

Chosen by Fate 231

Chapter 231 - Trinity - Birthday Party (VOLUME 2)

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Trinity

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When the day of the party rolled around it was to the best weather we could have hoped for. It was a beautiful cloudless blue sky shining down on the forest and clearing. There were several massive tents placed around the yard. There was a tent for delicious BBQ favorites, a tent for the variety of desserts, one for drinks, and of course one for gifts. You can't have a birthday party without gifts and the pack was not skimping. The table for the gifts was so full that it was overflowing onto the tarped ground. I had a special gift for Reece too, but I was going to give it to him tonight, when we were alone.

When everyone was arriving they stopped by Reece and I to say hello and wish the main guest a happy birthday. Reece was acting all embarrassed by the attention but I could tell he loved it all.

Riley came up to us then, a big grin on his face, his youngest fast asleep in his arms. At least I knew there would be no shoulder punches while they spoke this time.

"Hey there Fang, happy birthday."

"Fuck you, Fifi." Reece responded with a grumpy look, Katie and I just looked at each other and smiled. Boys will always be boys, no matter that mine was twenty-six now, he was still just a big toddler.

"Were you really hurting for new things that badly that you had to have a party to replenish, or was it that you like the attention that much."

"Bite me, Benji." That was Reece's only retort.

"I see you're branching out, that's good." Riley was laughing as he came closer to us. He was moving in to give Reece a quick one armed hug.

After Reece, Riley leaned toward me for a hug as well.

"Thank you for putting up with this fool for me." Riley joked.

"I've got no choice, I love the fool." I joked back. Riley was laughing at my weak joke and backing away when all of a sudden he stopped and stared at me, a knowing look in his eyes. He looked between Reece and I a few times with a raised eyebrow.

"Hmm." He hummed curiously for a moment. "Hey, Trinity, are you-?"

"Shh." I cut his question off mid way through it. "How did you know?" I whispered to him.

"I've got a way more sensitive nose than most wolves, like four times stronger. It's a curse really." He smirked at me. "But you are?" I nodded to answer him.

"But don't say anything, we're going to make an announcement, don't ruin it."

"Mums the words." He grinned.

"What are you two whispering about?" Reece stepped closer and put his hand around my waist. "What's going on?" He added.

"No worries Reece, everything's fine." I assured him.

"Yeah, I was just offering to sell her some really embarrassing photos of you from your awkward phase."

"I never had an awkward phase." Reece countered proudly.

"Yeah, you sure it's not just happening now?" Riley's joke made Reece's confidence falter.

"Want an ass kicking Fifi?"

"Just messing. Happy birthday buddy." Riley winked at me and walked away with his family in tow. Phew, That could have been a disaster.

After the greetings were over everyone at the party mingled. There was music playing and a dance floor. There was a place with fun things for kids to do, like squirt guns, water balloons, a bouncy castle, and a lot of toys that we had on hand from the daycare. We were still running the daycare, but with everything that had happened, Mom and Lila had taken over it for me. They were doing amazingly well with it too.

We sang happy birthday for Reece, cliché yes but totally necessary. Reece, and everyone else loved the cake, the decorations had been done with such artistry that it was like a work of art. And it tasted divine, what little of it I had managed. It seemed that these babies were going to give me trouble right now. Most foods made me sick to my stomach just looking at them. But I still enjoyed what I could of it.

There were too many gifts for Reece to open during the party, so it was something we were going to do throughout the next week, and I would make sure everyone was tanked properly because I know he would never do it alone.

I was so happy with how things were going. This party was coming along very nicely. I couldn't have asked for a better day. And now, as the sun was going down, it was time for our news. For some reason, Reece wanted to wait and tell them all right before the fireworks were set to start.

We made our way to the head of the gathering, bringing everyone attention to us. Once we made it to the raised platform that had been prepared for us to stand on everyone was eyeing us curiously. They seemed expectant, like they knew something was coming but didn't know what it was.

I heard excited whispers and snippets of conversations as we made our way to the front of the party.

"I wonder what's going on?"

"Could something bad have happened?"

"No, they wouldn't tell us bad news at a party, it has to be something good."

"This is exciting, what could the Luna Queen and Alpha King have to tell us?"

These little tidbits of conversations all brought a smile to my face as I prepared to give them our speeches. We had two speeches prepared really. We were going to lull them into a false direction and then blindsides them with the major news, it was going to be kind of funny really.

"Hello everyone, I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate with us today, to celebrate my husband's birthday and our continued happiness here in the Red Springs Pack." I was smiling.

"There is more news we would like to share with you all as well. Something wonderful has happened recently." I heard gasps and jittery, gleeful laughs spread through the crowd, especially from the women.

"I would first like to ask our good friend Dietrich to come to the stage." I held my hand out toward him as I said this.

Dietrich came quickly, walking as if the obstacle of people in his path wasn't an issue, for a vampire that can move in the shadows, I guess it wasn't. But his shadow walk seemed to have been improved, made more seamless and effortless. That must have been an enhancement for him from Selene.

"Thank you." Dietrich nodded to them and us as he reached our platform.

"Dietrich received some wonderful news just recently, something we thought would be best shared here tonight." Reece had his left arm around Dietrich's shoulders, a show of their friendship.

"On the night of the battle with Edmond's monsters, his mate had been mortally wounded and infected with a poison. During his attempt to heal him, the Goddess, Selene, came to me and told me something amazing." I paused and smiled at Dietrich and then the crowd. "Dietrich, who is an amazing man and a powerful elder vampire, has been chosen as Selene's spiritual successor, she has named Dietrich as the Vampire King. I know this doesn't change much as he was already their leader, but this means he now bears marks from the Goddess, the same as I do."

"Dietrich, a very good friend of my family's, has ascended and become someone even more powerful. He is an amazing person and a strong leader. I am proud to call him my ally, and my friend." When Reece finished the three of us smiled at each other and then the crowd. Everyone that was gathered broke out into massive applause, congratulating Dietrich. There was a lot of cheering coming from them as well. Everyone here seemed to love Dietrich too. I was glad.

Just as the cheering started to die down Reece and I looked at each other with twin grins of excitement. We now only had the other revelation to give them, and it was the best news of the night.

"Now, there is something else we found out on that night as well." Reece raised his voice to be heard over the commotion that could still be heard. Instantly everyone quieted down and looked back at us. I noticed Dietrich step away and head somewhere behind us.

"It was not long after the battle, and after my conversation with the Goddess Selene, that Dietrich told us of something else that was going to change our lives forever." I smiled at them all.

"Over the last several months there has been a lot of heart ache for our pack, and for our family personally. There were the children who had gone missing, there was the fight that had cost so many lives, that night and the many lives Edmond stole to make his monsters. There was also the night that

our unborn baby was taken from us. It was the hardest night of our lives. We were devastated." Reece's voice held a note, a hint, of that emotional toll it took on us. They got to glimpse the pain we had felt.

"But there is hope, there is a new reason to be happy again." I was beaming, grinning madly at them all, and so was Reece. We probably looked insane as we grinned so big.

"The night of the Battle of Edmond, Dietrich, our very good friend, told us of something that had escaped our notice that morning, but to be fair we were awakened by a phone call alerting us to the approaching horde."

"Dietrich shared with us the most wonderful news we could have hoped for that night."

Right as I said those words there was an explosion behind me. I wasn't expecting that, so I turned to look at the sky where the massive fireworks were exploding in bright pink and blue sparks. There were two baby bottles, one pink and one blue. There were two cartoonish looking baby faces, one pink and one blue, and there were just several large explosions that looked like stars and hearts, all in pink and blue.

"Dietrich told us we were expecting again. And this time it's twins!" Reece yelled these words to the crowd so he could be heard over the sound of the fireworks. The cheers erupted immediately.

If I had thought the cheering and applause was loud for Dietrich, it was nothing compared to this. There was so much noise I thought the whole party was going to go deaf. And I could see our families and my guards all making their way up to the platform. They were excited and smiling happily.

Mom and Dad got to me first, hugging me so tightly that I thought I was going to pop between them.

"Oh, sweetheart, I am so happy for you." Mom was cooing and crying happily at the same time.

"I know you're going to be a great mother." Dad added as he squeezed me tighter.

Noah and Carter came up next, Nikki and Emmalee right there with them.

"OH MY GODDESS!" Emmalee squealed. "If you thought I went crazy for birthdays and weddings, wait until you see the baby shower I'm going to throw for you. I am going to personally make sure you're kept in a bubble so my party can go off without a hitch.

"Our babies will still be so close in age, they can all play together and be raised together." Nikki hugged me gently, her belly now massive as she was only a couple weeks away from delivering my little nephew.

"I'm so happy for you." Noah hugged me, his tears falling onto my face.

"You're gonna do great." Carter added his arms around me, hugging me with Noah.

"Is this what Dietrich has been hiding?" Shawn asked me as they all got closer to me.

"Yes." I nodded to him. "He told us after he made you a hybrid."

"Oh Goddess, I thought he didn't love me anymore." Shawn laughed. "I'm so happy for you Trinity." He hugged me as tightly as the others had.

"It will be so much more fun with a couple babies around the house." Shane added.

"If you need any advice, just ask me or Heather." Vincent added his kind words and hug as well.

"I'm happy for you, but please don't give Rawlynne any ideas, I'm not ready for that yet." David half joked as he gave me his hug.

After David stepped aside Lila took his place.

"I can't believe you two knew that long and didn't tell me, I live in the same house as you dammit." She hugged me and slapped Reece's arm.

"Ouch, why did you hit me?"

"Because I'm happy you idiot." She hugged him after that and stepped aside to let Grandfather come forward.

"I am happy for you, I knew you would rise again. You're so strong, Trinity."

"Because you raised me to be strong." I hugged him as he held me close to his chest.

"I will have to do my best to protect you all this time around."

"We will all be doing a better job, Grandfather, no need to worry."

"I will always worry about you, I always have."

The night continued like this for a while. People congratulated us and told us how excited they were. It took a while before they all started to leave, still wearing smiles and looking excited. It was an amazing day, and I was glad Reece had done the fireworks, they turned out amazing. Even the ones that went after the baby themed ones. He had really made me happy with them all.

But now, it was time to head back to our room so I could give him his birthday present.

Chapter 232 - Trinity - Private Party (VOLUME 2) ((MATURE))

11-14 minutes

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Trinity

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On the way back to our room, Reece got a phone call and had to stop by the office. It wasn't anything life threatening, just work related. So, while he was on the call I decided to head back alone and hop in the shower. Being cleaned up would be a plus and it gave me time to prepare my surprises for him.

