

Denied 541

Chapter 541

I need to right my wrong, before it is too late and I have lost her forever.

"You stay here." Uncle Orpheus finger is pointed aggressively towards my face, his face twisting with anger.

"Not a chance in hell."

"You've done enough damage. I don't want you anywhere near my daughter."

"No, she is my mate and that is my baby." I snarl out.

"Exactly...you will fall right into his trap." Mum nods out, her hands moving to collect Auntie Rosa off the floor as she holds her by her side.

"Trap what trap?" Jaxon's voice is of panic.

"Trust me, Than will have been conceiving a plan for some time."

"I don't care." Nothing...nothing was going to stop me from getting to her. From claiming what is mine.

"I'm leaving, Hector...now. Mark my words Jace, if anything has happened to my daughter because of you, I'll fucking kill you myself." Uncle Orpheus threat is venomous, and aimed solely on me. Something I don't blame him for, I deserve all his hatred.

"No..."

"Kaia." Dad shouts out.

"I'm sorry Jace, but this is for your own good. I won't let my mistakes of the past shroud your future. We will handle it."

"What are you taking about?" Jaxon scoffs to Mum but I already know what she is preparing to do, as does Josie.

"Mum don't..." Josie screams out just as Mum's eyes bleed out into the ethereal blue of her wolf, her hands moving out in front of her...just as that unsettling coldness spreads out on me again.

I fall under her spell, but this time I'm not the only one. I...Jaxon and Josie all fall to the ground, our energy wiped from us as darkness starts calling out to me.

I can feel Callie desperately slapping at my face, trying to keep me awake as her face is laced with panic. Knox does the same to Josie, catching her in his arms as her body weakens.

His roar aimed at our mother is deafening.

My body fights it, tries to fight her power... tries to conserve what energy it has but it is useless...she is just too powerful.

Jaxon is knelt beside me, fighting the White Wolf's ability, refusing to surrender to the darkness.

His roar matches Knox's, if not surpasses it.

Cleo was my mate, she was

pregnant with my child...they can't do this to me. I need to be there for her, she'll never forgive me but I will spend the rest of my life trying to deserve her love, trying to make up for what I have done.

I was trying to keep her safe, trying to protect her...but she has been put in danger by my very actions.

Josie screams out in anger her eyes turning a fiery shade of orange as she tries to heal herself.

I look up to find Dad lifting Mum in his arms, cradling her towards the front door. She was using

all her power on us, diminishing her own energy levels.

If I can just fight it long enough, I'll be able to ride it out longer than her, she'll fall before me.

I can then get to Cleo, I can save her.

Jaxon's

to me hin

Mum'sy falls to the floor next

own attempts at fighting

Mum's power surprisingly rendering him just like Josie and I.

"I'm sorry Jace, but it has to be this way." Mum's voice pushes through the mind-link to me.

"No Mum, stop...she is mine."

"I will protect her, but I can't lose you." Her words dwindle out as my breathing becomes laboured and my eyes start to droop.

My eyes become heavy...my body

too weak to stay awake as my head hits the floor, the last thing I see is my parent's figures leaving through the front door.

Chapter 542

- Cleo ~

"What beautiful roses!" Luna Medea exclaims; her manicured nails stretching out to touch the bouquet of freshly cut roses that stand in the vase, the centre piece to the kitchen table that the four of us were eating breakfast together on.

Every meal time was just the four of us...Alpha Than, Luna Medea, me...and the elderly relative.

I've been here for a week yet I still haven't learnt any more of this relative than on my first day here. She would slowly walk down the stairs for each meal time, wind up Luna Medea, then slowly walk back up...as if she was under room arrest.

I would say she was a poorly great auntie of Than's, that he let stay here from the goodness of his heart, but something wasn't really adding up.

She had a constant glaze over her eyes as if she was in a permanent mind-link...which I know for a fact isn't true.

She also has aging spots upon her skin and a purple tint to her lips.

I hate the term batty...but I would definitely say she fell into this category.

I enjoyed our meal times together, more so because she had a way of grating on Luna Medea

which was rather satisfying to watch. It was becoming more difficult by the day to hide my giggles at the table.

"Thank you, I cut them only this morning." A playful smirk forms across the lady's lips, a complete contrast to the tensed jaw of Luna Medea.

"Cut from where?" Luna Medea tries to sound composed but I can tell she is dying inside, knowing full well where the roses were obtained from. Her precious garden.

"From the alpha garden."

"You cut my roses...without permission?" Luna Medea seethes out.

"I didn't realise I needed permission when the roses are part of nature."

"My late husband planted those seeds."

