

## Denied 481

### Chapter 481

I'm angry at his words, a fire forming in the pit of my stomach at his threat.

I know he will tell him, it's only a matter of time. I need to make my own threat, to bide me some time.

"If you tell him, I will leave. You will never see me again, nobody will. He has a mate, I won't destroy them, I won't destroy our families with one mistake." My wolf comes forward slightly, with the energy she can muster...making sure he knows I mean every word of this. That I will follow it through if he betrays my trust.

"His child is the heir to the Clear Waters pack." No, my child stays with me. Already, before it was even born, a title was already being discussed. This child is a Red Thorn pack member, not Clear Waters...not Dark Phantom.

"Jaxon, read my lips. If you tell him, I will leave...I will go so far away that no body will ever see me or my child again." I make my words clear and calm, I mean every single word.

"I know he has hurt you, he's hurt us all." He cups my face again, his thumbs wiping away the tears that trickle down my face.

A desperate plea within his voice for me to change my mind. For me to tell Jace the truth.

But he'll run again, and I can't spend my life waiting. He has a mate now, he will pick her...he should pick her. I can't live a half life hoping he will pick me one day. The mate bond is strong, undeniable.

I need to protect what is mine. I need to protect this child...I will not have it raised in conflict. I will not let my child be seen as a mistake by Jace's mate.

I make this decision for my child.

I raise my hands, placing them on top of his before removing his from my face completely, adopting a steely expression.

"My child is human Jaxon, I'm sorry

if that

I surprises you. I know it's not

onal but my child is human. I you should leave.

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I'd appreciate if you could keep my news to yourself until we are ready to announce it as a family.

I know it is only a matter of time that the news comes out. I have a lot to think about, a lot to consider."

"You can't keep an alpha baby under wraps forever. When the baby is born, the truth will come

out. You must know this." He nods before a scoff escapes him.

"I will do what is right for me and my child, whether that is adoption..." My chin is held high.  
"Adoption?"

"My child is human Jaxon, a human may struggle in a pack environment."

His spine elongates, his alpha height towering over me as he peers down at me with a tensed jaw.

"Say that enough times and it will stick. I won't let a nephew or niece of mine be raised by strangers."

"My child is human Jaxon, you have no jurisdiction here. This is an Arancea family matter. I think you should go."

With one last look at me, his eyes

drop down to my lower tummy.

before he finally admits denet

leaves my bedroom door. belongs to

He closes the door behind him, glancing back one last time at me. As soon as tam alone, I slowly drop down onto the floor....my hands moving to my stomach protectively. I don't think I can give this baby away...which means I know what I must do.

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- Jace-

"Callie, I managed to get hold of your parents. I thnk they thought it was a scam at first. I've invited them over..." Mum walks into the sitting room where she places her mobile phone down on the coffee table, a hesitant smile forming upon her face. Callie's parents had finally called back, Mum taking the call upstairs...the office currently in use.

"You have?" Callie tenses, my hand landing upon her thigh to calm her. This wasn't easy for Callie, I know it wasn't.

"I hope that is okay? I don't think they believed me." Mum shrugs out just as the front door is opened.

"There you are..." Dad storms out of the office, walking through the hallway towards the

front door. He doesn't even cast an eye over to Mum, Josie, Callie and myself in the sitting room.

Determined to pin Jaxon on the spot.

I'm not the only one to twist my neck to watch Dad angrily head out of his office. Knox slowly exits the

office, before leaning against the door frame...they had been waiting for Jaxon to return for a meeting I wasn't privy too.

It hurts but I can't blame them, I haven't been here for a year.

"I had to cancel on Jude because you disappeared. Where have you been?"

"Something came up." Jaxon grunts, I could feel his fury through the sibling bond. One wrong word, one wrong move from any of us and he will explode.

He is a ticking time bomb when in this mood.

"It must have been important for you to cancel the meeting?" Dad demands to know.

"I've had to postpone Jace's return meeting." Dad continues as Jaxon shows no remorse for skipping out.

"I didn't realise Jace was staying long enough to officially be classed as returned?" His eyes find mine without fail, his jaw tense as he seethes out the words. "Yes I have returned."

"You don't have something you need to return to?" His words continue to sound pained, like he was forcing against his need to shout at me.