I hurried through my shower and dressed in the special 'outfit' I had for tonight. It was something I thought Reece would appreciate a lot. Plus, I never planned to wear it again so I didn't care if he ripped it.

I was able to get his cake positioned on the table, though it was covered with a silver dome to hide the special design. I had his present sitting on the table, wrapped neatly in its small box and beautiful forest green paper. And I was sitting in a chair, wrapped in my bathrobe, waiting for him.

I didn't have to wait for long. I had only been ready with everything for maybe five minutes when I heard him coming up the stairs. His steps were light and I didn't detect any frustration from him so the call hadn't taxed him too much, that was good.

When he opened the door and saw me sitting there in my bathrobe and my still damp hair hanging loosely by my shoulders he grinned.

"What's this?" He asked me, his voice already going husky.

"I thought maybe I would give you your birthday present privately." I made my voice sound like a purr.

"I see the box, but are you one of my presents too?" He was definitely taking the bait, there was no doubt in my mind that he would anyway.

"Maybe, after you open your other gifts first." The heady, seductive note in my voice didn't go unnoticed by him, I could see the slight tightening in his jeans at my words.

"Then let's hurry up and get to those presents." The smile on his face held both joy and anticipation. This was going to be an exciting night.

Reece crossed the room in quick, long strides, coming up to me and placing a quick kiss to the top of my head before he sat in the chair right next to mine.

"So, what do you have for me?" He asked, reaching for the dome over the cake.

"Wait, open this first." I stopped him as I held out the small wrapped present before he could see the cake. It wouldn't completely ruin things, but I wanted him to see the gift first.

Reece didn't say a word, he just grabbed the gift from my outstretched hand and started to rip off the paper. I swear, he could act like such a toddler at times, especially when I gave him a gift.

With the pretty green paper and the cute little bow torn off and flung away haphazardly, Reece now only had the small black box that fit in the palm of his large hand. Slowly, he lifted the lid and pulled out the custom made piece I had designed for him.

It was like a pocket watch, in the sense that it went in the pocket and had a chain, but it didn't have a watch. This was a beautifully designed locket for him. It was about as big around as my fist, which was much smaller than his, and it was in the shape of a wolf's paw. The piece was made from platinum and outlined in black gold. The pads of the toes for the paw each held a large diamond that glittered in the light.

There was a button on the top in the middle that you pressed to open the locket. It didn't open in one fluid motion on a single hinge like most lockets. No, this locket opened in a french door style. A near invisible clasp in the middle held the two doors shut until they swung outward to reveal the images inside.

Each of the four toes could hold a small picture, just like a regular locket. But what was special about this locket, was that the large center of the wolf's paw could also hold a picture.

"This is beautiful, Little Bunny." He said as he looked up from the elaborate piece. "You designed this didn't you?"

"Yes, I did." I smiled at him as I nodded my head.

"It's beautiful. But why did you only put two pictures in it when it will hold five?" There were indeed only two pictures, one of Reece on the far left side and one of me on the far right. The middle two toes and large area were empty.

"Well, when the babies are born, I figure we could put their pictures in the other top two spots and fill the bottom with a family picture." I saw the joy and love in his eyes, and for a moment the slight misting of tears that filled them as well.

"That's amazing, sweetheart. I love it. And I am going to fill it just like you said and wear it every day." At those words he leaned over and hugged me tightly, his smiling face pressed against my hair.

My scent must have been strong. Just after he started hugging me I could hear a growl of desire coming from him.

"Mmmm, you smell like such a delicious dessert. Can I eat you now?" He may have sounded like he was joking, but I knew he was serious. He would spend the night devouring me if I let him. I was inclined to do just that.

"You need to see the rest of it all first. Which do you want now? What's under my robe, or what's under the dome?" I knew he would think there was nothing under the robe and choose that option first.

"Under the robe." He nearly yelled in his excitement and rush to get the words out. I called it. I just grinned at him and stood up.

Slowly, I took just a couple steps away from him, backing up but never taking my eyes off of him. In slow, teasing motions I slowly slipped the robe off my right shoulder, revealing just a little bit of skin at first.

With a grin I turned around, showing him my back as I looked over my shoulder at him to gauge his response. Next, I lowered the robe from my left shoulder, revealing the emerald green sash I was wearing across my body like a beauty pageant winner. There was nothing else but the sash.

Slowly, I lowered the robe all the way, showing him all of my back and the sash that circled it. When the robe had slipped free of my arms I let it fall to the ground.

"That's a beautiful sight, but can I see the rest now." He asked me in a deep, desire filled voice.

"Oh, I guess so." I joked as I turned slowly to face him.

The sash went across the front of my body, blocking a small portion of my breasts from his view, but as it ended at my waist and didn't hide the lower view he was content in watching me.

"Mmm, now that looks like a birthday present." His voice rumbled through the room. "What does that say?" He asked me as he noticed the words on the sash for the first time. "Oh, I like the sound of that." He rumbled even more. The sash that he had just read was printed with white lettering and said 'PROPERTY OF FIDO'. "If that's true, can I do whatever I want with you?" His voice was a growl this time, not a threatening one, but one that sent jolts of excitement coursing through my body.

"Well, I am yours after all." I grinned at him. "But now it's time for the last present." I pointed to the dome.

With no hesitation Reece whipped the dome off the cake and looked down at the elaborately designed confection. It was in the shape of a cartoon dog head. It was a big German Shepherd with a goofy grin. The dog's tongue was sticking out the side of its mouth making it look even sillier. And there was a crown sitting crookedly over the dog's left ear. But the really funny part was that the collar the dog was wearing at the very bottom of the cake said 'FIDO'.

"Oh, you're really playing at the dog jokes tonight, huh?"

"Can you blame me, you are a dog after all."

"Oh, I can show you just how much of a dog I really am, baby, so you better get ready." His eyes darkened with desire as he stalked toward me, excitement exploded inside me and I pretended to be scared.

"Ahh!" I squealed and ran away from him.

"Oh, you're not getting away from me. Remember, you're mine."

"Then that means you agree your name is Fido."

"Only for you baby, only for you." He purred as he caught up to me, wrapping his arm around my waist.

"Eek." I squealed again as I felt my feet leave the floor and my body was flung toward the bed. He landed on top of me just seconds after I bounced onto the mattress.

"I'm going to enjoy this." He grinned at me. "But let's set this aside for now." He gingerly took the sash off over my head. I thought he would rip it off like wrapping paper, I guess he wanted to have me wear it again. I could do that, it was fun for me too, after all.

With the sash set aside Reece buried his face in my left shoulder, inhaling my scent deeply before swiping his tongue across my mate mark with one long, slow stroke.

"Yum." He rumbled the word but then suddenly seemed to have an idea. "Wait here." He slid off the bed and stepped across the room. By the time I had sat up he was already walking back toward me, the cake in hand.

"Reece, what are you doing? We can eat that later, we were in the middle of something."

"But I want to have my cake and eat it too." he joked. I was confused for a moment.

"What?" I asked just as he used his right hand to swipe at the frosting on the cake, ruining the beautiful designs.

"Reece." I was shocked.

My surprise didn't last too long, he just straddled me and swiped the frosting across my neck.

"Hmm, should I taste here?" He asked as he dipped his fingers into the frosting again. "Or here?" He asked himself again as he wiped frosting on my left breast. "No, maybe here." This process continued until he had swiped a line of frosting across my cheek, neck, each breast, my belly, left thigh, and a small amount right above my dripping core. I was already ready for him, but he was going to take his time.

"Time to eat." I saw a glint of excitement light up his eyes, but behind that was his hungry desire for me.

With one last swipe of his finger he spread a small dab of frosting onto my lips and immediately followed that with his lips. It was like he was trying to not only kiss me and lick away the frosting but like he was trying to eat me whole and draw me into him, it was intense and sexy as hell.

When he pulled away and broke the kiss I was panting for breath, my desire and need already reaching its peak. I wanted him, bad.

He continued to tease me though. Slowly he licked at my flesh, devouring the frosting and me at the same time, leaving long hot, wet trails in his wake. He licked across my left breast first, then grazed it slowly with his teeth before drawing it completely inside his mouth. The suction was intense but exquisite. With every draw of his mouth I felt a pulsing, throbbing ache between my thighs.

After Reece had his fill of suckling my breasts he moved lower. I felt his tongue stroke feather light across my stomach. Each slow stroke of his warm wet tongue sent shivers through me.

"Nngh." I moaned softly at the erotic feeling and I shivered once again when his tongue dipped inside my belly button. "Ah, Reece." I called out his name as I buried my hands in his hair. He just chuckled against my flesh, sending a chill along the wet skin.

He was devouring me as he lapped up his frosting. I was his meal, his snack, the dessert he often referred to me as. And I was enjoying every second of it.

When his head dipped lower and he lapped at the frosting on my thigh I jerked. My whole body spasmed at the feeling of his hot mouth on my sensitive, ticklish leg. I moaned again, unable to stop myself.

"Nngh, ahh." Shuddering and gasping as I moaned, causing his mouth to press closer. I nearly screamed in the next second when he sank his teeth into my thigh, a light bite that I knew would leave a purplish hickey behind for just a little while.

When Reece moved just slightly up my body to lap at the frosting he had placed at my core, my mind went blank. I couldn't think at all, I could only feel the pleasure of his mouth on me.

Chapter 233 - Reece - Have My Cake And Eat It Too (VOLUME 2) ((MATURE))

7-8 minutes

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Reece

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When I had walked into the room to see my wife sitting there at the table with her robe on, I had gotten my hopes up. I had hoped that something like this was planned and I was happy that I was right.

And when I saw the sash she was wearing that read 'PROPERTY OF FIDO' I nearly swallowed my tongue. I know my eyes must have darkened when I saw her slow, teasing reveal and the mouth watering sight that stood before me. My mate was the best there was. And the most sexy.

That cake may have been a little much, but I still loved it. She was mine and I was hers, no matter the situation. And the best part of tonight was that I could be a dog all I wanted. I was going to prove to her just how much of one I really was.

When I stepped away from her naked body to grab the cake, I thought she was going to hit me, but she saw that I was not abandoning her and all was well. I really just wanted to savor my dessert and this seemed like too good of an opportunity to pass up.

