

## Broken 431

### Chapter 431

I wipe my eyes as Thomas and Tula head inside. Tula is such a sweet sprite. Well, they all are, but there is something about her

that has pulled at my heart ever since I met her.

"I don't know how we can thank you Ailduin." I say, walking over to him.

"There is no need. You are a leader of your pack. You would do anything in your power to help those that look to you for

guidance and protection. I am the same. My gifts are just different than yours, Grace. Or, at least, somewhat different."

"Now," he says, before turning to the other sprites, "did anyone else need my assistance before I begin my training with the

Guardians?" He asks.

"Sir King Ailduin, sir. We were wondering if there would be any more time we could spend with you while you are here."

"We just want to be near you."

"We won't be a bother."

"We could help, if you need us."

I can feel Eli's patience starting to wane, so I jump in. "How about you all join us for dinner this evening. We'll plan to eat out

back here and you can tell King Ailduin all about your time with our pack and for those of you that came to the mate gathering,

you can tell King Ailduin all about that as well."

"Oh, thank you Lady Luna Grace."

"We'll be back for dinner."

"We'll bring our plant nectar."

"Thank you, again."

"See you later."

Ailduin looks at me as they fly away. "You handle them very well."

I shrug. "Their hearts are in the right place. I know they annoy some people." I spare a glance at my mate. "But, really, they're

kind, sweet little beings.”

“I appreciate you letting them interact with your pack. The sprites have always had a love for werewolves.”

“Why is that?” Angel asks. She just had a sprite mate with one of her pack members and move to her pack

“As you may have noticed, the sprites are sweet beings, but they are not strong, they are not fighters. They have little to no

method of protecting themselves from predators or hunters. In the past, the wolves protected the sprites while the sprites kept an

eye on the areas surrounding the wolves for enemies. Generally, both species found the arrangement beneficial. And, as you

have

seen, sprites and wolves have been known to be mates.”

He looks out watching the sprites as they fly back into the forest. “Wolves and sprites make good mate pairs. The sprites adore

their mates in a way that you wolves appreciate, and the wolves cherish the sprites in a way that makes them feel safe and

loved. Also, sprites don’t mind the wolves’ possessiveness. That also makes them feel loved and cherished, like they are the

most

special person in the world to their mate.”

“They are.” Liam says, coming up and wrapping his arms around Angel “Most wolves treasure their mates above anything and

anyone else. Those that don’t, don’t deserve the bond they have been gifted with.”

“I’ve started to wonder if this generation of Guardians is stronger than the ones I worked with before because you’ve been

allowed to find your fated mates. I know your mates are stronger, but it seems that you, as Guardians are stronger as well, and

not necessarily from the next generation of reincarnation. Time will tell I guess.” Allduin says.

“Time will tell for you.” Rik says, dryly. “We won’t be here to see it.”

“Hmmm, a good point. Well, shall we get started?”

“What would you like for us to start with today?” Cara asks.

Ailduin turns to me. “I understand that you pulled power from Cara and Angel. Tell me what that was like for you.”

I explain to him about the colors and how they blended. He nods as if this makes perfect sense.

“So, Maia’s power is red. As the parent, her color was stronger than Artemis’s which was orange. Alessia’s is different, having

the ability to direct her aura, so hers was a different color but blended into yours making it an altogether different color. And you

were able to manipulate power of all three of you combined into one.” He summarizes.

“Yes.”

“Healing power is yellow, as you may have seen by the glow in my hand when I healed Tula. I wonder if you could find Alessia’s

healing power and draw from it.”

the

I look to Angel. “Well, Angel is pregnant and since my power draw knocked all of us out, we don’t want to hurt the baby by

practicing on her. Is there something else we could practice?” I ask,

noticing Liam’s relief.

Ailduin looks at me intently for a moment, causing me to shift uncomfortably. “Perhaps you could try with me.” He says, finally.

“With you?” It comes out more of a squeak than a question.

## Chapter 432

“I also have the power to heal.” He reaches his hand out to me, palm up. “See if you can feel my healing energy.”

I look at the others before stepping up and gently placing my hand on top of his. “Reach out with your strength, see if you can

feel mine. You are a Guardian of the Realm. If your powers really do extend to all supernaturals, you should be able to pull power

from me as easily as you do your

Guardian sisters.”

I realize why Ailduin stared at me for so long. He was deciding if he was comfortable with me having this level of power over him.

If I learn to pull power from him, I could drain his power, or possibly use it for my own personal desires. He’s taking a risk and

he’s putting his trust in me. Considering the recent negative history between the fae and the werewolves, I feel honored.

I close my eyes, letting myself feel the warmth of his hand. Maia pushes forward and we pull gently, trying to find his aura and

strength. “Yours is green.” I say, almost to myself.

“The color of the earth, where my strength comes from.” He says. “Find the layer of yellow within the green.”

