

Chosen by Fate 251

Chapter 251 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 15

Emmalee

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Tonight was my date with Carter. He didn't tell me where we were going or what I should wear but I didn't care. As long as we were together that's all that mattered to me.

I chose to wear a light sundress, something cute yet flirty. It was a bright green and was in a halter style. I had just tied the dress's straps behind my neck and put on a pair of black sandals when I heard a knock at the door. I could tell by the scent that it was Carter.

My hair was done. My makeup was perfect. My outfit was wonderful. All I needed was a light jacket and my purse. I grabbed an emerald green satin jacket to slip over my shoulders. It's sleeves were only three quarter lengths that I pushed up to my elbows. Now I was ready to go.

When I opened the door I saw Carter's handsome, smiling face.

"Hello beautiful." His words brought a blush to my face as he leaned down and kissed my cheek.

"Hey." I was breathless now, with the excitement of the upcoming date, the kiss, and how handsome he looked. He was wearing a pair of black jeans, a dark blue button up shirt that was fully open showing the light gray t-shirt underneath. He looked casual but so sexy and handsome.

"Ready?" He asked me with a grin.

"Yeah." I nodded my head, I had been looking forward to this all week.

Carter helped me into the Jeep just like he had last time before driving us into town. He took us for an early dinner at a nice restaurant that I had always dreamt of going to. It was called The Fiery Jewel and it was a popular place for dates. But I had never dated anyone before Carter so I was excited for this chance to finally go.

The food was amazing, the menu was high class and full of expensive fine dining options. We ordered saffron risotto, langoustine ravioli, turbot and morels, filet mignon with fondant potatoes and asparagus, and chocolate millefeuille. The food was enough to make me feel like I had just been taken to another planet and spoiled beyond my wildest dreams.

After the dinner was over the sun was just beginning to set so I thought we might be going home, or maybe for a walk. So I was really shocked when I saw Carter start to drive into the mountains. This wasn't his pack and he didn't know the area, but he seemed like he knew what he was doing.

When he finally pulled the Jeep to a stop I saw that there was a whole place set up. There a large dark gray tent set up in the middle of a clearing with the opening facing the mountain's flat surface.

I saw that there was a large white screen standing in front of the rocky wall with a battery operated projector in front of it. There were candles waiting to be lit, an ice bucket with a bottle of wine, some

simple yet nice snacks that we could eat later, and of course a bag of popcorn to have while watching a movie.

"What's all this?" I asked him, with my heart fluttering excitedly. It was beating very rapidly because I could see a king size air mattress inside the tent covered in soft looking pillows, sheets, and blankets.

"A movie date." He grinned. "I thought it would be best if it were just the two of us."

"Really?" I asked him to make sure even though I could tell that there was no one else around.

"If that's alright with you." He held my hand firmly in his, but his eyes were questioning and full of hope.

"That sounds wonderful to me." I was happy, nervous, excited, and scared all at once. But this night was meant to be special. It was meant to be just the two of us and that made me smile.

Carter walked me into the tent and I sat on the edge of the bed. I didn't want to make the sheets dirty so I slid my sandals off.

"What are you doing?" He asked me, confused.

"I don't want to get dirt in the sheets."

"That makes sense." He said as he sat beside me and slid his hiking boots off and put them next to my sandals.

"So, what movie are we going to watch?" I asked him. "Anything specific?"

"I have a couple of options, I thought I would let you choose."

"Awe, that's sweet of you."

I looked at the list of movies he had chosen for the night. They were all romantic comedies and sweet chick flicks, and they were all the types of movies that I had told him I liked. He listened to me, that was so sweet of him.

I picked one of my favorites and he put it on, streaming it from his phone wirelessly through the projector to the white screen. We snuggled together among the sheets and pillows and settled in to watch the movie.

I had seen the movie a dozen times. I knew exactly what was going to happen. Which was good, because I couldn't concentrate on the movie at all with my head laying against Carter's chest and his arm wrapped around me.

We were pressed so close together, cuddling and snuggling each other, that I could hear each beat of his heart, every breath he took, every shift of his body beneath my head. This was a closeness and a level of intimacy that we had never had before. It was amazing, wonderful, and nerve wracking.

The movie just played on as I ignored the screen completely. I was daydreaming the whole time, hoping, begging inside my head for Carter to pull me closer, to hold me tighter, for him to press his lips to mine and kiss me.

I longed for one of those kisses that stopped all rational thought. The ones that made me want to beg him to not stop, to keep going. I had been waiting for a night like this where we could be alone, where we didn't have to worry about anything or anyone else.

I wanted him.

I took my eyes off the screen, they hadn't seen any of what happened in the movie at all anyway. When I turned my head and my eyes met his, I saw that he was staring down at me. There was a heat, a passion that I had never seen before filling his eyes and it sent shivers running through me.

Our eyes were locked and there was no separating them. I had a feeling that neither of us had seen any of the movie. And that the rest of the movie was going to end up just as ignored as the beginning of it had been.

"Carter?" I called his name and was shocked to hear that my voice was deeper and more raspy than usual. A darkness settled over his eyes when he heard that one word spoken in my voice.

"Emmalee." He called my name right back and I could hear the desire, the need, that was swelling within him. It all but dripped from the syllables as he said my name. The sound of his voice made me shiver against him, bringing us closer together.

I tilted my head up, hoping for a kiss. He did not disappoint me.

His head lowered as mine raised and our lips met in the middle. I heard the groan of satisfaction as we felt each other's lips, but I couldn't tell you if it was my groan or his as we both seemed to sigh with happiness.

The kiss started soft, gentle, and chaste but it soon morphed into something more, something hungry and needy.

My arms slid up his chest so my hands could link behind his neck. His arms slid around my waist, pulling me against him.

I gasped when I felt him pressed against me, hard and ready. He took advantage of my mouth opening on the gasp. His tongue slipped into my mouth to tangle with my own. I felt the added heat of his mouth inside my own.

We were desperate for each other, frantically trying to pull each other closer. His hands were roaming all over my body making me tremble.

I felt the moment his fingers slid to the hem of my dress, tickling my thigh and sending a shiver running through me. He pulled back then, breaking the kiss to look me in the eyes.

"Emmalee? Do you want me to-." He trailed off, seeming uncertain how to finish asking what was on his mind. I loved him even more at that moment, for right then he would have stopped it all if I wasn't ready.

"Don't stop Carter. Please don't stop." I both told him it was ok to keep going and begged him not to stop at the same time. I wanted him, I needed him. I was ready for him, so why not tell him that now. "I need you Carter. Please keep going."

Chapter 252 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 16 (MATURE)

9-11 minutes

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Carter

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When I stopped to ask Emmalee if I should stop, if she was ready, I was prepared to pump the breaks and wait until the time was right. But when she told me not to stop, that she needed me, I thought my mind and heart were both going to explode with joy and need.

There was nothing and no one around who would stop us tonight. This night was for us, this was to be our first, and I wanted it to be special for her.

My hand trailed up her leg, lightly tickling her thigh as it moved higher and higher. Her body shivered against me again, pressing us closer together than we had ever been before. I had to keep reminding myself that this was her first time so I shouldn't rush it. I wanted to treat her right and make this special for her.

I slid my mouth along her jaw, trailing a thin wet line with my tongue until I got to the curve of her neck and left shoulder. I placed a gentle kiss there, eagerly anticipating the moment when I marked her there.

When my hands had pushed the dress higher and I could now trail my fingers across her stomach I felt like I was going to need some serious levels of self control to make it through this night alive. The touch of her skin, the softness and the warmth, was better than anything I had ever felt before.

I pulled my mouth from her body finally. I needed to take care of a few things first, and in the blink of an eye my jacket and shirt were stripped off and thrown to the corner. I had hurried through the removal of half my clothes, but I was not going to rush her. I pulled her up so that she was sitting on the bed. Slowly, and with great care, I slid her jacket down her arms, exposing her shoulders.

I laid a quick, gentle kiss to the bare flesh that felt so warm after its time concealed by the fabric. The warmth nearly burned my lips with the need behind them.

With my lips still against her shoulder I slid my hands up her back to reach for the ties on the dress. With a gentle tug I heard the fabric as it slid against itself and straps separated.

With the small bow undone the fabric fell forward, down the front of her body. With the halter undone I now had an uninterrupted view of her naked chest. There was no bra in place, just the beautifully tanned flesh of her flawless body. I felt the need stiffen within me to a near painful level.

After a brief pause to enjoy the view I grabbed the dress where it had bunched together around her waist. With ease and care I pulled it up and over her head. There was now only one small amount of fabric blocking the fullness of her naked body from my view. I growled low in the back of my throat, more of a purr than anything else. It was done out of pure satisfaction and joy.

"Carter?" Her voice seemed hesitant, questioning.

"You're so beautiful, so gorgeous, so delicious." I knew I might scare her if I was too intense so I worked hard to keep my voice steady and calm. "Is this ok?" I asked her once more, giving her one last chance to tell me she wasn't ready.

"Yes Carter. I'm ready." Her smile was embarrassed and sweet and she urged me on. "I want you, I want this."

With the last confirmation from her I was more determined and sure than ever before. I undid the leather belt around my waist and slid my jeans and boxers down my hips. Once they were off they too were flung somewhere out of sight and out of mind. I was now bare before her.

I pressed my lips to hers briefly before moving my mouth lower. I kissed down her chin, down her neck, and down to her chest. I pushed gently, with just a slight amount of force I pushed her back and laid her against the pillows.

I was relishing the feeling of her body, the nakedness of her flesh pressed against the palms of my hands. I was trailing kisses over her body, gently and sensually. I was fighting my wolf who longed to take the lead, but I didn't think that her body was ready for that.

"Carter." She called my name as I scraped my teeth across her shoulder, her whole body jumping beneath me. "Please." She was begging me to continue. I could smell that her body was ready, and that she wanted me, but still I wouldn't rush it.

As I settled my mouth at the peak of one of her glorious breasts I simultaneously buried my hand deep between her thighs, right into the burning hot heat of her core. She was dripping and waiting for me, but still, I needed to make sure she wouldn't get hurt.

Slowly, I slid the tip of my middle finger past the opening of her dripping core and her body closed around it with tight, needy pressure. Just what I thought, had I taken her without preparing her first I could have hurt her and I vowed to never hurt her again.

I withdrew my finger and raised myself up. Slowly, I slipped the black lacy panties she was wearing down her hips, down her long, long legs, and off her feet. They were tossed gently aside to land near her dress.

Now that we were both bare before each other, it was time to prepare her body for mine. My hand slid back down her body and to her entrance. My fingers played gently for just a moment in the curls they found there. My middle finger ringed her core for just a moment before sliding inside.

This time, I pushed past the barriers, past the resistance and all the way inside her body until my palm was pressed against her mound. I pulled back and pushed forward again and again creating a slow gentle rhythm. Her already dripping core was slowly opening for me, readying her for me. After a few moments I inserted a second finger, increasing the amount of me her body was taking. All the while she was moaning and panting below me as I kissed my way across her neck and across her chest.

When she began to tighten and squeeze my fingers with a much stronger force I knew she was about to climax. I didn't want to push her to that edge just yet, the climax would cause her core to swell and make her tighter and it could hurt her to take me then.

She moaned when I pulled my hand away from her, leaving her empty. But she smiled excited as I placed myself between her legs and positioned myself at her opening. I was ready, beyond ready, harder than I had ever been in my life, and I needed her in this moment as much as she needed me.

