

## **Broken 311**

### Chapter 311

"Please." Her voice sounds broken, like she's on the verge of tears. "Please promise me. I'd rather be forced into a bond with my mate then with a complete stranger. So please, promise me."

I clench my teeth. Can I promise this? I made this mistake once. I learned my lesson. A forced mate bond is the start of a

fractured mate bond.

I look at her, her eyes glistening in the dark. "I promise that if I cannot keep you safe, or get you away, I will mark you before I

allow another wolf to mark you."

She nods and lays her head back down. I can feel the wetness of her tears on my chest. I kiss the top of her head, rubbing my

fingers in her hair, massaging her scalp. Eventually, I feel her body relax and her breathing even out.

I don't know when I fell asleep or how long I've been sleeping when the sound of shuffling at the door wakes me up. When

you've been on the run as long as I have, your subconscious becomes hyper aware of every sound you hear in your sleep. I

gently pull myself out of Grace's embrace and silently go to the door. I look out through the peep hole and see two people

making out against the wall by our door. They are either really drunk and at the wrong door, or they are shifters. and pretending

to be distracted to try to get closer to us.

I take a deep breath. I can smell the alcohol on one, but the other is definitely a shifter. I can't tell if it's a werewolf or some other

kind of shifter. I growl low and quiet, so only the shifter can hear me and I can see his or her reaction. I

immediately know it's the male. His head jerks to my door and I see him take in a deep breath before turning to the drunk

woman.

"Come on Cher, we're at the wrong door. We don't want to wake anyone up." He says with a Cajun accent before pulling her

down the hallway. I listen until I hear a door open and sounds of their little make out session quiet down.

I spent some time in Louisiana, and while there are wolf packs there, it's more likely that he was a fox or maybe even a coyote

shifter. Either way, I wait until I hear the sounds of the woman screaming her pleasure before I crawl back into bed with Grace.

Her warm body immediately curls up next to mine. She throws her leg across my body, and I can't help the instant reaction. I'm

rock hard, my dick pinned against my stomach by her leg. Every time she shifts, it adds to the discomfort and the need for my

mate that has been building inside me since I found her. I won't be getting any sleep like this, but I'd rather be uncomfortable with

her laying against me, than alone without her.

I gently rub her back and grit my teeth until she settles against me and I'm finally able to fall asleep again.

The next morning, I wake her early. "Grace, wake up baby. We need to go."

She groans before opening her eyes and realizes that she's practically laying across me. "Oh my goddess, I'm sorry." She says,

leaping from the bed.

"It's fine. But there is a shifter here that is staying a few rooms down the hall. I'm not comfortable staying here, just in case. Let's

leave and we can stop and get breakfast on our way to the bus station.

She grabs her bag and heads to the bathroom to change. I grab mine, trying to hide my morning wood. When she comes out of

the bathroom, I go in, quickly taking care of my growing erection, which doesn't take long since I'm surrounded by her scent.

After I get dressed, and we've both gotten ready, we head out. I make sure to check the area before letting Grace out and then

quietly close our door, just in case the shifter was supposed to be keeping an eye on us.

Chapter 312

We stop on the way to the bus station and grab some breakfast. I make sure we are sitting at a table where we can't easily be

seen from outside, but I can watch anyone walking by the diner. We order coffee and breakfast. As we're eating, I see the shifter

from last night walking by, looking around. He looks in the diner but doesn't see us. Shit, he is working for the wolves.

on the

"Change of plans. Time for us to go." I say to Grace. I drop some money table and we walk out the door of the diner, turning in a

different direction than the shifter. I take a deep breath, trying to catch his scent.

"Do you smell that?" I ask Grace. She takes a deep breath and nods her head.

"That's who is following us. If you smell it again, even faintly, let me know."

She nods and we begin walking around the diner. I had checked out a map, so I'm familiar with the grid-like layout of this town. I

take us to a back road and begin making our way toward the bus station. Once we get there, I slowly make my way up to the

buses, keeping my eye out for him. I finally spot him, waiting in the center of the bus station, sitting like he's waiting for a bus. If I

hadn't seen him earlier, I might believe that's what he was doing, but not now.

I point him out to Grace, then begin sneaking around the buses, trying to find ours. When I do, I breath a sigh of relief that the

door isn't facing the area where the shifter is sitting. I check the time and realize our bus will pull out in under 15 minutes. I push

Grace on ahead of me and then follow her, keeping an eye on the shifter. My size makes me impossible to miss, so if he's been

given any information about me, he'll know it's me on this bus.

