

Chapter 31 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

EMBER

I walked into the school with Zealina right on my tail. The energy I was getting in school today was not really what I had expected it to be, and the worst part was everyone was looking at me like I had suddenly become another creature.

"What do you think is going on, Zea?" I queried as I held onto my backpack.

She hissed. "I have no idea, but I think you're definitely at the core of the whole thing. Do you think the triplets had something to do with this? I don't completely believe that they have changed their attitude towards you."

I shifted my gaze to her as I made my way through the crowd. "No, that doesn't sound right at all. I don't think the boys would do something like that all of a sudden. They've been so kind. I'm sure it's something else," I said feverishly.

Zealina shrugged. "I hope that you're right."

With that said, she linked her hands with mine as though she wished to give me strength. I took a shaky breath as I moved further into the crowd. There was no way I would cower for anyone. I had done nothing wrong, after all.

We finally made our way to the front of the crowd, and my eyes slid open as I noted two pack warriors at either side of Mr. Lark. What was going on? I looked around the crowd, trying to see if the triplets were around, but they were nowhere to be seen. Come to think of it, they had not come back to the pack house last night. That was strange.

"There is a confession that I have to make to you all regarding Ember's accident," Mr. Lark suddenly said through the giant microphone in front of him.

I gave him a look, feeling the hair rise on the back of my neck. "Oh, Moon Goddess!" I mumbled under my breath.

Mr. Lark took a shaky breath as the warriors held him harshly on both sides. I was aware that a couple of people were looking in my direction, wondering how I was going to react, but I kept mute and focused on the podium. This man should better not try anything funny with me.

His eyes met mine for a split second, and I could see the pain behind them before he turned back to the students. "I know you all have questions, and I believe that it is time to answer them. Whatever you have heard were lies, and the truth of it all will be made known from my own words," he spat out feverishly.

"Do you think he is fooling us?" Zealina asked by my side, amidst the chatter of students around us.

I swallowed hard. "I don't know, but I don't think he would go against the crown Alphas of the pack. He isn't so foolish," I pointed out.

Taking a courageous step forward, I glared at him. "What exactly should we know in all this?" I asked at the top of my voice.

He sniffed. "Whatever you have heard so far is nothing but lies," he shot out, ignoring my question. "The truth is I was blackmailed by Vera, Fiona, and Diana to kill Ember through the project. What I did was so shameful, and I don't deserve to be the instructor of the pack. I should have told the Alpha about it, but I lied to myself that if I did so, the money would be enough to satisfy my conscience. What happened with the project was not an accident. Alpha Lucas was not supposed to be with Ember that day, but he found a way to go with her. I would never be able to..." He trailed off. "To look at myself in the mirror, knowing that I had been the cause of everything."

The whole crowd erupted in chaos, and a couple of teens threw things at Mr. Lark in rage. I had always known the truth, but hearing it out in the open was like I was being torn apart once more. It brought painful tears to my eyes.

Mr. Lark took the gooey substance on his face. He didn't even try to wipe it off as he grabbed the microphone like a man possessed. "I hope Ember forgives me for everything I have done to her," he mumbled.

"I wish I could," I mumbled under my breath as tears dripped from my eyes. He wasn't even addressing me directly. How could someone be so cheap? I wished with all my heart that he rots where the sun doesn't shine.

I could feel Zealina's touch as she tried to make me feel better, but I couldn't think straight. Everything that I was feeling was coming to me like a volcano, and I was scared that my wolf would shift in front of everyone and do something that it shouldn't do.

One of the men in the disciplinary committee stepped onto the podium, and the students stopped flinging things. I watched as he signaled for the warriors to take Mr. Lark away, without looking at him once.

"Our academy is meant to protect," he started as he shifted on his feet. "But we've failed to do that, and that wouldn't be the norm. Mr. Lark has been banned from stepping into the academy, and of course, the Alpha of the Crescent Pack would take it up from there. Also, I need you to bring Vera, Fiona, and Diana here in whatever form!"

I held onto Zealina as I tried to ground myself. There was no time to be weak, and why weren't the triplets here when I needed them the most? I just can't understand this! I closed my eyes momentarily in a bid to clear my thoughts.

"Where could the girls be?" Zealina said angrily. "They need to come around now, so they get what they truly deserve. I can't believe they hurt you so much, and I know they also have a hand in the crazy things that have happened to you."

I nodded. "I want them to be punished," I said simply.

Zealina pressed my hand tightly. "They will be."

A few of the students looked at me in pity, and I could tell that they also thought that I had suffered too much. I wanted to thank them for standing by me, but my lips wouldn't move. Maybe it was the right thing since they were so mean towards me at first. I didn't know.

A couple of minutes later, the few students who had gone in search of the girls came in, panting.

"Where are those girls?" The disciplinarian queried.

"I'm afraid we couldn't find them, sir. We also went to the border, and their scent had been miffed. I think they are still in the pack, but we don't know where they could be found," one of the boys said.

The other shook his head. "I have a different opinion. I believe the girls are in danger."

I gulped as I looked at Zealina in shock. I was trying to believe that it was a coincidence that the boys were missing too. Could it be they had a hand in this?

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Ember's POV

"Zea, I would have to talk to you later," I said softly.

She frowned as she let me go. "Why? Where are you going?"

Pulling the bag strap closer to me, I looked around at the mess that was going on. All the attention was on the boys and their explanations, so this was probably the time to escape. Zealina tugged at my hand.

"Zea, I will be back soon. Bye," I said quickly as I slid out of the crowd without anyone noticing me.

I breathed a sigh of relief when I stepped out of the school compound. My body felt like it was slightly evaporating. Okay, I'm exaggerating a bit. I brushed off the sweat that matted my forehead in frustration as I looked down the windy street.

There were a few people moving around, but no sign of the triplets. Where could they have gone? I really hoped that they wouldn't do anything to make things worse for the whole pack.

Sighing wildly, I set out for the pack house on a run. There was no need to shift; it was too much work. My eyes were literally everywhere with each move that I made, but there was no wild hair catching my fancy.

Before long, I was at the pack house and moving through the double doors. "Lucas!" I called out at once.

A pair of blue eyes turned to me. Lucas turned to me with his lips drawn in a smirk as he held the black glass cup firmly. Focus! But it was hard to do so when he was looking like a bag of hotness.

"Were you looking for me, Ember?" He teased.

I shook my head lightly as I made my way to him. "Where were you?" I snapped at once.

He shrugged. "I was trying to live my life?" He teased.

I rolled my eyes and pulled at my brown hair in frustration. Lucas had a liking for getting under my skin, and I was not in the mood for all that.

"Look," I said firmly, "I'm not here to crack jokes or anything, but I really need to know where you've been since last night. I think I deserve to know the truth at least," I ground out.

He shrugged as he took a sip from his drink before he walked over to the counter, placing the cup on the table without a care in the world. I said nothing as he turned around to face me.

