

## Chapter 11 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV

"I'm sorry" I muttered.

Behind Tristen were two of his friends, Brandon and the other guy who had expressed interest in banging me if I wasn't an omega earlier today. I think his name was Jack.

Tristen just stared wordlessly at me, not moving an inch. Well, at least he wasn't raining down insults on me.

I bent down to pick up my books, which were scattered on the pavement.

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"Damnnn, look at that ass," Jack whistled, making me feel uncomfortable.

"What did you just say?" Tristen asked coldly, glaring at Jack like he wanted to strangle him.

"Common man, relax. Don't tell me you don't admire that chick's curvy ass" Jack said with a smirk.

THWACK!

The sound of Tristen punching Jack in the face echoed loudly. What in the world was happening?

"Chill, man, what's the deal?" Brandon tried to hold Tristen back, but Tristen aggressively brushed him off and pounced on Jack.

I stared horrified as they both shifted into their wolf form. Tristen's wolf was huge and shiny black with slight white furs. His green eyes were burning with anger.

The air grew thick with tension as Tristen's massive wolf form towered over Jack. Jack's wolf form, though not as imposing, was a dark brown wolf with streaks of black.

Brandon tried to intervene, shouting, "Tristen, stop! This isn't worth it!" But Tristen was beyond reasoning, driven by a rage I had never seen before.

With a growl that sent shivers down my spine, Tristen lunged at Jack, teeth bared and claws extended. They collided with a crash, rolling and snarling, locked in a fierce battle.

Their snarls and Jack's yelps filled the air, each sound more terrifying than the last. Brandon and I shouted, pleading for them to stop, but they seemed lost in their battle.

Tristen pinned Jack to the ground, his jaws inches away from Jack's throat. For a moment, everything was eerily silent. Then, with a low growl, Tristen released Jack and took a step back.

Both wolves began to shimmer and shrink, their forms contorting and changing until Tristen and Jack lay on the ground, panting heavily, covered in dirt and blood.

Jack was badly injured, his face swollen and bruised, one leg twisted at an unnatural angle. Tristen barely had a scratch. He and his brothers were the pack's best fighters, after all.

Brandon rushed to Jack's side, frantically checking his injuries, while Tristen picked up spare clothing from his bag and put it on.

I stood there, shaken to my core by what I had just witnessed.

"What the hell, Tristen?" Brandon asked, staring at Tristen with a confused expression.

"No one should dare say anything uncalled-for to Ember unless they want to deal with me. And trust me next time I wouldn't be so gentle" Tristen said darkly.

A gasp escaped my lips upon hearing his words. This made him look at me, his expression softening.

"Come here," he said, grabbing my hand and leading me away from them.

"Where are you taking me to?" I asked.

My feet were walking hurriedly, trying to catch up with his fast pace.

"To where I parked my motorbike" he answered curtly.

"But why?" I asked again, I could barely process what was happening.

One moment he was beating the crap out of his friend and the next he was dragging me off to somewhere I don't know.

"Too many questions, Ember" he grumbled.

We got to where his motorbike was parked and pulled out a helmet.

"Here," he said, handing it to me.

There was no way I was riding in that, I've never been on a fancy motorbike and I have no intentions of riding one. It looked extremely dangerous and scary.

“Hell no!” I deadpanned.

“Just hop in Ember, I’m not taking no for an answer, and you know that,” he said with all seriousness.

These boys confused the fuck out of me. Wasn’t he the one wanting nothing to do with me? Then why is he insisting I ride with him on his motorbike?

What if he was trying to kidnap me? Nope, that’s just silly.

Reluctantly, I accepted his helmet and prayed silently, just in case.

“Hold me, unless you fancy falling off the bike on our way” He teased.

Huffing, I wrapped my hands around his waist but made sure to still keep some distance between our bodies.

He starts the engine and drives out of the academy, leading me in an unknown direction. Hope my doubts about him kidnapping me aren’t true. Because I was low-key scared now.

“We’ve arrived,” he announced soon after, parking at the corner.

I looked up to see we were parked in front of an archery camp. Oh my goodness! This was my favorite activity, my dad and I used to play archery for fun when I was younger.

“I noticed you might have something for archery, so I brought you here,” he said.

He kept back the helmet and led me towards the entrance.

Wait, how did he know about that?

“How-?” I asked confused.

“It was just an assumption. I noticed you had like five archery tips books kept in your locker the other day. It is quite obvious you’re interested in it” he replied.

“Oh,” I muttered quietly.

Okay, but why did you feel the need to take me here? I wanted to ask, but I held back my questions.

“Ticket for two” Tristen said to the lady at the gateway.

After getting the tickets and paying her, we were allowed inside the camp.

I picked up one of the bows, gently stroking it. This brought back so many memories I wasn't sure made me happy or sad.

Tristen threw his hands over my shoulder, pulling me closer to him.

"Are you crying?" He asked worriedly.

Shit!

TWELVE

## Chapter 12 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV

Taking a deep breath, I tried to hold back the threatening tears.

"No, I'm not crying," I replied, avoiding his gaze. I rather not look weak in front of him.

"It's just... this place brings back memories," I whispered.

"Oh... I didn't mean to make you emotional," he muttered, combing his hands through his hair.

"It's fine," I said while stepping away from his hold and trying to compose myself.

"It's been long since I visited this place or even held a bow. Not sure if I'm still good at this," I chuckled.

"I can assist you," he offered.

"Do you want to try shooting?" he asked softly, gesturing towards the archery range.

"Sure," I replied after hesitating for a second.

Tristen led me to a shooting lane and helped me adjust my stance and grip on the bow. His body was so close to mine that I could feel the warmth radiating from him.

"Focus on the target," he whispered in my ear, making me feel a bit tingly.

I took a deep breath and drew the bowstring back, aiming at the distant target. At that moment, it seemed like all that mattered was the bow in my hands and the target ahead.

