

## Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 41

I quickly agree to meet him when the front door bangs open and my father is glaring at me from the front porch. Great, now I have to deal with him, and he'll be furious when he learns who I was with last night. Climbing out of the car, my father storms down the steps toward me with a furious look on his face

His eyes flash with anger as he confronts me, his voice laced with disappointment. "Cleo, what the hell were you thinking? Spending the night with Zayn, of all people!"

Of course, Lydia couldn't wait to throw me under the bus. His words pierce through me like hot iron, igniting a mixture of fear and defiance

"Dad, it's not what you think," I stammer, attempting to defend myself. But he doesn't seem interested in hearing any explanation

"Not what I think? You're fraternizing with the  
i"

enemy!" he growls, his face turning red with.

anger

"I know, I know," I stammer, my heart sinking at the disappointment in his voice. Once again, I've let him down, great, thanks Lydia

"But it wasn't like that, Dad. I was in no state to drive, and Zayn found me outside the club. He brought me back to his place to make sure I was safe. That was all. Nothing sordid, I swear!" I try to explain myself, hoping he listens

My father's expression softens slightly, but his disapproval is still evident. "And where was Deacon during all this? He should have been the

one taking care of you, not Zayn."

I swallow hard, my throat dry with guilt. "I don't know, Deacon left me at the club earlier in the night. I haven't seen him since."

His eyes narrow as he studies me, searching for any signs of deceit. "You expect me to believe that Deacon just abandoned you in that state?"

"I wouldn't lie about this," I say firmly, meeting his gaze head-on. "Deacon disappeared, and we need to find him. Ask Lydia, we just returned from his house; can we argue about this after we find him please?" And for the first time ever Lydia comes to my defense against my father, even though she is the one who clearly told him where I was

“She’s right Joseph, Deacon wasn’t home. We can’t find him,” Lydia adds, and he peers over

his shoulder at her then looks at me

“And nothing happened between you and Zayn?” he questions. My brows furrow in confusion at his words. “No, I just told you that!”

“So you didn’t fuck him?” my father accuses, and my eyes widen, appalled at his question

“Excuse me?” I splutter

“Answer the question Cleo or I will have the doc check you. If I want this alliance to go well with Alpha Dane, you best still be pure.” I stagger back at his words, and even Lydia seems disgusted at his question, which says a lot because that B revels in my discomfort

“For your sake, I’m going to pretend you did not just ask about the state of my virginity. And

Alpha Dane can go fuck himself if he thinks I will marry his son,” I snarl angrily, stomping off toward my car

“Where do you think you’re going?” my father yells at me, and I stop flinging my car door open

“To find Deacon, my boyfriend and future mate!” I yell at him before climbing in my car. I start my car and slam it in reverse, tearing out of the driveway and back toward the city

28K ok

~Zayn~

After Cleo leaves, I head home to the packhouse where my brother, who’s also my Beta, Vance, is waiting. I groan, I was on high after seeing my little mate, not so much now seeing his concerned face

Toeing my shoes off, I kick them beside the door and wander into the living room where he is sitting on the leather armchair by the window

“Spying on me now?” I ask, knowing he just witnessed everything outside with me and

Cleo

“Not spying, I’ve come to speak to you about Deacon.” I raise an eyebrow at his words

“What about him?” I ask, falling onto the sofa

Vance scratches his chin nervously before

leaning forward and resting his elbows on his knees

“His body?” Vance questions

“In the freezer in the basement,” I answer with a shrug, and Vance nods slowly and sits back

“What is it?” I ask, cocking a brow as I lean back in my seat

“Nothing major, just thought you should know.” He sighs heavily like the weight of the world rests on his shoulders

“Alpha Grayson put out an alert this morning when he didn’t show up for patrol duty.

He knows Deacon is missing, and he felt the pack link sever.”

“Well, that’s to be expected,” I state

“You sure he didn’t mind link anyone?” Vance questions

“Positive, he was too intoxicated. And every time he tried I handled it, I’m not stupid

Vance

He isn’t the first wolf I’ve killed,” I remind him

“What about his car?”

“Burnt out, I had Harry pick it up earlier and crush it. They won’t find it.” I nod with confidence

“So nothing to worry about then?” It’s obvious he’s still concerned

“Video footage I took care of last night, bouncers won’t speak, you know that. But

apparently the kid was pretty reliable, he never misses patrol. His Alpha was quite concerned about him; he’s worried he’s dead, or was forced

to be a rogue for some reason.”

Vance gets to his feet and heads toward the door, only to stop at the threshold. “What do you reckon he was taking the photos for?”

“Nothing good, what I want to know is why he would send them to her step sister,” I question

Vance seems to think for a second

“She’s Alpha Samuel’s daughter, right?” he asks, and I nod

“Yeah, why’s that?”

“Alpha Samuel won’t hand the pack to her because that means Linda has access to it

Makes me wonder if she is trying to get Cleo removed as the next Alpha, and what better way to do it than embarrass her father and hurt her reputation.”

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~Zayn~

“I figured the same thing, but how would she explain handing those photos over to her step father?”

“I don’t think they’re for Cleo’s father, perhaps Alpha Dane? Joseph had a meeting with Alpha Dane earlier, they were spotted at the public library. Alpha Dane wont accept her if she isn’t a virgin, you know how religious his pack is.” I press my lips in a line, the bastard was serious about marrying her off

“TI handle it, somehow.” I shake my head, annoyed at just the thought of her marrying anyone else

“Are you gonna tell her?” Vance asks, and I sigh

“No. I don’t want to put her at risk while she doesn’t have her wolf, she’ll have every Alpha after her trying to use her against me,” I remind him. I wish this wasn’t the case, but right now it’s the only choice we have

“Yeah, dad made sure to make a lot of enemies the last few years.” I nod sadly. The weight of the past, heavy on my shoulders

“If I figure it out, Boyd won’t be getting his hands on her, I will kill him and declare war before I allow him to marry my mate,” I growl in annoyance

“We’ll, I’m off to check border patrols, I will organize some men on her borders and tell them to keep their distance, and to remain on neutral

territory.” I nod, waving him off while I ponder what to do about the marriage alliance Alpha Joseph has planned for his daughter. There is no way I will allow her to marry anyone else

I must have dozed off at some point because I wake to my notification ringtone blaring. It takes me a few seconds to come to my senses and shut it off, only to see I have a message from Cleo

“Is she okay?” Zarek, my wolf asks, stirring awake at the thought of her. He presses beneath my skin and I open the message

Cleo: ‘Deacon is missing. Can you check the club’s footage from last night? Maybe it can help us find out where he went.’

