

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 51

~Cleo ~

My pulse quickens as the heat rolls off Zyan's broad chest and muscular arms pulling my gaze back to him. Our bodies pressed together, his skin igniting the friction between us. His intense gray eyes bore into mine, setting off tremors that ripple through my entire body and cover me goosebumps

"Do you not hear your own words, Cleo?" Zyan's husky whisper sent an intoxicating 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?" he whispers. My brows scrunch at his words

Confusion marred my sudden arousal momentarily what was this game he was playing? What interest could he possibly have in me except for revenge against my father?

But before I could voice these doubts, Zyan's lips Were upon mine, silencing any further thoughts

The kiss is completely unexpected. Zyan's lips, full and soft, press firmly against mine, his face intense and focused as his fingers tangle in my hair. His eyes are closed, but his brows are slightly furrowed, as if he's as surprised by our kiss as I am

My eyes flutter closed in response, caught off guard by the unexpected sensation, and I kiss him back. His fingers entwined in my hair, tugging gently as he deepens the kiss – strangled sounds escaping him when I kiss him back. My core tightened at the roughness of his grasp, sending shivers of delight straight down to my throbbing heat

Suddenly, his weight shifted. Strong hands moved lower down my waist then hips before seizing my thighs and lifting me effortlessly onto the kitchen counter

My heart races as I struggle to process the whirlwind of emotions coursing through me

Guilt threatens to suffocate me; Deacon is missing, and here I am kissing another man. I think of how selfish I must be, betraying Deacon when he needs me most

Yet, despite my inner turmoil, something about kissing Zayn feels so right, as if we're two puzzle pieces finally clicking into place. Just as I start to lose myself in the moment, that same doubt creeps in like a dark cloud, casting a shadow over my bliss and smacking into me

With a jolt, I push Zayn away, breaking the kiss

My breathing is ragged, my cheeks flushed, and my mind a chaotic mess. How could I let this happen? What was I thinking?

“Zayn,” I stammer, trying to regain some semblance of control over the situation. “We.. we can’t do this. It’s wrong.”

“Ts it really?” he questions softly, concern etched on his handsome face. “Or 1s it just that you’re afraid?”

I don’t know how to answer him. My heart aches

for Deacon, but something about Zayn calls to me in a way I’ve never experienced before. Still, I can’t ignore the fact that Deacon 1s out there somewhere, possibly hurt or worse, and I need to find him

“Zayn,” I say firmly, trying to shove my conflicting emotions aside. “This isn’t the time. for this. We need to focus on finding Deacon.”

He studies me for a moment, then nods reluctantly, stepping back and giving me space

As much as I want to explore whatever is happening between us, I know that we have more pressing matters at hand. I need to find Deacon, and only once he’s safe will I be able to sort through the tangled web of emotions that Zayn has stirred up within me

Zayn sighs heavily

My chest is tight, my heart aching with guilt and confusion. This is all too much. I barely know this man, yet this stupid sire bond makes me feel like I’ve always known him. It lets him get under my skin, and plagues my mind

“Hey,” Zayn says softly, cupping my face in his hands and pressing his forehead against mine

“We’ll go try to find Deacon, okay?” Although he doesn’t seem too happy about it, more like he is trying to placate me so I don’t go to water works, which seems like I’m fighting the inevitable these days

“Thank you,” I whisper, forcing a small smile despite my turmoil

As we head to the printer to collect the missing posters I’d designed for Deacon, I can’t shake the feeling of unease. Zayn walks beside me, his presence providing a strange

sort of comfort,

even as it adds to my internal battle

As we are leaving the packhouse Zayn shivers suddenly. “Are you okay?” I ask him

“Storms coming,” he tells me, and I look at the clear sky

“Weather looks fine to me,” I tell him, and he shakes his head while digging out his keys. “I’m driving in case we get caught in it,” he tells me and I raise an eyebrow at him

“I’ve driven in rain before,” he shrugs

“I have better vision,” he smirks, pointing to the passenger seat. I roll my eyes, I really should drive myself. “Car Cleo — now. I don’t want you driving in the rain,”

“What rain, it’s sunny,” I tell him, motioning to the sky

“It’s coming, I can feel it,” he sniffs the air. “And smell it,” I sniff the air and he chuckles

“Wolf senses, now come on,” he tells me, opening the passenger door. I huff but slide into the seat while he walks to the driver’s door

Zayn lets me direct him to all the places I know Deacon frequents, and we park at the train station to start sticking the last of our signs on poles, he starts to get on my

nerves

“Deacon is probably just chilling somewhere, don’t get why you worry so much,” he jokes, trying to lighten the mood

“Shut up, Zayn,” I snap, glaring at him. “My boyfriend is missing, and he could be hurt or worse! What if he’s dead?”

“Alright, alright, sorry,” Zayn sighs, raising his

hands in surrender. “You’re probably right; he’s probably in some serial killer’s

basement stuffed in a chest freezer.”

“Zayn!” I gasp, horrified by his crude joke

“That’s not funny! Now, either help or leave me be!”

“Fine, I’ll help you,” he says, his tone suddenly serious. “Though I find it a little strange

being the current boyfriend, looking for your ex-boyfriend, strange times, can’t say I ever predicted this,” he mutters

“I am not your girlfriend,” I remind

“Keep telling yourself that, it’s cute when you’re in denial,”

“I am not in denial,”

“That’s why you kissed me back,” he tells me,

sticking another sign on a pole

“I kissed you back because you sired my wolf!” I whisper the last part not wanting anyone to overhear

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“So what, doesn’t change anything.” This man is impossible

Together, we put up the missing posters all around the city. The weight of my conflicted emotions and the fear for Deacon’s safety threaten to crush me, but I can’t allow myself to break down now. I need to be strong for Deacon, and for myself

As the day wears on, Zayn remains by my side, his teasing replaced by quiet. In those moments, I can’t help but appreciate him, for putting up with me for the past week. Moving to the next street we place the last sign and are about to head back to the car when I hear the first crack

of thunder. Glancing at Zyan he smirks. “Told ya,” he chuckles. and I look up at the sky

Where did the sun go?