With a release, the arrow soared through the air, hitting the target with a satisfying thud. I looked back at Tristen, a triumphant smile on my face.

He grinned back at me, clearly impressed.

"Not bad, Ember. Not bad at all," he said.

"Thanks," I whispered, grinning at him.

His eyes glanced down from my eyes to my lips, and it was then I realized how close we were to each other. I shifted quickly to put a distance between us.

Tristen cleared his throat nervously and walked away to the next shooting lane. Well, that was weird...

We continued to shoot at our targets in silence, my focus entirely on the game.

"So... why were you in the backyard at the academy? You were supposed to have class, weren't you?" Tristen asked, breaking the silence.

I hadn't planned on telling Tristen that I was skipping classes because I was upset about what they had done.

"I could ask you the same thing," I said with a smirk, trying to dodge his question.

"I asked first," he deadpanned.

"Well, I'm not answering that," I replied.

I felt his heated gaze on me, making me turn to stare back at him.

"What?" I frowned.

"Nothing. Just you look kinda hot while focused," he teased.

"Ugh, shut up," I groaned in annoyance.

I slammed my hand on my mouth after realizing what I had just said.

**I DID NOT JUST TELL TRISTEN TO SHUT UP!**

Surprisingly, Tristen burst out laughing.

“Damn, you don’t have to be so scared,” he said mid-laughter.

Tristen finally stopped laughing and wiped off a tear from his eye.

"You're really funny, Ember," he said, still chuckling.

I looked away and tried to prevent him from seeing me smile.

"I get that a lot," I joked.

He looked at me still grinning. "I see."

We continued shooting for a while longer, the tension gradually easing between us. It felt kinda weird hanging out with Tristen.

I wasn't used to this part of Tristen since it was new to me, and I had no idea if I could even take him seriously.

First, he was bullying me, and now, he was making me laugh. How on earth do I keep up with his different personalities?

“We should head back to the Academy; we would be just in time for the last lessons of the day,” Tristen said.

“Yeah,” I agreed, and we both headed out of the archery camp.

We arrived at the spot where his sleek black motorbike was parked. Tristen handed me a spare helmet once again, and we got on the bike.

The ride back to the academy was quiet except for the sounds of the breeze as Tristen sped off.

When we arrived back at the academy, Tristen pulled the bike to a stop and turned to me.

"Listen, Ember," he began, his voice serious. "This doesn't change anything, okay?"

I looked at him, holding back from rolling my eyes. I got off the bike, handing him back the helmet.

“Yeah, whatever. I know,” I said emotionlessly and walked inside the academy.

The hallway was already drying up as students were rushing off to their next class since the warning bell had already gone off.

I quickly rushed to my locker to get my things and hurried to my next class.

The hushed whispers died down the moment I entered the classroom, it was replaced by complete silence. All eyes were on me, staring and judging.

"Miss Ember," the teacher's voice echoed through the room, stern and disapproving. "You're late."

"I'm sorry, Sir," I apologized timidly.

My cheeks were already bright red. I was so embarrassed.

"I won't be late next time," I said.

Professor Lark, a tall, thin man with reading glasses, sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Take your seat."

I nodded, avoiding eye contact with my classmates, who continued to stare and whisper amongst themselves.

I scanned the room looking for any available seats, but there was just one left. I had no choice but to sit next to the last person I wanted to spend an entire training class with.

He met my gaze, his eyes cold as usual...

## **Chapter 13 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets**

Ember's POV

He met my gaze, his eyes cold as usual...

Lucas turned his attention back to the front of the class. I quickly hurried to the only seat left and settled down beside him.

"Where were you?" he asked quietly so our instructor wouldn't hear.

"Huh?" I asked back.

"Don't play dumb, I know you weren't in the academy all this while," he said, giving me a pointed look.

Wait! Since when did Lucas start keeping track of my activities?

"None of your business," I answered coldly.

“Since today is the first class of this week, that means I will be having another project,” Professor Lark announced.

Murmurs and groans from all the students filled the room. Honestly, I wasn’t even bothered; I was happy actually.

I preferred when we had to work on projects since I got to do schoolwork on my own and didn’t have to attend classes except when it was time to submit the project findings. This is good since then I can avoid people, which means free from my bullies.

“But this time there is a twist. This project wouldn’t be done individually; you’ll be paired in twos,” Mr. Lark announced.

Ugh! So much for having to work alone.

“Lucas darling, let’s be partners,” I heard Diana’s annoying high-pitched voice say.

It was then I noticed she was sitting in the other row next to Lucas. Ugh! Looking at her now I wanted to punch her in the face and get the revenge I deserved.

But I knew I would just get expelled the moment I tried that; I didn’t have the grace of being the beta’s daughter to escape punishment the same way she did.

“Also, your partners would be selected by me. Give me a minute so I go get the project list,” Mr. Lark said and exited the classroom.

“Oh gosh, why can’t we just pick our partners?” Diana whined.

“Psst, you!” I heard Diana say, and from the corner of my eyes, I could see her pointing at me, but I chose to ignore her.

“Are you deaf?” she asked irritably and got up to stand in front of me.

“What do you want?” I asked coldly.

“Go sit there,” she ordered, pointing at the chair she just got up from.

“No, if you wanted to sit here so badly you should have done that before since you were here earlier than me,” I said, glaring at her.

“Diana, stop making a scene,” Lucas muttered tiredly. He looked like he was fed up with Diana's behavior.

Me too, Lucas! Me and you both!

“Are you seriously supporting her?” she asked in annoyance.



"She sat here first, didn't she? Besides, I don't see why this chair is suddenly special," Lucas said.

Diana reached for her water bottle. I stared confusedly, wondering why she suddenly needed to drink water in the middle of our conversation.

Before I could react, she tilted it towards me. I felt a sudden cold splash on my lap. I looked down in surprise at the water soaking through my clothes.