I pressed forward, quickly but gently. Still, I heard her gasp and smelled that sharp scent of blood as I broke past the last of her barriers.

"Are you ok?" I asked her before I continued.

"MMhmm, yeah, keep going." She encouraged me with words and her body as she rocked her hips against mine. That got a gasp out of both of us.

"I love you." I whispered the words into her ear before I kissed the side of her head.

After that I set about creating a slow and steady rhythm, something her body could handle without hurting her. The feeling of her wrapped around me, enveloping me, was the best feeling there was. Nothing and no one was better than that.

Her moans and panting breaths were like spurs in my hyde, urging me on. I was driving us both closer and closer to the edge of climax with every stroke in and out of her perfect little body. I felt the desire to mark her welling up inside of me as I was driving in and out of her.

I quickened my rhythm to try and distract myself from the thought but it was no use. The need to mark her was too strong. My mouth found the curve of her neck.

I licked that tender spot of flesh first, then laid a kiss against it quickly. Then, finally, I sunk my teeth deep into her skin. I could feel the power building, the heat passing from me into her. The mark was to tell the world that she had a mate, that she was mine and we belonged to each other.

I envisioned our future together as I tasted her blood in my mouth and felt her body wrapped around me as intimately as she could be. The thought was like the rising moon, ushering in a bright new future filled with happiness and hope.

With one last thrust I pushed us both over the edge at the same time. My mouth released her as I threw my head back and called her name.

"Emmalee." She was panting and clinging to me as she threw her head back at the same time.

"Carter" We came together and collapsed onto the bed holding each other close.

It was several minutes before either of us stirred, the feeling of holding each other close was too intense, too perfect. But soon I noticed she was drifting off to sleep.

"No, Emmalee, we can't sleep here." I tried to wake her up.

"Why not?" She seemed dazed and confused.

"Do you think I could keep you here all night and your dad not kill me?" I joked with her.

"Good point." She giggled. "We should head back."

I helped her out of the bed and helped her into her clothes. Once we were both dressed I took the food, which had gone untouched, and the wine, also untouched, and packed it in the Jeep. I closed the tent up and took the projector and screen to the car as well.

"I'll come back for the rest tomorrow." I told her.

We rode home in silence with her leaning across the center to lay against my arm. I held her left hand in my right as I drove us home. This had been the best night ever. And I even got one more amazing kiss goodnight after I walked her to her door.

I had a spring in my step as I walked back to my room for the night.

Chapter 253 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 17

10-13 minutes

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Emmalee

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The morning after my movie date with Carter I woke up sore, but happy. It was not a bad kind of sore though. It felt like something achy, like I had spent a lot of time working out and had stretched some good muscle. As I moved and felt the pleasantly sore spots twinge I couldn't help but smile.

While I was showering, I noticed the place where he had bitten me last night. The bruise around it was already fading, and I knew what the lines meant. He had marked me. I couldn't help but grin when I saw it.

But, I didn't want my family to see it, not yet.

I was glad that Mom had taken Katie to visit family and they wouldn't be home until this afternoon. And that Jordan wasn't often home since he, too, had found his mate. It was just going to be me, the staff, and Daddy.

Oh, that was even worse. I had to hide the mark as best as I could. After my shower I left my hair down, blow drying it so that it would lay properly on my shoulders. Then I wore a sleeveless turtleneck sweater in a soft shade of pink. I did everything I could to make sure Daddy didn't know what I did last night.

I may be mated, but I was still his little girl and I didn't want him to get mad at Carter. I would let Daddy think that we waited until we were married, that would be the best option for us all.

When I went down to breakfast I saw that my dad was already sitting at the table, drinking his coffee and reading the newspaper.

"Good morning Daddy." I said as I skipped into the room. I kissed him on the top of his head as I passed and then sat in my seat.

"Morning." His voice was gruff and he was looking at me sternly. "Where's Carter?" He didn't sound happy.

"I don't know, I haven't seen him since we got home last night. Why?" I turned my head and looked at him curiously.

"Just wondering." He definitely sounded mad and his eyes were boring into me like x-rays or something.

"Is something wrong Daddy?" I asked him, making my voice sound extra innocent.

"Nope. Not a thing." He said as he folded his newspaper in half and left the room. I didn't like how that was going.

I had just sat there and watched on worriedly as my dad rose to his feet and left the room without another word. I just hoped he didn't know what I had done last night. I would die of embarrassment if he did.

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Carter

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I had gotten the important things last night but I had to come back to get the tent, air mattress, and other odds and ends that I had left in the tent from the date. I had set my alarm to go off extra early so I could accomplish this before breakfast.

There was a spring in my step as I walked happily up the path to the tent. I even seemed to be whistling as I worked. This was the best I had ever felt in my entire life.

I worked efficiently but I still wasn't done in time for breakfast. I think it was the fact that I kept smelling Emmalee's scent and stopping to take long deep breaths, remembering the night before and grinning happily. That had delayed me quite a bit.

Once I was certain that there were no traces of the campsite left behind I headed back to the Jeep and started off back toward the pack house. I drove calmly, leisurely, and with the memories still dancing in my mind.

When I pulled up in front of the house I saw Bryce leaning against the porch, glaring at the Jeep as I got out.

"Carter?" He called out to me, his voice gruff and there was a deep line running between his brows.

"Yeah?" I called out, wondering what he needed.

"I need to talk to you." He stalked down the steps. For a moment I thought he knew about what had happened last night, but I knew Emmalee would never tell him. She had understood when I told her why we had to head home.

"Is something wrong?" I asked him, curious about his behavior.

"It's sensitive information, come with me." He tilted his head toward the trees, indicating that he wanted me to follow him out there.

"Alright." I agreed as I followed behind him.

We had walked for at least ten minutes before the silence got to me. Bryce, a stoic look on his face and a stern set to his eyes hadn't made a move to talk at all.

"What's going on?" I asked him again.

"How're things, Carter? Enjoying yourself?"

"I've got no complaints." I answered him, perplexed by the question.

"Enjoying your time here in my pack?"

"Of course. Things have been great." I didn't understand what he was getting at.

"Hmm." He seemed to hum, as if he was agreeing with me. Life truly was great in his pack, they didn't have to worry about everything that my pack had to worry about.

We walked a little further, Bryce in the lead. Finally, we came to a large stream that was running across the path where the two of us stood side by side. It wasn't something that would hold us up, we could have jumped it given the determination, or we could have just walked through it as the water would only come to our knees, maybe a little higher.

We stared out at the stream for a moment before Bryce started to turn. I thought that he was going to say something, that he was going to start talking again.

I did not expect that Bryce was going to swing around with his fist lashing out at me. By the time I realized what he was doing his fist had slammed into the side of my face so hard that it sent me sprawling, right into the stream.

I felt the water rush across my body and my face and into my nose. I rose to my knees quickly, coughing and spluttering.

"What the hell Dad?" I asked him, pissed and confused.

"Shut the hell up, you asshole." He screamed at me. "You couldn't keep it in your fucking pants could you?"

"What?"

"Don't what me, boy. I know what you did to my daughter last night."

How could he know? Did Emmalee really tell him? I didn't think that was likely.

"You're going to shut up and take responsibility. Do you fucking understand me?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Bryce." I yelled at him. "You clearly know what happened and I don't know how, but I won't lie to you. Yes, I slept with her. But she's my mate, and I love her. I treated her with every ounce of respect."

"Shut up you piss ant." Bryce was furious. "You couldn't wait?"

"Did you?" I asked him. "When you met Bree did you wait until you were married? The mating alone makes us as good as married in our culture."

"No, the marking makes us married in our culture. Did you fucking mark her too asshole?" He wasn't going to like my answer, so I just hung my head in shame, still kneeling in the water. "God dammit, you're a real piece of fucking work."

Bryce was pacing, running his hands through his auburn hair as his temper fumed. I took advantage of his distraction to rise from the water and step back on to the grass.

"So not only did you take my daughter's virginity last night but you fucking marked her and knocked her up all in one fucking go. You had to hit the damn triple sevens didn't you."

"What?" I looked at him, stunned by his words. What did he just say? I felt the need to ask that out loud. "What did you just say?"

"Oh, so you didn't know? You just banged her and left then?"

"That's not what happened and you know it." My temper was rising now. "I love her, I respect her, and I want to be with her in every way possible. I didn't mistreat or abandon her at all last night. I took her back to her room and kissed her good night."

"Where did you do it?"

"I don't feel comfortable talking to you about my sex life with your daughter." I felt the blood draining from my face.

"You better get comfortable right now, if I have to be ok with the idea of you deflowering her and stealing her away then you need to be pretty damn uncomfortable yourself." His deep voice was growling at me menacingly.

"I had a date planned for us last night. I took her to dinner, and then after the sunset, we watched a movie on a projector in the mountains."

"You took her on the dirt in the mountains?" He looked even more pissed.

"Hell no." I felt offended by his words. I had a tent set up and an air mattress so we could be comfortable while we watched the movie."

"So you planned it from the beginning."

"NO!" I threw my hands up defensively. "No, I did not. I only planned for the movie. I wanted us to be comfortable, maybe cuddle and make out. But one thing led to another and it happened."

"It just happened. That doesn't sound too romantic. How could you be so cruel to my little girl?"

"It wasn't planned, Bryce, I swear to that, but I promise you I treated her right. Ask her if you don't believe me." I heard Bryce growl in anger and frustration. I had a feeling that he would not be asking Emmalee, no matter what happened.

After several more minutes of pacing Bryce finally spoke again.

"Let's get back to the house. You need to change, we have an appointment."

"An appointment?" I felt my heart stop. "You're going to try and make her have an abortion? I won't let you."

"No, I'm not. I'm going to go take you two to the court house. You're going to get married, today."

"Today?" I felt my stomach drop. "What about our friends and family? What about Emmalee's dreams for a big wedding?"

"You can still have that. The big ceremony and celebration, later anyway. Right now, you're going to get married and make an honest woman out of her."

I followed Bryce back to the house, my clothes still dripping and my heart pounding too fast. Emmalee was just coming into the yard where her mother and younger sister Katie had just pulled up when we got home.

"Hey sweetie, what's wrong?" Bree asked Bryce as we walked up.

"Carter, why are you soaking wet and what happened to your eye?" Emmalee asked me.

I just locked my eyes onto my mate and walked to her. I pulled her into my arms and hugged her close.

"Stop, you'll get me all wet." She pushed against me playfully as she giggled. I just ignored it and buried my nose in her neck where I had bitten her, inhaling deeply.

"He was right." I smiled into the curve of her neck.

"Who was right?"

"Your dad."

"About what? What did he say?"

"Emmalee, marry me, please. Marry me right now."

"What? Carter what's going on?"

I was in a state of bliss. I was getting everything that a man could ever want all at the same time.

"I'll answer that for him." Bryce said, as he pulled away from Bree. "He's asking you to marry him so he can make an honest woman out of you."

"What?" Emmalee was confused.

"Seems your date last night was a lot of fun. A little too much fun." Emmalee blushed at Bryce's words.

"He's going to marry you, today, because the three of you are going to be a family real soon.

"A family?" The shock was clear on Emmalee's face. "I'm, I'm, I'm-." She seemed to be stuck on repeat.

"Ooohh." Bree squealed. "My baby is going to have a baby."

