

Chained By The Alpha By Jessica Hall Chapter 61

Zayn hoists me higher as he climbs the stairs, and for a frightening second, I worry he'll drop me since he isn't exactly watching where he is walking with his mouth trailing down my neck

"16 steps," he murmurs, feeling me tense

"I won't drop you," he chuckles, pulling away. I suck in a shaky breath when his eyes meet mine

We reach the top floor and his room, and he kicks the door shut behind him. His strong arms never once let go of me as he moves to the bed and lays me down on it gently, hovering over me, his eyes burning with desire.

"I want you," he groans before crashing his lips back on mine again, tongue pushing past my

parted lips with all the desperation I'm feeling for him right now. One of his hands moves to cup my breast through my bra, his thumb brushing over my nipple, sending shockwaves of pleasure through me. I moan into his mouth as his other hand slides beneath my pants, cupping my pussy through my panties

He growls against my lips at my arousal, kissing his way down to my neck once more

"Zayn," I whimper pleadingly as his hand tugs at my pants, and they're suddenly gone

"Stop, I'm not stealing virginity," he purrs. I sit up on my elbows, looking at him

"You're not?" I ask him, wondering why we are up here then. "I rather you get your wolf before I steal that, besides I know right now, this is a fuck it moment because you're angry at your

father," he leans down, kissing me, forcing my shoulders back

"If I'm gonna fuck you, I don't want the fear of your father on your mind; I don't want anyone on your mind Cleo, except me," he nips at my lips

"Just you?" I chuckle, gripping his hair. He kisses me, his tongue plundering my mouth almost violently before he pulls back, making me groan

"When I finally do take you, I want your mind consumed with the sensation of me being inside you." he nips at my lips. My face heats at his words while his fingers find my slit

"You are something else.." I trail off incoherently when his fingers tease the outer folds of my core

“And you are everything,” he purrs as he shoves his finger inside me, watching my face. His eyes flicker as I squirm at the sensation

“Let me taste you,” he growls, his eyes moving down to his hand between my legs as he watches his finger slip out of me, but he doesn’t shove it back in like I expect

“Deep breath,” he whispers before kissing me, and I feel him force another finger inside me

His tongue invades my mouth, teasing every inch while his fingers work up friction, making my skin warm when his lips trail down my jaw

“Let me taste you, I want you to explode on my tongue.”

His voice is rough and husky as he asks, and my face heats further at the thought of his face

down there

When I don’t answer, he kisses me, sucking on my tongue, and I groan at the sensation

“Let me show you the true meaning of satisfaction as I lick and suck every piece of that sweet pussy.” His words send shivers down my spine, igniting an intense hunger within me. I thread my fingers through his hair, pulling him closer. Our bodies press against each other, the heat between us becoming almost unbearable

“Is that a yes.” he breathes against my ear, his voice dripping with anticipation. “Don’t think, Cleo, just feel,” he purrs, flicking my earlobe with his tongue. “And I’ll make you feel, baby, what it’s like to be worshipped.” I shiver as his breath skates across my neck. “Say yes,” he purrs

“Yes,” I moan, surrendering myself completely to him

Zayn’s eyes darken with desire as he takes in my words. He trails his lips along my jawline, leaving a trail of fiery kisses in his wake

With a swift motion, he removes my bra, exposing my aching, hard nipples. His mouth descends upon them, sucking and nibbling on the sensitive flesh. Waves of pleasure course through me, making every nerve ending come alive

I arch my back off the bed, desperately seeking more of his touch. Zayn trails kisses down my abdomen, and he grips my hips, pushing me higher up the bed

“Are you ready?” he asks softly, his eyes locking with mine

“Yes,” I whisper breathlessly

He slowly grabs my thighs, pushing them apart, revealing my throbbing core to him. A surge of anticipation courses through me as I feel his warm breath against my skin as he settles between my legs. Zayn’s fingers gently part my folds, teasingly brushing

against my clit

“Please, Zayn,” I whimper, unable to contain myself any longer. Zayn smirks, his eyes flicker darkly

“I love the way my name rolls off your tongue.” He leans down, pressing his lips gently against my clit. “And I’m not stopping until I hear you

scream it,” he growls

Zayn wastes no time plunging his tongue into me, sending shockwaves of pleasure throughout my body. I grip the sheets tightly, my back

arching off the bed as he expertly explores every piece of me with his tongue

The sensations overwhelm me, and I feel myself nearing the edge of ecstasy. Zayn’s tongue intensifies its movements, pushing me closer and closer to the brink

“Let go for me,” he growls, his voice sending vibrations through my core while his tongue swirls and flicks my clit

I surrender to the sensations, shuddering as pleasure radiates through every fiber of my being. Zayn continues to torture me pleasurable; he sucks my clit, his tongue making my eyes roll into the back of my head when my vision goes white, heat floods me, and I shatter; Zayn’s tongue is relentless, prolonging my release until it becomes almost unbearable

When I finally come undone, a wave of pure bliss washes over me, and he doesn’t stop

until I scream his name, leaving me breathless. My body trembles as he climbs up my body before pulling me into his arms as he holds me close, kissing my flushed skin. I’m going to be in so much trouble tomorrow, but for now, it’s so worth it

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Zayn

As Cleo’s breathing slowed and her body relaxed against me, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of contentment wash over me. Her head rested on my chest, her blonde curls tickling my chin, and I couldn’t imagine a more perfect moment. Yet beneath the

surface, there was a gnawing fear that tomorrow would bring an end to this idyllic bubble we have created

I know Cleo will revert back to being standoffish. Her father has far too much influence over her but that is to be expected since he is her father

I made a silent promise to myself to savor every

second with her, to memorize the pattern of her breaths against my skin and the feeling of her warmth seeping into my body. She was where she belonged, in my arms, a place I wanted to covet her away from the rest of the world. But for now, she was safest not knowing who I am to her. Not yet, anyway

"Are you awake?" my brother calls through the mindlink

"Yes, what's up?" I reply while glancing down at Cleo

"We have an issue, meet me in the living room," he tells me and I sigh heavily not wanting to move but knowing I have to. Carefully I slip out from beneath Cleo, tucking the blanket back around her not wanting her to lose my warmth and wake up

Climbing out of bed, I head for the door and to the living room. The room is dimly lit, the only source of light coming from the moon peeking through the curtains. I can see my brother Vance, his arms crossed and his tall frame leaning against the mantelpiece. The scowl on his face deepens as I enter the room

"What's going on?" I ask, crossing my arms over my chest

"You know damn well what's going on," he snarls

"No, I don't," I retort, "Tell me what the problem

is

"You just declared war with not one but potentially 3 packs and you brought her here

You can't just keep her here are you insane, what if her father comes looking for her?
Have

you even told her or does she think she is some little pet you've decided to keep?"
Vance demands, his wolf eye's flashing silver with anger

"You dare speak of your future Luna like that," I shoot back at him. "She deserves better than that."