"Then he was a keen gardener, he had done a superb job. They are flourishing."

The table turns quiet, my eyes flickering to Than's who tries to hold back the laughter that wants to

escape from him also. Every meal time ended up with a similar type of argument between the females. Unlike my fellow guest, I have spent the last week touring the pack grounds and getting to know the pack members.

Each one of them was welcoming towards me, each one took time out of their busy schedules to speak to me. No matter what they were in the middle of.

I'm pretty certain they had been ordered by Than to take the time to make me feel welcomed, rumour had gotten out that I was the new Luna.

The female beta, Freya, was tasked with accompanying me at all times. She was of a similar age to Mum, yet she still worked as if she was new to the role.

Rushing around answering Luna Medea's every whim...I kind of felt a bit sorry for her.

By now a new beta should be carrying out the duties of her mate, Beta Zane, letting Freya start to retire from the role.

She was a nervous female, always looking over her shoulder...shaking when around Than and her mate.

The other day I had noticed sore

scars across her arms. When I

asked about them she brushed them off as the results of an attack on the pack years ago...but I didn't believe

her

They looked too recent for injuries sustained years ago. She said the scars a lasting reminder of what tyranny can look like before changing the subject.

I dropped it when she wore a long sleeve top the next day. Who was I to question her injuries, maybe she doesn't want to be reminded.

I'm starting to understand how sheltered I have been living in the Red Thorn pack, sheltered by my own parents.

We've never had a pack attack, not since I have been born. It must be hard to constantly worry about the next attack, one that you may not survive from.

The White Moon pack attack was my first experience with any type of attack, one that was the deadliest to the Dark Phantom pack...I still remember it like it was yesterday.

Maybe trauma never really heals....Freya a living reminder of that.

"Cleo?"

"Hmm?" I'm pulled from my own thoughts when Than calls out my name.

"What are your plans for today?"

"Oh, I was going to visit the hospital, if that is okay with you." I sit a little straighter, conscious of Luna Medea's scrutinising eyes on me.

"Do you need me to come?"

"No, it's not that kind of visit." I

hadn't taken Than's offer up on his doctor's performing a scan on me. t still felt too early but I know for the sake of the baby, I needed to do it in the next few days. I was already pushing my luck with waiting this long.

"Remember, I can have them available in a matter of minutes." He reminds me as he takes a sip on his coffee.

"I know, thank you." I smile out, before taking a bite of toast for my breakfast.

I don't know what I was holding back on, maybe having the scan without Jace present is making me delay it...a milestone that I'm all too aware that he will never get back.

Once Luna Medea and Than had left

the house, waited in the front garden for Freya, she seemed to be my chaperone all week...I knew it wouldn't be long before she was sent out looking for me at the hospital.

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So I thought I would save her the time and wait for her here.

Closing my eyes, I tilt my head up to let the morning sun beam upon my face. I would never get used to the way the sun feels stronger here...maybe because the land is slightly of higher altitude.

Even the floral smell this pack seems to have...so many flowers. So much nature here, I felt as if I had found my calling, found the pack for me.

Don't get me wrong, I was a Red Thorn alpha's daughter through and through, but the Amber Desert pack seemed to call to me, as if I was meant to be here all along.

Maybe it's the family connection, maybe my blood can just recognise lineage...family history.

A connection.

My eyes open when I hear the sound of cutting coming to the side of me in the front garden. Opening my eyes I find the elderly relative cutting white roses with pruning shears, her head turning to me as those unworldly eyes stare back at me.

"You know she'll go mental at you." I snicker out, taking steps closer to her as she continues to feel each white rose before deciding which one to cut.

"It's fun to get her worked up, she's far too on her high horse."

"Careful, she's your family.."

"My family? In no way am I related to them...thank the goddess." She pauses, handing me the shears to hold for her as she moves to her jacket chest pocket... pulling out a hip flask.

So the batty guest was senile as well as a drunk.

She takes a sip on the hip flask, to my horror...pain radiates through her face as she grimaces out...a silent scream escaping her.

I drop the shears taking a step closer to her, determined to pull the hip flask out of her hand but she was too fast for me, a growl escaping from her as she holds the flask out of my reach.

"No, not near the baby." She grunts out, her lips still twisting from pain.

"You know I am pregnant?"

"Why else would you be here..."

"Well I.."

"Let me guess, he's offered you safety to raise your child." I'm not sure I like the tone to her voice.

"Well as a matter of fact yes.."

"I didn't take the daughter of Alpha Orpheus as a fool." She barks out before seemingly regathering herself, placing the hip flask back in her jacket...her face not so pained now.