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"Jace and I with need to address our affairs at the hotel, but we have a business partner that can run it in our absence." Callie responds chirpy, trying to ignore the tension between my brother and I. Both of our auras now entering into the room.

"Hotel?" Josie presses with intrigue, used to Jaxon's and I's fighting auras.

My wolf pushes forward, now on high alert for an imminent threat. I stand, taking slow steps towards the hallway, not keeping my back on him.

He's been wanting to pounce me the moment I returned, but he let Knox do it. His pent up anger at me was becoming boring now.

I would rather just get this over and done with, then, move on.

"Yes, we own a beach hotel club. On the eastern coast. It's quite well known, we host a lot of celebrities." Callie continues with the conversation, while I just watch my brother like a hawk. "Wait, isn't that where I was meant to go away for Cleo's 18th?"

"You were booked to stay with us?"

"I bailed last minute, but Cleo and Maya went. I can't believe this..... need to text Maya...this is crazy. You didn't see them?" In my peripheral vision I see Josie pulling her phone out of her pocket, panic starting to pound through me as she writes out a text message tapping away speedily with her fingers.

"No, we didn't see them." Callie looks up to me, I am not willing to turn my back on my brother still. I could sense his wolf...so could Dad and Knox Both starting to lean forward, their muscles stretching as they prepare to break us apart.

"Providence.." Jaxon smirks out.

"Excuse me."

"It's almost providence for them to be at your hotel, what a shame it didn't work. That they didn't see Jace." He takes a step forward raising his hands into the air. Everyone pauses, watching him with a guarded expression. Josie's ringing phone breaks the escalating charged energy that had been growing in the room. She answers it moving out of the sitting room and towards the kitchen just as Beta Riley walks in through the front door, a pile of documents held in

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his hand.

"Well, now that you are back I can introduce Callie to pack members whilst Jace attends the meeting with Jude." Mum gestures to Callie to follow her, removing her...knowing, as do I, things needed to be said between Jaxon and I. "He's unavailable now." Dad responds, keeping a watchful eye on his first born.

"Okay well, I'm sure you men can sort something out. Try not to break the furniture." Mum's tongue clicks as she takes Callie by the arm and heads towards the front door.

"I'll catch you later." I give Callie a reassuring nod as she turns to me, slightly concerned.

I move towards the alpha office, where Dad, Knox, Jaxon and I all take seats, Beta Riley also entering and closing the door behind him.

"I have the paperwork you asked for Alpha."

"Thanks Riley. Also I've informed Alora and Ezra of Jace's return. They are going to head over tomorrow, can you send warriors to intercept them and further to add extra protection detail in their absence." Warriors to intercept...since when did pack members need an escort.

"Yes Alpha, Alpha Jude has just sent over this report..." He hands a piece of paper to Dad, who skim reads it before sighing out.

"Shit."

"What?" Jaxon's eyes leave mine for the first time since he entered the house, turning to Dad.

"Deaths reported in the mountain range." They share some kind of look, again detail I wasn't privy to.

"Then we are getting close, keep pushing Dad."

"I can't send men knowingly to their deaths Jaxon."

"Then send me." Jaxon offers out.

"Both of us, we both will go." Knox adds, also offering himself up for some kind of secret mission.

"What and face the wrath of not only your mother Jaxon, but also your mate Kit." Dad scoffs out as he signs a document, handing it back to Riley.

"I'm with Jaxon, I'm bored of this lying-in wait for them. Looking over our shoulders every time we are off pack grounds."

That ugly sensation of guilt washes over me, my life over the past year has been quite the comparison.

"We are in this for the long game remember. One wrong step and all

of our hard work will be Wilbha

of this increased security will have been in vain."

There's a pause before Jaxon sighs out, his hands brushing through his hair.

"What I'm about to say isn't easy. I need to go off pack grounds for while."

"What? How long for?"

""I'm not sure."

"No." Dad is quick to deny Jaxon's request.

"No?"

"You are the future alpha Jaxon, your presence here is vital for security and also reassuring pack members. You cannot leave." "What I need to do will only take a day or two."

"Jaxon!" Dad growls out, making it clear on his answer.

The growing need within me to say something, to start making rights overwhelms me. I need to start playing my part in all of this. The hotel now was a memory, a money maker for a gap year.

I needed to commit to my pack and family once more.

"Jaxon, I know what I did was wrong. I know I left you to handle this threat without me."