Vance huffs out a breath. "This isn't about what she deserves, this is about pack business. She is not safe here. You are putting the pack in unnecessary risk, you need to tell her and claim her or you need to let her go until she shifts Zayn!"

My wolf howls in protest at the thought of losing Cleo, even temporarily. "I don't think I can," I admit

Vance pinches his nose between his fingers

"You've really made a mess of things Zayn. You should have told her."

"Told her what? She has no wolf," "You're her mate!" he groans in frustration

"Yes and her father's rival, as if she would have believed I was her mate."

"Then popsicle boy, you could have told her that at least, Alpha Grayson has accused Alpha Joseph of attacking Deacon; he never kept his dislike for boy quiet." Vance argues

"Shadowcrest and Lakeview are on the verge of a pack war. It's only a matter of time before Alpha Joseph forces her home to keep her safe

If he finds her here..." He trails off. "You should have told her about Deacon at least."

"Again she wouldn't believe me, what reason

would she have when the only information she has about me was what her father fed her." I try to reason

"The video footage." he growls annoyed

"Showed her boyfriends escorting her to the car, and me following them out minutes later and killing him, it never showed what Deacon was doing to her." I explain and he

curses

"The phone footage then"

"Again nothing saying I didn't take that footage of her after I killed Deacon. She had no reason to trust me back then."

"And now?" he asks

"She has enough playing on her mind with the entire arranged marriage shit with Alpha Dane and Claymore pack." I remind him

“So what’s the plan then? Please tell me you have one, Zayn, because everything can get out of hand really quickly at this rate.”

“For now, I need to keep her safe. They find out she is my mate; Alpha Samuel will use her to try to take me out.”

“He’s best friends with Joseph,” Vance states

“Is he, though?” I ask. “Only because of Linda, not for any other reason. My relationship with Samuel is only out of desperation. His alliance with Joseph...”

I try to think of why he tolerates Joseph because how can you be friends with your ex-wife’s mate? I’m not blind, and I know he had a hand in Cleo’s mother’s death. I just don’t know why or how, but it makes sense. And I still remember the argument he had with my father the week

before their pack was attacked

“We’ll keep patrols at the university to keep an eye on her, but for now, you are best keeping your distance from her, Zayn. If you’re serious about protecting her, you need to figure out something fast.”

“What do you mean?”

“Alpha Greyson told Aunt Andrea that Alpha Dane and Joseph are still going ahead with the plan for the marriage alliance,” Vance says, stepping closer and away from the window

“When?” Task, my mind racing with possible options to stop it

“The day after she comes of age,” he responds

“Why the rush, though? It makes no sense,” I mutter out loud, more to myself than to Vance

“Joseph owes a massive debt to Alpha Dane,” he explains

“How much?” I question, trying to gauge just how desperate Joseph must be. Vance

shrugs in response

“No idea. I wasn’t there,” he admits. “But that’s how I found out about Deacon, from Aunt Andrea.”

My heart drops at the mention of his name. It’s a reminder of the pain I’m going to cause when she realizes I am behind Deacon’s death. But it’s also a reminder of how important it is for me to keep her safe now

“It’s also why Greyson believes it was Joseph who killed Deacon,” Vance continues, “to get him out of the way for the alliance.”

“So he is going to declare war against Joseph?” “I think so,”

“I’ll speak with Greyson,” I tell him. “Organize a meeting with him.”

“What do you plan on telling him?”

“Everything. I’ve never had issues with Greyson, and he hates Samuel; if I am going to war, I will need his pack on my side.” I tell Vance

“I’ll organize it and send you the information,” Vance tells me before walking out just as I hear footsteps upstairs

“Fuck!” I curse now making me wonder if I can convince Cleo to remain here but I know I can’t, she’ll refuse. She is too stubborn

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Cleo

I wake to the soft light filtering through the curtains, casting a gentle glow on the contours of Zayn’s face. His steady breathing is comforting beside me, his chest rising and falling with a peacefulness that belies the chaos of our lives. The warmth of his body seeps into my skin

For a brief, precious moment, the world outside this room ceases to exist the looming threats and my father’s ironclad expectations all fade into nothingness. I allow myself to revel in this illusion of serenity, nestled against Zayn, the Alpha whose presence promises protection and provokes an insatiable longing within me that I

can't quite explain

But reality is a demanding beast, gnawing at the edges of my consciousness, reminding me that I can't stay here, hidden away in the cocoon of Zayn's arms; as much as I crave the escape from my own life right now, I know I'll have to leave, eventually. The pull of my responsibilities and the gravity of my father's unspoken yet inescapable demands claw me back to the surface, reminding me of how much trouble I'll be in if he finds out I'm here

I stir slightly, careful not to wake him, my gaze lingering on the lines of his face the sharp jawline softened by sleep, his dark hair that falls haphazardly over his forehead. I trace the arc of his brow with my eyes, committing it to memory. His gray irises are hidden now, veiled by long lashes that flutter slightly as he sleeps. I

wonder what visions dance behind those closed lids when his brows furrow. As much as I like Zayn, I still hardly know anything about him

Right now, I am a serial killer's wet dream, trusting blindly, yet Zayn feels like home; I don't know if it is the sire bond or if I am starting to fall in love with the man. He's so different from the persona everyone else sees him as, so different to Deacon

Deacon would never have stood up against my father the Zayn has; he wouldn't have come to check on me if my father forbade it, as he did in the past; it wasn't until I was begging my father to let me see Deacon that he allowed it, making me realize I've done nothing but chase after Deacon not once has he chased after me. Yet Zayn didn't just tell my father to say no. He was willing to declare war over me against not one but two packs

With a sigh, I slip out from under the covers, my bare feet touching the cold floor as I sit on the edge of the bed, anchoring me to the present and reminding me of how much trouble I will be in

The absence of his heat leaves me exposed and vulnerable, but I wrap the sensation around me like armor. Today, I will face my father and the countless eyes that watch, waiting for me to stumble

