

## Denied 501

### Chapter 501

"You will command them to come here."

"I'll do jackshit until you explain your reasons?"

"They are hiding things from us, something that has a direct impact on our security"

"Jaxon you can't go around making such claims without proof." I pipe up, feeling protective of the Arancea's.

"Oh, I have proof." His eyes dart to mine, a heated glare sent my way.

"No Jaxon, they are their own pack we have no right to interfere with what happens within their pack unless it directly impacts us or they call for help." Dad's aura oozes out of him, moving to match Jaxon's. But this isn't Jaxon's full aura, he continues to keep it truly hidden. "Oh, this impacts us." A rumble vibrates off him.

"What is it?" Mum asks out. Incredulously not even battering an eye lid at Jaxon's behaviour.

But now I know, Mum could have him collapsing on the floor within seconds.

"I can't say." Jaxon seethes out, surprisingly not sharing his proof.

"Then you have no evidence." Dad places a supportive hand upon Jaxon's shoulder, using it as an opportunity to calm him.

"They need to come here, on a matter of urgency." Jaxon continues, not backing down.

"Hector, no.." Mum clicks her tongue.

"Dad...this is important, please trust me."

A moment is shared between the two of them, between Jaxon and Dad. Something I don't think I have ever seen before. They aren't in a private mind-link, this was something else. Like a silent conversation between the alpha and the next.

"We haven't seen them for a while, it would be nice to see them." Dad's tone does a complete u-turn, a smile landing on his face.

"Hector..." Mum growls out, not making her anger unknown.

"They haven't seen Jace since he returned, like you said...they cancelled which for them is most peculiar. If Jaxon is right and they are in trouble, it's on us to help them. Callie's parents are coming anyhow, what's a few more seats at the dinner table...." Dad's voice slowly trails off as Mum starts to walk towards him.

He places his hand out, snaking it around her waist and pulls her into him. A giggle escapes Mum as he sucks on her mate mark.

"Let's call them together." He leads Mum out of the kitchen, towards the office, so they can call the Red Thorn pack together. Leaving just Jaxon and I alone in the kitchen.

"What is going on?" I move further into the kitchen, heading towards the fridge.

"Cleo?" His voice snarls.

"What about Cleo?" I spin on the spot to face him.

"I need you to admit it to yourself that you are in love with her."

"Excuse me?" I cough out.

"Before it is too late."

"What are you talking about?" I out in

baake irritation as I turn

him and open the fres

door.

"If you take Callie as your luna, as your mate." He seethes out, forcing me to slam the fridge door shut.

"She is my mate Jaxon."

"Stop with the lies Jace, stop it before you do something you will regret."

"What will I regret?" His cryptic words are giving me whiplash.

"I know you, you forget I know you. I'm sure you think you are in love with the female upstairs..."

"My own mate? Of course I am in love with my own mate."

He closes the distance between us, each footstep heavy...sincere.

"So you feel nothing for her?"

"For who?" I growl out in frustration.

"For Cleo...tell me, tell me you don't love her."

My body stills, my wolf trying to call

out to

exon, trying do The?

me. push him back down

force. .

"I don't love her." I growl out, continuing to fight my wolf internally.

"That she means nothing to you." Another step further until he is standing right in front of me, his arm crossed in front of his chest.

"She means nothing to me." I say with a tensed jaw, my eyes refusing to blink as I stare at him.

He unwraps his arms, his finger pressing firmly against my chest.

"I'll remember those words Jace. I'll remember them well, when I come for your soul."

Chapter 502

- Cleo -

I'm pounced on as soon as I exit my car. Mum gently guiding me out of the vehicle where she then covers my eyes to stop me from seeing anything. "Mum..." I chuckle out at her behaviour.

"What's going on?"

"We have a surprise for you...no peeking okay?"

"Okay."

She guides me into the alpha house, straight to the stairs where I reach out for the banister, just as a precaution.

I've walked up these stairs every day from the moment I was old enough to walk, I know each step, each angle she is taking.

She's taking me directly to my room.

"Mum what's going on?" A hesitant laugh escapes me, as I feel out in front of me.

"You seem to be struggling and I wanted to show you something, show you that no matter what you think, it's never as bad as you think it is.

You can do this Josie, we can do this." Her words have complete faith in me, complete confidence in me.

We stop, my hands feeling at my bedroom door where she removes her hands from my eyes.

"You can do this." She reiterates passionately as she pushes my bedroom door open.