"I'm going to be an aunt." Katie exclaimed.

"I'm pregnant." Emmalee finally managed to say the words, a smile very evident on her face.

Chapter 254 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- CARTER AND EMMALEE CHAPTER 18

10-12 minutes

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Emmalee

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I had a quick ceremony in town with Carter, we would have a big celebration once everyone was home from France and things had settled down. I was loving the idea and feeling of being pregnant. I wanted to be a mother, to take care of my own family. I know it was a little rushed, but we couldn't be happier.

We had kept it all a secret from Carter's family back at his pack, I didn't want to make things hard on them while the training and fighting was still going on. It was just over two weeks after the wedding that we got a call from Noah, Trinity and Reece were on their way home because Edmond, the crazy evil warlock, was on his way to their city.

The fight was coming, and it would be a bad one. All the non fighters like the elderly, women, children, and weaker males were sent to other packs for their own safety. We took several of them and I noticed that a lot of them seemed scared and worried about their family members.

I spent most of the time that they were all there making them feel welcomed and comfortable. I used my ability of making people smile to help the kids. I didn't throw a party, but apparently I was able to use that ability in other ways. I may not have been granted a power by Trinity but I was still special.

After the battle was over there were a lot of lives lost, but it could have been worse. Though what mattered was that the threat was gone. Edmond was gone. And none of our close friends and family had been lost. I had been holding my breath with my heart in my throat as I waited to hear how it all went down. Thank the Goddess Carter was alright.

There was a collective funeral after the battle, but that didn't seem like the right time to share the news of the baby and wedding that had happened while they were all gone. And then at Reece's birthday they announced that Trinity was pregnant, she had gotten pregnant the day they came home from France, the night before the battle. Well, ruining her big moment by telling her then just didn't seem right.

When was I going to stop procrastinating and tell her?

My sister-in-law Nikki was in labor with her baby and Carter and I were on our way back to their pack to see them. This might finally be the right time.

We didn't make it in time for the delivery, but all of Carter's family was there when we arrived. When Nikki's parents and brother had left to go get some lunch and it was just the eight of us, plus that adorable little baby boy, my first nephew, I thought it was time to spill the beans. But how to do this?

"Oh, Carter, do you think our baby is going to look like him?" I asked in an offhand sort of way. I hoped they would catch the phrasing.

"I'm sure any baby of yours will look adorable." Trinity smiled at us.

"Yes, when the time comes it will be just as beautiful and unique as the two of you." Eve assured me.

"But I'm talking about now." I smiled at them.

"What?" Wesley was the first to react as everyone just stared on in confusion.

"Emmalee, you're-." Trinity started but stopped as I just nodded to answer her already.

"Oh Goddess, they're going to be so close." Nikki squealed.

"Actually." I smiled awkwardly. "My baby will be older than Trinity's."

"What?" Noah asked with his eyebrows raised.

"We got pregnant at the end of May." Carter answered him, a grin firmly in place.

Eve, standing so close to Carter already, just reached her hand out and slapped him in the back of the head.

"Ow! What was that for Ma?" He yelled at her.

"Why didn't you tell me, you jerk?"

"I'm sorry Eve." I hung my head. "We didn't want to burden Trinity and Reece while they trained, or Noah while he handled business in their absence."

"Oh, sweetie, it's not a burden." Eve came to me. "I'm so happy." She was grinning at me.

"Now you just need to get married." Trinity was grinning.

"Well." I smiled sheepishly.

"CARTER!" Eve yelled at him.

"Bryce made me." He squirmed away from his mother.

"He's telling the truth. Dad made us get married the day we found out. But I want to have a big celebration soon. A proper wedding and a reception to let everyone know."

"I'll help you plan it." Trinity hugged me.

"Me too." Nikki chimed in.

"This really is quite wonderful." Wesley smiled.

"I just wish Grandfather had been here today to hear all this." Trinity smiled happily.

"We'll tell him later." Eve assured her.

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Carter

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Two weeks after Nikki had her baby we were all back at Bryce's pack. And I do mean all. Mom, Dad, Grandfather, Noah, Nikki, Trinity, Reece, and of course Emmalee and myself. It was time for us to have our big party to celebrate our wedding. So why was Bryce calling me to his office all of a sudden?

I walked, slowly, to the office. It almost reminded me of the day we found out Emmalee was pregnant. Was he going to punch me again? Was he going to shoot me this time? Would I ever make it out of this house, his office, alive? I didn't know the answer to any of those.

My heart rate sped up and my pace slowed with every step that brought me closer to the doom room. That's what I was currently calling his office. Hey, look, I was even wearing a suit. They could just bury me out back and not have to worry about a funeral or a casket, or an investigation into the murder.

Oh man, what did I do this time? I asked myself, running my hands through my hair as I rounded the corner to his office. I could already hear the funeral march. Bum bum ba-bum bum. The classic Chopin song was playing in my head on an endless loop.

When I finally got to the room, though, I noticed that Bryce wasn't alone inside it. No, Reece was in there on the other side of that door. Maybe I wouldn't die today. Then again, I had made it known before that I didn't like Reece, maybe he was helping Bryce get rid of me.

No, he wouldn't do that, it would upset Trinity. So what the hell was going on here.

"Took you long enough." Bryce griped the second that I opened the door.

"Hey Carter, you don't look so good." Reece noted, commenting on my ragged, tired look. I could have told him that being dragged to Bryce's office was not my favorite thing after the punch he had given me and the massive black eye I had been sporting afterwards.

"I'm alright, just a little nervous about today." I answered, partially honestly. Bryce laughed.

"Tell him the truth." The laughter made Bryce sound young and fun, making me think about the time I had made him laugh when looking at Stanley's head. "Tell him you're afraid I'm going to try and knock your block off again and you're too scared to fight me."

"He won't fight you?" Reece questioned. "Is he afraid to lose?"

"No, we don't know who would win. He's bested me and I've bested him. But if we were to fight for real it wouldn't be a good thing for Emmalee, she would be upset either way." I nodded to show that Bryce was right.

"And what do you mean knock his block off 'again'?" Reece wondered.

"When I found out he'd deflowered my little girl, marked her, and knocked her up all in the same night I punched him in the face."

"To be fair, you punched me when you only knew about two of those three." I corrected him.

"Yeah, and I would have hit you harder if I knew about the last one beforehand." Bryce snapped at me. "So count yourself lucky." Reece laughed at our exchange.

"Don't worry Carter, this isn't a bad thing. We both need to talk to you."

"What about?" I asked him, my curiosity peaked.

"Sit." Bryce pointed to the chairs opposite him. I sat down in one, but Reece continued to lean against the wall behind him. "You remember my wedding present to Reece?"

"Yeah, Stanley's head. He got what he deserved."

"That he did." Bryce grinned. I had to remember that he had ripped that head from Stanley's body with his bare hands.

"Well, that's left a vacancy. And in the absence of their Alpha lately, Bryce has been maintaining their pack. But we need to find a new leader for them, and soon." Reece explained to me.

"So you want me to find someone?" I asked them, confused. They looked at each other and laughed.

"No, Carter, we want you to be the Alpha." Reece answered me.

"And you're lucky we decided it before you knocked up my daughter." Bryce snapped at me.

"Me?" I just gaped at them and asked that one word question after a stunned silence.

"Yes. You've proven yourself to me, and Bryce said he's been training you since we left for France. We think you're ready now."

"You've been planning this for a while?" I was still stunned. "Why not Noah?" I asked him, confused.

"Noah is my Beta, and he's not the type to want to be an Alpha. He's happy and would have said no."

"Why not Jordan."

"My son will take over my pack, you fool." Bryce snapped. "Do you want the job or not?"

"I do. I want it." I answered in a rush, making them laugh.

"Good." Reece laughed. "Now you just need a job."

"I don't even know where to start." I laughed.

"If you're willing to work hard I know what you can do." Reece grinned.

"You know I always work hard." I smirked at him.

"I'll train you to work for me. In my company."

"Doing what?" I had to know, the look on his face told me he had something up his sleeve.

"As a talent scout, since you so enjoy being a scout."

I groaned at his words but I couldn't help but smile as well. If I had never become a scout I would never have the mate and family I have now. I'd take it, and I would make the best life for my wife and child.

And, so my new life as an Alpha began, in the recently renamed wolf pack. I had renamed my pack The Rising Moon Wolf Pack. It was a new start for the pack and a new start for my wife and me.

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FOUR MONTHS LATER

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CARTER

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I was sitting in the hospital room, holding the baby in my arms as Emmalee slept soundly. The bright blue blanket wrapped around my son's pink little face. He was so adorable. He looked like me, though I would have been just as happy if he had looked like Emmalee. He was sleeping just as soundly and peacefully as his mother was while holding onto my finger gently.

"I love you CJ." I whispered the words to him. The name, Emmalee's choice, made me happy as well. My son was named after me, my little CJ, my little Carter Jr., my little bundle of joy.

Chapter 255 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 1 (BL)

9-11 minutes

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Shawn

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I was sitting in the restaurant, across from the girl that my brother had set me up with. He had insisted that I try to date, to get out there and be with people. I just didn't see the point in it.

Why should I go out there and find a girl, get to know her, maybe even love her, just for it all to come crashing down when one or the other of us finds our mate? I couldn't do that to a girl. I couldn't stand to break someone's heart like that.

Honestly, if it wasn't for my brother's insistence I wouldn't even be here right now. He had told me he thought she was my type, that he hoped she would be my mate. But if she couldn't be my mate then she could be my distraction. My brother could be so crude and vulgar, sometimes. I found it hard to believe that we were twins with how differently we acted.

"So what do you do?" The girl, Kelly, was pretty enough. She had long platinum blonde hair and pretty hazel eyes. She was skinny, and tall, and amply endowed on the chest. But nothing about her appearance did anything for me. Maybe I just wasn't going to have a type until the Goddess chose the girl for me. Or maybe I would just never mate with anyone.

"I'm a warrior." I answered her, she was a wolf and would know what that meant.

"A warrior?" She seemed to like the sound of that. "You must be strong. And good at fighting." I could see her eyes darken and fill with heat.

Things always started this way. The women were always interested in my career, interested in a man that was in a burly type of position. Every time they found out that I was a warrior they perked up a little.

"I do quite a bit of training, yes." I knew where this was going. They would want to hear about the work that I do, the missions that I go on, and those things were confidential.

"Where have you gone? Have you ever been in any interesting fights?" I knew it, it was just like all the other times. "Ooooh, do you work with the Alpha and Luna? I can't believe their wedding is coming up."

"I can't talk about all that. My work can be sensitive and it's confidential."

"Boo, that's no fun at all." She pouted. "Well what can you talk about?"

"Anything but work."

"Well, what do you do for fun?" She didn't look so happy now, like I had deflated her somehow.

"I read mostly. I never know when I will be called back into work. That's the life of a warrior. You're always on call."

"Boring. Don't you like to go out? Go to concerts? Have fun?"

"Not really. I prefer to read, listen to or play music, or watch a movie quietly at home."

"You don't sound fun at all. Your brother is a lot more exciting than you are."

"Sorry, but that is just the way that I am. I am not a very outgoing person. I prefer peace and quiet."

"That's so blah. How can you be so uptight." That wasn't the first time that I had heard that I was uptight. "Ugh." She was upset now, venting her frustrations as she put a bite of her food into her mouth.