I send Grace to the back of the bus. It isn't full, so I grab a seat closer to the front, in case the shifter decides to come looking for

me. As I watch, he continues to scan the bus station, not looking inside the buses at all.

When our bus finally pulls out of the station, I see two more men running up to the shifter. Fucking red wolves. This is going to

make our travels more difficult. There are red wolves in Texas and in Louisiana. We need a Plan B.

Once we pull out of the station, I move to sit next to Grace. She looks at me and I see the fear in her eyes. "It's okay. I don't think

they realized we were on the bus. But we do need to think of another plan. The red wolves are hunting you now.

I put my arm around her. "Do you have a driver's license?" I ask her.

"No, I never learned to drive."

Shit. Neither did I. Even if we could rent a car, neither of us could drive it. I pull out my phone to call Rik. I need a new plan.

What do you think about Eli's promise to Grace? Do you think he should force his mark on her if she's at risk of being marked by

others?

### Chapter 313

I was serious last night when I asked Eli to mark me rather than let some stranger mark me. Better the devil you know, right? At

least I hope so. I may not believe in the mate bond, but I have a better chance with someone who might actually care about me

than with someone who only wants me for the strength I can bring to their pack, someone who will treat me like a commodity and

a breeding machine.

I know I'm a Guardian, and I'm supposed to be this strong wolf that all the Alphas want, but I'm terrified. I don't know how to fight.

Up until a couple weeks ago, I thought I was a human. A human that was doing everything I could just to survive, much less

learn how to fight or defend myself.

So, as much as I hate this feeling of dependence, I'm thankful that Eli is here with me. He makes me feel safe, or at least safer

than I would feel if I was running alone. I wasn't expecting to get any sleep last night, but after laying on his chest, smelling his

intoxicating scent and listening to the steady beat of his heart, I fell into a deep sleep. When I woke, I had slept more soundly

than I can remember sleeping in years. If I hadn't woken up practically on top of him, it would have been great. As it was, I could

tell he was not immune to our close proximity. His hard length had been pressing against my thigh.

I listen as Eli talks to Alpha Rik on the phone. I can hear another male voice in the background but can't decipher what he is

saying. It sounds like the red wolves. know we are on the run and since they have territory in Texas and Louisiana, we need to

divert from our course quickly and head north again. I listen as they talk through our trek north to Oklahoma, then turning east

and working our way to North Georgia.

I miss the question that is asked, but Eli turns to look at me. "No, we're not at that point yet." He says and I can guess the

question. Can't he just mark me? Then there would be no need for this running.

Part of me is ready to agree, but then I remember my father, and I would rather run forever than live like that again.

I turn and look out the window at the miles and miles of flat nothingness. I hear Eli disconnect the phone. "We have a plan. I'm

not sure how good it is. If the red wolves are watching the bus stations, we're screwed. At the next station, if it looks safe, we're

taking off in our wolf form. I need to get a map so we can skirt the pack territories, but it may be safest.

I just nod. "I'm sorry you're being dragged into this. I know this would be easier

if I would just let you mark me."

He puts his fingers against my lips. "You have your reasons to not trust the mate bond. I can respect that, and I can wait. As long

as it doesn't mean that you end up mated to someone else."

I turn to look back outside. We sit in silence for a while.

"That car should have passed us a long time ago." Maia says in my head.

I look and there is a car keeping pace with the bus. She's right, it seems like it's going very slow considering we're in the middle

of nowhere.

"Eli. Maia says this car is keeping pace with the bus. Do you think it's the red wolves?"

He leans past me, looking out the window. I hear him curse under his breath before he grabs his phone and hits speed dial.

"They're following the bus." He says as soon as Alpha Rik picks up.

"How far are you from the bus station?" The voice asks but it doesn't sound like Alpha Rik.

"Thirty minutes. We're just coming up on the town."

"Give the phone to Grace."

Eli looks at me, then hands me the phone.

"Hello?"

"Grace, this is Alpha Liam. Do you recognize my name?"

"I know you've been talking to Eli."

"But you don't remember who I am?" "No. Should I?"

## Chapter 314

I hear him curse under his breath. "What does your wolf remember about being a Guardian?"

'Maia?'

'Just that I am a Guardian and that makes me powerful.'

"She knows we're a Guardian and that we are strong."

"But she doesn't know how to access her strength? She doesn't remember anything about her past?"

"No. Nothing."