I groan, sick of hearing about the weasel but quickly reply if it means seeing her again. I may

Just watch her boundaries myself if it means being close to her all the time. I quickly type my reply and hit send

Me: ‘Deacon is missing? I saw him last night before I left. He was dancing with Lydia. I can meet you at the club later, and we can go over the footage together.’

Cleo replies almost instantly, agreeing to meet me at my club at 7 PM. Smiling to myself I check the time, I still have hours and decide to go shower, check on work and follow up on emails while I wait

Heading upstairs to my room I grab some clothes, my wolf pressing excitedly beneath my skin urging me faster, and I roll my eyes

“Your eagerness will scare her off Zarek,” I warn him, but he ignores me. Hopping in the shower I have just started washing myself when I hear my phone again

I step out of the shower, drying off and then reaching for my phone to see another message from Cleo

Cleo: How about now? I’m headed to your club

My brows furrow in confusion wondering what happened, but I need to sort a few things out first

Me: What happened? We agreed on 7 PM. I have to stop by and check my brother has sorted your borders out before heading into the city

I send back only for her reply to come back almost instantly

Cleo: That's fine, I will wait for you there. See you at 7

I stare at the screen in confusion

"Something happened," Zarek chimes in and I nod in agreement. Maybe her father found out about where she was last night. That thought has me wondering if she is okay

Me: I'll get there as soon as possible, meet me at the bar

Cleo sends me back a thumbs up. I don't like the idea of her being at the club by herself, but I'll message the staff to keep an eye on her. We have a function there tonight for one of the packs

Drying myself quickly, I get dressed then mindlink Vance. "Did you sort out Cleo's borders? I was going to stop by before heading into the city, but something must have happened, Cleo is heading there now." I tell

him

"Almost I am struggling with numbers, most are running rampant with the other packs,

but I'm moving numbers around. I will have to man the doors at the club tonight for the Claymore pack event. I need to send Michael in, most are refusing since Joseph isn't in agreement. But Michael agreed to go," Vance tells me, and I nod along before Zarek

speaks up

"Claymore, that's Alpha Dane's pack, right?" Zarek asks, cutting through the mindlink. I nod to him before recognition of his words hits me

"Fuck, I gotta go. That means Boyd will be at the club." I tell Vance before cutting the mindlink. Snatching my phone, I try calling Cleo to tell her to meet somewhere else or to come here, but I get no answer. With a growl, I snatch my keys up and jog downstairs. Zarek

presses beneath my skin, urging me faster

“He better not think about touching our mate,” Zarek grumbles at me as I jam the keys in the ignition. I tear out of the pack territory and onto the highway heading toward the city only to come to a screeching stop when I see cars lined up and smoke ahead. “Fuck!” peering out the window I realize it’s a car accident. I reach for my phone only to find I have no reception here

Great, just fucking great

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~Cleo ~

My hands grip the steering wheel tightly as my frustration and anger churn inside me like a storm. I can’t believe my father would even think of marrying me off to Boyd, let alone question my virginity. It feels like a betrayal, a disregard for my own choices, my life and not to mention absolutely mortifying

As I park outside Zayn’s club, I notice the flurry of activity in the beer garden where staff and caterers are setting up for what looks like a coming-of-age party. I briefly wonder what the event is about, but my thoughts are quickly consumed by the need to see the video footage of last night and confront Deacon; more so now

with my father trying to marry me off. Deacon

may get his wish to mark me sooner than he thinks

Climbing out of the car, I make my way inside the club. The pulsating music hits me as soon as I step inside, surprising me with its intensity

The place is alive, even at this hour, and I make my way to the bar perching on a stool where I wave down the bartender and order a can of coke

Taking a sip, I scan the increasingly crowded space, my nerves on edge as I wait for Alpha Zayn. But when I spot Boyd weaving through the crowd, my heart sinks. Quickly, I turn back to the bar, hoping he hasn’t noticed me. But luck is clearly not on my side today, or this week, maybe ever it feels like

“Hey there,” says a deep voice behind me,

making me jump when I feel hands slide down my arms. I turn to find Boyd smirking down at me, his eyes roaming over my body with an

unnerving hunger before falling on my breasts

“Boyd,” I grit out, trying to keep my voice steady, despite how repulsed I feel right now

“Hi, I didn’t see you,” I state, knowing I can’t cause a scene here

“Really, you didn’t notice me despite looking directly at me?” he chuckles

“Come on, Cleo,” he drawls, leaning closer. “I Just wanted to talk to my sexy future bride.”

“About that,” I say, feeling my cheeks flush with anger. “I have a boyfriend, Boyd. This marriage isn’t happening.”

“Really?” he taunts, one eyebrow raised

“Because the paperwork has already been drawn up.

“Excuse me,” I snap, irritated by his arrogance

“You don’t get a say in this, am not marrying you. I have a chosen mate.”

My heart races as Boyd’s unwanted presence looms over me, his smirk sends shivers down my spine. I take a deep breath, trying to steady my nerves and find the right words

“Boyd,” I say, attempting to keep my voice even, losing my temper right now will only worsen things. “It’s not what I want, and I don’t think it’s what’s best for either of us.”

Boyd leans in closer, his hot breath brushing against my ear as he slurs, “You know this would be good for both our packs. We’d be a power couple.” I almost scoff at his words

Power couple? At the cost of my future?

I suppress a shudder at the thought of being with him, but I can’t deny the truth in his words

Our packs would undoubtedly benefit from the alliance, but at what cost? The thought of sacrificing my happiness, my dreams and my self-worth for the good of the pack feels like a suffocating weight on my chest

“Boyd, listen,” I start again, trying to maintain eye contact despite the intoxicating scent of alcohol wafting from his breath. “I have a boyfriend, someone I care about, I can’t just throw that away for an arranged marriage.”

