I was fairly advanced in my own pregnancy at the time, but I was able to give them both a boost of healing, ensuring that

Cara didn't bleed out and that baby Lily's heart continued to beat.

It was Aolis, who snuck in, that seemed to make the biggest impact. He came up beside the doctor, reaching out his hand to

touch the top of Lily's head that was breaching and just visible between Cara's legs. Rik was talking to Cara and didn't see it.

Cara was in so much distress that I doubt she even knew he was there. The doctor started to push Aolis away, when Lily started

to move through the birth canal, almost as if she was trying to get to Aolis. It was the strangest thing I had

ever seen.

The doctor moved to give him room and watched as Aolis gently coaxed Lily through the birthing canal while Cara pushed. Aolis

was the one that held her as she was delivered, a strange look of reverence and love on his face. The doctor quickly swooped in,

rubbing Lily with a towel, cleaning her up and getting her to cry before handing her over to Cara. The moment Cara held her

baby girl in her arms, I knew that everything would be alright for both of them.

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I take Aolis by the hand and pull him from the room with me, his eyes never leaving Lily. When we get outside the door, Liam is

there, waiting for me. I turn to Aolis. "What was that?"

He looks at me. "I'm not sure. I could hear her distress and her desire to be born but she couldn't find her way, so I helped her."

He turned looking toward the delivery room again. "She's the most beautiful baby I've ever seen."

I look at Liam and back at Aolis. "Aolis?"

"It's okay. I know she's too young to recognize the mate bond. I will wait for her." And with that, he turns and walks out to find his

father. Liam and I just stand there, dumbfounded.

After getting our turn to see Cara and Lily post-delivery, Rik looking every bit the proud papa, we head back to our pack.

Another month goes by, and life gets back to normal. Sarah and I begin to take on more work, not just with the packhouse but

also with the pack's business. Sarah is so efficient that it's easy for us to assist Liam and Dustin.

Liam finally names Evan as his new Gamma, and then names a new lead warrior to replace Evan.

My favorite time of day is after dinner, when it's just me and Liam. As my pregnancy has progressed, Liam has gotten creative

with ways for us to have sex, which is good, because pregnancy, for some reason, has made my desire for him almost

insatiable. Liam is happy to oblige me any time I ask.

Tonight, he comes in as I'm getting out of the shower. He does what he has been doing every day for months. He walks up to

me, kisses me gently, then gets down on his knees to talk to our son. He was right, we are having a boy. We decided on a name

a while ago, but we haven't told anyone, waiting until after he's born.

"How's my little man doing today, mamma?" He says, his hands on either side of my stomach as he sniffs to find the spot where

he wants to talk to his son.

"He's been a very active boy today, daddy." I tell Liam: "

"That's my boy." He says, and then when he finds the spot he wants, he begins telling his son about his day and his plans for

when he's born.

The nursery is complete and Liam had them put a doorway from our room to the room next door so that we can hear him if he

fusses and he's close enough for me

I take Aolis by the hand and pull him from the room with me, his eyes never leaving Lily. When we get outside the door, Liam is

there, waiting for me. I turn to Aolis. "What was that?"

He looks at me. "I'm not sure. I could hear her distress and her desire to be born. but she couldn't find her way, so I helped her."

He turned looking toward the delivery room again. "She's the most beautiful baby I've ever seen.

I look at Liam and back at Aolis. "Aolis?"

“It’s okay. I know she’s too young to recognize the mate bond. I will wait for her.” And with that, he turns and walks out to find his

father. Liam and I just stand there, dumbfounded.

After getting our turn to see Cara and Lily post-delivery, Rik looking every bit the proud papa, we head back to our pack.

Another month goes by, and life gets back to normal. Sarah and I begin to take on more work, not just with the packhouse but

also with the pack’s business. Sarah is so efficient that it’s easy for us to assist Liam and Dustin.

Liam finally names Evan as his new Gamma, and then names a new lead warrior to replace Evan.

My favorite time of day is after dinner, when it’s just me and Liam. As my pregnancy has progressed, Liam has gotten creative

with ways for us to have sex, which is good, because pregnancy, for some reason, has made my desire for him almost

insatiable. Liam is happy to oblige me any time I ask.

Tonight, he comes in as I’m getting out of the shower. He does what he has been doing every day for months. He walks up to

me, kisses me gently, then gets down on his knees to talk to our son. He was right, we are having a boy. We decided on a name

a while ago, but we haven’t told anyone, waiting until after he’s born.

“How’s my little man doing today, momma?” He says, his hands on either side of my stomach as he sniffs to find the spot where

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“He’s been a very active boy today, daddy.” I tell Liam:

“That’s my boy.” He says, and then when he finds the spot he wants, he begins telling his son about his day and his plans for

when he’s born.