"You're up early," Zayn's voice is a husky whisper, his fingers reaching out and locking around my wrist. He moves beside me, gray eyes slowly opening, their intensity capturing me in them, and he pats the spot beside him in the bed, ripping the covers back

"Don't make me drag you back. I wasn't done cuddling you," he growls playfully, the corners of his lips tugging slightly. "I need to get to school," I remind him

His eyes flash black to his wolf for a second

"You need to get your butt back in bed," he tells me. I raise an eyebrow at him, his words not a demand but more playful

"Ten minutes, then I need you to run me back to my dorm," I tell him. Just as I move to lay back down, he grabs me, jerking me toward him and trapping me beneath him and the blanket. "Stay, you don't have to leave Cleo," he whispers

His hand brushes a strand of hair from my face, tucking it behind my ear with a tenderness that squeezes my heart. When he leans in, his lips find mine

I melt into the kiss for a brief moment, allowing myself to drown in the sensation, in the heady scent that is uniquely Zayn. But the chains of responsibility tighten around my chest, reminding me of the world that awaits beyond

this bubble I find myself in when around him

"L can't," I whisper against his lips, voice barely audible. His brow furrows as he leans back, watching my face intently. "Why can't you?" he demands. "You're 19 years old, Cleo, an adult, technically. You don't have to answer to your father," Zayn explains

"An adult, yes, but not in werewolf society; I'm still under his protection until I get my wolf." I remind

"You don't need his protection; you have me." he frowns, his thumb brushing my cheek gently

"The silence from him... it's the calm before the

storm, Zayn. You know it is."

Zayn's arm beneath me grips me tighter as if he could shield me from the inevitable with his

embrace alone. The muscles under his skin are coiled strength, the power of his aura evident as it rushes out blindingly fast, snatching the air from my lungs. I gasp, and he jolts like he didn't realize he lost control momentarily. "Shit," I

shake my head, knowing he didn't mean it

His sigh is a deep rumble, echoing the unrest that's building between us. The frown

that creases his brow seems out of place on Zayn's usually confident face. He sits up in one fluid motion, his muscular arms trapping me in an embrace that shows what I feel for him isn't one-

sided

“Let me worry about your father,” he says, his voice a low growl. “I can handle your father.” His gray eyes lock onto mine, fiercely reflecting the seriousness of his words

But as much as his presence is a balm to my

frayed nerves, I can’t surrender to the sense of security his words offer, knowing it will cause pack wars

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Reluctantly, I pull away from his warmth, feeling the cool air kiss my skin where his touch lingers

“I have to go back to college, Zayn,” I insist, sliding out of bed and wrapping myself in the thin barrier of a sheet. My heart races, betraying the conflict within as I meet his silver gaze. “I can’t risk my pack.”

“What risk, Cleo?” he asks. I purse my lips

“And if my father declares war?”

“Then he’s more stupid than he looks. I would annihilate his pack, and probably single-handedly. Sorry, your pack is quite small,” Zayn

chuckles

“Exactly, Zayn. My father would declare war

He was willing to risk our pack by refusing your protection. Despite that, though, he declares war on your pack. My pack will stand with him

They’ll get hurt.” I sigh heavily. This is such a mess

Zayn watches me, silent and brooding, his eyes tracking my every move like a predator. But instead of pouncing, he reclines against the headboard, his dark hair in disarray. There’s a raw edge to him now, as if he’s waging his own internal battle

“I don’t like you being away from me,” he admits, his voice rough with emotion

‘You say that like I am your only friend?’

“If I say you are, will you stay?” he asks. I roll my eyes at him, looking for my discarded clothes

As I dress hastily, the weight of his stare is as tangible as the fabric slipping over my curves, igniting a familiar heat despite the urgency thrumming through my veins. I

pause, glancing back at him, my resolve momentarily faltering as I'm reminded of the depths of this alpha

"Zayn..." [need him to drive me home, or I'll be late for my first class, but it's clear he doesn't want to. "Please, I still need to go to school; I have classes," I tell him

"Fine, since I am not allowed to kidnap you, I will drop you back—" I smile, and then he speaks again. "For now, your father keeps getting under my skin. I may not give you back next time," he warns me

"And you said you weren't a serial killer and could trust you?" I remind him

"T never said anything about killing you. I just wouldn't give you back. I'd keep you all for myself." he laughs but rises, pulling on some jeans and a black shirt

I follow him downstairs, where he grabs his keys and my hand, leading me out to his car

The drive back is quiet, neither of us willing to disturb the peace, knowing that will be the last of it for a while

The engine purrs to a halt, and the world outside Zayn's car blurs past insignificantly as he pulls me against him when we arrive back at my dorm. His kiss is a searing brand, igniting a fire that threatens to consume us both. "I'll call you," he breathes against my lips, his voice rough with the effort of parting

"Make sure you do," I reply, the taste of him still dancing on my tongue. Reluctance claws at me, urging me to ignore everything else and stay in his presence

He brushes a thumb across my cheek, leaving a trail of heat in its wake. "When will you start working for me?" There's hope in his eyes

"You'll still protect our borders even after everything with my father?"

"If it means seeing you, then yes," he tells me

I press my forehead to his, feeling the weight of the choices I have to make. "I'll check my class schedule and let you know; I might drop out of a class or two." The words come out more strained than I intend, tangled up with the knowledge of what's at stake my future and my pack's future. Yet once I am alpha, I will be able to make treaty agreements without my father's

input, so this will do for now

"[need to go," I murmur, even as everything inside me protests

“Wait,” he says abruptly, capturing my hand

“Ring me when you finish class. We’ll go get dinner.”

“Zayn, we’ll get caught.”