Diana stood next to me, wearing an expression of fake innocence.

"Oops," Diana said with a smirk, her voice filled with malice. "My hand slipped."

"What the hell, Diana?" I asked angrily. The whole class's eyes were now on me.

"Oh, Ember," she said with a mock pout, "I'm so sorry. It was just an accident."

Lucas, who had witnessed the entire incident, immediately intervened.

"Diana! That's enough. Apologize to Ember right now," he ordered.

Diana simply flipped her hair back and scoffed.

"Honestly, Lucas, it was just a small mistake. Ember should be more careful."

"You did that on purpose, and we both know it. Your attitude is uncalled for."

"If you insist, Lucas. Sorry, Ember, I guess I'm just clumsy today," she said, pretending to look apologetic.

"But accidents do happen, you know," Diana sighed dramatically.

I clenched my fists, struggling to keep my composure. I tried squeezing my dress to make it dry quickly.

"What happened here?" Mr. Lark asked as soon as he returned to the class.

"I made a little mess by accident, but I already apologized," Diana quickly replied, she looked so innocent it was hard for someone who didn't see the whole incident to not believe her.

Mr. Lark just shifted his gaze between the two of us and told her to go back to her seat.

"Now for the pairing. Diana Golden, your partner is Fred Giffon."

"Fuck," I heard Diana whisper.

Mr. Lark continued calling the pair while I waited patiently to hear my name.

"Ember Ryan, your partner is Lucas Enzo," the professor announced.

Thanks, professor! Ruin my life, why don't you!

Mr. Lark proceeded to explain the project details. We were all given different assignments.

"Lucas and Ember, your task is to find a rare and mysterious flower inside the forest outside town. This flower is said to possess a unique scent that is unlike any other."

"Your objective is to locate it and document your findings, focusing especially on how it stimulates and challenges your sense of smell. As proof that you did the work properly, you'll have to submit the flower also."

"This should take a week," he continued.

Wow... not bad, I guess. But having to spend an entire week alone with Lucas outside didn't sound so appealing.

The room buzzed with whispers and murmurs as all pairs communicated with their partners about the project.

As the class ended and students started to shuffle out, Lucas approached me. "Ember, we should discuss our plan for the project. How about we meet up early tomorrow morning?"

I nodded, trying to hide my nervousness. "Sounds good. Let's meet at the academy gates at dawn."

Diana, who had been eavesdropping on our conversation, interrupted with a scoff.

"Good luck finding that flower. Maybe it could work some magic on your face. You'll need it," she said while glaring at me.

Lucas rolled his eyes at her remark. "Enough, Diana."

I gathered my things to leave; I didn't want to stand Diana for another second.

Ugh! What a day...

## **Chapter 14 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets**

Ember's POV

I went quickly to find Zealina. I already knew she would be waiting for me at my locker, so I didn't have to worry about finding her.

"Hey," Zealina waved as soon as she sighted me.

"Hi," I replied tiredly, not matching her excitement one bit.

"Wait, why does your dress look damp? And aren't you a ray of sunshine?" She asked sarcastically.

"Long story, and sorry I'm just so tired," I pouted.

"Aw, how about we get some ice cream? Ugh! I missed hanging out with you, and I think you owe me some juicy details," she said, winking at me.

"I missed hanging out with you. Also, I have no idea what juicy details you're referring to," I replied, giving her a pointed look.

"Oh yeah? I heard you got partnered up with Lucas, and you're going to be alone with him for an entire week!" She said with a smirk.

Wow! News concerning the triplets travels fast around here.

"Gosh, I can already feel the heat," she giggled while wiggling her eyebrows at me.

"Don't," I grumbled and started speed walking to the exit.

"Aw, don't be like that," she chuckled, walking quickly to catch up with me.

"There's nothing juicy to tell about that. Lucas hates my guts and so do I," I replied.

"Oh yeah? Then why are cheeks red since I mentioned Lucas?" She teased.

"Come on, girl," I groaned, embarrassed from all her teasing.

"Okay, okay, I'm done," she replied and laughed at the embarrassed look on my face.

We were walking together towards her home, which wasn't that far away.

"I noticed you didn't attend our shared class in the fourth period," Zealina said after moments of silence.

"Were you still sulking? You should have texted me to come cheer you up after my combat class," she said, looking at me with concern.

"Oh no, it's fine. I'm alright now anyway," I replied.

I didn't want to mention my outing with Tristen because she'd most likely tease me, and I didn't want that. At least I wasn't lying, though; I just didn't mention it.

Zealina and I continued our walk. The conversation flowed effortlessly, bridging the gaps of time we hadn't spent together.

We talked about everything and nothing at the same time—from the latest gossip at school to cute details about Ernest and Zealina's relationship.

When we reached her house, the warm glow from the living room windows welcomed us. Zealina's house always had a comforting aura. It was a place where I had spent countless hours, and it felt like a second home.

We headed to her room. Posters of our favorite pictures of us covered the walls, and a pile of fluffy cushions lay in one corner.

We settled down, sharing a bucket of ice cream and diving into more stories. Hours seemed to fly by, and soon it was dark outside.

"I should probably head home," I said, glancing at the clock.

"Yeah, it's getting late," Zealina agreed, yawning.

As I stepped out into the cold night air, I shivered from the cold.

When I reached home, the aroma of a delicious meal greeted me. I could hear the familiar sounds of Alpha and Luna chatting and laughing. As soon as I entered the dining room, Anna spotted me.

"Ember! There you are. Come, join us," she said, gesturing to the empty seat next to her.

The triplets were also present at the dinner table, munching on their food quietly. After exchanging a glance, they just continued with their meal.

I took my seat, exchanging smiles with Anna and Alpha Dominic.

"Ember, it's been up to a week since you moved in with us. How are you finding life in the pack house?" Alpha Dominic asked.