I cross the threshold of my room, scanning it well to find that my bed has been pushed closer to the window, creating a gap wide enough for a small baby crib.

I take a step forward, my hand moving to my mouth as a small gasp escapes me.

It is beautiful, it is white with a rocking stand...a small beige teddy sitting upright at the head of the basket. On closer inspection I can see working embroidered into the white fabric covering the edges. "It's beautiful." My hands trail across the stitching where I read the words; My Everything.

"It was yours. You were the perfect baby, never woke me up at night, always slept through. Unlike your brother, the little monster."

"Mum.." I can't help the small tear that trickles down my cheek, my everything.

"And look, outside your window...you see the gap of land there.." She points out to the small patch of grass land that has always been up for discussion on what to do with it.

"Dad will build you your own home

for when you feel ready to move out.

But not until you are ready. We will raise this child together Cleo we will

help you...you aren't ent

"I know I'm not alone Mum."

"Do you? Because I could see the panic in your eyes in the hospital, just because the father isn't around doesn't mean you are doing this quean you are

will

alone. We are here for you, we help you." Her hands rise to cup at my face, her thumbs stroking away the tears that continue to fall.

I'm touched by what she has done, what she is saying.

"I've been overbearing, I know I have. I have my reasons. All I wanted to do was to keep you safe..."

"Even from pack members, the same age as me?" I playfully quirk an eyebrow at her.

She pauses for a moment and I'm worried I've ruined the moment between us, ruined the bonding.

"When you hold your baby in your arms for the first time, you'll understand why I wanted to keep you safe. The pack will stand by you Cleo, as will Ares when he is alpha." "I don't know what to say." I'm lost for words.

"You don't have to say anything." Dad's warm voice comes from my bedroom door, his gigantic tattooed body dominating the entire door frame.

His eyes roam my room until they land on the fist sized hole in my wall. They linger on it for a moment before he pushes off the doorframe and enters into my room.

"But.." I feel as if before his eyes

noticed the hole he was going to continue talking. The damage Jaxon has left is something I need to sort out before too many questions are asked.

"You know Hector's a half human.."

"What?" I'm taken aback by this sudden declaration. I have known Hector all my life, why am I only just hearing of this now.

Chapter 503

"If that is what is worrying you, then don't let it." "I didn't know that."

"It's not common knowledge, he doesn't like to talk about it. Not because he is ashamed of it, he just doesn't think it stops him being any less of the strong alpha that he is. And he's right, it doesn't."

Dad was right, this doesn't change how I see Hector, how powerful he is. How the shifter community would see him if they knew.

I don't miss the way Dad's eyes move back to the hole in the wall, before they return to me...questionably.

"We can keep the pregnancy hushed if that is what you want but you have nothing to be ashamed of darling, we love you no matter what, and we will love and protect this baby as one of us." Mum adds, her hands moving to my shoulders where she places a kiss on the side of my cheek.

"No matter what." My voice is barely a whisper, if only my child being half human was the issue. If only it were that simple. But when they learn the truth, that I have been lying all along... will they be this supportive. "No matter what."

"Thanks Mum, thanks Dad." "Any time."

We share a moment, a quiet embrace just the three of us which I am the first to break out off when Dad mentions the Dark Phantom pack.

My ears perk up, keen to hear what he has to say.

"We've been invited over to stay the night tomorrow, apparently they are having an important dinner that they want us present for." Dad informs us.

"All of us?" I swallow hard, he wouldn't have done. My threat was clear, that I would leave if he did tell a soul.

"Yes, Hector was quite insistent that it was all four of us."

"I wonder what the dinner could be about." Mum asks out, straightening the corner of my bed sheet. She always likes to keep her hands and mind busy. This was Jaxon's doing, it had to be.

"You three go, I'm not ready for others to know just yet."

"It would look suspicious if you didn't come. We don't have to mention anything, they won't need to know you are pregnant."

How easy was it for Jaxon to identify that was pregnant, and then for him to be able to smell that the child was his brother's. He'll put me in in front of the entire dinner party if he hasn't done so already. This could be a plot to get me to admit it in person to Jace.

I know he will, that's his plan. To back me in to a corner where I can't deny that Jace is the father.

"They are our friends Cleo, they will be supportive, they will be happy for you."

Happy? To find out that their son has found his mate but across the dinner table is a female he has impregnated after a one night stand.

I don't think so.



"I'm not even full term yet." I say, trying to find another reason not to go.

