

Chosen by Fate 61

Chapter 61 - Trinity-A Chat With Lila

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Trinity

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Later, after my failed meeting with Reece, I was finally reading in the library, but I just couldn't concentrate on any of the stories I tried to read. I was upset about my conversation with Reece that morning. And to top it off, Noah came to tell me that Reece hadn't yet managed to get my exam situation figured out, so I was about to fail all my classes. Great.

I was aimlessly looking through the books trying to find something interesting to read and trying to identify some of the other books as quite a few didn't have covers on them. I had just picked up what looked like a journal on a shelf by the far window when a picture fell out of it.

I didn't recognize the people in the picture at all. It showed a man and a young boy, about ten years old, playing guitars together. They were smiling happily at each other. The boy had black hair and honey-colored eyes. The man had black hair and bright yellow eyes.

The more I looked at the picture, the more I felt like I knew who they were, but I would have to ask Lila if I was right. I went looking for her and found her on the third floor. She had turned a sitting room into an art studio for herself. I have a feeling that Reece had gotten rid of every trace of his parents from the house because their memories were painful for him, but Lila was going to bring those memories back.

"Hi Lila." I called out to her.

"Hi there, Trinity, sweetie. How are you?" She asked as soon as I came into the room, she acted like she hadn't just seen me at breakfast.

"I found something that I wanted to ask you about." I told her.

"Really? What's that?" She seemed excited.

I showed Lila the picture, it had been folded and was badly creased across the middle, but it was clear that whoever had kept it in the book had done so with love. The book that had looked like a journal had been empty, so I wasn't able to get any clues from it.

"Oh my, look how young Reece is." She cooed as she touched the boy's face in the picture. "He was always so handsome. Don't you think so?" She looked up at me with a happy smile and tears brimming in her eyes. I knew that's who it was, and the man must be his father.

"He was definitely a handsome little boy." I agreed. "Is the man with him your husband?" I asked.

"You didn't know?" She asked, me confused.

"No, I was never really allowed out, unless it was a mandatory thing I never went to meetings. And usually my family kept me hidden at the back. I had never actually seen the previous alpha. It was purely

coincidental that I had seen Reece's face prior to forming the mate bond." I looked at the floor in shame as I confessed how my Grandfather had forced me to be raised.

"That's a shame." She seemed saddened. "My husband was a kind and gentle man. He would not have liked the way you were treated."

"We can't change the past."

"No, but we can stop it from being repeated."

"What are you talking about?" I asked her.

"No one should treat you, or anyone else in the pack, like that." She seemed angry, did she and the former alpha not know how people in the pack viewed me when I was growing up? Or was I mostly ignored until I was old enough to be a topic of discussion? The previous alpha died when I was eleven, so maybe most of the pack didn't know much about me then. I wasn't even old enough to start trying to get my wolf at that time, so it was possible they didn't know.

"Trinity, have you talked to my thick headed son yet?" Lila asked me, her voice changing from saddened ponderings of the past to annoyance. Was she angry at me too, or at Reece?

"We tried to talk to each other earlier, it didn't go well."

"Was he mean again?" She asked as if she expected this.

"Not really, I'm sorry to say that I let my typical response to him come out, but I think it's become a defense mechanism to him now. I can't help it. Plus, he acts like a jerk so much that it's just natural for me." I told her. "I'm afraid I was a bit too snarky with him." To my surprise she laughed.

"That's fine, he needs someone to humble him, he's been holding himself too high for so long, do me a favor and knock him a little lower will you. Once you think he's fallen enough, come talk to me, I have something I want to tell you."

"Can't you just tell me now?" I asked her, curious as to what it was.

"No, I think it best to wait. But just know, he's not all bad." Her knowing smile seemed a little devious at the moment. I didn't know what she was hiding, but I was definitely curious.

Christmas was coming up. I hadn't even thought about it until just now. But I only have about two weeks. I shouldn't be heartless and ignore him, I needed to get him something. The problem was, I couldn't go to the store to pick anything out. So, I was stuck shopping for him, and everyone, online.

I had already picked out gifts for Aunt Eve, Uncle Wesley, Carter, Noah, Nikki and Grandfather, which were the usual crowd. New to my shopping list this year was Juniper, Paul, Cedar, Vincent and his family, David, not to mention Shane and Shawn. Then there was everyone at the estate. I needed to shop for Lila, Abigail, Peter, get something small for the rotating housekeepers, and of course Reece. I had never had to shop for so many people in my life.

Most people were easy, I knew what types of things they wanted because I had either spent my entire life around them or they were open and friendly, so they were easy to understand. The only person who was hard to shop for was Reece.

"UURRGHH!" I screamed in frustration as I tried to think of what to get the jerk that seemed to have everything and wanted nothing to do with me.

I had figured out almost everyone's gifts in no time at all. But here I was spending hours trying to figure out what to get that jerk. Most of what I knew about him had to do with his personality, which sucked.

"What do you get a man with a superiority complex that hates you?" I asked myself. "I can't make myself invisible, which is probably all he would want from me." I was talking to myself, that's how mad he was making me. I growled to myself as I continued to look at what to get him.

I started to think about What Lila had said earlier. She said he wasn't all bad. I guess she might be right. He saved my life twice now. And he had managed a few conversations with me that didn't end in disaster, or that didn't go south because of him. He wasn't the only one to blame here.

Then I remembered the picture that I had seen. I remembered how happy he had looked in it, and I realized that I hadn't seen a single guitar in the music room. Did he get rid of them when his father died? Would he get mad if I got him a new one? Would he be fine with a memory of his father now that his mother was back?

I had a plan, I just hoped it didn't backfire on me. I started looking for the items I wanted to order. This plan needed two things to make it work. But I wanted to get him something else too, just in case they didn't go over very well.

In the course of my searching I found a watch set that looked like it would be perfect for him. It was masculine and screamed alpha to me. The band was made mostly of platinum but with a line of black gold in the middle. The face of the watch was platinum ringed in black gold. Instead of digits for the numbers, they had small black spinel stones embedded in the face of the watch beneath the crystal. The constant contrast of black and platinum was mesmerizing to me that I just felt drawn to it. It also came with a matching bracelet, it was a thick, army style id type bracelet, best of all, I could put an inscription on it, but I would do so on the bottom not the top.

I had 'Alpha' engraved onto the watch for him. As for the bracelet, well that inscription read 'Reece "FIDO" Gray'. I just knew he would love it. There was one other gift he was going to get. I just hoped I didn't laugh too hard when I gave it to him. This last one was how I was going to start letting him know I might forgive him, if he was willing to try to behave himself and start over with me. I couldn't wait for Christmas now.

Chapter 62 - Trinity-Reece Sees My Unfinished Mark

8-10 minutes

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Trinity

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I didn't have to wait long to talk to Reece again. Two days later, I had just accepted a delivery of gifts that I needed to wrap for Christmas, I ran into Reece on the stairs.

"What's all that Little Bunny?" He looked at the many, many packages in my arms.

"Christmas presents." I answered without looking at him or stopping.

"Seriously, you're doing this again?" He complained?

"What exactly am I doing Reece?" I asked as I struggled to hold on to all the packages in my arms. They weren't heavy, not for someone with enhanced strength. No, my issue was the fact that I was smaller than people like Reece. I had smaller arms and hands than he did. I'm sure he would have no problem carrying them all, but I was struggling.

"You're ignoring me again." He sounded petulant. "What gives? Is this becoming a hobby of yours?" I couldn't see him as I had already moved past him, but I could hear him coming up behind me.

"I'm not ignoring you. I answered you, didn't I?" I wanted to laugh at the absurdity of him in that moment, but I just didn't have the opportunity, my precariously perched pile chose that moment to topple over. "No! Dammit!" I growled the two words in quick succession before they could fall as I watched them unbalance.