I hesitated for a brief second, trying to figure out how to answer him the right way without sounding ungrateful.

"It's different," I began cautiously. "I'm still getting used to the routines, the dynamics, and... well, being around everyone."

Anna, who noticed my nervousness, reached out and gave my hand a reassuring squeeze.

"It takes time, Ember. You're doing great," she said.

Alpha Dominic nodded in agreement. "I understand everything can be overwhelming at first, but you'll find your place here. Remember, we're all here to support you."

"I'm pretty sure she already made herself comfortable and adjusted alright," Caleb snickered.

"Give her a break, Caleb. It isn't easy for her," Alpha Dominic scolded.

"You guys have been doting on her since the moment she got here, can we have a break now?" Caleb said, staring at me in annoyance.

"Caleb, where is this coming from? Why are you so pissed all of a sudden?" Anna asked worriedly.

"That's Gabby's chair for crying out loud! We already agreed no one should sit there, didn't we? I guess that doesn't matter anymore," Caleb said bitterly.

"Calm down, it isn't that deep. I had no idea," I said, getting up from the chair.

"Excuse me?" Caleb asked angrily, looking furious now.

"Sorry, I didn't mean for it to come out like that," I said, apologizing.

Caleb just scoffed and stormed out of the dining room angrily, leaving us all staring at him in shock.

FIFTEEN

## Chapter 15 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV:

The remaining triplets, Lucas and Tristen, exchanged a look before Lucas spoke up.

"We'll go check up on him," they pushed back their chairs and walked out of the room. It was just me, Anna, and the Alpha now.

“Don’t worry, it’s not your fault,” Anna said before pulling me to sit down again.

“Um, maybe I should take a different seat,” I said, feeling uncomfortable with sitting in that chair again.

I picked up my food and carried it to the chair opposite Anna.

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“This chair is safe, right?” I asked.

“Of course,” Anna replied, giggling a bit.

I settled down and resumed eating. Not gonna lie, with the triplets gone, I felt a bit more relaxed.

Alpha Dominic cleared his throat, breaking the silence.

I looked up from my food to see him already looking at me with a serious expression.

“Ember, about the incident earlier,” he started.

“What incident?” I asked in confusion.

“He’s referring to the lake incident, Ember,” Anna answered, her voice gentle.

“Oh…” I muttered and looked at him questioningly.

“I just want to let you know that I didn't mean to let your case slide,” he stated.

“Getting justice for you is a bit complicated since the girls involved are daughters of my close partners. I won't go into details, but without video proof, my hands were tied. I couldn't take any actions against them without causing a lot of drama,” he explained.

“So, what you're saying is that without video proof, it's okay to turn a blind eye when we all know they were responsible?” I gasped.

I was both shocked and hurt.

Alpha Dominic looked down, guilt evident in his eyes. "I know it's hard to understand, Ember. But please try."

“It would have been a lot better if you didn’t even bring up this conversation in the first place,” I muttered.

Anna reached out, attempting to touch me.

“Ember, we're truly sorry. We're trying to make amends now," she apologized.

“You knew too?” I asked in shock. That was all it took to lose my will to hold my tears back.

I pulled away slightly, my tears already falling down my face.

“I should get some sleep," I said coldly and stormed out of the dining room. I ran quickly up the stairs and headed towards my bedroom.

Reaching my room, I closed the door softly behind me.

I moved towards the attached bathroom. The tiles were cool beneath my feet as I turned on the faucet, waiting for the water to heat up.

The sound of running water was oddly comforting.

I added a capful of my favorite lavender bath oil, letting the soothing scent fill the space.

As soon as the tub was filled with foamy water, I began to undress, my clothing dropped off on the floor.

I eased myself into the warm water, letting out a sigh as the tension began to melt from my muscles. It was like the warm water was washing away the anger inside me.

I picked up a book I had brought with me to the bathroom. Books were my go-to when I wanted to escape my ugly reality.

I dived into reading and minutes later I started to feel a lot better. Their tub was fancy and was able to keep the water heated while I soaked.

It was so comfortable I started to feel a bit drowsy, but I didn't feel like getting out of the water just yet.

Slowly I started falling asleep...

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“Ember!” I heard a voice shout and my eyes immediately shot open. The voice woke me up from a sleep I had unknowingly fallen into.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!” I screamed and quickly brought my hands to my chest. The foam was almost completely gone so it wasn't hard to see my naked body inside the tub.

“Get out!” I yelled.

But he just stood frozen, his worried expression changing to that of lust.

Lucas was in my bathroom!!

And I was naked!

## Chapter 16 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV

I quickly grabbed a nearby towel, wrapping it around myself as best as I could, trying to shield my modesty from his intrusive gaze.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I asked.

Lucas finally snapped out of his trance, his face turning slightly red.

"Lucas was blushing?" I thought, surprised.

"I came to talk to you, but you've been in there for quite a while and weren't answering when I called you, so I thought something happened to you. I didn't mean to barge in," he explained.

"Well, I'm fine, you can leave," I muttered, still embarrassed by the whole situation.

"Were you just sleeping inside a tub though? You could have drowned, you know," Lucas said.

"Good thing I'm still alive as you can see," I said coldly. I don't know why he was being nice and trying to look caring when we both know his true attitude. It pissed me off.

"Please leave, I need to dress up," I said, pushing open the bathroom door and gesturing for him to leave.

"Sure, whatever," he replied.

I ushered him out of the bathroom, my heart still pounding loudly in my chest. The audacity of some people, I thought. How could he just walk into my private space like that? Well, I know he meant well, but I was naked! And I didn't appreciate Lucas staring at my body.

After ensuring Lucas had left, I locked the door properly behind him. I sank to the floor, trying to erase the image of Lucas staring at me with lust.

What I didn't like was that it didn't irritate me like I expected it would, rather it turned me on...

Why? Why did my body get so hot and needy under his gaze?

