

Denied 461

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"Cleo, you really should give your parents more credit."

"Sophia please." I plead with her, my voice desperate.

"You'll need the night to sleep on it. I have an appointment first thing, be here at 8am. If you still feel the same as you do right now, then I will put measures in place..."

"Thank you."

"Be on time, I can clear out my diary for the first hour to stop witnesses...any thing after that and you'll have to wait another day."

"I understand." I move from the chair, stepping towards the office door.

"Cleo.." Sophia calls out, I spin around to find her investigating the PH strip again.

"I advise you to really think carefully about this, once done...it cannot be taken back."

Yes, that was the whole point.

I keep to myself, not wanting anyone to question this fiery mood spreading through out me.

Because if I really stopped and ask myself, was I really acting in the best interest of my family...or from anger.

Jace had already moved on.

I'm not saying we were anything in the first place, that it wasn't completely one sided on my part but a word of warning from him, even a message when I have tried him so many times since the hotel stay. He would have read every message, listened to

every voice note...only to ignore it and then send me a message to let me witness his lover in her

lingerie in his bedroom.

Almost as if he wanted me to see her. Wanted me to know there was no hope of a future between us, that I was nothing to him. Now, not even a friend.

I refused to sleep, between my spiralling mind and not wanting to wake up with a new mindset, I wouldn't have been able to rest even if I tried. So as I wait outside Sophia's Doctor office at 7.50am, a sad smile escapes her as she opens her

office door.

Perhaps she expecting me to change my mind overnight. But the visible dark circles under my eyes must inform her that I've not had any sleep. "Come inside, I need to prepare some things and you need to fill this out." She states as she hands me a document and a pen. "What is this?"

"Your authorisation...and a few questions just to make sure you are certain."

"Yes I am certain."

"I'll be back momentarily, don't move. When you are done with the form, just lay it on the desk."

I nod in confirmation of her orders before reading the first question on the document. I feel as if she has printed this off fresh for me, some of the questions were set to make me change my mind...or were checking I was in the right frame of mind to make such a decision for myself.

I am left in the stillness of her office, the only sound coming from the frantic scribbling of the black pen in my hand as I complete the form, and sign on the dotted line before I can think clearly.

I need to do this, before I have doubts...second thoughts.

I place the completed document back down on her desk, just as she opens her door and steps back in. I hold my breath as the overwhelming sensation of nausea grips my stomach...morning sickness.

In my peripheral vision I can see her fingers check through the paperwork, my eyes turn to the opposite side as I try to ride out the urge to vomit. Her finger slowly moves across my signature on the dotted line, followed by a sigh that was far too masculine for her.

My eyes shoot up, Dad peering down at me.

"Cleo?"

"Dad?"

"What is this?"

"What are you doing here?"

"Any medical decisions that would endanger the life of pack member...born or not...as the alpha

I have the final authority. I just never thought I would be called for my own daughter."

I'm stunned, silence by his disappointing look...I never wanted him to know about this.

I had no idea he would have the final say.

That being alpha he is above even a pack member's medical right.

"Talk to me, we always say a problem shared is a problem halved."

Hot wet tears prim in my eyes, emotions for the first time in a day threatening to break me.

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I was starting to let my body shed.

"I can't keep it." I whisper out.

"Why not?"

"It would bring shame upon the family, you and Mum will never forgive me."

"When have we ever put that on you. When have we ever made you feel that way?" It pains me to see the frown form upon his face.

Truthfully...never.

"Is the father a pack member?" He calmly asks but I can tell it has taken a lot of self control for him to sound calm. His clenched fists tell me otherwise.

"No."

"Someone I wouldn't agree of?"

Yes, most likely...but I can't share that...I just can't.

I was already humiliated enough, I didn't need to drag the Varon's in to the now, Arancea family sins.

"It was only one time..." I slam my eyes shut not wanting to witness Dad's response. When does a Dad ever want to know his daughter has been physical with another.

"Cleo." He growls out.

"and...he was human." I make sure I land the final punch, the information to seal the deal.

His dark alpha eyes stare at me, threatening to pierce through to my soul and retrieve the real truth.

"You see I need to do this. Where is Doctor Sophia."

"I refuse to let you do this."

"Dad, you can't."

"Oh yes I can."

"Dad you don't understand..."

"Understand what? You think I would love my grandchild any less if they were half human. Is that what you think of me?"

"This isn't about you."

"No, it's about that innocent child that is growing inside of you. That has a right to live Cleo." His wise words are the ones to punch me in the heart, my chest painfully contracting at his final line. Of course he was right.