The next thing I saw was Reece's arms reaching around me from behind, grabbing the stack of boxes and bags that had begun to spill. He kept them all from falling with ease.

"Why did you order so much?" He snapped, but he didn't really sound upset, he sounded like he was laughing at me.

"My list of people to shop for got a lot bigger this year. Since I have met a lot of new people. Before I have only ever shopped for my family and no one else, this is the first time I have shopped for someone other than them." Being this honest with him, I could feel the blood rushing to my face, I looked to the floor trying to hide my embarrassment. Why did I have to be so pathetic, so different from everyone else?

"Let me help." He said. Without waiting for an answer, he lifted most of the pile up and over my head. I looked over my shoulder in awe and I saw him holding them easily as he stared at me apathetically. "What?" He asked me as if I was the one that had done something strange. "Let's go." He was acting like I asked for his help and was now wasting his time. Don't snap at him, he's helping me. I had to remind myself three times before taking a deep breath and walking the rest of the way to my room.

Reece didn't wait for me to invite him in, he just went inside and walked over to the table by my desk, setting the packages down before turning to me.

"Who all did you buy for?" He looked like a little kid trying to see if they were getting a toy too.

"My family, my friends, my guards, the staff, your mother." I told him, waiting to see the look on his face when I didn't mention his name.

"Hmm, should have known you wouldn't get anything for me." He frowned looking at the pile.

"Oh, yours was delivered yesterday." This was true, as they had been picked up from three very specific stores in town by Juniper. There was another one on its way, possibly in the pile there, but that wasn't an important one. I noticed the shock and slight excitement as it flitted across his face, it was kind of cute to see him acting like a normal person for once.

"Really?" I nodded my head. "What did you get me?" He grinned.

"Now why would I tell you that?" Laughing, I glared at him and went to start sorting the packages. They were all ones I had ordered from the same website, he most likely had one in this mix, but he wouldn't realize it even if he saw it.

"So, you're just a tease, huh?" His voice was suddenly right next me, his breath tickling my ear as it stirred the hairs that had come loose from the ponytail that I had pulled it all into. I shivered at the feeling but refused to give in.

"Not in the least. It's not teasing if you dangle a treat in front of a puppy when training it, isn't that what you're supposed to do. Dangle the reward so they want to follow their orders and behave?" I fought the urge to shiver again and refused to turn my head and look at him.

"Keep calling me a dog, and I'll show just how much of a dog I really am." He whispered in my ear, it was both seductive and playful and I could hear a laugh in his voice.

"Actually, I called you a puppy." I giggled turning my head just a little to the right so I could see the slightest edges of his face. I had turned more than I had intended, and I saw the heated look in his eyes, the sight of which shocked me and scared me just a little.

"Huh! Hey, Little Bunny, what's up with your mark?" He asked me. I had never noticed that Reece hadn't seen my mate mark since the day he had bitten me. I immediately put my hand up and covered my mark. The collar of the thin, black, long sleeved, cloth jacket I was wearing must have shifted enough for him to see my neck and shoulder more clearly.

My mark still hadn't fully formed, even after over two months. I was beyond embarrassed by the incomplete mark. And to add to my humiliation, the state of the mark left it unsightly. It was currently a larger than average pack seal surrounded by nothing more than a giant gray cloud. Unless the gray cloud was Reece's personal twist on the mark like every man had something special that they left on their mate. Maybe Reece Gray left his in the form of a giant gray cloud, and maybe his mark was larger because he was the alpha. I just didn't know.

"Let me see it." He demanded pulling my hand gently away from my neck.

"I don't think it ever finished." I told him sadly.

"It doesn't look like it, does it?" He agreed, tracing the crest with his finger.

"Stop!" I demanded as I took a small step away from him. I knew we were having a decent conversation, and that my overreaction could very well set us back again, but I wasn't ready for him to touch me so intimately. I had let him be suggestive, let him whisper into my ear, but he hadn't actually touched me then.

"What's the matter?" He looked confused when I turned to look him in the eyes, I almost felt like I could see a small amount of pain hidden in his eyes.

"I'm not a toy for you to play with whenever you feel like." I told him. I know he was trying to force himself to be nice to me, and I knew his end goal here. But I will not be an outlet for someone who hates me. "I will not be your outlet Reece. If you want satisfaction, then go get it from yourself. I told you,

you're not getting anything from me. Not unless it was a mutual thing." He was confused as he looked at me.

"I was only looking at your mark." He smirked like I had the wrong idea.

"Yeah, and you were intentionally suggestive. And you can look at the mark without touching it."

"What's the matter with you? We were actually getting along just fine for once." He seemed sad as he said this last part, like he wanted it to go on.

"But I know I am nothing more than a distraction to you Reece. You have nothing, or no one, better to distract you right now so you chose me to fill that role. But I won't be that kind of distraction for someone who hates me." I could feel the tears stinging the back of my eyes.

Why was I about to cry? I asked myself, even though I already knew the answer. Ever since day one, I had been slowly falling in love with him, even with what he had said to me. I couldn't help it, my body made it happen, the mate bond, everything that bound us drew me to him. I just wished he felt a fraction of what I felt for him. I was already so in love with him.

And let's not add the attraction to that. Oh Goddess, the attraction. I could set a forest fire with the heat of the attraction I had for him. But he felt nothing but hatred, animosity, and apathy. That was always clear by the way he looked at me.

"Fine, I'll be leaving." He sighed in a resigned voice. Hanging his head in defeat as he left the room without another word. I felt a little better when he was gone, but I also felt lonely the minute he was gone.

"Why does he have to hate me?" I sobbed to myself after he left.

Chapter 63 - Reece-I'm Trying, Why Does She Hate Me?

Reece

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I had thought my Little Bunny was ignoring me in the hall, but as she pointed out she did answer me. I realized she was just trying to hurry before the boxes and bags that had been delivered toppled out of her arms. I would never understand why they would insist on delivering their stuff in so many different packages.

"What's all that Little Bunny?" She nearly jumped when I called out to her.

"Christmas presents." She spoke but never paused or looked at me, or did anything besides continue walking.

"Seriously, you're doing this again?"

"What exactly am I doing Reece?"

"You're ignoring me again. What gives? Is this becoming a hobby of yours?" I could see the annoyance on her face as I spoke to her.

"I'm not ignoring you. I answered you, didn't I?"

"No! Dammit!" I heard her cry out and noticed all the packages were about to fall.

I went up the last two steps separating us and put my arms around her and steadied everything that she was holding.

"Why did you order so much?" My voice held a mocking, joking edge to it as I asked her.

"My list of people to shop for got a lot bigger this year. Since I have met a lot of new people. Before I have only ever shopped for my family and no one else, this is the first time I have shopped for someone other than them." She blushed, I always forgot how much her Grandfather had kept her hidden from people. She had never gotten the chance to buy a present for anyone except her family, that was sad, which meant no one but them had ever gotten her a gift.

"Let me help." I lifted most of the pile up and over her head before she could protest. She looked at me holding them easily as if I were some sort of alien. "What? Let's go." I was nervous having her watch me, so I just continued up the stairs.

When my Little Bunny got to her room and opened the door I went in without hesitation, putting the load of packages on her table and turned to look at her playfully.

"Who all did you buy for?" I was genuinely curious about her answer to this question. I admit I wanted to know what she would get me for Christmas.

"My family, my friends, my guards, the staff, your mother." She never said my name, that was to be expected.

"Hmm, should have known you wouldn't get anything for me."

"Oh, yours was delivered yesterday." Shocked, I felt excitement as it flitted through me.

"Really? What did you get me?"

"Now why would I tell you that?" Laughing, she looked at me playfully and went to start sorting the packages.

"So, you're just a tease, huh?" I whispered into her ear and watched as she shivered.

"Not in the least. It's not teasing if you dangle a treat in front of a puppy when training it, isn't that what you're supposed to do. Dangle the reward so they want to follow their orders and behave?" She was calling me a dog again, but I was still calling her Little Bunny that I know she hated.