“I’ll pick you up for dinner,” he smiles wickedly

I laugh, shaking my head. Sneaking out last night was one thing. Again, tonight might be asking for trouble

Climbing out of the car, I head to my dorm to get ready for my first class. The halls are deserted as I walk back; the students are still asleep or only just waking for the day, so

no one sees me

The key in the lock turns with a soft click, but the moment I push the door open, the chill of an aura rushes over me. The room feels different charged with anger. My eyes flicker to my bed, and there he is. My father, sitting like a judge presiding over his court, his jaw set in lines of disapproval so deep they might be carved from stone. Storm clouds gather in his dark eyes as they fix on mine, and my heart plummets into

an abyss

“Dad...” My voice is a breath, a whisper of dread that can’t mask the quake of fear that rushes through me

“Quiet, Cleo,” he snaps a command that rings with authority and silences any protest I might muster. The two hulking enforcers behind him are statuesque in their stillness, yet the threat they pose is palpable even in their silence

My gaze slides to them, noting the way they turn to look out my window, pretending not to listen or witness whatever is about to go down. I take an involuntary step back, feeling the walls close in around me

“When Lydia told me you were seeing Zayn, I hoped she was wrong, especially after the shit storm he caused at the council meeting staking claim to you!” His words slice through the tension, each one a cold blade against the warmth I felt with Zayn only moments ago

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“Lydia...” I start, but the name tastes like betrayal on my tongue, sour and sharp, not that I expected anything else from the evil wench. Yet still, her deceit stings because I know she did this out of spite over Deacon, making it more cutting than I would have imagined. The mere thought of her sly, self-satisfied smile makes my insides twist with

hatred. "You've embarrassed me after all the drama he caused the other day; now this, you look like you are defying me and picking his side!" My father accuses. I glance at the two enforcers, wondering what their purpose here is, yet they don't meet my gaze, instead ignoring what is going on

"Dad, please" I try again, desperation edging my voice. The plea hangs unfinished, my words

faltering under the weight of his glare and aura

"Enough." He stands, and the motion has the finality of a gavel's fall. "You will end this..

toying with Alpha Zayn, or suffer the consequences. You are promised already, and running around with him makes me look like a weak alpha who can't control his own daughter!"

"Consequences?" The question comes out with a choked noise

"Your future, our pack's stability, your place in this family. You've put all of that at risk." Each phrase is a heavy stone added to the burden already pressing on my shoulders. I struggle to keep my composure, to remain upright under the onslaught

"Dad, you can't mean—"

"No, I don't want to hear excuses. End it, Cleo!" His voice booms, and I flinch. His expression is unyielding, a mask of merciless fury. "You defy me once more." he doesn't finish

But he cuts me off from saying anything more with a dismissive wave of his hand, silencing me more effectively than any shout could. "Save your breath, Cleo. I don't want to hear it." The finality in his tone warns me not to argue right now

"From now on, you're under guard at all times." I glance at the two enforcers with him

"Do you have any idea what you've done?"

My heart pounds a desperately against my ribs

Each beat echoes the gravity of his words. I search for something to say, some plea that will soften the edge of his anger, but the presence of

the enforcers a silent, oppressive force- strangles my voice

"Seeing Zayn isn't a crime," I muster the courage to argue

He stands, towering over me, his stature alone a reminder of the power he wields. "Have you no respect for me? It's about what's expected of you, of us." His eyes, the same light blue as mine, now hold the chill of a winter storm. "Your actions put everything at risk."

The room feels smaller, the air thinner, as if my very existence has become an offense. My gaze flickers to the window, where the last traces of dawn are giving way to the harsh light of day, mirroring the reality I'm forced to face. "Do you hear yourself? All this is because you made a deal with Alpha Dane and refused Zayn's protection! Why do I have to be the sacrifice for your damn ego? It's wrong!" T snaps at him

My father listens to my rant stone-faced. "Right or wrong, you'll do as you're told." He steps closer, his proximity a clear threat. "You will marry Boyd. That's final."

"Dad, please" My plea is cut short by the look in his eyes, a harsh reminder that this isn't a negotiation

"Understand this, Cleo," he continues, his voice lethally calm. "You belong to the pack before yourself. Before whatever fleeting desires you think you have. You are alpha first. We don't

always get to do what we want."

"This is your last warning, Cleo. You are to end whatever this is with Zayn. You will marry Boyd, and so help me, if you step one foot out of line, I will give the Pack to Lydia," my father

warns, his voice a venomous whisper that wraps its icy fingers around my throat

I can almost feel the demand behind his threat, the way it claws at the fragile veneer of control I've managed to maintain. Lydia's jealousy and drive to steal my pack has hung over me for years. A bitch that now threatens to devour everything I hold dear and all I have left of my mother

The fight drains from me, leaving a hollow emptiness behind. I nod, the gesture mechanical, as thoughts of Zayn flood my mind

"Good. Now get ready for class; these two will wait at the door for you; you do not

leave their sides outside this dorm room." With that single word, he turns and strides from the room, his enforcers following. The door clicks shut behind them, the sound

final

Alone, I collapse onto the bed, Zayn's lingering scent woven into the clothes I'm wearing. The room feels smaller somehow, the air thick as my mind races at the ultimatum I've been given

If I don't end things with Zayn, my father will disown me. Give the pack to Lydia. A coldness seeps into my bones as I contemplate the ramifications

My mind still reels at the amount of trouble Lydia has caused recently. I know her intentions; the pack would fall into ruins under her watch. I have no idea how I will end this with Zayn, not when my heart already belongs to him. Forcing myself out of bed, I look for some clothes and get dressed quickly before grabbing my books and bag and heading out the door, only to groan when I notice my father's enforcers waiting outside the door for me

Locking my door, I stomp past them

I shuffle down the hallway, my boots clicking against the cold tile, feeling the scrutinizing gaze of the two enforcers at my back. Their presence is a suffocating cloak I can't shake off, a constant reminder that my every move is monitored and judged. It's not that I'm prone to trouble; it's just that trouble-namely, Lydia has a liking for finding me

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"Watch your step," one enforcer murmurs as a student darts in front of me, nearly colliding with my shoulder. My new guard is alert, vigilant, but I barely hear him over the internal monologue cursing my father's punishment

My gaze flickers to the faces blending into the sea of students. Whispers tickle my ears, words woven with curiosity and a hint of fear. They see the enforcers, they see me, and their imaginations spin wildly. I can already imagine the shit circulating around the place already

"About time."

The voice cuts through the noise, sharp and unwelcome. Lydia leans against Maya's dorm

room door, arms crossed, her smirk as taunting as the glint in her eye. She thrives on this, the power play, the show of superiority in the most public of areas, the bitch just loves trying to humiliate me

"Lydia," I greet her, my tone flat, unwilling to give her the satisfaction of seeing me riled up

She pushes off the door and saunters towards me, her heels clicking loudly on the floor. The other students around us quickly move out of our way, giving us a wide berth

I take a deep breath and force myself to stay calm. I can't let her get to me, not now. Not when I have so much at stake

"What are you doing here?" I ask, my voice steady

Lydia rolls her eyes and raises an eyebrow

"You know perfectly well why I'm here."