"You don't even realise what you have done." Jaxon's voice is low...bitter.

"Then tell me, shout at me. Punch me...let your wolf out on me. Just tell me what I have done. You'll feel better afterwards." I yell at him.

I wasn't innocent growing up. I've

always known Jaxon's wolf was powerful, yet I still egged him on, still

ind him.....tried to get a rise out

of him.

But this bitterness, this silent anger within him was putting me more on edge than actually fighting his beast of a wolf.

It works, he lunges for me...my back being forced into the wall as his arm presses against my throat...locking me in place. "You really want to know?" His eyes turn a demonic black.

"Yes." My own wolf presses forward, my own eyes bleeding out to that of my wolf's.

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- Cleo ~

Josie keeps trying to call me and for the first time since forever, I'm not answering.



I need time to think, time to put a plan in place.

Jaxon knows, my attempts to persuade him that the baby is human may have worked on my parents, but he could sense the child was related to him.

Which means...I haven't got a lot of time. His out-of-the-blue arrival yesterday means I need to speed things up.

I haven't got the luxury of time like I thought I would. I wanted time to adjust, time to let my body get used to be pregnant.

But now I need to act...before I am truly ready.

Time to think how I can stop Jace finding out...that's if Jaxon hasn't already said something.

Hence, why I can't bring myself to answer Josie's call...what if she also knows.

She doesn't, he wouldn't have done that...I made it very clear I would leave.

As my phone starts ringing again, I cast my eye down...surprised to find that it is no longer Josie but Maya calling.

"Maya?" I answer it without hesitation.

"Have you heard the news?" Her excited voice greets me.

"What news?" I ask cautiously.

"Jace is back..back at Dark Phantom."

I'm silent as she waits for my response, only for a sigh to escape her.

"That's not all, the hotel we stayed in for your 18th...that was his hotel. That's where he had been all this time." Her voice is gentler this time. She's thinking she's the one breaking the news, she's trying to ease me into it. Until she realises...there is a reason for my silence.

"Did you know? Shitting hell...you did didn't you...was he the guy?"

""What guy?"

"You know...the waiter. I assumed you stayed away with the waiter, but..."

"Maya." I need to stop her mind from running away with her because she was too close to the truth.

"Was it him?" Her voice is so low, almost like a whisper on the other end of the line.

"Vault?" I groan out, I shouldn't be telling anyone but she's already found out too much.

"Locked in, I swear."

"I mean it Maya. You cannot tell a soul, not even Josie."

She's silent, because her and Josie are best friends. I wouldn't ever want to put her in a position that would ruin her friendship with Josie.

But she already knows too much. I need to see her, I need to press the point of how important it is that she doesn't say anything.

If I don't, she'll mention the bartender to Josie, and when it comes out that I am pregnant...and was at Jace's hotel, it will be too coincidental for Jace not to be involved. Especially to Josie.

She knows how much I have loved him and for how long. She'll know that between him and a human bartender, it would have been Jace. Without a doubt.

"I won't tell a soul." She promises me down the phone line, but I still need to see her. A promise is better made face to face. "Yes, it was Jace."

I close my eyes as I confirm her suspicions.

Jaxon's face, when I told him that I

had known for the past two months of Jace's location, painfully flashes back in my mind. Josie will be even more hurt, she will hate me, that I know for certain.

"He took your V card...not the bartender?" She gasps, not able to hide her shock.

"Yes."

"Cleo, he hasn't come back alone." I can hear the hesitation in her voice, hear that she doesn't want to tell me this but has no choice. She's trying to protect me, to prepare me

"I know, he has his mate...his Luna." Why do I keep doing that, keeping seething those words out. Even my own wol whimpers at the thought of Jace having found his Luna But surety I had prepared for this day, surely I knew this day would come.

"What is it, what's wrong?"

"Can we meet? Off pack grounds?"

"Why off pack grounds?"

"The services, half way point."

"Yes, but why can't I just come to you?"

"I'll explain when I see you."

I'm careful in where I agree to meet Maya. Most of the restaurants and coffee shops in the city near her have direct links to either Hector or Jude.

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I'm also conscious of not being off pack grounds long enough for my absence to be picked up on. The services that were half way between us seemed like the obvious option, however, I can't shake the feeling of being followed. It's me, I'm hormonal and paranoid. Needing my secret to remain a secret. For as long as I can,

before Jaxon presses further.