I took a deep breath, reminding myself that I couldn't just fall for him. Fuck the mate bond for making me feel this way.



The triplets never accepted me nor did they officially reject me so I could still feel the intense pull of the mate bond drawing me to all three of them even though I still hated them.

I got up from my position on the floor and went to change into my nightgown and got ready for bed. I was still a little curious to know what Lucas wanted to say but at the same time, I didn't even care much.

I lay on my bed, covered myself with my pink blanket and slowly drifted back to sleep.

The room around me began to blur as sleep overtook my senses. But my peaceful sleep was short-lived.

Almost immediately, I found myself in a dimly lit forest, its towering trees casting long, scary shadows.

Ahead, a woman stood. As I approached, my heart skipped a beat. It was my mother. How is it possible that my dead mother was alive and staring back at me?

Her bright blue eyes were hollow, filled with an emptiness that chilled me to the bone.

"Mom?" My voice wavered, echoing through the silent forest.

She looked at me, a tear rolling down her pale cheek.

"Ember, run," she whispered, her voice filled with fear.

Before I could react, a black shadowy figure came from behind her, a gleaming dagger in hand.

The figure's face was blurry, but its intention was clear. My mother's warning came too late as the figure thrust the dagger forward, piercing her heart.

"No!" I screamed, rushing forward, but I was rooted to the spot, unable to reach her. My mother's lifeless body fell to the ground, the dagger still stuck in her chest.

The figure turned its attention to me, The figure smirked.

"Why?" I gasped.

"She was always in the way, now she's finally gone. I would achieve my purpose" the shadow sneered.

"I'm after your life Ember"

With a sudden jolt, I woke up, my heart racing, sweat drenching my body. The room was dark, except for the dim light coming from the moon streaming through the curtains.

My dream felt so real it scared me terribly. This was the first time I saw my mom in my dreams and it just happened to be a terrible nightmare.

I hugged my knees to my chest, trying to shake off the ugly images. I didn't think I could go back to sleep again so I picked up my half-finished book and tried to distract myself once again.

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Hours later, the day had already brightened up and it was about time I started getting ready for school. I decided to brush away the thoughts of my nightmares, after I convinced myself that it was nothing.

Just a silly nightmare...

After I was done showering and dressing up, I grabbed my backpack, making sure I had all my school supplies. Then I made my way downstairs,

Anna was at the stove, stirring the pot of food, while Lucas sat at the table, scrolling on his phone.

"Morning," Anna greeted and placed a plate of food in front of me.

"Morning, and thank you," I replied, trying to avoid eye contact with Lucas. Surprisingly my earlier anger towards the Luna was completely gone.

Lucas looked up, his eyes lingering on me for a moment before returning to his phone. "Sleep well?" he asked, his eyes still on his phone.

I stiffened.

"Yes," I mumbled, focusing my attention on my meal.

After my meal, I picked up my bag and prepared to leave for school.

"Wait, let me take you," Lucas offered.

"Don't worry about it Lucas, I and Ember already have plans on riding together," Caleb announced, making his presence known. He was already dressed for school.

"You did?" Lucas asked, looking confused.

Did I?

I had no idea of the plans, and last I checked Caleb was angrily glaring at me last night.

"Isn't it Ember?" Caleb smirked.

## Chapter 17 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV

“Um, I don't recall—“ I started.

“Come on, Ember, let's go,” Caleb urged, placing his arm around my shoulder.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Lucas glaring at us as Caleb pulled me toward the front door.

“What was that?” I asked when we were both seated inside his luxurious sports car, and he had already started driving.

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“Nothing. Just that you and Lucas seem to be getting a bit too close to each other,” Caleb replied.

“I don't want that happening,” he said coldly.

I stared at him in confusion. Why did that matter to him? Was he jealous?

“Not that we're getting any closer, but why are you so against it?” I asked.

Caleb glanced at me for a second before he looked back at the road.

“Don't flatter yourself into thinking I'm jealous of whatever might be happening between you and Lucas,” he snickered.

“Let me be frank; I don't trust you, Ember. I'm pretty sure you're trying to win his favor so you could get some money from him or you just enjoy whoring yourself around,” he spat.

“What?” I gasped in shock, surprised by the words Caleb used.

I should be used to his bullying, though, but somehow it always seemed to strike a nerve every goddamn time.

“Don't try to act innocent now, Ember. You already played your part well with my parents; it's only a matter of time till you extend it to my brothers,” Caleb mocked.

“Stop this car now; I think I'd rather walk to school,” I gritted angrily.

“No,” Caleb argued.

“STOP THE FUCKING CAR NOW!” I yelled at the top of my voice.

“I. Said. No!” He shot back and pressed on the accelerator.

His car was now going above the speed limit.

He had chosen the farthest route to school, and this road was usually deserted. I was beyond scared now at the speed he was driving at.

The speedometer needle crept higher and higher, mirroring the escalating conflict between us.

"Caleb, are you insane?! Slow down!" My voice wavered, my fingers gripping the seatbelt, and my knuckles turning white.

"You don't get to tell me what to do!" Caleb shouted, his eyes wild and fixated on the road ahead.

My heart raced. I could hear the car's tires skimming the edge of the pavement.

"This isn't just about Lucas, is it?" I yelled, trying to reason with him. "What's really going on with you?"

Caleb's face was filled with rage.

"You wouldn't understand," he spat out, his voice barely above a whisper.

"You're just like them. Always taking and manipulating."

A sharp bend approached, but Caleb showed no signs of slowing down. The tires screeched in protest, and my scream filled the air as the car suddenly spun out of control.

Time seemed to stretch; each second felt like an eternity as the vehicle veered off the road, crashing through a street light.

Metal shrieked, and glass shattered. I felt a jolt of pain as the world around me spun violently. When everything finally came to a stop, the once luxurious sports car was a terrible wreck, smoke rising from its twisted remains.