"You know my Dad?"

"No...I don't know him."

"What do you mean fool?" My eyes scowl at her.

She doesn't answer me, only stares at me with those haunting eyes.

They are hard to look at, my own eyes struggling to keep eye contact due to how uncomfortable they make me feel.

A cold chill rises up my spine when I hold them for just that little bit too long, the sensation disappearing as soon as I snap them away.

"There you are, ready?" Freya arrives,

her eyes scanning between myself and the woman. A tut escapes her mouth as she regards the female before her hand pulls me by the arm, pulling me

away from the garden.

"You shouldn't engage with her Luna, she's crazy." "Crazy?" I'm not sure about crazy, eccentric maybe. "Hmm."

"She's not a relative?"

"No, Alpha found her in the middle of the woods miles from here. Brought her back at the request of the Luna, I don't know why..."

"I can't deny there is something

strange about her." I speak out loud

but it was more for my own benefit. Something was nagging at me, something I couldn't quite put a finger on it."

"Everyone says that. She's bitten a few pack members that have gotten too close, she was then made to stay here at the alpha house."

"Really? No I mean more...I don't know, something familiar about her, but I can't put my finger on it."

"So, you wanted to go to the hospital?"

"Just a tour, just to meet some of the doctors...I just want to be of use."

"You are, you will be....you will make a fine Luna Cleo. Everyone is already besotted with you, you are a breath of fresh air. After the troubles of his past lunas...'

"You've met them both.." I stop dead in my tracks, I can't deny I wanted someone to talk to about this. To understand more of the story.

Auntie Kaia has always been such a positive influence in my life, I refuse to believe the crimes she has been accused of.

Than hasn't said anything, but the pack members...not knowing my connection to her...have been quite vocal and have not painted her in a flattering light.

"I...I shouldn't have mentioned them. I'm sorry."

"You don't have to be sorry, you've done nothing wrong."

Something peculiar takes a hold of Freya, something that has me feeling worried. She freezes, almost talking to herself...her head shaking side to side before it hangs low...a deep sigh escaping her.

"Freya?"

"No.....I need to be somewhere. I'll come find you later."

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- Cleo -

I don't know her very well but I couldn't help but think Freya's odd behaviour was something I shouldn't ignore.

All week she refused to leave my side unless I was in the alpha house, so why has she left me alone to tour the hospital. It's not that I can't do it alone, but her sudden withdrawal of the offer to be with me, wasn't sitting well with me.

I take the time to walk around the hospital, meeting some of the Doctors who all greet me by using the title Luna. I guess I need to get used to that.

I'm not sure how not having access to the mind-link will work on a long term basis, I suppose the only way around that would be to become a pack member...something I have already briefly discussed with Than. I'm not marking him, that is for certain. It would just be too weird.

However, the thought of losing the pack link to my family pack, to Dad in particular....sits heavily on my heart.

My pregnancy was still a secret, I had asked Than not to tell pack members, not even his mother. So why did the female living in their house know...and if she wasn't related to them...and was found in the middle of the woods.

Who exactly was she...

I head back to the alpha house, keen to locate Freya but find no sign of her when I enter the quiet house. Not even Than.

Moving into the kitchen, a smile spreads out onto my lips as I find another vase bursting with freshly cut white roses...displayed in pride position on the kitchen side. They were hard to miss.

She knows full well that Luna Medea is going to see those first...see them and lose her composure. My fingers reach out, picking up a rose before placing it to my nose and smelling it.

I place it back in the vase, turning to leave only to find the old lady blocking my path...staring at me with those eery eyes.

"I thought I was alone." I back step slightly, her eyes still unsettled me. I never knew if she was in a trance or staring blankly at me, expecting something.

"You are a werewolf, you are never alone." She cryptically replies. I could be mistaken but there seems to be a bit of sarcasm to her tone...an annoyance towards me.

"Excuse me?"

"You are made up of two parts, the human and the wolf side. Therefore you are never alone, because you have your wolf." She moves past me, a grunt escaping her as she uses the kitchen side to support her weight.

My eyes drop down to find she was barefooted, the skin on her feet bearing the same aging spots as her face and arms. How old exactly was she.

"Oh...I see. I was actually looking for the female beta, you haven't seen her have you?"

"That meekly thing, no...but have you tried the beta house?"

No, I guess baby brain really was a thing.

"Meekly? Why do you call her meekly?"

"She's got no character, does exactly what the alpha and beta command her to do."

"Isn't that what a female beta does?"