"I can't believe she has betrayed me." I growl out, my voice wrongfully bitter at Sophia.

"She's just doing her job, you can't blame her. If it wasn't her it would have been another. I have rules within this hospital Cleo, rules that are adhered to."

"Then I'll go elsewhere.." I stand up, moving towards the door when his alpha aura reins down on me, and he prevents me from leaving.

"You're in shock...you need time to think."

"I've had time to think Dad."

"Not enough time. You will carry this child...when you give birth, if you decide you no longer want it, then I will listen to you again at that time and we will give it away for adoption, either within or outside of this pack."

"Dad...please." I can't be hearing this, I can't carry Jace's baby to full term.

I know I won't be able to give it away. I will love it unconditionally...I will be tied to him for life. He, who has another.

I won't be able to hide the baby, one look from Hector and Kaia...one smell and they will know the baby is a Varon. That the baby is also theirs.

"Cleo, can you really tell me in your heart of hearts that you want this, that you won't regret this decision. Being a parent is a marvellous thing, if the moon goddess has willed it that you have a half human then I am sure it is for a good reason. But you cannot fight against fate."

"Dad.." I make one last plea but I know his mind is made up.

"I will help you, I will share this burden with you...you aren't alone. Please don't do this...please darling. The guilt will destroy you." Sometimes I feel as if Dad knows me better than I know myself.

My bottom lip starts to tremble as a sob takes over me. His large arms pull me into his chest, protecting me from myself as I cry out. He was right, I couldn't have gone through with this. It wasn't the baby's fault.

I'll have to continue with the lie that it is a human's child, I'll have to worry about the truth coming out after the baby is born.

For my child is alpha blood, on both sides...which cannot be hidden after birth.

- Jace -

Taking that first step back into Dark Phantom territory wasn't easy. I didn't call ahead, incase I changed my mind last minute.

This was my home, all of my childhood memories were here. Sure, we visited the Clear Waters pack many a times, but I always feared I would never get the same connection as I did to this place.

This pack that was Jaxon's birth right, not mine.

But I know as soon as I arrived on the land, both Dad and Jaxon would have been informed through the pack bond of my return.

As I drove down the path towards the alpha house, both males were already standing outside waiting for me.

Their eyes widen as the car light's only enhance their alpha bulky frames. I've bulked up myself but it takes me longer, takes more effort being off pack grounds, the pack bond slowly slipping away from me.

It was first thing, I had decided to drive throughout the night...in the cover of darkness in case I chickened out at the last hurdle.

But with Callie by my side, spurning me on, I knew this was something I had to do.

I had been away for close to a year. I needed that space, needed the time to figure out what I wanted, what was good for me.

I couldn't accept what fate had planned out for me, so I've been busy making my own plans.

Building my own future.

Their eyes watch me inquisitively as I turn the engine off, a deep calming breath in to steady those nerves.

As I stepped out of the vehicle my wolf was on stand by, readying to shift at the earliest sign of

Jaxon making a move for me.

I had felt the mixture of anger and fear through the triplet sibling bond for the past year, so when he takes a step towards me...his arms unfolding from his chest I expect his fist to fly at me.

But as he pulls me into his arms, his hand resting on the back of my head as he pulls me into an embrace...all tension leaves my body.

My tense muscles melt into him.

"Thank the goddess!" He whispers by my ear as relief washes over me. I had been a coward, I know I had, I had abandoned him when he needs me most...time I cannot make up for.

But time that I needed for me.

"Where have you been?" Dad takes a step forward towards me, his hand resting on the nape of my neck as I step out of Jaxon's embrace only to be pulled into Dad's chest.

"I'll explain, but I haven't come alone."

"Oh?" Both of them respond.

I nod at the car, giving Callie the agreed safe sign for her to exit the vehicle. I didn't know how my return would be handled, and I had promised to keep her safe no matter what.

"Who do we have here?" Dad asks as Callie closes the passenger door and walks around the front of the car, extending her hand out. "Alpha, a pleasure. I am Callie." Callie was strong, she was born to greet alphas confidently in the eye...which she does so well with Dad. "Welcome Callie, please do call me Hector. Will you be staying?"

"Yes, she is here with me." I don't miss the exchange of looks both males give one another from my words.

"This is Jaxon, Jace's brother...Josie isn't here but I have gotten word to her of your return so I imagine she is already en route."

"You didn't have to do that." I shoot out, I didn't know how long I was staying yet. I didn't want Josie to travel all this way for nothing.