Slowly, I applied the frosting and then took my time devouring her. She didn't seem to notice the bites I was leaving on her until I got to her thigh though, she really was super sensitive there. What would she say in the morning when she woke to the numerous purplish marks all over her delectable little body. Just thinking about them made my already hard dick twitch just a little more.

When I finally settled my head between her legs, lapping at her sweet tender folds, she screamed. Her head flew back and she screamed my name.

"REECE!" She was so sensitive and needy tonight. I could get used to this if that is how the whole pregnancy was going to be.

The sweet, vanilla flavored frosting just helped to intensify her own natural flavor of vanilla and apples. I couldn't get enough of it. I had meant to go slow, to take my time and enjoy my birthday present, but as soon as I started to devour her core I lost my patience and control.

With hard, fast licks and laps with my tongue I ate the sweetened, creamy frosting from her body, but I didn't stop. I continued to devour her. Licking between every fold, burying my tongue deep inside her wet opening and swallowing her juices. I couldn't get enough.

With every lap of my tongue her breath seemed to hitch up a little more until she almost seemed to be hyperventilating. She was screaming incoherently, just sounds of pleasure as I ate away at her desire.

When the screaming and panting became too much for her I could tell she was cascading over the edge. One more lick and she flew apart before me. I felt her hands dig big fistfuls of my hair, hanging on tight so she didn't drift away with her ecstasy. I felt little pinpricks of pain from the hair being pulled but all it accomplished was sending me into a frenzy, sparking my desire and need into a fever pitch.

The waves of her orgasm hadn't even left her body when I pushed the top of my jeans down and placed myself at her opening. I couldn't wait. I drove into her with a savage, animalistic need.

It was almost like I wasn't in control anymore. My wolf had taken the lead, the reins tethering him in the back had snapped and he was taking his place where he wanted to be the most.

I didn't fight my wolf, I let him lead. He set about creating a feverish rhythm, more frantic and hungry than I had ever pushed her to. But she seemed to be either ok with it or too far gone to notice.

As I watched my wolf move, me watching mentally from the sidelines, I saw my mouth being directed to my Little Bunny's neck. My tongue lapped out and licked the spot where I marked her so long ago.

After the quick lick my wolf sunk our teeth into her flesh, and not gently. He was remarking her. He had never been in the forefront, never in the lead, when I marked her and now he was taking his chance.

"Nngh." She moaned when my teeth broke her flesh, the pain being mixed in with the pleasure she was feeling in that moment. I heard the rumbling growl of pleasure that came from my wolf as he heard that moan.

With her tender flesh in my mouth, the slight taste of blood accompanying it, I felt the build of power as it passed from me to her. I didn't know what effect a remarking would have on her but I couldn't stop it now, it was too late.

The heat, pleasure, and power coursed from me into her. The feeling was unlike either of our previous markings, it was more intense, and more erotic. I felt like even though I was already driving into her with a feverish pounding my dick was going to explode from the need to have her.

The speed and need of my thrusts increased. She was crying out with every brutal pound that met her sweet tender body, and my wolf growled with every thrust.

I don't know exactly when, or how, it happened, but soon I seemed to be looking down at her from higher up, and her flesh that was still inside my mouth seemed to fit differently from before. When I looked out of the corner of my eye at my hand, I saw it was claw tipped and covered in fur. I had become my lycan form as I drove into her.

My clothes had shredded around us and I was now fully naked, but that didn't matter. I could feel her supple skin, ample breasts, tender areas, they were all pressed against my new body in a way it had never been touched before and I couldn't get enough of it.

I could feel myself reaching my limit, I was going to explode soon. But my wolf wasn't going to have it. He threw our head back and howled, fighting to ravage her body that much more. He thrust at least a dozen times more, my body struggling to release as he mentally fought me off.

Eventually though, my body won out and both my wolf and I roared at the same time. I exploded inside her and she screamed with another wave of ecstasy cascading over her. Her tight little body was milking me with crushing force, I was larger in this form and the hard, persistent squeezes from her body made that abundantly clear.

With a sigh of satisfaction my wolf retreated. My body collapsed next to her and I scooped her into my arms. I was reluctant to pull out of her comforting warmth so I stayed there just a few moments longer, luxuriating in the feel of her.

I was still in my lycan form when I separated us, but she didn't seem to notice. She was already fast asleep in my arms, breathing heavily. I licked the mark I had just re-bitten, helping it to heal just a little quicker. With a smile I fell asleep holding her, my breath chuffing out above her as I was still not my normal self.

It would be the next morning before we noticed the new mark on her trinity chain, this one that looked like a lycan inside a star. The weird part was, I had one now too. I wonder what those marks were for?

Chapter 234 - EPILOGUE 1 (VOLUME 2)

9-11 minutes

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Juniper

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I don't know if it was the party atmosphere or not, but after we got home from Reece's birthday party I wanted Paul more than I had wanted anything in a long time. I spent the whole night enveloped in his arms, our passion spilling over each other. It was the most intense thing we had done in a long time.

I woke to a pleasant ache in my body and the warmth of Paul still wrapped around me. His scent, like the wind coming off the ocean mixed with fresh coconut milk. It was always so refreshing being with him.

Just after I woke I could tell that Paul had woken up too. I hadn't moved, but he always knew when I was awake, I think he could feel me watching him.

"You're burning hole in me." He joked, a laugh chasing the sleep from his voice. "I know I'm irresistible, but do you have to scrutinize me so early in the morning?"

"It's not early, dummy, it's almost noon."

"Mmm, then should we have some lunch?" He joked as he tightened his arms around me. "You smell so good."

"You're such an animal." I laughed as I playfully smacked his arm. "I must smell like sweat after last night."

"I'm not joking. You smell amazing. Your scent is so much stronger today." His eyes were open now, all traces of sleep seemed to have left his face.

Paul was raised up on his arms and hovering over me. He kissed my neck and groaned in pleasure.

"It's so good." He kissed across my collar bone. "So delicious." He kissed across my bare chest.

"Raspberries and strawberries, so strong." He kissed across my stomach and froze. "So strong." He said again, only this time with more intensity.

For some reason Paul buried his nose in my belly button.

"So much stronger than usual. So intense." He inhaled deeply. When Paul raised his head he was grinning at me. The look on his face was goofy and sweet yet kind of unsettling.

"What is it?" I asked him, confused.

"Your scent is stronger, more intense, and somehow different." He was grinning and looking like a crazy man.

"I heard that already. What's wrong with you though?"

"I'm just happy." His face looked ready to crack open from the intensity of the smile he was wearing.

"Because you're pregnant."

I felt my stomach drop to my feet then instantly float right up to my throat, triple in size and choking me. At the same time, my heart rate sped into high gear, speeding up to go a mile a minute at least.

"What?" I asked him, dumbfounded. We had talked about kids, and we both wanted them. But I was nineteen and he was twenty. Yeah, werewolves always have kids early but I was still in school. He had dropped out after the most recent semester because of his job as a warrior and trainer. We had decided to take an if it happens it happens approach but not to actively try until I graduated. This was so sudden, so spur of the moment, and so exciting.

Once my brain processed what he had said I broke out into a big smile.

"I'm pregnant?" I asked him, my elation making me feel like I was on cloud nine.

"Yup." He was still grinning so much that it looked painful, but I was probably wearing a smile just as big so I didn't care.

"Oh Paul, I'm so happy." I squealed, reaching out to hug his head to my chest.

"You and me both honey, you and me both."

After I got up I felt like I was floating. All through my shower I didn't feel my feet touching the tile floor. All through getting ready for the day I felt like I was taking off into orbit. Everything seemed to make me float and grin. Nothing could ever bring down my mood, nothing.

I needed to tell people, I needed to share the news. I had to tell Trinity, I had to tell my brother, and my mom and dad. But my best friend was going to be first. She was the closest thing to a sister I had and she was my best friend.

It was just after noon that I called Trinity and asked if she wanted to have lunch. This was a regular enough occurrence so it didn't seem off, right? It was just a bestie calling up and saying 'hey let's do lunch'. Nothing suspicious right?

I could usually hide anything from just about anyone. I was the lie detector and could sniff the truth out from other people but I was the iron fortress, the vault that couldn't be penetrated. But the moment that Trinity sat down at the booth in our favorite diner she just grinned at me. Reece slid in with her, I knew she would have either him or Vincent with her.

"You seem happy. What's the good news?"

"Is it that obvious?" I just beamed at her, making no effort to hide my excitement.

"Girl, even if I didn't know where you were today I only had to follow the bat signal you're projecting into the sky. You're glowing so much it's like a searchlight." She was grinning at me as she made her jokes.

"Well, you're right, I am happy." I grinned at her. "Exceedingly so." I just laughed, I couldn't contain my joy.

"Well, let's order our lunch and then you can tell me all about it." She was smiling but not rushing me. I just nodded and picked up my menu.

A little while later we were staring at our plates full of delicious looking food, Reece digging in first like a starved man. As I watched him and looked at how tired both he and Trinity looked I could guess that the two of them had just as exciting of a night as I had. Not only that but there was a massive hickey on Trinity's neck that was only partially covered by the sleeveless turtleneck she was wearing. I grinned at them knowingly but they didn't seem to notice.

The food tasted amazing, and I felt so hungry after all the excitement. I took a big bite and moaned softly.

"Mmm, this is so good." I sighed with relief as I started to fill my belly.

"Yeah it is." Trinity grinned and looked at me with suspicious eyes. "So, what's the good news?" She had a quizzical look on her face but I could see the underlying investigator look in her eyes. She was curious and would find out one way or the other, but she knew I was going to tell her so that didn't matter.

"Well, I woke up to some very happy, and exciting news today." I grinned at her, I just couldn't keep the smiles off my face today. I felt like I had been smiling so much that it was likely to become my new permanent look. I didn't care, I was too happy to care.

"Really? And what news would that be?" She was smiling happily at me. She was not pressing for more details yet, she was letting me guide this conversation at my own speed. Honestly I am kind of proud of myself for not jumping with joy when I saw her screaming 'I'm pregnant, I'm pregnant'. This was actually a miraculous feat for me right now with how happy I was feeling.

"Well, I didn't discover this happy thing myself." I grinned being cryptic.

"Oh really? Then who told you whatever this happy thing is?"

"Paul did actually." I blushed as I remembered the scene this morning, how it had turned from an intimate moment to one of pure joy for us both, all thoughts of sex and intimacy flying straight out the window.

