

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 1

~Cleo~

The moment Lydia's shrill voice pierces through the walls of my room, I know today's going to be another test of my patience. It's like living with a hyena, her voice just grates on my nerves.

I glance at the photo of my mom on my nightstand, her smile a bittersweet memory

Ever since she passed, it's been a circus in this house, with my stepmother Linda and her daughter Lydia playing the starring roles in the drama that is my life

I'm already dressed, wearing the top I snatched from Lydia's closet. It's a small victory, but in a house where I'm constantly overshadowed by her theatrics, I take what I can get. Plus the fury

on her face will be so worth it. My father's voice, firm and commanding, echoes from downstairs, summoning me. He's a good man, but the weight of his expectations feels like a rope around my neck.

Today, he wants me at the Alpha meeting — a display of family unity or some such nonsense just another way for him to teach me the ropes when I take over the pack

Another door slams downstairs, and I wince, bracing myself for my father's wrath as I listen to his angry footsteps. His feet echo on the stairs as I rush to finish getting ready for a meeting I do not wish to attend

"Cleo!" he yells from the second floor. "Get down here now!"

My blonde hair falls in soft waves over my shoulders, and the deep blue blouse, as well as my black faux pants, hug my curves in all the right places. I take one last look in the mirror

The blue blouse and black pants might be a far cry from the glitzy dress code of the city ball happening alongside our meeting, but they're more 'me'

But even after getting dolled up for the city ball/ alpha meet. I can't quite summon the excitement. Chances are, I won't be attending, but will be forced to go to the Alpha meeting next door. I sigh; I should be in a dress. Instead, I'm in work clothes, though I must admit, I do love this top.

I snicker, knowing my step-sister Lydia will be furious when she realizes I stole it. Then I just see the look on her face "I'll be right out!" I call back to my father. Hastily, donning my heels, I rush to the door and the stairs. Stepping out of my room, I brace myself for the inevitable clash with Lydia. My heels click on the hardwood floors.

As I make my way down the stairs, I see Lydia standing impatiently by the front door, perfectly coiffed and dressed to impress in a slinky red number.

Too bad her personality is so horrid because no amount of makeup would ever hide the inner troll she is Lydia smirks when she spots me. She no doubt wants to boast that she'll be the belle of the ball Like I care. If I even do attend, I'll likely stay put, lurking in the shadows.

That is, if I even get a chance to leave this stupid Alpha meeting in time "About time," she sneers, pushing off the wall she is leaning on, she then eyes my top, her eyes squinting before a look of outrage crosses her features "Wait, is that my top!?"

Lydia demands, taking Just a heads up in my appearance as I reach the bottom of the stairs "Not anymore," I mock, and she goes to say something, but my father cuts her off when he appears in the hall "We don't have time for this, girls," my father chides, steering us out the door.

As we pile into the car, I can feel the tension radiating off him He's got a lot of riding on tonight's meeting, especially with Alpha Zayn attending.

The man's a walking challenge to my father's authority — too young, too brash, and apparently, too good at getting under Dad's skin Lydia's gaze roams over me, taking in my appearance with obvious disdain "You look plain, as usual," she scoffs, knowing better than to start a fight in front of my father "Thanks, Lydia," I reply sarcastically, fighting the urge to roll my eyes. "At least I don't need to layer on makeup to hide what a troll I am."

"Cleo, enough," my father scolds as Lydia folds her arms across her chest, a smug look on her face hearing my father tell me off.

Dad tends to pick her side so as to avoid upsetting his mate, who unfortunately is my stepmother "Can we go now?" my father interjects impatiently, his stern expression warning me notto start another argument with my step-sister after our cat fight earlier where I smashed her in the face with my drink bottle. Oops.

But the B deserved it for tripping me on the stairs With a resigned sigh, I follow him out the door and to the waiting car, mentally preparing myself for the night ahead.

A night of pure boredom "I can't believe how long you both took to get ready," my father growls. "We're running late." I roll my eyes at his words, but he grabs my arm in an iron grip and drags me down the steps when I don't keep up with his long strides.

I wince, stumbling in my heels to keep up as he marches us to the car.

This meeting with the other Alphas means everything to him, and to our pack, but to me, it's just another reminder that my fate has already been decided Climbing in the car, my

father shuts his door a little too hard, signaling that he's in a ripe mood and I shouldn't push his buttons.

He jams the keys into the ignition and starts the car, muttering to himself as he pulls out of the driveway and heads into the city.

As we drive, I can't help but wonder about this Alpha Zayn I've never met him, but the way Dad talks about him, you'd think he was the devil incarnate "I swear, if Alpha Zayn is late to this one-" I glance at him, but his words cut off with a growl as he glares out the windshield.

My father can't stand the new Alpha in the city. Always complaining he is too young, cocky, and arrogant.

I'm yet to meet the man, and if my father's opinion is anything to go off, I probably won't like him either As we drive towards the Alpha ball, and the meeting that is being held at the same venue, I can't help but feel a growing sense of unease

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The city is packed, even with so many attacks lately. Having all these gatherings is like posting a neon sign saying attack here! My father's words from earlier echo in my mind: 'Once you get your wolf.'

This serves as a reminder of my yet-to-emerge inner beast is a constant source of anxiety, knowing once I get my wolf, I will have that target on my back.

I will constantly be scrutinized by everyone over everything, and not just by werewolf society, but also the human governments that help govern the city. We may be alphas, but we too have rules we must abide by Furthermore, with that date of my impending shift looming closer, it seems to put a strain on my relationship with my father. Alpha's rarely get along with other Alphas, so three living in one house will be horrendous.

Lydia is also of Alpha blood. She is already a pain in the rear.

I can't imagine how much more insufferable she'll be when the pack is handed down to me However, Lydia is the least of my worries. My father is a bigger concern. It seems like no matter how hard I try, I can't live up to his expectations.

Honestly, I can't wait for the break to end so I can go back to university and live out my last semester in peace; soak in those final few months before I am forced to step up and take over the pack. We spend the rest of the drive in tense silence.

I stare out the window, longing to be anywhere but here.

I'd rather be sitting by the lake with Deacon out laughing or sneaking into the new club that opened up. Not stuck at some stuffy political event where my only purpose is to be shown off like a prize and watch as they all argue "Make sure you pay attention at this meeting, Cleo.