"Keep calling me a dog, and I'll show just how much of a dog I really am." I whispered in her ear again, it was both seductive and playful and even I could hear the laugh in my voice.

"Actually, I called you a puppy." She giggled sweetly and turned her head just a little to the right so I could see the edges of the mate mark I had left on her.

"Huh! Hey, Little Bunny, what's up with your mark?" I had never actually gone to see it after I bit her. I remembered the night I left the mark quite vividly. She was the most beautiful woman I had seen in a really long time. She looked like the moon walking among us. And when I pulled her toward me and buried my face in her neck, scenting her and biting her, it drove me wild.

It looked like the mark still hadn't fully formed, even after over two months. It currently looked like a larger than average pack seal surrounded by nothing more than a giant gray cloud. Unless the gray cloud was my personal twist on the mark.

"Let me see it."

"I don't think it ever finished." Her voice was dripping with sorrow.

"It doesn't look like it, does it?" I traced the crest with my finger as I spoke.

"Stop!" She demanded taking a small step away from me.

"What's the matter?" I couldn't stop the pain from filling my eyes at her reaction.

"I'm not a toy for you to play with whenever you feel like. I will not be your outlet Reece. If you want satisfaction, then go get it from yourself. I told you, you're not getting anything from me. Not unless it was a mutual thing.

"I was only looking at your mark." I tried to play off her words.

"Yeah, and you were intentionally suggestive. And you can look at the mark without touching it."

"What's the matter with you? We were actually getting along just fine for once." I had been hopeful that we might finally be moving beyond all the fighting.

"But I know I am nothing more than a distraction to you Reece. You have nothing, or no one, better to distract you right now so you chose me to fill that role. But I won't be that kind of distraction for someone who hates me." I could feel her words like a knife to my gut and my heart.

"Fine, I'll be leaving." I sighed. I hung my head in defeat as I left the room without another word.

"Why does he have to hate me?" I heard her sob after I left the room.

"I wish we could talk, Little Bunny." My voice cracked as I whispered, like tears threatened me as well.

Chapter 64 - Trinity-A Visit From Carter

Trinity

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After Reece left, I started wrapping presents. I had all but one gift now, but that one needed a little more time to get ready, so I knew not to expect it yet. I wrapped all the presents for my family first, because I had gotten them things that I knew they would like and was really happy with those presents. Then, as I started on the gifts for my friends, there was a knock on my door.

"Trinity?" It was Carter. I hadn't seen him in so long. I was so glad I had already wrapped his presents. I bolted to my feet and ran to the door. When I flung it open and saw him there, I threw my arms around him, happy to finally see him after so long.

"Carter!" I squealed. "Oh Goddess, I missed you. Where have you been?" I asked him when I stepped away and beamed at him.

"Around, I had some errands to run." He was smiling at me. "I missed you too Trin." He was a sight for sore eyes. He was my partner in crime, my closest confidant, my best friend growing up, and ever since I moved in with Reece, I have barely seen him. He used to be the rock in the family for me. My protector, my healer, he was whatever I needed.

"Jeez Carter, I leave to become Luna and you ignore your favorite cousin." I joked with him and I stepped aside so he could come into the room.

"Favorite?" He put his hand on his chin as if contemplating.

"I'm your only cousin." I snapped at him.

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

"Absolutely not, a win is a win, it doesn't matter how you got it unless you cheated. If you cheated, then it's a loss and you suck." He laughed at my playful banter just like he always did.

"How are you feeling? I heard you were in bad shape." He asked, looking at my head with wary eyes.

"I'm fine, no worries."

Carter followed me over to the table I had been wrapping presents at. I sat down and continued with the gift I had left off on. It was an art supply kit for Juniper, I had also gotten her an easel and some canvases.

Juniper was an artist at heart, but she was taking most of the prerequisite classes that I was, but we had different career plans in mind. She wanted to be a social worker or child therapist. She hadn't decided completely yet. But she had to do some criminal law study to be a good social worker. Or that's

what she believed. I think it mostly had to do with the fact that Paul wanted to be a cop and was taking the criminology class.

"You got a lot of gifts here Trin." He seemed so shocked looking at them all. "Why do you have baby and kid toys here?"

"For Vincent's kids of course." That should have been obvious, but he might not know that I was so friendly with my guards that I would buy them gifts.

"Who all did you get gifts for?"

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

"Your guard is your friend?" He was shocked to hear this.

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

"Just because her name is your middle name?" He asked me, laughing loudly.

"Shut up Carter." I snapped. He instantly stopped laughing and stood up straight.

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

"Oops." It was my turn to laugh now, I hadn't meant it as a command, but apparently wolf laws didn't care.

"Don't oops me. You can't give me a command like that and then laugh at me." He was only pretending to be mad. I knew because I could hear the laughter in his voice as he pretended to growl at me.

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

"So, I have something to tell you."

"What's that?" I asked him curiously, looking up through a spill of hair that had fallen out of my ponytail during my laughing fit.

"Well two things really. First, the Alpha has managed to get you approved to sit your exams, but only if you do them on Saturday." He had a big grin on his face.

"OH MY GODDESS! REALLY?" I basically screamed as I jumped to my feet and hugged him again.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you." I told him and literally jumped for joy. "I am so glad I won't have to fail all four classes."

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

"Wow, so serious." I said jokingly.

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

"I know Carter, I'm just so happy right now that nothing is going to sound like I am taking it seriously." I told him. It was the truth, but it wasn't enough for him, he was still mad. He continued to glare at me uncomfortably.

"I'm just so glad that I will get to start new classes next semester." I was still on my happy cloud, ignoring Carter's bad mood as best as I could until he calmed down.

"Yes, but not the way you think." He popped my happy cloud, forcing me to look at him with confusion.

"What?" I snapped at him.

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

"NO!" I growled at him.

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

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

"I'm sorry Trin."

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

"No, the second thing had nothing to do with you or your little problems." He sounded annoyed now, like he wanted to tell me something but didn't know how to do it.

"What's wrong Carter?" I was afraid there was going to be more bad news.

"I found my mate." He smiled, but he sounded really upset about it.

"That's wonderful news Carter." I smiled at him.

"No, it's not. She's in the enemy pack I was sent to scout." He looked so dejected as he spoke, like the world was going to implode upon itself and we were all going to die before he could get his mate.

"I can't go anywhere near her. I can't tell her who I really am, where I'm really from, or anything. If I did, they would know that Reece sent me to spy on them all." He tried to smile through the pain he felt as he looked at me.

"Carter." My heart broke, and I cried the tears he was fighting back for him. "We will work something out. Maybe we can convince her to leave that pack and join us." I tried to sooth him.

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

"Carter." I sighed.

I wanted to talk for a little while longer, but Carter was suddenly in a hurry to leave.

"Wait, Carter." I called out to him. "Take these." I had packed all the gifts for him, Aunt Eve and Uncle Wesley into a large green bag. He could take them and put them under the tree.

"Don't you want to deliver them yourself?" He still looked depressed.

"I can't go anywhere, not until the exams that is." I reminded him with a sad smile.

"You really haven't left the house in a month?" It must have been a shock to him to learn that.

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

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

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

"You're probably right." He agreed. Everyone who knew me, seeing the direction my life had taken, would agree that my life was never going to be normal again.

Chapter 65 - Both-Awkward

6-7 minutes

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Trinity

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I watched Carter leave, a bittersweet feeling deep inside of me. I was happy to have seen him, and happy to be continuing school, but I felt so bad for him right now. I wanted to help him somehow. Maybe I could figure something out. Eventually.

Right now, however, I was just still so happy about what Carter had told me. I was excited for my exams, and glad that I had kept up on my assignments, thanks to all my friends. I wanted to thank Reece. I needed to tell him how happy this made me. And I had never thanked him for saving me last time either.