"Really? What exactly did Paul say?" She had a knowing look on her face, like she could tell what I was getting at.

"Oh, nothing too serious really." I joked. "Just that I'm pregnant."

"Juniper!" She squealed my name. "I thought you might be alluding to that, but to know I was right, oh my Goddess, this is amazing." She was bouncing on her seat like she just couldn't sit still. "Our babies will be so close in age, and Nikki's baby will be just under half a year older than ours, they will all grow up together and it will be so much fun having playdates for them. I am so excited, this is amazing."

"I know, I am so happy, and so excited. I feel like I am going to just float out of this booth and keep going until I reach the moon. I didn't know it was possible to be this happy and excited."

"It's a wonderful feeling isn't it. Once the initial shock wears off. It's the best thing there is." She reached across the table and took my hand. "I'm so happy I am going to be pregnant at the same time as my best friend."

"Me too, this is the best thing that could have happened. My baby, and your babies, they're only going to be like two weeks apart. Can you imagine it? They will learn everything at the same time."

"We can do all our shopping together, and have all our pregnancy moments together. This is awesome. I'm glad I have someone to go through all of this with."

"You and me both, Trin, you and me both."

"You two look about ready to burst." Reece spoke for the first time since getting his food, having spent the last several minutes watching us and listening to us as he stuffed his face. "This is going to be fun to watch. What's going to happen when you both become emotional train wrecks with all those baby hormones?" He laughed at his own joke.

"We'll be fine." I assured him.

"Yeah, butt out Fido." Trinity smacked his arm. We finished our lunch, the three of us talking about all the fun things the future had in store for us.

Chapter 235 - EPILOGUE 2 (VOLUME 2)

12-15 minutes

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Trinity

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It had been a week since Reece's party, and since Juniper told me she was pregnant. I had nothing but babies on the brain right now. What with my pregnancy, Juniper's pregnancy, and Nikki ready to pop any day now. It was nothing but babies for me.

I wanted to start shopping, to start buying things for the babies right away. But Reece forbade it. He said it was too soon. I know he was right, but dammit, I was excited, and there was so much going on last time that I didn't get the chance to buy anything besides the announcement gifts. What else was I supposed to do?

Well, I knew what I could do. I could go crazy buying a super special baby gift for Nikki. She was my sister in-law of sorts and I was going to be the baby's aunty.

Nikki didn't have any sisters, just four brothers, two older and two younger. Her two older brothers were married and had started families of their own, one of her younger brothers was recently mated

but wasn't married yet. The youngest brother was younger than me and still in highschool, so he still had a little while.

Nikki got along with her sister in-laws and soon to be sister in-law, but she seemed to gravitate more towards me, she always had. So, it was no surprise that she was including me in everything to do with the baby.

As the days passed since the party and my baby fever was reaching its peak I was out shopping for baby stuff almost every day. My guards took turns going with me at first, but Vincent was the only baby expert among them so eventually they just left the job up to him. He gave me lots of advice on how to take care of my babies, though he had never had to deal with twins. And he told me what we really needed and what was just superfluous and we could get only if we really wanted to. I had a feeling I was going to buy everything, even if I didn't need it.

Day in and day out he took me to different stores in the city. From big box stores and chains that carried everything under the sun to small little baby boutiques. I just fell in love with everything and I couldn't help myself, I bought too much stuff for my little nephew that was due anytime now. Oh well, who was going to reprimand me for buying so much? That's right, no one. I was the Luna Queen, I could do what I wanted.

I was in my room, sorting the massive amount of baby stuff I had bought for Nikki, and putting it all into a neat little arrangement for a gift, when my phone rang. It was Reece calling me in the middle of his work day.

"Hey Bruiser, what's up? I joked with him, another dog name coming to me easily as I spoke to him.

"Hahhh." He sighed when he heard the dog name but continued immediately like I hadn't said anything."

"Hey Little Bunny, just wanted to let you know, Noah just rushed out of work in full on panic mode." I could hear a hint of laughter in his voice.

"Why? What happened?" I asked him absentmindedly as I continued creating my wonderful masterpiece.

"Oh, nothing too much really. Just Nikki going into labor."

"Oh, glad it's nothing too seri-." I stopped mid sentence when I fully processed what he said. "Wait, what did you just say?" He laughed at me like he thought my delay and outburst were hilarious.

"I said Nikki is in labor."

"Oh my Goddess!" I squealed. "My little nephew is almost here?" I felt my excitement reach new heights that I wasn't even sure was possible before now. "Oh, I need to hurry and get this gift ready then I need to hurry to the clinic. They are going to the clinic right? Or are they going to the hospital? Or is Griffin going to their house? I don't even know where to go Reece. Help me."

"Calm down sweetheart." His voice still held a note of his laughter as he tried to calm me. "I'm on my way home to get you. We will go to the hospital together."

"Really? Thank you so much Reece. Ahh, I'm so excited. I get to see my little nephew today. Yay!" I couldn't contain my bubbly excitement as I squealed into the phone.

"Just finish what you're doing and get ready, I will be there soon." He hung up the phone, I could hear his laughter as he chuckled at me even as he ended the call. He must think that I'm going insane, but I couldn't help it, I was happy.

I finished arranging the giant gift for Nikki. It basically looked a lot like those diaper cakes I had seen pictures of online but it had so much more and it was way bigger and more elaborate. There were diapers in there too of course. But there were also bottles, wash clothes, onesies, cute adorable outfits, toys, stuffed animals, lotions, soaps, blankets. There was a lot more too. It was all arranged on a stack of boxes for other little odds and ends.

They might have a bunch of the stuff already, but they would need more than one of these things. One set to leave at home with mom and dad for when they watched the baby, one set for my house for when I kidnapped my sweet little boy and brought him home to get lots of practice for my own baby and to give Nikki and Noah a night off to relax. A set to leave with Nikki's parents so they were properly prepared to babysit. You could never have enough with all the people who could potentially watch the baby. I wasn't going overboard at all, really. I swear I wasn't.

Reece arrived a few minutes after I was done putting together my massive gift. He hadn't actually seen everything that I had gotten for them and his eyes just about popped out of his head when he saw the massive thing sitting in front of me.

"What the hell did you do? Buy everything in the whole damned store?" He asked with a grimace on his face.

"Oh shut up. I actually restrained myself a little bit."

"Restrained? Restrained with what?" He sounded incredulous, like he couldn't believe what I had just said.

"I didn't buy any of the really big stuff." I informed him.

"Big stuff? Like what?"

"Car seat, stroller, crib, dresser, you know, the big big stuff." I listed them off.

"This thing looks massive, if I wasn't as strong as I am I would need a damn forklift to carry it."

"Don't be so melodramatic Droopy."

"I'm not kidding, this thing is massive."

"Well it doesn't matter, I don't need you to carry it anyway." I huffed at him as I made my way toward the giant gift. But I didn't even get halfway there before he ran in front of me and put his hands on my shoulders.

"Oh no you don't. You're not lifting that massive monster of a gift."

"Reece, I'm not a weakling, I can lift it."

"I don't doubt that, but it's as big as you are, and you're pregnant. You're not fucking touching it."

"It's not that big." I said looking at it. It was at least a good eight inches shorter than me.

"If that present was any bigger, it would walk there itself."

"You're being ridiculous." I huffed as I tried to walk around him, but he stopped me again.

"I told you, you're not lifting that thing. Just grab your purse and let's go, I'll carry that monster." I rolled my eyes at him but did as he said, grabbing my bag and walking out of the room ahead of him.

On the way down I opened all the doors for him, and then opened the hatch of the large SUV we were taking to the hospital. It was the only vehicle the gift would fit into. Ok, maybe I did over do it, but I didn't care, it was too late to take it all back now.

When we got to the hospital I found that Mom and Dad were already there waiting, as were Nikki's parents and youngest brother. I ran over to mom and hugged her.

"What have you heard?" I asked her, grinning like a crazy auntie, which I guess I was.

"Everything is fine. They just got her taken back and are getting her situated. She was waiting for you to show up cause she says you're her real birthing coach in this because we all know Noah is going to be useless when it starts happening. He's smart as hell and can keep his cool for everything except his family." Mom was laughing as she said this.

"Oh, I know." I laughed with her.

"Hello Alpha, Luna." Nikki's dad came over, a nervous look on his face. He hadn't been this nervous around me in the past when I met him, but to be honest I hadn't seen him much since Nikki and Noah got married and I was still in high school then.

"Hi Mr. and Mrs. Parker, how are you?" I smiled at them but I noticed that Mr. Parker flinched a little. It was like he was afraid of me for some reason.

"I'm good Luna, thank you for asking." He tried to smile but it became a grimace.

"Mr. Parker, I'm the same person I was when Nikki got married, you don't have to be nervous." I gave him a reassuring nod and for some reason he looked over my shoulder at Reece. "Don't worry about that giant puppy either." I joked and that got a real smile out of him.

"You really do act just the same." He seemed to be a little more at ease. "I'm glad that you and Nikki stayed close even with things changing like they did."

"I won't change the fundamentals of who I am just because my status changed. I am who I am and that's never going to change. And with the baby coming today I hope our families can be a lot closer from now on." I smile at him.

"That would be nice."

We talked for a few minutes longer until Noah came out to get me.

"Trin, Nikki is ready for you." He seemed so excited and nervous. It was like he didn't know which emotion should take control and he was just spinning like a top from one to the other. It was totally cute and I would so make fun of him for it later. But for now the attention needed to be on Nikki, not Noah.

Things seemed to be moving pretty fast once I got into the back room with Nikki. Apparently she had been in the early stages of labor since last night and didn't even realize it, she only noticed something was up when the pain of the contractions got really bad. Not five minutes after I got to the room her water broke and it was almost time for the big show.

I had to admit, seeing Nikki sweating and looking like she was in intense pain gave me pause for my own delivery. But Nikki also looked like she was the happiest person in the world right now so it seemed to be a good trade off. She was such a sweet and caring person, I just knew she was going to be a wonderful mother.

Griffin checked her again and said she was fully dilated and one hundred percent effaced, it was time for her to push.

I held her hand and coached her through the pushes and breathing like I had been practicing to do for the last couple weeks. I counted to ten for her with each push and rubbed small circles on her back to help her relax in between them. During all this Noah paced the room from the other side and looked like he was about to simultaneously wear a tread in the floor and float away from glee at the same time. He was such a nervous wreck and a happy expectant father all at the same time. He was adorable to watch.