"Okay, Grace, listen. I don't know that we can get you out of there without a fight. If the time comes, you need to be prepared to

run and possibly fight. Even if you have to leave Eli. We can go back for him but it's you that they want. And if you are not willing

to have him mark you, then you will have to run. Head east. Listen to Eli, he's good at evasion, but if the time comes, run. And if

you have to fight, don't hesitate. Maia should get her memories if she's put in the position of having to fight."

"Okay." I answer, knowing I can't leave Eli. Maia has already told me that we're his Guardian and we are bound to him, so

leaving him isn't an option. I hand the phone back to Eli.

He's watching me closely. "Okay, yeah, I'll let you know when we're safe. If you don't hear from me in two days, send out a

search party." He tells Alpha Liam before hanging up.

"You need to do what Liam said. You need to run, even if it means leaving me behind."

"I can't. Maia won't let me. We're your Guardian and it means we are bound to you."

"I have a plan, but I don't know if it will work. When we get there, we need to be ready to move fast. They will have to park and it

will give us a few moments to get off the bus

and run. If we're lucky, all the scents around the bus station will confuse them. If we aren't, they'll follow us and call for

reinforcements. Let's

hope Maia is fast."

When we see the bus station, Eli has us move forward to seats closer to the door. As soon as we stop, he has us up and at the

door. When the doors open, he steps.

out, pulling me behind him and checking both ways before taking off at a jog. I follow him as we skirt around buses and the bus

station. When we get to the back of the building, he looks around one more time before we race for the nearest trees. There isn't

much area to hide so we run as fast as we can.

As soon as we hit the trees, we shift and begin running in wolf form. We've been running for about an hour when we hear the

howl go up. They are tracking us. Every time we find a stream or lake, we run in or through the water as much as we can to hide

our scent. We have to be careful of alligators, so we can't run in the water as much as we'd like.

We finally stop to take a break, catching our breath and getting a snack. Eli pulls a map out of his bag and looks at it checking

our surroundings trying to figure out where we are. "We need to keep heading north, but I think we can start veering east a bit."

He looks at me. "How is Maia? Can she keep running?"

"Yes, we're good."

He nods. "Okay, we're going to run until dusk and see if we can find a place to hole up for the night. If not, we'll have to run

through the night. There aren't any caves around here to hide, so we may have to make due with trees."

As the day goes on, my muscles ache, but we continue to run. I refuse to slow down. When the sun starts to set, we see a sign

that lets us know we are near the Arkansas border. There is a small town and outside of the town there is an area with small

hills. I follow Louis up the hill and wait while he sniffs around and finds a spot where he feels it is safe for us to rest.

When he gives me the all-clear, I collapse on the ground.

## Chapter 315

I have to hand it to my girl. Running all day is not for the weak. I pushed us hard, knowing the wolves were trailing us. I haven't

heard them howling in hours, so I'm hoping that we have some time to relax.

When we get to a small hill near the Arkansas border, I find an overhang where I can put Grace to let her rest while I keep watch.

I'm used to not sleeping for days or only sleeping lightly for a couple of hours. That is how my life has been, but that is not the life

that Grace has lived. She needs her rest and she will be sore after pushing so hard today. I know we'll have to go more slowly

tomorrow, but once we pass out of red wolf territory, we should be safe to slow down.

When Maia collapses, I shift and pull on some shorts before walking over and picking her up. She's a big wolf, beautiful in her

coloring, black but with streaks of different shades of brown. I've never seen another wolf like her.

"I've got you, gorgeous." I tell her as she whimpers when I pick her up. "You did so well today. Louis and I are very proud of you.

I know that was hard."

I find some pine needles, small branches and vines and build a make-shift bed for her, laying her on it gently. I run my fingers

through her fur, massaging the muscles in her shoulders, down her back and to her flank. Maia alternates between whimpering

and purring at my ministrations.

When she's half asleep, I lean into her, running my fingers in the fur around her face. "You rest, I'll be back shortly."

Her eyes open in alarm, and she begins to stand. I put my hand on her chest, holding her down. "No, stay here. I'll be back soon

and I won't go far. You'll be safe. Don't shift, stay in your wolf form. Promise?"

She reaches out and licks my face. "That's my girl. I'll be back as soon as I can." I tell her before shifting and running off to find

us food.

Louis finds and kills several rabbits. When we return, he proudly lays them at Maia's feet, laying down in front of her to see if

she'll accept his offering. I've become used to Louis eating animals over the years. It was the only way I could survive. But Grace

hasn't lived that life, and this may not be something that she can handle. It's instinct for Maia but may be problematic for Grace.