Just then I caught his scent. I didn't know if he was leaving or going back to his room. I had to hurry. I ran down the hall as fast as I could and was at the top of the stairs and the connecting hallway before I knew it. I saw him, walking toward his room, his tall broad back facing me and growing smaller the farther he went down the hall.

Without thinking I ran after him.

"Reece!" I yelled when I was nearly to him. He was already turning before I called out to him, undoubtedly alerted by the sound of my running footsteps and my scent.

"Little Bunny?" He asked me confused to see me running toward him. I leapt the last step and threw my arms around his waist, not caring that I had just thrown a fit about him touching me.

"Thank you."

"What's this about?" He asked confused, his hands held up as if he didn't know what to do. He was clearly not in 'the mood' right now because he was even more hesitant to touch me than usual. It was completely different to how he usually acted when he was being his typical suggestive self. That's fine, I just wanted to thank him, I wasn't after anything more.

"I just wanted to say thank you." I told him as I pulled away. Seeing him there made me want to laugh. But I didn't, that would have started another fight. He had both his hands held at about chest level, palms out, almost like he was facing down a criminal with guns drawn. It looked like the typical movie "freeze" pose, And the shock on his face.

"Thank me for what?" His sense of what was normal must be coming back because he was getting his voice under control, he was talking in his usual clipped tone of voice.

"For working out my situation with the university. I know it must have been difficult. And I've been meaning to tell you thank you for saving my life. I just hadn't gotten around to it because we always ended up in arguments." I was giving him what I hoped was a thankful smile. I could see his eyes darkening. I was wearing his patience down. I should leave before he gets mad at me.

"I need to go. I have more things to do now than I originally thought." I smiled at him again. I nodded my head and ran off, smiling happily. "I'll see you at breakfast."

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Reece

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I could smell her the moment she opened her bedroom door. She was there with another man. I had to calm my wolf by telling him that I would settle it all soon and locking him in a mental cage just to stop him from taking over. I knew the man with her was her cousin Carter. I had had a quick meeting with him earlier after all. I knew he was going to come here. But my wolf was still jealous.

Soon after that I passed Carter on the stairs, he gave me the cursory bow and mumbled. "Alpha." He was a good man, but he was completely on my Little Bunny's side. If push came to shove, I knew that he would choose to help her over the pack. He loved his cousin and was fiercely loyal to her. Honestly, that made me happy. She needed more allies on her side.

I was almost to my door when I turned around. I had heard her feet running down the hall, but at first, I thought she might have just been chasing after Carter. I thought he might have forgotten something. But her footsteps chased me down the hallway, and her scent grew stronger. As I was turning around, I heard her call my name.

"Reece!" It was enough to stop me in my tracks. The sight of her running toward me so happily. I didn't know what to think.

"Little Bunny?" I asked confused, just as she threw her arms around my waist, slamming into me with such force that I was rocked backward momentarily.

"Thank you." Her voice was soft as she spoke the words, squeezing me.

"What's this all about?" I asked her, confused. I held my hands up above her, not knowing where to put them. I wanted to hug her back, but after what happened earlier today, I didn't know if I should.

"I just wanted to say thank you." She repeated her words she had said once already, but I didn't know what she was thanking me for.

"Thank me for what?" I tried to remain calm, to make myself sound neutral. She pulled away and continued.

"For working out my situation with the university. I know it must have been difficult. And I've been meaning to tell you thank you for saving my life. I just hadn't gotten around to it because we always ended up in arguments."

I couldn't believe my ears. She wasn't acting like the Little Bunny I had grown used to. But the sound of her voice, the feel of her body when it was pressed against me, it made my wolf pant in my ears and beg for more.

"I need to go. I have more things to do now than I originally thought. I'll see you at breakfast." She spun around and ran back down the hall while I stood there, still dazed. Come back! My wolf whined in my head after she left. What am I supposed to do when she does things like this? First, she told me off for touching her, then she literally ran into my arms and hugged me. I was so confused. But maybe it was possible to move past all the things that had happened between us. I smiled thinking this as I finally walked into my room.

Chapter 66 - Reece-Little Bunny's Exam Day

8-10 minutes

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Reece

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Today is going to be a long day. Little Bunny is taking her exams, so we had to be prepared in the event that someone tried anything. I had almost two dozen pack warriors at the ready. They would switch out and rotate who guarded the building and who would be searching the surrounding area.

I was advised to let the warriors handle everything today. That they would report back to me when everything was all over. They told me it would be best not to allow the enemy access to me if they were

truly after my position. I refused. I was alpha around here and I would protect what was mine. Be that my pack, my land, my mate or myself. It was all up to me to protect.

I was also beginning to wonder if those that were after my Little Bunny were doing so to go after me or if they were after her directly. I was beginning to think she was the intended target. I don't think she was supposed to get hurt so badly during any of the events. No, my suspicions are telling me they're trying to get to her for something specific, and I intend to find out what that is, and soon.

I didn't want her to know that I was going to be close by, so I had Vincent and David ride with Little Bunny to the university. I was going to be overseeing the entire operation, running the command and following up on any scent trails personally. I would not let anyone slip between my fingers this time.

It was just before eight in the morning when she went into the building. And we could already smell that wolves had been scouting the area. The trails weren't fresh, they had most likely scouted sometime earlier in the week.

My men had been informed of this mission on Wednesday, only three days in advance. The elders knew about it on Tuesday. I had been given the go ahead from the Dean on Monday. So, the leak came from either the school, the elders, or someone in my inner circle. I needed to find out who was actively working against me and make them pay. They would suffer as much as they had made my Little Bunny suffer.

Four guards began tracing all the old trails. They said there was nothing new for them to report, that was both reassuring and disappointing. I would prefer this day to go smoothly, with no problems for her.

But I knew that things weren't going to go that way. I had only just thought those words when my phone vibrated in my pocket. Looking at the screen I saw that it was Kenneth, he was one of those tracking the old trails.

"What do you got for me?" I asked him curtly.

"I'm sorry Alpha, but something funny is happening to these trails." He sounded nervous as he was saying this. Like he thought I might be upset with him. In truth I was pissed, but not at him.

"Funny? Explain Kenneth." I demanded. My voice held more of an edge than it normally did.

"Well, the smell keeps fading in and out when it gets out to a certain point." His voice was definitely nervous now. He was speaking in as few words as possible.

"Like they're hard to smell at all?" I asked. I knew exactly what he was meaning.

"Yes, Alpha Sir." His voice seemed clipped.

"I'll be right there." I told him.

After getting his location I drove out to where he and another warrior were waiting for me. I had smelled the scent trails near the school, so I knew what these wolves had smelled like. Getting out I could still smell them partially. But as I walked closer to the men that were standing, waiting for me, I noticed the smell fading in and out.

The smell didn't disappear altogether, not like how it did with the Warlocks last time. But it was enough to make it hard to follow. We were far enough out of the city now that I didn't have to worry about passersby coming up at any moment. The edge of the forest was just in front of us.

"Try to find out everywhere they went in the city. I want to know everything they touched if you can. I will follow this the best I can." I told them. "And tell the guards at the school to be extra alert. Whoever might try to attack could have the aid of Warlocks, we will not be able to detect their scent." I saw their eyes go wide at my warning.

"Warlocks?" Kenneth exclaimed.

"Is that why their scent is hard to track, Alpha?" Brian, one of my newest and youngest warriors asked. I nodded in response to his question as I started to unbutton my shirt, I was already walking toward the trees.

"I expect all of you to stay alert. I want no harm to come to the Luna today." I glared at them. They would know better than to disobey me.

"Yes, Sir." They saluted me. The salutes were a bit much, this wasn't the army, but at least they were more respectful than others.

Once I was in the trees, and had my clothes off, I shifted into my wolf form. The feeling of being in this other form, wearing a different skin, was so freeing. I dug my claws into the dirt, savoring the feeling of the cold, snowy ground pressed against my paws.