Cleaning off the slight stain on his lips, he said calmly, "Why are you asking about that now? Do you wish to claim me as your mate now?"

I looked away from him, my hands writhing together in anger. I had no idea what to do or how to get to the truth. Lucas didn't look like he was willing to hear a word that I was saying or give me answers to my questions, and that was a bit frustrating.

His shoulders brushed mine, and when I tried to speak, he simply winked at me before leaving. I walked back to the counter and looked into the cup. There was a slight residue under it.

What was that?

I used my little finger to swipe at the bottom and then tasted it. It was Wolfsbane. What? I looked back just in time to see Lucas turn towards the right. It was not like him to behave this way, so what was the problem? Who was the drink for, and had he simply acted as though he took a sip of it when he had not?

There were so many questions running through my mind, but I suspended them all as I made a run towards Lucas. I was careful enough to make sure Lucas didn't sense my presence.

He was moving towards the back of the house, which I felt was so odd. Turning around, I tried to make sure that no one saw me before jumping over the stone fence.

"I see you won't stop following me," he snapped at once.

I gasped in shock as I lost my balance. Lucas caught me like I weighed nothing, and all I could do was stare into his eyes, feeling my body go on fire. The proximity we shared was too intense, but it was fruitless because they had not accepted me as their mate yet.

Sliding my hair behind my ears, I said, "Put me down at once."

"Why should I? I mean, you're following me, so I can as well take you where I'm going like this."

I glared at him. "Stop talking nonsense, Lucas! I want you to put me down at once or else..."

"What is going on, brother?"

Lucas smirked as he finally placed me down on the floor. I turned in time to see Caleb and Tristan come out of the back room. Tristan looked angry, but Caleb was a bit antsy.

"What are you doing here?" Tristan snapped at once.

I pulled myself to my full height as I looked at him squarely. "I should be asking you three the same thing. What are you all doing here when it's a school day? It's not like you to skip classes!"

They looked at each other, and I could swear that they were communicating even then, and it annoyed me the most. "Stop it!" I snapped.

"I..."

"Yes?" I encouraged Caleb.

"We don't want you to be involved in all of this, so go back to the main house, and leave your life like you didn't see me here."

I massaged my head in irritation. "How do you expect me to do that when Lucas had mixed Wolfsbane? I'm not so heartless. I know I mean nothing to the three of you, but I wouldn't let you do anything wrong. And, I can't shake off the feeling that it has to do with the girls."

"Fine! We had to do what we could to deal with those girls, so what? You don't need to get involved in this because I would definitely punish them for what happened to you. I can't spare them," Tristan gritted out, his hand shaking in rage.

I made my way to him, struggling not to touch him. "There is another way to punish them, but what you're doing is not right. You're the Alphas and if you make decisions like this, the pack

would be filled with anxiousness and worry. The members may not feel safe. I want those girls to be punished, but through the right channel."

From his eyes, I could tell he was annoyed, and the other two were seething, but they didn't wish to upset me with their words. I just knew I couldn't stand it if something happened to them in any form.

"Let them go," I said softly.

He nodded. I turned to Caleb and Lucas, and they looked like they were ready to fight someone. I slowly mouthed, "Please," hoping it would bring their anger down a bit, and it worked.

They moved as one without saying a word to me, and I followed closer behind them till I got to the door, which Caleb threw behind. Bound together like a pair of rats were Fiona, Diana, and Vera. Their hair was a mess, and there was blood at odd parts of their bodies. I could feel the horror in their gazes, but the strangest thing was I didn't feel sorry for them.

My eyes flicked to the boys, and I realized that they had protected me and fought for me like maniacs.

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EMBER'S POV:

I was outside the pack house, waiting to see what would happen next. The boys had informed me to trust them, and that they would put everything in order. I had no choice but to believe their words.

A black Toyota car caught my gaze as I looked towards the left side of the road. Who could that be?

I turned in time to see Vera, Diana, and Fiona being pulled into chairs at the side of the wall. Our eyes met at that moment, and I could feel the pure hate oozing through their sockets. I didn't care, though, because they had ceased to exist for me.

"Let's go now," Caleb said as he slapped his hands on his brothers' arms.

They grunted in approval as they jumped through the fence. The next few minutes were more intense with the disciplinary officers moving in. I knew the girls would be dealt with brutally after everything that had happened.

The lady in charge of bringing them forward removed the gags from the girls' mouths, and they made signs of anguish. I tried not to show any form of emotion as I looked on. Before long, they were pulled to the car like a pair of animals. Nothing about them was right. It was as though they had dined with pigs in less than 24 hours.

Vera pulled to a stop in front of me. "Let go of me," she snapped at the lady.

"Mind your words, or I will cut your tongue off," the woman snapped in response.

Vera groaned in anger as she looked at me. "You will pay for this humiliation, Ember. Do you think that you're going to have fun with those bastards since we're out of the way now?" she taunted.

My fingers clenched into fists as I looked at her in anger.

"What are you looking at?" Fiona queried.

I shifted my gaze to her, wanting to do something that would shut their mouths up for life. The fact that they still tried all they could to ridicule me after all that had happened was so annoying.

"Whatever Vera says is the truth. You will always be a lowlife and a disgusting creature that was picked up by the roadside. You may do anything, but you can't erase that identity from you. But, I will definitely be back to put you in your place," Fiona added coldly.

I took a step forward, watching as the ladies of the disciplinarian community held the girls to task. "You need to worry about getting out first because you're never coming out from this."

"Shut up! You've ruined my life. I hate the fact that I ever met you. Why did you come here, huh?" Diana screamed suddenly.

I shook my head as I gave her a sad smile. "You're wrong. You ruined your life by your own will, and no one is to blame for it."

"You..."

I raised my hand, stopping them from saying another word. "You've been talking a lot, but now, it's my turn," I snapped.

The three of them glared at me like they wished to skin me alive. I simply raised my chin up as I met each of their gazes with cool indifference. Raising my fingers, I pointed at each of them. "You call me a lowlife, and then, you imagine that you're some highlife. What do you think? Is harming someone and breaking their will something to be proud of? I never wronged any of you, and I didn't wish for the Moon Goddess to bless me with three mates, but she did. It's not my fault," I said.

Vera scoffed.

I ignored her. "Your bad wishes on my relationship with the triplets hold no water because we have been destined by the Moon Goddess. If you come back from this, which is never going to happen, you will never be able to harm us. You're nothing! I don't even have much to say to you. But, I hope you repent and beg the goddess to cleanse your heart. Because there would be

no second chance if you ever do this again. Enjoy your punishment, Vera, Fiona, and Diana," I spat out as I turned away from them.

The girls cried foul as they were dragged away from the pack house to the car for their punishment. I didn't turn to watch, instead concentrated on kneading the kinks from my fingers. My heart hurt a lot, though it felt good to speak up to those idiots at last. They had made my life a living hell, but not anymore.