“Is that so?” Boyd taunts, leaning in even closer until his lips are just a whisper away from mine

"You might be surprised by what you want, Cleo." I fight the urge to punch him in his smug face

Forcing myself to meet Boyd's gaze, I try to project an air of confidence I don't entirely feel

His eyes are glazed from liquor, but there's still a predatory gleam in them that sends shivers down my spine. I wish I wasn't here beside him

"Come on, Cleo," he insists, dragging out my name as if it were the punchline to some private joke. "You can't be serious about this boyfriend of yours, he's not even Alpha blood." Boyd reaches out and brushes his fingers along my arm, and I fight back a shudder at the unwanted contact

"Boyd, stop," I say firmly, pulling away from his repulsive touch. My heart races with a mix of anxiety and anger, but I refuse to let him see how much he's getting to me. "My relationship is none of your business."

"Relax," he coos, completely ignoring my

protests. "This alliance is good for both our packs. Besides, what's not to like about having me as your mate?" His smirk is infuriating and I clench my fists at my sides, struggling to keep my temper in check

"Boyd, I have a boyfriend," I repeat for the hundredth time, enunciating each word carefully but clearly my words are not getting through to him. "I won't marry you."

"Ah, so it's true," he muses, his grin turning even more sinister. "He must be something special if you're willing to defy your father and risk our pack's future for him."

"Boyd, it doesn't matter how many times you repeat it, the fact remains that I can't marry you," I say, my voice wavering slightly despite my best efforts to remain composed

My words are cut short as Alpha Dane strides toward us, his dark eyes assess the situation with a keen interest. "Ah, Cleo, so nice to see you again," he says smoothly, extending his hand for me to shake

"Alpha Dane," I reply, forcing a smile onto my face as I place my hand in his. His grip is firm and unyielding, much like his son's determination to see this alliance through

"To take it the function being held here is yours?" I ask, suddenly wishing I'd waited in

the car for Zayn. Alpha Dane places his hand on my shoulder and nods toward the beer garden

"Yes, my youngest daughter's shift is tonight, I suppose your father told you about the great news?" he asks me, and my eyes dart to Boyd who smirks smugly

Before I can answer, Alpha Dane starts leading

me out to the beer garden where the function is being held

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"Please, allow me to introduce you to my wife, she's been here since this morning setting everything up, she'll be excited to meet Boyd's future wife. He gestures to a woman standing beside the fountains, her delicate features and sharp eyes immediately giving away her connection to Boyd. "This is Luna Grace, Boyd's mother."

Alpha Dane introduces us, and she steps forward, a smile on her lips

"Nice to meet you, Cleo," she says warmly, though there's something in her gaze that suggests she's already sizing me up as a potential daughter-in-law

With pleasantries exchanged, Alpha Dane wastes no time in diving into the topic of the alliance

"Boyd has told me how you seemed hesitant when he mentioned it at the alpha meeting..

that you have hesitations regarding this marriage, but surely you understand the importance of uniting our packs?" he asks, his tone deceptively gentle

"Of course," I reply, struggling to keep my anger in check. "But there's more to consider than just politics—"

hold on dear, that's Alpha Grayson, I'll be right back," he tells me and I grit my teeth

The outdoor area is buzzing with activity, fairy lights casting a soft glow over the various tables and guests. I reach for a glass of wine from a

passing tray, hoping the liquid will help calm my frazzled nerves

My patience is wearing thin, and I glance at my phone, noticing it's already past 7 PM. Zayn should have been here by now, and have I really been here that long?

"Where the heck are you?" I mutter under my breath, my fingers gripping the wineglass tighter as I steel myself for whatever might come next, when I see Boyd stepping closer

"Excuse me, Boyd. I need to use the restroom," I say, my voice strained as I attempt to maintain a polite demeanor

"Of course, Cleo," he replies, his eyes lingering on me before returning to his drink

As I step back inside the club, the pulsating

music washes over me like an invigorating wave. Desperate for some semblance of control, I make my way to the bar and ask one of the staff members if they've seen Zayn

"Alpha Zayn? He's not here yet, there was an accident on the highway so he's probably stuck in traffic," the bartender informs me

"Damn it," I mutter under my breath, accepting another drink from the bartender as I try to calm my nerves. The idea of waiting for Zayn while dealing with Boyd is less than appealing, but I don't have many other options

"Here you go," the bartender says, sliding a glass toward me. "This should help take the edge off."

"Thanks," I reply, taking a sip and hoping it will help me keep my composure

As I turn around, leaning against the bar and scanning the crowd, I suddenly hear Boyd's voice cutting through the buzz of the club. My heart skips a beat, and my grip tightens around the glass. Oh for frig sake! I mentally curse

"Cleo, I thought you were going to the bathroom? My mother was wanting to speak with you," he asks, irritation evident in his tone as he approaches

"Boyd," I say, struggling to keep my voice steady. "I'm not avoiding you, I'm just waiting for someone."

"Who?" he questions, eyeing me skeptically. "I know this is all a lot to take in, and my father can be kinda pushy but we can make this work," he continues, and my eyes dart to the bartender who's watching us closely

I sigh inwardly, trying to come up with a plausible explanation. "Look, I appreciate your enthusiasm about this alliance, but as I've told you before I can't marry you."

His closeness is suffocating, and I feel the urge to flee, to find solace in Zayn's arms—even if it's only temporary. But for now, all I can do is wait hopelessly for Zayn to get here so I can leave

Drinking the rest of my wine, I turn to the lady at the bar, she hands me another glass of wine, leaning closer

"He's just pulled up in the parking lot," I sigh in relief. Finally!