I raised my head to the sky with my eyes closed and searched for the scent I was trying to track. I found just the slightest trace of it nearby. It was getting harder to track the farther away from the city we went. There was definitely something strange going on here.

Why would Warlocks be working with these wolves? Are they rogues or from a pack? Are they trying to get to me, or did they want my Little Bunny?

I had begun to suspect something about my Little Bunny, but I didn't know if it were true, and there was no one I could ask to confirm if it were true or not. No one in the pack knew who her father was. Her mother had never told anyone, but did she truly know? I'm beginning to think she didn't even know anything happened until she was surprised with the baby. But with her mother dead I couldn't ask her.

There had just been somethings that made me wonder. Like how Little Bunny's eyes had looked in the forest the day she had been attacked, they seemed to be tracking the Warlocks with little trouble until I broke her concentration. It was like she could see past all the trees and through the night itself to see them. Then there was the color of her eyes themselves.

Most wolves would have green, yellow, gold, brown, or hazel eyes. There were the rare one with blue eyes, but they were the wolf equivalent of an albino. They were typically born with white, silver, or very light blond hair to go with the blue eyes. And Little Bunny had not just sky-blue eyes, but also sapphire and gold in them as well.

The triple iris, while unique and beautiful, was definitely not a wolf trait. Was she half human? Was she half warlock? Or was she something else? I just didn't know how to answer that question but I have more questions than answers right now.

I was tracking the scent of the wolves slowly, moving with great care so that I didn't lose it completely. That made me think about how she had been able to smell them too. She was the only one among us that was able to smell them. She said their scent was weird and made her sneeze, but she was able to smell it when we couldn't. I bet she could follow this scent. I laughed to myself.

I hit on a new trail among the other trails, something that didn't fade like the others. This smell shouldn't be here at all. I could smell my beta. My cousin Caleb had been in this area, and recently. I followed the trail. What had he been doing here? He was not among those that I included in this guard mission, though he did know of it. Goddess, but I hated having that twit as my beta. I growled in my mind. If it turns out he had any part of this whole plot, he is going to pay.

Caleb's scent continued heading in the direction of the estate. He hadn't been there since Tuesday, but this trail was fresher than that. What was he up to? I would be finding that out soon enough. I heard a distressed howl coming back from the direction I had just come. I turned and ran back.

Chapter 67 - Reece-An Injured Wolf Means Lockdown For The Luna

11-14 minutes

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Reece

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The howl was female, we only had two female wolves with us today, Sarah and Lisa, they were supposed to be guarding the building unless they had already done the first switch. I raced through the trees until I came across the she-wolf that had howled.

She was lying on her side, blood seeping from a series of gashes in her left flank. I could see her pain as she tried to keep her eyes from quivering. She didn't want us to think she was weaker because she was a woman, and crying would make her seem weak.

"What's happened?" I asked in what passed for speech when in wolf form.

"An intruder tried to make it past me, but I stopped him. He no doubt thought I would be easy because I was female. He learned otherwise." I could hear pride in the series of yips, growls, grunts, and barks she spoke with.

"Where is he now?" I asked, this was what I needed to know the most. "Did he get away?"

"I'm sorry Alpha, he did get away. But I did injure him as well, he should be bleeding." She was eyeing the ground as she talked.

"You did good." I told her. "See to it she is looked after." I commanded before following the slight traces of blood and paw prints from the enemy wolf.

I had followed the trail for nearly six miles. The blood was less frequent, he was healing, but I had his scent and prints. I needed to find him. I needed to know why he was after my mate.

But then I hit it. It was like a barrier, but instead of stopping me in my tracks, or making me bounce back off of it, it seemed to cut off my senses. Or at least lessen them. I couldn't smell the wolf anymore at all. I could barely see the prints on the ground. I couldn't even hear my own breathing, ragged as it was from anger, running, and now frustration. Something wasn't right here.

There was definitely a powerful Warlock close by. Someone much stronger than the ones from before. This one was the true enemy. He was the one I needed to find.

"Go back." A voice rumbled in the air around me.

"What is it you want with me?" I demanded.

"I don't even know who you are, wolf." The voice seemed to be speaking through the air, not like there was a person near me at all.

"I am the Alpha of this area." I growled.

"Well, Alpha wolf, I don't need you." The voice chided.

"Then what are you after?"

"I think you know that." The voice, whoever he was, chuckled.

"You want my mate?"

"Why not? You don't want her." He seemed to be pleased with himself.

"You can't have her." I screamed at him.

"I will get whatever I want, and you can't stop me." I could feel the pressure in the air intensifying. He was trying to suffocate me.

"I will stop you." I yelled at him once more before I turned around and ran back toward town. I heard the voice chuckling as I left. He thinks he won, just because I am leaving. Let's see him fight me face to face. I thought.

I went back to where I had left my clothes and shifted back. I wanted to go check on the she-wolf who had been hurt. I was sure it had been Lisa, but I wasn't positive. Today had given me a lot to think about.

If the man who spoke earlier was the mastermind behind all of this, then they weren't after me, they were after my mate. But why? What could they possibly want from her? I would find out sooner or later. But it was looking like today would be her last time out of the estate for a while.

I was dressed and had driven to where they had taken the injured she-wolf all while lost in thought. I had been right. Lisa was the one who had been hurt. She was doing better now. Just shifting was enough to take care of most of her injuries. There was nothing left but bright pink scars now. In another hour they would fade to nothing but white scars. They would look years old by the end of the day.

"Is everything alright, Alpha?" Vincent asked me when I went to check on how things were going at the university.

"Just thinking." I answered him. "How have things been here?" I asked him. My Little Bunny's four primary guards had all insisted on staying at the doors all day. They said that other than a quick break, if needed, they would guard the doors all day. I was proud of all four of them in that moment.

"No problems, Sir. I know there have been issues elsewhere, but it has not reached us here. The Luna knows nothing of what has happened." Vincent was a good family man, but when it came to his job as a warrior, he was also one of the most capable we had. He was extremely loyal, highly dedicated, and he could think quickly on his feet if he needed to. I was glad I chose him for her.

"Good, I don't want her to know about anything that happened today. Not yet anyway." I praised his efforts in keeping her safe.

"Might I ask why you're keeping it from her? She would likely not be very happy were she to find out." He offered me his advice.

"Yeah, I gather she wouldn't be." I laughed. "But today is looking like it will be her last day out for a long time. And you know how she will respond to that too, I'm sure." I watched as he grimaced at the thought.

"Not pleasantly." He admitted.

"Exactly."

"Might I offer some advice, Sir?" Shane, one of the twin guards said as he came walking over. He had apparently heard our conversation.

"You should not have left your post." I growled at him.

"I put someone else on the door for just a moment." He smiled sheepishly.

"Fine, go ahead." I snapped. "Say what you wanted to."

"If tonight is to be the Luna's last night out for a while, you should make it as special for her as you can." He smiled as he spoke.

"What do you mean?" I asked him.

"Come on, Alpha, you're a man that knows how to treat a lady, aren't you?" He joked with me.

"I most definitely know how to treat a lady and show them a good time. But are you suggesting I take her out when the city isn't safe for her right now?" I growled.

"The entire city isn't completely off limits, is it?" He asked. "There are some places that are safer than others. For instance, Gina's dress shop is completely run and staffed by wolves. And then there's Lawrence's restaurant over on Mountainview Pass, Kaleidoscope. It's five star, top rated, and beautiful inside. Added perk, is it's also staffed at least fifty percent by wolves, including those at the door. A few calls and you could have things set up to enjoy a quiet night with your mate and not have to worry."