This one is about pack protection," my father reminds me.

"No falling asleep like you did at the last one." Lydia snickers behind me, and I clench my teeth, casting a glare at her over my shoulder. How I would love to give her a real piece of my mind. "Maybe I wouldn't fall asleep if it wasn't so boring," I grumble to myself as we pull up to the meeting place.

As soon as the car comes to a stop, Lydia practically jumps on the spot, her eyes scanning our surroundings like an eager pup for her friends. "You better get used to them, kiddo.

You'll be attending them a lot more soon," my father adds. I pull a face, wishing I had an older sibling to take my place. Climbing out of the car, I wait for my father. "How could you not want to go to the Alpha ball?" Lydia huffs, tossing her perfectly curled hair over her shoulder. "I would rather tolerate the ball than the meeting! Wanna trade?" I offer, and she looks at me. "Ew, no, why would I want to hang out with a bunch of old dudes whining about border patrols when I can be hunting for my mate," she huffs.

I sigh. She's as dumb as she looks. I swear she was supposed to be Omega.

How she ended up with Alpha genes is beyond me when she acts like a bitch in heat. "You realize you'll have to attend these eventually when your father gives you his pack?" I tell her. She pulls a face.

"And that is precisely why I will choose a mate. They can attend all that boring crap.

I got better things to do," she tells me. "Like what? Your nails?" I taunt. "You're just jealous your father is forcing you to go to the meeting, though I can't wait to see your face at the end of it," she laughs.

I raise an eyebrow at her. "Well, unlike you, I have better things to do than flaunt myself at Alphas all night," I reply, stepping next to my father.

Now, he is done speaking with Lydia's father, Alpha Samuel. I straighten my stolen blouse. "Have fun, Cleo. I'm sure you'll meet your destined mate tonight," she laughs. "What the heck are you flapping your gums about now?"

I ask. Lydia smirks. "Wouldn't you like to know," she chuckles before spotting one of her friends. "Oh, Maya is here," Lydia gushes excitedly and immediately prances off to her friends who are hanging out next door, outside of the ball's entrance.

My father grabs my arm.

“Stay close,” he tells me, and I know he is worried about this venue. He did warn the Alphas we need to change the venue given the heightened security risk in the city.

Routine 1s bad with all the recent attacks, and council meetings are always held here. He shakes his head and drags me off to the restaurant where the council meeting will take place.

The place is already full of Alphas in crisp suits.

“Too many of us in one place. We should have changed venues,” my father growls as he leads me upstairs and into a conference room.

My father’s jaw clenches when he notices one particular seat still empty. I internally groan. Please don’t be late, Alpha Zayn.

Great, now my father will be extra moody, if that’s even possible.

We take our seats, and my father drums his fingers on the huge table, looking more annoyed as each minute passes. “Where the hell is he?” my father hisses.

Alpha Samuel looks over at us as we enter and take our seats.

He is Lydia’s father, yet she didn’t have to attend this shitshow like I have to. “Joseph, calm down.”

He’s on his way,” Samuel warns my father Alpha Zayn.

The Alpha of the Black River Pack. Rumors have been swirling for months about how he gained his position, but one thing is clear—my father hates him. And those that don’t hate him, fear him.

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Sitting back in my seat, I remind myself that four more hours and the annual Alpha meeting would finally be over, and I can go home. Well, as long as Dad doesn’t force me to go to the ball and babysit Lydia. Dad loves to drag me to these silly meetings, even though I find them boring as hell. Mostly, they just argue or boast about their latest business affairs.

The meeting is held in the main part of Nightshade City, which is neutral territory. All the packs are on the outskirts, surrounding the city. So, it makes sense for the city to be a neutral ground because otherwise, movement within the city limits would be restricted. All five packs rely on it not only for business to thrive, but also to keep supplies coming in.

I've spent all my school holidays in these sorts of meetings. Despite literally nothing important happening in them, my father has still insisted I attend even though my stepmother volunteered to go in my place. Dad, however, wasn't having it, lecturing that I needed to learn the ropes of running a pack and how these meetings are a big part of it

I guess I am an accessory, and I'm one step away from becoming his fanny pack at this point. I'm already his notetaker, calculator, mediator, and coffee maker. He might as well just hand the pack over already

A few of the other Alphas have brought their sons and daughters. It is strategic on their parents' part, a way to strengthen alliances through marriages

However, I had no such interest, and it is clear I

wasn't the only one who wasn't interested in parental antics. The only person I will marry one day is my mate, if I find him or her, that is

I often wonder what my mate will be like... who my wolf will choose... if I find my mate before Deacon marks me, that is. One part of me is conflicted if I should wait a year to see if I find my mate. Deacon wants to mark me once I get my wolf, we've been together two years but occasionally, I am not so sure. Finding my mate, that person who was made for me, sounds so exciting and enticing

I am brought out of my thoughts by Dad's irritated voice

"This is ridiculous. Where is he?" he growls, smacking the table with his fist. Alpha Zayn is notoriously late, and as Dad had explained earlier, he doesn't seem to care much for these

meetings. Well, that is one thing we have in common, I guess. But that explains why I've never met the man, since he's apparently too busy to attend

Maybe now's my chance to slip out to the bathroom and not come back. Dad seems preoccupied enough with Alpha Zayn's tardiness. I peer around the room, only to find the young man across from me staring. He smirks, and I bite back the urge to ask him to stop staring when he leans over the table

"Have you heard the good news?" Boyd asks

My brows furrow when his father elbows him harshly, giving him a look that seems to tell him to shut his mouth. Boyd leans back in his seat and folds his arms across his chest, looking rather smug like he knows something important I don't. Confusion washes over me, we don't have much to do with their pack. My father

never really liked Alpha Dane, who is Boyd's father. I glance at my father, who is suddenly stiff as a board beside me

"Dad?" I elbow him

"Well, discuss it later," he whispers back before diverting his attention back to the conference room door. "For frig sake, where is he?" my father snaps angrily, glancing at his watch

"Hush, Joseph, I would prefer no bloodshed at this meeting," Alpha Samuel states, glancing at the other Alphas nervously

Rumors have spread that Alpha Zayn's father met an untimely death, and the circumstances surrounding it remain quite murky. Yet, Alpha Zayn looks guilty as sin. His father goes missing, and he is suddenly ruling over the largest pack in the country. Yeah, that doesn't

sound shady at all

Dad groans at his words, drumming his fingers on the oval table. We are one of the smaller packs surrounding the city, and we rely heavily on alliances, especially when it comes to rogues and hunters. Without alliances, we would never have won the last rogue attack. It was sheer luck that Alpha Samuel's pack was visiting at the time because otherwise, we would have been completely destroyed

That's the subject of today's pack meeting

Rogue numbers have grown out of control, and packs are constantly under threat or being attacked. Even the city has been targeted a few times

If something does go down at this meeting after my dad warned against it, I'm blaming the alphas who refused to listen.