"Oh yes we did..." Jaxon's chest rattles, as he bites back on a growl, his wolf not as appeasing to the human side as most.

"The alpha household is still waking up so you'll excuse my mate for not being here but I will wake her. She was up late in the hospital." Dad offers out to Callie, a soft welcoming smile upon his face.

"There's no need." Callie's cheeks blush slightly under his intense gaze.

Dad is the strongest alpha in existence...well...at the moment, his aura was starting to affect her as he slowly releases it. Testing her resilience. "Our son has returned, trust me...she'll never forgive me if I don't wake her."

"In the hospital, is she alright?" I turn to Jaxon and Dad, returning from the boot of the car with our luggage.

The sensation of worry hitting me square on in the chest, a feeling I haven't felt for a long time.

"She's been picking up on Josie's shifts in her absence that's all." Dad smiles out, as he gestures

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his hand to Callie to enter into the house. Callie follows him, her long brown hair bouncing with

her movement, her skin sunkissed by the recent heatwave at the hotel resort.

She had travelled down in a black sports bra, black leggings and a flannel shirt which coordinated well, only enhancing her natural beauty.

As she follows Dad into the house, I feel Jaxon's eyes on me...feel his watchful gaze upon me.

I follow Callie inside, placing the bags down and placing my arm around her waist...her body rigid under my touch until I pull her closer into me, and place a kiss upon her cheek.

She smiles under my movement, her eyes glancing behind to find Jaxon watching us both.

I needed to be careful, needed to remember the plan.

"Are you sharing your room or shall I get a guest room ready?" Jaxon asks, his hands crossed over his chest as he rests against the hallway wall, a smirk forming into the corner of his mouth.

He's not buying it.

"Sharing, of course." I meet his gaze, holding it steadily.

In a matter of seconds Mum is racing down the stairs, her arms clinging on to me as she breathes in my scent.

"I missed you."

"I missed you too." I inhale her scent, my height towering over her but I never considered Mum small. She had an aura that rivalled Dad's, making her the strongest female I have ever known.

She pulls out of my chest, placing her hands on either side of my face. Taking me in.

"There is much to discuss...." She whippers out before she notices the female to my side. Her eyebrow quirked in surprise.

"And us..."

"Us?" She looks to me with a smile.

"Mum...this is Callie."

"Alpha Kaia...I've heard such wonderful things."

"Does this mean what I think it means.." Mum's excitement jumps her voice to another level as she greets Callie with two kisses on either side of the cheek.

"Steady on Mum, let's get inside first." I chuckle out, my hand snaking back around Callie's waist.

IT doesn't take long for Callie to make herself at home, she gets stuck in as we all prepare coffee

and a light breakfast to sit around the kitchen table together.

I know they have questions...things I need to answer.

As the croissants, cereals and fruits are laid out on the table, I watch on as the three of them...Dad, Mum and Jaxon enter a private mind-link. Have I really been gone that long that they forget to include me in on it.

This must have been how Josie felt for all her teenage years, all of us having our wolves and communication through the pack link...except for her. "So..." I try to gain their attention.

"So?" Jaxon cuts the mindlink first, his green eyes turning a darker shade of green....almost black. Meaning his wolf was peeking through....my wolf in return now doing the same thing.

He was on edge, until Jaxon releases his pent up anger on me...my wolf and I won't be able to rest.

"Let's get this over with."

"Get what over with?"

"Our wolves, around the back." I sigh out.

"Why, have you done something for me to be angry at you?" Jaxon tries to hide his anger with humour but he forgets how well I know him. How I'm the comical one, not him. He is the dark intense one.

"What, like disappear for a year?"

"Actually..."

"Jaxon!" Mum cautions my brother, her hand flying out and gripping tightly on to his shoulder.

"There is a lot that we need to share with you, but hopefully you'll stay for a while....it would be nice for us to just spend time with you before you need to leave again." Mum makes it clear she has no expectations on me, her support as always is undying.

"Exactly, and where is it you have been?" Dad nods in agreement with Mum, shifting in his chair as he presses me for some kind of information. "On the East Coast, Callie and I own a hotel there."

"Own a hotel...together?" Mum looks between Callie and I, her curiosity eating away at her.

"Yes, that's one of the reasons I have returned. I wanted you to meet Callie...and to discuss my future as the alpha of the Clear Waters."

I ignore Mum's gasp, her hand rising to cover her mouth.

"I am ready to accept my fate."

"You are ready to be the alpha?" Mum places her hands palms down on to the table, her shoulders leaning forward in anticipation. "Well, with Callie by my side."