After about fifteen minutes of some really intense and painful looking pushes I heard Griffin's excited voice.

"It's out." He said happily. "It's a boy." We already knew that it was going to be a boy, but he confirmed it for us as he clamped off the cord. "Are you going to cut the cord Noah?" He asked him.

Noah mumbled some sort of gibberish as he walked hesitantly forward. He was nervous, but he managed to do his job properly. Once the cord was cut Lana wrapped the baby in a hospital blanket and took him to be cleaned up and measured. Noah was hugging Nikki and wiping sweat off her forehead while the baby was being cleaned up, it was a heartwarming sight.

About ten minutes later, Lana brought the baby back over and handed him to Nikki. I saw the tears in Nikki's eyes as she looked down at his tiny round and pink face.

"Hi baby. Hi Elias, I'm your mommy." She cried, the tears streaming happily down her cheeks.

"Hey little man." Noah cooed at him. This was such a beautiful sight and I was happy I was here to see it.

Nikki handed the baby to Noah, who bounced him in his arms for a few minutes, staring at his adorable face. Then, Noah came over to me and handed him to me.

"Here you go buddy, meet your Aunt Trinity. She's going to be there for you a lot." Noah smiled as he slipped the baby into my arms. I nearly started to cry at his words.

"Hi Elias, I'm your Auntie Trinity. I love you so much already." I smiled down at him, my vision blurring slightly for just a moment as a tear formed in each eye and then began to streak down my cheeks. He was so adorable, and he looked just like Noah with a head full of dark brown hair. I just wanted to hold

him forever, but I knew I had to give him back to Nikki soon enough. With a little kiss to his forehead I handed him back, letting him take a small piece of my heart with him.

Chapter 236 - EPILOGUE 3 (VOLUME 2)

8-10 minutes

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Bryce

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"Alpha, we've finally found where he's hiding." One of my deltas, Kyle, had just returned from a meeting with some allies of ours that was helping me to locate a traitorous shitbag.

"Where is he Kyle?" I demanded.

"He's hiding in the mountains in Tennessee. It seems like he has some very distant relatives in that area that we didn't know about at first."

"Good, we'll leave right away." I started toward my office door, ready to head home and prepare for this journey.

"Yes, Sir." I knew that Kyle would notify the right members of my pack to let them know of our travel plans. Delivering messages was his job after all.

I had been waiting for this moment. For almost two months now I had been looking for this fucking scumbag. This worthless piece of shit that considered himself an alpha but turned his back on his own kind and aided in the attack on another pack. Who the fuck did he think he was?

I may be a world class asshole that doesn't like most people but even I wouldn't try to deliberately destroy another pack just so I could get their land. That was idiocy. And to attack the largest pack in the damn country, seriously. That man must have had a death wish.

And, to make matters worse, he brought that fight of his to my territory. He crossed my boundaries and put my people in danger. He had to pay. There was no way around it. He was going to pay, with his life.

I decided it was best to drive to Tennessee to track Stanley down. I planned on bringing home some souvenirs and I didn't need to get caught by TSA. It would be a little hard to explain why my luggage was dripping blood on the return flight. Nope, driving it was.

It took a few days of driving through the mountains, but I eventually made it to the little hick town that Stanley was supposed to be hiding in. I caught his scent the moment I got within ten miles of the town. There was no mistaking the scent of a cowardly asshole.

I hadn't even been in town for an hour when I found where he was cowering, hiding while holed up in some backwoods cabin with no electricity. He probably thought that if he stayed in this place long enough, Reece and I would forget about him. Like Reece would forget that he had aided Edmond in

fighting against the Red Springs Pack, and like I would forget that he had crossed into and fouled up my territory with his vile stench.

I stomped my way to the cabin's front door. Stanley must have known I was coming. When I kicked the door in I saw him cowering in a corner, nearly shaking with fear.

"Hey there fuckface." I smiled at him. "Been waiting for me long?" I saw him flinch at my words. He knew he was beat but there was no back door that he could have escaped from. There was only the front door and two front windows. Any attempt at escaping would have put him into my hands anyway. If he was a smarter man he would have realized that he was a werewolf and this was a wooden cabin, he could have broken down a wall to escape. But we were talking about a brain dead, spineless twit, he wouldn't have been smart enough for that.

"Leave me alone Bryce, I've got no beef with you." He was trying to sound tough as he shook in fear. "I-I don't want to have to hurt you." He was really putting on a show for me.

"You? Hurt me? Don't make me fucking laugh Stanley. The day that you could beat me is the day I fucking dropped dead ten minutes before the fight started."

"I'm younger than you."

"What the fuck does that prove?" I growled at him.

"I'm younger so I'm stronger." He seemed to be getting more confident. "I-I thought it was going to be Reece that found me, not an old has been like you."

"If you think I am so easy to beat then you shouldn't be cowering like a little girl in the fucking corner."

"I'm not cowering." He yelled at me.

"Yeah, right. And I am the queen of fucking England. If you were shaking anymore you'd cause a tsunami in Japan."

"Fuck you Bryce." He ground out through his clenched teeth. "This is why everyone hates you. You think you're better than everyone else and you're a fucking asshole to boot."

"Awe, don't be like that Stanley, you'll hurt my feelings." I chuckled at him to let him know that I was unfazed.

"Go to hell you old geezer."

"Come over here and fight this old geezer, Stan my man, and we'll see who's the stronger of the two of us."

"You've got your men with you, you'll just have them take over for you."

"The hell I will, I fight my own battles you fucking pussy. I'm not like you who turned tail and ran as soon as you saw Reece and I show up at your little fuck buddy's house of horrors." I yelled at him, my anger flaring. "Did Edmond show you a real good time Stanley? Did he make it all worth your time and effort? For your sake I hope he did, because you're about to atone for that shit right now."

"Like hell I am." He was finally growing his back bone, he even took a step away from the wall as he glared at me.

"Then prove it. Cause I am about to beat your fucking ass like there is no tomorrow.

Stanley seemed to have had enough of my taunts. He thought he could attack me with a surprise attack. He curled his hands, making his lethal claws appear as he threw himself at me. But there was no comparing his idiotic fighting style to my aged wisdom and experience. I simply sidestepped his attack and grabbed him by the throat at the same time.

"You're a fucking moron Stanley, you know that." I grinned at him as I added a great deal of pressure to his throat. He tried to say something but it was unintelligible. "What was that Stanley, I didn't catch that? Did you say you want a stronger hug from my fingers?" I joked as I tightened my grip even further, bringing my claws out as well.

My long, sharp claws instantly dug into his throat, breaking the skin and sending blood pouring down his body.

"Oops, I seemed to have made a booboo." I laughed as I lifted him in my grip and proceeded to slam him against the ground. "Here, let me help you."

Once I had Stanley on the ground, me leaning over him, I placed one foot on his chest. I tightened my grip and felt my fingers and claws slide even deeper into his throat. Stanley made a choking noise as my claws dug into his jugular, blood was also beginning to trickle out the side of his mouth.

I smiled at the sight before me. The man was being choked by my hand and his own blood at the same time. It was so satisfying to see. I was about to really enjoy what I was going to do.

With my one foot on Stanley's chest to hold him down and my claws dug deep to give me a firm hold I started to pull.

I heard the popping, tearing, and screaming as I slowly pulled harder and harder on Stanley's throat and head. I added my other hand, claws digging in just as far as the ones on the other hand.

With both of my hands now in place it was making my task that much easier. The sight that was playing out before me was not pleasant, for most people anyway, but it made me grin happily.

The skin around the punctures, all the holes I made in Stanley's neck with my claws, were slowly tearing open. I watched on with pure joy as his head slowly ripped free of his neck. The hot, violent spray of blood that accompanied it didn't even annoy me, it was satisfying because I was the one who had caused it, I was the one who had killed that little fucking piss ant.

"Hmm, what should I do with your head?" I mused, asking the dead man as I stood up, his blood dripping off my face like it was nothing more than sweat caused by an intense workout. "I think I will give you to Reece as a wedding present. He should like that." I laughed then, it sounded normal to me but based on the looks from the men around me it must have been at least a little maniacal. Oh well, I wasn't going to stop anytime soon. I was glad that I had killed that fucking asshole. That was one less thing we all needed to worry about.

Chapter 237 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 1

8-10 minutes

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Carter

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There had been so many changes recently, ever since my cousin had mated with the alpha. Her life had been turned upside down, and try as I might to stick by her side to protect her, I just wasn't able to.

I had immediately joined the pack warriors with hopes of being one of her personal guards so I knew that she was safe. But I was assigned elsewhere. I don't know if that was done on purpose, out of spite, or if it was just the way things were.

No, I was assigned to be a scout. A spy as it were. My job was to infiltrate other packs and find out if they were involved in the attacks on my cousin. So, I guess in a way I was helping her, just not directly.

I had been at this job for nearly two months and I was already in the third enemy pack. The packs I was being sent to were not close. They were the packs on the very fringe of our territory.

Our pack, the Red Springs Pack, was the largest in the entire country. But most people didn't know that. Most other packs didn't pay attention to what happened that far beyond their borders so they just didn't care.

But our pack has apparently been very prosperous over the last several generations and we have acquired more fealty packs and treaty packs than any other werewolf pack had ever done in our species' history.

I didn't care for our current alpha though. He claimed my cousin, my little sister of sorts, and he proceeded to force her to move into his house immediately. And that had happened on the day of the first attack.

That first attack had been from a rogue, or so they say, but I didn't trust him at all. Reece, the alpha, just seemed like an asshole to me. He was someone that I needed to protect my innocent little cousin from.

I was just two years older than Trinity, and my parents raised her since she was three months old. There isn't a part of my memory that doesn't have her there like the little sister my parents never had. They didn't need to since Trinity was my sister. I had always thought of her that way anyway. And now my little sister was in danger.

This pack I was spying on now was about six hours or so away from home. The Black Canyons Pack, run by a mean son of a bitch named Bryce. Or at least everyone said he was mean. I had only met him once and all he did was grunt at me.

My story was that I was a nomad, a drifter, that hadn't felt at home in my family pack. I wasn't a threat to them so as long as I didn't do anything wrong or try to hurt anyone I was allowed to be here.

I had always been good at blending into the people around me and I was even better at people pleasing. That was one reason I was so good at my job. No one suspected anything from me, most of the time they often just forgot that I was even there to begin with.