The double doors swing open as if summoned, and Alpha Zayn stalks in. The room stills, all eyes turning to him. He exudes power and confidence with every step, those piercing gray eyes taking in everything and the energy in the room, waltzing in like he owns the place. My breath catches as I drink him in. Messy dark hair, stubble accentuating a sharp jawline, and tattoos peeking out from his open collar. He looks like sin personified. Maybe this meeting won't be boring after all

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"Is there an issue, Joseph?" Alpha Zayn demands. Only then do I glance at my father, who is shooting a look of daggers in his direction. I kick him under the table, and my father sits back in his chair, folding his arms across his chest while shooting me a glare

“Behave!” I mouth to my father. Gee, now I need to tell him how to act!

“Not at all, Alpha Zayn,” Dad denies quickly

Looking back at the Alpha, I quickly avert my gaze when I realize that me kicking my father under the table didn’t go unnoticed. Yet when I dare to look up, Alpha Zayn is still staring at me as if I am some puzzle he is trying to solve. He

shakes his head and moves toward his seat. My eyes follow him to take his seat. When he does, his gaze finds mine for a heated moment before he turns his attention away, clenching his jaw. I feel my cheeks flush and quickly turn my attention to the huge board Alpha Samuel spent a good ten minutes writing on earlier

I swallow, not liking the way he is staring so intensely, and I can once again feel his gaze on me. A shiver runs up my spine. Thankfully, Alpha Samuel clears his throat, drawing his attention away, and I let out the breath I didn’t know I was holding

My eyes wander around the room, taking in the tense expressions of the Alphas as they discuss alliance strategies and resource management

All this talk about pack politics and territory borders is exhausting. I can’t wait to escape back to my life outside these walls

“Alpha Joseph, your input on the new trade agreement would be appreciated,” Alpha Samuel says, his voice cutting through my thoughts

Was I close to dozing off again? My dad straightens up in his chair, preparing to speak, but I can’t bring myself to care about whatever he’s going to say. Instead, I find my gaze drifting towards Alpha Zayn, who sits across the table, every bit as disinterested as I am

“Very well,” my father begins, launching into a lengthy explanation about supply chains and tariffs. I try to focus on his words, but it’s hard not to get lost in my own fantasies, especially when they involve the enticingly dangerous Alpha Zayn. His dark hair and the Alpha’s steely gray eyes make it difficult to concentrate on anything else when my phone vibrates on the table. I snatch my phone off to glance at the message lighting up my screen

Leaning down, I look at it under the table to see it’s from Deacon, making me grin mischievously

‘Meet me outside in ten minutes’

I quickly type a reply. “You decided to go?” I reply back to my boyfriend. His reply is just as quick

‘Jailbreak, meet me downstairs.’ I can’t help the goofy smile that splits onto my face

I quickly reply, telling him I will find an excuse when my phone is suddenly snatched from my hand. I grit my teeth, expecting it to be my father, but I am shocked to find it is Alpha Zayn. He raises an eyebrow at me

"Is there something you'd like to share with the rest of us?" Alpha Zayn asks suddenly, his gaze

piercing through me. My cheeks flush with embarrassment, but I can't deny how my heart races at his attention. I shake my head, staring at the man wide-eyed

"Um, no," I stammer, trying to regain my composure. "Sorry for the interruption."

"I'll hang onto this until after the meeting," he tells me, and his eyes flicker to his wolf as he peers down at my phone, reading my text messages. I reach for my phone, but he pulls it away, and I glare at him

"You can't take my daughter's phone," my father quickly growls. Alpha Zayn merely glances at him before pocketing it

"L already did," he states, giving me a pointed look. I turn back in my chair, and my father looks like he is about to leap out of his chair,

when Samuel speaks up

"Joseph!" Samuel shakes his head, warning my father to back off, and reluctantly, he does while Alpha Zayn retakes his seat across from me

The meeting continues, and I notice some other future Alphas sneaking off. They're using the bathroom as an excuse to leave. It is that boring

And no one seems to have noticed they haven't returned, so I decide to chance it. Glancing around, I lean closer to my father

"L need to use the bathroom," I whisper. He nods for me to go, and I quietly push my chair out, making a quick exit for the door. Once in the hall, I go to retrieve my phone before remembering Alpha Zayn took it from me

Great, I'll find Deacon either way; I will just have to mindlink Dad to grab my phone from him on his way out. Moving toward the top landing and the stairs, I run into one of the Alpha's sons from the meeting. I'm pretty sure his name is Boyd. He is the same one who seemed to have no issue staring most of the night

“Cleo!” he calls out, and I stop, fisting my hands and turning back to face him

“You escaped?” he laughs

“Trying to, but you’re intent on getting me caught if we are going to be lingering outside the door,” I tell him. He glances back at the conference room door

“I’m not taking over. My brother is. No purpose for me in those meetings,” he says, draping his arm across my shoulders. “I heard your father is handing down the pack to you. I’m surprised it’s

not going to Lydia, since Samuel’s pack is bigger. It would make sense if they joined packs,” he tells me

However, this time, I try to step away. I may not like having to attend these meetings, but there is no way I would let that bitch take over my mother’s pack. I couldn’t dishonor her like that

“Oh, sorry, I didn’t mean to offend you. Come on, let’s get a drink. My father wants to discuss alliances with your father anyway. It seems we’ll be getting to know each other better soon anyway,” he says, and I stop in my tracks at his words

“Excuse me?” “Your father hasn’t told you?” he asks me

I step away from him, wondering what he

means. For some reason, I remember what Lydia had said earlier and wonder if this is

what she meant. Suddenly, Boyd stiffens as I bump into somebody. A warm hand falls to my hip, and tingles rush over my skin, sending a shiver up my spine