"Ember?"

I jumped in shock as I watched Tristen step out from the back of a van. He had climbed the fence, right?

"Don't look so shocked," he teased.

I sighed. "I can't help it. When did you return?"

Tristen sighed as he walked over to me, placing a hand on my shoulder as he led me away from the sun to the nearest shade. "I just thought it wasn't nice to leave you alone here in case the girls tried something stupid," he informed me tersely as he scratched the back of his head.

I smiled at his show of anxiety. It was not like him to be so soft. "It's fine, Tristen. I didn't need saving," I mumbled.

He nodded repeatedly as he grinned. "You're right about that. The Ember I saw right there really lived up to her name. You weren't so shy and weak anymore. That is more like it," he said softly.

I rolled my eyes as I flicked my hair behind my back. I was painfully aware of our close proximity. Despite the fact we had not done anything with our mate bonds, I still felt so attracted to him. He had a raw masculinity that was difficult to ignore.

"Where are you lost now?" he teased.

I laughed nervously, hoping he didn't catch me staring at him as I moved back a bit, but it almost felt like I was rubbing against the wall. "I'm right here with you, Tristen," I said sarcastically.

"I think that is a relief then," he teased.

I smiled as I looked down at the clear granite. "I..." I trailed off, suddenly unsure of what to say.

"You can tell me what is in your heart," he said softly. I looked up at him and noted that he was blushing. "What I mean is that there is no need to fidget. Speak your heart like you always do because it would feel nice," he said quickly.

I felt my cheeks heat up too. "Well," I started, wrangling my hands together. "I felt nice to be able to stand up to those girls. Vera, Fiona, and Diana have made my life miserable since I

stepped into the pack, and for obvious reasons," I looked away as I fought not to crumble. "The thing is, I just want them to spare me, and I'm tired of listening to their taunts. Do you think I would get justice?"

Tristen gave a quick nod as he placed his hand on my arm. "You will get justice. Don't be worried about that. Whatever they said was nonsense because you will be safe from all their schemes," he said softly.

I smiled at him, and he squeezed my arm in response. "Let's go inside," he said softly.

"Of course," I said with a smile.

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EMBER

"Look who's here!" Caleb shouted at the top of his lungs.

I rolled my eyes as I made my way to the counter, with Tristen leading me. Caleb and Lucas were popping chocolates into their mouths as they leaned on the counter lazily. Though I tried to ignore them, they made my heart skip a beat.

Lucas suddenly jumped down and shoved Tristen away from me as he took his place, gripping me by the shoulders.

"Don't look so sulky now because I know you kicked those girls' asses," he said in response.

"That is going to be how I'd kick your damn ass if you shove me again," Tristen grunted.

Shrugging Lucas's hands off me, I made my way to the counter. There were peanut butter and French fries, which made me realize how hungry I was.

"Don't snub us now," Lucas whined.

I sighed as I grabbed a peanut and popped it into my mouth. "Seriously, when did you start caring about my reactions? Spare me and continue with your childish fights."

"But you think they're cute, right?" Lucas mumbled with a wink.

"She doesn't think that, man. Don't act cringy with her. Ember, ignore the boys. I'm the only mature one here," Caleb emphasized as he shoved his face in front of mine.

I felt the hair on the back of my neck rise in awareness of him. I popped a chocolate into my mouth, trying to distract myself from the silly thoughts that rose in my heart.

"Guys, I appreciate what you did for me," I said quickly.

"What did we do?" Lucas asked playfully.

I sighed. "You fought those girls for my sake. I still insist that you shouldn't have gone so far because I don't want you to get into trouble because of me. Yet, I really appreciate whatever you did for me."

I gasped as the two suddenly jumped closer to me, their lips twitching in a silly grin. They looked so identical at that moment, and I couldn't help but swoon. Why do they manage to make my heart skip a beat, even when knowing that they didn't feel a thing for me? Our bond was nothing more than a liability to them.

Lucas hit me on the side of the head with a silly look on his face. I rolled my eyes as I made a sign to hit him. He pulled back, playing along with my silliness. Then, he leaned back, placing his hand on the counter and looking right at me. It was a bit too much to observe at this point.

"Why do you have to spoil the mood? I liked it better when you were acting as though you were snubbing us," he emphasized.

His brothers grunted in response. "Even these oldies agree with me. Now, do one thing. Peck me on the cheek to make me feel as though you're really grateful."

I turned my back on them quickly. "What are you saying? I'm heading to my room now, since you have all sworn to tease me to scorn," I whined.

The sounds of the boys' youthful laughter rang in my ears, causing my wolf to leap up in happiness. I had always known that she had not given up on the triplets yet. But her desires and needs would always be nothing but a distant memory.

"Ember," Caleb said softly. "On a serious note, we would do whatever we did for you over and over again. I and my brothers can't stand it if anyone says anything bad to you or treats you with disrespect. What Fiona, Diana, and Vera did was the height of it all, and there is no way we can tolerate all that happening to you."

I wanted to ask why, but I held my words back. Turning to face them, I smiled softly. "That sounds so good, Caleb."

His brothers hit him on the arm, grinning. "He sounded so serious for the first time in his life."

"I'm always serious," he cried.

They mocked him as one. "Indeed," they taunted.

It was at that moment that my stomach growled loudly. Ugh! Who could kill me with embarrassment now? All three pairs of eyes looked at me with amusement, and then Tristen suddenly came around, taking me to the dining table. I tried to ask what he was up to using my eyes, but he ignored me completely.

"Here," he said as he lowered me down on the chair. "You would sit here like the good girl you are while I and my brothers do what we have to do. Plus, the way you stood up to those deserves a good meal."

"Tristen..."

He placed his finger dramatically on my lips, and I felt like my heart stopped beating at that very moment. Shaking his head lightly, he said, "No arguments."

I bobbed my head a couple of times, and he seemed to be quite impressed by the fact because he grinned at me before moving quickly in the direction of the kitchen. I shifted slightly as I watched them cook.

It was like never before. They acted in sync, trying to make pasta for me. I was lowkey glad that the rest of the pack members were not here right now. It was nice to feel as though the moment belonged to us, even if it were just a couple of minutes.

"Should I help you guys? I mean, I'm not so sure you know what you're doing," I called out.

The three of them turned midway to face me with a silly expression on their faces. "You would bite your words back when you see the magic that I create," Lucas said firmly.

"No, it should be 'we create'," Caleb snapped as he hit his brother on the head with a crayfish pack.

"Whatever," Lucas said with a grimace.

I rolled my eyes. "I would just sit here like Tristen told me then," I said at last.

"Good!"

The boys moved in sync, and I watched amused as they almost made a mess of everything. It was so funny that the most arrogant boys in the pack were doing all this for me now. 'Get to reality, Ember. This doesn't change things,' I scolded myself inwardly.