"By your side?"

"Yes, Callie is my mate....Callie will be my luna."

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- Jace -

As soon as the words leave my mouth my phone vibrates in my front trouser pocket.

I reach for it, pulling it out...her name flashing up on my home screen.

Cleo.

The one person I had hurt more than my own family...and that is really saying something.

I knew what I had done, walked out on her the morning after the night I can't forget.

She was perfection.

Waking to find her next to me...in an ideal world that's all I would ever want. But I can't, I can't have that.

So I did what I knew would hurt her again.

I left her, I didn't even leave a note.

I had ghosted her.

I've ignored every attempt of hers to make contact since the hotel, I had nothing to say to her.

Nothing that she would want to hear. I lost control that night....I refuse to lose control again.

Nothing can happen between us again, not now I am back.

I got lost in the heat of the moment, the red hot heat of jealousy surging through my body. Knowing if it wasn't me...then another male would take my place.

She was determined, and I refused to let another male take her virginity.

Opening the message, I am aware that the eyes of my family are on me having just declared to them that I had found my Luna...fuck, it's almost as if fate is trying to remind me of her own plans.

Fuck that shit.

I quickly type out a reply to Cleo, she wanted to talk...says it is important. What better way for her to find out my news than in person. Once I have text Cleo to come here, I place my phone away, returning my attention to my parents and brother.

"Well...this is happy news. We must celebrate." Mum beams out, her hands reaching for Dad's.

"We will...but first, we can't have it be public knowledge not until Callie's parents have been informed." I place an arm around Cleo's shoulder, remembering I need to touch her more.

"You haven't told your parents?" Mum seemed to be the only one asking questions, Jaxon and Dad continuing to watch...testing us.

"No, our relationship is strained." Callie responds, her eyes turning to me.

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that."

"I'm not innocent by any means Luna, I ran out and they told me not to return to their pack."

"Their pack?" Dad's body shifts forward, intrigue getting the better of him.

"My parents are the alpha and luna....I'm their only child."

"I see, so you are an alpha born?"

"Yes." Callie smiles out to Mum, her relationship with her own parents and pack the main reason she talked sense into me to return. To take what is mine.

I first met her with a group of others, living it day by day not quite rogues, but living in the human world earning their daily crust.

When I happened to discover them, Callie knew immediately that I was an alpha born, my aura unmistakable in the human city.

We hit it off right away, the two of us making a fresh start for ourselves on the east coast.

"Would you like to reach out to them?"

"I've tried, numerous of times, they won't accept my call." Callie sighs out, I being with her the last couple of times she tried. They really had cut her off.

"Leave it with me." Mum's hands clap together, a plan coming to her.

"You don't have to. I don't want to get you involved with my family drama."

"But you are to be family are you not? So we are now involved."

I knew Mum and Callie would get along, Callie was strong. She was independent...capable of handling bad situations.

"You said there were things to update me with? Things about here?" I ask, changing the topic of conversation.

"Perhaps...we will wait until you have settled in. This is a happy moment, let's not spoil it with pack politics. There is always later." Dad firmly states, his aura seeping out of him to inform us that it was non negotiable.

To be honest, I could do with a break...regathering myself and resting.

"In that case, we've been travelling through the night. We could do with some rest before I show

Callie the pack."

After sleeping throughout most of the day, I jump into the shower. My room hadn't changed since the last time I was in it, even the box for the wedding shoes remained placed on the chair in the corner.

I try not to think back on that night, the memories creating a storm of emotions within me.

Over the noise of the streaming water I can hear Callie talking to somebody in the bedroom, I turn the shower down, trying to listen from the ensuite. "Is somebody there?" I call out to Callie.

"It was just one of the house staff, here...your towel." She hands me a towel as I step out of the shower, drying myself off in front of her.

Her eyes roam the length of me, as she leans against the doorway. She was in a red lace bra and knicker set, her curves owning the material.

"What?" I look at her wondering what she was thinking.

"You need to do a work out..."

"Ouch!" I laugh out at her undiluted bluntness.

"Have you seen how big your brother is?"

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"Yes, well he is the future alpha of this pack. Each time he takes away responsibility from Dad, his muscles expand. Once he is full on alpha, he'll be like a brick house."

"I don't think he likes me." She sighs out, moving to the mirror above the sink where she checks her slightly smudged mascara from sleeping.

"What do you mean?" I run the towel through my hair, towel drying it with speed.

"He's very intense...he keeps watching me." She wisely whispers out.