The downpour started seemingly out of nowhere, drenching us in seconds. I shiver as the cold rain pelts my skin and soaks through my clothing. Zayn and I exchange a glance before hurriedly searching for somewhere to wait it out knowing it’s a good twenty minute trek back to the car

“Over there!” I shout over the sound of the rain, pointing to an old library across the street. We sprint towards it

Rain poured mercilessly from the dark, overcast sky as Zayn and I dash across the street. Cold raindrops splatter against my face, causing shivers to race down my spine. We reach the old library, its heavy wooden doors offering a

warmth from the downpour. The distinct smell of dust and aging books fills my nostrils. The sudden change in environment is jarring, but it offers us a temporary refuge from the storm outside. The sound of rain pouring on the library’s roof creates a soothing ambiance. I’ve always loved the sound of the rain, though the thunder can kindly leave

"Damn," Zayn mutters, shaking his head and sending droplets of water flying from his hair

"We're soaked."

"Tell me about it," I reply, attempting to wring out my shirt to no avail. "Well, I guess we will wait here until it passes."

"Yeah," he agrees, running a hand through his damp hair. "You're right. Let's find a quiet corner." he tells me

We settle into an empty aisle between towering bookshelves, the dim lighting casting shadows across the space. Zayn shrugs off his jacket and drapes it around my shoulders, his touch igniting a spark within me that I struggle to suppress, despite the outside being soaked, the inside is dry and warm

"Better?" he asks, laying on his back

"Thanks," I whisper, pulling the jacket tighter around me

"Of course," he says softly, his gray eyes dark and intense as they lock onto mine. For a moment, I allow myself to get lost in them, wondering what it would be like to be this intimidating man's girlfriend

He sits up and moves closer, his wet clothes clinging to his muscular frame. I couldn't help

but let my gaze linger on his broad shoulders and strong arms before meeting his stormy gray eyes. Their intensity drew me in like a moth to a flame

After a while, I can't stand his intense gaze so I get up and wander through the towering bookshelves, the sound of rain pouring on the library's roof and the window panes seems to calm my rattled nervous. But I might as well get ahead on my reading list if I am going to be stuck here

"Hey," Zayn calls, drawing my attention from the book I'd been scanning for my college reading list. "Of all the things you could read, you're reading that?" he chuckles

"It's for school," I tell him, looking over the back of the book making sure it's the right volume

"Why medicine?" he asks abruptly

I glance back at him, startled by the sudden curiosity in his voice. "I want to help people," I reply, tucking a damp strand of hair behind my ear. "I've always wanted to work in either the children's hospital or the emergency department."

"Those are pretty different areas," he notes, stepping closer as he peruse the shelves alongside me. "Why those two areas?"

"T like children," I admit. "And as for emergency... When my mother died, all I remember is feeling like there weren't enough people to cater to all the injured. Maybe if they

hadn't been so understaffed, they could have saved her." I shrug

Zayn's expression softens, his eyes filled with

some emotion I can't read. "But I'll have to drop out when I become Alpha," I mutter quietly. I sighed, my chest tightening at the thought. "My father would never allow me to do both responsibilities."

"Who says you can't do both?" Zayn challenged, a spark of defiance lighting up his eyes. "You'll be alpha, you could do what you want, Cleo

You shouldn't have to choose between your dreams and your pack."

"Easy for you to say," I murmur, running my

fingers along the spine of a medical textbook

"But it's not just about what I want. It's about what's best for my pack."

"Is it, though?" Zayn presses, his voice suddenly serious. "Or is it about what your father wants? Because the way I see it, wouldn't being a doctor be an advantage to

your pack alongside

being alpha?"

I hesitate, the truth of his words hitting me like a ton of bricks

"Come on," he says gently, guiding me to a cozy nook in the back of the library

We settle onto a plush couch, our legs tangled together as we lean against one another. The rain continued to drum against the roof above us, but at that moment, with Zayn's arm wrapped securely around me, I feel safer and content. As the storm raged on outside, I allowed myself to believe in the possibility of a future where I didn't have to choose between my dreams and my pack

Zayn's words echoed in my mind as we sat in silence, the library around us fading into the background. I looked at him, his gaze steady

and encouraging, and for the first time, I felt a glimmer of hope. With a deep breath, I nodded, deciding to face my fears head-on. "You're right," I whisper, my voice barely audible over the rain outside. "I need to talk to my father."

It rained for hours, and after being stuck for longer than intended, we decided to try to

make the dash for the car. We both ended up sopping wet and once back at Zayn's. I sigh heavily, knowing I have to go home

"You're not staying longer?" Zayn asks as I fish my keys out of my pocket. "No, I need to go home. And you need to work instead of babysitting me constantly," I remind him, and he nods slowly

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After saying bye to Zayn I jump in my car, turning the heat on, it's freezing and I now need to come up with an excuse of where I've been, while praying Alpha Dane hasn't spoken with my father about last night

Once home, I hesitate outside the front door of my house, steeling myself for the confrontation that is sure to come. My heart pounds in my chest as I turn the knob and push the door open

"Where have you been?" my father demands as soon as I step inside, his piercing gaze boring into me

"Out, and today I put up signs for Deacon," I reply, trying to sound calm

"In this weather, don't lie to me. And why did I have Alpha Dane ringing me last night about you turning down his son?" I already want to leave, I don't feel like fighting with him, especially over Alpha Dane

"And why did Zayn claim to be your boyfriend," Dad growls, his eyes narrowing dangerously. "Is that true?"

"Of course not!" I exclaim, feeling my cheeks heat up. "He just said that to get Boyd to back off."

"Then why do you have a new phone? Lydia told me all about it." Dad's voice is cold, and I knew she would rat me out but she could at least give me a chance to fucking enter the house for once without being questioned. I'm freaking cold, wet and I want to go to bed and start packing for school

"Zayn gave it to me," I admit, fidgeting with the hem of my shirt. "My old one got damaged, and he...."

“Give it to me,” he commands, holding out his hand

“Excuse me?”