"You not being there says more than you going." Dad states with a

political mindset. Annoyingly he was right, my absence would open up far more questions rather than me being there.

"What is it? Why don't you want to go?" Mum tilts her head at me, concern within her eyes.

I have no choice, I have no reasonable excuse not to go.

I'm not showing, and as long as Jaxon keeps his opinions to himself then I might just survive this dinner party.

Maybe this would be the moment I

told Jace, for the sake of our child. I needed to do better, what if this was the platform for me to make that first step. No matter how much I fear doing it, I know I have to do it.

Jaxon's plot is to corner me but he doesn't know the lengths I will go to for my child.

Yes, I need to tell him...no more lies. No more hiding. He was apart of this, this child is also his.

Chapter 504

- Jace-

It was the calm before the storm. Jaxon had spent the day with a fucking smug smirk upon his face, something I wanted to beat right out of him.

To say he was pissing me off was an understatement.

By the time I had finished with training and pack duties it was already almost early evening. I hadn't been at the alpha house all day, half expecting the Arancea's to arrive early. Half expecting to bump into Cleo before I was prepared. I stayed well clear in the eventuality of such a thing happening.

Walking into the alpha home, the sight before me is one of frantic energy and chaotic dismay.

Mum had roped Callie into prepping the meal, which judging by Callie's eyes as I walk in, was the cause to the nervous atmosphere in the kitchen.

"Where have you been?" Callie grits out to me as Mum leaves her side to head into the pantry for something else, muttering a list of extra ingredients.

"Training and pack duties, why?" I move in closer, Callie adding small sprigs of rosemary onto a tray of roast potatoes.

"I told her I can't cook."

"Yes you can."

"Barbecues, fish on the grill...things that I will cook when the restaurant is closed at the hotel Jace. Not bloody beef wellington." She scathes at me, her eyes murderous. "You're nervous."

"No shit."

"I'm here next to you, you don't need to be nervous This will work Callie."

Mum could probably pick up on Callie's nerves this morning, thinking helping to keep her busy would go lengths in calming her.

But judging by the mess of the kitchen and Callie's appearance, it's only stressed her out even more.

"I haven't seen my parents since they all but kicked me out Jace...this is a bad idea..." She lifts the tray up to shake it out, biting down on her lip.

"Just breathe. Everything looks great." I try to calm her spiralling nervous energy as best I can, secretly holding my own fear for how tonight will go. Tonight was in celebration of my return, my acceptance of the alpha position of Clear Waters...and to announce Callie as my luna.

With my own fated mate sitting right in front of me.

Tonight will be one of the toughest nights of my life.

"What are you doing?" She watches me suspiciously as I head to the fridge, picking a bottle of chilled wine and pouring out two glasses.

Clearly the only way to get through this would be with alcohol...to help numb that growing feeling inside of me, my wolf's hell bent desire to ruin my plans. She takes a slow sip of the wine, breathing in the fruity scents before her shoulders start to relax.

"You're right, we can do this." She confidently nods out, just as Mum re-enters.

"Callie, I think we are on top of everything, why don't you go get ready."

"Are you sure? We still have two hours before everyone arrives."

As soon as the words exit her mouth the front door rings, Dad exiting his office and heading towards the front door.

I watch Callie's face drop of all colour at the unrecognisable voices at the front door. Unrecognisable to me, but not to Callie.

"Callie?" Mum's supportive hand goes to her shoulder as she notices her paling face also.

"They are early.." She gasps out, running her hands through her hair trying to flatten it down.

Callie has full heartedly dived into my family life, helping Mum with the dinner...but she was not prepared to meet her parents like this for the first time.

I knew how important this was to her, how long she had waited...how many times I have had to encourage her into doing this.

And deliberately or not, they have come early...completely knocking her off course.

"Alpha Bill Luna Louise...such a pleasure to finally meet you both

Mum wipes her hands with a kitchen cloth as she moves towards Callie's parents, shaking their hands

Callie is of similar colouring to her dad; that permanently tanned skin, the dark silky smooth hair, but on

first appearance she see but on ""

have her mum's eyes.

Eyes that were sharply scanning the ground floor of the alpha home.

"Thank you for inviting us." She politely replies, her eyes falling upon me and taking me in.

"Of course." Mum responds giving me a look to introduce myself, but something holds me back. Maybe look rude, but I don't particularly care..not when I know how cruel they have been to their own child.

A tension falls upon us, where their eyes move to their daughter for the first time.