Out of all the pack I had been to so far, this one had the most potential for being behind those unfounded attacks. Bryce, the alpha, hated every other pack in the country. That was common knowledge. Also, this was the second largest pack in our area and the fifth largest pack in the country. If they were going to try and take over they were the one with the most chance at succeeding.

Another anomaly with this pack was that they were the only one to give me a job right away. I was put on perimeter patrol. Apparently, they had had some problems with people, other shadow worlders, sneaking around in the past and Bryce didn't like to share his land.

It was during one of these perimeter patrols, one really close to the alpha's estate, that I smelled the most amazing scent in the world. It was like sweet flowers, a bunch of them. Daisies, jasmine, lilies, roses, and so many more I couldn't place. It smelled like a greenhouse.

I just smiled with a dazed look on my face while I patrolled the area. I was moving closer and closer to the house, weaving in and out of the trees. The scent would get stronger the closer I was to the house, but it would fade the farther away I went.

I would catch the slightest trace of the scent on my path, like whoever it belonged to had gone on a run in the area. I almost felt like a cartoon character, ready to be lifted off the ground only to start being dragged around by my nose as it followed the trail.

I knew what this scent meant. This was my nose telling me that I had found my mate. This was going to be the best day of my life. I would find her, convince her to run away from her pack and join my pack. We would live together in eternal bliss, growing older as we watched our children grow up around us. It was the life every wolf wanted.

I couldn't take it anymore. I started following the trail for real. I needed to find this girl now. I needed to see her, to know who she was.

The scent trail was leading me closer and closer to the alpha's house. This alpha house looked so much like the one back home. It was shaped the same but made of slightly different materials and was different colors. Other than that, it was the exact same house.

As I looked at the pack house, comparing it to the one my cousin was now living in, I wondered if my new mate was a maid in the house. Was she here at work right now? Was today her day off and I was just following an old trail of hers? I needed to find her though. Perhaps she would like the idea of someone rescuing her from her life of being a maid to an asshole brute of an alpha.

I was running different fantasies and scenarios through my head. Different visions of how I would sweep her off her feet, profess my undying love to her, and we'd ride off together into the sunset. All these thoughts had me utterly distracted so when I heard the most musical voice ever I froze in my tracks.

"Katie, Jordan, you two are so mean." The words she was speaking didn't seem too happy but her voice was full of glee. "I'm going to get the two of you for not helping me. It's almost my birthday you know, can't you help your sister out a little bit?"

"But if we start helping you now, we will never be able to rest until you've worked us all to the bone." A man about my brother Noah's age was responding to her.

"Don't worry, Ems, I will help you in a few minutes. Just let me put all this stuff away." That was from a younger girl, perhaps in the last year of middle school, if she was even that old.

"Thank you Katie." The musical voice was cheering now.

I saw her through the trees then. She seemed to be bouncing up and down, a happy smile dominating her beautiful, perfectly sculpted face. She had a light tan still and her hair was a beautiful shade of blonde. And I could see her pretty green eyes from here. She looked so angelic, and sexy.

Her body seemed to be sculpted by the gods. Perfect hips, perfectly long legs, perfectly perky and ample breasts. She was maybe five feet nine inches tall, maybe a little more or less, it was hard to tell from a couple hundred yards away.

All my dreams and fantasies were already morphing to something more, adding her beautiful visage to the details. I started to walk forward, intent on talking to her and introducing myself.

I took step after step, slowly closing the distance between us. That was until I saw the alpha, Bryce, walk out of the house behind her.

"Daddy!" She leapt with joy and jumped right into his arms. "I'm so happy you're letting me plan all of this."

"Well, I know how much you love parties." Bryce smiled sweetly at his daughter as he hugged her to him.

All of my fantasies and dreams for the future shattered in an instant.

My new mate, my one and only mate in this life, was the daughter of an enemy alpha. This couldn't be happening. How could this be real. Why did the moon goddess hate me?

I turned around and stopped myself from walking toward her. I couldn't let her see me, I couldn't let her smell me. I had to get away.

"What's that?" I heard her voice in the distance and that was when I started running.

I shifted and ran as far and for as long as I could. My life was over.

Chapter 238 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 2

8-10 minutes

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Emmalee

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Today had started out like any other, really. It was early December and that meant that it was almost my nineteenth birthday. I had just started university in the fall and I was absolutely hating it. I had always hated school though. I prefer to be with friends and hang out, I'm a sociable person.

Another good thing about December was getting the family together for a huge party. It was like celebrating all the birthdays that were so close together and Christmas all in one. There were three other birthdays in December besides mine and we all usually had a massive party in the middle of the month.

This year my dad was letting me plan it and I was trying to get my annoying older brother and little sister to help me. I knew that Katie would help if I just asked her to, but Jordan was a jerk and he would be a brat about it. Seriously, what were big brothers for if not helping their beautiful, angelic little sisters plan parties.

"Katie, Jordan, you two are so mean." I whined at them, hoping to convince Jordan with guilt since his refusal had me tacking the blame onto my little sister as well. "I'm going to get the two of you for not helping me. It's almost my birthday you know, can't you help your sister out a little bit?"

"But if we start helping you now, we will never be able to rest until you've worked us all to the bone." Jordan said this as if I was a slave driver. What era was he even living in inside that messed up head of his? I just rolled my eyes at him.

"Don't worry, Ems, I will help you in a few minutes. Just let me put all this stuff away." Katie, the angel that she was, agreed to help me right away.

"Thank you Katie." I squealed in delight, jumping up and down with joy.

I watched as Katie bounded into the house then glared at my brother. He would come around, eventually. I would see to that. I may not be a slave driver, but I could be an evil dictator if he pushed me too far. Maybe the era inside his head really was spot on. Hmph, who would have thought? Oh well.

I was waiting for Katie absentmindedly when I got the faintest whiff of something strange and wonderful. But before I could think about it at all I heard the door open. Only it wasn't Katie that had come out, it was my dad, the alpha.

"Daddy!" I screamed happily as I jumped at him. "I'm so happy you're letting me plan all of this." I clung to him as he hugged me tightly. I could smell how happy he was, Daddy was always happy.

"Well, I know how much you love parties." He was right. I loved parties of all kinds. Birthday parties, New Year's parties, random backyard BBQs, Christmas parties, Weddings, anything. If a bunch of people got together to celebrate something, anything, I loved it. I loved being around people and making people happy with the big celebrations I put together. I didn't care if the party had anything to do with me or not, I just liked to make people happy at their own parties. This big Christmas and a birthday bash wasn't just for me. Yes, my birthday was part of it too, but my younger cousin Mina was turning five this year and I wanted to see her eyes light up the most. She was so adorable and when she was excited her eyes went so wide they looked like saucers. How could I resist the urge to make her day special.

"What's that?" I asked as something tickled my nose. While I had been lost in thought I thought I had heard a rustling in the trees beyond the house and there was that scent again. It smelled amazing, like

butterscotch and sugar. It was sweet and it made me think of a party dessert. But most of all it had my wolf screaming in the back of my head.

'MATE! MATE! MATE! MATE! MATE!'

My wolf was straining at her leash, trying to take control, trying to run off into the wood and find whoever that scent belonged to. I didn't seem to have the strength or the willpower to stop my wolf as she howled inside my head.

'MATE! MATE! MATE! MATE! MATE!'

I gave in and let her take the lead. My wolf had her nose to the air and was sniffing away madly.

'Where is he? Which way did he go? What happened to him? Didn't he smell me too? Did he run away because he saw me?' These were all the questions that my wolf was asking over and over inside my head. She was begging to know the answers to these questions and more and I didn't know what to tell her, I had no answers for her at all.

"Where is he?" I asked the trees and empty area around me. His scent was here, I can smell it, but it was like it disappeared almost immediately. How did that happen? Could he hide his scent? The only ones I knew who could do that were warlocks and witches and this scent didn't seem like that, they didn't really have a scent at all. So he couldn't be a warlock, could he?

I ran around the area five times, trying to follow his scent. I even went further toward the city but there was no trace of him. What happened? What could this all mean? I wasn't crazy was I?

After what felt like hours of searching in vain and not finding hide nor hair of the man I had scented I finally started to head home. I slowly dragged my feet, depression settling on me with each step I took.

"Why doesn't he want me?" I asked myself while tears streamed down my cheeks. "Am I not good enough for him?" I could hear my own voice cracking with emotion. "Who is he? I would like to know that at least, if he's going to reject me." The tears started to flow harder now as the realization hit me. "I'm never going to have a mate. And I am never going to get married or have a family." My chest felt so heavy and my heart seemed to be so shattered that I couldn't even feel it beating anymore. "Is there even a point to my life anymore?"

These depressive thoughts kept eating away at me as I slowly made my way home. When I pulled the front door shut behind me and dragged my feet toward the stairs I heard Dad's light footsteps take on a thunderous tone as he stalked out toward me.

"Emmalee Rose Evans, where the hell have you been?" He thundered at me, but then he caught sight of my face. I must look awful. "Ems?" He called out to me as he swept me into his arms, picking me up off the floor and cradling me against his chest. "What happened baby girl? Did someone do something to you? I'll kill him, whoever it is."

"I smelled my mate today Daddy. That's why I took off."

"Well, that should be good news then, honey. Where is he? Who is he?" He seemed so happy at that moment, not understanding why I was so upset.

"I don't know who he is Daddy. I don't know where he is or what happened at all."

"What? I don't understand." He huffed for just a quick second.

Dad was confused and needed time to think, so he adjusted me in his arms and carried me into the sitting room. He walked right over to my favorite oversized arm chair that was sitting next to the fireplace. With a small grunt he sat down, setting me on his lap as he did so.

I curled up into a ball, burying my face into his shoulder. Dad has always been able to make everything better. He's always been able to fix anything no matter what it was. But I don't think he could fix a broken heart.

"Alright Ems, tell me what happened, all of it. Don't leave a single thing out."

"Daddy, I smelled him. His scent was intoxicating and perfect. I took off to find him, to see him, but when I found the trail in the woods it just disappeared."

"Disappeared?" that confused him. "Like a warlock?"

"But they don't have any scent at all. He had a scent, and it was wonderful. Butterscotch and sugar, he smelled like a dessert for a party. It was perfect." I was smiling wistfully at the memory of how his scent made me feel.

"Are you sure it was a mate scent?"

"Yes, Dad, I'm sure. My wolf was screaming it in my head."