I arrive first, parking up but keeping a close eye on my rear view mirror.

Paranoid, I was just being paranoid.

By the time I get home it will be evening, the sun starting to set...I didn't want to arrive home too late.

I didn't want to drive in the dark, not when nausea was still coming in waves.

I enter the services, finding a small bakery where I order and pay, taking a seat which gives me full view of people entering and exiting the building.

If I was being followed, then they would have to walk right past me.

Maya isn't related to the alpha family in her pack, so for her to leave won't seem odd.

Besides, Maya's always leaving on her own accord, coming and going as she pleases.

Mainly to the Dark Phantom pack grounds to see Josie...well, when Josie hadn't been away at the alpha training facility with Knox.

I smile as the bakery assistant walks over; my coffee and cake on the tray as she places it down on my table.

I thank her, standing up to return to the counter only to pick up some sugar. I needed sugar, more than what this cake would provide me.

I had driven for two and a bit hours, Maya's pack grounds neighbouring the Dark Phantom which are a four-five hour drive depending on traffic.

I sit back in my chair, knowing Maya would be at least another hour but I could use this time to think.

I close my eyes, taking a steady deep breath in to calm the adrenaline pumping through my body. I had been running off it since finding out I was pregnant, I needed to start reducing my fast heart beat otherwise it may harm the baby. "Excuse me?" I open my eyes to find a middle aged male with short red hair watching me, his eyes squinting slightly. He was standing opposite me, his hand on the tip of what will be Maya's chair when she arrives.

"Yes?" I look behind him to check he was alone. He was clearly a werewolf, his presence was unmistakable amongst the humans. I'm surprised I didn't sense his approach, even with my eyes closed.

"I feel like we have met before?"

"No, I don't think so." I don't recognise him but there is something familiar about him, something I can't quite put my finger on.

"Cleo? Cleo Arancea?"

"Yes."

"I thought so, you look like your Dad."

"I do?"

"Just missing the tattoos. May I?" He starts pulling the chair out, preparing to take Maya's saved seat.

"Erm, I'm waiting for someone."

"I won't keep you long, I'm only passing by anyway. I just had to come and say hello." He doesn't seem a threat, why would he be.

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"So how do you know my Dad?" I ask, tearing open the sugar packet and pouring it into my coffee before giving it a good stir. I look up when he hasn't answered, his eyes having watched my every movement.

"We are sort of related."

"Related?" This was shocking to hear.

"Yes, second or third cousins...something like that." He waves his hands as if the exact relationship didn't matter.

He leans in closer, his eyes darting to the bakery assistant to make sure she wasn't listening.

"My name is Than Sable, I am the Alpha of the Amber Desert pack. My Mum was related to your grandfather."

The Amber Desert pack. I've heard of it, but I never knew we had relatives there.

"I didn't know." Dad never really spoke of

his parents, my only living grandparents being Mum's still at Dark Phantom pack.

"Yes, well...unfortunately we had a bit of a falling out. We aren't really on speaking terms."

"Oh."

"Things better left for the past." He smiles out at me, a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes.

I look over his shoulder at a movement...Maya waving as she rushes over to me. She was early...she must have sped. "Here's my friend."

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"I'll leave you to it." He stands up, pulling the chair out and tucking it back in under the table only for Maya to walk over, eyeing him with suspicion. "Take care." He offers out, a nod as he departs.

"You too." I call out after him as he walks away, Maya pulling the chair out and sitting down.

"Who was that?" She turns, as I watch him leave the services back towards the car park.

"Just someone that used to know my Dad. It doesn't matter." I shake my head out, trying to refocus on why I was here.

"So, what was so important that you couldn't tell me over the phone."

"Let me get you a drink." I stand, suddenly feeling nervous about telling her.

"Cleo...stop stalling. I've just driven hours to meet you here when you could have just video called me."

"No, I didn't know who might be listening. It isn't safe to discuss this on pack grounds."

Her eyes widen at my words, her hands reaching out to hold mine.

"Cleo...you're actually starting to freak me out. What's going on?"

"Vault?"

"Yes, I promised you this would remain within the vault."

"No matter what?" I try to portray in my voice just how important this is.

"No matter what. Just tell me."

I'm pregnant."

""You found your mate?"