Louis and I watch as Maia sits up, sniffing the rabbits. She crawls forward and pulls one closer to her before tearing into it

ravenously. We sit and watch her until she finishes. When she's done, she looks at them and then at us. Louis scoots forward,

pushing another one toward her with his nose. She grabs it and

devours it as well.

When she finishes, she looks at us and then at the last rabbit. Louis goes to push the last one at her, when she stands and picks

it up, dropping it in front of Louis before laying down next to him. He leans over and begins licking her muzzle, cleaning her.

When he's done, he grabs the remaining rabbit and eats it in two bites.

He gets up, pushing her back into the safety of the overhang with his head. Once she's as safe as we can make her, he lays

down in front of her. She curls up beside him and lays her head over his back. I can feel her deep sigh as she settles in and

eventually falls asleep.

Louis and I lay awake for a while longer, keeping watch from our makeshift lair. Eventually, the warmth of my mate and the sound

of her even breathing lull us to sleep.

It's still dark and the moon is still high when I jolt awake. My ears prick and I listen to the sounds of the night to see what woke

me. I can hear the sounds of creatures scurrying over the rocks, the hooting of an owl in a nearby tree, the soft sounds of small

creatures running through the grass below and in the distance, the sounds of a river flowing gently in the night.

My eyes start to close when I hear it, the crunch of pine needles under a heavy paw. Louis lifts his head, taking a deep breath. I

watch from our spot, listening intently, unable to smell what I am hearing.

I hear it again, but this time, I hear more than one set of paws. The wolves are close, we have to go. I turn my head to wake

Maia, only to see her eyes glowing in the dark. She's heard them too. She pokes her nose into my face, letting me know that she

understands that we have to go.

We silently get to our feet, climbing over the top of the hill, making no sound. The wolves will have to either climb up or go

around, which gives us time to make our escape. It's why I chose this particular spot.

When we get far enough away, I begin to run, giving Maia a few minutes to warm up to running again, before I begin pushing us

hard. We cross into Arkansas and I push us through the morning and into the early afternoon, until we get to a large river.

There are a lot of places to hide here, I just need to find a place away from human hikers. I finally find a place where we can

easily access water and there are rock formations where Maia can hide while I go get us human food. When I find the spot

where I feel like she'll be safe, I shift back, quickly grabbing my bag and putting on a pair of shorts.

"Grace, I'm going to go into town and get us some food, some human food. I want you to stay here and stay hidden. When I get

back, we'll eat and then we can find a spot to rest for a few hours and even bathe if you'd like. While I'm gone, stay in wolf form.

If you hear anything, or feel that you are in any danger, you head east."

She begins shaking her head, and I take it in my hands. "Listen to me Grace. You are too important. Too important to me and too

important to the other Guardians. If they come before I return, you run."

I put my forehead against her furry one. "If you have to run, I will find you, but let's hope it doesn't come to that. I will be back

soon, love."

I stand, removing my shorts and putting them in my bag, before shifting, taking my bag in my teeth and heading down the

hillside.

## Chapter 316

hate this feeling of helplessness. Worse, I hate the fear that comes when Eli isn't around. I'd rather stay with him and risk getting

caught together than being left alone. It was different when I was in the town where mom and I lived. At least there I had a home,

a job and Benny. Here, without Eli, I have nothing. Nothing is familiar, the sights and sounds are all new and every sound makes

me jump.

I tuck myself into the small cave that Eli found for me. I'm continually amazed by his ability to find places for us to hide while

keeping us safe. I guess I shouldn't be surprised, he's been doing this most of his life.

'He is a good mate. He is taking care for us.' Maia says.

I could tell she has not only fallen hard for Louis, but after last night and the amazing rub down Eli gave her, she's a soppy mess

for him now too.

'He didn't have to do that. Not every mate would have realized how sore we were or taken the time to massage our muscles

before going out and catching food for us. He's thoughtful, considerate and a good provider.'

I have to admit, my wolf has a point. Eli hasn't tried to push the mate bond on me at all. He's been very considerate in our

sleeping arrangements which have been less than ideal basically since we've met. And I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't affected

by the mate bond. Having Eli close to me has been comforting, but it's also making it harder to be away from him.

"You should let him mark us." Maia tells me.

I'd been contemplating letting him mark me. He's not a bad man. He's proven that he's willing to do whatever it takes to keep

Maia and I safe. I just haven't made the decision to trust him with the rest of my life. Once you're marked, it can't be undone

except by the death of one of the parties.