"When dinner is over I can drop you off at your place." I offered.

"No thanks. I will walk or get a ride."

"Whatever you prefer." I had had this happen to me more times than I would like to admit.

After the meal was finished I paid for the bill and we walked out of the restaurant. She stormed off to the opposite end of the parking lot. This, too, had happened to me several times. I was used to it.

I was in my car, driving to my apartment alone where I would spend the rest of my night alone. I lived alone, spent all my spare time alone, and that was fine with me. I enjoyed the calm and quiet of my own company.

I had just gotten home, shutting the door behind me, when my phone rang. I knew who it would be and didn't even bother to check the caller ID.

"Hello Shane." I sighed into the phone.

"What the hell, Shawn?" He demanded of me as he yelled into my ear. "How could you strike out with her? She's a guarantee, man. She likes everyone, dude."

"That's not what I want."

"What the hell do you want, Shawn. What is it that you want from a girl?"

"I don't know, Shane. I just know I haven't found it yet."

"Bro, you need to meet more women or you're never going to meet your mate."

"I don't care. Why do I have to focus so much on finding a girl right now?"

"It's what we do, Shawn. It's the way wolves do things."

"Maybe I'm just not meant to follow in that path. Nothing ever works out for me."

"You're so fucking pessimistic, you know that. You need to think positively."

"Fine, I'm positive that I don't fucking care about finding a mate right now."

"You're hopeless."

"Thank you. Now, can I go to bed?"

"Yeah, go pull one off in frustration before you fall asleep."

"Ugh, you're so disgusting."

"And you're a prude." He laughed at me as he ended the call.

When I woke the next morning I was thinking about what my brother said. Was he right? Was I doomed to be a lonely prude for the rest of my life. Should I get out there more? Should I try to meet more women?

It didn't matter what it all meant or what I should do. Today was going to be busy. We have the leader of the vampires coming today and all of the Luna's guards were supposed to be there to protect her.

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Dietrich

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Was für eine Überraschung! Oh what a surprise it was when I had that video call with the Alpha Reece Gray. I had known the Gray family for generations. Ever since their ancestors had still lived in the old country as they would say. Back when the boy's great great great grandfather Irél Liath had run his pack in the Irish countryside.

Over the last few hundred years my relationship with that family had remained strong and flourished. Around the start of the twentieth century we each started a new business venture. I worked with them to bring their company to Europe and they in turn helped to lead my company into the Americas. We had both profited quite a bit from our mutual cooperation.

And as all that time passed I had watched as the head of their family changed from son to son. From Irél Liath to Finian Liath to Caelan Gray (this was when they changed from the Irish word for gray to the English word) to Brennan Gray, to Collin Gray and now to Reece Gray.

The family had had a strong run of Alphas in their blood, and I had remained loyal to them all. I just know that something special will come to this family soon enough.

And here I was being asked to come and assist the new young head of the family. To help him with his mate, his half witch half wolf mate. They were also having trouble locating some missing children that were taken by a group of warlocks that were led by his mate's evil warlock father.

This was shaping up to be quite interesting indeed.

But, alas, this young new Alpha and his curious mate were not what had made my video call so interesting and surprising.

No, the thing that had interested me, excited me, and surprised me that day was the man named Shawn who had been in the background of the video call.

It had been such a long time since anyone seemed to call out to me. Not verbally of course, but spiritually. The man's essence was reaching me even through the digital waves that were passing across the world from me to him and back again.

His heart was already calling out to me, he just didn't know it yet. I know wolves needed to have the scent to make them notice their partner, but I was not the same as them. I was older, stronger, and more powerful. And in all my five hundred and twenty-eight years I never once felt a pull as strong as the one I was having for him.

His looks weren't bad either, if I'm being honest. When you're as old as I am then you've tried all types of people. Women, men, manly women, effeminate men, cross dressers, and of course people from every possible group of the shadow world. I would know good looking when I saw it, having seen the beauties of the world for the last five centuries. And Shawn was a beauty.

His eyes were a gorgeous gray that looked like the clouds blowing off the ocean right before a winter storm, and his hair, so bright in the light of that room, that hair that almost looked silver. The body I could see through his clothes was toned and slim, so athletic looking. And best of all, he had such an innocent look to his eyes, surely he couldn't be as pure as he looked.

He wasn't the only one in the room with that look. He seemed to have an identical twin brother there with him. But even though they looked the same, looking at the brother did nothing for me. That was another proof, another way for me to tell that this man, this Shawn, was meant to be mine.

Ohh, but I was beginning to look forward to this trip. And so, it was with those thoughts running through my head. My driver, a human subjugate of mine, was guiding us up the driveway at a steady, though agonizingly slow pace. I wanted her to hurry. I wanted to see that man in person.

Chapter 256 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 2 (BL)

15-19 minutes

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Dietrich

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When my servant, Marticia, pulled the car up to the front of the house I noticed that the young Alpha was standing outside, waiting for me. Standing with him was, presumably, his mate and three pack warriors.

With the trouble they had been having it was understandable that they would be wary and on guard when I arrived. Especially considering that the envoy I had sent to them recently had attacked them rather than helped them. I needed to make up for that blunder.

I should have known better. I should have gone to them personally. This was not a simple matter that I should have pushed off onto someone else. But I thought I was doing what was best, Octavius was the best at tracking among those in my employ. He should have been able to do his job properly, that fool.

But, if he hadn't messed up then I wouldn't have had the chance to see Shawn on that call and I wouldn't be coming here to meet them all in person, so I guess things happen for a reason.

What saddened me was that the man I was seeking was not with those standing outside. I hoped I wouldn't have to wait long to find him, I wanted to see what his reaction to me was going to be.

I couldn't help but smile to myself as Marticia parked the car and walked around to open the door for me. Regardless of when I managed to meet that delicious looking man this was bound to be an interesting trip.

I stepped out of the car slowly and elegantly. I wasn't trying to look pretentious, but I was just born in a different time and continued to hold myself a different way than most.

"Welcome Dietrich." Reece called out in a friendly voice. There was already trust between the young Alpha and myself.

"Reece, so good to finally meet you. I have not been back to the States in close to thirty years. Your father had not yet sired you then. I am grateful for the chance to come and see you all personally, though I do regret the cause for it." My introduction made sure to cite our histories as well as my regrets.

"Welcome to our home." The lovely woman standing beside Reece spoke softly. I noticed immediately that little extra spark of life glowing within her.

"Ahh, the new Luna. I am so sorry I did not know that your Alpha had taken a mate. Had I known we could have avoided a lot of this trouble." I paused for a moment, my eyes darkening as I thought of the trouble so recently caused. "But may I say that you are a very lovely woman. Reece is a very lucky man."

"I am indeed." Reece agreed as he grinned at me. I returned the grin easily. "Allow me to introduce my mate, and fiancée, Trinity Whitton. Trinity, this is Lord Dietrich Conrad, Vampire Emperor and a close friend of my family."

"It's a pleasure to meet you." She smiled and nodded her head at me.

"The pleasure is all mine, my dear. Allow me to congratulate you on your upcoming nuptials."

"Please, Lord Dietrich, I would be delighted if you stayed for the wedding."

"There is no need to be so formal, Trinity, just call me Dietrich, and I most definitely would love to share in your most special of days." I was smiling, I knew I was, but I had no intention of leaving anytime soon. If the pull from Shawn meant what I thought it meant then I may never be going home again.

After a few moments of smiling at each other I continued, adding to my congratulations.

"Also, allow me to congratulate the two of you on the upcoming addition to your family."

"Addition?" I heard the man standing right behind the young Luna say questioningly.

"I am sorry, did I say something I shouldn't have?" I felt saddened for a moment, my heart sinking.

"No, it's no problem Dietrich, we just haven't gotten around to telling all of the guards, with how busy things have been. David, Vincent, Trinity is expecting." Reece smoothed my slip up over. My eyes lit with happiness as the men seemed to take joy in the news they just heard, and I had learned the guards names as well.

"Congratulations Luna." The man who had questioned my words immediately spoke and grinned at his Luna. The other man was just smiling at her fondly.

"Shall we head inside then?" Trinity asked, looking a little more relaxed than she did when we had started.

Marticia and I joined the wolves on the beautifully adorned porch and followed them inside. The moment we stepped into the hall I heard a gasp. I immediately caught sight of Shawn, his gorgeous face and tender eyes. He had noticed my scent. That was all that I needed to know. He was mine and I was his.

"What's wrong Shawn?" His twin brother asked him as he stared intently at my driver and me. Oh, how cute, he doesn't know which one of us he is smelling. I wonder if Shawn has ever been with a man before.

"Come on Dietrich, we've got dinner waiting for all of us." Reece and Trinity turned as they were talking, expecting to speak to me, but I wasn't standing there anymore.

As I moved quickly and silently through the shadows in the room, I noticed that Shawn was still staring perplexed at the place where I had been, at my driver. It wasn't long before I was standing right next to the man. And oh the scent he had. He smelled like warm rich cream and decadent chocolate, the best way to describe his scent was like that of a bakery. Fresh baked cakes, gooey chocolate chip cookies, frosting, just sweet, so sweet, so mouth watering.

"So we finally meet." Shawn jumped when he heard my cooing voice.

"E-excuse me?" Shawn sounded scared and nervous.

"I have been looking forward to meeting you since I saw you last week."

"W-why would you be looking forward to meeting m-me?" Shawn's shaky voice seemed to ask me.

"Because, in all my years, I have never met someone so intune with my wavelength as you are, Shawn. Do you know what that means?" Shawn shook his head in denial. "But, you must have noticed it by now, right?" I was oblivious of all the eyes staring at us as I spoke to the man who made my heart sing so.

I continued to grin at the young man, so handsome and innocent as he stared at me with wide eyes.

"What should I have noticed?" Shawn looked around nervously, his eyes passing over his brother, Reece, Trinity, and finally settling on my subjugate across the room.

"Trust your senses, Shawn." I purred to him. "Close your eyes and follow your truest of all senses."

"No, I shouldn't." Shawn tried to refuse with wide shocked eyes as he stared at me nervously.

"Trust me, and just do it." I insisted as the nerves settled into me, what if I was wrong?

"Just listen to him for a moment Shawn." Reece instructed. I saw the look of fear and dread on Shawn's face as he gulped once then followed his orders.

Shawn closed his eyes and tilted his head just a little. With his eyes closed and head tilted back, he inhaled deeply. I saw the flare of his nostrils and he picked up exactly what he was supposed to be sensing. His head tilted to the side on instinct trying to follow the scent trail.

I saw the smile that settled on his face as he took in my scent. Clearly, Shawn could smell me and I was intriguing and pleasant to him.

"What do you smell Shawn?" Reece asked him. Shawn answered with his eyes still closed.

"It smells like musk, cognac, and leather."

"And what is this scent telling you?" Reece questioned him further.

"The scent, and my wolf, are telling me that I've found my mate."

"And where is that mate?" Reece asked.

Shawn opened his eyes, staring right at me, a look of pure shock on his face.

"How?" The smile I gave him then was full of pure joy.

"I imagine it's the same way as any other mating. Or am I wrong?"

"But this is impossible." Shawn was shaking his head. "How can this be?"

"In all my five hundred and twenty-eight years I have never found a mate. I have of course had my fair share of lovers over the years, but never have I felt anything like what I felt when I first saw you on that video call. I knew when you were bespelled by my words that you were the one for me."