I can see they are scanning her...their jaws tense in a disapproving manner.

"You aren't dressed?" Luna Louise tries to smile through the words, but it comes out with a distorted face as she seethes out the words.

Chapter 505

"You are early." Callie sighs out, her shoulders instantly sagging, any sign of the confident

entrepreneur business woman disappearing at her mother's words.

I didn't even recognise this Callie in front of me.

My eyes move to Mum's who is also picking up on the awkwardness.

"Callie has been such a help in the kitchen, had we of known we would expect you early...of course we would have been more prepared to welcome you." Mum sweetly smiles but makes it very clear of the dig within her tone. They've purposefully come early to catch us out, something that she was aware of and wouldn't let slide.

Dad notices this as well, moving swiftly to Mum's side and placing a hand around her waist, pulling her into him. It could be a move to keep Mum in check, to give them a chance.

Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, I hear whistling at the back door only for Lobo to come hurling into the house, covered in dirt...his muddy paws jumping up at our guests.

"Lobo, down!" Josie growls at him, as she rushes in after him, followed by Knox.

"He loves new people, I'm so sorry." Josie pulls Lobo down off Alpha Bill, who seemed more pleased than his mate to greet my sister's dog.

"It's fine, I was due to change anyway." Luna Louise pats down her outfit, flicking off the bits of mud that were dry.

"Josie, perhaps you can show Luna Louise and Alpha Bill to their guest room?" Dad gently commands out, Josie nodding in agreement.

"Yes, let me go wash my hands." She smiles out, tugging Lobo by his collar. She's making it look as if she is telling him off but she's not, if anything she is telling him he is a good dog.

Her eyes flash back to me widely just as she opens the door that leads to the utility room, a smirk sent my way.

I fight the corner of my lip that wants to curl up into a smirk. Any other time I would be chuckling out loud at the mud paw prints on Luna Louise's outfit...but Callie's horrified, terrified face has the reality of the situation knocked back into me. "Allow me."

"Thank you Kit." Mum smiles out at Knox, who picks up the luggage and gestures for them to follow him upstairs.

I can hear him introducing himself as they climb the stairs. Alpha Bill's interest heightening as he hears that Knox trains alphas. It's always been a neat trick of Knox's when starting conversations, it always helps introductions flow better. "What just happened?" Callie sighs out in distress the moment they have left the room.

"It will be fine dear, Jace, take Callie upstairs to get dressed. I'll finish everything here."

"What just happened?" Callie repeats as I navigate her up the stairs, my hands guiding her by her shoulders.

I think she was in shock.

"Have a shower." I command at her, placing her down on the bed and moving to the ensuite where I turn the water on.

"This was a terrible idea, we can't do

this. They see right through it." hear her moan over the shower, moving back in to reassure her. This has to work, I have no other option and we've come this close

"No they won't.."

"Jace...they will."

"So? What if they do, they won't say anything...because they can't handle the truth. So they'll play along."

Callie seems to regather her senses after the shower, her confident attitude returning as she dresses in a red dress, which large hoop gold earrings and matching golden sandal shoes.

en

"Feeling better?" I ask out as she places the finishing touches to her makeup in the mirror.

"Yes, much." She smiles out to me, as I place the smart dinner jacket on... pulling my white shirt cuffs

through and tidying them up.

"Damn, wish I was straight." She chuckles out to me as she moves away from the mirror and adjusts my shirt collar. "We've got this." She affirms.

"Yes, we have." I move to my bedside table, pulling out a small bottle and pouring the purple liquid in a shot glass. "Really?" Callie rolls her eyes at me, a disapproving click of the tongue coming off her.

"Just to keep my wolf in control." I take the

as

liquid burns at the back of my

ose shot, a cough escaping me

throat. tock of my

I haven't needed to take this for a long time, the taste so vile that I have to fight down my need to gag.

But I need this for tonight, especially as I hear the front door open.

Hear her voice greet my parents....

Chapter 506

- Cleo ~

I've made this journey hundreds of times in my lifetime.

I've passed the Dark Phantom main gate hundreds of time...so why when the guards stop us do I suddenly feel panic at the way their eyes look at me. They know, they must know.

They all know, this was a trap.

"Evening Alpha, Luna..."

"Evening lads, we aren't usually stopped."

"Sorry Alpha, just extra precaution with another alpha and luna being on site." The guard responds, his eyes moving to the back seat where Ares and I are.