I had seen a sign as we were running. We're in the Red River area. It's beautiful here, but I can't enjoy it. Every minute that Eli's

gone makes me more anxious. I should try to relax and take a nap, letting my muscles rest but I'm nervous, on edge.

I'm looking out over the land, watching the clouds go by when Maia's head pops

1. up.

"What is it, Maia?"

Through her eyes and in her mind, I can feel her narrowing her focus on the ground below us, in the direction we came from.

She pricks up her ears, listening

intently, and that's when I hear it. I can't see anything from here, but I hear the sounds of bodies moving through the forest floor

below us.

"Check the other directions, Maia. Are we surrounded?" I ask her, my fear spiking.

"Don't panic, Grace. I'm strong, I can get us out of this if needed, but if you panic, they'll be able to hear our heart beating faster."

Relax and let me take the lead."

I don't want to be forced into a mate bond. I don't want to end up with someone who sent their pack to hunt me down and drag

me back to them. Someone that wants me because I strengthen their pack by forcing their canines into my neck.

“There.’ Maia says and through her eyes, I can see what looks like 10 wolves, slinking through the forest floor. As we watch, the

leader lifts his head and sniffs the air, then begins sniffing the ground again.

‘A tracker.’ Maia says to me. ‘We need to move. He will find us.”

She slinks out of our cave and begins to move quietly over the landscape,

jumping across small gaps in the rocks, moving around trees and bushes to try to keep us hidden from view as much as

possible.

‘Where are we going Maia?’ I ask, not having any idea what direction we’re moving in.

‘Eli told us to head east. But first, we’re going south where I can smell water and we’re going to run through the water and try to

lose them.’

As we’re coming off the hill where we were staying, Maia begins running. She’s fast and the trees and bushes in the area give us

a lot of coverage. We haven’t gone far, when I hear the howl go up. They found our cave and are alerting those nearby that they

are on the hunt.

What makes my blood run cold is the answering howls that seem to come up all around us.

‘Change of plans.’ Maia says. ‘We’re heading east and I hope we can find some water to cross. I don’t know if we can outrun all

of them.’

She takes off like a shot. Even though we’ve been running for days, Maia has no intention of getting caught, so she pushes

through the pain. Unfortunately, the hunt will only incite the wolves and make them more determined to catch us. Without Eli, my

only hope is that the Alpha doesn’t catch us, giving Eli time to find us.

As we’re running, another howl goes up, this one is much closer than the last. Maia is pushing as hard as she can. When we find

a small creek, we don't even have time to run part way in it, we crash through and continue on the other side.

As we rush out of the creek, I can hear the sound of panting and large paws pounding into the ground on our left.

'Maia!'

"I know." She says and veers right. We're running for only a short while when we hear the sound of paws coming from our right

and behind us. She turns back toward the east, pushing herself harder than I thought possible. The further we go, the flatter the

land is becoming. We don't have time to decide on a better route, they are catching up to us.

I can feel them coming up on all sides now. There aren't as many as when we first heard them howling, which means only the

strongest are still following us. That also means it's very likely that one of these wolves is the Alpha of their pack and is planning

to mark me.

We've been running full out for nearly an hour and I know Maia is running on adrenaline only now. Eli will have realized that

we've left and should be on our trail. At least I hope he is, I hope they didn't leave other wolves behind to keep him from getting

to us.

I feel a nip at Maia's heels, tripping her. She falls face first into the ground, rolling over a couple of times before getting up and

trying to run again. She only gets a couple of steps when she is nipped on her other heel. She kicks back, her paw smashing into

the face of one of our pursuers. His yelp does nothing to make me feel better about our situation. We are hopelessly

outnumbered.

## Chapter 317

A large red wolf runs up beside us and slams into our body sideways, knocking Maia off her feet. When she stands again, we are

surrounded. There are six wolves that have us caged in, the largest is the red wolf that took Maia down.

Maia stands panting, waiting to see what is going to happen. The red wolf, who is also panting, begins to shift. When he's done,

he stands, bent over at the waist, breathing heavily before looking up at Maia, smiling possessively. Maia bares her teeth at him,

snarling furiously.

He puts his hands up in a surrounding position, but I don't trust it for a moment. He has us surrounded and he's been hunting me  
for days.

"You've given us quite a chase Guardian. But you've lost. My name is Alpha Brody, and I claim you as mine."

If possible, Maia's snarl is even more ferocious, and she nips the air in between us and Alpha Brody.

"Now, now. None of that. I've caught you and you can't get away from me. Be a good girl and shift and let me mark you as mine."