I feel like I’m in the green layer of a rainbow, searching for the next color. Roy G Biv. I remember hearing that mnemonic

somewhere for the colors of the rainbow. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. In that color scheme, yellow is right

next to green.

I push my aura in one direction, and the green starts to feel darker, so I move and begin letting it flow to where the green starts to

feel lighter until I’m surrounded by yellow. “I found it.” I say. opening my eyes. Ailduin is watching me intently.

“Interesting. I’ve never known anyone that could maneuver around an aura like that. Grab hold of the yellow.” He says and I do,

pulling it into me. As I do, he beckons Elfover. He takes a knife and

hands it to him.

“This is silver. I know you can heal from it, but I want to see if your mate can use my healing to heal you faster.” He says. Eli

takes the knife and looks at me.

“Ready?” He asks. I nod. He slices his hand with the knife before opening his bloody palm to me. I

reach my hand out and cover his.

“Push the yellow into his hand.” Ailduin instructs me. I focus, Maia helping me, and I watch as my hand glows a faint yellow and

Eli’s hand heals. When I’m done. I’m exhausted. I feel like I’ve run a marathon after starving myself for weeks, and not sleeping for days. I’m sweating and I’m stagger forward. Ell immediately picks me up bridal style, looking at me concerned.

“What’s wrong with her?” He asks, holding me close.

“Doing this is difficult and she has exhausted herself. Can we get her something to eat and something sugary to drink?” He asks

and Ell calls Cammy to bring me something.

“I’m okay, Ell. I just feel so tired.”

“Can’t you heal her?” Eli asks Ailduin.

“Yes and no. She’s not injured. She has exhausted herself. It would be better for her body to heal itself and learn it’s limits.”

“While she rests, Cara, lets see if you can find my healing aura.”

“I can’t see the colors. When I pull on her power, I just feel the power coming through to me. I don’t do any of the blending thing

that she talked about.” Cara says.

Ailduin looks at Angel. “Not a chance.” Liam says before Ailduin can even suggest Angel trying it.

Ailduin nods looking back at Cara. “Can you feel the difference between strength and healing?”

“I don’t know.” She says.

“Let’s try.” He says as Cammy brings out a tray of food and a soda for me.

We watch as Cara tries to find the difference between Ailduin’s strength and his healing power. We can see that she’s getting

fatigued as well. Rik walks up behind her, lending her his support.

“I think I have it.” She says and she sounds like she’s panting with the effort. Ailduin pulls his hand away and her body sags. Rik

scoops her up and brings her back to our little seating area.

“I think that is a good start for today. We can have dinner and rest. Tomorrow, I want to work on mind linking and if we have time

and feel up to it, we can try again.” Ailduin says.

Cara eats a little and has a soda as well before we both start to feel better. When it’s time for dinner, we’re both feeling back to

normal.

### Chapter 433

Dinner was a loud and chaotic affair. The sprites were back to their incessant back and forth chatter. I don’t know how Grace can

have conversations with them and not get a headache, but my amazing mate takes on the roll of hostess and inserts herself in

the conversations with the sprites. Angel and Cara seem to have the same ease interacting with the sprites. Liam on the other

hand, makes me look like I have the patience of a saint. He has no tolerance for their chatter

at all. Rik falls somewhere in between us and our mates.

I watch as Aolis dotes on Lily. She’s still too young to really give him attention, but he seems to enjoy making her laugh. “Is it

weird that you already know who Lily’s mate is?” I ask Rik.

He looks over at Aolis, playing with his daughter. “Right now, it’s fine. As she gets older, I know it will be harder for me and I’ll

have to set serious boundaries. Here I was, worried I’d have to fight with Liam about his son messing with my little girl. Instead, I

get fae royalty that is ten years

older than she is. I honestly don’t know which is worse.”

As the evening winds down, Grace makes sure that everyone is settled in their rooms. Ailduin and Aolis have been put in rooms

on our floor. After making sure they also have everything they need, I pull my mate into the shower and make sure she knows

exactly how amazing I think she is before I wrap myself around her in our bed and we fall to sleep.

The next morning, we wake early as Grace wants to make sure that everything is ready for breakfast. We haven’t been

downstairs long when Ailduin comes in, looking a bit frazzled.

“Grace, has someone stayed in the room I’m in recently. There’s a scent...”

“Oh, Ailduin, I’m so sorry. We did have guests last week. I thought the room had been cleaned and aired properly, but I can make sure that it is cleaned again today.”

“NO!” He says sharply, before regulating his tone. “You misunderstand me. The scent, it’s intoxicating.” I watch as his eyes nearly roll back into his head. I look at Grace. I know that look. Everyone mated werewolf knows that look. That’s the look of someone that just smelled their mate.

Summer? Who stayed in the room that we put King Ailduin in?” I can see Grace’s eyes shining.

She thinks she knows who his mate is.

Summer walks in and thinks for a moment. “Let me see, I believe that was Alpha Anastasia.”

“Thank you, Summer.” Grace says, with a shrewd look I’ve seen before. She’s planning something.