"That must be Jace's mate's parents." Mum's head turns around to both my brother and I, her eyes glistening with excitement.

I could feel my chest tightening, somehow gripping around my heart, how was that even possible.

I take short small breaths trying to control my breathing, something Ares notices.

"Hey, are you okay?" His hand stretches out and rubs my back as I place my head down in between my knees.

Why couldn't I have driven myself like I had suggested, I could have pulled over...not only calming this panic attack but also try and get on top of the nausea that was still hitting me in unpredictable patterns. "Promise me you won't leave me alone in there." My voice is low, careful not to be heard by our parents.

"Why?"

"Just promise me you will stay by my side? Please Ares." I need him to hear the plea in my request, how I couldn't trust myself to be alone with any of them. Not if they all knew.



"Yes, I promise."

I had already sent an SOS text message to Maya who hadn't responded yet but I know she has read it.

It felt as if my insides were curdling and trying to force themselves outwards. The sudden urge to be sick threatening to reveal my truth.

I'm standing in the Varon hallway in no time at all, I look back, I don't even remember us being cleared at the gate.

I must have been so absorbed by my own thoughts that I spaced out.

Kaia throws her arms around me, as she always does. Bringing her cheek to mine as she cups my face, telling me how much I have changed since the last time she saw me.

I suppose it has been a while.

She scans the length of me, and I catch my breath as her eyes settle upon my lower stomach...she knows..she can sense it.

She's the most powerful wolf in existence, I knew I

couldn't fool her...especially as this is her grandchild I am carrying.

What does that even mean, to be the grandchild of the White Wolf. Josie has abilities being her daughter if I have a girl will my child have abilities of her own...I was spiralling and couldn't stop myself.

"You look beautiful in that dress Cleo." Kaia smiles out at me, as I take in a much need gasp of air.

I wore black to hide any signs of a bump, not that I was showing yet....well I didn't think I was.

But like Kaia says, it's been a while and I wasn't sure if they would pick up on anything.

Black has always been known for its slimming techniques, it's just this particular dress is a tight one.

It leaves nothing to the imagination, even my cleavage I've noticed has started to plump out. I've had to

coax my boobs into the dress, which is now looking a bit too revealing.

My dinner clutch bag is my secret weapon, placing it in front of my stomach as Hector moves over to greet me just like his mate.

"You look sensational. Where has this glow come from?"

"Glow?" I murmur out only for my eyes to catch Dad's and plead him for help.

"I guess I've been outside more than usual recently." I smile out politely to them as Dad pats

Hector on the back and steals his attention away.

Not Kaia's though, she continues to watch me.

She mirrors my smile when I catch her, her hand gesturing to the sitting room where the others were.

I can't do this, as soon as I get over one hurdle another presents itself.

My feet feel heavy, as if they are

stuck in mud, it would be better if it were quick sand; take me with it. Let the ground pull me under. I'd much prefer that to walking into the sitting room and play the polite guest.

Chapter 507

I can hear the pleasantries of Hector introducing my parents to their other guests, Jace's mate's parents.

I don't think I will be able to look them in the eyes knowing I am carrying their daughter's future betrayal. "Do you need help in the kitchen?" I offer out to Kaia, anything to prevent stepping into that room. "No thank you dear, it's all set."

I feel her hand gently place upon my lower back as she walks me into the sitting room, where..and thank the goddess for her... Josie leaps up and pulls me into her arms.

She is wearing her signature silver silk dress that highlights her figure. The contrast in the dress' colour to her hair, only makes her luscious free-flowing locks look even more redder. "I've missed you." Her words almost coo into my ear before she pulls away and also takes me in.

"I missed you too." I respond meaning every word. Josie along with Maya were my ride or die. I want to tell her everything, share everything with her.

But I can't, I'd be putting her in the middle and she'll always choose Jace...as she should.

They were each other's worlds from the moment they were conceived.

I just hope, if she ever finds out the truth that one day she will forgive me for keeping it from her.

"Damn girl, you're coming into your own." Her eyes linger at my cleavage, her eyes widening in surprise.

"Don't...you sound like Maya."

"Yes, I've not heard about this girl trip yet. Both of you have been rather MIA since then."

Just at the mention of the girls trip has my heart beating faster.

"Cleo, this is Alpha Bill...and Luna Louise." Hector pulls me over by my hand, introducing me to Callie's parents.

My eyes search the room, no sign of Callie.

"A pleasure." Alpha Bill nods out to me as Luna Louise smiles sweetly at me.