I focused on the blue tablecloth once more. After several minutes, the boys came around. Caleb held the pasta. Lucas grabbed the wine, while Tristen held the glasses. One after the other, they set them in front of me. I wanted to tell them not to do things like this, or it would be difficult to let go. Instead, I smiled like it was the best thing ever.

"This is for compensating because our exes were psychos," Caleb said softly.

I smiled. "I would take this interesting compensation."

The rest of the dinner went by so fast, and I was amazed that the boys actually knew how to cook a decent meal. The whole thing made me feel like a tomato because I kept blushing at everything.

I was glad and disappointed at the same time when the whole thing was over, and Caleb offered to walk me to my room. I just wished with all my heart that they would stop being so cute towards me because I was not ready for another heartbreak.

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EMBER'S POV

"Who is there?" I turned around repeatedly, trying to make sense of the darkness. It rose the fear in my heart in spades, and I found myself clutching my chest. What was going on, and why did I feel like someone was looking at me through the lens of darkness when I couldn't see anything myself?

I took a tentative step forward, hoping I wouldn't fall into a ditch. "Please, if there is someone here, step out! I can't bear this crazy prank more than it's needed."

"Why do you fear?" came the voice from behind.

I turned and saw a shadow standing in semi-darkness. Squeezing my hand to my side, I hoped my wolf would be alert to protect us if it became necessary. The shadow glided towards me, and I simply remained where I was like I was rooted to the spot.

"Speak," the voice said again.

Sweat pooled through my skin as I said, "There is nothing to say. Show me who you are right now!"

It was at that moment that the lights flickered on, and I saw my mother right in front of me. Or, what looked like her. Her face was still as clear as the sun, but her body and clothes were dipped in red. I tried to move back, but my legs seemed to have lost how to move.

"Mom?" I managed.

"Fear is bad, and it kills faster than danger," she said instead. I gulped as she raised her hand to touch my skin. "You need courage to face the danger on the way."

"What danger?" I asked at once.

She smiled simply. "I cannot speak of it. But be aware that it will come soon, and there will be nowhere for you to hide. It may come in the morning or the next week, but it would definitely come."

I shook my head. "No, the boys wouldn't let anything happen to me!" I cried.

She placed a hand on my forehead. "That's what you feel. The danger will not spare you! Now, go back," she said feverishly as she pushed me back slightly.

"No!" I said in horror as my eyes sprang open.

I placed a hand on my lip as I struggled to sit up. It took me a moment to realize that I was back in my room, and there was no one around, and I definitely didn't have any ghosts trying to warn me.

The window door was slapping against the rods so badly, and I wondered how I had not gone deaf by now. Slowly, I stepped down from the bed and made my way to it, clicking it shut despite the wind that tussled my bed-hair.

"Oh, Moon Goddess!" I breathed as I rested my back against the window sill.

Why did I have to have such a bone-crushing dream right now? My mother was long dead, and she definitely couldn't look as bad as the woman in my dream had, but there was no denying that whoever she was, she had come to warn me.

What was this danger that she had spoken of? And how could I not fear when I had no idea what was out to get me? I closed my eyes briefly as I tried to control my breathing. It was at that moment that I thought of Zealina. Maybe, she was awake? I could call her on the phone to distract myself a bit.

I opened my eyes as I threaded through the darkness, in search of my phone. She would have to forgive me for waking her up at this time of the night. It's not like I had a choice in this matter.

Bending down, I finally grabbed a hold of my phone, which was nestled under the pillow. The device beeped loudly, and I could tell that my battery was low. Just perfect! Switching on the bedside lamp, I managed to find a charger and plugged the phone in.

I dialed Zealina's line at once, and her groggy voice sounded after the fifth ring. "Oh, you creature!" she exclaimed. I rolled my eyes. "Is this the time to call a woman like me?"

"Zea, I just needed to talk."

"Then go to the boys already. You have three of them. I'm sure they wouldn't mind having your company," she said dryly.

I scoffed. "Stop talking nonsense, Zea. You're supposed to be my best friend. I mean, cheer me up and stop whining."

"Right, but I was sleeping," she pointed out.

I put my tongue in cheek, wondering why I had called her in the first place. Zealina never took anything seriously, and just like everyone, she must think that the relationship I shared with the boys had magically improved after the fiasco with those mean girls. But things didn't work like that in real life.

"Ember, I'm sorry," she said at last.

I sighed. "It's fine. You're right, I should have been more conscious of the time and not disturbed your sleep," I said softly.

"Don't take me too seriously," she scolded. "I'm awake now, and sitting on my bed, cross-legged. I wish I was on my mate's bed though, but it is what it is. So tell me why a beautiful problematic woman like you is calling me by this time," she teased.

I couldn't help the smile that touched my lips as I slid my hair behind my ears. "I just wanted to hear someone else other than my own voice."

"Aww, baby," she teased. "Are you scared of the girls?"

I shook my head. "No, I just don't know if they might do something to get revenge. They were really mean."

"They are always mean, Ember," she pointed out. "Look, I will tell you what, push all your fear to the side of your mind, and try to sleep. They won't try anything with the Alpha sons around. Everyone saw how much they tried to protect you today. It wasn't a sham or a joke. So, be calm."

"You're probably right," I said softly.

She chuckled. "I'm always right, silly. Now, go back to bed. Stay safe and cute," she teased.

I smiled. "You too," I said softly.

I disconnected the call as I placed the phone back on its bedstead. Zealina was probably right. I was just making a fuss of things. The dream was just a nightmare. Of course, I had not told her about the dream, but I knew it probably meant nothing. There was definitely nothing to worry about.

Time to sleep...

Moving towards the bed, I suddenly had a hiccup. Damn it! I was thirsty, and I knew there was no water in my room. Let me go and get it. I walked slowly, not willing to wake the other people in the house. Werewolf hearing could be insane sometimes.

The house was so still, but the hall light was on, so I felt safe. As I moved through the rooms, I suddenly heard the voice of an angel. The voice was so soft, but melodious at once. It was also masculine.

Who could be singing?

Carefully, trailing the voice as it led me to Caleb's room. His door was slightly open, and as I peered through the opened pathway, I could see Caleb seated on the bed, with his eyes closed as his lips poured out melodious music.

'So beautiful,' I thought in amazement.

Chapter 36 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

EMBER's POV

I leaned even closer to the door, intrigued by his voice. He was so intense and pure just then. I had never imagined that someone like Caleb would have such an intense love for music. His voice was so beautiful It seemed unreal, to say the least, but I swooned.

"Nothing is more beautiful than love,

It's as precious as the moments that ignite!

Oh, Love!

With its feelings and purity intact,

How it touches my heart to long for my love."

I bobbed my head to the side, feeling like I was on cloud nine when I was just standing behind a door. In the second stanza, he suddenly shifted his gaze to meet mine, and I couldn't even try to escape.