"Then it was probably just an old trail. Something that lingered."

"Do you think so?"

"Yeah, it has to be. You'll find him somewhere in the pack soon. You're finally old enough to mate so you just haven't noticed him before now, that's all. Give it time, you'll find him again."

Dad's words were comforting, and I hoped that he was right. But little did I know that I was never going to find him mixed in among my own pack. He was gone, and he wasn't coming back here anytime soon.

Chapter 239 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 3

16-20 minutes

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Carter

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I ran for hours. I didn't go back to my apartment that I had in Bryce's territory. I just ran and ran. I needed to only run at night and hide during the day since I was in my wolf form, and that meant that I didn't have any clothes.

I didn't mind the prolonged time in my wolf state. It gave me time to get my frustrations out. I just needed to destroy a few cave walls during the day, or knock down a few trees. It didn't help all that much but it was still better than wallowing in my human mind all the time.

My wolf had whined incessantly since I had run away from my mate. After this trip back home was over I was going to have to avoid being in my wolf form for a very long time.

It took me two and a half days in all to get back home, being limited as I was with travel time. I went straight to my family's house in the compound, I needed a shower and some sleep. And when I woke up in the morning, I would have to go straight to see the alpha.

I'm certain that Reece wouldn't be happy with me for leaving Bryce's pack so soon, but there was nothing I could do about it. I couldn't be found out and I was the one who sacrificed the most during this mission.

I'm just glad that my mate didn't see or smell me. I couldn't bear it if she had noticed me and was suffering like I am. To know that I was causing her this kind of pain and sorrow, that would tear me apart.

I shifted back and climbed through my bedroom window, glad that I had my own private bathroom. I didn't want to see or talk to my parents right now. I didn't need to hear any 'it'll all work out' babble. Right now all I wanted to do was take a hot shower, crawl into bed, and cry myself to sleep, which I hadn't done since I was a little kid.

The water was scalding hot. Too hot to stand really. I had hoped that it would numb me and burn away my ability to ever feel again. But it didn't and soon I left standing in water that was slowly turning cold.

I crawled out of the shower and barely dried off before I crawled, naked, into my bed. I couldn't get comfortable at all. I tossed, turned, and hugged my pillow for hours before I finally drifted into an uneasy sleep.

I had very bad dreams when I did finally sleep.

I dreamt that my mate found someone else. I dreamt that once I settled this stuff with Trinity and I was finally able to try and work things out I was too late. I dreamt that I had to watch from afar as the only woman there was for me grew old loving another man, raising his kids, and I just wasted away into nothingness.

"Carter?" I woke to the sound of someone pounding on my door. "Carter!?" Mom was yelling at me from the otherside. "Carter answer me if you don't want your mother seeing how much you've grown." I groaned as I shook my head, shaking the sleep from my eyes and my mouth. Mom knew I always slept naked, ever since she walked in on me when I was fifteen and was able to last assess my development, I didn't want a repeat of that now.

"What?" I yelled at the door.

"Don't you what me in that tone boy." She reprimanded my angry tone of voice.

"I was sleeping, Ma."

"I know that. And I also know you're supposed to be on a mission right now, so why the heck are you home?"

"I needed to get out of there. Don't worry, I am planning on seeing Reece today and explaining what happened."

"You had better, if you bring any trouble to your cousin with all that's happened lately, so help me boy I will whoop you."

"You realize I'm too big for that, don't you mom?"

"Shut it! You're never too big for me to bend over my knee, boy, do you hear me." My mom really was scary sometimes.

"I'm not going to cause trouble Mom, I swear."

I groaned again as I rolled out of bed. I felt too tired to even move, but I had to force myself. I needed another shower. A cold one this time so that it could wake me up. I shuffled my feet until I got to the bathroom and took a shower with the water as cold as I could stand it.

Once I was dressed and forced myself to eat something for breakfast, or was it lunch time now, it was time for me to head to the Alpha's estate. I didn't want to rush this meeting into happening sooner than it had to so I decided to walk, slowly, to the house. Walking, slowly, up that long, winding driveway through the woods.

But, sooner than I wanted, or was ready for, I was at the front door. I could smell a lot of familiar scents. My brother Noah's, he was Reece's best friend and assistant, my cousin, should be sister, Trinity who was mated to Reece, and of course Reece, who just always succeeded in annoying me and pissing me off since he had stolen half my family away from me.

I was never a big fan of the Alpha, but seeing how terrified Trinity was when she was forced to live with him just made me want to beat his face in. Then, add in the fact that Trinity was attacked the day she moved in here, yeah, ok, Reece rescued her, big whoop. What happened when they went to Azure River? She was kidnapped and given a massive concussion.

Oh, and it didn't stop there either. She was attacked at her school, and attacked here, on these very grounds. I looked around me, looking for some sort of danger in the distance just to be safe. Was there another attack coming for her?

How could this Alpha of ours be any good if his mate has been attacked so many times? Alright I get it, there seems to be so many threats coming from so many different places that we don't even know where to look for them. That's why I've been sent scouting after all.

"What are you doing?" Noah's voice cut through my thoughts. I nearly jumped when I heard him, nearly, meaning I didn't quite get that far.

"Thinking."

"Don't strain yourself there Einstein, and be careful. It looks like your head's about to catch fire from the effort."

"Fuck you, Noah, you asshole." I snapped at him. "I just have a lot on my mind."

"Like what?"

"None of your business."

"Geez, you annoying little brat, I was just trying to help."

"Who are you calling little?" I stepped forward, a little closer to where he stood on the steps near the door, a little closer so that I could prove my height and physical presence to him.

"Maybe I was talking about your brain and not your muscles, genius." He just laughed. "Are you here to see Trinity?"

"I'm going to see her, but I need to see Reece first." Noah raised an eyebrow at that.

"Why do you need to see him?"

"Who's the genius now?" I laughed at him. "I need to give him a report on my latest mission."

"Speaking of." He eyed me suspiciously. "Aren't you supposed to be there still?"

"Supposed to, yeah. So what."

"Why did you come back so early?"

"Well, dumbass, maybe that's what I'm here to tell him. Did you ever think of that?"

"Just shut up and go. He's in his office. You know where that is don't you?"

"Oh no, Noah, I can't find my way. Will you hold my hand and show me how to get there?"

"Fuck you." Noah stormed off and didn't look back.

"Asshole." I snapped at the empty space where he had been standing. My mood was not good, at all.

Two minutes later I was knocking on Reece's office door. I could smell Trinity's scent close to the area, she had been in his office a few times at least. He better not be mistreating her.

"Come in." He ordered as soon as my fist hit the door. I opened the door and saw him leaning over the documents spread out on his desk. No matter what kind of Alpha he was, he was still a businessman too, and a good one.

"Hello Alpha." I was speaking formally to him.

"What is it Carter? I'm kind of busy today." He hadn't even looked up yet, but then I saw his brows crease. "Aren't you supposed to be at the canyons still?" He looked confused.

"That's why I am here."

"Did something happen? Are they behind the attacks?" He had hope in his eyes, like he thought he had finally found a solution to the problem.

"No, I don't think they are." I was shaking my head. "They never acted like they wanted to do anything except keep others out of their land. If they were behind the attacks, then they would be planning more of them, not tightening their borders."

"You're right, that's what I would do if I were behind them." He deflated for a moment. "Then why did you leave so soon?"

"I found my mate there." I slumped my shoulders and hung my head.

"Are you thinking about fighting the bond?" He didn't sound like he was telling me not to, he was just asking. I shook my head.

"No, I want to be with her."

"What does she want?"

"I don't know, I've never spoken to her."

"What?" He sounded confused, and when I lifted my head to look at him, I saw that he looked just as confused as he sounded. "How could you have not met her?"

"Well, I ran away when I saw her."

"Was she that ugly?" He laughed cause we both knew it was a joke.

"No." I was shaking my head and I felt tears gathering again. "It's because of who she is."

"And who is she?" He looked very curious now, all he needed was a man with a yellow hat standing next to him and you could call him George.

"Bryce's daughter."

"Oh." That was all he said. He knew exactly what I was getting at.

After a few minutes Reece got to his feet and walked over to me. This was the kindest and most understanding I had ever seen him look.

"It's hard right now, but if Bryce's pack really isn't behind the attacks, then there will be nothing stopping you from being with her. We can explain to them what happened, why you were there and why you left."

"They'll know I lied, they'll know that I am a spy."

"And they'll know it's what we do. They have Upsilon's too, we're far from the only pack that has that rank."

"If Bryce ever finds out I lied to him, he would kill me before he would let me be with his daughter. It's over Reece, I'm never going to have a mate."

"I'll figure something out for you."

"I don't want to hear it." I snapped at him. "I'm just going to work as a warrior for the rest of my life and help take care of my cousin. That's all I have left." I was having a hard time keeping the emotions off my face and out of my voice.

"Why don't you go see Trinity. She's wrapping Christmas presents right now, I know she would love to see you." Reece was actually trying to make both me and Trinity feel better.

"Yeah, I think I will." I nodded a little as he walked me to the door.

"Do you want to give her some good news while you're there? She's going to be happy to hear it and she will probably love hearing it from you."

"What's the news?"

"Tell her I managed to get her exams figured out and they're scheduled for Saturday."

"Will that be safe?" I wondered.

"I've taken plenty of precautions. I will make sure it's safe." I nodded to him, deciding to trust him, there was nothing else I could do. Reece then proceeded to explain his plan to me.

I went up to the fourth floor and down to the room where my cousin was living. I was both happy and confused about the fact that Trinity and Reece had different rooms. Tossing the thought away I knocked on her door and called her name.

"Trinity?" I heard her gasp and run across the room.

"Carter! Oh Goddess, I missed you. Where have you been?" She squealed and threw her arms around me. I really did miss her.

"Around. I had some errands to run. I missed you too Trin."

"Jeez Carter, I leave to become Luna and you ignore your favorite cousin." Her joking voice made me smile.

"Favorite?" I put my hand on my chin as if contemplating.

"I'm your only cousin."

"So, you win by default, but isn't that just as bad as a loss."

"Absolutely not, a win is a win, it doesn't matter how you got it unless you cheated. If you cheated, then it's a loss and you suck." I laughed at her playful words.

"How are you feeling? I heard you were in bad shape." I tried to assess her with my eyes, worry written on my face.

"I'm fine, no worries."

I followed her over to the table she was working on as she answered. There were a lot of presents there.