Okay, they don't suspect anything, maybe this will work.

My newly found confidence is short lived when I turn to find Jaxon watching me intensely from the bay window, a glass of whiskey in his hand.

He hasn't told them, but that's not to say he won't.

A dark aura is swirling around him, no wonder he's standing alone. He's completely unapproachable when he's like this...unless you are able to look beyond it. Like my family.

He is forced to break the eye contact between us when Mum moves over to him, as always not putting up with his bullshit.

Jaxon places a kiss upon Mum's cheek, and shakes Dad's hand. I'm the only one that doesn't move closer to him.

Ares even moves to receive a pat on the back and a compliment by the future Dark Phantom alpha of how much he has grown.

I let the safe sensation of relief wash over me, for now, it would seem he hasn't told them.

When his eyes find mine again, a smirk enters onto his lips...just as Knox moves behind me, causing me to flinch out slightly.

"Are you okay Cleo?" Jaxon calls out to me, all eyes turning on to me.

"I'm fine." I plaster on a sugar sweet smile for him, trying to hide my gritted teeth.

"Where are the happy couple then?" Mum calls out with enthusiasm.

"Callie wasn't ready when we arrived. I apologise they aren't here to greet your arrival, Luna  
Louise's tone has a level of coldness in it as she takes her seat back down, reaching over to hold the  
glass of bubbly in her hand.

Taking a small sip through her pursed lips.

"No not at all." Mum looks at me with a wide-eyed look.

"I think you sent her into a panic

frenzy being early." Kaia says defensively, but keeps it in a teasing manner. She moves to top Luna  
Louise's glass up before handing a

Pn

glass out to me, which I take without thinking.

A pang of jealousy hits me as Kaia defends Callie, already looking out for her future daughter-in-  
law.

I feel nausea rise up at the thought of Callie already being perceived as a Varon family member.

My lips move to my glass only when

I catch myself and pull it away,

gently holding it down by my lap.

Mum watching me carefully as she takes her own seat. A slight tension forming between the two  
lunas.

I don't actually know what would happen if I drank alcohol whilst pregnant and being a werewolf.

But as I still have the burn on my arm from the oven...I won't take the risk.

"Do we have a marking ceremony date in the diary yet?" Dad asks out, trying to steer the conversation on to the topic of the evening. The entire reason we are here.

I love Dad's attempts to diffuse the tension but if he knew the truth, it would be the last thing he would ask.

"Not yet, Callie needs to visit Clear Waters pack." Kaia responds, her eyes looking to the hallway where Knox moves back in, a glass of whiskey for Dad and Ares, which they both clink together.

"Ah speak of the devils!" Kaia declares out, all eyes turning towards the hallway but mine remain on the glass of champagne in my lap before they move up to Jaxon.

Who is still watching me, slowly sipping on his tumbler. The ice rattling as he lowers the glass down, placing it on the windowsill.

Everyone stands up, thankfully blocking me enough so that I can move to the back of the room.

I can't look at him, my entire body is trying to move towards him, like a magnetic pull...it's the baby, recognising I was near their father. It has to be.

Edging myself closer and closer to the corner of the room. Away from Jaxon and away from Jace, I close my eyes...trying to recollect myself.

"Ares!" I call out to him in the mind-link, blind panic starting to come back to me.

I open my eyes as he moves with precision towards me, his eyes locking on me with concern.

"What's wrong?" He responds through the mind-link.

"I can't be here."

"You have no choice. They won't find out..."

"Hello, you must be Cleo?" I'm pulled out of the mind-link as Callie moves over towards me, guilt spreading through me as she makes the first move, a friendly smile upon her face. "I've heard so much about you."

"You have?" My brows furrow at her words, I was a fraud. Letting this beautiful, charismatic female be kind to me when I hold her mate's child in my belly.

She was dressed in red, with large gold hoop earrings that added a warmth to her eyes.

"Yes... in fact, you look familiar.." Her eyes cast down upon me, lingering a little too long upon my cleavage.

"Oh.." My mind was trying to think

fast to distract her from remembering that we have met

That she was in her lingerie at the time, thinking I was a housemaid.

en

"I guess I have one of those faces. "I hold her gaze refusing to shrink under it.

"Hmm, no I've definitely seen you before, I just can't place it."

"Well Cleo was at your hotel two months ago with Maya...maybe you saw her there." Josie walks over, interjecting into our conversation.