My vision blurred, and pain throbbed in my head.

Through the smoke, I saw Caleb, unconscious and slumped over the steering wheel. My panic escalated, but I managed to unbuckle my seatbelt, wincing as I crawled out of the wreckage.

Sirens wailed in the distance, growing louder with each passing second. My heart pounded in my chest as I looked back at the wreckage, praying that help would arrive in time.

I had to get Caleb out; we both needed help.

I stood up and tried to take a step to the other side of the car where Caleb lay unconscious. I groaned as soon as I felt an insane amount of pain run through every inch of my body.

I felt extremely weak, and black dots started to cover my vision. I tried to fight to stay awake, but I couldn't.

Eventually, I slumped on the cold road and slowly slipped out of consciousness...

## MINUTES BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Tristen's POV

When I woke up, I decided that I should check on Caleb since he's been acting a bit weird since Ember's arrival. Well, technically, we all have been pissed off by Ember's arrival and intrusion into our home.

Caleb, on the other hand, was the most fed up with Ember's presence since it started to seem like Ember was adjusting just fine a bit too quickly and was starting to take Gabby's place in our home.

Any reminder of Gabby was all it took to put us on the edge. Caleb was having an even harder time since he always blamed himself for Gabby's death, even though he wasn't the one responsible.

His girlfriend was, but that's a story for another time...

When I entered Caleb's room, he wasn't inside, and I'm pretty sure he hadn't left the pack house this early. I went up the stairs leading to the rooftop, and there he was, lying on the rooftop with a pack of cigarettes that definitely included weeds in them.

"Hey," I called him, and he turned to look at me weakly.

From his countenance, it wasn't hard to guess he was already high on weed. Seeing him like this hurt me so much; I had expected he had already quit this terrible habit he picked up after Gabby's death but seemed like he had flopped back once again.

Caleb took a drag from his cigarette, exhaling a cloud of smoke before looking back at the sky.

"Didn't expect to see you up here," he mumbled, his voice raspy.

I approached him, taking a seat beside him, my eyes scanning the beautiful landscape of the pack.

"You know, this isn't good for you," I said, pointing at the cigarette between his fingers.

He chuckled bitterly. "A lot of things aren't good for me, Tristen."

Silence settled between us for a moment, only broken by the distant sounds of the city.

“You wanna talk about it?” I asked.

He took another drag; he looked like he was contemplating my question.

"It's just... Ember," he began, his voice breaking slightly.

“Every time I see her, it's like a slap in the face. She's everywhere, and it feels like Gabby's fading away.”

I placed a hand on his shoulder.

“Gabby will always be a part of us, Caleb. No one's forgetting her.”

He shook his head, tears glistening in his eyes.

“It's not just that. Every time I look towards Ember's new room opening, my mind always plays this game, and I expect Gabby to walk out every goddamn time! It's killing me.”

I took a deep breath; I tried to think of the right words to say since I wasn't that good at this, but I had to be there for my brother.

"Caleb, you can't blame yourself for what happened to Gabby. It wasn't your fault."

He looked at me, sadness evident in his eyes.

“I know that, logically. But every time I close my eyes, I see her. I hear her. And I can't escape the guilt .”

”You'll be fine, Caleb...” I muttered.

“Yeah,” Caleb muttered and got up all of a sudden.

“Where are you going?” I asked, but he didn't reply and walked out.

\*\*\*

I went downstairs to where Lucas and Anna were also seated having their meal.

“Where's Caleb?” I asked.

“He's driving Ember to school,” Lucas replied, looking a bit annoyed.

“HE IS DRIVING??” I asked in shock.

“Is that an issue?” Lucas asked, looking at me quizzically.

“Caleb is definitely not sober! What the hell,” I quickly reached for my car keys.

I had to catch up with him before anything went wrong.

I started the engine, my hands trembling on the wheel. Every second counted now. Pushing down hard on the accelerator, my eyes darted to the rearview mirror, hoping to catch a glimpse of Caleb's car.

Suddenly, as I rounded a bend, I saw it—a cloud of smoke in the distance, the remnants of what seemed to be a recent collision.

My heart sank. As I got closer, the mangled remains of Caleb's sports car came into view, and my worst fears had just taken place...

## **Chapter 18 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets**

EMBER's POV

“You're awake,” I heard Lucas's voice say as soon as I managed to force my eyes open.

He assisted me in sitting up and pulled me into a long hug.

“Damn, I thought I would've lost you,” I heard him whisper under his breath.

Memories of what happened quickly rushed back to me, and I pulled away in panic.

“Where's Caleb?” I asked, feeling worried. I remembered how bad he looked before I passed out.

“Don't worry, he has the Alpha blood running in him, and we all can heal quickly, so he's pretty much as good as new,” Lucas replied.

“Oh...” I muttered, feeling a bit relieved.

I noticed I was in my bedroom. There weren't many injuries on my body, except for a few scratches from some shattered glass scraping my skin during the accident.

“You're probably wondering why you're here instead of at the hospital. Well, you didn't have much damage, and after you were checked by the royal pack's doctor, it was confirmed you passed out from shock, which limited blood flow to your head,” Lucas explained.

“Sorry for the pain you were put through. Luckily, Tristen found you guys just in time,” Lucas apologized, staring at me worriedly.

“Whatever, it's nothing new after all,” I muttered, which made him frown a bit.

With him this close, the mate bond pull became a lot stronger, and it was really hard resisting the urge to kiss him right now.

He smirked, noticing the direction my eyes were in, and leaned in closer.

“I’d suggest you stop looking at me with those ‘fuck me’ gazes because, trust me, I like the thought of you under me while I fuck you hard,” Lucas whispered in my ear, his lips softly brushing my ear and sending shivers down my spine.

I blushed furiously as I imagined the image he had just put in my head. His raw, unfiltered words were enough to make my wolf whimper in need and my body tense up as he awakened every nerve in my body.