I sigh out, this seemed to be the standard reaction to my news. I shake my head, closing my eyes, waiting for her to figure it out.

"You mean..." She snatches her hands away, placing both hands to her mouth to cover her shocked gasp.

"Yes."

"Jace is the father?" She removes her hands, leaning forward and whispering. I don't know why, nobody was here to listen. "Yes."

"What are you going to do?"

"I've told my parents the baby is human."

"You know that won't work. As soon as the baby is born they will know that is a lie. Especially giving birth to an alpha's child." My back stiffens a protective sensation tugging in my lower tummy as she clicks her tongue at me. I know this but hearing it from her of all people makes me worry about the birth. She was only thinking of me, I know she was.

"I know that Maya, but it will give me time to sort something out."

"Sort what out?"

"I'm not sure yet, but Jaxon..."

"Jaxon?" She snaps back, as if this was too much all of a sudden just because his name was mentioned.



"He came by, he knows I am pregnant but I think I persuaded him that the child is a human."

"Even I'm not dumb enough to believe that, come on. This is Jaxon...he's probably already told Jace." "No, I told him I would leave if I did."

"Why can't you tell Jace? It's the 21st century, not the 16th."

"Because he has found his mate."

"She won't be that naive to think he hasn't had sex before meeting her."

"There's sex Maya, and there's the product of sex. Quite different when it's screaming at you for a diaper change."

"You need to tell him."

"No, not yet. Jaxon was already talking about the baby being the heir to the Clear Waters pack. I

can't let them take my baby." My hands wrap around my stomach.

My mind hasn't stopped spinning since taking the pregnancy test but one thing was for certain now, one thing that my mind was clear

enough to not change its mind on.... was keeping my baby.

I couldn't bear to give my baby away, I couldn't bear for my baby to be taken from me.

This was my baby and if I needed to raise it alone, off pack grounds then I will go.

"I won't let this cast a dark cloud on the pack or Ares' alpha legacy. I won't let them take my child only then push it aside when they have their own child. The mate bond takes preference with children, you know this. Which is why I need you to

get your story straight." I say with fierce determination, my back straight and my face serious.  
"Okay, I can do that."

"The bartender...the human one." I remind her of the story, of who we are saying the father is. "Yes, I remember."

"He was the one I went back with, he is the father."

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- Cleo

I had straightened out the story with Maya. She understands what is at stake, and she promises to keep to the story of the bartender being the father.

I may be growing tired from the drive but it was worth it, I was feeling more in control.

Jaxon's visit having left me slightly shaky and fearful of what he would say to Jace, but now it was his word against mine and Maya's.

That surely had to count for something. I was giving Jace an instant out; he had a mate to think of now, someone to adore and protect. Why, when a pregnant female claims he is not the father, would he admit that he is.

I have to get home, talking to Maya took longer than I had expected and now the afternoon was turning into early evening.

If I don't hurry then I just know my return will invite questions of where I have been.

I was taking longer to return home, that adrenaline starting to ease off and the realisation was dawning on me...I was carrying a child. A child that needed protecting.

Even as I drive, I move over to the slow lane of the highway, instinct kicking in to take my time, to be

careful.

A feeling I have never experienced in my life. I was a werewolf, I didn't need to take things slow, I didn't need to be extra careful.

But with my wolf's energy being drained, I had to be more vigilant of my surroundings and actions.

I am about thirty minutes from home when that nauseous sensation, which has been threatening me all day, finally hits me like a brick wall.

I move into the breakdown lane of the highway, the need to be sick overwhelming me.

I have been able to quash it back down for most part of the day, but this was too much. I knew I needed to empty my stomach.

As soon as I stop the car, I lunge out of the vehicle, moving to the bushes where I can't hold it in any more.

I catch my breath, my body bent over and my hands on my knees as tears rain down my face. Werewolves are hardly ever ill, I don't think I've actually ever been sick in my life. Something I hope was not a daily reoccurrence.

A car pulls up behind mine, but I pay it no mind at first, this was a busy part of the highway, until my name is called.

"Cleo?" I turn, my eyes blurry from the excessive tears, all I can see is a distant shape. I blink them away to find a male walking towards me.

"I thought that was you. Is everything okay?" He calls out stopping at the rear of my car, a frown on his face.

It takes me a while to recognise him, it was the man from the services.