Her hotel? I thought it was Jace's, unless...do they own it together.

Which means if they do, he's not just met her...he's been with her all this time since leaving.

He cheated on her to be with me that one night.

Anger starts to flare up within me, how he played me...how he has played us both.

I can feel the heated gaze of his eyes upon me, as I talk to his mate.

How much he must be fearing that I will spill, that I will tell her the truth. But I have even more to spill than he can dream of.

"Did someone mention me?" Maya

laughs out as she enters into the hallway. My eyes that had so desperately been trying to avoid the hallway area, lose all self control and snap to find her with her arms out wearing a blue dinner dress.

She's answered my SOS, my own superhero...coming to my rescue.

My eyes linger on her for only a

second before they are drawn to the

male standing almost next to her, the one who hasn't entered the

BUMS

room.

He's remained locked in the hallway letting his own mate move over to me on her own.

I didn't have Jace down as a coward.

My eyes finally lock on his, a sudden cold rush to my blood at his stony icy glare.

I shouldn't have come. I shouldn't have slept with him. I should have had more self control.



This dinner was going to be my living hell.

Chapter 509

- Jace -

I should have taken another shot of liquid wolfsbane, the only thing that stopped my wolf from returning each time I left.

There's a reason an alpha doesn't leave a pack unless challenged for the position, disowned or frankly....dead.

I couldn't cope at first, thinking my wolf would claw my skin off in my sleep.

The animalistic urge trying to dominate me daily to return back to my family, back to my pack...back to her.

He's running on adrenaline fuelled by vengeance against me, for refusing what is his.

I've loved Cleo all my life.

At first as a friend, a protector...a member of the family. A devotion to keep her safe, I thought a result from our families relationship...no...the mate bond was working even as children. Trying to manipulate me even then for when she was older.

Then something changed, she changed.

I remember the moment vividly to this day.

She travelled down behind her family, arriving half way through a typical group dinner her long blonde hair curled at the ends as it used to do, wearing a mini skirt...showing off just how long her legs are. I didn't see her like that, never, until that very moment.

I made the mistake of hugging her, of leaping out of my chair and being the first to greet her as I have always done since she was born.

There has always been a connection between us...when I smelt her it was an overwhelming reaction to my senses.

Peaches, she smelt like ripe sweet peaches.

It took all my strength not to claim her as my mate at the dinner table.

I had to leave, she wasn't part of my plan.

I always knew my luna would be marked the moment I claimed her, my family has enemies everywhere.

Ones we don't even know about, our reputation bringing on jealousy in others. Those that would want to destroy us for their own power gain.

I couldn't bear for something to happen to Cleo, not when I have been protective of her my entire life.

So I made the decision to leave, to work on myself, to deny the mate bond.

To fight fate.

I can't accept Cleo is part of the moon goddess' plan for me, I won't accept it.

I can't spend the rest of my life fearing for Cleo's life, I love her too much.

I thought I had it in hand, I thought I had it under control until the

wedding...her approach to me to ask for a dance was a simple request.

She knew no different, she was just that little bit too young to recognise the mate bond.

But if I had danced with her, I would have struggled to let go.

I know I was cruel, I embarrassed her in front of my friends, in front of our family, but I didn't it to protect her.

I was being cruel to be kind.

When I met Callie she was in a similar situation as me, although her exit from her pack wasn't exactly her choice.

Along with Colt, we decided to make

a new future for ourselves but she could see I was struggling to

the pack bond, fight mynt.

I hadn't rejected my pack, I was caught in between being an alpha and being a rogue.

I was a drifter, a nomad.

I've thought about giving it up, rejecting my title but I can't do that to Mum, and I need my family as much as they need me.

Callie was the obvoious choice.

There is nothing romantic between us, there never has been. She's become my bestest friend, my confidant.

In agreeing to be my Luna I can continue to deny the mate bond, distancing myself from Cleo until she takes another. Rejecting her would destroy our families.

One shot does nothing to keep my wolf at bay. He's supercharged just knowing she is the same four walls as her.

The intoxicating scent of sweet peaches hits my nostrils as soon as I take the first step down the staircase.

Each step down the stairs with Callie by my side, my pretend luna, is painful.

My wolf sending me shots of guilt laced with pure stomach-churning anger.

He'll never forgive me for this.

My eyes lock on to her back instantly as she sits, cupping a glass of champagne in her hands...her eyes fixed on Jaxon's.

That smirk of his finally disappeared and now a murderous glare aimed towards her.