“Your father seems to think otherwise,” Boyd retorts, a smug grin spreading across his face

“Boyd, I—” I start, but he interrupts me with a laugh

“Relax, Cleo. I’m just teasing, we’ll figure it out,” he says, reaching out to trail a finger down my arm. The sensation sends shivers down my spine, and I can’t help but flinch away from his touch

“Please don’t do that,” I snap, unable to maintain my composure any longer. My heart races in my chest and I feel a wave of heat rush through me as frustration and repulsion collide within me

“Boyd, we need—” My words falter as I try to formulate a response, but before I can continue, strong arms encircle my waist, pulling me away from Boyd and spinning me around. I find myself face-to-face with Zayn, his gray eyes blazing with intensity. His presence instantly transforms the atmosphere, sending a shiver down my spine

“Hey, baby,” he purrs, his voice low and

seductive. My breath catches in my throat, and I’m momentarily frozen, shocked by his sudden appearance and the way he’s acting

Boyd’s expression shifts from irritation to horror as he takes in the scene before him. “Wait, he’s your boyfriend?” he stammers, his composure

slipping

But Zayn ignores him. “Sorry, I’m late,” he murmurs, his arm tightening around my waist possessively as he pulls me closer, I stare at him like he’s grown two heads. What

does he think

he’s doing?

The heat of his body seeps through the fabric of my dress, igniting a fire within me that I struggle to control and my face flames knowing Boyd is watching this display

Zayn’s eyes hold mine, some unsaid message in

them when he leans closer burying his face in my neck. He groans, his hand sliding

down my back to grab my ass. My heart races, threatening to burst from my chest as Zayn takes control of the situation in a way that’s both exhilarating, and terrifying. The intensity of his touch, the determination in his gaze it all sends shivers down my spine

“Zayn,” I manage to whisper, my voice barely audible

“Play along,” he whispers below my ear, and I barely hear him over the loud music

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He pulls back, brushing his nose against mine gently, and then his hand grips my chin, tilting my face up to his. I can feel the heat radiating off his body and the scent of his cologne mingling with his natural addictive scent. It's intoxicating, and I find myself unable to look away from his piercing gray eyes

And then, without warning, his lips are on mine

The kiss is searing, electric, like a bolt of lightning straight to my core. His tongue teases my lower lip seeking entrance, and snapping out of my shock at his actions, I grant it willingly, letting myself get lost in the feel of his tongue brushing softly against mine. When he pulls

away, all I can do is stare at him

“Does that answer your question?” Zayn asks Boyd, who looks utterly baffled

“Y-yeah,” Boyd stammers, his cheeks flushed with embarrassment. “I guess it does.”

“Good,” Zayn replies, his eyes never leaving mine. “Now, if you'll excuse us...”

Boyd hesitates for a moment, then nods, turning on his heel and disappearing into the crowd

The tension in the room seems to dissipate with his departure, but my own internal turmoil only grows

My chest tightens with a strange mix of relief and anger. I can't help but feel like a pawn in some twisted game, with Zayn making moves I can't predict

“Zayn,” I seethe, my hands balling into fists as I shove his broad chest. “What the fuck?”

His eyes flash dangerously, a storm brewing behind those silver gray eyes. “He won't challenge me for you, Cleo.” There's a bite to his voice that sends shivers down my spine. “I panicked. Or if you'd like,” he adds, his lips curling into a feral grin, “I can tell him you're ripe for the picking.”

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My heart races in my chest, torn between fury and something else entirely dangerous spark of desire. It scares me how attracted I am to this unpredictable alpha, even as his words set my blood boiling

“Fuck you,” I spit, trying to ignore the heat pooling low in my belly. “This isn’t some game you can control. This is my life!”

“Believe me, Love,” Zayn murmurs, stepping closer until his body brushes against mine. The scent of his cologne threatens to overwhelm my senses, a heady blend of cedar wood and smoke

“I know exactly what’s at stake.”

“Then why would you do that?” I whisper yell, feeling the first tendrils of doubt creeping in

Maybe Zayn’s impulsive actions are going to throw me in hot water once again with my father. This will definitely get back to him

“Because I couldn’t stand the thought of that prick laying claim to you,” he growls, his fingers digging into my hips as he pulls me flush against him. My breath catches at the intimate contact, my body betraying me by arching into his touch

“Zayn,” I breathe, struggling to maintain my anger as I push against his chest

“Unless you want Boyd coming over and staking his claim against you, you’ll stop pushing me away, Cleo.” He growls in warning before dropping his head lower. “He’s right there, no lovers quarrels, you’ll make him think he stands a chance,” Zayn whispers, then grins deviously as he leans closer

I am about to mention Deacon, but my words are swallowed by his lips and he groans. His fingers twist in my hair as he tilts my head back and nips at my lips with his teeth, forcing them to part. His tongue brushes mine and I feel the sire bond kick in as a sound, a cross between a whimper and moan, escapes me. Zayn chuckles, kissing me deeper, and my tongue brushes his as I kiss him back. Breathless, Zayn pulls away, his eyes darting behind me, but I don’t look

“He’s gone,” he states, his lips hovering just above mine. I bite my lip and Zayn’s hand moves

from my hair, his thumb brushing my lip and pulling it from between my teeth. “You’re not married yet, Cleo. And from what I saw, you didn’t seem too keen on the idea.”

My chest heaves with the weight of my emotions, my heart pounding like a war drum.

I can't make sense of what's happening within me, but I know I need to get away — at least for a moment

"Zayn," I say, my voice strained, "I need to get out of here."

"Sure, come on, I'll take you to view those tapes," he replies, his eyes flickering with an unreadable emotion. He leads me towards the security room, his hand on the small of my back, warm and reassuring, sending shivers down my spine

Each step feels like a battle, my mind racing with confusion of how the sire bond makes me feel toward Zyan, and the uncertainty of the war I could have possibly started. The suspicion that my draw to Zayn might be due to a sire bond gnaws at me like a relentless itch, clouding my every thought. Seeing a waiter with another tray of wine, I snatch a glass and scull the contents before holding up a finger telling him to

wait

Right now, I need something to drown out this sire bond; I give him the wine glass back when it's empty, and I grab another

"Now you can go," I tell him, and he nods, walking off while Zayn raises an eyebrow at me

"Didn't realize that me kissing you requires a drink?" he taunts, grabbing my hand and leading me down a hall

As we enter the security room, the tension

between us is thick, the air heavy with unspoken words and unanswered questions. We

sit down next to each other, our thighs brushing together, sending jolts of electricity through my body

"Let's just focus on finding the footage from last night," Zayn suggests, his voice low and slightly husky. "Maybe it'll give us some answers."