"But I'm a guy." Shawn protested.

"Shawn, I've lived so long that people ceased to be male or female to me, people are just people. We all love and live do we not. I have no preference one way or the other. Do you truly not feel the same way?"

"I'm not gay!" Shawn nearly shouted.

"But, you've never had a relationship either. You never seemed like you ever cared for any of the girls you tried dating." His brother revealed some of Shawn's history to us all.

"Shut up!" Shawn yelled at his brother. "I was just saving the best of me for my mate. Why go half ass on a relationship that is going to end when I meet my mate?"

"Are you opposed to me as your mate?" I was afraid to hear his answer but I remained steady as I looked at him. "Do you not wish to have who the Goddess chose for you?"

"I, that's not, it's just that, I don't-." Shawn seemed incapable of finishing a coherent thought. He took a deep breath and settled his nerves. "I just don't know."

"I understand that you're confused." I leaned in close to Shawn and placed a hand on his cheek. "But we can work it out together. After all, fate has drawn us to each other." Shawn froze in place, an uncertain look on his face, but he didn't pull away.

"I think this is wonderful news." Trinity's voice broke the tension by providing her support for us. "This is a time to celebrate. Two new matings with the people so close to me."

"Indeed, it is a joyous and wonderful day. You should be happy Shawn." Reece smiled at us as he offered his encouragement.

"But...but...but-." Shawn spluttered.

"Come on, let's get to dinner. You can sit next to me." I wrapped an arm around Shawn's shoulders and dragged him toward the dining room and the smell of food.

I noticed that Trinity stalked over to Shawn's twin brother and growled at him in a low voice.

"Don't you dare give him hell about this. He needs to accept it and understand it without you making it worse."

"Yes Luna." His head snapped up and he looked like he was afraid of her.

My heart had been pounding and fluttering with excitement with each second I had spent next to Shawn. When I touched him, the feel of his warm, glorious skin made my palm blaze with heat, my heart melt, and need flood my body.

~~

Shawn

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I had been standing in the hall with David and his new mate and my annoying brother as we waited for the others to come inside. We would also be able to rush outside if something were to happen and they were to need out assistance.

I didn't know what to expect when the vampire got here, but I didn't expect to have my wolf scream the moment they all came inside.

'WHAT?' I screamed at the howling beast as he said one word over and over.

'MATE, MATE, MATE, MATE, MATE!'

What the hell was going on? I only saw the vampire and the human who had driven him. She was different from other humans, off somehow, but she couldn't be my mate. She was quite a bit older than me for one thing, and she didn't look like what I thought the Goddess would have chosen for me.

While I stared at her, confused, I didn't notice the vampire as he snuck up behind me.

"So we finally meet." I jumped and spun to face him when he spoke right next to my head.

"E-excuse me?" I couldn't believe that my voice sounded so scared and nervous.

"I have been looking forward to meeting you since I saw you last week."

"W-why would you be looking forward to meeting m-me?" I asked him shakily.

"Because, in all my years, I have never met someone so intune with my wavelength as you are, Shawn. Do you know what that means?" I just shook my head at him. "But, you must have noticed it by now, right?"

This was crazy. I had no idea who this vampire was but he obviously had the wrong person.

"What should I have noticed?" I asked him as I looked around for allies.

"Trust your senses, Shawn. Close your eyes and follow your truest of all senses."

"No, I shouldn't." I was trying to refuse, I didn't want to do this, I didn't want to close my eyes in front of this unknown, yet intriguing vampire.

"Trust me, and just do it." Dietrich insisted, his calmness faltering for just a moment.

"Just listen to him for a moment Shawn." Reece instructed me. I wanted to plead with him, to beg him not to make me do this, but I complied.

The last thing I saw was the vampire staring at me. His bright, almost white blue eyes full of joy and expectations. The black hair neatly styled with not a strand out of place. His strong, athletic physique was quite intimidating when you see him in person.

'NO!' I yelled at myself. I had to stop thinking like that, he's a guy for crying out loud.

With my eyes closed and my head tilted back I inhaled deeply. The scent I had first noticed by the door was so much stronger now, so much closer. As the scent filled my head, filled my senses, I got a vision of the person it belonged to. Cognac, leather, age, and experience. Those were the words that came to my mind when I scented him. No, not him, them. I didn't know it was the vampire. It couldn't be him.

I smiled involuntarily for a moment when I let that scent take over my mind.

"What do you smell Shawn?" Reece asked me while my eyes were still closed.

"It smells like musk, cognac, and leather."

"And what is this scent telling you?" Reece questioned me more.

"The scent, and my wolf, are telling me that I've found my mate."

"And where is that mate?" Reece asked.

I opened my eyes, staring right at the vampire, Dietrich, I just knew there was a look of pure shock on my face.

"How?" Dietrich smiled at me when I asked him this.

"I imagine it's the same way as any other mating. Or am I wrong?"

"But this is impossible. How can this be?" I shook my head trying to get the scent out of it and say no at the same time.

"In all my five hundred and twenty-eight years I have never found a mate. I have of course had my fair share of lovers over the years, but never have I felt anything like what I felt when I first saw you on that video call. I knew when you were bespelled by my words that you were the one for me." Seriously? This man was telling me that I was his mate, he was my mate, and I was the first one who he had met in over five hundred years. How could I be destined for a man for one thing and an elder vampire for another?

"But I'm a guy."

"Shawn, I've lived so long that people ceased to be male or female to me, people are just people. We all love and live do we not. I have no preference one way or the other. Do you truly not feel the same way?" How many people had he been with? That thought, that question, made my heart sink and race at triple speed at the same time.

"I'm not gay!" I shouted the words.

"But, you've never had a relationship either. You never seemed like you ever cared for any of the girls you tried dating." Shane spilled the beans on my personal life to them all.

"Shut up!" I screamed at him. "I was just saving the best of me for my mate. Why go half ass on a relationship that is going to end when I meet my mate?" Was it so wrong to save myself for the right person? How could this be happening to me?

"Are you opposed to me as your mate?" Dietrich looked saddened by my outburst. "Do you not wish to have who the Goddess chose for you?"

"I, that's not, it's just that, I don't-." I stuttered as it seemed I was incapable of finishing a coherent thought. I took a deep breath to settle my nerves before continuing. "I just don't know."

"I understand that you're confused." Dietrich leaned in close and placed a hand on my cheek. "But we can work it out together. After all, fate has drawn us to each other." I just stood there frozen when he touched me.

How could this be? Everytime one of the girls that Shane had set me up with ever touched me all I wanted to do was recoil. So why then, was my heart racing uncontrollably right now? Why didn't I want to pull away from him?

"I think this is wonderful news. This is a time to celebrate. Two new matings with the people so close to me." Trinity was smiling at us, clearly happy.

"Indeed, it is a joyous and wonderful day. You should be happy Shawn." Reece smiled at us.

"But...but...but-" I spluttered as I tried to talk.

"Come on, let's get to dinner. You can sit next to me." Dietrich wrapped an arm around me and dragged me toward the dining room

Chapter 257 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 3 (BL)

14-18 minutes

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Dietrich

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I was loving Shawn's reactions. The innocent look in his eyes was obviously not just for show. I would have to find out just how much experience he had, how truly innocent he was. That would change the way I approached our relationship. Oh, but I was so happy to have found my mate, I've waited several lifetimes for him after all. And to think that he was here in the pack that I have had ties with for so long. This was truly a wonderful blessing for me, for the both of us really.

I had led the way to the dining room, able to guide myself on the smell of the food alone. I may be a vampire but we quite enjoy food. It can even act as a way to give us energy like it does to humans and other shadow worlders, but not to the extent that it does for them. I was quite looking forward to the meal. My first date, sort of, with Shawn.

The dining room was elegant and refined, something that had clearly been decorated long ago. Chances were the antiques in this room were purchased when they were new or semi new. I saw that there were only four place settings and I knew that they hadn't included a place for Shawn or any of the other guards.

Taking the initiative I dragged Shawn with my arm still wrapped around his shoulders. I pulled him along to the side of the table with one place setting, aside for the head of the table that was meant for Reece. I knew how the standard order went. Alpha at the head of the table, the honored guest to his right and his mate to his left. They would just have to make another place setting for my new mate.

Shawn's face had been red from the moment I had wrapped my arm around him, and he hadn't said a word. I hoped he wasn't taking all this too hard. I would have to have a serious talk with him later.

After the new setting had been placed and the food was brought out, Reece stood at the head of the table. Trinity was across from me and Rawlynn Otsana, an FBI agent and new mate to one of the other guards, was sitting next to her. I had learned the names to all the men as well. Shawn's brother was named Shane, the man who had spoken when we were outside was Vincent and the silent one was David, Rawlynn's mate. Then there was Trinity's cousin and Reece's Beta, Noah. They were all people close to the top of the pack and therefore I needed to remember their names for the future.

After doing a sweep of the room with his eyes Reece began to speak.

"There are a few people at this table that still do not know about the news from the Luna and I. Dietrich was able to discern immediately that the Luna and I are expecting a child together. She has yet to visit with a pack doctor, but I would like to spread the news the rest of the way. Shane, Shawn, Agent Otsana, you were not outside when the others found out." His words were filled with pride and the ring of an Alpha.

"That is excellent news." Shane immediately declared.

"I am happy for you and your Alpha." Rawlyne congratulated Trinity. The guards were looking truly happy, and even Shawn was looking a little less nervous when he had heard his Alpha's words.

"Congratulations, Luna, that is wonderful news for you and the entire pack." Shawn was smiling at her as he spoke.

"Thank you everyone." Trinity looked nervous as she blushed but there was no hiding the beaming smile on her face.

"Now, let us eat. We may talk business now or after, that is up to you Dietrich." Reece smiled at me.

"I wouldn't mind a friendly chat while we eat. But we can hold off on the major issues until after the meal." I gave him my preference for the conversation during the meal.

"That sounds perfect. Please, enjoy your meal everyone." Reese sat down then and started the meal by taking the first bite.

While we started eating the talk initially gravitated toward Reece, Trinity, and their upcoming wedding. I was glad I could use that as an excuse to stick around. Hopefully I could get Shawn warmed up to me by then. But, I also wanted to know about Shawn and I was planning to ask a lot of questions about him. His brother Shane, was all too happy to fill me in.

"How old are you, Shawn?" My question didn't seem to be too intrusive to me but the embarrassed look on Shawn's face proved me wrong.

"I...I...I'm-." He was stuttering so bad that his brother interrupted him.

"We're twenty-six." Shane answered the question.

"Such a tender age. I remember those times for me. I was twenty-seven when I became an immortal." This seemed to shock them all, did I not look young still. "Did you go to college Shawn?" I asked him, a smile on my face. "I personally have gone many times." My smile became a grin.

"N-n-n-no." He managed to finish the word but nothing else.

"We joined the warriors straight out of high school." Shane was being very forthcoming for me.

I continued in this fashion for a few moments until there was a lull in the conversation. That was when Trinity took advantage to ask me something that had clearly been on her mind.

"Dietrich, how did you know that I am pregnant?"

"I may not have the same senses as a wolf, and I have never smelled you before so I would not have been able to detect it from that alone. However, as a vampire, I have the ability to sense life. And when I looked at you I saw not just one life essence, but two."

"Does that mean you would know if someone were having multiples." Rawlynnne asked in a joking tone of voice.