"What are you doing here?" I croak out, my throat sore from having just been sick.

"The next exit is mine. Do you need help?"

""No, I erm..." Shit I couldn't remember his name.

"Than, my name is Than."

"Right sorry Alpha..." Thinking back on the services I hadn't even addressed him as Alpha. The height of disrespect within the shifter community. "Not at all. Do you need assistance. Can I call someone for you?"

"No, I think it was just something I ate...maybe too much sugar." I try to regather myself, my hand reaching back for the car side. Why was I feeling dizzy suddenly.

"You did put a lot of sugar in your coffee." hear him chuckle out but my eyes become blurry again, I try to squint them to help the sensation pass. I didn't like this, not when I still had to drive home.

"Right...yes...that must be it."

He takes a step closer, pulling something out of his inner jacket pocket before handing it out to me.

A handkerchief.

"Take it, I don't need it." He offers.

"Thanks, I can get this back to you." I place the smooth cloth in my hands, the initials TS embroidered in gold stitching.

"Please don't." He chuckles out as I place it to my lips. It felt good, the softness of the cloth was slightly cool as I tab it against my forehead and on the back of my neck. Why was I feeling so hot, I could feel myself burning up.

"Are you sure you are quite well? My pack is on the next exit...I can get you some medical assistance?"

"No, thank you. I'm only a little bit further until I get home."

"I know, remember....I know the Red Thorn pack." There's humour in his voice, his lips forming into a side smirk. He's by the back passenger door now, his hand stroking the roof

of my car.

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"Yes of course." I shake my head out, I knew that. My mind was like a running tap at the moment, not soaking up anything.

"I feel a bit uncomfortable leaving you alone."

"It's the alpha in you. I'm fine..honestly. I'm feeling better already." Which wasn't a lie, whatever was happening to my stomach seemed to have settled back down.

How can I have morning sickness

when it isn't even the morning.

Whether it was the coffee or just the

symptoms of being pregnant...but

now that my stomach was empty, I was starting to feel hungry again.

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"Look, here's my card..." He places his hand back out towards me, a small business-shaped-card in his hands.

I must seem very bizarre to him, not quite with it. Even now, my hands are running through my long blonde hair...trying to make sense of everything.

To say I was in a state of inner turmoil was an understatement.

"Can you at least text me when you get home?" He moves to open the passenger front door, seemingly not wanting me to enter the car on the driver's side. Where vehicles continue to plummet past at incredible speed. "That's not necessary."

"No, but I will continue to worry unless you do. Then I will have to call the alpha office."

I go into panic mode. He can't call the alpha office, he'll let my parents know I was at the services and meeting a girl friend, which will only invite more questions. Undo my attempts of today. "No don't do that...I don't want to worry my parents."

"It's just a little text, that's all." He shrugs out, his hands resting on the top of the car door, his chin resting upon them.

Why was he so concerned, I had only just met him. But I couldn't run the risk of him calling the Alpha office, of my parent's finding out.

"I'll text you when I'm back." I sigh out, taking a step into the car, moving over to the driver side.

"Thank you. Look after yourself Cleo." He nods, closing the passenger side door, tapping the back of my car with his hands.

He moves back to his car but he doesn't drive off until I am first to go. He seems genuinely concerned about me. I suppose it's not every day a shewolf is vomiting on the side of the road. As soon as I drive through the Red Thorn gates, I can feel a number of people pressing on the mind-link.

One of them being Doctor Sophia.

"Sophia?" I grant her access first.

"There you are, I've been trying you all day."

"What's up?" I was still pissed at her for going straight to Dad about my pregnancy and request for an abortion. But I understand why she had to do it.

"I need you to come in for an overall check and scan. You left my office, I thought you would have come back."

"I didn't realise I needed to." I bite back the scoff that wanted to escape me.

"You are pregnant Cleo, yes...I need to give you the once over."

"Tomorrow? First thing again?" Ideally before her other appointments.

"See you tomorrow." Sophia confirms before she cuts the link.

I pull the car up outside of the alpha house, glad to be home. All I wanted was to fill my stomach up with something carb based, take a bath and go to bed.

I pick the business card up in my hand, my fingers running across the card edge. He was right, it was just a text and it stopped him from calling the alpha office to check up on me. Something I think he would do.

..Thanks, am home now.