The security room's dim lighting adds to the heavy atmosphere that seems to press down on me as I follow Zayn inside

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The soft hum of computers and the faint glow of monitors cast eerie shadows across the walls, their silhouettes distorted and ever-shifting. My heart races in my chest, anxiety gnawing at my insides as I try to make sense of the chaos in my mind

"Any luck?" Zayn asks, his voice low and controlled as he speaks with one of the security guards watching over the screens

"Not yet, Alpha," the staff member replies, frustration evident in his tone. "I've been trying to locate the footage, but it seems to have vanished."

"Vanished?" I echo, my eyebrows shooting up in

surprise. "How is that even possible?"

"Technical difficulties," Zayn explains, though it sounds like a weak excuse. "These things happen sometimes."

"Let me try," Zayn tells him, stepping forward and holding his hand out. The security guard rummages around on his desk, which seems to be in messy order

"Here you go, Alpha," a technician says, handing Zayn a tablet before stepping back to work on one of the computers and trying to pull the footage up. The whirring of processors forms a quiet hum as he retreats back to his computer station drenched in ghostly blue light. Fingers dance swiftly over keys in order to coax up missing fragments from last night's events, his brow furrowed as he searches for the footage

"Thanks," Zayn replies, his tone detached. I can feel the weight of his gaze on me, but I avoid looking at him, focusing instead on the screens around us. One by one, they display grainy images of the club's various rooms and corridors, but none seem to capture the moment I so desperately need to see

"Seems like we're having some technical difficulties with the footage," Zayn says, handing the tablet back to the technician. "Keep looking, though."

"Of course, Alpha," the man replies, nodding before turning back to his task

"Technical issues, huh?" I mutter, more to myself than to Zayn. My thoughts keep drifting back to the confrontation with Alpha Dane, and the uncertainty of where Deacon might be. A sense of helplessness washes over me, and I

suddenly feel lightheaded

"Hey, are you okay?" I nod, and chew my lip

"Just worried about Deacon," I admit. Zayn rolls his eyes

"I'm sure he's fine, probably just cooling off somewhere, chilling out with friends," he tells me. I raise an eyebrow at him

"We checked his friends, they haven't seen him

Zayn sighs

"If it makes you feel better, tomorrow I will even help you put up missing person flyers, fuck I'll find a milk carton company if you want to plaster his ugly mug on that too, okay so cheer up." he tells me and I can't help but smile knowing he is only saying this to make me smile,

"Deal?" he asks

"I may take you up on the flyers if we can't find him," I chuckle

"I'm sure he's fine,"

I place a hand on the edge of a desk to steady myself, realizing that the wine I had earlier is affecting me more than I expected

"Lightweight," Zayn teases. He leans over, gripping my arm to steady me. The casual gesture somehow makes him even more desirable, and I have to force myself to focus on anything but the magnetic pull I feel towards him

"Never took you for a wine drinker," Zayn comments, his voice tinged with amusement

"Are you always this much of a lightweight?"

"I don't usually drink wine, okay?" I defend myself, rolling my eyes. I can't help but appreciate the distraction, though. It's a brief reprieve from the storm of emotions threatening to overwhelm me

"Relax, Cleo. I'm not judging you," Zayn says, amusement dancing in his eyes. "If anything, it makes you more... endearing."

"Endearing?" I scoff, feeling the heat rise in my cheeks. "That's one way to put it."

"Would you prefer adorable?" he asks, his lips curving into a smirk

"Definitely not," I retort, trying to ignore the way my pulse quickens at the sight of his smile

The sire bond it has to be that, right? There's no other explanation for why I'm reacting this way to Zayn

I roll my eyes, trying to suppress the flush creeping up my neck. "I don't usually drink wine," I admit. "But I needed something to calm my nerves after dealing with Alpha Dane and Boyd."

“Fair enough,” Zayn replies, leaning against the desk with a smirk. “But you’re not driving,” he warns me

“I’ll catch a cab,” I retort with a shrug, and Zayn huffs

“Let’s get out of here,” Zayn suggests, sensing my irritation. “I’ll drive you home.”

“I don’t think I can go home just yet. My father will be furious.” I admit

Zayn sighs, rubbing the back of his neck as he considers my words. “Do you have any other

places in mind? Your dorm, maybe?”

I take a deep breath, attempting to regain some semblance of control over my emotions. My heart is a thunderous drumbeat in my chest, and the heat from Zayn’s touch still lingers on my skin, and I am a hundred percent positive he has sired my wolf now. I can’t ignore the fact that our chemistry is undeniable, but the thought of being bound by something so uncontrollable terrifies me

As we make our way toward the stairs, I see the barrage of threatening messages from

my father on my phone. My heart clenches with fear as I realize that going home isn’t an option tonight

Zayn, sensing my distress, guides me gently down the stairs, his hand warm and steady on my lower back

“Careful,” he murmurs as I stumble slightly. “I’ve

got you.” he murmurs, his grip tightening on my arm slightly when someone calls out to him

“Crap Shana, needs me to fix the safe, apparently it’s jammed again” he grumbles, leading me down the last couple of steps

We reach the bar, and Zayn insists on confiscating my clutch, teasing me about trying to drive home buzzed before shoving me down on a stool at the bar

## **Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 47**

He waves someone over. Annoyance flares within me, but it’s quickly overshadowed by the realization that I’m stuck without many options

“Fine,” I huff, rolling my eyes, even though a part of me appreciates his protectiveness

“Stay here,” he instructs, leaving me under the watchful eye of his massive security man. I recognized him immediately as Vance, Zayn’s brother. “Watch her, don’t let her out of your sight while I help Shana,” Zayn tells him

I watch Vance step closer, the man is just as big as his brother, standing beside me with arms crossed tightly over his broad chest. His dark expression and muscular build make him appear

even more imposing and intimidating

“I don’t need a babysitter,” I huff. Vance chuckles, looking down at me

“He’s just looking out for you after the other night,” Vance tells me, and I roll my eyes

“Hey,” he leans in, lowering his voice, “Between you and me, I know how much of a pain in the ass Zayn can be. But trust me when I say he’s got your best interests at heart.”