"Ember?" he asked in shock.

I felt my cheeks heat up. "I'm sorry, Caleb. I didn't mean to eavesdrop," I said quickly.

He gave me one of his looks. "Stop apologizing Ember and come in here," he said with a smile.

I held the knob tightly. "Are you sure about that?"

"Of course, you silly creature. Come in already," he teased.

I smiled at him as I made my way inside the room, closing the door behind me with a soft click. A golden bedside lamp illuminated his room, which I found to be so cute. I never imagined that

the intense Caleb indulged in such frivolities. It made me realize that I had a warped opinion about the boys.

"Are you going to keep standing like that, or sit down here?" he teased, tapping the bed with a smile.

I rolled my eyes at him. "You keep teasing me at midnight," I said with a sigh as I sat down beside him.

He smirked. "It's 1 am, Ember. You know that it's morning already," he pointed out.

"Not in my book," I said softly.

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He simply laughed at me, his handsome face looked completely relaxed. My wolf suddenly itched to come to the surface, and I had no choice but to suppress that urge. This damn wolf wouldn't embarrass me tonight.

Caleb suddenly went quiet as he grabbed hold of the guitar beside his bed. He put it on and caressed its strings like he was making love to it. Oh, where did these unholy thoughts come from now?

I placed my hand on my cream nightie, suddenly realizing how underdressed I was. I blushed hard but still couldn't stop looking at him. I realized with increasing alarm that I could look at Caleb like this all day, every day.

"You know," he drawled as he unsettled my thoughts. "I have always loved to sing and play guitars."

"I never imagined that someone who is the Alpha's son would indulge in things like that," I blurted out. He turned his gaze to me, and I quickly said, "Forget that I said something like that."

Caleb shook his head as he smiled. "You wouldn't be the first to have such thoughts."

Did it mean that most of the pack members knew this fact? I was suddenly jealous of that.

"People think that because I have Alpha blood in me and I'm the Alpha's son, I don't have the right to indulge in such frivolities. They don't realize that you can't stop those thoughts from coming up if you try. Life shouldn't be so serious, and there should be things that make you feel calm. And, for me, music is that thing," he stated.

I licked my lips. "That is beautiful," I stated.

He grinned at me. "I know, Ember." We held each other's gaze for a long time, and I could see the passion in his eyes; it was purely beautiful with no form of blemish. "I want to sing for you."

"What?"

He leaned closer, and I imagined that he would kiss me. But, instead, he said, "If you don't mind, I wish to sing for you."

Unable to make a coherent sentence, I bobbed my head up and down like an idiot. Why did I have to think that he would kiss me? No, maybe it would have been better if he had done that instead; then I wouldn't have felt like I was the most special woman in the world because he was going to sing for me.

No, he was just being polite. Don't dwell on it too much Ember.

"Are you ready?"

I gave a soft nod.

He shifted lightly as he turned to face me. 'Ok, don't look so cute, Caleb!' I screamed inwardly.

He closed his eyes lightly as his fingers grazed the guitar strings softly. I knew he had the sounds reduced a bit, but still, it found its way to my heart, soaring me up like a kite. It was insane.

'Never think you're alone,

For love found you instead...

You think you've got it figured out,

But love would make you weak...

When you're sad,

Just know that life is a path to love...

When you break,

Just know, that it's for a time...

Never stop being you,

Because love would find you real...'

His voice was so intense, and I found myself sniffing as I tried to hold back tears. If I didn't know better, I would have thought that he was actually professing his love for me.

He strummed the guitar once more as he sang more of the song, and before long, he was done. He made a sheepish bow at me and winked.

"Did that cheer you up, Ember?" he queried.

I smiled this time, and it was genuine. "Yes, it did."

He leaned closer with the guitar and all. "To be honest, I did that on purpose," he confessed.

"What?" I asked as I hoped that the golden light would hide the insane blushes on my cheeks. He was already looking at me too closely, and every one of his words was hitting my heart at that moment.

His fingers touched my cheek, only to pull back quickly. "You looked like you needed it. I mean, you wouldn't be moving around in such a state if you were in a good mood. I know how much you love your sleep."

I pushed him lightly. "It's not like you to be so serious," I stated.

He rolled his eyes. "And it's not like you to be so stiff."

"Don't dare me," I said dryly.

"So, I was right."

I rolled my eyes as I slid a hair behind my ears. "I didn't say that. Well, the thing is, I was thirsty, and there was no water in my room, so I decided to get it from the kitchen."

He looked at me as he straightened up. "I don't see the water around," he pointed out.

I hit him on the arm playfully. "Your melodious voice is the cause of it."

This time, I noted the blush on his cheeks, and he looked away quickly, pretending to adjust the guitar. My wolf felt excited by it, and I could feel the urge for her to claim him as her mate.

"Don't tease me too much," he whined.

I laughed. "It feels good too. After all, I have been living with you for some time. I should pick up something from you."

"I will go and get your water. Don't spit out any more of your praises when I come back and stay put," he said as he rose to his feet.

"No," I said, getting to my feet. "I will get it myself."

"I never said it was up for debate," he said pointedly as he made his way out of the room.

I couldn't help but sink back into the bed, fighting the blush that threatened to get the best of me.

Chapter 37 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Ember's POV

My eyes flickered open, and I shifted lightly on the bed, only to see Caleb sleeping beside me with his hands wrapped around my small waist. What the... It was right then that it dawned on me—I had slept in Caleb's room. Oh my God!

I jumped out of the bed, careful not to wake him up. If the boys knew about this, I wouldn't hear the end of it. What do I do now? Caleb stirred around at that moment, and I froze, scared he would sense my presence. But he snored instead, proving he was deep in sleep.

Without wasting much time, I tiptoed out of the room. I closed the door firmly behind me and made my way to my room. Thankfully, the pack hadn't come alive yet. There was no one to see me sneak out of Caleb's room early in the morning. That would have definitely given the wrong idea.

I honestly hoped it stayed this calm until the morning run.

Inside my room, I quickly showered and dressed in black jeans and a white crop top that Zealina had given me as a present. For once, I wanted to dress differently so I could feel like a new person.

"I can't stay here for long," I whispered to myself.

If Lucas or Tristan found out what I had done last night, I wouldn't hear the end of it. I didn't want any form of mockery or teasing right now. I was too sensitive to bear it.

With that thought solidified, I grabbed my phone from the cabinet and tossed it into my yellow purse with a silver strap. Maybe my sense of color was bad, but who cares? Those three witches must be punished by now, so there should be no one to mock me.

"Ok, stop thinking about all these," I snapped at myself as I combed my hand through my hair.

I quickly strapped my purse and dashed to the door. A few maids were around, and I gave them a quick nod in acknowledgment before moving away from the pack. Taking my phone, I called a cab to take me to Zealina's home.