I resist the urge to roll my own eyes at her predictable response. "Enlighten me then."

"I see your father finally realized his little princess isn't safe roaming free, huh? About time he put you in your place," she says, and I realize she is here to gloat about getting me in trouble with my father, why else?

The enforcers stiffen like statues on either side of me, their eyes scanning for potential threats at our audience to our brewing confrontation

Lydia's smirk doesn't waver, her gaze sharp and piercing

"I wouldn't be under guard if you weren't speaking shit, Lydia. What have I ever done to you?" My voice echoes slightly in the corridor,

and I feel a hot flush of anger color my cheeks

She leans in, close enough for me to catch the faint scent of her perfume an attempt

at intimidation that I refuse to acknowledge. "You should have thought about that before choosing Zayn over Deacon," she says, her voice a low hiss

"I'm not choosing Zayn over Deacon," I shoot back, my voice steady despite the turmoil inside me. "And what I do with Zayn is none of your business."

Lydia's eyes narrow, and I see the flash of her own frustration. She's always been good at dishing it out, but taking it? Not so much. She steps closer, violating my personal space, a challenge in her stance. I know she is trying to provoke me, anything to make me look bad to my father

"Everything you do is my business when it affects the pack," she counters, her words clipped and cold

"Then maybe you should spend more time worrying about your own actions rather than obsessing over mine!" Lydia huffs, glancing around. "And since when do you care for our pack when the only thing you're good at is spending pack money." I retort, leaning in until we're almost nose to nose

My heart races, blood pounding in my ears

Lydia has always known how to push my buttons, and right now, she's mashing them with the force of a sledgehammer

"Obsessing, I'm trying to stop you making a mistake with that mongrel, he did god only knows what with Deacon, and here you are defending him!" Lydia snarls

I press my lips together, feeling the familiar twist of frustration in my gut. My fingers itch to lash out, but I rein in the urge. "Not this again, Lydia. I don't know where Deacon is, but wherever he is, he isn't looking for me and clearly he ain't looking for you either!" The words snap like a whip through the tense air

"Hey, let's just take a breath here," Maya interjects, her voice soft and soothing, trying to wedge herself between the storm brewing in Lydia's eyes and my own flaring

temper

But Lydia doesn't seem to care about the crowd we are drawing as she points an accusing finger at me

"You were the last one seen with him, and now you're covering up for that bastard Alpha Zayn." Her accusation pierces the hallway. "I know he did something to him; he was seen following

Deacon out moments after you both left."

"Bullshit. We checked the tapes. If you're so worried about him, go look for Deacon yourself

I'm done with the dramatics, Lydia." I turn to leave, my patience worn thin, but her next words freeze me in place

"How dare you! You call me dramatic yet your actions have caused pack wars. You're exactly like your whore mother, stirring up trouble!" Lydia spits venomously

I whirl around, my fists clenching at my sides as the last word slithers out of Lydia's mouth. The venom in her tone, the acid dripping from each syllable, burns through any restraint I have left

My vision tints red, and the halls fade away until all I see is Lydia's smug face. Her words slice through me, igniting a fire that rages

through my veins. With a feral snarl tearing from my throat, my hand shoots out, fingers tangling in her hair

I yank her closer and my hand tightens in her hair, pulling her so closer until our noses almost touch. Her eyes widen in shock, but I don't care

All I see is red, all I feel is rage

"You do not get to talk about my mother like that," I hiss through gritted teeth, my voice low and dangerous

Lydia tries to pull away, but I hold her firmly, my grip on her hair unrelenting and only grows tighter

"Let go of me!" She screams, panic lacing her tone. My father's enforcers stand frozen not knowing what to do, clearly not expecting me to grab her

"Cleo.." Maya urges clutching her mouth with both hands, but everything is moving

way too fast and I can't seem to calm down. She shouldn't have mentioned my

mother

"Ah!" Lydia's scream pierces the air, high and shocked, but it's like background noise to the inferno within me. My other hand balls into a fist, and then she's flying forward, her face connecting with a sickening crunch against the brick wall

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Zayn

The roar of my engine cuts through the quiet as I pull into Alpha Greyson's territory, the familiar scent of pine and earth greeting me. As soon as my boots hit the gravel, I'm met with Greyson's booming laughter as he comes out his front door and down the steps. Greyson's light brown hair is windswept, his strong jawline defined as he nods in acknowledgment. His piercing blue eyes seem to glint with amusement, but there is a hint of something else lurking behind them

"Heard you riled up Alpha Dane and Joseph at the meeting the other day?" His voice carries across the distance, and even though it's lighthearted, it does nothing to ease the knot in

my stomach. Since I am having to ask a favor

"News travels fast," I reply, shutting the car door with a thud that echoes in the open space. The scent of pine and impending rain mingles in the air, a storm brewing just like the one inside me

Greyson's lips curling into a smirk, his nod indicating both amusement and a hint of skepticism. The lines around his eyes crinkle, revealing his age "Indeed," Greyson nods

Greyson crosses his arms, his posture relaxed but his eyes sharp as flint. "I bet that got under their skin. Joseph looked like he was ready to tear someone apart when he left."

"Wouldn't be the first time," I mutter, thinking of how easily tempers flare when pack laws and personal desires clash

"True enough. So, tell me, what's brought you to my doorstep today?" Greyson asks, tilting his head, his keen gaze dissecting my every intention

My gaze drifts across the sprawling packhouse, an imposing structure shadowed by the dense forest that encircles it. Alpha Greyson stands before me, his presence as commanding as ever

"You need my help, don't you?" he asks before I can even answer

"T might, which is why I came here." Alpha Greyson nods slowly, regarding me carefully before looking away

"Whatever you need, you have my support."

"You haven't even heard what I have to say," I remind him

Greyson's expression sobers instantly, the lines of his face hardening into a hardened resolve. "I don't need to. If it's going against Joseph and Samuel, you know I want in. Especially after what they did to Clara." His tone is like steel

"You truly believe Joseph had something to do with Clara's death?" My voice is a low growl, barely contained, as the memory of my aunty wailing for her friend comes to mind when she learned of her death

Greyson's eyes harden, like two chips of flint ready to spark. "You doubt me?" His tone slices through the tension

I shake my head, casting the doubts away like dead leaves in a storm. "No, of course not." I glance back at Greyson, finding his steel gaze unwavering. "Andrea isn't fond of them either," I confess. "She wanted me to cut the treaty

agreements with Samuel but didn't want to leave Clara's daughter unprotected."