I write the text out, checking it

before finally hitting send. Instantly I

can see

that he has accepted my contact number and was already

typing out a reply.

...Thanks for letting me know. Stay safe. T

As soon as I step out of the car a new sensation of being watched washes over me.

It has to be a symptom of being pregnant My wolf on overdrive knowing she can't shift at the first sign of danger, so she was sending off signals to put me on edge.

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If this continues I will spend all of my pregnancy in an anxious state.

"Calm

are seen, we are home now. We are fine. send calming off

the doctor tomorrow,

my wolf, trying to regain control over my body.

It was evening now, the lights of the alpha house informing me that Mum, Dad and Ares were all inside.

All but me.

I was about to walk into a firing line of questions. Perhaps I can save that for the morning.

I move to the side of the house, my eyes shooting up to my bedroom window. I could climb it...if I was super careful.

I've done it plenty of times as a girl, I've just never needed to do it for a few years that's all.



No, I know I can't risk it, I'll have to walk through the back door and pray I go undetected.

That feeling of being watched returns to me again....my body spinning as I hear a noise in the distance.

My eyes scan the darkness before me, it was dusk but without my enhanced vision, it might as well be midnight.

I can't feel of any threat through the pack-link, it must have just been an animal climbing a tree.

I turn, contemplating my discreet return back into my family home when a hand grabs my arm from behind and spins me around.

I am dizzy from the movement that I don't even realise who it is at first.

A figure dressed in black...everything covered, even the face.

I gasp, hands moving to my mouth to prevent me from screaming as I reach to the face to remove the black balaclava; covering all but the eyes

and lips.

"Cleo, it's me."

"Jace?"

Chapter 489

- Cleo -

The pregnancy is playing havoc with my senses because not only did I not pick up on him being close by, but I can't even smell him.

"Jace? What...what are you doing here. And what are you wearing?" My hand moves to my chest where I can feel my heart pounding. "Shh...I didn't want to be recognised." Something wasn't right,

he was searching the area around us to make sure we were alone. Why can't he be recognised, and why was he even here.

"Why? What's going on?"

""Is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"Jaxon...he told me." My blood runs cold as it becomes clear why he is here. Any excitement I may have felt quickly dying.

I take him in, his entire body was covered in black. Except for his eyes and lips.

Why he is dressed like he is doing a reconnaissance mission.

"Told you what exactly?"

"Cleo...I can smell the baby...I can smell it is mine." His hands grip at my shoulders, his tall height lowering down to look me directly in the eyes.

The blood that was running cold had just frozen over, my entire body feeling like ice.

"You have it wrong."

"Cleo." His hands grip me tighter, but it felt wrong... it felt wrong for him to touch me, even just a little, right now.

He was an alpha, he was a predator. He wouldn't hurt me I know that, but I was lying to him...maybe he could pick up on that, I don't know, all I know is I need to keep me and my bump safe. "Get off me." I push back, trying to bridge some kind of gap between us.

He was too close, the air I was breathing was his. Already used air...it was making me dizzy...I needed space.

He backs away, his hands raising into a surrender sign, his alpha built frame finally giving me a room to breathe.

"Tell me it isn't mine." His eyes hold mine, an intensity within them...he was too serious for my Jace. I was hurting him, but how much has he hurt me.

"It isn't yours. It's..."

"Human? You know I won't fool for that bullshit. Jaxon told me everything." His voice is low, animalistic...like a predator.

"No... he couldn't have done." I shake my head out, refusing to believe it.

No...surely he wouldn't....of course he has. The fact that Jace is here is proof.

I was spiralling I didn't have the time I thought I would have.

Jaxon had told him. Why did I ever think he wouldn't. This was his brother my child his own flesh and blood of course he would have told him. The Varon's look after O

themselves first.

My hands cover my face, I can't look at him. I didn't tell him...someone else did.

Shame washes over me, I had so many mixed emotions at the moment... the pregnancy hormones making everything even more confusing.

Maybe a small part of me had hoped for the happy ending, the walking off into the sunset together, hand in hand with my baby bump.

That dream really has been slashed, really has gone. Now that another has told him, I am the female that has lied to him, that even tried to abort our own child.

I wasn't a bad person, but I felt like a monster. I bite down on my bottom lip, trying to control the sobs that are so desperate to escape.

"Hey...look at me...it's okay. I'm not angry...this is great news." His words surprise me, give me hope.