His eyes watched me as I pulled my legs tightly together to stop the aching, and he smirked, knowing exactly what I was doing.

His right hand reached for my face, and his thumb gently stroked my lower lip.

“You’d like that, wouldn’t you?” He asked, his low voice seductive.

I let out a low moan as his lips placed a soft kiss on my cheek, dangerously close to my lips.

“See you in the Academy so we can start our week-long project. I can already tell it’s going to be more interesting with you there,” he said with a wink and exited my bedroom.

This was my first time seeing Lucas’s seductive side, and gosh, it left me as a pile of pudding.

As soon as he left, the mate bond pull wasn’t as intense as before, and I could finally think rationally. What was I doing? I can’t be sexually attracted to my bully!

Well, at least I could blame it on the mate bond. It was incredibly hard to resist the pull.

‘You and I know it’s not just that’ my wolf Layla said smugly, but I quickly pushed her back to prevent more teasing.

Before I could even dwell on my thoughts, the door opened again, and this time Caleb walked in. Just like Lucas said, he looked as good as new. It was hard to believe he was the same person lying unconscious behind the driver’s seat with blood all over him.

“Ember…” he whispered, looking remorseful.

“Please don’t say the word. I know you’re being forced to do this, and I’d prefer not to hear another fake apology,” I snapped.



The concern I had for him quickly vanished into thin air, and all that was left was my anger towards him for putting me in such danger when he knew he could easily heal from it and I wasn't going to be that lucky.

It's only a miracle I didn't get much damage.

"Look, Ember, I'm truly sorry, I really am. I had no intention of putting you in danger, it's just I wasn't in my right state of mind then," he apologized, avoiding eye contact.

"If your apology is real, then why can't you look me right in the eye and say it!" I yelled angrily, and a lone tear slipped down my cheek.

"I'm sorry, Ember, I know this doesn't make up for anything, but I want you to know I would never willingly try to hurt you, at least not anymore since you're my mate," he said.

He was now perched on my bed next to me, and his hands gently brushed my tears away.

"I'm sorry, I really am," he whispered.

"Okay, sure, I accept your apology. Now I need to go back to the Academy," I announced.

"What? You can't go back to the academy. You're not fine yet," Caleb ordered, glaring at me as if my decision to go back to the academy really angered him.

"I can, I feel just fine too. I wasn't that injured anyways, and I need to start the project now so I won't end up slacking," I explained.

"What project?" He asked.

"Oh, just some project I have to do with Lucas," I replied.

I noticed he got tense the minute I mentioned Lucas. Huh? What was that about?

"Okay... let me drive you. I promise I'm sober now," he offered.

I looked at him with one eyebrow raised and gave him the 'really?' look.

"I think I'm fine walking. I'd rather not be in a car where you're driving," I replied.

"Aw, come on," he said with a pout.

"And isn't your car already damaged?" I asked.

"I got another one brought in," he said with a cheeky smile.

Of course, he did, perks of being the Alpha's son I see...

“Okay. But my decision to walk alone remains the same,” I said with finality.

“Alright,” he said, giving up.

Now I have to worry about how I could face Lucas again after what happened...

## **Chapter 19 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets**

Ember's POV

As I arrived at the academy, Lucas was already waiting for me at the gate, just as we had planned.

“Hey,” I called out, catching his attention.

“Are you sure you're up for this? We could take today off and start the project tomorrow,” Lucas said, giving me a strange look as if I were some fragile glass about to shatter.

“I'm fine,” I deadpanned, tired of being treated like I was weak.

“If you say so, let's go. It's this way,” he replied, gesturing toward a path leading into the woods.

I nodded and followed him. Once we were deep inside the woods, we came to a fork in the path.

“How about we split up? You take the left path, and I'll take the right,” I suggested, still feeling uneasy about our last encounter and not wanting a repeat because I was certain I wouldn't be able to resist the mate bond pull this time.

“Why? Do you realize it's dangerous to walk alone in the woods?” he asked.

“This woods is still within pack territory; it can't be that dangerous,” I retorted.

“Sure, go ahead then,” he replied, a smug smirk on his face as if he were certain I'd come running back for help.

Well, I was determined to prove him wrong. I started walking along the left path, carrying a sample of the flower we were supposed to find and a map of the woods in my right hand.

Deciding not to walk the whole way, I shifted into my wolf form since she seemed eager to be let out. Glancing back, I saw the area was empty except for tall trees and the sounds of nesting birds.

I discarded my clothes, tucking them into my small leather bag, and allowed myself to shift. My bones cracked and readjusted, my white fur sprouting out, and seconds later, I fell to the ground on my paws, completely shifted.

Layla purred, extremely happy to be finally let out.

My wolf carried my bag with the flower sample and map on her back, then began running, her paws digging harshly into the dirt and grass as she went deeper into the woods.

Her ears perked up as she paused in the middle of the path. My wolf was never this tense so for her to get all vigilant out of the blue, I knew something had to be wrong.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, concerned.

“I think we’re being watched,” she warned. I scanned the woods but saw no one.

“Do you think Lucas followed us?” I asked, unsure if he had kept to the deal and taken his own path.

“If he did, I would smell his scent, but this isn’t him,” she replied with certainty. Why would anyone be watching me apart from Lucas? I wasn’t even far off from the academy yet.

“Maybe you’re just being paranoid; I don’t see anyone around,” I said, making her snarl in annoyance.

Reluctantly, she agreed to continue the journey.

By nighttime, my wolf was grunting, tired from our long run. It had been a while since we’d gone for a run, so it was no surprise she was tired.

My bones cracked and adjusted again, my fur disappearing as my body returned to human form.

Quickly, I retrieved my clothes from my leather bag and put them back on, relieved by the warmth they provided against the cold, windy woods.