"That's just Jaxon, he's always been like that. Pay it no mind."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, I said I would protect you...and I will." I move past her, placing a reassuring kiss upon her cheek.

Once we are both ready we head downstairs, her hand in mine as we enter into the living room.

I wanted to give her a tour of the pack, but I knew there was something my family was holding back on, something I wanted to know.

It was middle of the afternoon and having slept a little too long I knew I would jump onto the night watch, giving my wolf the chance to shift....something that had been difficult to do in the human beach resort.

"I've left word for your parents Callie, they weren't able to take my call at the time. But I've asked them to call me back." Mum updates Callie as we both take a seat on one of the sofas.

"Okay...thank you Luna...I really appreciate it."

"Please, it's Kaia. We don't have titles in this household.

I feel as if we should share the news somewhat with our pack and friends. They will be over the moon to hear that not only have you returned, but that you have found your Luna Jace."

Cleo should be here soon, once she sees Callie for herself, she will share the news with her parents. So what does it matter if Mum and Dad inform people first.

"Sure, okay." I shrug, trying to sound nonchalant.

"But let's wait for Josie first...then you can tell who you want."

"Oh, yes let's wait for Josie...and Kit. You must have heard...?" A devious smile forms about Jaxon's face. What was his game.

"I felt her being marked through the triplet bond. I am sorry I missed it."

"Are you?" He raises an eyebrow at me, his aura washing over me but I wasn't going to play ball. I needed to keep my promise to Callie.

"Jaxon, enough." Dad lowly growls out in warning. I didn't care, I knew I would have to rebuild my sibling's trust, Josie especially.

I ran out on her when she came after me, came to help me when I bailed out on the wedding. Moments later leaving the pack and not looking back.

I knew rebuilding these bridges wouldn't be easy.

But I needed to start somewhere to lay down the foundations.

"Did you hear of the attack?" Mum's voice takes on a more serious tone.

"Attack, no what attack?"

"I can leave, give you all a moment to talk in private." Callie stands but I pull her back down next to me.

"No Callie, I want you to stay." She nods in acknowledgment before she places her hand in my thigh for support.

"The night of the wedding, after you left. We were invaded by hunters..." Mum continues.

"What...why didn't you tell me."

"How could we Jace, you've not been answering our calls." Jaxon grunts out.

"I take it you handled it, that there wasn't too many losses?"

"They weren't alone in their attack. It was cleverly orchestrated by an old enemy. Who will come again." I don't miss the way Dad's hands reach for Mum and place her possessively into his lap.

A lump forms in my throat, had Mum been in danger....

"What do they want?" I growl out.

"Your mother...and your sister." Dad responds, inhaling Mum's scent to calm his wolf as he must be picturing events that I had missed.

"What..."

"There's more, the night of the wedding....." Jaxon starts but is cut off.

"Jace?" I spin around in my chair, my sister's soft voice calling out my name.

I'm on my feet in a flash staring back at her.

"Josie?" She looked strong...a fighter. I knew she must have gone back with Knox to his training quarters, but I didn't expect him to also train her like an alpha.

"You're back? I can't believe it...I can't believe you are back." She takes a step towards me, and I her. Of all people, wherever Josie was...it felt like home to me.

I can see the tears that start to well up in her eyes, tears that I was happy for once to be causing, because I knew they were happy.

I take a step closer to her, my hands reach out to pull her into me when her body is angled away from me, a masculine hand wrapping itself around her waist as she is moved out of my way.

My eyes are too busy watching her sudden movement that I miss the fist flying towards me, the clenched fist that lands upon my cheek....with such a force that I stumble back at first.

"Knox..." I growl out, rubbing at my cheek.

"Get the fuck away from my mate!" He roars out at me.

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- Jace -

"I knew you shouldn't have come." Josie turns to Knox, removing his arm from around her just as

I push my chest into his.

"What the fuck is your problem?" I growl out, my eyes now inches from his. He might be pissed at me, just like the rest of my family, but what gives him the right to be the one that acts out.

"You." He jabs his finger into my chest, trying to push me back but my steady feet weren't moving.

They were cemented to the floor.

"Take it outside." Dad commands out, putting his alpha aura behind it.

I don't take my eyes off Knox but in my peripheral vision I can see Mum placing her arms around Callie's shoulders to guide her back towards the sitting room.

Perhaps it was better for us to do this outside. My wolf has been eager to find an excuse to shift. I told him to wait until border patrol tonight, but he is pressing just beneath the veil...hopeful for the opportunity.