Glancing over my shoulder, I find Alpha Zayn behind me

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Damn it! I try to step away from him, but he presses closer until I feel his entire body pressed against my back, and his grip on my hip tightens

“Shouldn’t you be in the Alpha meeting?” Alpha Zayn asks Boyd, who stares at him like a deer in

headlights

“My father let me leave,” he stammers, quick to defend himself

I remain frozen in place. Some part of me is grateful that Zayn stepped out before shit got awkward with Boyd. The other part of me knows I'll be dragged back into that damn meeting, my opportunity to escape ruined

"Good, now leave," Alpha Zayn growls when I feel his hand on my hip move slightly, brushing beneath my blouse. Boyd also notices the Alpha's hand and reaches for me

"Come on, Cleo," Boyd states, reaching his hand toward me. Yet after hearing what he said, I don't want to go anywhere with him. Honestly, I'd rather put up with the boring meeting and this mysterious, somewhat bossy Alpha whose grip only seems to grow tighter

"Cleo is using the bathroom. She is required to attend since she'll be Alpha. Isn't that right, Cleo?" his fingers dig into my hip harder. No Alpha has ever... disciplined me like this. I glance up at him and swallow when I find his eyes glaring daggers at Boyd

"I guess I'll see you later, Cleo, if you come down to the ball," Boyd quickly states before

rushing off down the stairs

I gulp, peering up at Alpha Zayn, who leans down and points behind me.

"Bathrooms are right there," he tells me, and I glance back toward the conference room door, which the unisex bathroom door is next to the conference room

I give him a nervous look

"You weren't sneaking off now, were you?" he asks

"Just using the bathroom, but then I ran into Boyd," I say, awkwardly turning for the bathroom when I stop. "May I get my phone back, please?" I ask him. He raises an eyebrow at me

"Why, so you can message Boyd?" he asks, and my face falls

"What, no? It's my phone." Why is he so concerned with who I'm messaging?

"Until the end of the meeting, it is mine. Now, hurry, your father was worried about you," he snaps

"So, what? You decided to play errand boy for my father?" I snicker, rolling my eyes. Who is this guy? My teacher

If he thinks I am going to take his crap because he's an Alpha, he is in for a shock because I am also an Alpha and do not have to bow to him

"I'm waiting for my Beta. Now, use the bathroom before I tell Alpha Dane how excited you are to take Boyd as your mate, and become

the next Luna of Claymore pack" he growls, and my face falls

"I am not taking him as my mate!" I reply, my tone changing to a growl. Alpha Zayn smiles deviously

"Then you better get back to the meeting to say that, I heard Alpha Dane ask to speak with your father after the meeting about an alliance proposal."

"What did my father say?" I ask him, slightly worriedly. This is common within packs, my father married my mother as part of a pack alliance, he then took over her pack only to find his true mate in my stepmother. It made things complicated, but at first, my mother had accepted it, though Linda wasn't as accepting as my mother. This is one thing that constantly troubles me, even if we take a chosen mate, we will still recognize our true destined mate

"I didn't hear. My Beta mindlinked me," he says as he steps closer and leans down

"But he can't marry you off without your consent. So make sure you don't give it," he tells me

"You know it's not that easy," I tell him, noticing how good he smells as he leans in closer, making me want to lean closer so I can soak up his scent. I almost follow that instinct when I snap out of the weird haze I'm under before embarrassing myself

"Isn't it?" he says, and my brows furrow

"It could cause pack wars," I remind him

"You'll have strong alliances," he tells me

"I highly doubt Alpha Samuel will go up against Alpha Dane, given they're best friends, and he is the only alpha my father currently has an alliance with." My eyes suddenly burn at the thought as tears spring to my eyes

"The only thing that would stop that going ahead," he begins to say, then smirks, and I want to slap him for being a jerk about me possibly being married off

"A mate, I know!" I snap at him, and his brows pinch. It's alright for him; he isn't being forced to marry someone he doesn't like. I gulp, a horrible lump in my throat. How will I explain this to Deacon? We have plans. Plans that don't involve political alliances

"Are you seriously not going to..." his words cut off when someone in the distance calls his name

“Alpha?” mutters a voice. Peering around him, I see his Beta standing on the stairs

Using his momentary distraction, I turn to the bathroom, push the door open, and quickly move inside. I wash my hands, not actually needing to use the bathroom, just trying to buy time. Now the urge to escape extends beyond avoiding an annoying meeting. I need to speak to Boyd and try to get him to talk his father out of that idea. Deacon will be my mate if my wolf doesn't find her own. He's insisted. We've already discussed it. Walking back out, Alpha Zayn is still talking to his Beta, and I internally groan. So much for escaping

“I should go back into the meeting,” he tells the man he is speaking with, and I know I won't be sneaking off anywhere with the Alpha around to alert my father. He turns and moves toward me

I quickly rush back into the meeting and retake

my seat

Alpha Zayn follows me a second later. My father once again looks furious about having to wait for Alpha Zayn

“Sorry, my Beta needed to speak with me,” Alpha Zayn states, and the other Alphas don't seem to mind. However, my father does

“That's what the mindlink is for,” my father snarls

“Really? I wouldn't have known, Joseph. Last I checked, the mind link provides me with access to his thoughts, not his eyes. He had something to show me. Now, can we continue?”

My father's lip tugs in the corners, and I know he is biting back what he wants to say

I lean back in my seat, sulking that I can't escape to see Deacon. Yet, one part of me is grateful to Boyd for the heads up about my dad's master plan. If he thinks I'm marrying Boyd, he is severely mistaken

The meeting drags on, tensions rising as Alpha Zayn continues to shut down my father's every argument. I can see Dad's temper boiling, his hands clenching into fists on the table. They spoke about the threat of the rogues and new treaty deals. As time

passes, my father becomes increasingly angry as everything he says continues to get shut down

None of the other Alphas dare to interfere, and I wonder what my father did to infuriate this Zayn so badly. Surely, it isn't just because of the look my father gave him when he entered

Eventually, my father finally snaps and explodes, making me jump in my seat

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"Fuck this. If you are just going to hand him control of the city, then I am done here," my father snarls abruptly, making me jump

"Sit down, Joseph, my men on your borders are the only thing keeping the rogues off your land

So sit the fuck down and shut up!" Alpha Zayn growls, and his fist comes down on the table with a loud thud: the wood creaks and groans, a crack slivering right up the middle of it makes my eyes widen

My father laughs and shakes his head. "I have no alliance with your pack!"