I had to admit, he was very convincing as he spoke. And he was right too. I knew of the places he was talking about. Little Bunny definitely deserved one last hurrah before going back into confinement. I hated making her stay inside like that, but she needed to be safe. And I could just tell her it was for

having completed her exams. But I would still want someone to watch the restaurant from outside, in case anyone tried anything.

"Shane, what are you and your brother doing tonight?" I smirked.

I had everything set and ready long before my Little Bunny was due to come out of the building. The twins were going to guard us from a distance tonight. And I would take my mate on our very first date ever. I was getting nervous. She could respond in many different ways.

I didn't have to wait too much longer for her to come out. She was smart and had kept up on her work even when I forbade her from going to class. The result meant she finished her exams with four hours to spare. We had plenty of time left for the day, but I was glad that we would get done sooner, this way we wouldn't be out that late. No need to push fate, with the other wolves or her.

They told me they heard her coming, so I got into position near the door she was likely to come out of. Vincent greeted her with a smile and asked how she had done.

"Well, I will know soon, but I'm sure I did alright." She smiled back at him. My wolf growled at the idea of another man being on the receiving end of that smile.

I Walked slowly toward them, as was the plan, and noticed when she realized I was there.

"Reece?" She was surprised. "What are you doing here?" She asked me.

"Well, these guys have been here all day, I thought I would check up on them. Looks like I got here just as you got done." I smile at her. "Come on, let's not block the door." I motioned for her to follow me. Her and Vincent both followed after me until we were under the shade of a nearby tree.

"How did you do?" I asked her.

"Fine, I think." She seemed nervous now.

"Good. Well, since I'm here let's go celebrate you passing your classes by having dinner together." I told her.

"It's a little early for dinner, and I'm not dressed for it." She tried to avoid the invitation, looking me up and down. I had gone home to change into a black Armani suit with a dark green silk shirt. The sun, just an hour away from setting, was glinting off my black leather shoes. I didn't ruin the look with a coat, I didn't need one right now anyway, I wouldn't need a coat unless it was somewhere below 0°F outside.

"Well, we can get you ready for dinner then." I smiled, taking a few steps closer to her. She took a step back.

"I don't know." She avoided me again.

"Come on now, you don't want to make me look bad in front of everyone do you?" I asked, causing her to look around. It was then that she noticed that the other three guards had joined us as well.

"Go on Luna, you deserve to have some fun." Shane urged her.

"Yeah, you've been cooped up for a while." Shawn added.

"You should just enjoy it." David told her. Finally, she looked at Vincent.

"Go on Trinity, it will be alright." He encouraged her. I had a feeling he knew more than the others did, but his words seemed to be what she needed to crack. She turned to me and nodded.

"Alright, I am a bit hungry after all."

"Good." I said, taking her hand and pulling her toward me. "Shall we get you ready?" She tried to turn back to the others. "You gentlemen can go about whatever other business you might have." I called over my shoulder.

"Yes, Sir." I heard all four of them answer me.

"Where are we going?" She asked me. She looked confused and worried at the same time as I walked her toward the parking lot.

"To get ready for dinner."

"So, back to the estate?" She wondered.

"Nope, if I took you there, you'd likely try to get out of going to dinner."

"I would not." She insisted. "Probably." She added. I laughed at her words. "You seem to be in a good mood today." She commented.

"Really? That's the last thing I thought I would hear today, actually. Today did not go as I thought it would."

"Did you have a busy day as well?" She inquired.

"You can say that. I was chasing down leads all day." I said evasively.

"Hmm." She hummed as if she might have caught my meaning.

We were almost to the car now. Today I had no choice but to drive the Portofino. I knew she didn't like the Ferrari because it was ostentatious, but all the other cars were currently in use by members of the staff. I heard her scoff as I opened the door for her.

"All the others are in use." I told her as she sat down.

"Or you just wanted to look important while wearing that sharp suit of yours." She laughed at me.

I shut her door and walked around to slide into the driver's seat. The engine roaring to life drew the attention of several men, and quite a few women, on the campus. I could partly see why she didn't like the car. She wasn't used to all the attention. Well, we would have to get her used to getting all the attention from now on, wouldn't we?

Chapter 68 - Reece-Gina's Boutique

6-8 minutes

Reece

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I drove her uptown to Gina's boutique. They were expecting us. I had called earlier in the day and told them what I wanted. She had all the measurements for my Little Bunny and knew what color would suit her best.

"Where are we?" She asked when I pulled the car to a stop in front of the beautiful, upscale shop.

"This is Gina's place." I told her. "She makes the dresses for the ceremonies, but she also has her own shop."

"I didn't know that." She said smiling at the storefront. She always looked so radiant when she smiled genuinely like that.

I walked around the car and opened the door for her. I was glad to see that she was learning to wait for me to do that for her. She took my hand and let me help her out of the car. She must have known that if we were going somewhere with wolves, so we would have to keep up appearances. That made me happy too.

As soon as I escorted her into the shop we were greeted by Gina and her staff. This was a full-service shop. There weren't just dresses for sale here. You could also purchase shoes and accessories. And there was a place to get hair and makeup to match. This was truly a good choice. I would have to thank Shane later.

"Welcome, Alpha and Luna, we are honored for your visit." Gina smiled as she inclined her head.

"It's nice to see you again Gina." Little Bunny greeted the woman like a friend.

"I have a dress picked out for you already, Luna, please try it on." Gina implored her.

"How did you get one ready so soon?" She asked.

"I called ahead and told her we would be coming." I admitted.

"How did you know I would agree to have dinner with you?" My Little Bunny was smiling at me with a hint of an evil smirk.

"I hoped." I smiled back at her in return. She giggled, making my wolf wag his tail.

Gina took her to the back of the shop then to try on the dress. It was apparently almost perfectly sized to fit her and according to the staff, the best color choice possible. I would be the judge of that. I didn't want to brag, but I had a pretty good sense of fashion myself.

A little while later Gina brought her out. They had dressed my Little Bunny in a midnight-blue strapless dress. It was cut low enough that it showed an ample amount of her milky white cleavage. It was corseted, accentuating how small she really was. The skirt of the dress flared out a little, but it wasn't like a gown. It was more like several layers of silk and whatever the sheer material they had used combined with the way it was cut and sewn together. It looked like the skirt would twirl out around her

if she were to spin, but it also went all the way down to her ankles. She was wearing matching midnight-blue stilettos with three-inch heels. They would close the distance between us a little.

"What do you think, Alpha?" Gina asked me. It took a minute for me to get my wolf to shut up then another minute to unstick my tongue to allow me to speak.

"You look beautiful." I choked out in as even of a tone as I could manage. I saw the smile of satisfaction on Gina's face, but for some reason my Little Bunny looked sad.

"Come on now, Luna, let's get you ready." Gina directed as she led my Little Bunny to a chair in the back.

They were there for a while. I decided to walk around the shop as I waited. There was some laughter at first, and some tense voices as well. I stopped listening pretty quickly, but as I was looking at the diamond earrings in the case next to the counter, I heard something that caught me off guard.

"What's the point in all this?" Little Bunny asked.

"Why would you ask that, Luna?" Gina seemed as shocked by her question as I was.

"There's no point to it anyway." She sounded so sad, why was my Little Bunny so sad?

"I'm sure the Alpha would argue against that." Gina laughed.

"He's the reason I say there is no point."

"What? I don't understand Luna?" Neither do I Gina, so please keep probing. I thought to myself.

"You heard him when he saw me. He's always so apathetic when it comes to me. He could barely find it in himself to answer how I looked. And he seemed so mad." I was floored by what she said but Gina just laughed.

"Luna, you don't have much experience with men, do you?" She asked her. I wanted to growl that she better not, but that would make me a hypocrite, I had been with more women than I should have been.

"Not a lot, no." She admitted. Oh thank Goddess, thank you Little Bunny. I thought.

"Well, the Alpha wasn't mad honey, he was stunned. He didn't remember how to talk for a minute. And I'm betting he had to rein his wolf in too." Gina was spot on of course.