I already find my feet moving to the front door...Knox and Jaxon following me.

"Wait for me." Josie calls out behind, just as I exit the front door...Knox on my tail.

"No." Knox growls out.

"Kit." Josie clicks her tongue, she has never been one to be told what to do, and I don't expect her to take it from her mate either.

But, I'm surprised when she looks between her mate and me...seemingly contemplating his words.

"I said no."

"You're an asshole.."

"Yes, but I'm your asshole." Knox takes a step closer to Josie, his arms wrapping around her

lower back as he pulls her into a kiss. His lips then moving to his mark on her neck, her body vibrating. That mate bond between them getting to work.

Their bodies like magnets towards one another, something I don't think I will ever be prepared to see.

I turn away, trying to prevent the vomit threatening to rise in the back of my throat as I start walking over to the training field.

It wouldn't be exactly private, but if Knox has something to say...then at least my wolf can come out.

Remind him of his place. He may be my sister's mate, but he isn't alpha.

"What's his problem?" I grunt out to Jaxon as we reach the training field, Knox behind us as he breaks out into a jog to close the gap.

"Let's just say if it wasn't guaranteed that he would hit you...then it would have been me." Jaxon flatly responds, as if it was the most obvious thing to have happened.

"Look, I'm sorry I bailed again....that I didn't return your calls."

"Uh huh, but that's not what this is about." Jaxon eyes take on a darker tone, just as Knox's fist comes flying for me again.

But I manage to duck out of the way this time.

"You son of a bitch."

"Josie's issue is with me, you shouldn't get involved." I warn him, he was crossing that line into sibling business.

"I'll get involved, when you leave her for dead!"

"What are you talking about?"

"The night of the wedding....you were pissed about something, so you fucked off...she went after you..." His rage is affecting his breathing as he makes circles around me, threateningly.

Stalking me as the predator that he is. He just isn't as strong a predator as me.

"What happens between my sister and I has fuck all to do with you." I seethe out at him as I'm trying to play catch up.

"Wrong, it has everything to do with me." His dark brown eyes turn a shade of black, his wolf preparing to take control.

"Remember your place Knox." I warn out, my wolf now pressing forward. My shoulders rolling forward in preparation to shift. "Oh I know my place Jace, it's protecting my mate."

"You think she needs protection from me? I wouldn't harm a hair on her head."

"But you already have. Your actions led her to be attacked."

His words feel like a punch to the chest, they wind me as my eyes dart to Jaxon's for clarification. "What, who by?"

"George, on the night of your parent's wedding. After you ditched her by the hospital, she went

inside and was attacked by George...if it hadn't have been for Doctor Abel and Luna Rosa." "What do you mean attacked?"

"Do I need to spell it out, he tried to rape her."

The rage burning within Knox is now contagious as it starts to spread throughout me.

George tried to force himself on my sister...I'll rip his heart out.

"I'll kill him."

"Don't bother he's already dead, as is Doctor Abel. As it a lot of pack members. The hunters attacked that night." Jaxon's chin tilts upwards at his words, daring me to excuse my behaviour.

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I may not have been the one that caused Josie's attack or the attack on the pack but I had been silent. I had ghosted my entire family...who had been through hell. Who had clearly needed me.

Shame washes over me.

"Look had I of known I would have..."

"Stayed? I don't know why the fuck you left for a second time, and I don't care. But put my mate

in danger like that again and I don't care if you are her brother or not, I will end you." Knox threatens me, his toxic tongue re-igniting that fire within me.

"Don't put that shit on me. I may have left but I'm not to blame for what he did to her. I'm not having that.

I've done things wrong, I know I have, but don't put your guilt on me."

"My guilt?"

"Where the fuck were you that night, where were you when your mate was being attacked."

"Why you arrogant piece of shit. I was the one reassuring the sixteen year old girl that you embarrassed in front of your entire pack and friends." Cleo, he means Cleo.

My mind spirals at the flashback of her hurt face.

I've just poured explosive fuel onto the fire burning within Knox. He rips his shirt off, preparing to shift. What had they both been eating, both males had grown more muscular in my absence.

"He's marked an alpha born, he's quite the component now." Jaxon teases through the mind-

link.

"Please." I respond back, removing my top off and tossing it aside. If a fight with my wolf is what he wants, then that's what he will get.

Fur on fur.

"He's an alpha born as well, something he failed to mention."

Knox was an alpha born?

I didn't have time to think on Jaxon's words, Knox had stopped circling me, his eyes locked on mine as his chest continues to pant out from his growing rage.