"Understandable," Greyson nods, his eyes reflecting a storm brewing within. "Cleo needs all the protection she can get, doesn't she? Especially after hearing about this marriage alliance with Alpha Dane." There's a snarl lacing his words, and it resonates with the anger coiling in my gut

I can stop it, a surge of possessiveness gripping me so fiercely it's almost crippling. Images of Cleo, her light blue eyes wide with fear, flash through my mind, and my wolf prowls beneath my skin, eager to claim what's ours

I narrow my eyes in confusion, a frown creasing my forehead as I try to piece together Greyson's words. "What do you mean?"

"Rumor is that Alpha Samuel was the one who came up with the idea," Greyson says. He moves closer and leans against the hood of my car, arms crossed over his broad chest. "Now, why would he suggest such a thing to Joseph?"

The question hangs heavy in the air, making me think for a second

"Of course, Linda jumped all over the idea

Now, why would she do that?" Greyson continues to probe, his voice sharp, not hiding his hate for Linda

"Because she's always weaving her web of manipulation, that's why," I snap, the pieces falling into place with a clarity that chills me to my core. The muscles in my jaw clench as I piece together the nefarious puzzle. "So her daughter inherits the pack. Therefore, Samuel does," I answer, my frustration growing. The

power play is clear as day, and it sickens me

Greyson's eyes narrow, and he leans in, his voice low and dangerous. "Exactly. But I'm curious how you became involved in this entire situation," he inquires, his gaze sharp and my lips tug in the corners

I clench my jaw, meeting Greyson's probing gaze. "Be ready for war, old man," I growl

"Because if you're right about Samuel, it looks like it's me and you against the rest."

Greyson's laughter rolls across the space between us. The sound is laced with something feral, the promise of a fight he's been craving

"Good thing I'm on the winning side, then." He states. "But you still didn't answer my question

This seems out of character for you. You generally try to keep peace within the city

What's made you declare war? Has to be more than morals."

"Sometimes, peace isn't an option," I admit, my voice low and steady, betraying none of the chaos brewing inside me. "Especially when those you care about are threatened." The image of Cleo flashes through my mind her smile, her strength, the softness of her skin under my touch. The thought of her being pawned off ignites a fire in my veins that no amount of reason can extinguish

Greyson studies me, his eyes narrowing as if he sees straight through me. "Ah," he says, the word drawn out and knowing. "So it's personal."

"Isn't it always?" I counter, the corner of my mouth twitching with a humorless smirk

"When it comes to protecting what's yours, the rules change. You know that better than anyone."

I turn to leave, my hand wraps around the handle, the metal cool, when I stop looking back at Greyson

"Tell me, Greyson," I push past the lump in my throat, "if you had your chance over again with Clara?" I watch his jaw clench and his nostrils flare. The air between us thickens with unspoken understanding

His voice, when it comes, is like gravel dragged through dark memories. "I would bring this city to its knees to protect her and Cleo."

"Well, there's your answer, Greyson, because I'd do the same for Cleo," I say, my voice steady

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Greyson's response is immediate and visceral; a laugh erupts from his throat, deep and resonant, filled with recognition

"Indeed." His eyes glint, and there's a fire there that wasn't present moments ago. "Because the only woman worth going to war over is your mate."

It's the truth that has been etched into my bones since the moment I recognized Cleo as mine

“Exactly,” I respond, heat flooding my veins, thinking of Cleo with an intensity that borders on obsession. “And I’ll tear apart anyone who tries to claim her.”

“Love makes us do the unthinkable,” Greyson

muses, his tone suggesting an old wisdom mingled with raw instinct. He knows the stakes, the unspoken rules of this game we’re playing

It’s more than just territories and power it’s about the heart’s relentless drive to protect its counterpart

“Even before she’s fully mine,” I add, the admission rough in my throat. The thought of Cleo, untouched and unaware of the bond, ignites a ferocity within me that’s hard to contain

“Ah, the sweet torture of waiting for the mating bond to snap into place,” Greyson acknowledges, a knowing smirk tugging at his lips. “But when it does, Zayn, you’ll know no bounds. Trust me.”

My jaw clenches at the mention of the bond

The mere idea of claiming Cleo, marking her

flesh with my teeth, branding her soul with my essence it’s intoxicating, maddening

“Your secret’s safe with me,” he says, a smirk forming on his lips. “Cleo is safer that way, for now.” Greyson meets my gaze, the lines around his eyes deepening as he nods once

“I know it is,” I reply

“I’ll be ready when you need me.” But then his brow furrows, a wrinkle of concern fracturing his otherwise hard expression. “But what if he makes her marry Boyd before she gets her wolf?”

My hands clench involuntarily, knuckles whitening as I imagine Cleo bound to another

“She won’t be marrying Boyd. That will never happen. They can make all the wedding arrangements they want; it will be their funeral,” I state firmly, turning back to my car, eager to get back to Cleo

I can feel my wolf creeping beneath my skin, eager for a fight, while Greyson’s piercing gaze holds a quiet determination that matches my own

“So what’s your plan?” he finally breaks the silence, his voice low and almost hesitant

I take a deep breath, trying to calm the anger bubbling inside me before answering. "I don't have one yet," I admit. I open my door

"Well, when you do, let me know." I nod once about to climb into the car when he speaks again

"Almost forgot, I meant to ask you. What about

Deacon? I have had that bitch Lydia snooping around here. I haven't seen the kid since before he went missing, but I thought I felt" Greyson's words trail off, and I can tell he's piecing it together

Fuck. I forgot Deacon was part of Greyson's pack

Greyson looks at me, searching for confirmation. "Did he deserve it?"

"He drugged Cleo with Lydia's help. He was going to..." I can't even finish the sentence, the thought making my blood boil

"Good enough for me. As long as it wasn't cold blood."

"He deserved it, that I assure you," I say, feeling the weight of Greyson's gaze on me

Greyson swallows thickly, his expression pained yet understanding. "Does Cleo know?"

I shake my head

"Does she remember?" Again, I shake my head

"I'll make sure everything is cleaned up on my end. And will make a statement about him going rogue later today," Greyson decides, a plan forming between us

I sigh in relief, grateful this didn't turn ugly

Greyson knows I'm not a liar, and I had every reason and right to since she is my mate. Now, all that's left is to make sure Cleo is safe, no matter what it takes

"Thanks, Greyson. I owe you."