"No, a female beta challenges, a luna challenges her alpha. She doesn't roll over and let tyranny be

committed." A large exhalation of air escapes her as she sits down at the table, the movement seemingly using a lot of her energy.

I stare at her, my mind trying to think not only who she was but how hold she must be.

Her appearance was pushing close

to the ninety mark, even one hundred years old mark....but her min had the wit of someone decades younger.

"Tyranny?" I shake my head, refocusing back on our odd conversation.

"On Kaia."

"On Kaia?"

"She was the luna here, she was his wife."

"Yes I know that already."

"I think you only know what he has told you, what he is willing for you to know. If I were you..."

"Well you aren't me." I snap back.

"If I were you and in your current state, I would be miles from here. Especially knowing who you are connected to."

"And who am I exactly connected

to?" I take a step closer to the

kitchen table; my arms crossed over my chest, an eyebrow quirked.

"You are the daughter of his rival...you being here is purely a game piece to him."

I bite down firmly on my tongue, trying not to rise to her bait.

"And why are you here?"

"He captured me..."

"He didn't find you wandering in the woods, alone?"

"Alone yes, in the woods yes...wandering yes but to my own tune. I live in the woods...he was ordered by

his mother to capture me."

"For what purpose?"

"I know things."

"Things?"

"Things on the White Moon pack."

I haven't even realised it, but I've

been hanging on every word that et

she says, that I haven't notice my feet move closer to the table to be by her side.

"The White Moon pack...the pack that attacked Alpha Kaia?"

"Yes."

"What business does Than have with them."

"None...not yet. But he would like that to change...are you sure you are of Arancea blood? You don't seem to know a lot."

I roll my eyes at her backhanded comment, no...it was clear I didn't know a lot about my parent's past.

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"Then why don't you enlighten me?" I slowly sit down next to her, sliding into the chair with confidence. They may have been holding out, but I'm determined to find out from her.

"I don't think you have the stomach for it."

"Then you, like my parents, are underestimating me."

"The White Moon pack has a claim on the White Wolf, believes that if they sacrifice her back to the moon goddess...who created her...they will return to their former glory. To be the most powerful pack in existence.

The white wolf's very existence is the reason they have been shunned to the outskirts of shifter society. Most would want to live their lives out in peace, in comforts...but not the current alpha...no he is power hungry, he was revenge.

He thinks the pack has suffered for too long, he thinks in sacrificing her...the moon goddess will restore them."

"When you say sacrifice..."

"Kill...well, drink the White Wolf's blood and send her soul back to the moon."

"The White Wolf, you mean Kaia?"

"Yes."

"How do you know this?"

"How do you not?" She tuts out at me, that annoyance again in her demeanour towards me.

No it can't just be me, Jace has never mentioned anything like this about his mother, not even Josie. Surely they can't all know but not have told me...or Áres. No...this can't be right.

"Even her children do not know this so I know it isn't just me." I retort back at her, she kept taking swipes at me and they were getting on my last nerve. I can't help it if I don't know something that has been deliberately kept a secret from.

"I guess they've been kept in the dark too. You cannot hide from the past, a mistake on the White Wolf's part. She has poorly equipped her own children for the future they must face."

"What do you mean?"

"Each child of the White Wolf is in danger, he can get to any of them...if he so wishes. He almost got to the healer wolf."

The healer wolf...

"Josie?"

"Yes..."

"What would he want with Josie?" Just the thought of my best friend in danger, of any of them in danger shakes me to my core.

"Just imagine, an army that never dies..." Her head snaps towards me, her eyes almost luminous...like a white light shining in the darkest of nights.

"And Jaxon...Jace?" I swallow hard at the lump that has formed in the back of my throat from saying his name out loud.

I promised myself I would never think of him again, never mention him...but if he was in danger I owe it to our baby to help him. To make sure he stays safe.

I may not be able to be with him, but I cannot lose him. I will love him for the remainder of my life, as long

as he is safe...I can't love him if he is gone. As much as it hurts me that he will never be mine...I cannot survive in a world that he no longer exists in.

It's too early surely, but I can feel a small movement in my lower stomach, like a kick.

I gasp out, my hand moving down to my belly as soon as I mention his name.

Her eyes follow mine, to my small belly. I still wasn't showing but my leggings were becoming tighter, it wouldn't be long until I could no longer hide that I was pregnant.

"Is it his?" A mumble escapes her.

"Whose?"

"The second born...Jace?"

I don't answer, but I know my frozen response is speaking volumes.

"You can't stay here....you need to leave."

"Why?"

"Are you carrying the grandchild of the White Wolf? If so, you are in more peril than I had realised." Panic starts to course through me, a sinking feeling that I was struggling to climb myself out of.