"You need to control that rage within you Knox, you aren't thinking clearly." I seethe out to him, trying to remind him not to start something he cant finish.

"My mind has never felt so clear. How could you turn your back willingly on your pack...for an entire year." I'm surprised when his voice flitters into my mind, he had become a pack member.

"I have my reasons." Not that I would admit it, but they were right.

My reasons for leaving are no longer justifiable after what they have all been through.

I shouldn't have left, I wouldn't have left...not if I had known what would happen in the hours after I disappeared.

I needed to make the first move, I needed to apologise. I had made what had happened a hundred times worse in selfishly disappearing.

"I'm sorry that I left. I do have my reasons. Believe me, I would never have gone if I knew what was to come. I would have died protecting Josie, you know that.

If she doesn't breathe, then neither do I.

I am sorry my friend. I will make it up to her and to you." My words are sincere, truthfully meant. This was the foundation I needed to lay, brick by brick I'll rebuild their trust.

"I don't care about me, but you make it up to her...or we will be having words again." Knox's eyes continue to hold anger, but his body starts to ease...his muscles relaxing.

"I understand."

Alpha born or not, I could quite easily pin Knox's wolf to the ground within seconds. But he was hurting...I hadn't been here.

Shame washes over me again as I think back on the past year...I had been sunbathing and knocking back the beers, enjoying my life as a hotel entrepreneur.

While my family and pack have been living through hell.

Why didn't Cleo tell me two months ago, why didn't she warn me of the shit they had been through.

"I'm here, with my luna, to take on the Clear Waters pack. I won't dissappear on you all again...you have my word."

I place my hand out to Knox, preparing to put the ground work in to earn his forgiveness.

Not only had I missed a key milestone in their relationship...but I had not been here to protect my

own sister.

Who went to the hospital after chasing after me. Fuck, yes, I understand why Knox had so much anger targeted towards me.

Being back with Callie, I will make amends to my family. I will earn their trust again.

Chapter 469

- Cleo -

"I don't think I can do this." I felt nauseous with the nerves that were crippling my body.

Telling Dad was one thing...I didn't actually tell him, Doctor Sophia informed him as the Alpha.

But to say the words out loud to Mum....I don't think I can muster the courage.

"I'll be right next to you. " Dad tries to reassure me, a soft smile forming onto his face.

He hasn't left my side once since the hospital, even when I walked home rather than join him in his car. I wanted to use the walk as thinking time, to let the news sink in.

His car remains at the hospital, he walked silently next to me the entire way.

Maybe he was right.

Maybe this won't be as bad as I am thinking it will be. Mum's always been super supportive of both Ares and myself.

Why would now be any different.

My wolf, albeit, sleepy can't help but give a moan of realisation...a warning that I choose to ignore.

The alpha office door was closed, a signal that Mum was busy and not to be disturbed.

If it were just Dad he would walk in, but he's honouring his promise to me...let's do this right the first time.

"I thought I heard you both outside....always thick as thieves." Mum's excited voice greets us as she opens the office door, both Dad and I stepping in.

"Where's Ares?" Mum asks as she moves back towards her Luna desk, picking up a pile of documents to read.

"Must be at training." Dad responds as my eyes turn to the clock. It was only 8.50am. Yes Ares won't be home for another thirty minutes.

"Okay...I have news." Mum claps her hands together her smile usually contagious, although it fails to catch on to us.

"So do we..." Dad responds seriously, her smile dropping.

"Oh?"

"Cleo?" Dad's hand gently places itself upon my lower back, as he pushes me forwards, towards Mum's desk.

Mum's innocent eyes look up at me, she was excited about something and I was about to rain on her parade.

"I...erm..." I'm quiet, not loud enough.

"I've just got off the phone with Kaia..." Classic Mum as she moves the topic along, knowing what I was about to say would be difficult to hear. Therefore, if she can fill the gap, it might make me think twice before sharing.

"Rosa, baby...this is important." Dad remains next to me as he tries to focus Mum.

Mum's eyes look back up at me, intrigue alight within them as they burn into mine. She finally places the documents down, her body leaning forward as she gives me her undivided attention.

This was it, I had the floor. This was the moment that would change everything for us. Our family was about to change forever, no matter what I decided.

Words become jumbled in my brain as she stares at me expectantly. My mouth opens, waiting for the words to form...but nothing comes out. "Cleo...what is it sweetie?" She stands, her body moving towards me but I take a step back, putting my hand out to stop her. "I'm...pregnant." As soon as the words leave my lips, my body becomes rigid, not knowing what response to expect.