“King Ailduin. Allow me to make a phone call. I don’t want to make any assumptions, but it’s possible that the person that was here last weekend could possibly make a trip to come this weekend as well. I’ll find out and then, then we’ll see what happens. In the meantime, please have some breakfast.”

Grace leaves to make her call. While she is gone, the others join us for breakfast. They say hello to their previous pack mates

that chose to move to our pack, catching up on the changes in their lives since they came to live here. When Grace joins us, she has a smile on her face.

“I let Cammy and Summer know that we’ll have a couple extra visitors this afternoon, staying the night.”

“I hope that this won’t lead to disappointment for them again.” I mind link her.

“He’s a king. In retrospect, she’s perfect for him. It just means that Alpha Christopher will have to figure something else out with his pack.” She mind links back.

After breakfast, we drop the babies off at the nursery and head back outside.

“Today, I want to try something different. We know that Grace and Ell have the ability to mind link long distances, and that Grace can push her ability to Eli and have him mind link longer distances as well. So first, let’s see if Cara and Angel can pull from Grace and mind link back to your respective packs.”

It takes some time, but eventually Cara is able to mind link Lacey back at her pack. Next, Angel takes a turn with Liam hovering over her ready to swoop in if she looks tired.

“Liam, I’m pulling from her, she’s not pulling from me. I’m fine.” Angel tells him, but he doesn’t budge. She rolls her eyes and focuses on Grace. It takes her a bit longer, but eventually, she’s able to mind link back to her pack as well.

“Excellent. Next, I want to see if Cara can pull from Grace’s power and have Rik mind link his pack.”

This takes longer but eventually, Rik is able to mind link Chase back at his pack. Next, they try again with Angel and Liam. Again,

it takes longer, but Liam is able to mind link. By the time they finish, it is time for lunch, and everyone looks like they could use a break.

At lunch we see a very happy Thomas and Tula. Tula has a mate mark on her neck. When I look at Thomas, he pulls his shirt down to show me the glowing circle above his heart. The two of them look radiantly happy. Grace gives Tula a hug and she thanks Ailduin again for healing her.

In the afternoon, Ailduin wants to see if Grace, Cara and Angel can mind link each other. They all look at each other, frowning before turning back to him.

“Your bonds are different, more significant than they have ever been in the past. Two of your wolf spirits have been mated and one of your wolves is the daughter of the other two. In both of those scenarios, wolves are able to mind link, correct?” Ailduin asks.

“Correct.” They all agree.

“So, let’s try it.”

It doesn’t take long at all before they all realize they can mind link each other. They are all laughing and begin hugging each



other.

“That’s amazing!”

“Now, let’s try adding the mates into the mind link, Grace, start with Rik. See if you can mind link him. Angel, you try to mind link

Eli and Cara, you try with Liam.”

They do. Angel is looking at me, focusing on trying to open the mind link. It takes longer than it did. when they were trying with

each other. Grace gets it first, but she and I have the stronger mind link. Suddenly, I can feel a fluttering against my mind. I smile

at Angel and nod at her. She pushes harder and she’s in.

“Hey Eli.” She mind links me.

“Nice job, Angel.”

We are just confirming that we’ve all been able to mind link when Grace’s eyes go unfocused.

“Oh. I’ll be right back.” She says.

She goes inside as everyone continues chatting about the possible implications of us being able to mind link to each other now.

When Grace walks out, Ailduin’s head snaps up. She moves aside and Anastasia is standing there. She looks at Ailduin.

“Mate!”

Ansettia and Alduin were unplanned and sort of happened by accident in my head. I hope you like the pairing!

## Chapter 434

I knew it! I knew Anastasia and Ailduin were mates! Now, we just need to see how this plays out.

In an instant. Ailduin has moved forward and has Anastasia in his arms.

“King Ailduin, may I introduce you to Alpha Anastasia. Anastasia, this is King Ailduin.”

“King?” Alpha Christopher says, looking at his daughter in the arms of her mate before turning to

1. me.

“Ailduin is the fae king.” I reply.

“How is this possible? I thought you only get one mate in a lifetime.” Ailduin says, his voice thick with awe. He hasn’t looked away

from Anastasia.

She tenses in his arms. “You’re already mated?”

He shakes his head. “No, I was, years ago, but she was taken from me.” He looks around at all of

1. us. “How?”

“You’ve lived more than one lifetime by our standards.” Rik says. “And werewolves have second chance mates. It’s not common,

but it does happen. Maybe the fae do as well.”

“Perhaps you would like someplace more private to get to know each other.” I say, gesturing to them to follow me. “I’m sure you have much to discuss.”

“Yes,” Ailduin begins, before turning back. “But your training.”

“Can wait until tomorrow. Go speak with your mate. Everyone here understands.” Eli tells him.

King Ailduin then turns to Alpha Christopher. “I am King Ailduin of the fae. I assure you that no harm will come to your daughter

while she is in my company.”