Even more disturbing than him wanting to mark me simply because I'm a Guardian, is his body's obvious reaction to taking me

as his mate. His growing erection, while it doesn't seem to compare to Eli's, let's me know that he will force a mating immediately

after marking me.

'Maia, that guy comes close enough' I start to say before she cuts me off.

'I'm ripping his dick off.'

Glad we're on the same page, but that doesn't change things at the moment. We are still surrounded, and I have no idea how to

get out of this mess.

"You can make this easy and I can be gentle, or you can make this hard and my pack here will hold you down while I force my

mark on you, then mate you. Either way, this is happening. What's it going to be?"

This disgusting excuse for an Alpha is exactly why I've been afraid. I should have just let Eli mark me. I would have been better

off.

"The hard way it is." He says before starting to shift. He's going to mark Maia, make her compliant then force her to shift so he

can mark and mate me in human form.

In a last bit of hope, I send up a howl hoping beyond hope that if Eli is nearby, he'll hear me and get here in time. As the Alpha finishes his shift, his pack pounces on me.

Maia fights back immediately. She's ripping at anything she can sink her teeth into, fur, flesh, I think she even ripped an ear off.

But we're no match against six full-grown, ranked wolves and warriors.

Eventually, they have her pinned to the ground on her stomach. She continues to roll and bare her teeth, but we can't move. I can feel the Alpha in wolf form walk over top of me before laying his weight on me, holding Maia in place.

She turns her head and snaps at his face. The Alpha grabs her by the back of the neck, forcing her head to the ground, growling

at her, trying to get her to submit. I can feel his aura pushing out, but it has no effect on us.

I don't have time to think about what that means because I hear a commotion behind me and feel some of the weight lift off me.

The Alpha lifts his head and turns to look behind us. Maia takes the opportunity to reach up and grab the side of his neck, biting

down and ripping a chunk of his throat out. The Alpha gives a gurgling howl before moving off us. Maia immediately starts to run.

She's running full out when the Alpha smashes into her again, blood dripping from the wound in his neck. His teeth are snapping

at her neck, trying to bite down on her marking spot when he's knocked off his feet by a giant black wolf. Louis.

The two begin fighting, Louis putting himself between me and the Alpha. I know I should run, but I can't leave Eli. I'm his

Guardian, but also, he's magnificent. I know he told me he's descended from a Beta line, but Louis is bigger than this Alpha's wolf.

Maia already injured the Alpha, so I'm hoping that Eli can finish him off. I watch as they fight to the death over me. The other

wolves are now surrounding Eli and Alpha Brody waiting for the battle to end. They won't interfere, this is a battle for dominance

and strength. If they were to interfere, it would mean they don't trust their Alpha to win.

Louis takes some swipes of the claw and bites to his back and flank. This Alpha may not look like much, but he's an Alpha. In the

shifter society, you don't maintain that rank unless you fight for it and win it. So, he is a strong fighter and is giving as good as he

gets until Louis finally manages to bite down on the back

of his neck.

The sound of the Alpha's spine breaking is loud in the suddenly quiet field. Louis. shakes his head to ensure that the Alpha is

dead before dropping his body to the ground. He shifts and Eli is standing in front of me, in all his naked and bloody glory.

"Mine!" He says, pointing at me. He's definitely more animal than human right now and it's the only word that comes out of his

mouth before the other five wolves all jump toward me, as if they plan to mark me as theirs. They are powerful wolves to have

chased me this long, so I'm guessing, they are hoping to seal their position as the new Alpha if they mark me.

Eli jumps at the nearest wolf, turning slightly to me. "Run!"

Maia doesn't waste any time and takes off. I hear Eli shift back into Louis behind me as we run. It's hard to hear what is

happening through all the growls and snarls that I hear behind me.

I feel another nip at my heel, causing us to trip, but Maia gets her footing and continues on. Moments later, we're brought to the

ground, the heavy weight pushing us into the ground. In a moment, the weight is pulled off us and she stands ready to run again,

when another body lands on top of her, and I feel the sting of canines sinking into her fur at her mating mark.

"NO!" I scream in my mind, as everything around me begins to go black. The last thing I remember is trying to cry out for Eli, but

the sound is only in my head.

Chapter 318

I left Maia in the safest place I could find before heading into the town to get food. When I get close to the town, I shift and call

Rik, letting him know that we were still running from the red wolves. I told him that I'm hoping we have enough of a lead on them

that we will make it without any further issues.