“Give it to me, ever since you started hanging around that man you’ve been nothing but a defiant brat, now give me the phone Cleo!” Movement catches my eye and I look behind my father toward the kitchen where I see Lydia peeking out watching with a smug smile on her face. Reluctantly, I hand over the phone, my heart sinking as he confiscated it. “You’re grounded, Cleo. You will not leave this house without me or Mitchel from now on, do you understand?” I grit my teeth and my father snatches my phone

“I thought better of you, but to find out you’ve been sneaking around behind my back with that man, is the last straw, you do not go anywhere

without permission until I say so “But what about school!” I demand

“Then you better behave, or I won’t pay your tuition!” he snarls, stomping off. I swallow, hating how easily he can manipulate me just because he holds my title over my head

The following days felt like an eternity as I was trapped at home with no phone and under constant scrutiny from my father. The only bright spot on the horizon was the prospect of starting school again next week. At least then, I would have something to distract me from all the drama at the moment, and I could escape my father

I take a deep breath as I make my way towards the pack training grounds, most of the packs train here, it’s the largest space plus fully equipped. My father had even decided to join us today, under the pretense of wanting to spend more time together before school started, but I knew it was just another way for him to keep an eye on me. I can’t wait for school to start, so I could finally be away from all this drama and have some freedom

As I approach the stadium, my eyes scan the field and I spot Zayn among his pack members

It’s strange to see him here, as he usually trains in his own territory with his men, so I find it odd he moved his pack training here

Zayn catches sight of me too and starts making his way towards me. Panic floods through my veins, knowing that my father is watching from a distance. I quickly wave

him off, silently

telling him not to come any closer

Thankfully, Zayn seems to understand and nods before turning back to join his pack's training session. Relief washes over me as I continue towards the stands where other pack members are already gathered

I take a seat next to Lydia and watch my father talk to the other pack members. She looks at me curiously but doesn't say anything with my father within earshot

My father's voice booms through the stadium, signaling the start of training. As always, we begin with physical exercises before moving on to combat training

I try my best to focus on the drills and pay attention during combat demonstrations, but my mind keeps wandering back to Zayn. Why was

he here? Was it just a coincidence or did he purposely come here knowing that I would be here too?

My thoughts are interrupted when one of the pack warriors accidentally knocks into me during a sparring match. My father quickly rushes over, apologizing profusely while

also scolding the warrior

I shake my head, assuring him that I am fine

And my father finally calls it quits on training

After training, I make my way to the locker rooms to change. However, the last thing I expect is to be grabbed from behind and pulled into a cleaning closet by Zayn

"Zayn!" I gasp, my heart racing as I stare up at him in surprise. "What are you doing?"

"Where have you been?" he demands, his eyes searching mine with concern and frustration

"Why haven't you answered any of my texts?"

"Shh," I whisper, glancing nervously at the door. "My father, he's been watching me like a hawk. I can't risk being caught talking to you."

"Damn it, Cleo." Zayn curses under his breath, running a hand through his disheveled hair. His close proximity sends a shiver down my spine, and I struggle to keep my emotions in check. "I was wondering why I couldn't get a hold of you," He grumbles

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"What's going on?" Zayn questions but I haven't got time to answer. "I need to go," I tell him, pushing him aside.

"He's really got a leash on you, hasn't he," Zayn murmurs, his eyes darkening at his words before quickly pulling me toward him. He wraps his arms around me, I sigh, relishing the contact, it's nice to be touched when all week I've earned nothing but sneers from Lydia and criticism from my father

"Zayn, I can't be here with you," I whisper

urgently, glancing towards the door. My father had been watching me like a hawk, and I knew it was only a matter of time before he realized I wasn't alone. "He took my phone, and I'm in so

much trouble already. Deacon has not returned, and I have to focus on school now."

"School?" His brow furrowed. "When do you go back?"

"Tomorrow," I replied, my voice cracking with anxiety. "Please, Zayn, I need to go. If my father catches us..."

"Alright." He sighs, clearly frustrated but understanding the gravity of the situation. "Come on," he says softly, releasing me and cracking open the door to make sure the coast was clear. "You need to get back before your father notices you're gone."

I nod, swallowing hard as I step out of the closet and rush to the locker room into the harsh light of reality

"Cleo!" My father's voice cut through the air like a knife as I exited the stadium, making me jump

He was waiting for me by his car, his expression unreadable. I approach cautiously, trying to act as casual as possible

"Where is Lydia?" I ask him

"Linda picked her up," my father answered without explaining further. The ride home is tense and silent, my heart pounding in my chest as I wonder what my father is thinking

"Where are we going?" I finally ask when it becomes clear we weren't heading straight home. "I thought we were going home?"

"We will," he replies cryptically, still not meeting my gaze. "Afterward."

"Where are we going?" I press, growing

increasingly anxious. My father refuses to answer, and as we pull up to a doctor's office, my stomach drops like a stone. "No!" I exclaim, realizing what he intends to do as I catch sight of Alpha Dane waiting at the nearby doors

"Cleo, as the next alpha, you need to make sacrifices," my father says sternly, ignoring my protests. "This is a small discomfort for the sake of your future pack."

"Absolutely not." I refuse, trying to climb out of the car and escape this nightmare. But Alpha Dane approaches, blocking my path. "Cleo!" My father grits out and I glare at him

"No!" I snap at him slamming the door only to turn around to find Alpha Dane blocking my path with two of his warriors

"I won't marry your son, and I'm leaving." I tell

him, trying to step past him when his warriors block my path

"Your father and I have already signed the treaty agreement," Alpha Dane replies coldly, his eyes boring into mine. "The paperwork is ready to file. You don't have a choice."

"Like fuck I don't you can't force me to marry your son!" My voice is barely audible, but the defiance in my eyes speaks volumes. As I turn away from him, only for his men to grab me

I struggle against the strong hands that hold me, panic and disbelief flooding my senses. "Dad, help me!" I scream, desperate for my father to do something, anything. But he sits there, not even bothering to get out of the car, head in his hands, making no move to save me from this nightmare

"Get your hands off me!" I spit as Alpha Dane's men drag me toward the door and into the medical room. The sterile smell of disinfectant filled my nostrils, making me feel even more vulnerable and exposed

"Remove your pants," Alpha Dane orders coldly, his eyes unyielding as they bore into mine. I clench my fists and shook my head, unable to speak through the fury and humiliation that chokes me. "If you won't do it voluntarily, I'll have my men do it for you, Cleo," Alpha Dane sneers. "Your little scene at the club has raised enough questions, my son won't have a whore for Luna." he spits at me just as a female doctor steps into the room. I look at her for help and she drops her gaze but finally speaks

"Your presence

firm but

isn't needed here, Alpha Dane," the female doctor interjects, her voice

laced with sympathy. "Please leave."