"Regardless, if you bothered to go out to your borders for once, you would see my patrols

Every pack here is under my pack's protection, and I will revoke it if you don't sit down!"

"Samuel's men help patrol my pack borders, not yours," my father snaps, gripping my arm and yanking me to my feet

I curse, hitting my knee on the table. Great, why am I involved? Flinching, I'm nearly tossed to the ground, at the force of which my father grabs me and pulls me up beside him. My chair tips over, and I stumble over the top of it. A menacing snarl leaves Alpha Zayn's lips

"Samuel, would you enlighten this old fool," Alpha Zayn growls murderously, and my father stops, his grip on my arm becoming crushing

Now I wish I paid attention. My father never puts his hands on me, but something has really got under his skin for him to grab me like this

Alpha Samuel shrinks in his seat as my father's gaze turns to him

"What he says is true. I haven't had the numbers after the last attack, so asked Alpha Zayn to patrol the pack's borders," he explains, looking somewhat embarrassed

Alpha Samuel's pack is the second largest and usually runs the city's protection and the border patrols. That is what my father pays him for: his protection

“Excuse me? I pay you every fucking month,” my father spits at him, but it is Alpha Zayn that answers

“Now, you pay me. So sit down and unhand your—” he pauses, looking me over, having lost his train of thought

“My daughter, Cleo,” my father answers. The Alpha nods once, his eyes on my father’s hand that is still locked onto me in a death grip. What is going on here?

“I know who she is.”

My father growls, and I cry out as his grip crushes my arm. The other Alphas stare in shock. Alpha Zayn’s eyes blaze, a snarl on his lips

“Dad,” I plead. “Let go! What’s going on? What are they talking about?” I say, feeling like there’s something big I’m missing out on

“Let her go,” he commands, voice holding a deadly lilt. “You’re hurting her.”

My father blinks, glancing down at the bruises and scratches already forming on my skin where

his claws had slipped out and scratched me

Horror floods his face, and his hand falls away

My cheeks burn a brilliant shade of scarlet. I am frightened and embarrassed as my father released his vice-like grip on my arm, the intensity of it leaving behind the clear outlines of his fingers

“Cleo? Crap, I’m sorry, sweetie,” he apologizes, the tone of his voice changing abruptly from venomous to remorseful. I can’t help but feel like some sort of prize or trophy, one that he nearly damaged with his careless actions and temper

“I’m fine. Just leave me,” I whisper, trying to hide my humiliation from him and the others in the room

Swatting his hand away, I sheepishly try to hide

the bruises on my arms. The weight of their gazes bear down on me, making me acutely aware of how much attention has been placed on me at that moment, but I refuse to look at any of them. Instead, I focus on keeping my thoughts and emotions in check, remembering the countless lessons I have taken about controlling my

reactions

“Now sit down. We must finish; I haven’t got time for another meeting later,” Alpha Zayn snaps, my father’s head whips in his direction, and he growls, not liking being spoken down to by someone younger than him

“You are all fools, giving this lunatic control of the city and our packs,” my father snarls at Alpha Samuel, then turns to glare at Alpha Zayn. “Shove your protection up your ass. I will not bow to the likes of you!” he growls, glaring at the young Alpha before tugging me from the room

“Dad!” [hiss, still majorly confused about what’s going on. He growls daringly at me, but even I know the importance of having those patrols

“We need his help,” I grit out, but he isn’t hearing it. Instead, he rips me away from the meeting room and toward the stairs leading to the restaurant

“Dad!” I snap when we reach the bottom and are out of earshot

“No, Cleo, I am not leaving my pack in the hands of that monster,” he growls, stopping so abruptly that I slam right into his back. He grips my shoulders and looks at me with a sigh, and drops his head

“Look, one day you will understand, but for ”

Sirens suddenly go off, ringing from everywhere. My dad straightens up, his eyes darting around as the sirens grow louder, signaling the city is under attack. My eyes widen, and I glance around as people panic and screams ring out from outside. My father shoves me behind him

“Cleo, go, find somewhere to hide!” my father screams before shifting into his huge gray wolf

My heart beats like a drum in my chest, panic, and fear filling me, and I take off only to be knocked down by the stampede of panicked humans. I crawl to a nearby table, ducking under the tablecloth, when the windows all around suddenly shatter. Gunshots ring out deafeningly, and the roars and growls only get closer and louder

“Cleo, run!” my father screams through the mindlink when a giant malt-colored wolf

upturns the table. I scream, scrambling back on my hands and knees, only for my father’s wolf to attack the wolf. Turning, I try to get to my feet when teeth rip into my arm, sending jarring pain through me

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 7

My scream echoes through my skull as the beast shakes its head violently, flinging me toward the kitchens. My body flies through the air, and I crash heavily on the floor. Groaning, I scramble to get to my feet, slipping on the tiled floor that is drenched in blood. Bodies are strewn across the restaurant floor, and I run for the kitchen doors just as I am tackled to the ground—another wolf is upon me

“Dad!” I scream for him before hearing his strained voice

“Samuel, get to Cleo!” I hear his gurgled cry from another room before I hear the snapping of bones again. I kick out, trying to get the wolf mauling me off while keeping my arms over my head, knowing if he gets to my neck, I am gone

Claws rake down my sides, and I scream in agony as the wolf drags me closer

I thrash, screaming and kicking when his weight is suddenly gone from on top of me. I gasp in relief only to see a massive black wolf standing over the rogue that attacked me. The rogue now lies dead at his feet. I crawl back on my hands and feet, my leg throbbing as my blood spills onto the floor, mingling with the rest of the bright red stains. I shriek when I notice another rogue lunge at my face, only to stop midair when the black wolf mauls it. I try to escape, but I am caught beneath the black wolf