Alpha Christopher nods and turns to Anastasia. “I’ll be here if you need me.”

I find them a private room on the first floor and leave them to get to know each other. When I return, Alpha Christopher is sitting

with everyone else.

“A king? A fae king?”

“Yes. He has been helping us learn how to use our Guardian gifts and has been a catalyst in helping us overcome the difficulties

between the fae and werewolves.” Cara tells him.

“He said his mate was taken from him?” He asks, looking around.

“It’s not our story to tell.” Angel says. “But it is a sad story and in the end, the she-wolf died. There is no one making a claim to

Ailduin now.

“He is a good king. The sprites that live in our surrounding forest adore him.” I say. And as if I brought them into being by talking

about them, Funichio and Fanella come flitting up.

“Lady Luna Grace. Sir Alpha Eli. Good afternoon.”

“We’re looking for King Ailduin.”

“Is he around for us to talk to?”

“I’m afraid he’s busy right now. Is there something we can help you with?” I ask.

“Funichio, look, there’s a new one.”

“Oh, he’s a fine specimen.”

“He is, do you think he’s an Alpha too?”

They begin having a conversation about Alpha Christopher and I can see the Alpha’s lips twitching at being the object of their

not-at-all subtle admiration.

“You know I can hear you, right?” Alpha Christopher says to the two sprites.

“Oh, Funichio. Did you hear that?” Fanella says, quivering in excitement, her hand going to her heart.

“Definitely an Alpha.”

“He’s very big.”

“He looks like he’d be very warm.”

Fanella flits over toward Alpha Christopher. “What’s your name, handsome?”

“I’m Alpha Christopher. What’s your name, beautiful.” Christopher flirts with Fanella.

“Funichio, did you hear that, he thinks I’m beautiful.”

“Well, he may be an Alpha, but he obviously has poor eyesight if he thinks you’re beautiful sister.”

“Take it back.” Fanella says to Funichio.

“I think you’re quite lovely.” Alpha Christopher says to her, making her flutter and shiver again.

“Are you always this responsive to the voice of an Alpha?” He says, seemingly genuinely curious.

“Only some. Your voice is deep, it feels delicious when you speak.” She says, her eyes rolling back in her head.

“Delicious?” He frowns, looking at the rest of us.

I shrug. “It’s apparently a good thing. But don’t lick her and don’t let your wolf lick her. That’s how they mate.” I warn him.

“Lady Luna Grace.” Fanella snuffles, looking at me, offended. “Maybe he wanted to lick me. You didn’t have to tell him not to. I

would be a good mate.”

Chapter 435

She turns back to Alpha Christopher. “You’re welcome to lick me if you want to.”

Alpha Christopher smiles at her. “Maybe we should get to know each other before either of us considers licking the other.” He

tells her kindly.

“Oh, I would love to spend more time with you. Do you have time now? I could show you the forest.”

He looks at us. We all shrug.

He turns back to her. “As it turns out, I have some free time. I’d love to see the forest.” He leans in to her, smiling mischievously.

“Would you like to meet my wolf?”

“Ooooooh, oh yes. Yes I would.” She says, and her entire body quivers in excitement. He chuckles, turning back to us. “Excitable

little ones, aren’t they?”

“You have no idea.” Eli says dryly, shaking his head. “But you’ve been warned Alpha. They take licking very seriously.”

Alpha Christopher looks at us like we’re crazy. “Why would I lick her?” He asks quietly.

Eli shrugs. “The wolves in my pack have as much fascination with them as they do with us. If you’re going to shift. I’d be prepared to keep your wolf under control.”

He turns back to Fanella. “Okay. Lead the way, little one. Or are you going to finally give me your name?” Alpha Christopher

says. Fanella tells him her name before leading him into the forest.

“Funichio.” I say, as he watches them leave. “I’m not sure when King Ailduin will be free, maybe try back at dinner time?” I tell him.

He looks at me, before turning back to where Alpha Christopher has disappeared into the forest. Maybe I'll help Fanella show the

Alpha around while I wait." He says, before flitting off after the

"We warned him." Is all Eli says before shaking his head.

We have a couple hours before dinner, so Cara, Angel and I head down to Main Street to pick up the items they ordered last

weekend. They are thrilled with their clothing and order more for others in their pack.

As we're walking back to the pack, I notice that the flowers in the front of the packhouse look more vibrant than usual. I shrug it

off as the sprites do their thing. However, when we get inside the packhouse, I see everyone staring into the back yard. I rush

over, seeing Summer among those looking outside.

"Summer, what's going on?"

"Luna, look."

I follow the direction she's pointing, and I realize that the back of our packhouse and even to edge of the forest around us looks

almost magical. The flowers are all blooming and in beautiful color, more colorful than I've ever seen in nature. The trees have all

turned a vibrant shade of green on their leaves and the trunks are the brightest shade of brown that I've ever seen.

"What's happening?" I ask.

"We have no idea."

"Where are the sprites, are they doing this?" I ask, looking around.