Alpha Dane looks like he is going to argue but the doctor. "She is entitled to privacy Alpha. I can't perform the exam if she is tense and fighting me." she quickly adds

Reluctantly, he retreats from the room, taking his men with him. The door clicks shut behind them, leaving me alone with the doctor

"Please," I plead, tears streaming down my face

"I don't want this exam."

The doctor looks at me with pity in her eyes

"I'm sorry," she said softly. "I've been given orders. If you refuse, Alpha Dane has men who will hold you down. It's best if you cooperate, it is uncomfortable, but not painful and will only take a few minutes. I just need a sample of your slick." I scoff. I can't

believe my father would

allow this. Tears burn my eyes

"Please, I don't want to order them in, you have every right to feel violated, this is an abuse of power, but I am under command, I can't let you leave this room without that sample." she tells me and I can hear how badly she doesn't want to force me

Horried by the thought of enduring this violation while being forcibly restrained, I comply, feeling my dignity shatter as I remove my pants. Each moment of the exam is an invasion I never would have imagined my own father would force upon me

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When it is over, Alpha Dane returns to get the test results. And I rise to my feet to finally leave

"That wasn't so hard, was it, Cleo?" Alpha Dane sneers and I can't help myself, I spit in his face

"You're a pig, and when I become Alpha, I'll make you pay for this," I snarl

He laughs cruelly. "How can you be Alpha when you'll be my son's Luna?" he tells me. I blink at him, is this why the arranged marriage, my father is giving this man control of my mother's pack?

The ride home is silent and tense, my father

trying to apologize while I refuse to look at him

As soon as we reach our house, I lock myself in my room, wishing I could erase this terrible day

from my memory

Morning came too soon, but with it a glimmer of hope. My phone is back on my nightstand, Dad showing his guilty conscience and I waste no time packing for college. I can't wait to escape the suffocating atmosphere of my home and finally live life on my own terms. So I packed and left the house before he even got a chance to speak with me

Once at school, I moved into my new dorm room and turned on my phone, surprised to find a barrage of messages from Zayn. I hadn't heard from him since training, and though I wanted to talk to him, I didn't know where to begin. Yet as I finish unpacking my room, my phone starts ringing. Picking it up, I see it's Zayn. I let it ring out, only for it to ring again and I reluctantly answer It

"Cleo?" I suck in a breath

"Yes, its me" I assure him

"Thank God I saw you read my messages, but then you never replied. I wasn't sure if it was you or your father," Zayn says, his voice filled with concern

I didn't answer, too overwhelmed by the emotions coursing through me. Here was a man who barely knew me and yet had shown more care for my well-being than my own family this past week. A single tear slips down my cheek

"Cleo?" Zayn asks when I say nothing

"T should go," I tell him, trying to regain control over my emotions

"What's wrong? Where are you?" he asks gently

"In my dorm room," I admit, sniffing quietly

"I'm on my way," he says before hanging up. I stare at the phone

About thirty minutes later, I hear a knock at my door. I hesitate, not entirely convinced that it could be Zayn since he had no idea which room is mine. But when I open the door, there he stood, his gray eyes filled with worry. He immediately scoops me up in his arms, pulling me tight against his chest as I burst into tears

"Hey, hey, it's okay. I've got you," Zayn murmurs into my hair, his strong arms comforting as he kicks my door shut. The raw intensity of his embrace sends shivers down my spine, making me all too aware of our close proximity. My body reacts to his touch, my heart pounding in my chest as he hugs me tightly like he can squeeze the life back into me

“Zayn,” I whisper, the sound of his name on my

lips sending another wave of longing crashing through me. Our eyes met, and for a moment, we were both lost in each other’s gaze. I could see the same need reflected in his eyes, but also a hint of something more – perhaps a tenderness and understanding that I never thought I’d find

“I’m right here, what happened?”

Despite the storm of emotions raging inside me, Zayn’s presence brought me a sense of calm that I hadn’t felt in a long time. Zayn moves toward the bed and sits on it

“Are you going to tell me what happened?” he asks gently, my face heats remembering the humiliation and at the hands of my own father makes it even worse

Zayn pulls away looking at me and waiting for me to answer. “My father and Alpha Dane...they

made me take a pelvic exam. They tested my slick to ensure my virginity.”

Zayn’s body tenses beside me, a low growl rumbling in his chest. But he doesn’t say anything, instead choosing to hold me even tighter, as if his embrace could shield me from the humiliation of what had happened

“Everything will be alright, Cleo,” he murmurs into my hair, pressing a soft kiss onto my forehead

Exhausted, both emotionally and physically, I eventually fell asleep in Zayn’s comforting embrace, feeling safer than I had in a long time

The next morning, I wake up to find Zayn gone

An unsettling emptiness settles over me, but I didn’t have time to dwell on it when I spot the alarm clock beside the bed. Crap! I’m running

late for my first class of the semester. I quickly got dressed and hurried to my science lecture, running through the corridors. This is not how I wanted to start my first day back. I manage to slip in the back unnoticed by everyone except Maya, Lydia’s friend who nods to me. Maya is vastly different without Lydia around and seeing a familiar face I calm a little as I take my seat

Besides being late to my first class, I had a good day, and feel somewhat normal, but as I walk through the campus, I noticed hushed whispers and furtive glances. Confused and uneasy, when

I spot Maya, heading to her next class I wave to her

“Maya,” I call out, catching up to her. Maya pauses and waits for me to catch up. I fall in step with her

“Do you know what’s going on? Why is everyone whispering?” Maya stops looking at me. “You haven’t heard?”

“Heard what?” I ask as she blinks at me then rolls her eyes

“Where have you been? Do you live under a rock?” she asks incredulously. I frown, anxiety knotting my stomach. “It’s been all over the radio and social media!”

“What? Please, just tell me,” I ask, not wanting to play guessing games. It makes me wonder if Deacon has been found and dread fills me but I find her next words even more shocking

“Alpha Zayn declared war against the Alpha of Claymore pack. He pulled all his men from pack protection and broke all treaty agreements,” Maya informed me, and my eyes went wide with

shock

“Wh-what?” I gasp, my heart pounding in my chest. “Why?”