I want to leap in-between them,

block her from him. That need to

protect her from his glare surges through me from my wolf but I keep my feet firmly

glued where I stand, any swift movement on my part will give everything away.

Tonight might have well never happened.

Callie pulls off my arm, moving into the crowd to be introduced to Orpheus, Rosa and Ares.

I watch as Cleo discreetly moves into the corner of the room, her eyes still watching Jaxon.

Chapter 510

I was hurting her, her movements were like that of an injured defenceless animal being coerced into the corner.

Callie moves towards her, my eyes can't tear themselves away even as Auntie Rosa moves towards me to greet me....Maya then opening the front door and announcing her arrival like the fucking cling-on that she is. A cling-on that perhaps might just save this night for me.

But her arrival is what makes Cleo's eyes finally lock on with mine.

All noise drowns out, all figures around me evaporate as our eyes meet.

It's as if we are the only two in the room, that gravitational pull towards her calling out to me.

My wolf wanting nothing more than to pull her into my arms and mark her.

I wish I could tell her, I wish she could know how incredible our night together was, how it killed me to leave her the next morning.

To walk out as she lay sleeping in my arms.

My wolf is roaring like a monster in my head.

"Mine... MINE..." I can't move, it takes all my strength to not move.

Frozen on the spot.

"I thought this was a party Jace?" Maya claps me on the back as she moves towards Josie, taking a champagne flute from the table.

Thankfully her entrance has created an unexpected commotion, Mum delighted by her appearance moves out of the living room to set another setting at the table.

She's the first to tear her eyes away when Maya moves in front of her, blocking her momentarily.

I move my head to the side, still chasing her eyes only to find she has had the strength to pull her glare away.

She was wearing a black dress, fuck. That skimmed her body perfectly.

Every inch of her was perfection, her breasts looking even more divine in the dress than out of them...I've tasted them, I've tasted her.

Her perfectly shaped pink pert nipples have been in my mouth.

My fingers twitch wanting to remove her clothes, to repeat the night of the hotel together...

"Shall we sit for dinner?" Mum calls out from behind me, Callie moving towards me and pulling me into the direction of the dining room.

"What's wrong?" Callie whispers into my ear.

"Nothing." I grunt back, it's all I can manage as I continue to push my wolf back.

I curse out when I notice Cleo is placed directly opposite me, Ares by her side... Maya on the other.

It is too late to change the seating plan as everyone piles in behind me, conversing amongst themselves as they take their places at the extended dining table. Cleo stops, her eyes hesitantly scanning the name card in front of her before looking across the

table at me, then at Callie.

She takes a sip of the champagne flute gripped tightly in her hands before pulling the chair out and sitting down.

She closes her eyes...preparing herself for what is going to be a long night.

The last of us take our seats, all but Jaxon who moves towards Cleo, bends down and whispers something only for her before snatching her flute away.

My eyes watch him, the pang of jealousy surging through me at their odd behaviour to one another tonight.

Her eyes follow him, launching a flight of a thousand flying daggers with her stare.

It would seem I wasn't the only one to notice, Orpheus is following Jaxon carefully.

"Callie, I hear you own the beach club with Jace. Did you know Cleo and I were there only two months ago..." Maya reaches over for a jug of water before pouring a glass for Cleo, then herself.

"Hotel? What hotel?" Luna Louise chips in, a disapproving glance shot our way.

"Callie and I own a hotel in a human district.." I mutter out my eyes on Maya and Cleo who were now exchanging strange looks to one another. "Human?"

"Yes Mother...humans." Callie seethes out, trying to control her snarl but it has gotten the better of her.

"You left your pack for humans?" Luna Louise shakes her head.

"Your pack?" Josie looks between the mother and daughter, before her eyes settle upon me with confusion.

"Callie is the heir to our pack.." Luna Louise fills the extended silence, answering Josie's question.

"Can we not do this now." Callie grits out, her hands keeping busy by @ flattening the napkin out in her lap. Her breathing becoming more rapid, she was becoming stressed

"..but she gave it all

away....abandoned her pack for an

easy life by the beach." Callie's mother continues until Alpha Bill clears his throat, shifting

uncomfortably in his chair

"Then she suits Jace after all because he's done exactly the same." Jaxon just can't help himself.

The anger that my wolf feels towards me for denying him Cleo is channelled towards Jaxon.

I kick the chair out behind me, my body standing to its full height, a challenging growl emitting out from me.