He takes down the rogue, and I clutch his fur,

wondering which Alpha it is because I haven’t seen this wolf before. He doesn’t snarl as I use his body to pull myself out from under him so that I can stand, but the wolf sniffs my leg and whimpers when I notice more rogues spilling in through open windows. The wolf snarls, spinning on his feet before snapping his teeth at

me, his way of telling me to run without the mindlink

I don’t need to be told twice. I clamber to my feet, ignoring the pain and running toward the kitchen to find somewhere to hide and catch glimpses of rogues everywhere. They are going to kill everyone, I think, panicked. There are too many. Sliding along the floor, my leg throbs to its own beat, and my arm is gushing blood when four rogues come into the kitchen from the other end. I come to a jarring halt before spinning, only to find my exit is now blocked, and I am surrounded

“Cleo, where are you?” my father calls through the mindlink

“Dad, I’m...” a snarl pulls me from the mindlink

“Hold on, Bub, I’m trying to get to you!” he calls back, but my eyes track the movement of the wolves surrounding me

Looking around, I grab a knife off the counter, trying to watch them as they stalk toward me

The one at the exit I just came in from charges at me, and my eyes fly wide, a shriek leaving my lips when it too is suddenly mauled, mere inches away from me

The huge black wolf from before starts ripping it to shreds and knocking me out of the way when the other four join the fray, trying to kill him

Scrambling back on my hands and feet, I turn, looking for a way to escape, when I see one wolf

tear into the black wolf's hind leg. Panic ripples through me at the sight, knowing that the wolf is the only thing keeping me alive

I stare at my hand and remember the knife

Getting my hands and knees, I scramble to my feet. I rush toward the one ripping at his rear leg while two try to get at him from the side, the other dead on the ground. I plunge the knife into the filthy gray wolf. It rears back and snarls then wheezes when I pull the knife out just as quickly

Only it doesn't kill him. It only serves to piss him off. Panic rushes through me as he stalks toward me. The black wolf is busy mauling the other two when more come in. By the time I turn back, it's too late. The wolf pounces and tears into my shoulder, knocking me backward. I scream, pain flooding through me, and the sound rings out loudly as it shakes its head

Teeth tear through my flesh easily when it suddenly lets go. I groan, rolling on my side

Blood coats the floor, making it slick as I try to drag myself away

I crawl toward the huge walk-in freezers and grab the handle, attempting to rip it open. The savage fighting grows louder, and I hear their bodies dropping just as more come crashing into the kitchen, knocking the steel benches over and sending utensils flying. The black wolf that saved me is now severely outnumbered and wholly surrounded as he puts himself between me and them

Yet, no matter how many spill into the kitchen, he keeps attacking them with surprising finesse

But he's slowing down, limping and bleeding in several places. I feel powerless, unable to shift and of no use to him. All I can do is watch and slowly back up, watching them

intently. Who is

this mysterious wolf? And why hasn't he abandoned me to save himself?

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 8

I yank on the freezer doors, trying to get them to open, but in my panic, I realize there is a button on the handle. Jamming my thumb on it, it clicks open, and I grip the frame, using it to help pull me to my feet. Turning back, the wolf is covered in blood as he takes on three rogues at once. After looking around and finding no exit for him, I call out to him, knowing the freezer would be secure if we could jam the door closed

“Hey!” I scream out to him, and he glances back only to be attacked. He attacks back, mauling the wolf, only for another to replace it

He retreats, backing up toward me, and I push the door open. If he doesn’t hide in here, they

will kill him. We can block the door and wait for help to come. Unable to shift and join the fray, it’s our only hope

Not given a choice, he turns the moment he gets a chance and barrels toward me. I shriek, darting out of his way before slamming the door shut the moment he is inside. The wolves hit the door and nearly toss it open while I push back against them

“Help me block it!” I shout at the wolf while gripping the handle and digging my feet into the ground, trying to hold it closed. I scream as it pushes inward, my shoulder and arm protesting as the door rams back at me; my injuries threatening to make my whole body collapse. I can’t lock the handle when suddenly, a body hits it. Likewise, I click the lock in place, only for it to unlock instantly, and I know one of the rogues has shifted back. Paws would struggle to

manipulate the lock

“Move!” a man’s voice growls, and I jump back as he slams his body against it. Hearing the lock click back in place, and then the handle drops to the ground with a loud clang. I try to catch my breath, relieved he got it locked, just as my legs give out from under me

I clamp my hand over my bleeding thigh, internally cringing at the way it is ripped open

My consciousness fades and I feel like I am going to faint as I stare down at my blood-drenched blouse

“Show me,” the man’s deep voice comes as he swats my hands away, and I look up to see who is the man behind the mysterious black wolf who saved me. I gasp when I recognize him to be Alpha Zayn. Looking very handsome but absolutely exhausted. Plus, he is naked in the

flesh with his hands holding my leg together

“Why didn’t you shift?” he snaps at me, angrily pulling me from my shock

"I haven't shifted yet," I blurt out, and his head snaps up to look at me

"You're under twenty?" he stammers

I nod, and he appears shocked, pressing his lips in a line. He nods once before he growls

"Avert your gaze, jail bait, while I find something to cover myself with."

"Excuse me? Jail bait? I'm nineteen and an adult!" I retort, outraged that he would call me such a name

"Yes, exactly. You're unshifted. Therefore, jail

bait. Unmated wolves aren't supposed to be naked around the unshifted she-wolves. You won't get your wolf until you're twenty

Therefore, you're still a damn pup!" he retorts

"Shut up!" I growl at him

"Was that a purr?" he mocks. I glare at him, but he holds my gaze

"Look away so that I can stand."

Troll my eyes but look away. His logic makes no sense. I am the legal age to drink, an adult according to the law. Just technically not according to werewolf society, apparently

"Wouldn't be the first man I have seen naked," I mutter

"You're not a virgin?" he growls menacingly,

responding quickly

My face heats. "I mean, I have seen men naked when they shift before." I'm certainly not going to be discussing my barely there sex life with an Alpha I hardly know.

Especially one who knows my father

"Good, so you are a virgin," he snarls

Why does he care? I think bitterly

"[never said that either," I quip, and he growls

Not that he needed to know that I am, in fact, still a virgin. It just irritates me that he is

so damn nosey and prying into my life

"Well, are you or not?" he demands, and I look at him to find him covering himself with a meat bag. Seems fitting, I chuckle, staring at it

"Aren't there more important things to discuss?" I taunt. "Like for example my bleeding leg." I grunt, remembering the pain

"Answer me!" He glares at me

"Why does it matter?" I shoot back. He looks away, and I watch as he clenches his teeth. "Are you a virgin?" I ask in a mocking tone

"That's none of your business!"