"I admit, I do not know. It has not happened yet as far as I know. I am not often around pregnant women. If the few that I have encountered personally in the last five hundred years did indeed have multiples I have no way of knowing."

"Hmm. Sounds like it would be interesting to find out, you know." Rawlynnne added with a curious smile.

"Are you planning on multiples?" David asked with a hint of shock and fear from across the room.

"Goddess no!" Rawlynnne exclaimed. "I'm still coming to terms with having mated with you, don't go and bring kids into this too soon." David visibly relaxed at those words at which point we all started laughing at the relatively new couple.

"That's one thing you won't have to worry about." I joked with Shawn as I gave him a heated look.

"We've got built-in birth control." Shawn blushed crimson at those words, his mouth hanging open in utter shock with Shane nearly collapsed to the floor laughing.

"So, Shawn, your brother said that you have not had many relationships and that they didn't last long, does that mean that you're innocent?" I hadn't thought that it was possible for Shawn's blush to deepen, but he defied the odds and darkened to a deep maroon color. I thought he might pass out from the shock of my words. I had to try really hard not to laugh at that reaction of his.

"I-I-I-I-I-I-." Shawn spluttered uncontrollably, not able to answer.

"Shawn are you?" Shane shouted.

"Shut up!" Shawn yelled at his brother. "My personal life is none of your business."

"I'm sorry." My face fell and my expression softened considerably. I hadn't meant to cause him distress.

"I should not have asked that. It was too personal. Forgive me."

"No, it wasn't you." Shawn backpedaled. "I was yelling at my brother. He's just an asshole."

"So, you're not angry with me?" I leaned into him again, a sly smile on my face.

"Uh, well, I, it's not, you're my, we're, no I'm not." Shawn finally got to his answer. "I'm not mad." He confirmed with a firm set to his shoulders and an embarrassed set to his eyes.

"Good, I'm glad. We can save the personal talk until we're alone."

"Alone!?" Shawn practically yelled in a squeaky voice.

"Yes, I am so looking forward to getting to know you, all about you and the life you've lived."

After the color had faded from Shawn's face we moved the meeting once again. This time we were heading from the dining room to Reece's office. It was time to get down to business and actually talk about the reason why I had come here.

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Shawn

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After Dietrich had leaned into me and put his hand on my cheek he had wrapped his arm around my shoulder, pressing me against his side. I couldn't take a step without our bodies brushing against each other. I know that's what he had in mind too. He was trying to acclimate me to him and his touch. The bad thing was, I didn't want to recoil at his touch or his nearness and I knew I should have.

I had never been affected this way by anyone. Not a single person that I had ever seen before had affected me in the way that this vampire was affecting me. What was the matter with me? What the hell was going on here?

As Dietrich made his way up the hall his scent filled my head, further flustering me. Every woman I had ever gone on a date with had smelled of cheap flowery crap that just made my nose itch, but Dietrich's scent, as strong as it was for me it was subdued, and made my wolf dance with joy. Why would my wolf be so happy with a mating that ends with us?

When we got to the dining room and I noticed that there were only places for Reece, Trinity, Rawlynn, and Dietrich, my heart soared, I thought I might be able to get free.

Nope!

Dietrich just pulled me along, sitting me in the empty space next to him and forcing them all to set another table setting for me. I wasn't supposed to be sharing dinner with them. I was supposed to be guarding them. This just felt awkward.

I was so embarrassed by the fact that I was sitting at a meal I wasn't invited to. I was embarrassed by the hand Dietrich had let linger on me even after we sat down. For some reason I just didn't feel inclined to make him stop touching me. And I was embarrassed by everyone watching me, especially my brother.

Reece started the meal by standing up and addressing the whole room.

"There are a few people at this table that still do not know about the news from the Luna and I. Dietrich was able to discern immediately that the Luna and I are expecting a child together. She has yet to visit with a pack doctor, but I would like to spread the news the rest of the way. Shane, Shawn, Agent Otsana, you were not outside when the others found out."

"That is excellent news." Shane immediately declared.

"I am happy for you and your Alpha." Rawlynn was beaming.

"Congratulations, Luna, that is wonderful news for you and the entire pack." I smiled at Trinity, letting her know I was happy for her.

"Thank you everyone." Our blushing Luna grinned at us and looked happier than anything I had ever seen from her before.

"Now, let us eat. We may talk business now or after, that is up to you Dietrich." Reece announced.

"I wouldn't mind a friendly chat while we eat. But we can hold off on the major issues until after the meal." Dietrich indicated his preference.

"That sounds perfect. Please, enjoy your meal everyone."

We ate our food, talking about the upcoming wedding. There were discussions of the baby. And, not surprisingly, Dietrich wanted to know more about me, Shane was more than happy to answer when I was unable to.

"How old are you, Shawn?" It wasn't a hard question to answer, but the heated look in Dietrich's eyes, a look that was clearly filled with desire, that was what was hard to get past.

"I...I...I'm-." I just stuttered until Shane took pity on me.

"We're twenty-six." Shane answered the question.

"Such a tender age. I remember those times for me. I was twenty-seven when I became an immortal." I would be twenty-seven in just over six months, physically we were almost the same age, but he had been a vampire for five hundred and one years, how was I supposed to cope with that? "Did you go to college Shawn? I personally have gone many times." Dietrich was grinning at me. If I needed another reason to feel inadequate next to a five hundred year old man this would definitely do it.

"N-n-n-no."

"We joined the warriors straight out of high school." Shane told him what path our lives had taken. It was true, I had let Shane convince me to go straight for a pack career instead of wasting time on college. It seemed right at the time but now I just felt like an uneducated fool next to Dietrich. Why would he want a mate like me? I was nothing compared to him.

"Dietrich, how did you know that I am pregnant?" Trinity brought up something she had clearly been thinking about for the last several minutes.

"I may not have the same senses as a wolf, and I have never smelled you before so I would not have been able to detect it from that alone. However, as a vampire, I have the ability to sense life. And when I looked at you I saw not just one life essence, but two."

"Does that mean you would know if someone were having multiples." Rawlynne joked.

"I admit, I do not know. It has not happened yet as far as I know. I am not often around pregnant women. If the few that I have encountered personally in the last five hundred years did indeed have multiples I have no way of knowing."

"Hmm. Sounds like it would be interesting to find out, you know." Rawlynne looked contemplative.

"Are you planning on multiples?" David asked with a hint of shock and fear from across the room.

"Goddess no!" Rawlynnne screamed at him. "I'm still coming to terms with having mated with you, don't go and bring kids into this too soon." David visibly relaxed at those words at which point we all started laughing at the relatively new couple.

"That's one thing you won't have to worry about." Dietrich turned to me with smoldering eyes and a primal grin on his face. "We've got built-in birth control." I felt my face burn, I knew it was redder than anything in the room, and while I was sitting there panicking and feeling like my heart was going to explode from the shock of that statement my brother was in the corner of the room laughing hysterically and nearly collapsing from the force of it all.

"So, Shawn, your brother said that you have not had many relationships and that they didn't last long, does that mean that you're innocent?" Those words from Dietrich darkened my blush so much that I actually thought I was going to pass out from all the blood rushing to my head..

"I-I-I-I-I-I." I couldn't get my mouth to work so I just stuttered uncontrollably.

"Shawn are you?" Shane shouted.

"Shut up!" I yelled at my brother. "My personal life is none of your business."

"I'm sorry." Dietrich's face seemed to crumple and sadness replaced the burning heat that had been in his eyes. "I should not have asked that. It was too personal. Forgive me."

"No, it wasn't you." I was backpedaling and I knew it, but I didn't like that crushed and defeated look that had entered his eyes. He was too strong and powerful to have a look like that. "I was yelling at my brother. He's just an asshole."

"So, you're not angry with me?" Dietrich leaned into me again, a sly smile on his face.

"Uh, well, I, it's not, you're my, we're, no I'm not. I'm not mad." It took me a long time to settle on an answer that didn't make my heart flutter at the thought. What was happening to me?

"Good, I'm glad. We can save the personal talk until we're alone."

"Alone!?" I sounded like a mouse as I squeaked out my answer to him.

"Yes, I am so looking forward to getting to know you, all about you and the life you've lived.

When I had finally felt my face cool down and thought my blush was settling, Dietrich pulled me from the chair and wrapped his arm around me again. The blush returned with a vengeance.

Chapter 258 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 4 (BL)

14-17 minutes

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Shawn

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There had been some pretty mind blowing revelations during the meeting that followed dinner, but it still didn't hold a candle to the fact that I had found my mate. My very male vampire mate.

The questions that I kept asking myself was how could I be mated to a man when I wasn't gay? Or at least I didn't think that I was. Could you go your whole life not knowing you were gay? Wasn't there supposed to be something that told me that I was interested in men instead of women?

The problem was that I was not really interested in either men or women, at all. Not until now that is.

Just being next to Dietrich made strange thoughts run through my head. What was I supposed to do? I didn't know how to act. And what was I going to do with the fact that I now had a vampire as a mate.

There was just so much to think about. So much that I didn't understand and wasn't likely to figure out anytime soon.

Once the meeting was over and we were leaving the room, I bolted. I couldn't help it. I didn't want to hear whatever it was that Shane was going to say to me. I didn't want to have Dietrich put his arm around me again when I didn't even understand what was going on with me yet. I just panicked and ran.

I didn't have anywhere in particular to run. I didn't want to go back to my lonely apartment. I didn't want to go home to my parents, how were they going to react to this? And I definitely didn't want to run to Shane's place, that would be the worst of them all.

So, what did that leave me? The forest and the mountains.

I had always loved being up in the mountains. That probably came with being a wolf that was raised around them. But the higher I was in the rocky area the better I felt. And so, needing to think, I turned away from the house, away from the driveway, and ran as fast as I could.

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Dietrich

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I was walking with all the guards as they were leaving the house. It was getting late and the meeting was over so they were heading home. The Alpha was there to protect his mate now so they weren't needed as much.

I had hoped to stop Shawn and ask him if we could spend some quality time together, if we could talk. But, the moment he was out the door, out of the house, he turned away from everyone and ran.

"Shawn!" His brother Shane yelled after him. "Shawn where are you going?" I noticed that Shawn was running on two feet, not four, so he hadn't shifted, that was good. I didn't want him thinking that something was wrong with him, with this whole situation. I didn't hesitate, I just took off after him, following him into the trees and mountains that sloped up and away from the Alpha's estate.

I didn't call out to him. I just followed him in silence as he ran. I knew that sometimes running was a therapy in and of itself. That just pounding the ground with your feet, breathing heavily and drawing in that fresh air, getting your heart pumping and the endorphins flowing, all of that could help make someone feel better than just about anything sometimes.

After nearly twenty minutes I noticed that Shawn was beginning to slow down. His breathing was heavy, the breaths sawing in and out of his lungs. I could hear his heart racing, even though I was still a few meters away from him.

A few moments after coming to a stop, I noticed that Shawn was calming down. His heart settling and his breathing normalizing. He still didn't turn to look at me but I know he knew that I was there. Shawn just continued to stare out over the cliff he was standing in front of, enjoying the view, as he sat down on a large, low boulder. It was almost like a bench, one big enough for a few people, more than big enough for the two of us.

"Why did you follow me?" His voice was raw, emotions barely restrained even though he had calmed down somewhat. Just how upset had he been?