The nursery is complete and Liam had them put a doorway from our room to the room next door so that we can hear him if he

fusses and he’s close enough for me

to nurse at night.

As he's talking to our son, I feel a splash of warm wetness drip down my legs. Liam stops, pulling back, looking at the floor, then

up at me.

"Liam, I think it's time."

Liam rushes me to the pack hospital and three hours later, I deliver my beautiful baby boy. Liam wanted to honor my father, as

he had done everything in his power to protect me as a child, and we also wanted to honor Clint for helping me reconnect with

my Guardian spirit and being like a second father to me.

So, after our son was born, Liam took him into the waiting room where hundreds of pack members were waiting to hear the

news of their Alpha heir's delivery and Liam proudly announced the birth of Richard Clint Holstin.

Chapter 289

Three months later

To say that being a father has changed my life would be an understatement. You don't know how much you can love another

person until you hold your child in your arms for the first time and your heart aches because it's so full of love. The mate bond is

one thing, that is a gift given by the Moon Goddess and nothing could ever compare to that. But being a father feels like the

greatest achievement of my life.

My son is perfect, of course. All ten fingers, all ten toes. He was born with soft fuzz for hair that has started to grow in now and

he definitely got my golden, curly locks. However, every time I look into his gray eyes, I see his mother. Angel says his eyes are

the only thing he got from her and that we'll have a mini-me walking around very soon.

Works for me. I figure our little girl will look just like her mother. I hope so, it means she'll be beautiful. Yes, it means I'll have to

go all Alpha on any male that looks at her but having a miniature version of Angel walking around sounds perfect to me.

And yes, I got my sweet little mate pregnant almost immediately after Richie's birth. It's not my fault that she's so perfect that I

can't keep my hands and other body parts off of her. She did ask me to fill the packhouse with the evidence of our love and who

am I to deny my Luna anything.

So today, Richie and I are at the office in the human town while my sweet mate gets some much needed rest. This pregnancy,

while not problematic, is causing her more fatigue than Rich's. The doctor says it's because I didn't give her

enough time to heal in between, but Angel just laughs at that. 'Advanced healing', she tells the doctor every time.

Either way, it's a great excuse for me to have alone time with my son and give my mate a chance to nap without interruption.

My office has been renovated to include everything for a baby now, so working from here and bringing my son is no problem.

Dustin joins me in my office, taking every opportunity to hold and feed Richie that he can get. He even changes diapers on

occasion. I know it's a struggle for him. He and Sarah have been unable to have pups. They are still trying, but with her scarring

from years of abuse, it hasn't happened yet.

"We're thinking of adopting." He says, out of the blue while he's feeding my son.

He looks up at me before looking back down at Richie.

There are several orphans from the war, children who lost both of their parents. We would have adopted anyway, but we were

waiting to see if we would get pregnant first, knowing that Sarah will probably have a difficult pregnancy."

Sarah and Angel set up a section of the first floor of the packhouse for the pups. that lost their parents during the war. Some lost

both parents in the battle and some lost one in the battle and one when they couldn't survive after the death of their mate.

"I think there are still five pups that need homes." I tell him.

"Sarah has gotten attached to a little girl. She's two and struggles a lot with the loss of her parents. Sarah spends a lot of time

with her and has even brought her up to our rooms, with Angel's permission of course."

"I know you two would make excellent parents. We'll go through the proper procedures, but I have no concern about you

adopting one of the pups." I tell him.

He surprises me by handing me the application. It's been filled out and already signed by him, Sarah and Angel. My signature is

the only one required for make it official.

I sign the document and stand, going to my friend. "Here, let me have my son, you take this to your mate and let her know that

you are officially parents, starting today. If you need anything at all for your little girl, just let me know."

His smile is as bright as the sun. "Thank you, Liam. This means a lot to both of us."

I take my son from him and give him a slap on the back. "Go, I'll finish up here and we'll celebrate later when I'm back."

"Great, see you soon Alpha!" He turns and practically runs to the elevator in his excitement to get to his mate and let her know.

I finish up my work, getting with George and my assistant giving instructions for the next week while I work from the packhouse.

By the time I'm done packing up my son to leave, I'm the last person in the office.

"Let's turn off all the lights so we can go home and see mommy, what do you say?" I ask my son. I don't care what anyone says,

my son is brilliant and understands every word I'm saying. Even if he doesn't, he looks at me like he does, so I'm assuming he

does. Angel just laughs at me when I tell her he understands me.

"He chews on his toes too, Liam. Is that also a show of his intelligence?" Hey,

he's still a baby, he does baby things, too. I didn't say that he's coordinated yet. That will probably come next month.