"It's not us, Luna." Lelani says.

"We aren't strong enough to make everything this bright." Lolana says.

"Then who?" I ask, knowing no one has the answer. I see Eli looking around and I walk over to him

"What in the goddess's name is going on?" He asks me.

"I have no idea."

As we watch, the plants continue to perk up, getting impossibly brighter. "Look at the garden." El says, pointing as Cara, Rik,

Liam and Angel walk up and join us.

The garden is lush and overgrowing with fruits and vegetables. "Whatever it is, I want it in my pack." Angel says, looking around

in awe.

As we continue to stare. Aolis comes around the corner of the packhouse, holding Lily. "Aolis, do you know what's going on?" I

ask him.

He stops, looking around as if he hadn't noticed the change in the foliage around the backhouse before smiling broadly and

looking back at us.

"Father is extremely happy."

## Chapter 436

Well, I guess we can all assume that Ailduin and Anastasia have completed their mate bond. I'm not sure what else could make

a man happy enough to cause this sort of change in the environment. I'd like to be aggravated about it, but since it's not a bad

thing, I know that if I had the power, the entire world would have shifted when I mated with Grace, I can't really say

anything.

As everyone is adjusting to the fact that happy fae royalty means a lush landscape, Alpha Christopher comes out of the forest,

looking a bit worse for wear. His hair is going in all different directions, he has pieces of what I think are twigs in his hair and on

his clothes. He looks like either he or his wolf have been rolling around on the forest floor. Knowing the effect the sprites

have, I'm guessing I'm not far off the mark.

"Alpha Christopher." Grace says, looking a bit alarmed. "Is everything alright?"

"Dear goddess above, those sprites." He turns and we see Fanella at the edge of the forest,

waving at him.

He turns back to us. "I've been a single man since my mate died in childbirth with Anastasia. I never wanted to take another

mate, but that sprite may make me change my mind. The things they can do with their light." He looks back at Fanella. "I'm an

Alpha wolf. I'm not a young, inexperienced man. I'm used to being in complete control of every aspect of my life. But that- that

was...something else."

"Alpha Christopher." Grace says to him, trying to get his attention. "Perhaps you want to shower and maybe change your clothes

before dinner. We'll be eating in about 30 minutes." My tactful

mate says.

Liam, however, isn't nearly so tactful. "You're a fucking mess Alpha. Get upstairs and wash off whatever that sprite did to you."

Alpha Christopher looks like he's coming out of a trance. He looks down at himself suddenly realizing what a state of disarray

he's in. "Great idea. Perhaps you can show me which room is mine, Luna Grace."

"I'd be happy to." Grace says and as she turns, I can see she's trying hard not to laugh.

"Is it always this interesting in your pack?" Rik asks as we watch Grace lead Alpha Christopher away.

"Always." I say. Rik and Liam burst out laughing and I can't help but smile. It's crazy, but it's my crazy.

We don't see Ailduin or Anastasia the rest of the evening. Alpha Christopher briefly asks about his daughter before Fanella

shows up, looking for Ailduin. We explain that he is still busy, and Grace invites her to stay for dinner. We don't see either Fanella

or Alpha Christopher again after dinner.

"I'm not sure we'll be getting any more training this weekend. But we could practice on our own tomorrow." Grace suggests.

"Let's see what happens in the morning. Tomorrow was only meant to be a half day of training anyway. If nothing else. I'll be

practicing the mind link and making sure all is well at our pack." Rik

says.

The next day, there is no training. Ailduin spends the morning waiting to speak to Alpha Christopher who is nowhere to be found.

We all notice the mate mark on Ailduin's neck that he is proudly showing off. I'm guessing that Anastasia has some sort of light

symbol above her heart.

When Alpha Christopher finally returns, he tells us that Fanella agreed to return to his pack with

him. Fanella, we all notice, has a human form.

He turns to look at me. "Dalton, my wolf, might have licked her." He says quietly.

I place my hand on his shoulder. "I did warn you."

"You did, but I couldn't help myself. She is something special."

I just shake my head at him.

King Ailduin speaks to Alpha Christopher, and he agrees that Anastasia should go with him to

Araphyra, his home, now that they are mated. Ailduin tells Alpha Christopher that he'll be back in two weeks to train the

Guardians again and he will bring Anastasia with him. Anastasia hugs her father, saying goodbye to the rest of us and leaves

with Ailduin and Aolis.

Alpha Christopher waits while Fanella says goodbye to her friends and her brother, Funichio. "I don't know what I'll do with my

pack now. I'm ready to retire, but there isn't anyone to stand up and take on the role of Alpha. My Beta has a son, he may be

willing to step up. If so, I would want to speak to you about possibly retiring here and joining your pack. Fanella would like to be

closer to her friends and family."

"There will always be a place for you here, Alpha. You'll just have to find a spot you both like and we'll build you a home."