“Apparently, he punched Alpha Dane at the council meeting this morning. Right in front of everyone,” she adds, her voice hushed

My world seems to crumble around me. At this moment, I know that everything has changed

The consequences of my actions – and Zayn’s – would ripple through our packs, altering the course of our lives forever

And yet, deep down, amid the chaos and uncertainty, a small part of me can’t help but wonder if this is my fault for telling him about Alpha Dane and my father. Fuck!

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Cleo

As I stood there, staring at Maya in disbelief, my mind raced with questions and doubts. Had I set off this chain of events by confiding in Zayn? Had my trust in him, in the wrong person, led to this devastating turn of events? My luck seems to be getting worse and worse

The sound of my own heartbeat rings in my ears, loud and fast

Maya must have sensed my distress because she reaches out and squeezes my arm gently. "Look, Cleo, I don't know what's going on between you and Zayn, but you should know that Zayn..." She stops and shakes her head. Maya's expression is one of concern and confusion, her

brow furrowing and her lips pressing together

"What is it, Maya?" I ask, wondering what more there could be

Maya bites her lip. "Lydia told me you've been involved with Zayn; whatever is going on between you, too, you need to be careful, especially now," she tells me. My brows furrow in confusion

"I have a boyfriend, Maya, Deacon. Remember him," I remind her. Maya raises an eyebrow at me

"You sure about that? Because Lydia said, you've been sneaking off to see him. I know Lydia can be a bitch, but Zayn, of all people!? He's ruthless, Cleo, if he starts a war with our pack over you. You'll get us all killed; we haven't got enough warriors to go up against his pack!" she

snaps at me abruptly

"What are you talking about!" I snarl. "Just spit it out, Maya, whatever it is, tell me!" Maya

curses and shakes her head

"Your father was at that meeting. He's furious

Zayn put claim to you, told him if he forces you to marry Boyd, he'll start a war and challenge your father. How could you be so stupid to risk the pack like that?" she shakes her head in disbelief

"He what?" I squeak, knowing my father was going to lose it at me for this. What has Zayn done; why would he do that!?

"So forget about Deacon; if he hasn't heard already, he will because right now, you and Zayn are the talk of the city," she growls, storming off

I spent the rest of the day lost in thought, trying to figure out what I could do to help. Every time I think of Zayn, I am filled with a mix of longing and anger. He had seen me in my weakest moment, and instead of leaving things be, he had started a war—a frigging war, and not just with Alpha Dane, but my father

As the news spread throughout campus and beyond, the tension grew so thick it was almost tangible. The quiet whispers and casting gaze in my direction transformed into outright hostility laced with their fear

My phone also has done nothing but go off with messages from my father. I never even gave him this number, so I know he must have rang his phone off it, so he had the phone number. I didn't open a single one of them, already knowing what I would find in them

Alpha Zayn's decision to declare war against the Claymore pack had thrown the entire school into turmoil. It is as if everyone is expecting him to storm the place. Unable to handle everyone staring and whispering, I skip the next class and head back to my dorm

Yet even furious with Zayn I couldn't shake the memory of his embrace, the way he had comforted me in the face of such humiliation

Our connection is undeniable, and this sire bond only seems to make me ache for him despite wanting to punch him in the face. I paced back and forth, unable to shake the conflicting emotions swirling inside me. I knew I had brought this upon myself, but I also couldn't help feeling drawn to Zayn like a moth to a flame

I collapse onto my bed, a deep sense of despair settling in when I receive another message

Sighing I open it, not wanting my father to come here and cause a scene. There are around 50 messages from him, each one raging at me like I asked Zayn to declare war. Yet the last one sends my blood cold

Dad: Meet me at my office tomorrow so we can go over ways to fix this

My heart sinks as I realize there is no avoiding this conversation. My father is going to be furious with me for bringing this upon our pack

Swallowing down my dread, I hastily reply

Cleo: I'm sorry, I never asked for this

Dad: You may not have asked for it, but you certainly caused it. You will marry Boyd, but first, we need to fix this shit with Alpha Zayn

Whatever is going on between you two, you end it, and end it now, Cleo!

I stare at his message, tears burning my vision; I don't even understand what's going

on between me and Zayn. We aren't even a thing, so exactly how do I break up with someone I am not even with? Clutching my hair, I try to take some deep breaths, trying to will the tears away. This is so messed up, so frigging messed up

I was still trying to gather myself together; I was even too afraid to get dinner, not

wanting to be caught in the halls by anyone when I heard a knock on the door. I sit up abruptly, staring at my dorm room door. Glancing at the clock, I see it is a little after 8 PM now. I know it can't be my father because I literally just spoke to him

Nervousness ripples through me when the thumping continues, and some part of me worries it might be Alpha Dane

"Cleo, I swear if you don't open this damn door, I will break it down!" comes Zayn's voice. My

heart flutters in my chest, and I quickly move to open it before he busts it down

The moment I do, I want to slam it in his face when I see he is also furious with me. Zayn's face is twisted in anger, his jaw clenched tight, and his eyes flashing with frustration. His body is tense, and his fists are clenched at his sides

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"Why aren't you answering my texts?" Zayn's voice is harsh and demanding, his words hitting me like a punch in the gut. The door slams shut with a loud thud, the sound echoing in the small room

The scent of Zayn's cologne, a mixture of musk and sandalwood, fills the room as he enters, but the overwhelming smell of anger and tension quickly overpowers it

"Do you have any fucking idea how panicked I have been about you? I thought I was going to have to storm your father's pack looking for you!" he snaps at me before grabbing me. He crushes me against his chest

"Why are you here? Haven't you done enough?" I demand. He sighs, and I try not to breathe in his scent, knowing I will want to melt into him

Stupid sire bond

“What do you mean?” he asks, pulling away from me. I stare at him. What does he mean? What do I mean? He started a war, not even one war, but two! My father’s text messages flit through my head while I try to figure out how to break our nothing off

“Zayn, you declared war on my father. You can’t Just come here.”

“Well, I did. Pretty easily, actually, the front gates were open, they really should lock those,” he tells me, and I pinch my brow in frustration, what isn’t he understanding?

I go to tell him he needs to leave when he

speaks again. “Have you eaten?” he asks, and instead of me answering, my stomach does

“Good, neither have I. Let’s go,” He tells me, grabbing my hand and pulling me out the door before I can even protest. Great, I’m supposed to be dumping him, the man I’m not even dating

Instead, I’m being dragged off to dinner with him. Dragged may be an over exaggeration, but I am blaming it on being hungry

My father is going to lose his damn mind if he hears about this. “I can’t believe this!” I snap at him as he drags me out the door

“Believe what?” he questions

“You. You started a war with my father, and now you’re expecting me to have dinner with you?”