I chuckle. “He’s certainly bossy,” I laugh when I see Alpha Dane, approaching. He doesn’t look happy, and I sit up straighter when he stops next to me

“Boyd told me you’re involved with Alpha Zayn

For now, I will turn a blind eye, but you will end it before the wedding.” he trails off, about to

turn away when he stops again

“Oh and Cleo, after this little stunt, and knowing Zayn’s your boyfriend, you’ll be forced to ensure your virtue has remained intact. I’ll have one of my pack doctors get in contact with you to arrange a sample of your slick to be taken. Your father knows how strict I am on that tute,” he smiles coyly

“And well Lydia’s virtue is long gone, but he assured me you’re a virgin, that better still be true, or we’ll have issues, your father owes me a considerable amount already,” Alpha Dane warns

I glare at the man, and Alpha Dane leans closer

“Do the right thing Cleo, it’s not worth your pack. I get you don’t like the idea, but you’ll learn to love my son, but this little thing you have going on with Alpha Zayn needs to come

to an end.” Alpha Dane states before turning abruptly and wandering off. I watch him leave, and I move to get up, wanting some fresh air, when Vance grabs my arm,

pushing me back down on the stool. I look up at him, and he gives me an apologetic smile

“Sorry but Alpha orders, you need to remain,” he tells me and tears threaten to burn my eyes when Vance speaks again. “He can’t force you,” Vance says

“Yeah, well by the looks of it he can, my father owes him money,” I growl and then sigh, reaching for my leftover drink. But before I can take another sip, Vance takes it from me too

“Seriously?” I gape at him and he glances around nervously

I glare at him and he rolls his eyes. “You’ve had

enough,” he tells me but gives it back. “But I would need a drink after listening to that asshole too,” he chuckles, sending me a wink

I tip the glass to my lips and drink the rest of the glass when Zayn comes out, stopping beside me

“I told you not to let her drink,” Zayn growls at his brother. Vance leans in whispering something to Zayn, who’s entire demeanor changes, his eyes flash as he looks down at me, but he says nothing

“Come on, I’ll take you home,” Zayn says, grabbing my hand and leading me out of the club. Alpha Zayn seems angry about something but leads me to his car. He opens the passenger door and I slide into the passenger seat when an idea hits me

Zayn climbs in and starts the car. “I don’t want

to go home, I don’t want to deal with my father,”

I tell him. “Where do you want me to take you then?” Zayn asks, pulling out of the parking spot

“Friends place?” he asks, and I bite my lip

“Can we go to your place?” I ask. Zayn stares at me for a second

“Cleo, I don’t think that is a good idea, I’m assuming you are already in enough trouble with your father, and I don’t think I made it any better. What about your dorm?” he asks her

“Can’t get in for a few more days when school opens back up.” He sighs. “It’s fine, just drop me at a motel or something.” I tell him, but Zayn scoffs

“I’m not leaving you at a motel.” he growls at me. I huff, crossing my arms over my chest. “I’m

not a child, Zayn.” He smirks, refusing to meet my gaze

“I am not going home, so either drop me to a motel or I’ll sleep in my car.” I retort and Zayn growls

“Fine, you can stay at my place, but don’t come crying to me when you get in more trouble.”

I hesitate, considering my options. Going home was never an option tonight, but I

As we drive in silence, I watch the city lights blur by the window. My thoughts are a

whirlwind of emotions: anger, fear, confusion. I yawn and Zayn chuckles. “Stay awake for me Cleo,” he says, and I nod, pressing my head against the cool glass window

When we pull up out the front, he helps me out of the car and leads me up to his door. I take a deep breath, trying to calm my racing heart. I don’t know what I’m getting myself into, but I can’t go back home tonight

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Inside, Zayn takes off his jacket and offers me a glass of water. I watch as he moves around his living room, his muscles flexing under his shirt

I lean heavily on the counter, resting my head on my arms

“Here drink this, it will help,” Zayn says, and I lift my head staring at him. I take the glass and sip the water, not realizing how thirsty I am. I watch Zayn over the glass

“You’re not gonna be sick on me, are you?” he asks, and I shake my head

“Good you’ve puked on me once, let’s not go for another round,” he laughs again. My face heats when my mind goes back to Alpha Dane words

and him suggesting my virtue be checked

“Alpha Dane said I have to prove my virtue is intact,” I tell him, and Alpha Zayn’s eyes darken

“His pack is religious, it’s seen as a bad omen to take an “Unpure” mate,” Zayn explains. I pull a face when a revelation hits me

“So if I am not a virgin, it’s a bad Omen to the pack and Boyd can’t marry me?” I ask him. Zayn seems to think for a second. He shrugs

“I guess,” he tells me, taking my empty glass, he sets it in the dishwasher

“But you’ll find a way out of this. Don’t let it bother you,” Zayn tells me. But I think I just did find a way out of it? I wonder

Zayn closes the dishwasher and turns around

“Are you okay, Cleo?” he asks when he notices me staring at him. I shake the thought away,

reminding myself I have a boyfriend and I can’t use Zayn just to make sure I am not married off

“Yep, just tired,” I tell him and he sighs

“Come on, then,” he says, pulling me from the stool at the counter. He leads me upstairs to his room before wandering into his closet, while my heart races at the thought of spreading my legs to some stranger while they test my slick. Just the thought is horrifying, and I blink back tears

Zayn returns in a pair of Gray sweats hanging low on his hips and his chest bare. My eyes roam over his tattooed, muscular body, desire pooling in my stomach when he clears his throat

“Here, you can wear this,” he tells me, eyeing me worriedly. He cups my cheek with his hand

gently. “We’ll figure it out, just sleep. You’re safe here,” Zayn murmurs, and I nod

“Im going to make sure the house it locked, I’ll be back,” he tells me, leaving the room. Yet now alone in his room, I strip my clothes off and pick up the shirt when I hear my phone notification going off

Picking up my phone off the bed, I see another threatening message from my father. I toss my phone on the couch and pick up the shirt, my eyes going to Zayn’s bed. I stare at the shirt in my hand and bite my lip

“Come on Cleo, he kissed you, you could just be another notch in his belt, rip the band-aid off or rip the virginity away and no alliance, simple,” I tell myself

I suck in a breath, glancing at the door when my

thoughts go to Deacon. He'd be furious, but fuck him he ditched me while drunk, and is now refusing to answer my calls. With my anger slowly simmering hotter and my thoughts growing more panicked, I toss the shirt on the couch and shut the light off before slipping under the covers naked

"You can do this! He's not that big, he'd be..

what's the word. Experienced, beats losing it in the back of a car, right?" I give myself a mental pep talk when I hear his footsteps, and the rhythm of my heart falls in beat with his steps

Zayn taps on the door. "Are you decent?" he calls out. "Cleo?" he calls out again

Oh goddess, what am I doing?