After the chaos of the weekend, I'm thankful when life returns to normal on Monday morning. Grace and I are back to our

grueling schedule of work, building the pack and cleaning the packhouse. Before the week is over, we make plans to meet up

with Benny. Grace has talked to Cammy and gotten her ideas to share with Benny. If he is agreeable, he will also be joining our

pack.



On the evening before we leave to meet with Benny, Grace comes to my office, carrying a stack of files. She sits down in front of

me holding them in her lap. I set aside my work and give her my attention.

“What have you got there, baby?”

She smiles at me. “Proof that your mate is always right.”

I burst out laughing. “And what are you right about this time, my love?”

She stands, handing me a file folder. I look at it, seeing ‘Gunnar’ written on the front of it. I frown, looking up at her. “What is

this?”

She walks around the desk, coming to sit in my lap. I scoot back, making room for her, tucking her against me and looking at the

file over her shoulder. “We found this while we were cleaning out the bunkers. It’s the files for the families in Alpha Jerome’s

pack. This is your family’s history. It shows your family line, going back generations.”

She turns to look me in the eye. “Not only are you descended from an Alpha line nearly six generations ago, but your family has

consistently mated with Alpha females since they took over the position of Beta. That includes your mother, I might add. So,

Alpha, I was right. You have more. Alpha blood in you than Beta blood.”

What do you think of Alpha Christopher and Fanella? And is anyone surprised that Eli has Alpha blood?

Chapter 437

I knew Eli was an Alpha, or at least descended from Alphas before he took over as one. He’s more of a leader than many Alphas

I’ve known, my own father included. But it was nice to have confirmation and to be able to show him that he isn’t the fake Alpha

to this pack that he sometimes feels he is, even now. He is the real deal. He always has been.

The next day, Eli and I drive north two hours to meet up with Benny. I didn’t want him driving all the way to the pack if he ends up

running and screaming after we tell him what we are. Eli found a small town with an even smaller diner where we could meet and

have some privacy to talk.

We arrived first and got a table in the corner. I smile at Eli thinking of the time we were on the run and we had breakfast in a

diner.

“Why are you looking at me like that, baby?” He asks me.

“You’re sitting the exact same way you were that time we were being chased by the red wolves. You remember, we were eating

breakfast and you saw the shifter you’d heard overnight. Even back then, before I accepted you, you were such a good mate to

me.”

I watch as Louis pushes forward in Eli’s eyes. “You were ours, from the moment we first saw you. Ours to love and ours to

protect. That will never change, little wolf.” Goddess, I love this man with every ounce of my being.

I reach out and cup his cheek, Maia pushing forward. “We love you too.” We say together..

When I hear the bells chime announcing someone coming into the diner, I pull back and look up to see Benny looking at us.

“Benny!” I stand and walk to him, hugging him tightly. As I step back, he holds on to my arms, looking me up and down.

“I know you were all grown up when I last saw you, but hon, you’ve certainly changed since then. You seem all grown up now.”

“A lot has happened since I last saw you, Benny.” I turn, gesturing to Eli who has come over to join us.

“You remember Eli.”

“I do.” He says, putting out his hand to shake Eli’s.

“It’s a pleasure to see you again, sir.”

We begin walking over to the table. “I’m glad to see you’ve been taking care of Grace. I was worried at first, but she told me you

were, and now I can see that she was right.”

We sit and order food before Benny asks me what has been going on. “Well, there’s a lot Eli and I want to share with you, but I’m

not sure you’re going to be okay with it.”

He looks at us for a minute. “Are ya’ll livin in one of them nudie camps?” He asks.

Eli frowns. "Nudie camps?"

"You know, where people walk around nekkid all the time."

I can see Eli's lips twitching. "No, Benny, we don't live in a nudist colony." I say, mentally face-palming myself.

"Well, then, I don't see what the problem is. As long as I can wear clothing, I'm good."

"How do you feel about wildlife?" Eli asks.

"I was raised in the country, son. I'm used to wildlife."

"We live in and among the wildlife, Benny." I tell him.

We get our food and I can see Benny is thinking about what we've said. He puts his silverware down, wipes his mouth with his

napkin then looks up at us.

"What aren't the two of you telling me?" Benny was always astute. He comes across as an uneducated country bumpkin type of

man, but he's not stupid.

"Have you ever heard the term shifter, Benny?" Eli asks him.

"You mean like in the movies where someone turns into some kind of critter that goes around killing everyone?"

I look at Eli, my eyes widening. This is not the direction I wanted this conversation to go in.

"Not exactly." Eli says.

Benny looks between us. "Spit it out then, what do you mean?"

"We're wolf shifters, Benny. Eli and I and the people we live with, we're a pack. We can change into wolves."

Moment of truth. I watch as Benny looks at me, assessing if I'm telling the truth. I don't look away. He looks at Eli and gets the

same resolute expression. I watch as he makes up his mind about whether or not I've gone crazy, before he picks up his fork,

and stabs a bite of his pancake.