"I was worried about you. I don't want you being confused about what is happening between us, what this all means. I want you to know everything, if you're willing." I was ready to bare my soul to him, I would do so happily if it meant we could be a proper couple eventually.

"I don't understand any of this."

He hung his head in shame, the sight of him broke my heart and I longed to soothe him. I ached to wrap my arms around him and hold him close. I wanted to tell him that it would all be OK and that he didn't need to worry. But I couldn't force my opinions onto him. I couldn't rush him into this.

"If you're willing, Shawn, I will help you to understand. I will tell you anything, explain everything, if you'd just give me the chance."

"Why? Why do you want me?" He sounded broken hearted, the hurt, the pain and sadness in his voice, it shattered my heart.

"Oh Schätzchen." I spoke the tender word in my native tongue, hoping to get away with the pet names for now.

"What's that mean?" He asked me immediately.

"It's just a nonsensical word, every language has them." I hoped he would let it slide for now. He just shrugged his shoulders and seemed to ignore it after that.

"You didn't answer my question though." He pointed this out as he continued to look out over the cliff.

The scenery that he was looking at, that I could see from behind him, was that of a river running alongside the mountain and trees rising up toward the sky. This was a largely undeveloped part of the area and it was a wonderful sight to behold. I had a feeling that he quite enjoyed this view and often came here to think.

"Shawn, may I sit with you?" I asked him before continuing. "I want us to talk, to explain things to each other."

"Go ahead." He didn't act like he was repulsed by me, he didn't act like he wanted to get away from me, he just sat there looking out over the trees and away from me.

I walked slowly toward the rock he was sitting on, I didn't want to scare him by hurrying over in excitement. I would need to progress this relationship slowly. That's fine, I could do that. I could definitely do that for true love.

"Shawn, Liebling, what troubles you the most about our mating?" I thought that this was the most important thing for us to address.

"I don't understand it. Not really. I spent my life knowing that I was going to find a mate one day. That she and I would grow old together and have a family that we would hopefully raise into good people. But now, I find out that the idea, the plan, that I had drilled into my head my whole life isn't how my life is going to go." He seemed to be speaking both from right next to me and far away at the same time.

"Are you disappointed? Do you wish that you had never found a mate now that you know what the Goddess has in store for your future?" I hoped he wouldn't say no. I didn't know if my heart could take the pain if he told me that he didn't want me, even if it meant never having a mate at all.

"I don't know." He paused for a moment, lowering his eyes to the ground and studying the dirt he saw there for several seconds before he continued. Those seconds seemed to last for hours with the dread filling my heart. "I don't think I'm disappointed, not really. I had sort of resigned myself to never finding a mate anyway. I thought that since I just wasn't attracted to anyone, that I hadn't found anyone that I even wanted to be intimate with, that it just meant that I was not destined for anyone."

"So you really are innocent? You're a virgin?" I didn't have any trace of laughter in my voice, I just wanted to know. But still, his face flamed into a brilliant shade of crimson.

"Yes. I'm a virgin. I never found a woman I was attracted to, and I've never been attracted to a man before. So there was no one that I even thought about losing my virginity to."

"Are you attracted to me?" I held a little bit of hope in my voice. He had said before, not ever, to me that said that things had recently changed. And, judging by the even darker shade of red he turned, I felt that I had a reason to be hopeful.

"I don't know." He answered me quietly. "I feel something for you that I have never felt before, that is for sure, but I don't know what it is really. I don't fully hate the feeling, but it frightens me."

"I will never do anything to frighten you or to pressure you, I hope you know that Shawn." I was being honest, sincere, and I hoped he knew that. "I don't care if it takes me a hundred years to prove this bond to you, I will spend every minute of that time happily being there by your side until you're comfortable with me."

"That's what I don't get." He looked at me then. His eyes, those steely, storm gray eyes that looked like snow could blow from within their depths at any moment, were full of wonder and curiosity, and a little bit of apprehension. "You sit there and act like you love me, like you've had so long to build this dream about us, about a future together, and you're just hoping that I say yes. How can you feel that way so soon?"

"First, remember that I felt our connection sooner than you did. I have had a week to fantasize about a future with you. I saw you in that call and knew right then that I was already yours. Second, I am much older than you and I understand my own heart and feelings. I understand them to the point where I no

longer second guess myself at all. I know when I am comfortable with something and when I am not and there is no reason for me to question myself."

"Goddess, but that's another thing. You're five hundred and two years older than me. How am I supposed to be OK with that? You're literally more than twenty times as old as me."

"Yes, I am technically that much older than you, but I froze in time when I was just about your age. Time has moved on, but I have not."

"And what happens when I begin to age? What happens when I become an old man? What happens when I die?" This seemed to scare him as his eyes darkened with fear.

"I can't answer that right now, because I don't know what will happen in that regard. There are options, things that can prolong your life and give us more time together, but now is not the time to talk about that."

"And what about a family? That's something that every wolf wants but we can't have that."

"There's options for that too. Nothing is the end of the line. And we have plenty of time to figure it all out."

"And then there's the fact that you're the leader of the vampires. You're their Emperor for crying out loud. What would that make me? How would your people react to this situation? Won't they reject me? Won't we be considered freaks among them?"

"I think you underestimate us vampires. For one, we don't often settle down, there are a lot of vampires who never find their true mates. So when it doesn't happen, no matter who it's with, no one really questions it. At least not the majority of them."

Shawn looked away from me then, a sigh escaping him as he attempted to exhale the negative feelings, or at least that's what I thought he was doing.

"How could I be gay without knowing it?" He sighed again as he said these words.

"Do you have to put a label on it? Can't it just be that you're a man who was looking for love, no matter where that love might lie? When you look at things as having a concrete gender role then it can make you forget what matters most."

"And what is that?" He looked at me again, his eyes showing me the question he had just asked, curiosity all but dripping from them.

"Together we can be happy. Separate, we will always be searching out our other half. It doesn't matter if the person you're fated to be with is a man, a woman, or a purple blobby alien from Jupiter, as long as you're happy and your partner is happy isn't that all that matters?" I heard him laugh at my words, it was the first time I had heard him laugh. That laugh mixed with the smile that spread across his face lifted my heart so much that I felt the need to clamp my mouth shut so that it didn't float right out of my mouth and keep going until it reached Jupiter itself.

"I really hope that you don't turn out to be a purple blobby alien from Jupiter, honestly that might turn out to be a little too much." That mirth filled laughter that he spoke with continued to make my heart swell and cemented my grin in place, I didn't think that I would ever stop smiling after this night.

"As far as I know I'm not. But I guess my alien side could just be in hibernation mode or something." Shawn chuckled then, his laughter bouncing off the rocky mountain side and coming back to me in a musical chorus.

"We'll have to be on the lookout for it I guess." He was still laughing, that was a good sign.

"Shawn." I said his name with a semi-serious tone of voice, causing him to look at me cautiously. "Can we work on this mating together? Will you give us a chance? I promise that I won't force anything on you. I won't rush anything." I saw the nervousness in his eyes, the apprehension and fear that had settled in him when he realized our mate bond.

"I won't not work on it." His double negative made me want to laugh but I stopped myself at just a smile. "I can't promise you anything, not yet, but I won't reject you out right. I know that the Goddess chooses our partners for us, and everyone I have ever seen that has been mated is happy and enjoying themselves. I would like to have that someday. I didn't think that I would want that, but I do, I really do."

I grinned at him, hoping to convey just how happy his words made me.

We spent the rest of the night talking there on the mountain, getting to know each other. I kept my hands to myself, not wanting to frighten him or anything. When the sun started to come up we sat there in silence, watching as it slowly moved above the horizon.

After we watched the sunrise I offered to walk him home, which he did not refuse. The walk was mostly quiet, with just a random question thrown out here and there. When we got to the sidewalk for his apartment building it was time for us to separate.

"Sleep well, Liebing." I grinned at him as I pretended to brush a stray piece of grass from his cheek just so I could feel him one more time.

"Good night." He said as he started to walk away.

"Gute Nacht mein Schatz." I returned his words and added on my darling as I began to walk away.

I smiled the entire way back to Reece's Alpha Estate. I had found my mate. He hadn't rejected me. And I had spent the entire night talking to him and getting to know him.

Chapter 259 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 5 (BL)

9-11 minutes

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Shawn

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I had not expected to spend the entire night talking to Dietrich, but it was surprisingly easy to talk to him. Dietrich wasn't a bad guy, which was a good thing. And he genuinely seemed to want to make this whole mate bond thing work. I just didn't know what was expected from me.

What was I supposed to do with Dietrich? Which role was I supposed to take on? I am not effeminate, not in the least. Yeah I may not be the extrovert partying type of man that most women think of when they think of a man in their twenties. But that didn't mean that I wanted to be wooed, wined and dined, and doted on like I was the woman in the relationship.

UGH! What am I going to do? This was going to be hard.

Then there was the mate bond itself. I hadn't known how strong it would be. It was like an instant pull. That connection, that sense of being complete just by being in the same place as the person on the other end of that tugging line of fate, it had its own way of making you feel satisfied.

The entire night that I had spent with Dietrich, all the talking we did, I never once felt bored. I never once felt like I couldn't wait for it to be over just so I could go home and read a book alone. That's how I felt with every date that I had had in the past.

NOT THAT LAST NIGHT WAS A DATE! No, far from it. Last night was just us talking, just us getting to know each other and trying to figure out exactly what was going on between us. It most definitely was not a date.

So, why then, was I wanting to do it again? Why did I feel like it was one of the best nights of my life even given the shock of what had happened to me? What was I thinking?

It was my day off today, and since I didn't get home until dawn I was taking advantage to get some extra sleep. That was, until I heard the pounding on my door that woke me up just before noon.

I dragged myself from my bed and shuffled like a zombie from the bedroom into the hallway, down to the living room, and then into the entryway. I didn't even care that I wasn't wearing a shirt, or that I was still wearing the black cargo pants from the day before.

When I finally made it to the door, the knocking now incessant, I was slightly pissed off. I whipped the door open and growled at the person who was standing there.

"What the hell do you want, Shane!"

"Someone obviously woke up on the wrong side of the vampire this morning."

"Fuck you!" I snapped at him as I stormed back into the apartment and collapsed onto the couch. The slate gray leather was soft and cool against my flaming skin, I could literally feel the blush all over my body.

"Seriously, you're gonna pull that shit with me? You were gone all night. I stopped by several times to check on you after you stormed off and you never came home. I tried until three this morning and still you weren't here. Don't tell me you didn't do anything." Shane was looking at me like he was pissed off. "Do you know how fucking worried I was about you, asshole?"

"Thanks for your damn concern, you're the world's greatest fucking brother. But I didn't do anything with Dietrich last night. I literally spent the entire night staring out at the forest and talking to him."

"The entire night?" He questioned me.

"The entire night." I confirmed for him.

"Dude, you're going to be a virgin for your entire life." He laughed and collapsed onto the couch next to me. "I can't believe you're still a virgin anyway. But I guess it makes sense, you are a prude after all."

"I'm not a fucking prude, I just didn't see the point in being with anyone until I found my mate."

"And now your mate is a vampire that is five hundred years older than you and has more experience than anyone on the planet, how's that make you feel?"

"Ngh." I grunted in frustration as I buried my face in my hands. "This isn't supposed to be happening."

"Well, there is one upside."

"What's that?" I looked at him between my fingers.

"He can teach you more than any woman you would have met here ever could."