"You got a lot of gifts here Trin. Why do you have baby and kid toys here?"

"For Vincent's kids of course."

"Who all did you get gifts for?"

"Well, there's the family of course, then friends, guards, and staff. Not to mention Reece and his Mom. I also bought for Heather, Conner, Renea, and Faith, Vincent's family because I know them and consider Vincent such a good friend."

"Your guard is your friend?" This shocked me, she was probably the only Luna to make friends with her guards.

"Is that so wrong? Why is it so weird that I am friends with him? He is a nice person. And his mate is a wonderful, caring woman. And they named their baby Faith, whether that was after me or not I don't care, she's special."

"Just because her name is your middle name?" I laughed loudly.

"Shut up Carter." She snapped, I heard the ring of authority in her voice, the command in it since she was embarrassed.

"Damn, that Luna stuff is powerful." I growled, sounding serious.

"Oops." She was laughing now out of embarrassment.

"Don't oops me. You can't give me a command like that and then laugh at me."

"That was actually hilarious." We continued to laugh at each other for a minute while she quickly wrapped another present.

"So, I have something to tell you."

"What's that?" She looked curious.

"Well two things really. First, the Alpha has managed to get you approved to sit your exams, but only if you do them on Saturday." I grinned at her.

"OH MY GODDESS! REALLY?" She screamed and jumped to her feet. "Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am so glad I won't have to fail all four classes." She was jumping up and down.

"You're going to be taking them all consecutively. It will be you and a test proctor in the room. There will be a dozen guards, minimum, stationed around the building. One guard at each entrance, and the others scattered to look like casual bystanders."

"Wow, so serious." She said jokingly.

"Don't joke about this Trinity!" I snapped. "You were attacked last time you were there, and you've nearly died twice. This is no laughing matter. And in each of those attacks you were the one they were after. The Alpha still doesn't know how they plan to use you against him, but he knows they want to either hurt, kidnap, or kill you. Don't take your situation so lightly."

"I know Carter, I'm just so happy right now that nothing is going to sound like I am taking it seriously." She really did look happy.

"I'm just so glad that I will get to start new classes next semester."

"Yes, but not the way you think."

"What?" She seemed to have popped out of her happy bubble.

"You can take classes next semester, but you have to take them remotely for right now."

"NO!" She screamed.

"It's not up to me Trinity, those are orders from the Alpha himself. He says he will get this situation cleared up as fast as he can, but to please work remotely for this one semester until he knows that everything is safe."

"Why did I have to go and mate with him?" She roared. "My life has been turned upside-down and it will never go back. I want my life back Carter."

"I'm sorry Trin."

"So, was that the second thing you had to tell me?" She asked halfheartedly.

"No, the second thing had nothing to do with you or your little problems." I looked at her uncomfortably.

"What's wrong Carter?"

"I found my mate." I smiled, but I didn't really feel it.

"That's wonderful news Carter." She smiled.

"No, it's not. She's in the enemy pack I was sent to scout." I told her the truth right away. "I can't go anywhere near her. I can't tell her who I really am, where I'm really from, or anything. If I did, they would know that Reece sent me to spy on them all." I was still smiling but I felt like crying.

"Carter." She cried as if my pain was hers, this was one reason why I loved her so much, she was so empathetic. "We will work something out. Maybe we can convince her to leave that pack and join us." She tried to sooth me.

"I don't think she will, she's the Alpha's daughter." She gasped at my words.

"Carter." She sighed.

I could tell she wanted to talk but I was spent, I had to leave.

"Wait, Carter." She called out. "Take these." She handed me a bag full of gifts.

"Don't you want to deliver them yourself?"

"I can't go anywhere, not until the exams that is."

"You really haven't left the house in a month?" That shocked me to hear.

"Nope, except for going up into the mountains and forest, and I can't do that anymore."

"We will find whoever is responsible for all of this Trin, we will get your life back to normal." I declared firmly.

"That ship has sailed, Carter, it will never be normal again."

"You're probably right." I agreed.

After that I left and hurried home. I felt the need to sulk again, to be alone with my broken heart.

Chapter 240 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 4

8-10 minutes

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Emmalee

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I had hoped that my dad was right. That the man I had scented was in the pack somewhere. I had never smelled anything like him before. His scent was intoxicating, wonderful, amazing, and gone.

I looked around the pack for days and couldn't find him. I even stopped helping with the massive party as much. I just wanted to find the man who had gone missing. Why had he disappeared?

I was getting depressed, moping so much that my family was worried about me. I was on break from my classes until the next semester started in January, so all I did was mope around the house.

One day, my mom came to me to try and break me out of my funk.

"Emmalee!" She snapped at me as I was mechanically going through my day. "You need to stop this."

"What mom?" I asked her, confused about what I had done wrong just now.

"This incessant moping around." She glared at me.

"I'm sorry mom." I felt the tears sting again. Ever since my mate disappeared that day I have felt like the tears were closer than ever before.

"I don't want to see you crying anymore, sweetheart." She reached for me, placing her slender hand on my shoulder. Mom looked so much like me, or was it that I looked like her. We had the same hair and the same eyes. We both had slender frames and soft features, but where I always seemed to look young no matter what I did, my mom looked elegant and sophisticated at all times. She was the perfect Luna.

"Mom." I sobbed as I looked at her, she used her grip on my shoulder to pull me into her chest. She was just a couple inches taller than me and I fit against her perfectly. "Why did he run away from me?"

"Honey, you don't know that he ran away from you. Like your father told you, it could have been an old scent.

"I don't think it was, Momma. I think he was there. I heard him and his scent was so thick and strong."

"We will find him honey." She rubbed soothing circles into my back. "We'll find him, and you'll both be happy and everything will be just fine.

"How, Momma? How can we find him? I have been searching the pack. I have been looking for him and he's not here."

"You've hardly seen them all." She laughed. "That's why your father is going to hold a pack Christmas party this year. We will get all the men here together and you can scent them all at the same time."

"It won't work."

"Don't be so pessimistic." She scolded me. "Where did my bright, cheery daughter go?" She was leveling a steady, yet firm, look at me.

"How can it work?" I asked her this time, deciding to take a different approach.

"Because, you will walk around them and if you smell him you will catch him. Simple as that."

"What am I supposed to do Mom, tackle him?" I laughed at the thought.

"If that's what it takes to stop him from getting away then why not?" She didn't laugh, she just looked at me with her serene, regal eyes. She was serious?

"Sure Mom, if I ever meet him, I will tackle him to the ground." That actually made her laugh. I don't think she expected me to agree. Oh well. I'd prove her wrong.

I was starting to get excited. I'll admit it. I loved parties, and if there was a possibility that my mate would be at the party and I could finally find him, see what he looks like, know his name, then I would be so happy.

I worked hard with my family to prepare for the last minute party. It was going to be spectacular even though I didn't have much time to plan it. This meant that we would have three parties this month, if we counted the upcoming New Year's Eve party, but that was going to be on a smaller scale and just include people we were close to. There definitely wouldn't be anyone for me to mate with among them.

The party was to take place at the house. And the invitation was mandatory. Daddy didn't tell them why they had to be there, but he told them all that there was no skipping out on this event. I knew that every unmated pack male would be at the party. This was my chance to find him.

I arrived early to help finish setting up and to greet the guests. Why wait for my mate? Why spend all night figuring out which one was him when I could simply find him at the door? I stood there and greeted everyone as they arrived. Males and females, young and old. Not a single person entered the party that I didn't personally greet.

And he wasn't here. My mate wasn't at the party. Where on earth could he be? Wasn't he in the pack? Did he leave the pack because he couldn't stand the idea of being with me?

I could feel the tears beginning to return. My eyes were stinging and I knew they would be red. This was not good. I didn't want to cry at the party.

Without my parents seeing me I quickly made my escape. I ran from the room, hiding my wet eyes and blotchy cheeks as I went. I hoped no one saw what a mess I looked like.

It was official, my mate was gone. Whoever he was he had left. He never wanted to be my mate. He took one look at me and thought I wasn't good enough so he ran away from me. I felt my already broken heart shatter again. It felt like my heart would never be whole again.

As I laid there, crying into my pillow, I heard the sound of my door opening.

"Ems, sweetie, what's wrong?" My dad had come to check on me. He must have noticed my absences.

"I don't want to talk about it." My broken heart didn't feel ready to tell him that it was over, truly over for me.

"Didn't you find him here tonight?" He asked me, knowing the only reason I would be crying.

I sat up then, glaring at him and not caring that I had tears and mascara running down my eyes.

"No, Dad, I didn't find him. He never came tonight."

"But every male in the pack is here." He assured me.

"Then he left the pack. He had to have left the pack because he didn't want me."

"Honey, no one has left the pack lately." He looked confused as he stared at me. "None of our pack members have deserted us in years, so that's not what happened."

"Then what is it Daddy? What happened?"

"Could you have imagined it? I know you think you smelled him but could it have been a trick of the wind and your nose playing tricks on you?"

"I know what I smelled Daddy." I snapped at him. "I know he was there. He was by the house that day, near the trees, and then he just ran away."

"But sweetheart, no one has left the-." He stopped short of finishing his words.

"I know, you said no one left the pack, but someone had to have."

"We'll see baby. Maybe the wind just carried a really strong scent from somewhere else. You never know."

"That sounds stupid Dad, you know that." I glared at him as I hugged my pillow to my chest. "You have to know how ridiculous it sounds to say the wind carried his scent from another pack. That would be miles and miles away."

"Who knows, it could have happened." He smirked at me. "Are you coming back down to the party? We all got you presents." He was trying to coax me, but I didn't feel up to it yet.

"Maybe later, Daddy." I grimaced at him.

"Ok, just come down when you're ready." He kissed me on my head and left the room.

I know what he is trying to say. That I imagined it. That it's not real. That it's all in my head. Then why did he pause when he was saying that no one has left the pack? Did someone leave and he's just not telling me? Is my mate lost to me forever? Will I ever find him?

I didn't know the answer to any of these questions, but I knew I was never going to give up. Not yet anyway. I was still determined. Dad's insistence that I had imagined the whole thing angered me so much that I could have just screamed. I would show him. I would show them all. I would scour the earth for my mate. And when I found him, and made him explain why he had left that day, I would drag him to my parents and prove to them that he was real. They probably thought I was insane, off my rocker, had a few screws loose, or whatever else it was they wanted to joke behind my back. I'd show them. I'd show all of them.