"When the time comes, you know where to find

me

I climb into my car, leaving Alpha Greyson feeling lighter and more determined than

ever

2 2k 2k 2 2 2K 2

~Cleo~

The moment her face hits the brick, blood sprays, splattering the cold surface as her body slumps

“Wha-,” she gasps, her voice gurgling through the blood of her broken nose

“Never speak of her again,” I growl, my voice barely human

I don’t know where it comes from, but it’s like every little thing that has angered me over the

last couple of days chooses now to come pouring out. Rage engulfs me, white and hot, for a second I get this strange instinct that I know isn’t me, but a more animalistic side that is yet to emerge, it wants more, and demands retribution for every poisoned word she’s ever spoken. My nails elongate into claws. She tries to scramble away, but I’m quicker, my clawed hand swiping across her face. Fabric tears, skin parts, and her screams escalate into a wail of agony as J attack her, my fists pounding down on her while she screams, trying to cover her bleeding face

“Stop this, Cleo!” one of the guards shouts, his arms wrapping around my waist and pulling me back. The world snaps back into focus, and I see Lydia crumpled on the ground, both hands cupped over her face, blood seeping between her fingers

“Get off me!” I snap at the guard, still thrumming with residual anger

“Lydia!” Maya’s voice cracks through the chaos, her steps hurried as she rushes to Lydia’s side

“Look what you did!” Maya accuses, her eyes wide with shock

“Me?” I scoff, my chest heaving. “She brought this on herself.”

“Enough, Cleo!” The guard’s grip tightens on my arm, his voice a harsh whisper against the roar of my pulse. “You need to calm down, Cleo, or we’ll be forced to call on your father.”

The mention of my father is like a bucket of ice water over my head, dousing the flames of fury that had been consuming me. My hands tremble, the tips of my claws

still extended, slick with

Lydia's blood

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I blink, trying to clear the red haze from my vision, and I finally see her Lydia, crumpled against the wall, her face a mask of blood-red agony

"You're going to pay for that, Cleo," she gasps between sobs, her eyes bright with unshed tears and hatred. Her threat slices through the last wisps of rage within me, leaving a cold, hollow space in its wake realizing what I've done

"Go cry to my father, Lydia. Make sure you tell him what you said, though!" The words call back at her as I keep walking

Upon reaching safety, I shove the door open and slip through, slamming it shut behind me. The

guards, those watchful hawks, remain outside, their presence a reminder of the gilded cage I'm trapped in

But before I can sigh in relief, a hand clamps over my mouth, silencing the scream that instinctively rises. My elbow shoots back, connecting with a wall of muscle a familiar firmness that halts my panic. "Gotta do better than that, Love," Zayn's voice rumbles against my ear, his laughter a low vibration that sends a shiver down my spine

"Zayn!" I gasp out his name, spinning in his grasp, my hands splayed against the hard planes of his chest. His gray eyes dance with mischief, a spark of wildness that mirrors the tumultuous storm within me

"Missed me?" He smirks, the arrogance that so defines Alpha Zayn Holt written all over his

infuriatingly handsome face

"Like a thorn in my side." But even as I say it, my body betrays me, leaning into his touch, craving the heat of his skin on mine

"Is that why your heart's racing? Or just the adrenaline of smacking Lydia about?" He chuckles as his thumb strokes my cheek, wiping away an invisible smear of her blood

"You heard?"

“Someone live streamed it,” he tells me. Great, my father is going to hand me my ass

I jab a finger toward the door, my pulse racing with a mix of alarm and excitement. “You shouldn’t be here,” I hiss, acutely aware of the danger his presence poses

“Relax, Cleo,” he drawls, closing the distance between us in two easy strides. His smirk widens, and there’s a predatory glint in his eye that both alarms and thrills me. “They won’t hear a thing. And talking was never on the agenda.”

Before I can muster another protest, his hands are cradling my face, thumbs stroking my cheeks with a tenderness that contradicts his brazen nature. Then, he’s leaning down, his lips mere inches from mine, and I’m caught in the gravitational pull of his kiss as his lips brush mine

My fingers tangle in the fabric of Zayn’s shirt, pulling him closer as our kiss deepens. The world outside the whispers, the guards, Lydia-dissolves into nothingness. There’s just Zayn and his intoxicating scent. My hands, driven by a desire that feels bone-deep, slip beneath his

shirt, craving the warmth of his skin against mine

“Easy, Love,” he murmurs against my lips, his voice a deep rumble that resonates within me

He takes my wrists gently but firmly, easing my hands out from under his shirt. “Soon,” he promises

I want to protest, to pull him back to me and lose myself in the heat of his embrace, but the reality of my situation presses in. “You can’t stay here,” I whisper, my words laced with an urgency that mirrors the frantic beating of my heart. My eyes dart to the door, half expecting it to burst open and my world to shatter into chaos

Zayn’s gray eyes lock onto mine, steady and unshakable. “Let them try to take me away,” he says, the corner of his mouth lifting in a half-

smile that does dangerous things to my resolve

“Zayn, this isn’t a joke.” My voice cracks, betraying the fear I’m desperately trying to keep at bay. “If they find you here...”

“Shh,” he soothes, brushing a thumb across my cheek. “They won’t. You worry too much.”

I let out a shaky breath, leaning into his touch despite myself. His confidence is infectious, but it's a fleeting balm. The stakes are too high, the risks too great. And yet, with Zayn so close, with his scent enveloping me and his hands on my skin

"Zayn..." I begin, but the rest of my warning dies on my lips as he leans in, capturing my mouth once more with an urgency that leaves no room for words. Every part of me screams to push him away, to protect us both from the

fallout that would surely follow but the sire bond, the magnetic pull between us, makes resistance near impossible

As his hands roam over my body, every touch ignites a fire that threatens to consume me. It's reckless, it's dangerous-it's everything I've been warned to avoid. And yet, I don't want him to stop

I grab his wrists, trying to pull him away from me. The heat of his skin seeps into mine, urging me to forget everything but the here and now

"Zayn, seriously. If they catch you in here..."