"You're a dick, you know that."

"I aim to please everyone." He was grinning. "Oh, there's one thing I gotta know." He laughed at whatever thought was running through his head. I had a feeling I wasn't going to like what he was about to say. "He's the leader of the vampires, the Emperor right? Does that make you the Empress."

I didn't even bother with words this time, I just let my actions speak for me. My hand moved quick as lightning, striking him hard on the side of the face. The loud thud and dull cracking sound was highly satisfying. I hoped I had broken half of his damn face, maybe then we would finally look different.

"What the fuck? That hurt you damn prick."

"What did you expect with a comment like that, you moron." I screamed at him. "Stop making fun of me and my life. I'm stressed enough as it is."

"I didn't really mean it in the worst way possible. It's actually an honest question, sort of. He's the leader of the vampires, mates usually help to lead in that aspect, does that mean that a wolf now has authority over all but one vampire in the entire world?"

"I don't fucking know. And I doubt I will ever know."

"Why?" He looked at me shocked.

"Seriously, Shane, do you think this is for real? Could I have really mated with a vampire, and a male vampire at that? The whole point of a mate bond for us is to make us happy and allow us to have a family. So, why then, would the Moon Goddess make it impossible for me to have a family?"

"It's not impossible, not in this day and age. There are a lot of kids in the world who need a family, wolves included. And you could always find a wolf surrogate. I'm sure there would be a woman out there willing to carry your kids for you."

"Yeah, but then they would be half hers, genetically. And she might want to claim them as hers. That's not any better."

"I don't know what to tell you man."

"I think this is just some kind of big mistake, a cosmic prank. And in a few days it will all be over and life will get back to normal." I sighed and hung my head.

I honestly felt that way. I really did think that the universe made a mistake. I couldn't be mated to Dietrich. So, why did the idea of it all ending, all of it going away, and him leaving, make me so depressed?

Just the thought of Dietrich leaving and returning to Germany, just the idea of me being alone again, made me want to scream in agony. Is this what it was like to want to be with someone? For the first time in my life I wished I had had a relationship in the past so I knew what to do in this situation.

"I think you're lying to yourself." Shane looked at me with knowing eyes.

"Why do you think that?" I asked him, pretending not to understand.

"Because the look in your eyes tells me something completely different from your words."

"And what, oh wise one, are my eyes telling you?" I wasn't sure if I really wanted to know, but I would never let my brother know that.

"It looks like you're already starting to accept what you are to each other. It looks like just the idea of him leaving is killing you and that if he really did go you and your wolf would probably go insane, or follow him. It looks to me like you want to accept him."

I just looked at him for a moment, the truth of his words hitting me like a ton of bricks. I couldn't maintain eye contact with him for too long though. I had to turn my head and look anywhere but at him. First I looked over his shoulder at the soft blue-gray color of the wall and small pieces of art that hung there, then to the side at the massive bookcase, then at the black, slightly reflective screen of the TV, at the dark gray of the rug over the dark wooden floor, around and around the room at the different odds and ends.

"There's nothing wrong with it." Shane continued, causing me to snap my head toward him and look at him with disbelief in my eyes.

"What?"

"Seriously? You're going to question it. He's your mate Shawn, no matter what. You're fated to be together, there's going to be that pull for the rest of your life. So why fight it? Why deny it? Why not let yourself be happy? You know that with him you will be the happiest that you could possibly be."

"But we're both guys, Shane." My voice sounded pleading when I told him that.

"So what!" He snapped at me. "You think you're the first gay man ever? Get over yourself Shawn. You're a guy, he's a guy, so what. Be together, be happy, get married and do lover shit."

"You're so crude." I scolded him through my laughter.

"Says the prude." He laughed right back at me. "But seriously, there's nothing wrong with it."

"What are Mom and Dad going to say though?" I groaned as I threw my head back and slung my arm over my eyes.

"They won't care. They would want you to be happy."

"I don't know about that." I looked at him out of the corner of my eye moving my arm just enough to crack them open.

"They will. Trust me on that."

"I hope you're right."

I still had my eyes covered when someone knocked on the door. I groaned again, not wanting to answer it. I could already tell who was there.

"I'll get it, you continue sulking." Shane laughed, not catching the scent as easily as I did since he wasn't as attuned to it as I was.

"Oh!" I heard Shane's surprised voice from the entry when he opened the door.

"Good day to you, Shane." Dietrich's voice floated down the hall to me.

Chapter 260 - SIDE STORIES BOOK 1- SHAWN AND DIETRICH CHAPTER 6 (BL)

8-10 minutes

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Dietrich

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I had walked back to the Alpha's estate with a grin on my face. I didn't know which room was meant for me, but I knew that I was supposed to stay in that house. Thankfully, the staff was already hard at work when I got back and they happily showed me to my room.

It was a nice enough room, very comfortably decorated. There was a large, plush, king sized bed, I admit the first thing that went through my mind was a vision of Shawn laying on that bed. Oh how I wish I could see his body bare before me. But I needed to take this slow, he would not accept a position like that so easily.

Oh, but that will be fun as well, earning his trust. This whole mating had me flying high and I couldn't wait to move forward with this man.

I collapsed into the bed, not even bothering to go to my luggage that was sitting near the window, I was exhausted but pleasantly so. I needed a nap and a shower after that, then I could go back to find my new mate. My new boyfriend if you will.

A few hours and several blissful dreams later I was up in the late morning and preparing to take a quick shower. I still had some less than pure thoughts flowing through my mind when I stepped into the steady stream of hot water.

I let my imagination run rampant, feeling my desire and arousal take over. I needed to get this out of my system now before I went to see him next. It was a preemptive solution to a future problem.

Several moments filled with happy thoughts later I was drying myself off and getting dressed. I dressed comfortably, for me, in a crisp black suit, black leather shoes, and blue gray tie that reminded me of Shawn's eyes. When I went down stairs I found the Luna looking over some magazines with a smile on her face. She really was radiant and glowing in her joy.

"Good morning Dietrich, how are you today?" She smiled happily at me.

"I am wonderful, thank you for asking Trinity. I see you are exceptionally happy as well, you must be excited for the wedding and the baby."

"More than I ever thought was possible." She blushed as she answered. I noticed you got home very late. "How did things go?"

"I spent the night talking with Shawn, things were going quite well and I truly enjoyed the night. I'm sorry I didn't get home until this morning."

"Think nothing of it, you're more than old enough to do as you please and I am glad that things went well. I am happy for you and Shawn."

"Thank you for your approval and encouragement. It means a lot to have his Alpha and Luna's blessings."

"What are your plans for today?" She questioned me.

"I want to go see my mate." I grinned at her and was pleased to see the approval and happiness in her eyes.

Not long after that conversation I was walking into town. I had sent my subjugate home and had the car returned to the airport. I would need to get my own car if I planned to stay in town for any length of time, which I did.

I followed the path I had taken this morning, and also my nose, as I made my way to Shawn's apartment. I made my way to his door and smiled happily before I knocked.

The scent that was walking closer to the door was not Shawn's, and I was not yet accustomed to the owner's scent to know who it was. But when the door opened

"Oh!" Shawn's twin brother was the one who had opened the door.

"Good day to you, Shane." I smiled at my future brother in-law.

"Dietrich, what a surprise." Shane grinned at me. "Shawn's inside, come on in."

"Thank you." I felt my smile broaden even more.

I followed Shane into the house and was led into the living room, the sight that met me made my throat close tight, my mouth begin to water, and my entire body go on high alert. I was glad I had been preemptive before I left.

Shawn was sitting there on the couch. He was not wearing a shirt, just the black cargo pants he had been wearing the night before. His skin, so gloriously displayed for me, was just lightly tanned. His

muscles were well defined with perfect pecs and drool worthy ripple of abs. The situation was giving me a scrumptious uninterrupted view of his wonderfully sculpted body.

Oh, the glory of a warrior's body. It was definitely obvious that he trained his body on a regular basis. I itched to run my hands and my tongue along that body of his, but I had to behave myself. I had to restrain myself, but that was going to be hard.

"Good morning Shawn." I purred to him as I appreciated the view before me. I had noticed that Shawn had tensed a little when I walked into the room. No doubt he knew that I was coming in, he most likely knew that it was me when I knocked on the door.

"D-Di-Dietrich what are you doing here?" Oh that pure innocence of his was just so adorable. I don't think he knew how appealing it made him look. Why was it I envisioned myself as the wolf in our relationship? I just wanted to eat him right up.

"I thought we could spend some time together today, get to know more about each other." I knew I was smiling and I couldn't help it."

"I think I'm going to go." Shane was grinning as he left. "I'll call you later." He waved to his brother just before he shut the door.

Now that we were alone, it seemed that Shawn was very aware of the situation we were in.

"Uh, give me a moment." He said in a rush as he ran from the room. I figured he was going to his room. That would be a good place to see, but I wasn't going to push it. I needed to make sure this relationship worked, no matter what.

I had decided to make myself comfortable, sitting on the couch that I had seen Shawn on a few moments before.

His place was small but cozy, and I liked that. There was a rack with DVDs and a massive bookshelf that was crammed full. The couch and one arm chair along with a couple tables were the only major furniture in the room. The TV sat on a small stand with the remotes lined up neatly. I could see his quaint eat-in kitchen with everything seemingly in its place. He was very neat and tidy.

When I heard the door to his bedroom open I turned to look, a reveal like this couldn't be missed of course.

Shawn emerged from the room wearing a pair of black dress slacks and a light gray, long sleeved sweater. And his short hair was neatly combed into casual yet tidy little spikes as it stood mostly up on his head, this looked more like his hair's natural position rather than a chosen style. But he looked comfortable and still very well put together. I wouldn't have cared if he had come out looking like a bum though, he was all that mattered to me.

"Feel better?" I asked him with a grin, causing him to blush as he came over to sit on the couch with me. I was glad he hadn't chosen to sit in the arm chair.

"I had just woken up when Shane got here. Actually him pounding on the door was what woke me." I liked that he seemed to be getting comfortable talking to me.

"I'm glad he woke you then, that way it wasn't me who had done it. This way your ire is aimed at him." I laughed, unable to help myself.

"I wasn't mad really, annoyed at first because I had gotten to sleep so late, but not mad. Besides, we had a good chat before you got here."

"Did I ruin things?" I felt like my bubble was about to burst for a moment.

"No, we were close to being done anyway."

"Might I ask what happened between you two?"

"What do you mean?" He seemed perplexed.

"His broken and bruised cheek and your split knuckle." I indicated the hand that had a slight amount of blood on it.

"Oh." He looked down at his hand like he hadn't even noticed it yet. "He said something that had pissed me off, so I hit him."

"What did he say to anger you?" I didn't expect the blush that had just begun to fade would come back stronger than before.

"W-we-well, he called me-." He stopped and took a deep breath, then started again. "He asked me if I was going to be the empress because you're the emperor." His face flamed even redder than it ever had before.

I couldn't help it, I laughed. It was quite funny really.

"We will have to think of what your title will be, but he's not completely wrong. You are of a high status among the vampires."

"But I'm not even a vampire." He exclaimed, shock and fear in his eyes.

"That doesn't matter, you will have authority over them." I grinned at him. "And me." I couldn't help but add that last part, wiggling my eyebrows seductively as I did so.

"Oh Goddess." He buried his face, causing me to laugh again. I could already tell that this was going to be a good day.