It had never occurred to me that carrying the grandchild of the White Wolf would be dangerous, I was too concerned of the affects it would have on our families.

How naive I have been. So mentality warped by our inner circle, I never once truly thought of my baby being in danger... of who would benefit from having me by their side

Someone like Than.

"Why would I be in danger...and my child?"

"If the White Moon pack find you... if he finds me here."

"If who finds you here."

"The Alpha."

"Why would the alpha be looking for you?"

"Because I am his mate. I believe that is why I am here...to be traded as part of a deal."

"No...no Than wouldn't do that to me, he doesn't know who the father is, he just knows it's not human."

"Then you need to pray that he doesn't find out, and you need to keep your wits about you. I can help you, but only that will go for so far."

"Why would you help me?"

"The child...the one growing in your belly. He..."

"He?" I am snapped out of my spiralling state of mind.

"Oh yes, I would say it was a boy." my surprise her hand reaches taking mine in its hold and

squeezing gently.

"He is a part of me..." She continues.

"How?"

"Kaia is my niece, her mother was my sister."

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- Cleo ~

I can't escape the ominous feeling that I've made a mistake, that I have put my trust in somebody too soon.

He doesn't know my child is Jace's right? All I said is that my child is not human, that it is an alpha's. No I'm very aware of what I say, of not giving away information that could be used against me.

"You're very quiet this evening Cleo, is everything alright?" Luna Medea points out my lack of communication as she twirls the spaghetti with her fork before moving it to her mouth with a spoon. My eyes flicker to the female to the right of me, the one that somehow is related to my growing child in my belly.

How is that possible, and why was she here at the very same time as me.

"Yes..." I clear my throat as my voice is a little higher than expected.

"I was just thinking of the female beta."

"Freya, why?" Luna Medea eyes narrow in on me. I was starting to realise she was less of a wolf and more of a cunning fox.

"She seemed distracted earlier..."

"Nevermind her, once you are officially the new luna you can pick your own female aids, in fact, Than you need to start looking for a new beta. When are you two marking one another?"

"No Mother, I told you, Cleo and I aren't marking one another."

"How is that going to work then...you as Alpha, she as Luna?"

"By becoming a pack member, she will share the pack-link then...we can mind-link each other that way." "But..."

"Drop it Mother." A warning growl rumbles out of Than. I've been here for a week and I've not once seen him assert his alpha title over his Mother. Really, it's as if she is the leader of this pack, and he does what he is told.

"I'm not looking to axe Freya from her title, I just wanted to make sure she was okay." I had knocked on the beta home this afternoon but it was Zane that answered the door, who came up with some excuse to send me away.

I couldn't ignore the feeling that he was keen to get rid of me.

"How was your tour of the hospital?" Than smiles out to me, trying to change the subject.

"Yes...good. I met with the doctors, there are some changes I would like to make.."

"Changes? What sort of changes?" Her voice is loaded, preparing for an argument.

"Nothing big, just little things that I think could be of great benefit to the pack and its members."

"We've been running it fine all this time..."

"I don't think Cleo meant it like that Mother..."

"No, of course not... it's just...time for

foet

something new." I smile out, purposefully cutting my spaghetti before placing it on my fork and my mouth. I don't miss the way her eyes watch me cut into the spaghetti, I'm very aware of how differently I am eating to her.

"New? Am I that old?"

"Luna Medea, I meant no offence. It's just at home we..."

"Well this is your home now, I don't care on how you used to do things, this is how we do things."

"I was just..." My eyes dart to the woman next to me, her eyes were staring at Luna Medea, a hint of a smirk upon her lips.

She was enjoying this discomfort.

"I would love to hear of your ideas Cleo..." Than's hand moves out, touching mine.

A powerful wave of nausea rises up to the back of my throat, his touch was meant to soothe me...but it has done the exact opposite.

All his touch does is remind me that he is not Jace, his touch doesn't leave the same wanting for

more...there isn't the tintney

"Cleo?"

The nausea only worsens, dizziness now being added to the mix. "Excuse me for a moment."

I move away from the table, a sudden need to be out of there...for fresh air takes over me. But as I step out the front door it continues to persist, to only grow in strength.

I shouldn't be here, my baby knew it...and I knew it.

I was an imposter, I was in another alpha's pack whilst pregnant with another's child.

If it wasn't the baby trying to remind me that this isn't right, then it is my pack calling me home.
"Cleo?" A voice calls out to me.