I can’t believe he’s doing this, just casually taking me out for dinner like nothing has happened between us

I try to pull my hand away from him, but he tightens his grip. “What are you doing, Zayn?” I demand, trying to keep my voice steady

“T told you, taking you to dinner.” I huff, that was not what I meant, and he knows it

Zayn glances down at me, a look of frustration crossing his face. “Look, I didn’t start this war

Your father did, and I’m just trying to protect my own interests.”

Trolled my eyes. “Interests? Like what?”

“Like you! Why else Cleo? Besides, Alpha Dane never should have put fucking hands on you!” he tells me

"You can't just go starting fights. It's none of your business anyway, and I never should have told you, I... Just don't worry about it. It's already done. Now I gotta deal with the consequences," I tell him as he leads me down the corridor toward the open courtyard. Zayn growls, his hand gripping mine tightening, but he doesn't add anything to my words

Zayn leads me through the corridors while I nervously glance around, praying no one spots us. As we make our way through the dimly lit corridors, Zayn's grip on my hand tightens, and I can't help but feel a strange mixture of apprehension and excitement. I try to shake off the sire bond's influence, but it's as if its tendrils have already begun to weave themselves deep into my very being

"Where are you taking me?" I ask nervously, and he drapes his arm across my shoulders

"Nowhere public. I know you're worried about your father catching you," he answers when I hear voices coming toward us, and I stop; my heart skips a beat. This is the last thing I need, just great!

"What is it?" he asks, stopping when he feels me stop. I glance down the corridor, and Zayn growls, his aura rushing out abruptly

"Your father has been in your ear already, hasn't he?" he states. "What did he say?" Zayn demands, but my eyes are down the corridor, hearing whoever it is getting closer. His growl is angry, and if his aura doesn't drop soon, they'll feel it long before they spot us. Zayn realizing this, shoves me into the courtyard quadrangle, pinning me behind the pillar. Their voices draw nearer

"Your aura," I squeak out in panic

"Bit hard for me to rein that in right now; tell me what your father said to you. Did he threaten you? "

"What... No... he um," My heart hammers in my chest when I hear their footsteps on the stairs and the bats in the fruit trees in the small courtyard area take off, picking up

on his energy

"Cleo?" Zayn asks, his aura pressing down on me

"If he threatened you, tell me, I will sort it out."

"Like you did earlier with Alpha Dane," I retort my own minimal aura slipping out and challenging his. The voices draw closer, and I look around in panic, knowing my own barely there aura challenging him; he definitely felt it, even if it was a nudge

Panicking, Zayn presses closer, his eyes holding mine when I hear the voices halt abruptly recognizing a threat near, I stand on my tippy toes and kiss him. He freezes, shocked, but his aura drops instantly as my actions take him by surprise

Zayn's eyes widen in shock as my lips press against his. I can feel his surprise and hesitation, but I'm too desperate to think about the consequences right now. All I know is that we need to play it cool until whoever is approaching leaves

I wrap my arms around his neck, pulling him closer and deepening the kiss

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For a moment, everything else fades away, and I forget about the danger that we're in

My tongue sweeps across his lips, and I vaguely hear their voices again over the purring sound he makes in the back of his throat when he kisses me back. The voices grow fainter, and relief floods me. This was a terrible idea. I pull away abruptly, having avoided detection when I hear them leave

"They're gone," I tell him, peering over his arm in the direction they went. My shoulders drop, and I lean against the pillar and let out a breath of relief only to find Zayn has a silly smirk on his face

"You kissed me," he tells me like I don't know that

"Yeah, because your aura was about to give us away. I am in enough trouble because of you!" I tell him, and his smile only gets bigger. This man is absurd!

Zayn's eyes dance with a teasing glint, his smirk deepening at my attempt to explain the kiss

"Ah, so it was a strategic move to avoid detection, was it?" I swallow at his words because he leans closer

I nod, not trusting my voice

"And now?" he asks, his lips brushing mine as he speaks

"You're gonna get us in trouble," I whisper

"But you're not pulling away," he smirks. I open

my mouth to tell him it's the sire bond when he grips the back of my neck, dragging me closer until I am pressed up against him. His breath sweeps over my lips, and a strangled gasp leaves me

“Tell me not to, and I won’t. Tell me to stop,” he whispers, yet my entire body tingles at his words, my heart fluttering in my chest. Because I don’t want him to stop, and I know I should, but I can’t bring myself to say the words

His eyes flicker to his beast momentarily, and a wicked grin splits across his face.”I didn’t think

SO

Zayn’s lips crash onto mine once again, igniting a sense of urgency and fiery passion that sends my senses into overdrive. His kiss is a perfect balance of control and longing, his mouth exploring mine with such intensity that I am left

breathless and yearning for more

His hands roam over my back, pulling me flush against him, and I can feel the solid strength of his body. The kiss deepens, and I lose myself in the sensation, in the taste of him, in the way he makes me feel like I’m the only person in the world

As he finally pulls back, leaving us both gasping for air, he gives me a smoldering look that promises more. “Now, that’s the kind of trouble I could get used to,” Zayn says huskily, his eyes alight with a mix of desire and affection

At that moment, under the spell of his kiss and his mesmerizing gaze, I can’t help but agree

Being in trouble with Zayn feels dangerously right

As we pull apart, my cheeks flush with desire

and excitement; I reach up to touch my swollen lips. It was not the first time we’ve been caught in a moment of passion, but each time felt more electric than the last

“We really can’t do this here,” I remind him, my voice shaky from the intensity of the kiss

“But you didn’t say we couldn’t,” he chuckles, and my face flames at his words because he was right. I should be shoving him away, telling him off anything apart from kissing him. His fingers trace along my jaw

Despite the warning siren sounding in the back of my mind, I find myself inexplicably drawn to Zayn, his rough exterior and fierceness impossible to resist

“T just...” I say, searching for the words to fix everything, and whatever this is because it’s

wrong." You know we can't keep doing this," I whisper, feeling my resolve weaken in the presence of him

"You keep pushing me away despite not really wanting me gone," he sighs, his eyes searching mine. "But I can't stay away from you." He presses his forehead against mine