"Yet my virginity is yours?" I retort, raising an eyebrow

"Do I look like a virgin?" he snaps. My eyes roam over him. The man is sheer muscle and flesh, each part of him sculpted perfectly, right down to his..

"You look like a man who has his meat in a sausage bag," I snicker, trying to keep the mood light and the pain away. He doesn't find my joke funny. Instead, he stares blankly at me

"Fine, no, you don't look like a virgin, although I wouldn't be surprised if you were with your attitude," I snap at him

"Do you have a boyfriend?" he asks, and I sigh, rubbing my temples. I can already feel a headache coming on

"What's with the millions of questions? We may die in a freezer together, but that doesn't mean I need to reveal my entire life to you?" I remind him, and he sighs

"Just answer the question," he growls

"Kinda," I tell him. Shit! Why would I tell him that? What if he tells my father? "But, please

don't tell my father. He'll bloody kill me! I told him Deacon is just a friend," I blurt like an idiot

The last thing I want is for Deacon to get in trouble because we fooled around

The Alpha growls but says nothing else on the matter and instead tries to stem the bleeding on my leg when I suddenly hear a loud crack. The Alpha looks up at the ceiling, and so do I

Seconds later, we hear a crash, and the freezer we are hiding in shakes

"Please tell me that wasn't the roof caving in," I mutter

"That wasn't the roof," he says sarcastically, using a piece of my shirt to tie my wound shut

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 9

"So, have you got a girlfriend then?" I ask. I'm here and who knows what's going on outside, might as well pass the time

"Not anymore; I broke up with her today," he states matter-of-factly

"Today? No wonder you were in such a bad mood at the Alpha meeting if she dumped your cranky ass," I mutter

"I broke up with her!" he protests, sounding less like a suave, imposing Alpha and more like a teenage boy

I raise an eyebrow at him. "Really? Is that why you're so butt hurt?" I tease

"I'm not hurt. I dumped her during the meeting, and I was in a bad mood because your father is a prick," he states

"Wow, you broke up with your girlfriend via text. You really are a jerk!" I tell him, and he shrugs

"She'll find her mate eventually. It wouldn't

have lasted anyway," he tells me

"Wait, you just dumped her for no reason?"

"I have my reasons, none that you need to know about," he tells me. I roll my eyes at him

"Did she cheat?" I ask

“What? No, of course not,” he growls. Alpha Zayn gets up, wanders to the door, and unlocks it. When he yanks on the door, it doesn’t budge

“Great, now I am locked in here with you,” I curse as he examines the door. He swears, looking up, and I see that the door frame has been bent, locking the door in place. The Alpha peers over his shoulder and glares at me

“Sure, say it like it’s my damn fault, you’re not the only one trapped in here!” he growls

“Yes, but you can adapt to the cold, I can’t!” I retort, and he turns to look at me

“Fuck!” he growls, turning back to try to find a way out

My breath fogs the freezing air as I shiver, glaring at Alpha Zayn’s back. It is impossible not to notice how his muscles flex beneath his taut skin, but I refuse to let myself be swayed by lust in this very not ideal situation

“It’s no use; we’re literally stuck in here,” I state the obvious, my teeth chattering as I huddle against the wall. Whether it’s the cold or the blood loss, my leg feels numb

He turns, casting me a scathing glare that sends shivers down my spine for an entirely different reason. “Thanks for stating the obvious, I fucking know.”

As my heart pounds in my chest, I can’t help but think how unfair it is that I might die here with this arrogant-as-hell Alpha. I want to scream at the injustice of it all, but there is no time for that. I briefly think about Deacon, hoping he didn’t get caught up in the fight as he stood outside, waiting for me. And what about the people at the ball? What of Lydia and my father? My thoughts are cut off when I hear a chilling crack echo through the room, and my stomach tightens with fear

“Get down!” Zayn barks, his voice tense with urgency

Before I can even react, Zayn throws his body over mine, shielding me from the teeth-grating screech of metal collapsing above us. His muscular form presses against me, making it difficult to breathe

“Are you okay?” Zayn asks, his breath hot against my ear as he lifts himself off me just enough to look into my eyes. I nod, my heart still racing from the close call, when I notice the side of the freezer is bent in, and the roof is now lower

“Thanks,” I whisper, feeling a strange mix of gratitude and annoyance towards him while he moves to try the door again

“Maybe if we’re lucky, the power source has

been cut, and we won’t freeze to death,” I offer,

trying to ignore the incessant chattering of my teeth

Zayn tilts his head, raising an eyebrow as he assesses me. "I originally wasn't so sure if you were a natural blonde. This just puts my doubt to rest."

He did not just mock me for being blonde!

Anger blazes within me, momentarily eclipsing the cold

"Hey, I'm actually pretty smart; I at least think with my brain and not my temper and dick," I snap, realizing that I can still hear the faint sound of the motors running. Just great! The damn room is still powered

"Ouch, princess," Zayn smirks, but there is a hint of annoyance in his voice. "You sure know

how to hit me where it hurts."

"Good," I mutter, hugging myself to stay warm

My nipples are painfully erect beneath the thin fabric of my bra, but I refuse to let him

see how much the cold is affecting me. Instead, I focus on the anger coursing through me, using it to keep me warm when his eyes go to my shoulder and collarbone. His hands reach for my shirt, eyes wide with panic

I peer down at it before wishing I hadn't when I notice the skin flap. The next second, my blouse is ripped open entirely, with the buttons popping off. I groan as the flap of skin falls forward. I clutch it, forcing it back, when I hear his bones snapping. The next minute, a huge tongue rolls over my wound

I shriek, trying to push the wolf's head away. He snarls, snapping his teeth at me. He bites my

hand viciously, and I cry out at the sudden pain, but he returns to licking the gaping wound

"You're not supposed to do that!" I shriek in panic. My father is going to kill me when he finds out Alpha Zayn has healed me. This is not good. He shifts back and glares at me

"Would you rather bleed to death?" he snaps at me, reaching for my hand. He clicks his tongue when I whimper, seeing his bite mark on my hand. Leaning down, he goes

to heal me

“Wait, stop.”