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"I...I just need a moment." I respond, clutching at my stomach, excruciating pain cramping at me.
"Here take some of this?" The old woman hands her hip flask out to me, a groan escaping me as I bend over...I was going to hurl at any second.

"What is it?"

"It will help, it will take the pain away."

I take the hip flask off her, sniffing at it only to push it away from me...the potent smell of wolfsbane burning at my nostrils.

"It's wolfsbane." My pain is too intense to really sound how horrified I am that not only she was willingly sipping on this but she was offering it to a pregnant woman.

"Yes."

"Why would you think I would want that?"

"It will stop the calling to the pack, to the baby's father."

"It will kill the baby."

"No, I've been taking it for decades and I'm still standing." I'm torn between crying and laughing at her comment, the severity of my current situation hitting me like a ton of bricks.

My blood turns cold when I hear a scream coming from the beta household, a female scream.

"Freya?" My feet are already moving, all nausea leaving me...now replaced with concern for the female beta.

"Freya?" I knock on the front door, only for another scream to echo out.

"Freya!" Enough of ignoring this inner sense that something was wrong, enough of being polite...I may not be part of the pack link yet but I knew she needed help.

I kick the door in, a gasp coming from behind as I hear both Than and Luna Medea exit the alpha house. "Cleo?" Than roars out to me, but I don't wait, I cross the threshold of the beta house...following

the sound of whimpering.

I move with speed, my eyes searching the living space to find it empty...I head to the stairs where I listen intently, my wolf letting me use her enhanced hearing even though she was still ploughing all of her energy into growing our child.

The noise wasn't coming from upstairs, it was coming from downstairs.

"Freya? Zane?" I call out with urgency at a door that must lead downstairs to a basement.

"Cleo, no." Than grips my elbow.

"What is going on?"

"Nothing, we can't just barge into our pack member's homes. This is their private space."

Another scream has me forcing the door open, moving past Than and running down the basement steps.

The smell of dried blood hits me first, followed by the smell of wolfsbane.

But instead of the slight scent from the hip flask, this hits my senses full whack.

A scream has me at the bottom step instantly, my eyes scanning the basement to find a figure sitting in a chair, and a male hovering over her.

Freya.

A blood curdling scream escapes Freya again as Zane places a piece of rope across her arm, tying her to the chair.

I watch on in horror as the sound of burning flesh erupts, drowning out Freya's whimpers.

"What are you doing?" I demand out, pushing Zane to the side, my hands wanting to remove the ropes from her but in doing so I myself would be burnt.

"Help me!" I turn to Than who stands with his arms crossed, a displeased look to his eyes that I haven't witnessed before.

He looked cold.

"No...no." Freya cries out to me in pain.

"Shh, I'm going to help you."

"No, I don't want help, I need this...I deserve this."

"What are you talking about?" I

desperately scan the room, trying to find anything that could help me

remove these burning ropes without touching them myself.

"It is my punishment, leave them..." She mutters out, barely responsive. She was ghostly pale, her eyes rolling into the back of her head.

"Punishment? Punishment for what?"

"Freya is a pack traitor, she remains here under the kindness of the alpha." A coldness radiates from Beta Zane, his words laced with venom.

"What? You knew about this?"

Aghast, I turn around to Than,

expecting his help, that he like me was just as shocked by Zane's domestic abuse. But not one part of him seems surprised, not one part of him was trying to help me rip the ropes off Freya.

"A traitor's scar never heals." Than grunts out, his eyes holding mine before he turns his back on his female-beta, heading back up the stairs. Leaving me in the dark loneliness of the basement.

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Cleo -

"Freya?" I bend down, trying to gain her eye contact but she was in so much pain...her eyes were hardly focusing.

To my astonishment Zane fetches another rope soaked in wolfsbane, preparing to put it on her. He had thick leather gloves on, it might not be causing him harm but she was in excruciating pain.

Why was he behaving like nothing was wrong.

"Stop...stop it." I aggressively push Zane's hand away from her, blocking her body from him with mine. "What are you doing?" I growl out, my voice demanding.

"She wants it, she needs it."

"Needs it?"

His eyes dart between me and Freya, before moving to the ropes in his hands.

"I'm not...do you think I am doing this to her?"

Am I the only one that is truly seeing the depravity before me. Did I accidentally take a sip on the hip flask without remembering. Why was everyone acting like this wasn't severely wrong.

"You were putting the ropes on her."

"Yes, but without me..."

"Without you what?" I seethe out, my jaw tense as it takes a lot of my strength to not act out and throttle him with the ropes in his hands. Give him a taste of his own medicine.

"It's her punishment, for helping the lunas."

"Lunas?"

"She helped Luna Alora escape, then sided with Kaia."