As we're talking, my eyes are moving around, watching everything, and I see it. Three cars with men standing and looking

around, sniffing the air like only shifters do, and waving toward the direction that I left Grace.

"Rik, I have to go. They've found us." I tell him before hanging up and turning around. I run back to the tree line before shifting

and running back toward Grace and Maia. I'm about halfway there when I hear the howl go up. They found her, or at least, they

found where she was. The howl is the howl of the hunt, not a capture. I change course, hoping she followed my instructions and

started running east. When I hear a second howl go up later, I divert south. She must be trying to maneuver around them but I'm

guessing they have her surrounded.

I come around a bend and see several shifters, in their human form, working to set up camp and starting a fire. I don't have time

for them, so I run around them. However, it tells me that their Alpha is here and he's after Grace.

Louis starts running faster and when we finally catch up to them, what I see nearly makes my heart stop. Maia is being held to

the ground by multiple wolves and she has a large wolf on top of her, pinning her head to the ground. I can feel his Alpha aura as

he tries to get her to submit. He obviously has no idea that Guardians are immune to the Alpha aura.

Louis runs up, ripping first one wolf then a second off of Maia. This gives Maia a chance to run and she does before the Alpha

pins her down again, snapping at her, trying to mark her.

'Louis, take that Alpha asshole down.' I shout at my wolf.

'No one touches our mate and lives.' He says before jumping in knocking him off Maia then turning so we stand in between the

Alpha and our mate.

The Alpha turns and I know this will be a battle to the death. I only have a moment to wish that Maia would take this opportunity

to run, but I know she won't. Maia has been clear about her responsibilities as a Guardian, even if she doesn't truly understand them.

I'm full on in the fight. This Alpha is like every other Alpha I've ever fought, he's fierce. Even though Maia has injured him, he's coming at Louis with everything he's got. I'm surprised that we're larger than this Alpha's wolf, but it's still taking every bit of training and a lifetime of battling with rogues to hold my own against this wolf.

When we get an opportunity, Louis jumps in and snaps his jaws on the back of the Alpha's neck, shaking his head vigorously making sure the spinal cord is completely severed.

I feel feral when Louis gives me control to shift and I shout "Mine!" to the other wolves, letting them know that I will fight all of them for my mate.

When I see them all jump after her at once, I tell her to run and I shift quickly, taking one out immediately, then grabbing another from behind and slicing my claws from their ribs, through their stomach and down their flank.

Louis wants to go for the kill, but we see Maia get tackled and Louis jumps at him, grabbing him by the tail and ripping him off.

I didn't want it to be this way. I didn't want to force a mark on her, but I have no choice and I gave her my promise. There's no way I can guarantee that none of these wolves will get past me to mark her.

### Chapter 319

'She's ours.' Louis roars in my head as he jumps on top of her, his canines sinking into her neck.

I immediately feel the mate bond kick in. I can feel her fear and just before she loses consciousness, I hear her screaming my

name in her mind. Maia goes limp. I pump more venom into her while she's out, making sure that her scent changes to include mine before Louis pulls his canines out.

Louis turns, standing over top of Maia who is now shifting back into her human form. He snarls at the four remaining wolves.

She's marked, but that doesn't mean that they won't try to kill me and remark her.

I watch as they look at each other, then at their dead Alpha and the other one I just killed. I see them mind linking each other

before they turn and run off. I'm not foolish enough to think that we're out of the woods yet. I saw the others back at their

makeshift camp and they'll be angry that I killed their Alpha and what I'm guessing is another ranked wolf. Knowing I have the

Guardian will only make them more intent on killing me.

I turn, shift quickly, and run back to where I saw Grace's bag before grabbing mine, pulling on a shirt and shorts. I sling both bags

over my shoulder then pick Grace up and I begin to run.

When we get close to the next town, I grab some of her clothes and dress Grace. I find a place to leave her, tucking into an

empty field right outside of town. I go into town and find a bus station, getting us tickets for the next bus heading east. It leaves in

a couple of hours. I'd rather get out of here sooner, but this will have to do. I will somehow have to sneak an unconscious Grace

onto the bus without it causing any raised eyebrows. On my way back to get her, I grab some food and some bottles of water. I

know she must be starved by now and when she wakes up, she'll need lots of water.

I find her right where I left her and I pick her up, carrying her toward the bus depot. I take the back roads as much as possible

until we get to the depot. There, I find where our bus will be leaving, and I sit her next to me, wrapping my arm around her as if

she's sleeping until the bus comes. When it does, I wait until the bus empties and the driver goes inside. I hurriedly pick her up

and carry her onto the bus, finding seats for both of us in the back.