My best friend must be asleep as always. I would wait for her though because what else could I do?

"Who's home?" I called out as I stepped into Zealina's family home.

"I believe that would be a birdie like me," came a masculine voice.

I turned left and saw Ernest lying on the sofa, hugging a pillow. I grinned at him happily. "I can't believe I'd see you here!"

He rolled his eyes as he sat up a bit. "Now I'm in my mate's home, don't act so surprised."

"Oh, Ernest!" I squealed as I ran over to him.

He pulled me into a hug, and I grinned happily. Ernest was one of the best male friends anyone could have, and I was so glad to have him in my life. He made everything more beautiful and was so kind when it was needed.

"Whoa!" Ernest teased.

"Is that who I think it is?" Zealina's voice rang in my ear.

I pulled away from Ernest, trying to fight a blush. It was always weird when a werewolf caught you hugging their mate, even if it was a completely innocent act.

Zealina winked at me, carrying a bucket filled with popcorn. In my haste to leave the pack house, I had succeeded in gatecrashing my friend's romantic moment.

"I'm really sorry, guys. I didn't know you had something planned this morning," I said softly.

"I had no idea you now apologize for the simplest of things," Ernest teased.

I gave him a look, and he simply smiled at me. Jeez! I had the craziest friends sometimes.

"Babe, ignore him," Zealina said as she placed the bucket on the center table. "And, you need to stop worrying about being a third wheel. It's not a crime to be a third wheel. We all do it. I imagine I will do that for you in the future."

I rolled my eyes. "I highly doubt that," I said flatly.

She smirked as she leaned into Ernest's hands, and they kissed briefly. "Trust me," she said, looking at me. "You would need something like this from the boys at some point."

I felt a blush creep up my cheeks as I remembered waking up in Caleb's bed earlier that morning. No, I shouldn't even imagine that happening to me because the boys didn't even look at me like Ernest looked at Zealina. It would only lead to heartbreak, and I wasn't ready for that.

I walked to the nearest chair, sitting down clumsily. "I think you're wrong. Those boys don't even look at me like that."

"Let alone have any romantic feelings for me" I muttered. They seriously needed to stop feeding my delusions.

Ernest smirked. "If they haven't rejected the mate bond, then I'm sure they have feelings for you. You're their mate, either way."

Taking one of the mismatched throw pillows on the chair, I squeezed it hard. "I don't want to talk about that. I escaped the pack house to come have some fun with you guys, not to talk about the Alpha's sons," I stated pointedly.

Zealina and Ernest looked at each other sweetly and then grinned. Ugh! Why did they keep doing this? "Get a room, guys," I whined.

Zealina gave me a fuck you sign and then kissed her man before pulling away from him. I threw the pillow at her, and she caught it effortlessly while sticking her tongue out at me. I rolled my eyes at her childishness.

"Ok, girls," Ernest said suddenly. "I think I have an idea to make this morning a dream."

"What idea?" I asked.

"We should have a picnic. It's always so much fun," he announced, jumping to his feet.

It made me feel good that he had suggested something like that, and I couldn't help the grin spreading across my face. I loved how they included me and made sure I didn't feel like I was intruding. Maybe coming here was not a bad idea after all.

The next 30 minutes were spent planning, and before long, we were on our way to the back of the house where there were tall trees for shade. I always loved coming here with Zealina.

We threw the throw pillows and small carpets down, arranging everything nicely. When we sat down in a circle, opening the wine and fresh-scented meats, I thought I had gone to heaven.

"You need to hear this," Ernest said suddenly, staring at his phone screen.

I turned my gaze towards him. "What news do you have now?"

"Fiona, Diana, and Vera have been expelled from the pack for what they did to you. Their families tried to beg, but it was completely ignored," he read out loud from what I suppose was the academy blog post.

My eyes bulged in shock. "Are you serious?"

Ernest grinned at me. "I swear by the moon goddess!"

Did I matter that much that they got expelled for my sake?

"Well, technically, the girls getting expelled had more to do with the fact they also put one of the Alpha's sons in danger," Ernest muttered.

Yeah, that made so much sense now. But I still felt extremely happy those girls were getting the punishment for their wicked actions.

Tears of relief welled up in my eyes. "This is the best news ever!" I exclaimed.

"And it calls for a celebration," Zealina squealed.

Chapter 38 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

EMBER'S POV

"What a day!" I thought as I stepped into the pack house.

I wished I could go for my wolf run, but my legs ached like a demon. It was a miracle I was still walking. Pulling my hair up and letting it fall down my back, I walked over to the sitting area and sank with a loud sigh.

What a bliss

"I think I'm quite invisible around here," Lucas's masculine voice rang out.

I looked around in shock, wondering why Lucas sounded so close to me. He was perched on the other side of the sofa, chewing on some betel leaf like some sort of wild animal. The man never ceased to shock me with his various mannerisms.

Licking my lips, I asked, "How come you're there? I didn't see you when I stepped into the living room."

"Your eyes were on the series, I guess," he teased.

I rolled my eyes at this soft teasing. "I have better things to do than think about some old-fashioned movies," I said dryly.

He placed his hand on his chest and made a weird sound like my choice of words severely wounded him. It was too much. Lucas was proving to be the most dramatic of the triplets, and he was hot while at it.

"You wound me, Ember," he said softly.

I sighed. "Look, I need some space. I've had a long day trying to please Zealina, and my feet hurt. So, can you stop talking for a while?" I whined.

He raised his hands like he was surrendering to my will or something, and I found that incredibly annoying. The man didn't know when to stop being silly for once. I was so tired of his ways.

Well, I could simply ignore him. I shifted once more on the chair, leaning against the pillow and trying not to think about my hunger. I've had only snacks since morning, and snacks were never food, even though I couldn't leave without them on a bad day.

I sighed as I closed my eyes lightly, trying hard to focus on my everyday thoughts to avoid getting so hungry, only for my stomach to grumble loudly.

"It looks like someone is hungry," Lucas teased.

I opened my eyes slowly. "I'm not hungry."

The sound of the sofa popping made me realize he was rising to his feet. I was tempted to look back at him, but I didn't want to appear too desperate. If there was anything the mean girls had taught me, it was that I had to have some type of air to handle certain situations.

"Ok, that is fine. But I'm definitely going to fix myself something to eat because I need something in my stomach. See you later," Lucas said easily.

I bit my lip as I finally gave in to my impulse. True to his words, he was heading towards the kitchen area. I eyed him greedily with each step he took. How could someone be so hot?

The thoughts overrode my sense of preservation. The blue sweats that Lucas wore would look so plain on other werewolves, but on him, they made him look like some Greek God. He also seemed to fill out his clothes so well, making me drool.

"Oh, Moon Goddess!" I muttered to myself as I looked away from him.

Slapping my cheeks in frustration, I turned back to the TV in front of me. I would not embarrass myself again in front of this man. I just...