"It is?"

"Of course it is."

"But what about your mate?"

"Callie? I haven't told her." I watch him carefully, trying to decipher how he really feels about her. But with the balaclava still on, I can't pick up any of his expressions.

"Then this isn't real until you have told her Jace."

"I just need time to tell her, it's you I want to be with. I just need to tell her."

"She's your fated mate Jace, you've said so yourself right?"

"Yes but..."

"You can't deny the mate bond, and I can't fight it." This is painful but amidst the soul destroying truth, I have a new strength. I know I will keep going because I have to. I have to keep going for the baby

"It's you I love, I've always loved you. Please Cleo...don't give up on me. Just give me some time." He pleads, a desperate tone laced within his voice. "I've waited for you all of my life Jace. But you are not mine, and I need to protect our child."

Chapter 490

"Protect from what?"

"From you...from your family."

"I wouldn't hurt the baby." The colours runs off his face as if I had just slapped him.

"No, I know that. But the baby will be the heir to the Clear Waters until you have a real baby with your mate.."

"A real baby.." He chuckles out finding my paranoia laughable. Well he is the only one.

I take a further step back from him, anger radiating through me. Always pushed aside by him, always

ignored for no fault of my own.

"Don't laugh at me." I seethe out, hot molten anger racing through me.

"I'm sorry, I'm not laughing at you. You must know how much I love you Cleo, how much I want to be with you. Since the hotel..." Again he tries to close that gap between us. My back almost touching the brick house wall.

"Since the hotel you've had plenty of time to tell me that you have another. You let me find her almost naked in your bedroom..." My finger jabs into his chest, pure anger in my voice.

"You've had time to tell me you were pregnant." He jabs me back, in the upper corner of my chest...just before my shoulder.

He's strong, it actually hurts more than I am letting on. He doesn't know I feel everything at the moment, that my wolf is withdrawn.

Jaxon must have failed to tell him about my burn with the pizza as he spilled my most inner secrets.

"I only found out that day, I came straight to tell you Jace. I would have come to the hotel if you hadn't text back to say you were home.

Two months I've reached out, you had plenty of times to tell me.

Do you realise what that night meant to me, how I had waited...then you left me alone. Left me to wake up alone in your penthouse, made me feel like a one night stand.

Is that what I am to you Jace, a hotel girl. Some female you picked up at the bar, a dirty little secret?" I was finally letting out two month's of anger, two month's of frustration...and hurt.

"No, of course not....." Perhaps it is finally dawning on him that he shouldn't have treated me like that. How he shouldn't have tasted me and then ran out, bringing home another girl. He was almost speechless, his words struggling to come out. "I was naïve, I can see that now." My spine straightens, my chin rising as I realise how he played me.

Not any more.

"I want you.."

"You can't have me, not when you have another. I won't be a mistress, a dirty secret. I should have gotten into that lift, I should have gone downstairs to the human."

"Listen to me....I love you." He grips my shoulders painfully, shaking me slightly to make me listen.

"No."

"Yes I do, I've just tried to fight against it. I want to be with you, don't do anything you will regret. just need time. Please Cleo." I

whimper with the plea in his tone, he was only asking for some time.

Time that I also needed myself but there was something about him, something that didn't seem right.

I know he was in shock, I was still in shock myself...I can give him time, surely can give him some time. He needed to do right by his mate, he needed to tell her... to reject her.

Jace wasn't a villain, he was caring, warm and protective...of everyone. He needed to make sure she was safe, that she was taken care of.

I can give him time, for the sake of our baby, I can give him time.

"I can give you time, If you are sure

this is what you really want?" I shouldn't let it in, I know I shouldn't That small ball of excitement, of hope that I keep quashing back down...it starts to grow again

I struggle to fight against it as he keeps saying the right words.

"Yes Cleo, this is what I want. This is all I have ever wanted, I just need time. I need time to tell Callie and to put measures in place for her." He sighs out with relief. "Of course, I understand."

"Then you will wait for me, you won't act on this without me..do you promise Cleo? I need to hear you promise me that."

"Yes, I promise you Jace."

"Good now go around the back, you can't climb the walls...not pregnant Cleo."

"When will I see you next?"

"Give me a few days, I'll come back. Don't tell anyone I was here...not until we have decided what to do...together."