This was the most intense project we’d been given, and I hated every aspect of it. Now, I needed to find shelter for the night, preferably somewhere warm unless I wanted to freeze to death. I take it back, I do not enjoy project assignments one bit. I rather be in the halls of the academy and deal with my bullies than be out here in the middle of the night finding some stupid flower.

“It’s back,” my wolf warned.

This time, I felt it too—the intense gaze on the back of my head. But it wasn’t Lucas’s familiar scent. It was different and strange. Great! Just when I thought things couldn’t get any worse.

Anxiously, I turned back and froze in terror as I saw a huge black wolf staring at me, its red eyes filled with anger. It had a strange red marking on its fur, indicating it wasn’t from our pack.

Stepping back in fear, I realized I wasn’t skilled enough to fight off this wolf. I was barely trained.

“What do you want?” I shouted, slowly moving away from it. Maybe if I tried to communicate I could talk him out of his plan or distract him and escape before things escalated.

It just snarled, its red eyes searching for its next prey. Well, there goes my plan.

That was it. I had to do something fast.

RUN!

## **Chapter 20 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets**

Ember's POV

I quickly grabbed my leather bag and ran as fast as my feet would allow me. I didn't have time to pause to shift, but running on my bare feet didn't seem like a good idea either.

I yelped in pain when I felt the rogue's canines piercing through the skin of my legs. There would be a huge scar on my leg now.

The force with which his canines dragged my leg sent me falling flat on the muddy sand. I spat out some specks of dirt that had made their way into my mouth.

"Arrgg," I screamed as the huge black wolf pounced on me; my body could barely move under its hefty weight.

Just as quickly as he had pounced on top of me, I felt its weight lifted off me all of a sudden.

I inhaled deeply as I perceived the sweet scent of Lucas. He was here—

I lay helplessly on the dirt, unable to move an inch, but from the corner of my eye, I saw Lucas's gorgeous wolf as he fought with the rogue.

A few minutes later, the battle had finally ended, and I heard the sound of the retreating rogue far into the woods.

Lucas gently lifted me, seating me on the floor. I cringed in pain when I noticed the nasty wound on my leg. I was trying my hardest not to let out a loud cry.

"I told you it wasn't safe!" Lucas scolded angrily.

"Whatever," I groaned in annoyance.

"What do you mean by 'whatever'? Do you realize you could have died if I didn't show up to save your ass?" Lucas deadpanned.

"Then you should have just left me to die!" I screamed angrily.

"I'm tired of this sudden change of attitude! Why are you ignoring the fact that you and your brothers hurt me repeatedly in many situations in the past? Am I suddenly supposed to pretend none of that ever happened? Huh?" I yelled angrily.

Lucas flinched back, shocked by my sudden outburst.

"I'm sorry, Ember," he whispered.

"Well, guess what? Sorry doesn't change anything," I snapped.

This other side of Lucas was oddly nice and it scared me...

"Can we please put this aside and focus on your current situation? Ember, you are bleeding terribly!" he replied, his hands pointing towards the open wound on my leg.

"Fine," I muttered. I already started to feel a little dizzy so it was best I had my wound treated.

Lucas pulled his shirt off swiftly, and I had to stop myself from drooling over his well-toned masculine body.

"What are you doing?" I asked, flustered.

"Trying to stop your bleeding," he replied and started cleaning my wound with the help of his cloth and tightly tied the injured leg with his cloth to stop the bleeding. We didn't have many resources for first aid so he had to make use of any possible option.

"We have to find a shelter; we can't just stay here. Let me carry you, Ember," he offered.

I wanted to decline his offer, but I knew I couldn't. I found it hard to lift myself; walking myself was out of the question.

I nodded my head reluctantly, and Lucas's hands wrapped me behind my back and underneath my knees. He lifted me like I weighed absolutely nothing.

The heat of his naked chest on my body seemed to spark strange feelings in me.

"Damn, I wish he'd make love to us until we forget everything; his wolf looked so drool-worthy," my wolf whispered cheekily.

"Ugh, stop it! I know he's our mate and the mate bond is making it hard to resist the pull. But we absolutely cannot be interested in Lucas or any of the triplets even! They have hurt us too much, and I'm pretty sure their sudden change of attitude is another one of their sick games," I said angrily.

My wolf whimpered and laid low.

"What are you thinking about?" Lucas asked, snapping my attention back to him.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Well, we have arrived; this would make a good shelter, don't you think?" Lucas said.

It was then I realized we were in front of what looked to be a cave. Looked like we were going to be spending our night here...

"It seems fine," I replied, and nodded approvingly.

Lucas carried me inside and lay on one of the rocks carved out in the shape of a bed.

"Wait! My bag! It has my map and flower sample," I said in alarm.

"We can share mine," Lucas replied nonchalantly.

"I don't—" I started, but Lucas quickly interrupted me.

"Don't even dare think I'd let you continue the project alone once again," Lucas said definitively.

I just huffed in annoyance, but I didn't bother fighting his decision. It was for my safety after all. I just had to put up with him for the next week, and when we were finally done, I would try my best to avoid him by all means.

"It's freezing, I'll set a small fire," Lucas announced and went out of the cave.

"Where are you going?" I asked, a bit afraid of being left alone in this dark cave.

"To get some wood. Don't worry your pretty head, I'm around the corner and won't be out for long," he replied, his voice fading as he walked further away from the cave.

Just like he said, he was back within minutes with a bunch of wood and some dry leaves.

"How do you intend on lighting it though?" I asked curiously.

He dipped his hand into the back pocket of his black jeans and brought out a fancy lighter.

"I came prepared," he said with a small smirk.

"Of course you did," I whispered to myself.

I felt a little embarrassed that I barely planned properly for this trip. I only brought along with me my basic hygiene necessities, and they were all in my leather bag which was no longer there!

I would have to find my stuff back tomorrow early morning...

Just then it dawned on me, I'll be spending the night alone with half-naked Lucas in this small cave!

Fuck...