Mum had the tendency to flip out every so often, almost as if her emotions got too much for her...and she went into spiral mode. Her wolf taking over and her human side letting her, not fighting back.

Relinquishing full control.

Something I had witnessed more than enough times to serve one lifetime. Times I have had to protect Ares from seeing her like that. Time's I have had to coax her out of the locked bathroom while Dad was off pack lands.

Coming downstairs in the morning to find her in wolf form in the kitchen....picking Ares up and removing him just in case.

Mum would never harm us, but sometimes it was better to give her space to work out what demons she seems to have.

She was always fine around Dad. It's as if she can't breathe without him, something...I wanted differently for myself. Something I am very mindful of.

"Pregnant, you found your mate?"

"Not...entirely." I murmur out.

"Excuse me?"

"Mum..."

"I'm confused. You're pregnant but not with your mate....did somebody do this to you?"

"What do you mean?"

Chapter 470

"I mean, did somebody force you..."

"What, no Mum, of course not. Why would you say such a thing?" Why would she ever think that, what a thing to say.

"Well whose is it...somebody within this pack?"

"No..." I close my eyes. Here we go.

"Okay, so another pack...which one?"

"Mum...can we not do this yet."

"Which one?" Her Luna aura ploughs into me, her command clear...she wouldn't let this be until she knew.

I can't have her know the truth, so I have no choice but to maintain the lie...for now.

"He wasn't of our kind."

"Human?" She gasps out, taking a step back from me. As if I had wounded her with my words.
"Yes."

"How could you be so stupid." Her wolf is forward, her face twisting between rage and confusion.

"Rosa." Dad is by her side in a flash, his hand trying to calm her with his touch. Their mate bond always soothing her. "Don't Rosa me Orpheus. I told you we were being too lenient on her. That she shouldn't be allowed off pack grounds." "Off pack grounds, what am I six?" I scoff out, insulted by her words.

"No, you just started your life...only to ruin it at the first hurdle."

"Ruin it?" A bang of protectiveness hits me in my gut, in my womb...where my baby is growing. How could she say such a thing.

"A human Cleo, a human baby...what do you think that means to us, to the pack. You are alpha blood Cleo...you are meant to be with an alpha or a beta at least."

"I never thought I was meant to be with anyone...I didn't think you ever expected that of me." Her words have stunned me.

"We don't!" Dad's aura blasts out of him, stilling Mum instantly as they enter a private mind-link.

I take a step towards the office door, preparing to go back to the hospital.

All of Dad's earlier words of support, of how he and Mum would help me meant nothing if Mum wasn't on board.

"Where are you going?" Dad sighs out just as my hand reaches the handle.

"Back to the hospital."

"No, I meant what I said Cleo. You will carry this child full term."

"A human baby Orpheus, human." I reluctantly turn to find Mum looking up at Dad, his hands cupping her face.

"It's a baby Rosa, your grandchild..."

"My grandchild."

"Exactly." Dad's hands stroke across Mum's face, her anger now dying out.

I don't know how he did it...whether it was the mate bond between them but one touch from Dad, one word...and Mum always came back to us.

"Cleo, I'm sorry...I'm just in shock. If you are sure that nobody has hurt you.." Her shoulders relax and her eyes start to fill with tears.

"No Mum, of course not."

"Then we will support you, whatever you decide."

"Really?"

"Yes, really..." Mum moves towards me, her hands stretched out for me to take.

I am hesitant at first but when I notice her wolf has stepped back from her eyes, I let her pull me into an embrace.

She holds me, her hand moving to the back of my head as she rocks me side to side, and I melt into her hug.

"It won't be easy, but together we will get through this together."

"Thanks Mum."

"Now, how are you feeling...sickness? I had awful sickness with you, but not with Ares." I take a breath in as the palm of her hand lands upon my lower tummy. There's no bump yet, but give it time.

"Erm, not much...I mean I only found out yesterday."

"Yesterday? How far gone are you?"

"Around two months."

"We should tell people..."

"No, not yet Mum. Not until I've had the first scan at least...it's all still a bit too new. I'm still trying to let it sink in."

"Okay, well. We won't be the only ones with news. I was just on the phone to Kaia... Guess what?"

"What?" I let my body relax as Mum moves back towards her desk. She was going to be okay with this, I think she handled it quite well. "Jace is back."

"Jace is back..." I repeat, thinking I didn't hear her correctly.

"That's not all. He's found his mate...he's returned with his luna."