The sounds of pans clanking on the counter made me rise to my feet, and I turned to where Lucas was, hitting the pans with such intensity. Was this how he wanted to cook a meal?

I tossed my purse on the couch and made my way to him. "I know you cooked so well yesterday, but if I don't help you, I will go deaf."

He smirked at me halfway into hitting the pot on the table. "Come on, you only want to eat, you greedy wolf," he teased.

I rolled my eyes at him, muttering, "Oh, that is so funny."

"It is."

This man!

I grabbed the pan from him and turned it upside down. "Honestly, were you trying to cook the pots or something?"

"Doesn't sound like a bad idea," he teased.

He angled his body towards me so suddenly that it almost took my breath away. And I had the insane thought at that moment that he was about to kiss me. Instead, he grabbed the pot from me with a smirk.

I quickly averted my gaze to the cupboards, pretending that I wished to get something from it just to hide my blush. I would not get caught being the fool, no matter what it took.

"I think we need to do some sort of food contest to prove my mettle. You really think those pigheaded brothers of mine did the cooking yesterday, huh? I have to show you my worth," he whined.

I laughed nervously like I got the joke. This man didn't realize that I could barely understand a word he was saying. It was as though he was speaking some foreign language to me, and it was so heated.

My hands finally caught on some of the spaghetti and brought it forward. "Here," I stammered, placing the spaghetti in his hands. "We are cooking this," I said softly.

He smirked. "Are we now?"

Oh, Goddess! How could someone be so handsome like this?

That thought vanished as fast as it had come as I was suddenly showered with spaghetti. "You didn't just do this to me!"

"Oh, I definitely did," he said with a laugh.

Squinting at him, I grabbed hold of the salt on the counter and poured it all on him. It was my time to mock him, and I did that by laughing so hard. "Now, who is the one who is shaking like an earthworm?" I mocked.

Just like that, I found myself pouring various condiments all over him, and he was doing the same to me. Time seemed to stop, and I only focused on the sound of our laughter and trying to escape his crazy moves. It was so insane, and it made me feel so full all at once.

Suddenly, I found myself trapped against the counter, and Lucas stared at my lips with his face caked in salt, pepper, and something like veggies. He looked edible and so delicious, and it made my heart slow down in awareness of it all.

When he licked his lips slowly, I couldn't help but wonder if he wanted to kiss me as much as I wanted his lips on mine. I was thankful for the food fight because it would hide most of the blush, but then he leaned in, and before I could react, his lips were on mine.

What the hell was happening?

My wolf purred, wanting to melt like a bitch in heat as he devoured my lips, but I couldn't bring myself to move as I closed my eyes against the onslaught of pleasure that almost drove me insane.

"Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!"

Lucas pulled back almost immediately, and I followed his gaze to Tristen and Caleb, who were looking at us in shock.

Chapter 39 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

EMBER's POV

This was too much...

I shifted my gaze from one brother to the next, feeling like my heart was breaking in two. Lucas was still holding onto me, and I wanted to scream. Instead, I pushed him as hard as I could and dashed away.

None of them tried to stop me, not that I would ever let them stop me. I ran up the stairs toward my room. A couple of maids avoided me as I moved, and I was slightly grateful for their presence. It would make it difficult for the triplets to try anything that would break me in the process.

Finally, I reached my room. It called to me like never before, and I was so glad that no one could reach me if I stepped through the door. With a sigh, I threw open the door, walking into the room quickly. I slammed the door against the walls and rested my back on it, tears spilling from my eyes.

It shouldn't hurt, but it did.

"Why?" I muttered out loud.

I hit the door with the back of my head, feeling like my insides were churning. Did the triplets think I was some sort of toy without feelings? How could Caleb and Tristen stand there and act shocked?

Okay, they were really not the problem! The problem was Lucas. Why would he kiss me? I don't care what Zealina or any other soul had said; it didn't feel right to be treated like this.

"You three are supposed to be my mates, but when have you ever tried to claim me?" I asked aloud.

Slowly, I rose to my feet and walked dejectedly to my bed. Just because they had helped to stop their psycho girlfriends from harming me didn't mean that everything was all rainbows and sunshine.

The fact remained that they made me feel less for not accepting me in front of the pack. I was not a toy but a fierce she-wolf. The last thing I would do is accept being made some sort of plaything for the triplets, no matter how much they acted like they were so genuine.

With that, I threw myself onto the bed and let the tears keep me company.

TRISTEN's POV

I watched as Lucas shook his black hair in the kitchen with growing annoyance. How could he even think of playing us? I knew pretty well that the creature had not expected us to come so fast.

"Okay, boys, I will go freshen up," he said quickly and carefully streamlined himself between me and Caleb as he made his way out of the kitchen.

I said nothing till he was out of earshot. "Did you see that?" I asked in disbelief.

"Yup," Caleb said with a frown on his face. "This place is a mess, though. It needs a thorough cleaning."

"So you wish to do it for him?" I asked in disbelief.

Caleb gave me a look that made me feel as though I had gone mad before he signaled for a maid to come around. I watched as he gave the maid specific instructions before walking out of the kitchen like he had never been there in the first place.

I followed behind him as I grabbed a Coke from the fridge. It was still so annoying that Lucas got to kiss Ember first, and I was finding it so difficult to stomach it. Caleb finally settled on the sofa, and I sank on the floor opposite him, popping the drink into my mouth.

"You know, Lucas always acted as though he couldn't stand her," Caleb snapped suddenly.

I nodded in response as I lowered the drink down. "That was before, though. These days, he has really been so nice to her."

"She doesn't see it," Caleb argued.

I rolled my eyes at him. "Right? That is why they shared a kiss in the kitchen. Stop being delusional, Caleb. We have to accept that Lucas betrayed us to get to her, and that is not right."

He leaned against the pillow, and I watched as his eyes shifted to his wolf eyes and back to his clear hazel eyes. I grabbed a hold of my own drink, knowing that he was simply jealous about the whole thing. I just have to make him admit it so we can at least do something about it.

"This is crazy, Tristen," he whined.

I nodded as I took a huge gulp of my drink. "Maybe that is true, but we can't deny the fact that he is smart."

"No, he deceived us," Caleb blurted out.

"Who are you talking about?"

Caleb and I turned our gaze to Lucas, who was standing at the staircase. Our rage had not made us conscious of his presence, but who cared? Definitely not me! I looked away from him and took more of my drink.

"I'm asking you both because you're really acting weird," Lucas pointed out.

Caleb suddenly shot to his feet, and he ran like a manic, slamming into Lucas. I raised my brow in shock. It was not like Lucas to take what was being dished out with such finesse. He obviously must have seen Caleb coming, so what was he trying to prove standing like that?

"Control yourself, Caleb," he whined.

Caleb slapped him on the chest. "Don't preach to me about control because you don't even know what that means!"