We take this bus overnight and into the next day. Grace still hasn't woken up and I'm getting nervous. When we get to the

outskirts of a larger town, I decide to get a hotel. I need to check in with Rik and I need to make sure my girl is okay.

I wait for the bus to empty before picking Grace up and carrying her off the bus. There's a hotel about a block away, so I quickly

walk down the street carrying Grace. I'm getting some weird looks, so I try to make it look like some kind of romantic thing where

I'm carrying her and whispering in her ear.

When I get to the hotel, I set her in a chair in the lobby and get a room. When I finally get her into our room, I change her clothes

into one of my shirts and tuck her into bed. I lock up and go in search of food and supplies.

## Chapter 320

I come awake slowly. I'm completely disoriented, not recognizing any of the smells around me. When I open my eyes, I see that I

am alone in a hotel room.

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Everything comes flooding back to me and I gasp, my hand flying to my neck. I can feel where my neck has puncture wounds

from being forcibly marked.

'Maia? Do you know where we are?'

'No. I was knocked out, the same as you.'

I sit up and look around. From where I'm sitting, I see my bag and what looks like Eli's bag. I get up and run over to his bag,

opening it and seeing that it is his and his things are still inside. I open my bag and see that it's pretty much untouched, my

money still inside.

The blinds on the window are closed and I go over and peek outside. I can see the bus station not far away. I turn and look at

Eli's bag again. It's then that I realize that I'm only in a t-shirt. A huge t-shirt that smells like Eli.

'Maia, do you think Eli got us out of there? Do you think it's his mark?'

Just as I'm thinking it, the phone rings beside the bed. I stare at it for a moment before walking over and picking up the receiver. I

don't say anything, I just listen.

"Grace? It's me, Eli. I can feel your fear and confusion through the bond. I brought you to the hotel, I'm almost back, I was getting food for us, I know you must be famished."

"Eli! It's your mark?"

"Yes. I'll explain everything when I'm back, but Grace? I'm sorry, I didn't have a choice."

"I know. Thank you for rescuing me."

"I'll always be here for your Grace. I'm about 5 minutes out. I have a key, don't open the door for anyone. I'm not completely sure it's safe yet."

"Okay, I'll be here."

I hang up and use the time to go to the bathroom and wash my face and the mark on my neck. It's sore, but the punctures are already closed over.

Just as I'm finishing up, I hear the door open. "Grace, it's me."

I walk out and as soon as I see him, he opens his arms and I fly into them. Every

bit of fear, anxiety, and stress of the past few days comes pouring out of me. Eli holds me while I cry, rubbing my back and soothing me.

When he realizes that this won't be quick, he picks me up and carries me to the edge of the bed. Sitting down, he cuddles me in his lap and begins rocking me gently.

"Shhh, it's okay. You're safe now."

He holds me until I'm done, then sits back, taking his thumbs and wiping the tears from my cheeks before kissing first one then

the other eye. He grabs a tissue off of the nightstand and I wipe my nose.  
sme.

"Better?" He asks me.

I nod. Looking up at him. If I thought the mate bond was strong before, it's definitely stronger now that I have his mark.

He leans forward, kissing my forehead. "You know I can hear your thoughts now, right?" He says smirking. "And while I love that

you are feeling the effects of the mate bond, I also know you haven't eaten in far too long."

The moment he says it, it's like my stomach was waiting for permission and growls loudly, making both of us laugh.

He sets me on my feet and stands, guiding me to the small table where he put the food. He pulls out a chair for me then starts

pulling food out of bags, handing me a bottle of water.

I guzzle the water down, watching him unload Italian, Mexican, and BBQ dinners. He looks over at me sheepishly. "I wasn't sure

what you'd want and honestly, I'm starving too, so I figured I get a little of everything and we could eat what we

want.

"Sounds perfect."

He sits opposite of me and waits for me to begin, before grabbing some food for himself. I haven't really eaten since the morning

we left the last hotel. I've lost track of time and don't even know how many days ago that was.

"So, what happened?" I ask him.

He tells me how he marked me, then challenged the others, before carrying me to the next town and getting us on a bus. When

he became concerned that I wasn't waking up, he decided to stop until I was coherent again.

"I called Rik and told him that you are marked and that now there's a target on my back. He offered to send some of his men to

meet us, but I wanted to talk to

you first and see how you are feeling. You've had a rough couple of weeks, and I didn't know if going straight to his pack would

be overwhelming for you."