"I doubt that." Little Bunny wasn't convinced. I know it was my fault. I still had a lot to make up for. The thought made my chest ache and my sense of self hate grow even more.

"You just wait and see." Gina told her.

I stopped listening at that. I didn't want to hear anymore. Not to mention it sounded like they were almost done with her hair and makeup. The staff had apparently already picked out her accessories for the night, so I had nothing left to do but to pay for everything.

I was waiting near the front of the shop when they came out from the back. They had curled her hair and pinned the top of it back, they left a few strands down to frame her face, and the rest of her hair cascaded down her back.

She was wearing a black silk evening wrap draped over her shoulders, that mixed with her long dark hair laying on her shoulders hid most of the skin that was exposed, including the incomplete mark. Her makeup was once again simple, with light eye makeup and a hinting of color on the lips, but her complexion was so naturally beautiful that she didn't need the makeup as it was.

I walked to her slowly, giving myself more time to take in the view, before I reached my hand out toward her.

"Gorgeous." I whispered as I kissed the back of her hand. I was trying to reassure her of how lovely I thought she really was, but I could see the skepticism in her eyes. She just wasn't going to trust me. "Thank you, Gina." I said before leading my Little Bunny out of the shop.

Chapter 69 - Reece-Dinner And 'Dessert'

9-11 minutes

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Reece

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"Where are we going now?" She asked me apprehensively.

"To dinner of course." I told her.

"But dinner where?" She questioned me.

"Kaleidoscope." I answered.

"What!" She exclaimed. "That place is way too much." She seemed stressed out.

"It's owned by a pack member by the name of Lawrence."

"Oh, I get it now."

"Get what?" I asked her.

"We're only going to places owned by pack members. Is that a pride thing or something to do with me?" She was figuring it out.

"If pride had something to do with it, it would limit where I bought a lot of other things."

"So, it is about me." She snapped.

"Can we talk about it over dinner?" I pleaded as I pulled the car to a stop at the restaurant, a valet was already coming to open our doors.

"Fine." She consented.

We were seated right away, to the groans and glares of many people who were waiting near the door. I had the staff take them all a drink and some appetizers on me to appease them. I didn't need a scene

starting right now. Lawrence had also been informed of our impending arrival, so we were told that the Chef had prepared a special menu just for us, if we would be so kind to accept. We had no objections. So, the wine and water were delivered along with an hors d'oeuvres while we waited.

"Alright, why the pack only businesses tonight?" She asked as soon as the waiter had left the table. I watched as she took a bite of the hors d'oeuvres and saw the satisfaction spread across her face. I took a bite of the food as well before I answered.

"I wanted the extra security it would provide." I answered her honestly.

"For me or for you?" She looked at me skeptically. I raised an eyebrow, confused. "Are you worried someone might try to hurt me, or are you worried that I might bite you if there isn't a pack member around to keep me from misbehaving?" She smirked. I could tell the last part was a joke, but she had taken me completely by surprise that I couldn't help the laugh that escaped.

"If I said it was for both would that be bad?" I asked her. She smiled and giggled lightly, turning her head and looking up at me through her eyelashes. I don't think she knew how seductive she could be at times.

"It would be more honest than I expected, that's for sure." She giggled again. Her laughter always sounded like music to me.

"But, in all honesty Little Bunny, I chose pack businesses because, Goddess forbid, if something were to happen there would be extra help around if I needed it. I'm sure I could handle whatever came our way, but just in case you know."

"Oh yes, you big strong man, you protect woman." She spoke in a chopped, caveman style voice.

"I'm serious Trinity, I am Alpha for a reason you know." I told her.

"Yeah, because your dad was Alpha." She laughed.

"No, not just because my father was Alpha. If I wasn't strong enough, then I would never have been given the title. We like to keep the title in the family, yes that's true, but if the heir is not strong enough, we admit that and give it to whoever is strong enough."

"I didn't know that." She admitted.

"I noticed." I snapped at her. "I am more than capable of fighting off most, if not any, threat that comes after you. The rogue that hurt you last time only managed it because he had such a head start on me. But I was about to catch him. I only needed ten more seconds to stop him, but I didn't have that time and that pissed me off." I was explaining something to her that I both wanted her to know and I never wanted to tell her.

"Is that why you refused to come see me while I was recovering? And why you blamed yourself? And I know you blamed me as well."

"I never blamed you." I said automatically.

"What?"

"You were performing your duties. Taking women and children out for that hike was a good idea, you didn't know that was going to happen. And you were trying to save that boy, which you did. If you had half a second more, you would have been in the clear as well, but we all ran out of time. I should have stopped him sooner."

"Why are you saying all this?" She asked me, confused.

"You need to know the truth."

"Well, while you're on your truth kick, why did you save me?" She asked. Our soup had been delivered now, and we were slowly eating that while we talked.

"I didn't even stop to think about it. I just leapt over the edge. I could only think 'don't let her be dead'."

"Why? Wouldn't it be better for you to find a different mate?"

"We only get one mate." I glared at her.

"Has anyone ever tried finding a second mate?"

"No, because that's not how we wolves are. Do you want a different mate?" I asked her, angered by her words.

"I'm not the one who rejected my mate."

"Liar." I snapped at her. "You tried to run away from me multiple times, you told me you didn't choose me either and complained about being stuck with me."

"Yeah well, I was scared when I tried to run away. I didn't know what was happening at first, and I only tried to run once after learning you were my mate but everyone was putting a lot of information on me and nothing was going to be the same again. Also, I said all that after you rejected me." She argued.

"What if I had never rejected you?" I asked her curiously.

"We will never know, will we. Since you did reject me, and you do hate me and want nothing to do with me in that way." She was never going to forget those words I said.

"Well, hypothetically?" I asked.

"I don't know." She answered uncertainly.

"Hmm." I was curious about her answer.

We continued through the meal steadily. Each dish was better than the previous one. The inside of the restaurant added to the magical feel of being here. I noticed my Little Bunny looking all around. The restaurant was bright, highly decorated, with a glass ceiling that had been cut into kaleidoscope patterns. They had even used stained glass in the ceiling as well. The ceiling was several layers thick, so it even looked like a real kaleidoscope. Even with all its uniqueness, it was extremely elegant.

After the tense conversation we had been having, my Little Bunny worked hard to keep us to lighter subjects. We talked about the upcoming holiday. She apparently loved Christmas. I was glad that I had

gone all out with having the staff decorate this year, it had mostly been for Mom's return, but it worked for my Little Bunny too.

We talked about what classes she wanted to take next now that her exams were done. But she adamantly refused to let us talk about anything truly personal. What I was truly thankful for though, was that we didn't argue at all. Not even the tense moment we had already made it through could be counted as an argument. It was our best conversation to date.

After dessert and a few more sips of wine, stuffed full with six courses of food, I walked her back to the car that a valet had brought back up for us. The light easy conversation continued all the way home.

I opened her door and helped her out like usual. I was working on being the perfect gentleman for her. I walked her to the elevator, knowing she wouldn't want to take the stairs in the stilettos she was wearing. I had wrapped my arm around her waist like I did when we were on our visits to the other packs. The move seemed so natural to me that I didn't question it.

I could feel the tension growing between us. Ever since we got back to the house. I didn't know if she could feel it or if she understood it, but it was driving me, and my wolf, insane. As soon as we were in the elevator and the doors closed, it was like the tension snapped.

I leaned down and buried my nose in her hair, inhaling her scent deeply.

"What are you doing?" She asked, stunned.

"Mmm, contemplating having seconds for dessert." I practically purred at her.

"What." She was shocked by my words. Her mouth was slightly open in awe. I took advantage of that.

I pressed my lips to hers, sliding my tongue past her open lips and flicking it against hers. She squealed in surprise, jumping at the feeling at first. She put her hands on my chest, almost like she thought about pushing me away or pulling me toward her, but she couldn't decide so she just left her hands there pressed against me.