I say nothing and after a few minutes, he opens the door, flicks the light on, and I pretend to be

asleep. I hear him moving around the room before the lights go out, and he climbs into bed next to me and I remain frozen, stiff as a board, paralyzed by my own humiliation and panic

"Cleo? Are you okay? Your heart is beating so fast," he comments and sits up and slightly rolling me toward him

"Hey, are you okay?" he asks, shaking my shoulder, and I open my eyes, peeking out at him. He lets out a breath of relief

"T called out to you, you said nothing. I can sleep on the couch if you want?" he offers,

but I shake my head. His brows furrow and I know he's about to ask me what's wrong, but before he can, I kiss him. Unlike at the club, he freezes at the action, caught off guard and I move to straddle him, his hands grip my hips only for his hands to rip away like I burned him. He pulls

his face away

"What are you doing, Cleo?" he growls. I kiss him again, but he doesn't respond, instead freezing beneath when his hands grip my shoulders. "Have you got clothes on?" he snarls, moving, and my eyes are suddenly assaulted by light as he flicks the lamp on. His eyes roam over my naked body, and I suddenly feel very exposed under his gaze

"Cleo, what the fuck?" he growls as his eyes take me in straddling him naked. His eyes flicker as they roam down my body, but his rejection hits me loud and clear. My face burns and my eyes prickle with warmth. I scramble to climb off him

“Fuck Cleo. Wait, it’s not like that,” he growls, grabbing my hips before I can climb off him. He rolls, and I suddenly find myself pinned beneath

him on the bed

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I look away, unable to meet his gaze, and it feels like all the blood has run to my face. Zayn watches my face for a second and curses. He then groans and drops his head onto my shoulder

“I am not taking your virginity just because you’re scared you’ll be forced to marry Boyd,” he breathes out. I swallow, nodding my head and feeling foolish, I suddenly want to change my mind and ask him to take me home to face my father instead

He lifts his head, but I refuse to meet his gaze, instead staring at the lampshade like it is a work of art. Well, it kind of is with its swirling shape

“Cleo?” Zayn growls, pinching my chin between his fingers and turning my face to look at him

His eyes soften slightly

“I’m not rejecting you, you

haven’t got your wolf.”

“I thought you didn’t believe in all that crap?” I snap out of embarrassment. He presses his lips in line

“It’s not that, fuck. You caught me off guard, you just bitched me out for kissing you at the club, and now you’re trying to…” he shakes his head and pinches the bridge of his nose

“You’re drunk, and scared I am not taking your virginity while you’re in this state? I’m not taking advantage of you,” he whispers, lifting his head to look at me

He brushes my cheek softly. “It’s fine, Zayn. You don’t want me, it’s fine, I get it,” I tell him, pushing on his shoulders to shove him off. This is embarrassing enough, he doesn’t need to

humiliate me more by lying to me now we are both adults

Zayn growls and grips my wrists, pinning them above my head

“That’s not what I said,” he growls sexily, catching my lower lip between his teeth before soothing it with a languid lick

His strong grip on my wrists sends a delicious shiver through me, anchoring my fluttering nerves and focusing all my attention on him. I gasp as his hips grind against mine, the unmistakable hardness of his arousal pressing against me even through the barrier of his pants

My heart stutters erratically at the intimate

contact, my body instinctively responding to his with a wanton yearning that takes me by surprise

“Does that feel like I don’t want you?” he purrs, his voice low and rough, sending a tremor of desire rippling through my veins. I swallow hard, my eyes snapping to his. The heat in Zayn’s gaze is palpable; it sears into me, igniting a wildfire of longing deep within. I can’t help but squirm beneath him, unconsciously seeking more friction against the throbbing ache between my legs

Zayn releases one of my hands, only to slide it down to cup my breast beneath. His touch sends electricity zinging through my veins, drawing an involuntary moan from me. He tweaks my nipple, earning another whimpered cry of pleasure from me. The sensation spurs me on; liquid heat pools between my thighs, soaking

into the fabric of his pants, and he groans, his hand trails down my side, but his steely gaze finds mine

A whimper escapes from me as he tweaks my nipple again-challenging the very limits of my self-control. This sensation amplifies everything around me the soft rustle of his clothes, the sheets beneath me and the intoxicating scent of Zayn himself. It was all too much and not nearly enough simultaneously

His hand leaves a trail of tingling warmth down my side as he traces every curve with calloused fingers before stopping at the apex of my thighs

A bolt of electricity zaps through me at the contact, as I arch upward, unconsciously seeking more

“L never claimed I didn’t want you—far from it

But not while you’re rattled and terrified, and

certainly not when you’re drunk.” His words come out as a low rumble, his gaze hungrily tracing the contours of my lips. His tongue makes a pass over his own lips, causing my eyes to follow the motion in heated anticipation. The desire for his mouth meeting mine is evident

Zayn, seeming to read my thoughts, smirks before capturing my lips

His tongue caresses the line of my mouth deliberately, coaxing them apart in an act of surrender to him., his tongue delves between my lips, tasting every inch of my mouth, devouring me. I kiss him back with equal intensity, desire burning through me

When he finally pulls away, I'm left gasping, breathless

"But not like this," he murmurs slowly, each word heavy with unfulfilled promise. "Wait

until you're sober-minded and equipped to make decisions," he tells me, gently pressing his lips against mine before rolling off me

## **Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 50**

Zayn

Waking up to the first rays of sunlight filtering through the curtains, I turn to find Cleo still asleep beside me. Cleo's face is soft and relaxed, her features smooth and free of any tension. Her long lashes fan gently against her cheeks, framing her closed eyes

Her lips are slightly parted, her eyelids fluttering gently in her slumber, and I want so desperately to kiss her. I can't help but feel a twinge of regret for how things escalated last night, knowing how my rejection last night upset her