"But that was twenty years ago? Have you been doing this to her for twenty years?" Now the red scars upon her arm finally make sense.

Scars that had been painfully reopened. Scars that were struggling to heal under the impact of the poison, blood continuing to drip down the chair's arms creating a small puddle on the basement floor.

"Without me helping her she would be dead. It was her punishment set by the alpha. Without me, she would have taken it too far." He looks at me as if I was the delusional one, as if I'm the one that has gone insane.

"Twenty years ago?" He could be speaking a different language for what good it was doing me to understand what was happening right now.

"I want you to remove the ropes from her, take her upstairs and let her rest." I powerfully command out. "..."

"You don't want to get on my bad side Zane!"

"Yes Luna."

A fiery fury was alight within me, how could Freya still be paying for her choice from almost twenty years ago.

I follow Zane upstairs to the top floor, where he gently places a sobbing Freya onto the bed, before fetching warm water and soaking her wounds clean.

Knowing she was at least safe for now, I storm out of the beta household, entering the alpha house with a venomous anger surging through me.

"What the fuck was that?" I scream out, not waiting to be granted entry into the alpha office, I

barge in not caring if he was alone or not.

"Cleo...calm down."

"Don't tell me to calm down. You better start explaining..."

"It's simple, every time Freya does or says something that would be detrimental to this pack or to me as an alpha she self harms as punishment."

"Self harms? No Zane was standing over her placing the ropes on her."

"No, he was helping her. He found her doing it to herself.."

"so rather than stop her, he helped?"

"She has to keep going until she submits to it."

"Submits to what?"

"The alpha command." He calmly responds, his hands moving and resting openly on top of his desk.
"Alpha command? You commanded her to do this....for all this time?" No, that's not possible.

"No, not for all this time. It started

again when you arrived here... I guess you triggered it again." He shrugs

out at me, not at all bothered by what he had just walked in on..unlike me

I'm utterly disgusted by not only

what I had just seen, but the fact et

that he was allowing it...not just allowing it... he had instigated it a lifetime ago.

"Oh my god...you are a monster." I seethe out, my eyes finally awaking to the male in front of me.

"No...I'm not a monster. She was a traitor of the pack, I granted her clemency to return...her punishment is self inflicted."

"Yes because of the alpha

command, she's the female

beta...she will do whatever you ask her to do. You could have released

her from it.." But why does she keep

doing it, why is she

fighting it.

Chapter 549

Why not just leave.

"Yes I could have." He holds my glare with a challenging manner.

"I can't believe this."

"Don't think that your Father, that Hector hasn't done similar things...they just dress it different. As an alpha you do what you must to protect your pack."

No, I'm not buying that. My father and Hector might do things but nothing like this...they would kill rather than inflict this kind of pain upon somebody. No matter who or what they've done. Sometimes death was the mercy...something that Than knew would have been an easy option for Freya.

So instead he has kept her in this imprisoned mental state....which is why she was so desperate to leave me this morning. She had started talking about Kaia...about Alora.

"She has a mate bond with your own beta, you do realise that it is affecting him too. That you weaken him too."

"If my beta chooses to keep the mate bond then that is on him. He's had plenty of chances to reject it, that's not on me...I don't give much thought anymore to the mate bond..."

"Only because yours didn't work out for you."

"Careful." He warns me, his body slightly lifting up off his office chair. I don't stop, he doesn't scare me. "But you can't punish others for what has happened to you. The mate bond is there for a reason, you have to..."

"You are right Cleo, the mate bond doesn't work for everyone...for some it tricks...it kills." He interrupts, his voice cold.

"I shouldn't be here." I take a step backwards, needing to be out of this room. Off this pack.

"Too bad, you've signed an unbreakable agreement. Remember whatever happens to me you and your

child are the future of this pack. I will protect this pack from every possible threat, even

one from inside." His fist slams down on the desk, my body flinching from the loud bang.

"And what of the old woman, how is she a threat? You're keeping her a prisoner here.." "She will serve a purpose."

"A purpose, you mean with the White Moon pack?"

"Any alpha is wise to keep options to protect his pack. As my luna I would expect..." "I can't be your luna...not now."

"Why? Because someone inside of the pack does something you don't agree with. I'm sure there are things in your pack that are kept quiet, things that others wouldn't agree with His eyes narrow in on me, a menacing scowl aimed at me.

"Like what?"

"How about a mother that isn't fit to be a luna..."

"Don't talk about my mother." I roar out, my hands fisting into tight balls by my side. I won't have anyone talking about Mum...questioning her as a Luna.