Chapter 438

"I knew your mom didn't have cancer. Didn't know what it was, but people with cancer don't have the t  
type

of episodes she had. I'm guessing she was a shifter, too?" He asks, putting the bite of food in his mouth. Something inside me unwinds. I hadn't realized how much I wanted Benny to believe me and agree to come live in our pack. This man, who had looked after my mother and me when we had no one, then watched out for me after she died. This man, who has been more of a father to me than my own had ever been.

"She was."

He nods. "Is that where you got it from?" He asks, as if we're talking about the color of my eyes. not that I'm a shifter that turns into a wolf.

"I got it from both my parents."

"You ever find that shit for brains father of yours?" He asks. He knew enough to know that my father had kicked us out.

"Yeah. I took care of it." He stops, his food halfway to his mouth as he looks at me.

"Permanently?" He asks.

I nod.

"Good." He says before finishing his breakfast. "He didn't deserve either of you anyway."

"So, Benny, do you want to come live with a bunch of wolves in the woods and help a young girl start her own business in a

diner?" Eli asks him.

He shrugs. "I packed everything I own, knowing that there isn't anything for me back the way I came. Only thing for me is to go

forward with you folks. If you'll have me, I'm happy to come along. But I don't change into anything. What ya see, is what ya get

with me."

I drove home with Benny. We caught up on the last few months and I gave him the full story of my battle with my father. "Alpha

wolf, huh? That's like, top dog, right?"

"Something like that." I said.

"It's good to know the boss." He said.

He settled into pack life easier than I would have believed. He moved into the packhouse not showing any concern that he was

living amongst hundreds of wolf shifters. After making sure that he didn't need to worry about some wolves being the real thing and attacking him, he settled right in.

Over the next couple of weeks, he made friends with almost everyone. No one seemed bothered. that we had a human living in

our pack. He met with Cammy and talked to her about her ideas, and he gave some of his own as well. He worked with her to

make sure that the diner would be

built in a way that made it conducive to seating large groups of people and still had enough room for a kitchen, a prep station and

a checkout counter. He took her under his wing, just like he had with me.

Sometimes, he goes hunting with the wolves that bring in meat for the pack. I've heard him. arguing that he is the better hunter

because he doesn't have teeth and claws, he has to use a gun and his own old eyes and ears.

He even gets along with the sprites. After Fanella left with Alpha Christopher, Funichio didn't really have anyone to spend time

with. He and Benny have become good friends. I frequently find them sitting together in the late afternoon, relaxing under a tree

or walking through the forest, just talking.

He's chosen a spot where he wants to build a house, and once the diner is built, I doubt I'll see much of him as I'm sure he'll do

what he's always done. He'll sit in the diner and keep an eye on everything.

He did mention to me once that while we may not live in a 'nudie camp', people sure al

are 'nekkid' a lot. I just laughed and told him it was too expensive to constantly buy clothes if you shift with them on and destroy

them. And then, you don't have any to put on when you shift back. He's learned to adjust.

All in all, it's been a much easier transition than I would have expected, and I couldn't be happier.

It's been a couple of months since Benny joined our pack. It's really coming along now. Most of our pack members have

homes that are either complete or in the final stages of completion. Main

street stores are complete, and we've started building another set of stores in the expansion portion of the pack, making it easier

for those members that chose to live farther away from the packhouse to get supplies when needed.

Grace and I started having monthly pack meetings, keeping everyone up to date, providing any announcements and using that time to add new members to the pack, whether they are wolves coming of age, or people who have come to our pack looking for a safe place to live.

Ailduin comes for training every two weeks. He brings Anastasia so she can see her father. Alpha Christopher spoke to his Beta

when he returned with Fanella. He set up an Alpha challenge and

his Beta's son won, as expected. He took a month to help transition the duties to the new Alpha

and then he and Fanella officially moved to our pack. They have built a house near the forest, in at

community where Alexander and Thomas also built homes. It puts the sprites closer to their friends and families and it also puts warriors near our borders which helps protect our territory.

The hunters have started moving again. The sprites have found several in our forest and we've been able to scare them off or eliminate them. Alpha Anders and the team of elders that have been looking for hunter compounds have only been able to track down one. I wasn't there, but

from what I heard, they found all sorts of supernatural beings. They were being tortured and experimented on, just like Amber had been. We know there must be others, but they haven't been able to find them. We've

started hearing rumors again that something big is coming. We've increased our patrols and thankfully, we now have two sides of

our pack lands that border Liam and Rik's packs, which provides extra security for all of us.

Grace is getting stronger. Her ability to pull power has now extended past Cara to Rik. Somehow, once they were able to

connect the mind link, it made it possible for Grace to also pull from Rik's power. Ailduin has been testing her ability to pull it

separately from Rik or through Cara. At our last training session, Grace was able to not only pull from Cara and Rik, but she also

touched on Rik's pack members. Liam still refuses to allow Angel to participate, and I don't blame him. Grace is exhausted after

every training session. However, after she tapped into Rik's power through the

mind link, Ailduin started having Liam sit in. Now Grace can pull from Cara and Rik as well as

Liam and me all at the same time. She was powerful before, but now, when she pulls our power. her strength is amplified even

more.