It's not that I didn't want her, it is that I want all over her, lucid her. I want her to want me not because she feels it's her way out of an arranged

marriage, but because she feels comfortable and safe with me

I slip out of bed carefully, not wanting to wake her, and head downstairs to prepare breakfast

The silence of the house is heavy as I make my way to the kitchen, thoughts of Cleo occupying my mind

As I start preparing some eggs and toast, I can't help but remember the way she looked last night when I rejected her advances. Her eyes had filled with hurt and disappointment, and I hate that I caused her pain

I know Cleo will be embarrassed about last night, and I rack my brain for ways to reassure her, to ease the awkwardness between us. But before I could come up with a plan, she walks into the kitchen, still wearing my shirt from last night

Her hair is tousled from sleep, giving her an adorable bedhead look. She looks at me tentatively, unsure of how to act around me after what happened

“Good morning,” she says softly, avoiding eye contact

“Morning,” I reply just as quietly. “I hope you slept well.”

“T did,” she nods. “Thank you for letting me stay here.”

“Of course,” I say sincerely. “You’re always welcome here.”

We stand in uncomfortable silence for a few moments before I break the tension

“Coffee?” she nods but avoids my gaze, her movements stiff and cautious. I hand her a cup

of coffee, trying to gauge her mood

“So, what do you want to do today?” I ask, attempting to sound casual

She takes a sip of her coffee, still not meeting my eyes. “Is your offer to help put up missing signs for Deacon still on the table?” she asks, her voice almost a whisper

I nod, hiding my surprise at her request. “Of course. Have you got a picture of him.” she nods, and searching for her prick of a boyfriend who is currently a popsicle in my freezer is the last thing I want to do, but I will if it means spending the day with her

“Have you got a printer, I’m sure I can find a template online for a missing poster,” I give her

a tight smile and point her in the direction of my office while I finish making breakfast. She

wanders off, and I take a deep breath, my mind racing with questions. Why does she want to find Deacon? Is she hoping to reconcile with him? Or is it simply closure that she seeks? Regardless, I can’t deny her request. If helping her find Deacon means spending more time together, I’m willing to do whatever it takes

We work in silence, me in the kitchen and her in my office. I can hear the printer whirring as it spits out the missing posters, and I sing out to her to let her know breakfast is done. I want to discuss last night, to clear the air, but she’s clearly not ready. Cleo comes out and sits with me at the breakfast nook in the kitchen

For a few moments, we eat in silence. Every time I open my mouth to broach the subject, she changes the topic before I can ask. So when she gets up, to put her plate in the dishwasher, I follow and cage her in, giving her no escape

She stops, looking up at me questionably

Seeing Cleo in my shirt from last night, the fabric caressing her curves with each delicate movement she made, ignites a flame of desire inside me. Her long legs on full display and I suddenly wish to peel the thing off her. Her hair is in messy waves, making her look alluringly innocent yet sinfully tantalizing. And though there's a tension of unspoken words and events between us, the electricity is impossible to ignore. She can claim it's the sire bond all she likes, but she can't deny how attracted she is to me

"Cleo," I start, unable to hold back any longer

"About last night..."

She cuts me off, her voice firm. "I don't want to talk about it, Zayn. I need to find Deacon."

Her avoidance stings, but it's her desperation to

find Deacon that truly bothers me. "Why are you so desperate to find him, Cleo? After he abandoned you?"

She finally looks at me, her eyes filled with a mix of frustration and fear. "Because without Deacon, I'm screwed. I'll be forced to marry Boyd. I need him to mark me."

Her words hit me like a physical blow. The idea of her with Deacon, of him marking her, ignites a fire of anger within me. A flash of anger consumes me. The thought of him marking her skin with his touch, claiming her as his—it's enough to shatter my composure. The deep-throated growl that escapes me startles Cleo; she stares at me with wide eyes, taken aback by the brute possessiveness in my voice

"No," I say, my voice low but laced with fury. "I won't allow it."

Cleo stares at me, taken aback by my intensity

"Zayn, you don't understand. I don't have a choice. Besides, why do you even care?"

I take a step closer, my anger simmering just beneath the surface. "There's always a choice, Cleo. And I'll be damned if I let that bastard mark you." My fists clenched at the thought of another man touching her claiming her

Her eyes widen, and for a moment, I think she's going to argue. But then she looks away, her shoulders slumping, but I grip her chin, forcing her to meet my gaze. "You're not his to mark," I growled low

"I'm not Boyd's either yet, that won't stop him, at least this way I get some say in it, I rather Deacon than Boyd," she whispers. "At least I know him," she adds, her eyes burning with unshed tears

I sigh, running a hand through my hair. I need to find a way to help her, to protect her from this arranged marriage and from Deacon. But first, I need to break through the walls she's put up, to get her to open up to me

"Let's go put up these posters," I say, offering her a small smile. "And we'll figure out the rest together. Just don't make any choices that are forced, Cleo, your time."

Cleo laughs softly. "Time? What time, the moment I shift, my father will force my hand

or force me to stand down! If I don't find Deacon, I will be forced to marry Boyd, nothing I do will stop that."

"Then I'll mark you." I blurt before I can stop myself. She seems taken aback by my words

"That's not funny, especially after last night

Especially with you having sired my wolf, don't play games with me Zayn," she snarls shoving past me, but I grab her arm, swinging her back to me and pressing her against the counter

"I'm not playing games." I growl, unable to keep the anger from my voice

"You don't fuck with unshifted she-wolves, you said it yourself," she jabs my chest with her finger, but I capture her hand. "Don't fucking toy with me just because you sired my wolf, don't play with my damn emotions Zayn! I'm jail bait, you said it yourself."

"And yet, I would gladly rot in a prison cell for you until you get your wolf..." Cleo bites her lip, trying to avoid my gaze. She thinks I'm playing around, I'm not. How does she not see that?

I force her gaze back to mine, pressing closer, so our bodies are flush against each other, her soft curves pressing against the bulk of my muscle

"Do you not hear your own words Cleo, you said it yourself, I don't fuck with unshifted she-wolves, yet I can't seem to stay away from you, I'm already breaking all my own rules, what's one

more?" I whisper