Lucas finally pushed Caleb back and huffed in response. "I understand what this is all about. You think that I deceived you because I kissed Ember, right? But that is not true!"

"Then what is the truth?" I snapped.

Lucas sidestepped Caleb as he walked over to where I sat, looking into my eyes. "It just happened, brother. I would never do that to us. These past few days, I couldn't stop thinking about her and our bond. I tried to push it aside since we never wanted to accept her in the first place, but I couldn't. It's not something that can be done so easily!" He shot out.

I sighed as I looked into the bottle. The drink was completely empty, just right. Tossing the bottle to the side, I rose to my feet heartily and looked right at him. Lucas gulped in response.

"Look, how do you want us to believe that all this crap you're talking about is the truth? We are brothers, Lucas, and we swore to always walk together to achieve our goals, but you didn't keep it. How hard was it for you to just tell me about your growing feelings for Ember?"

Lucas groaned in response. "How many times do I have to tell you that it was spontaneous? I didn't plan to kiss her. It just happened!"

"Right!" Caleb screamed.

We both turned to watch him move to where we were and then he hit Lucas on the shoulder with a sigh.

"I don't think you understand what you've done!"

Lucas moved to him, looking him eye to eye. "Tell me what exactly have I done! Do you think I had no idea that she spent a night in your room?"

Caleb blinked in shock. "It's not what you think."

Lucas threw his head up in irritation. "Oh, now we are talking. You don't have the right to judge me then and I don't."

"You both listen to me," I said stiffly. Two pairs of eyes shifted their gaze to me.

"Since it has become this way, then I would definitely go after Ember. Both of you can't be the ones to take what is mine from me." I announced.

Chapter 40 - Bullied Mate Of The Alpha Triplets

Tristen's POV

I watched as they both turned to look at me in shock. Maybe what I said was selfish, but since they were both trying to be sneaky behind my back, I had no choice but to make this decision. I could care less about what they were thinking now.

My relationship with Ember was bad, but it was improving slightly, and I was confident that I would win her affection in due time. There was nothing that I could not do once I set my eyes on it, and this would not be any different.

"Do you realize what you're saying?" Caleb asked in shock.

I stared him down, using my aura to intimidate him. "I have never been one to share my woman with anyone, and I wouldn't start now. Plus, you have no right to judge me after what you both did."

Caleb scoffed as he moved away from us. "You all reason like she is just your mate."

"Well, I can always win her over to me. There were no rules on the mating bond, but she would definitely not belong to either of you. If you want to go low, I would definitely go lower. We all know that she hates your guts, and I might be the only one that she has smiled with genuinely these past few days."

Lucas laughed as he walked back to the couch, crossing his legs on it. "So, you think you're the only one she has had a decent conversation with these last few days?" He taunted.

I said nothing.

His eyes turned black, and I was fully aware that Caleb had come back to where we were. He had made a show of leaving in the first place. My brothers were beyond predictable when they wanted to be, and it was painfully annoying.

"You know," Caleb said coldly. "You and Lucas are so full of yourselves. You think that because you came out before me, you seem to have more power to intimidate me. That is a lie. We are all triplets, and for the first time, I wouldn't let you cheat me out of my destiny."

Lucas slapped his hands on his thigh and, at the same time, removed the invisible dirt from his eyes.

"Now, I understand. You're both jealous that she kissed me before you. Now, you want to turn it into some sort of giant competition." He said smugly.

"It was not supposed to be a competition until Tristen decided to claim her. And Ember is quite precious, and there is just something about her that is driving us mad like this. But unfortunately, no one is trying to own up to his mistakes," Caleb snapped.

Lucas waved him off. "Don't even try to preach to me right now because it won't work."

"I never wanted it to work," he retorted.

I growled angrily, and both of my brothers turned to face me. Our faces mirrored mine; they were filled with rage and anger, and there was no stopping us. We never went through this path, and it would be difficult to stop now.

We were the Alpha's sons with the Alpha gene in each of our veins. Caleb and Lucas respected me most of the time because I came out first, but it was quite evident that this wouldn't be the case this time.

"Stop trying to intimidate us, Tristen," they said as one, completely bringing my thoughts to the fore.

I clenched my fists and looked at each of them. "I don't need to do that. You would leave Ember for me because she is mine. I'm the first brother and the only one who should have a right to her. We should drop this childish argument now and do what is right."

Caleb smirked as he pointed in my direction. "And, in your book, that is allowing our mates to be yours, huh?"

I smirked back at him as I flicked my wrists. The clock pointed at 5 p.m. It was time for my wolf run.

"Yes, dear," I said sweetly. His smirk died down, and it was replaced with a frown.

"It doesn't suit you to show such anger, Caleb. Hopefully, when I'm back from my run, you will look more natural."

Ignoring his stink eye, I sidestepped him as quickly as ever, but his angry growl stopped me cold. Turning back, I noticed that Lucas and Caleb were suddenly standing side by side as they looked at me. I felt my wolf rise to the surface as he sensed the malice and anger beneath the surface.

"We won't stop our hold on Ember. I didn't want to play this game, but you have left me no other choice in this matter," Caleb said coldly.

I frowned. "What are you talking about?"

"Each of us is going to try and win her over. Ember still has the right to choose any of us, and we must not take that right from her because you're still too thick-brained to see the reality. Now, what is going to happen is quite simple. You wouldn't claim her until she says so. All of us have equal fields now," Caleb informed me.

I stepped closer to him, wanting to hit him so hard. "What makes you think I would listen to the nonsense that you say?"

"Caleb is actually quite right. Unlike your plan, this is fair and pure. If you don't accept it, it means nothing to us because we will have to go after her," Lucas snapped.

Caleb nodded in response, and I felt my stomach twist painfully. The boys were serious; I could see the way their eyes turned black at that moment. It was not something that I really liked to see, but it was not like I had given them so many options. Maybe I should accept this since I always loved a challenge.

"Fine," I said at last. "We will do it your way, and whoever she decides to stay with wins, and the rest back out. And she must be marked by them. There should be no tricks."

"No tricks," they said as one.

We moved closer to form a circle, and with our eyes flashing a painful black, we placed our hands together and muttered our promise regarding Ember. It was the craziest thing I had done to date, but I was ready to take that risk.

I smirked as I pulled back. "So, now, it's done. I won't wish you the best, bro, because I will be the best."

With that, I turned around and ran out of the pack house and into the forest, feeling my wolf push through my walls and bones, transforming my human body into my wolf. I howled as my fur hit the grass with a thud.

It felt so good to be a wolf. And I knew my wolf would assist me in the quest to mark my mate. Ember was mine, and no one else's. I could literally see her smile through my wolf's eyes, and it made me feel fulfilled.

Seeing my brothers going after her behind my back seemed to have struck a nerve inside me; now I want her all to myself.

I was not going to let her go to my cheating brothers!