I growled at the feel of her lips, the taste of her on my tongue. The flavor of her exploded into my mouth, apples, vanilla, spices, it was better than eating the apple pie she smelled like. And the danger of the taste of ozone that chased the taste of pie into my mouth, like I could get struck by lightning while devouring her kiss, it was exciting.

With my hand at the nape of her neck and another on her waist I pulled her body toward mine, but she stumbled with the unfamiliar shoes she was wearing. She pushed me away then, looking at me with lust mixed with fear. I know my eyes must have been full of only lust, a burning desire to have her, but she didn't know how much I needed her right now. The elevator doors chose that moment to ding open on the fourth floor.

"I won't be your plaything, Reece, or a distraction. I won't have any of this unless things are mutual between us." She was almost in tears for some reason before she ran off the elevator, bolting for her room.

"Don't you know they are?" I growled quietly to the empty elevator before going back to my room and taking a really long cold shower.

Chapter 70 - Trinity-Christmas Part 1

8-10 minutes

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Trinity

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The dinner date with Reece was a total surprise. I didn't expect it at all. But I enjoyed myself, probably more than I should have. But it turns out he was only after one thing. Why can't we get closer, get to know each other, without him wanting to move in that direction? I don't want to be a distraction to him, just a plaything to him to use when he sees fit.

The bad thing is, it was really hard for me to turn him down, my body wants him. My heart tells me I love him. But I know that I don't know him enough for that. I need a better connection with him, something more than just fate telling me he's the one. I need him to tell me I'm the one for him. I need to know that he accepts me and that he won't find solace in anyone else. But will I ever get that?

I sincerely hope so. I hope that we can have more nights like Saturday. More nights where we talk and get closer. More time where we just enjoy each other's time.

Tomorrow is Christmas. That was one thing for me to look forward to. I was wrapping the last gift I needed to put under the tree. I loved how elaborately the house had been decorated. I don't know if it was like this all the time or not, but it was wonderful.

The whole house had been covered in lights so just staring at its twinkling beauty was enough to make me smile. The tree that had been brought in and placed in the great room, the main living room, was massive. It had to be at least twelve feet tall and it was decorated with lights, ribbon, bulbs, tinsel, the whole works. There were little animal ornaments covered in gold and silver that decorated the tree as well. And at the very top, instead of a star or an angel, there was a full moon glowing atop the tree.

A giant train track had been set up that went up and around the tree, circled the room, and came back to circle the base of the tree. All around the track, at different points, pieces of a miniature Christmas village had been set up. Little houses, a church, shops, Santa's village, it even had trees painted with a frosting of snow. Twinkling lights lined the train tracks and followed the village as well. There had been white fluff put around all the little houses to look like snow.

There were snowmen scattered throughout the house. Sometimes in groups like a family, sometimes standing alone. Stars and snowflake patterns had been hung from the ceiling in shining silver and gold. There was a miniature Santa with a sleigh and his reindeer strung up in the entry hall, he looked like he was flying to deliver the gifts to everyone.

Stockings had been hung by the beautiful fireplace. They all looked brand new compared to the little village pieces. There were three stockings in all. One each for Lila, Reece, and myself. Being included without asking was enough to make me smile. At least whoever had decorated considered me part of the household.

There were small traces all throughout the bottom floor of the house. Wreaths, tinsel, garland, mistletoe, poinsettia plants. All the traditional decorations. It was like walking into a Christmas movie taking place at a castle or at least a rich person's house. Well, this place could be a castle, and Reece was obscenely rich, so I guess that was fitting.

There were small traces of decorations upstairs as well. Garland and ribbons decorated every banister in the house. Some lights here and there, and mistletoe hung sporadically. But nothing much had happened elsewhere on the higher floors. I took it upon myself to decorate my room and hallway slightly, no one said I couldn't.

I put lights up in my room, around every window, around the fireplace, and made a small canopy of lights above the whole room. I put snowmen, reindeer, Santa, and anything I could think of up and down the hall. It was only going to be for a short time, but I wanted to see these things to make me happy. The two weeks that I got to see them was magical to me.

I had been trying to avoid thinking about Christmas morning. It would be my first without my family. I was sure it was going to be emotional for me, but I would have to get over it somehow. I had to grow up, and I wasn't going to be alone after all. I would have Lila, and Reece I suppose. But who knows if he would behave himself?

I was both looking forward to the morning and dreading it at the same time. Only time will tell me how it would go. I just had to face it as best as I could.

I woke early on Christmas morning. I was nervous, and I wanted to be ready for the day. I took a quick shower and dressed nicely. I decided to wear a midnight-blue skirt that came to my knees, it was simple, no extra designs or fluff, but it was pretty and quite comfortable. I paired it with a white silk shirt and gold jewelry. The look was simple but looked classy.

When I went downstairs, I had expected to eat breakfast first. That's how things had always been done when I was growing up. So, it took me by surprise when Reece called out to me.

"Where are you going Little Bunny?" He sounded confused yet amused at the same time.

"To breakfast." I told him, bewildered.

"Don't you want to open gifts first?" He asked me, a slight smirk on his face.

"Before we eat?" I asked.

"Is it that strange?"

"It's different for me, I always opened them after." I informed him.

"Hmm, well let's not wait. I want us all to open them before we eat." He smiled at me.

"Alright." I was glad I had brought his last gift down last night instead of waiting until this morning.

"Come on you two." Lila called out from the other room. I smiled at her eager voice.

"Let's go." Reece said, holding his hand out toward me. I didn't take his hand but walked next to him, he placed his hand lightly on my right hip and he walked beside me.

As soon as we entered the room, there was a bright flash of light.

"Memories." Lila said once I could see again. She had a camera in her hand.

"Mom!" Reece growled.

"What? It's your first Christmas together, someone needs to take pictures." She smiled happily.

"It's not that special is it?" I asked her.

"Are you kidding? It's very special, this is the first of many Christmases together but there will never be anything like the first one." She was so happy that I just didn't want to burst her bubble. I just don't think Reece and I will ever have happy memories.

"If you say so." Reece grimaced. Clearly, he didn't think things would be happy either.

We started passing out gifts. Lila wanted to go first, so she handed us all of the ones she bought for us.

"I might have gone a little overboard." She smiled happily as she handed us gift after gift. "I just couldn't help myself."

"This is way too much Lila." I told her as she handed me my tenth present.

"Nonsense, you're the first daughter I ever got to buy a gift for, I am so excited." I could feel that excitement too. It just made me feel weird, getting a gift from someone that wasn't my family. Reece and I looked at each other and laughed nervously as our embarrassment kept growing along with the piles.

"Go on, open them." Lila insisted.

I did as she instructed and was stunned at the array of gifts. Lila had gotten me a beautiful, and delicate looking, gold watch. Several different outfits. There were books she thought I would enjoy. A violin to replace the one that had gone missing from the music room. And a bottle of perfume with a soft vanilla scent.

"That perfume is developed by a wolf, so the smell is not too strong. It won't affect a wolf's sense of smell." She was smiling happily. "And I know how much Reece loves the smell of vanilla." She added mischievously.

"Mother." He said embarrassed.

"What, you do." She giggled.

"Just be quiet." Reece put his head in his hands and groaned. I laughed.

"Thank you for everything, Lila. They were all wonderful gifts."

"It was my pleasure dear. I am so happy to have you here to shop for.

"Alright, let's move on." Reece cleared his throat loudly before he spoke. "Shall we give you all your gifts first, Mom, it would only be fair." He grinned at her.

"No, you should exchange each other's first." She countered. I was not in a hurry to give Reece his gifts, so I backed him up.

"No, I think we should give you your gifts, Lila." I smiled at her sweetly and she caved.

"Oh, alright. Fine, hand them over." She laughed, holding her hands out.