“T didn’t mean to let my wolf bite you. You angered him when you refused his help,” Zayn tells me before ignoring me and sucking on my fingers. My toes curl, and an embarrassing noise leaves my lips

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 10

This is precisely why wolves don’t heal each other, it’s taboo and only for mates. It can also possibly sire our wolves, but since I don’t have one yet, hopefully, that won’t be too much of an issue

I am about to protest when he turns my hand, he growls in a warning. I see his eyes flash black momentarily as he licks my palm and across the side of my hand, healing the wound his wolf had created. He then sits back, looking rather satisfied with himself

“My father is going to kill me!” I hiss, knowing his DNA will be circulating in my system for a few days. If too much DNA is transferred, especially if the wound is too big, he would risk

siring me

“Pretty sure he would rather you alive than find you dead when I could have saved you,” he comments

“Yeah, well, he’ll still be angry either way just because it was you, and the risk of you siring my wolf,” I sigh heavily when I realize what I said out loud. My face heats. Gosh, that would be humiliating if I started chasing after him like a lovesick-sired pup. Our wolves are always with us from birth but dormant until a certain age, but they can still feel and sense their human counterpart

I’ve always found that part of us to be fascinating, and my mother used to tell me about mate bonds and the magic of finding your fated mate. How our wolves can sense their mates by eye contact, it sets transmitters off to recognize

their soul’s counterpart, kind taking the term saying the eyes are the window to the soul to another level, it’s also why healing a wolf that isn’t your mate is so taboo. It can alter those neurotransmitters, making us not recognize our mate

“Don’t be embarrassed. I’d rather you stay alive; besides, it’s not like anyone saw me heal you or saw your reaction to it.”

“You saw! And they’ll still know!” I tell him, blushing even more. He shrugs, uncaring. I roll

my eyes and glance away. Great, what will Deacon think?

"I save you, and all I get is attitude. Keep going, and I will heal your leg." I flinch at his words, knowing if he heals any more of me, that risk of being sired goes up even without having my wolf yet. Still, though, I can't help but sense that

he genuinely wants to help me and isn't trying to manipulate me

"Sorry, I didn't mean to sound ungrateful," I mumble the last part, feeling guilty, but he isn't the one who will have to endure my father

Yet when the light blinks, I glance up in time to see one goes out while the other dims. It is dark in here now, yet that is the least of my worries as the temperature keeps dropping. I do my best not to shiver. I can still hear the fighting from outside, but it is fainter now. Is my father ok?

"Are you alright?" he asks, and I turn slightly to see the Alpha looking at me with concern. I can just about make out his eyes piercing into me where he sits in the darkest part, having moved away from me. That is probably a good thing because despite not having my wolf, his saliva is now in my bloodstream, making him far more

alluring. Which doesn't help much seeing as the man is already alluring enough! At least where I am. I have one flickering dim light

Nodding, I wrap my arms around myself

"Yeah," I reply, shivering, yet my voice stutters as my teeth chatter

"I can't believe this!" he growls, punching the wall and making me look up in alarm. "I should be out there."

I can sense his frustration as he drops to the ground, leaning against the wall, clenching his fist

Rubbing my arms, I look across at him. "Maybe we'll be found soon."

"Perhaps," he exhales, resting his head back against the wall. "How is your leg?" he asks, and

I look down at it, only now realizing I can't actually feel it. It's gone completely numb. I poke it, and nothing

"That's not good," he mutters, and I look at him, and he sits up better

"Come over here. You're going to freeze to death at this rate." I chew my lip, wondering if I should. After a few seconds, I give up and use the wall to get to my feet

As much as I want to argue, I don't want to die here either. I am already freezing, and Goddess knows when someone will find us. I drag myself over to him, and his gaze falls to my bleeding leg. "Can you cover up?" I ask. I am not going to cuddle against a naked dude whose junk is hanging out

He looks at me in disbelief. "Does it look like

there's something to cover myself with down here beside this bag?" he growls

He does have a good point. I take what's left of my top off, although that just left me in my bra, and toss it onto his lap. Almost smirking at the fact, his eyes flash, and he turns away from me

Now, who's uncomfortable?

Is he really going to treat me like I am underage? Bloody hell, I'm nineteen, almost the leader of my pack, and he just frigging healed me. If anything, he should be more worried about the potential sire he has created

"There, better," I huff

"Just come here," he growls, yanking me down on his lap. I sit there stiffly when he wraps his arms around me, pulling me closer and lifting

his legs, so I am not sitting on the cold ground

"Relax, I won't hurt you," he says softly as he rubs my arms while being careful not to squash my leg. Giving in, I lean against him, welcoming the heat of his body. Yet when I rest my head on his shoulder, he shivers

"You must be cold," I tell him

"I'm more worried about you... Your father will start a war if you die on my watch."

He tucks me closer, wrapping his arms around

me and pulling my flush against his chest, only for me to gasp when I feel his shaft against my

ass

Oh, heck no! "And she says she's not a virgin," he mocks

"I'm not." I lie, frowning, but I don't struggle

further, allowing him to enclose me in his muscular arms

“Yeah, you are.” he snickers

“Am not.”

He laughs again but pulls away. His hand moves into my hair when he suddenly jerks my head back. He buries his nose in my neck before running it along the column of my throat to the side of my lips. I swallow at how close he is, and his eyes flicker

“I can smell your innocence,” he murmurs, his lips so close they brush against mine when he smirks and his eyes flash to that of his beast

My face heats at his words. “That’s a good thing. I don’t understand why you are embarrassed,” he mutters, tucking my face back into his neck. “Now, rest. I’ve mindlinked my Beta already. They’re trying to get to us,” he tells me

“Finally.”

“Yes, but it might be awhile. The entire building is on top of us.”

“What?” I groan

“Sleep, don’t think about it,” he tells me, and I sigh but do as he says while wondering how

my father is. I try to mind link him, but with my blood loss, it is like I can’t exert that kind of energy

I have to admit, he smells good. I internally roll my eyes. Wow, focus girl. The severity of the situation settles in, and I become somber once more, knowing it’s just his blood in my system that is wreaking havoc on my hormones

Please find us soon..