As we're walking toward the elevator, I hear it ding and the elevator doors start opening. I immediately push my son in his car

seat behind a desk and take a defensive stance. No one should be coming up here this late in the evening.

When the doors open, I'm stunned at what I see. It's Audra, but the difference in her from when I saw her months ago to now, is

shocking. Back then, she was one of the most beautiful and exotic women I'd ever seen. Now, she is bone-thin, her hair is

missing in chunks and she looks nearly dead.

"Audra!" I grab her before she falls.

When she sees me, there are tears in her eyes, her eyes are bloodshot. Or no, not bloodshot, more like the blood vessels in her

eyes have burst. She looks terrible. "Liam. They are coming. They are coming for them."

I pick her up, bringing to a chair. "Who is coming Audra? Who did this to you?"

She grabs the front of my shirt. "The hunters. They know about the Guardians, and they are coming, Liam."

Chapter 290

Three years later

It's amazing how much changes in three years. Two days after Sarah and Dustin officially adopted Sienna, Sarah found out she

was pregnant. It worked out okay because her pregnancy was very difficult. As expected, she was on bed rest for most of her

pregnancy. Dustin would take Sienna with him to his office or I would keep her with me, having set up a kid's play area in my

office. Sometimes, Dustin would carry Sarah to her desk when she got too stir-crazy and needed a break from sitting in her bed

all day. At least being in the packhouse, he and I were always close and could monitor her.

The doctor told her she'd have to have a C-Section because her internal scarring was too severe to allow for a baby to pass

through the birthing canal. And five months after adopting Sienna, they welcomed baby Jackson Dustin Roberts into the world.

They named him after our previous Gamma, since he had given his life protecting Sarah and the others who were in the bunker

that day.

Cara and Rik finally had their second baby. I know Cara was frustrated with Rik's unwillingness to have a second child. After

everything that she went through with Lily, it was amazing how simple her second pregnancy was. After delivering a healthy baby

boy, Cohen Donovan Forte, a year ago, they are due to deliver their third child, another boy, any day now.

Rik finally had a talk with Aolis after becoming uncomfortable with his fascination with Lily. Aolis told him that he is Lily's mate

and he's been visiting the pack regularly ever since. At first, I think they were concerned, but seeing Aolis interact with Lily, it's

obvious that he feels the mate bond. Everything he does is to make Lily happy. He will spend hours with her and never become

bored or irritated with her, even though she is ten years younger than he is. The mate bond between them makes sense. His

father, Ailduin, was mated to a Guardian. years ago. Lily is showing signs of being a Guardian already even though she hasn't

gotten her wolf. This time, there is no concern that she will be taken from Aolis. Rik and Cara have no problem with their

daughter being mated to Fae royalty, but they are adamant that Lily will have to agree with the mate bond and choose Aolis as

her mate.

We finally connected with Clint and Donovan's Guardian spirit. To say she's a spitfire would be an understatement. Cara and I

loved her immediately. She brings a whole new level to the Guardians and our continued work together has increased our power

and strength.

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With that strength has come a new responsibility. It started almost a year ago, after the war with the hunters. Audra had given us

warning that the hunters were coming, but it was almost another year before we finally had the hunter war. Liam brought Audra

to the pack and gave her a place to stay while she recovered. She stayed mostly to herself and then one day not long after we

defeated the hunters, she just vanished. I guess as a panther, being a solitary creature, she struggled having the pack around all

the time.

The war with the hunters showcased our strength as Guardians to all the supernaturals. It was after the war that the requests for

our interventions started to come in. Ailduin had been correct in his prediction. We were being asked to pass judgement on

issues between the supernatural species.

So, we set up a council. There is always two of the three Guardians required on the council, but we also have included an

appointee from the vampire, fae and shifter communities. More recently, we've been petitioned to include a siren and a dragon

but so far, they've been included in the shifter community, although their needs are different from the average shifter. We've also

been petitioned to include a representative from the angel and demon communities. If I'm being honest, I had no clue that there

were so many different types of supernaturals out there. All of these petitions are under review and will be voted on at the next

council meeting.

And then, there's me and Liam. We had four children back-to-back. First was our son, Richard Clint, then only six months later

we welcomed our daughter, Leana Estella, named after Liam's parents. It worked out that I was in between pregnancies for the

hunter war. There's no way Liam would have let me fight if I was pregnant. But, we needed all three Guardians, so thankfully, it

worked out. Six months after the hunter war, we welcomed our second son, Alexander Conal and seven months after that, we

welcomed our third son, Cayden Andrew. Some people might say that we were having children too quickly and too close

together. Perhaps there is some validity to that. The doctors sure gave Liam and I a hard time about it. After our fourth child, we

were both tired. It's a lot to take care of four children two years old and younger. For over a year, I was nursing two children at

the same time.