"It's true isn't it though." He stands up, moving around the office desk, taking a step closer to me. "No..."

"Cleo, I have spies, as does your father, as does the dark phantom pack. You forget that Hector is my brother, I know how his mind works."

"Is that what I am...a spy?"

"No, you are my luna...your child is my heir. Don't let this one thing destroy the week we have shared. My people have taken to you, and you to them."

A vibration comes from his desk, his ringing phone forcing us both to break eye contact.

With a sigh he rejects the call, his eyes returning back to me.

"Cleo...a pack like this isn't part of the grand alliance, isn't looked after. I have therefore been required to put measures in place to protect these lands, my people."

"And with me being here you know

the alliance won't come after you...because they won't want to hurt megasp out, suddenly understanding what I was doing here How stupid I had been, how

easily manipulated.

"Just the cherry on top..." He shrugs out, a smug smirk creeping onto his lips before groaning out as his phone vibrates again.

"Yes, what...I said I didn't want to be disturbed?" He roars down his phone, only for his eyes to fall back

on me...a smile forming upon his lips.

"Well it would seem we have guests."

"Guests?"

"At the gate...let's put my theory to the test shall we?"

Chapter 550

- Cleo ~

"At the gate...let's put my theory to the test shall we?" A determined expressions forms across his him, as he head towards his office door...his hands gripping on to my elbow as he passes.

I had no choice but to follow him, not unless I was prepared to fight him.

But I was intrigued by what he meant, that I would follow him anyway...who was at the pack gates?
"Why, who is at the pack gates?"

"Your Dad and Hector...my warriors are already on their way."

Panic floods through me, at an uncontrollable force.

"What? No that can't be?"

"You didn't call them, you didn't tell them where you were?" He stops just by the front door, an oomph noise escaping me as I walk into him from my lack of attention.

My mind was on full alert for what would happen outside, not in this hallway. Besides he had dragged me along with him, his hand still grips onto my elbow even now. The tut that follows him was purely of his own doing.

"No, my phone has been off this entire time." I honestly reply, how did they find me.

"Then how did they know..."

"Jaxon..his car..." It hadn't occurred to me that Jaxon's car would have a tracker, something that

he must have activated to find me.

I had kept my phone off all this entire time for that exact reason, not to be found...not yet.

"It must have a tracker. Honestly, Than...I didn't know."

"You stay by my side and don't even think of leaving, this is your pack now." He growls out to me, his

hand gripping firmly on my elbow, pulling me closer into him. I could feel his warm hot breath upon my shoulder blade, his aggression towards me trying to scare me.

As soon as we step out of the alpha house front door I become petrified by the number of warriors already standing outside.

Lines of fighter wolves just waiting for the orders to attack...to kill.

No... This isn't what I wanted. I never wanted to put my family in danger from my decision to come here. What have I done...

A hand wraps around my lower back, pulling me to his side as I watch two cars in the distance head towards our location.

Two black SUV's, unmistakably pack vehicles.

"Don't even think about moving." He seethes next to me as my body tries to become less rigid upon the cars pulling up and the doors opening.

Figures step out, my parents...then the other vehicle...Hector and Kaia.

A gasp escapes me, as his hand grips tighter around my hip....I could already hear the rumble from the notorious Dark Phantom Alpha.

His eyes already turning to black as his eyes move to the hand gripping me at my hip.

"You're angering him...and on purpose." I lowly growl out to Than, my hand touching his and taking it off me.

Not only did I not want them to think there was something romantic here...I also wasn't used to another male touching me yet.

Just knowing it wasn't Jace still made me feel sick.

My eyes move past my parents,

eyes that I was trying my best not to meet...I could already feel the hurt in Mum, the anger in Dad as the pack bond kicks back in from them being close to me again. Another figure steps out of the car...a fifth person. At first I think it might be him, but to my horror... it is Ares.

No, why is he here. He shouldn't be seeing this.

Minutes past where words are not exchanged, just growls. The threat from the warriors was looming over

us all, but my parents didn't seem to pay them any mind.

They were solely concentrating on myself and the male that stood beside me.

The anger I had felt at Mum the moment I ran from the pack dissipated as I could see the fear in hers.

I hate that I have caused her to worry, but this was my only option and I have to live with that.

The tension was so thick that even

being out in the open air, it was almost tangible. Kaia turns to face the warriors, she was preparing to take them all down...a smirk spreading out onto her face the

moment a warrior snarls out at her.

"Then, please...stand the warriors down." I take a step closer to him

pleading to him. I didn't want a fight,

I

dn't want any harm to fall upon

them, not because of me.