"Come on, let me feed you at least before you kick me to the curb," he chuckles, grabbing my hand

Zayn leads me out of campus, and despite no one being around, I can't help my paranoia of being caught by someone. Unlocking his car, he opened my door, motioning for me to get in. I slip into the seat, and Zayn walks around to the driver's side, climbing in and starting the car

"So, are you going to tell me what your father

said?" he asks, reversing out of the parking space and turning onto the road

"Nope, because you've started enough issues already, I will pass on extra," I tell him, and he growls, his hands tightening around the steering wheel. He doesn't say anything else but starts driving through the city. After driving for a few minutes, I

glance at him nervously

"Where are we going?" I ask him

"My place since you don't want to be seen in public with me." My heartbeat quickens at his words as he pulls onto the highway

"Why do you look nervous hearing that?" he asks, and I shake my head

"I'm not, but I probably shouldn't be alone around you," I remind him

"Well, we can go to a restaurant if you prefer." he laughs, and I raise a brow at him

"Chill, I'm just playing. Not my fault you don't trust yourself around me," he adds, and I glare at him

"That is not why! I.."

"Keep telling yourself that, you're clearly not scared of me, or you wouldn't have got in my car. You certainly wouldn't have kissed me," he reminds me, and my face heats

"Just focus on driving!" I snap at him, knowing he is only taunting me

Zayn smirks, not taking his eyes off the road as he navigates the winding highway headed toward his pack house. I cross my arms and stare out the window, trying to

control my

frustrated emotions

The rest of the drive is mostly quiet, with only the sound of the engine and the wind rushing past us. Eventually, we pull up at the front gates. He fiddles with the visor, and the gates unlock, his men on guard nodding as he passes them

We follow the road to his driveway and park in the circular courtyard, surrounded by tall trees and lush foliage. The main house stands high above us, illuminated by the moonlight

As I get out of the car, Zayn follows me to the front door, opening it for me with a smile. We enter the dimly lit house, and he flips on the lights

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“Make yourself comfortable,” he grins, “I’m going to get out of this suit,” he tells me, leaving me as my eyes adjust to the light

I walk through the grand foyer, taking in the luxurious furniture and high ceilings, feeling out of place among the opulence. Zayn finds me a few minutes later, walking toward me in sweats and a tank, his eyes intent on me as he closes the space

He places his hands on my hips, pulling me closer until I’m flush against him, and brushes his lips over mine. “Hungry?” he asks, and I pull away from him, my hands flattening against his broad chest

“Actually, we should talk,” I tell him, knowing what I need to do. “We can talk after I feed you,” he tells me, leading me to the kitchen. I sigh but let him lead me to the kitchen and I take a seat at the island bench

Zayn cracks open a beer, before tossing one to me, and I catch it, noticing the way his muscles ripple under his tank. As he opens the fridge, I watch him, taking a swig of beer

Zayn’s movements are graceful and confident as he pulls out various ingredients from the fridge, humming to himself. His scent fills the room – a mix of woody musk and freshly bathed skin that makes me shiver involuntarily. The clink of glassware and metal on metal echoes against the stainless steel surfaces. I finish my beer when he goes to the fridge before pulling out an open bottle of wine

He pours some wine into a glass and hands it to me, his fingers brushing against mine as he does so. It tickles my senses, sending shivers down my spine. "Tell me what you like in your food," he asks while chopping up some vegetables with precision. I watch him work, his hands almost dancing across the cutting board with an ease that speaks volumes about his experience in the kitchen

I sip from the glass, feeling the smoothness of the wine glide down my throat as I ponder his question. "Surprise me," I finally reply with a smile

"Challenge accepted," he murmurs lowly before getting lost in his task once again – sautéing onions now while keeping an eye on something simmering on the stove top simultaneously. The aroma of garlic begins to fill the air, making my mouth water. His movements are graceful and

predatory as he prepares food and I find myself entranced watching him when he glances at me over his shoulder

"Like what you see?"

I blush a little, looking away quickly because damn it, he knows he looks good in this kitchen

He chuckles softly before turning back to his cooking

He pours the leftover wine into a pan, and the sizzling sounds fill the room as he tosses two big steaks in it with seasoning and olive oil he sears each side before he slides it onto a baking sheet, making sure to season both sides evenly before popping them into the hot oven. The smell intensifies as they cook, making my stomach gurgle with hunger

"So," I start tentatively, "My father..." I trail off,

wanting to get this over with, when he cuts me off, holding the wine bottle up

"Did you like this wine?" he asks, I shrug because I am not much of a wine drinker. "If you want, you can grab us another bottle. I have a few in the basement in a small cellar. Down the hall first door on left," he tells me, and I sigh, knowing he is deliberately avoiding the conversation, but it's one that needs to be had

Reluctantly I go to the basement and open the door only for Zayn to come rushing toward me, scaring the crap out of me with how fast he moved

I clutch my chest, "Jeez you scared me."

"Figured I would come to help," he says, though he suddenly looks anxious. He leads me downstairs to a huge basement. Chains hang from the ceiling, and I see this part looks like a

typical basement. One side has storage and a huge freezer when I see him walk through to another room. I stare at the chain, wondering what it's for

"Punching bag," Zayn answers my thoughts, yet I don't see any gym equipment down here, but I

smell the stench of bleach making me wonder if he is a clean freak

"This way," he nods, and I follow him through a door which turns out to be another set of stairs leading further down under the mansion. I hesitate on the top step

He must hear me stop because he glances back at me. "Are you coming?" he asks while I look at the darkness below

"Maybe I should wait upstairs," I tell him nervously; he rolls his eyes, stomping up the steps only to grab me and toss me over his shoulder

"Seriously, we're back at the Zayn 1s a serial killer. If I wanted you dead, I would have killed you in the freezer," he tells me

"Because 1f you were a serial killer, you would tell me too," I remind him

He chuckles before placing me on my feet. "And if I was, you didn't even put up a fight. Maybe you want me to kidnap you," he tells me before turning me around to face a giant cellar of wine

"T thought you said it was small?"

"Nothing about me 1s small," Zayn chuckles, and I look at him.

"Oh, you mean the cellar," he laughs, and I fold my arms across my chest. He nudges

"I'm fucking around. Now, choose one," he tells me, and I peer around

"TIL let you; I know nothing about wine."