It's late and I'm at my desk, getting ready to be away for another weekend of training with Ailduin. This time, we're scheduled to

be at Rik and Cara's pack. My phone rings and when I pick it up, I'm on a conference call with Rik and Liam.

"Eli, Rik. We have a problem." Liam starts the conversation. "I've just returned from my office in the city. A panther shifter that I

met nearly a year ago came in. She looked awful. She said she had been kept in a hunter's compound for nearly six months.

During that time, she overheard them talking about the Guardians. She escaped and came to warn me. The hunters are planning

to come for our mates."

Both Rik and I snarl at this news. We all take a moment to get ourselves under control. "So, you think this is the big thing that we've been hearing about?"

"I think it must be. Audra said she overheard them speaking about what happened at the tournament. The ones that escaped

that day did get the news back to their leaders. They have. also been experimenting on wolves. Audra thinks they are rogues,

which is why we haven't been alerted to missing wolves from any of the packs."

"I'll send my father to speak to her, if that's okay. I'm sure he'd like to find that compound." Rik says.

"Send him over. I've got her set up here at the pack. She's not happy about it, but she's safe." "Does she know what kind of

experiments they were doing on the wolves?" I ask.

## Chapter 440

“No. I’m not sure she could tell me even if she did know. She’s pretty traumatized.” Liam says.

“Let my dad speak to her. He’s been interviewing the supernaturals that were rescued from the compound they found. He knows

how to ask the questions slowly and carefully.”

“Good idea. If he wants to come tonight, I’ll set him up here, but I’d prefer that he wait to speak to her until tomorrow. She needs

food and rest. How do you both feel about moving our training session to my pack this weekend. I’d like to keep Angel close to

home, but it’s possible that we may be able to speak to Audra. She might be more willing to speak to our mates, knowing that is

who the hunters are after.”

“That’s fine with me.” I say and Rik agrees.

“You know we have to tell them.” I say to Rik and Liam.

I hear them both sigh. “Yeah, I know.” They both say.

“They are Guardians. They are strong, but they need to be prepared. They need to be warned to be on alert. And Grace, at least,

will want to know why I’m tripling our patrols.” I tell them.

“Cara will too. She won’t let it go until I tell her.” Rik said. “And I’ll feel better knowing that she’s being extra careful if she’s out

with Lily.”

“Agreed. So, we all tell them tonight since we’ll be together tomorrow?” Liam asks.

We all agree.

I finish the call and head to our room, following my mate’s scent. I find her in the shower and lean against the door, watching her.

“Why are you watching me like a creeper?” She leans her head out to look at me..

“Just enjoying the view.” I tell her.

She crooks her finger at me. “Come join me.”

I strip down, walking into the shower behind her, wrapping my arms around her. She turns in my arms, looking at me with a



mischievous look on her face, her hands slowly sliding down my chest to my stomach and lower.

“Do you know how much I love you?” I say, meaning it with every fiber of my being. No one and nothing will take my mate from me. I will die before I let those hunters or anyone else hurt her.

‘I will tear anyone to shreds if they even think of hurting our mate.’ Louis says.

Grace’s hands stop their descent and instead, her brow furrows and she slides her arms around me, leaning into me.

“What is it? What’s wrong?”

I look at her, my throat getting tight at the thought of someone coming after my mate. I swallow a couple of times, trying to get

the lump out of my throat so I can answer her. I lean down and kiss

her nose.

“We found out that the hunters are coming after the Guardians specifically. They are coming for you.”

“Hey, they won’t get me, or my sisters. We are strong. We’ve been training and we’re ready. I say. let them come. We’ll show

them that they are no match for us.”

“If they are planning it, then they have a thought of how they will win. Liam said they have been experimenting on wolves, most

likely rogues, but they may have found a way to hurt you that we don’t know about.”

She cups my face in her hands. “I’m not going anywhere. No one is taking me and Maia away from you and Louis. You’re stuck with us, forever. That’s what you promised me and that’s what I’m getting. Nothing and no one is

taking that from us. We’ve worked too hard to finally find the happiness that we both deserve.”

I lean my forehead against hers, my eyes closed, trying to get control of my emotions.

“Eli...” She says gently, feeling my struggle.

“Promise me. Promise me that you will be careful. Promise me that you won’t take any unnecessary risks. Promise me, Grace.

Promise me so that I can go about my day and not worry. every second that something has happened to you. Please, just

promise me that you will be okay.”

“I promise you, Eli Gunnar, I will be okay.”

I take my mate to bed and make love to her, slowly, taking my time, savoring every taste, every scent, every sound that she

makes. I need her to know how much I treasure her, how precious she is to me, how much I need her. When I finally find my

release, I hold on to her like I'll never let her

1. go.