He just laughs, a deep sound that only deepens my desperation worried my father's enforcers will hear him. It's a laugh that knows no fear, no consequence. "What's your guard gonna do, come submit to me?" His eyes dance with mischief, and I can't help but picture the scene

"Stop joking," I hiss, glancing nervously at the door even though I know it's solidly shut. "No, they catch you, they'll tell my father." My voice trembles

His hands, which had been moments ago mapping the terrain of my body, still against my ribs. His eyes lock onto mine, the golden flecks in them igniting with something fierce, something defiant. "And I told you, I don't fear your father, so you shouldn't either," he replies confidently, his thumb tracing the curve of my hip bone

But the words that spill from my lips next come out laced with a cold dread. "He threatened to give my pack to Lydia," I confess, the fear evident in my voice. The very thought coils in my stomach making me feel queasy knowing she would have her filthy paws on my mother's pack

"That's my mother's pack!" I remind him. Zayn's expression hardens, the playfulness

that danced in his eyes a moment ago now gone. He pulls me closer, his breath hot against my ear. "I know, Cleo. Let him give it to her if he so chooses. You'll get it back, you only have to challenge her for it." He lets me go, falling onto my bed while I ponder what he said

“By challenging her?” I ask, the idea slowly taking root

“See, you’re stressing over nothing. Now, get here,” he commands softly, patting the bed beside him

“Why are you even here?” I question, still processing everything

“I missed you. Isn’t it obvious?” he says, pulling me down to straddle his lap

“It hasn’t even been half a day,” I deadpan, trying to maintain some semblance of control

“And even that is too long,” he chuckles, his lips finding my neck

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Cleo

Zayn’s lips trace a fiery path down my neck, igniting a trail of desire that pools deep within me. His hands are everywhere, deft and commanding, coaxing moans from my lips, which he does his best to muffle. The world outside my bedroom fades away— into the electric touch of the man I’m tangled with on my crappy rumpled dorm sheets. Zayn shoves me back on the bed; his eyes flicker as he moves over the top of me

But reality crashes back to both of us when my phone blares its insistent ring, slicing through the haze that swept over us. Zayn pauses, and my head turns to the side where my bag is. I

push on his chest, and he growls at the interruption but reluctantly allows me to get up and grab it

Climbing out of my bed I snatch it from where it rests on my bag and books. My heart sinks; I know without looking who it will be. With a heavy sigh, I glance at Zayn, and he takes that opportunity to pull me back onto his lap so I am straddling him

“Don’t answer it,” he groans, his lips moving toward mine. I press my finger gently against Zayn’s full lips, pausing him mid-kiss. He glances up, eyebrows knit in annoyance at the interruption

“Hold on,” I whisper, holding up the vibrating device between us so he can see Dad’s name flashing on the screen

“Your timing sucks, Joseph,” Zyan mutters under his breath and I glare at him telling him to shut up before pressing answer. “Hey, Dad?”

"Where are you?" he doesn't even give me a chance to answer. "You need to be at pack training. Now," his voice is curt, brooking no argument

"Seriously? Now?" I pull away from Zayn, but he grabs my hips, holding me in place. "Can't it wait?"

"No, Cleo, it can't. I am sick of this tiff between you and Lydia," Dad growls through the phone, his alpha tone seeping through the line, making me shiver

"Maybe if Lydia hadn't called Mom a whore" I

start, my voice rising with anger. He hasn't even heard my side of the story and is making

assumptions already

"Enough!" he snaps. "I don't know who to believe anymore, Cleo. You've been caught out lying too many times."

"Are you serious?" I feel a hollow pit form in my stomach. "Dad, Lydia lies like it's as natural as breathing."

"I don't care. You are hardly role model material right now. Today, it will be sorted out properly once and for all. We need to stand united, and you two look on the verge of going to war with each other. Be there at 4 PM." He hangs up before I can argue further

"Damn it," I curse, throwing the phone onto the bed. It's already 3:30 PM-the sinking feeling in my gut tells me this will end badly, but what choice do I have?

"Your father being a dick?" Zayn's voice, laced with concern, breaks through my frustration

"Yeah," I admit, running a hand through my tousled hair. "He wants me at pack training to sort out the drama with Lydia."

"Lydia again?" Zayn's gray eyes flash with a mixture of irritation and something else. "That girl is nothing but trouble for you."

"Tell me about it," I say, pushing myself off his lap. My movements are jerky and rushed. I have to get ready, have to face whatever ridiculous resolution Dad has in mind

"Don't go, come back to mine." Zayn's hand catches mine, stilling my frantic movements. His thumb brushes over my skin, sending shivers down my spine despite the dread coiling in my belly

"I have to, you know this." I remind him, and he hangs his head and curses

“Fine, just be careful around her.”

“Always am,” I respond, though my bravado feels like it’s wearing thin these days.

“Don’t worry about me. I’ll handle it; I am not your

problem.”

“Like hell you aren’t,” he says, the edge in his tone making me pause. “You shouldn’t go alone.”

“Zayn, this 1s pack business. I have to deal with

1. My father would flip his lid if you showed up with me.” I slip my hand from his grasp, feeling

the loss of his warmth immediately

“Pack business or not, it sounds like a trap Lydia has you walking into,” he insists, standing

to tower over me. His presence is commanding, reassuring, and yet utterly infuriating

“Since when are you my keeper?” I shoot back, the emotional turmoil bubbling into defiance

“Since I started dating you, Cleo,” he retorts, his gaze intense

“You’re being ridiculous,” I tell him

“Am I? Because you’ve had nothing but issues for weeks now with that bitch, and every time I’ve spoken to you since your father has been forcing you into situations he has no right putting you in.”

I swallow hard, my heart pounding. “Just... stay out of it, alright? This is something I need to do on my own.”

His jaw clenches, and for a moment, I think he’ll argue further. But then he nods, stepping back with a frustrated huff. “Fine. But if things go sideways, I’m coming for you.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that,” I reply, though part of me thrills at the idea of being someone worth coming for. Deacon certainly wouldn’t have dropped everything to come to my aid out of fear of my father

The look he gives me as he turns to leave is filled with unspoken promises and dark warnings

“See you later,” I say, but he’s already climbing out my window. He stops perched on the windowsill and motions with one finger for me to go to him. I move toward him, only for him to grab the front of my top and yank me closer, crashing his lips against mine briefly. “Training

grounds?” I pull away. “I just wanna know in case you call me to come get you,” he adds. I eye him suspiciously

“Or just say the word, and I’ll march you out that door while telling your guards to suck each other’s dicks and kidnap you?” I huff