"That makes two of us because this was my father's, and I prefer whiskey or rum, but someone's gotta drink it." he chuckles, snatching a bottle off the shelf

"Come on, let's see how hideous this one tastes." he tells me

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I follow him back up the stairs and into the kitchen, where he is pulling out plates. "So, what did you want to talk about?" he asks, and I suddenly find myself tongue-tied. "My father..

he um," Fuck why is this so hard? How do I dump someone I am not even dating. "Let me guess, your father said to dump my ass so you can marry Boyd?" he asks

"But technically, we aren't even a thing, so I wouldn't be dumping you," I tell him. He raises an eyebrow at me

"Then what are we?" he asks, his eyes flashing dangerously, yet the smirk on his lips tells me he is toying with me

"Friends," I offer awkwardly. He seems to think for a second

"I don't like that title," "I'm not being your fuck buddy," I deadpan

"Good because I want you, not a fuck buddy," he tells me, turning toward the oven to check the steaks he is cooking

"And you're not dumping me because you are scared of your father."

"I have a boyfriend," I remind him

"Had a boyfriend. He is not your boyfriend. He is a fleabag," I raise an eyebrow at him, and he shuts the oven door before turning the stove down

"Well, my not boyfriend this is me officially

dumping you before shit gets more awkward," I tell him, and he chuckles

"You say that like you believe you can stay away from me," he chuckles, moving around the island bench. He stops in front of me

"Someone's got tickets on themselves," I mock and he laughs, gripping my chin

I swallow thickly as he leans down and captures my lips with his hot, demanding mouth. His taste is intoxicating, his tongue sweeping inside, searching for mine. I gasp into the kiss and lean into him, placing my hand on his chest, and I feel the steady beat of his heart

He pulls away, breathing raggedly, and I am left panting. "Do you always kiss friends like that?" he purrs. My face heats at his words

"I might not be able to stay away from you, but that doesn't mean we're good for each other. It's this sire bond once it wears off, things will go back to normal," I argue, my voice firm despite the lingering heat from his kiss

Zayn smirks, moving back to the kitchen and dishing out food before placing a plate of food in front of me. "You're not dumping me, Cleo

That's not how this works."

I sigh, picking at the food. "Zayn, we're causing drama in the packs. It's not just about us. I have responsibilities, and I'm supposed to... to marry Boyd."

He remains quiet throughout the meal, his silence stretching into an uncomfortable void. I can't help but feel the tension building, the unspoken words hanging heavy between us

Finally, once I've finished eating, I stand up, knowing he can't use feeding me as an excuse to stay any longer now, and my chair scrapes against the floor. "I should go back to my dorm

Classes start early tomorrow."

"I'll drop you off before classes," Zayn says, his voice devoid of any emotion

"No, Zayn, you're not listening!" Frustration boils inside me. "I can't be with you. This isn't right."

He steps closer, his presence overwhelming

With one swift move, he pulls me into a searing kiss, leaving me breathless. "You will be with me, Cleo," he whispers against my lips, his eyes burning with intensity. "Because I'll kill anyone who dares to touch what's mine."

I push against his chest, my heart racing. "You

can't just claim me, Zayn. I'm not a prize to be won."

He leans in, his breath hot on my ear. "I already did, Cleo. The moment I laid eyes on you, you became mine. And nothing, not even pack politics, will change that."

His words send a shiver down my spine. The mix of danger and desire in his eyes is intoxicating. Our argument comes to a halt when Zayn pulls me in, his grip firm on my waist. His ice-cold gaze softens as he closes the distance between our lips with a predatory certainty. I don't fight him this time. Instead, I allow myself to be consumed by the magnetism of his touch, the raw need radiating off of him

He tastes like temptation intoxicating, addicting, a taste that instantly lights an infernal fire within me. His tongue deftly explores the

contours of my mouth as if it's territory he needs to conquer and claim for himself

"Zayn," I gasp into the kiss, shivering under his intense gaze, the way every flicker of response engraved in my features

his eyes devour

His hands wander down my spine, tracing each curve and dip before settling at the small of my back and pulling me closer until there's no space left between us. I melt into him involuntarily, drunk on desire and drowning in the heated haze

My mind whirls with conflicting emotions. On one hand, I can't deny the magnetic pull

between us that defies all logic and reason. But on the other hand, the weight of our duties and obligations threaten to suffocate any chance of happiness we might have

I take a deep breath and meet his gaze head-on

"Zayn," I say firmly, trying to convey the gravity of the situation. "We need to think about more than just ourselves. There are consequences to our actions."

He sighs, a mix of frustration and desire evident in his eyes. "I understand that," he replies. "I just don't care," he growls, his lips claiming mine again

His hands grip my hips, lifting me and sitting me on the counter and after a few seconds I give in, my hands gripping his tank top to pull him closer and I feel him smile against my lips. His lips move lower, trailing lower

My heart races as he nibbles on my jawline and ear, leaving a trail of shivers in their wake. His scent-masculine and wild-envelops me entirely. My body arches into his touch

in a silent plea for more when he grips the fabric of my shirt and rips it apart, revealing my lacy black bra. The cool air hits my warm skin, sending goosebumps down my spine

I moan softly at the sensation as his lips press against my collarbone, his teeth grazing over my pulse point just enough to make it throb deliciously

He smiles against my skin before pulling back slightly to look at me once again. "Tell me to stop, tell me you don't want this?" he murmurs and I swallow thickly

“Tell me to stop and I will,” he whispers as one of his hands finds the hem of my shirt, pulling it upwards, revealing my stomach before he peels it off. He groans softly against my skin, his warm breath tickling me as his teeth graze it playfully, nipping

softly. “Beautiful,” he

whispers against my neck

Something inside me melts at his touch-it’s a feeling I’ve never experienced with anyone else, a sense of belonging and longing that makes me want to give in to him completely

“So what’s it gonna be?” I open my mouth to answer, but no words come out while he waits patiently

“Fuck it,” I growl jerking him closer and he purrs against my lips the sound sending thrills through me. My lips crash against his, my hands moving to graze over his abs as

I give in, my father will be furious but for now he won’t know. “Good girl,” Zayn mumbles against my lips dragging me closer. He grips my thighs lifting me and I wrap my legs around his waist

The consequences I will think about tomorrow because right now, all I can think about is how good he feels