

Denied 571

Chapter 571

~ Cleo ~

Mum was just tired and for some reason being here wasn't good for her.

Just like she would sometimes struggle when we returned to the Dark Phantom pack..or when Dad wasn't with her.

Yes it was her family pack...where she grew up but even then it was like a darkness took over her.

The same thing was happening here.

Both Ares and I had spoken to Dad about it downstairs, whilst Mum's wolf laid by the kitchen

patio door, waiting to be allowed back inside. The sound of whimpering coming from her.

I could feel Jace's heated glare upon my back, his eyes watching me carefully as I spilled secrets of my childhood to Dad. Secrets I had held onto for too long.

The Clear Waters vehicles had come to escort Alora safely home. This was my last chance to say goodbye to her, the next would be the finality of her funeral.

I had to do this, I had to accept the fact that I have caused her death. No matter what anybody says, I know deep down I will live with this for the rest of my life.

Jace dodged the bullet that hit her, but it was me that caused the gun to be fired. Medea may have murdered her...but Alora wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for me.

Something, I don't think I will ever be at peace with.

The rawness of the this morning, will remain with me forever.

Jace was furious with Mum, only letting her back inside when she had shifted and Dad promised to be with her at all times.

The problem is, it isn't the first time he has witnessed this happening, and now as the luna of this pack, I know it won't be the last. This place was doing something to Mum, but it was now my home.

With a deep sigh I finally muster the courage to push open the bedroom door of the guest room that Alora's body had been resting in, Kaia continuing to not have left her side.

I have to do this, I have to be strong.

Stepping inside, Kaia's head whips around...a sigh of relief escaping her when she sees it is me and not the men of her family coming in to remove Alora from her.

Quietly, I move in...taking a seat on the spare chair on the opposite side of the bed to Kaia, who was leaning forward, gripping at Alora's hand.

At first my prayers are in silence, I don't ever expect Alora to forgive me...but I pray to the Moon Goddess that she finds peace with her.

"I'm so sorry..." My sobs are quiet, and not meant to be uttered but my emotions are too much to contain any longer.

"I don't ever expect you to forgive me." I whisper out, taking Alora's hand and placing it in mine...moving it to my lips and placing a kiss upon the back of her hand.

"There is nothing to forgive Cleo." Kaia's voice tries to soothe me, but I can't accept her kindness...not yet.

"Don't Kaia, please."

"When Alora heard that you were here...she didn't hesitate to get to you. None of us did. If Alora and I had been more honest and open about our childhoods, how we re-entered each other's lives .. then maybe she wouldn't be dead right now.

Not one person is to blame for her death. As much as I am going to miss her, her death is the results of the two of us deciding to keep things hidden in the past.

Than completely took advantage of that. You aren't any more to blame for her death than Jace who moved out of the way of the bullet. If it wasn't for her sacrifice, then I would be mourning my son...and that, is something that truly would

broken me. She's at peace she's with the moon goddess....reunited with our mother...until I join them.” A sad smile forms upon Kaia's face, her eyes glistening with fresh tears....her face already sore and red from the tears she had shed throughout the night.

"I shouldn't have trusted him." I seethe out, angry at myself above all.

"My son backed you into a corner, and you acted out in the only way that seemed possible for you at the time. Although I don't see why you didn't remain at home...your parents would have supported you, you know that."

"I didn't want to put them in a position where it affected their relationship with you and Hector.

They live for your friendship..."

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"No Cleo, they live for you and Ares."

“Perhaps, I also didn't want Ares' alpha title to be affected." I sigh out, truths were

being spoken that should have been said a long time ago.

Death creating a time to ponder on the past, on the mistakes made.

"Is that what you think of us, that we wouldn't have looked after our own."

"For all I knew, I was pregnant with a man's child that had a fated mate. It would have ruined everything..."

"My son is the only one at fault of that."

"No, he cannot take all the blame. Looking back I felt the bond all my life, I just didn't believe I was worthy of him, that I deserved him." Silent tears start to cascade down my cheek.

"Oh Cleo." Her hand reaches out to mine, wrapping it around both mine and Alora's.

"It wasn't just the bond, I needed to leave in that moment, I couldn't cope with the disappointment on Mum's face."

"Your Mum may be lost at times Cleo, but she never loses faith in you."

"Maybe, I just wish she wouldn't let the darkness in."

"It's being here....it's being near the Amber Desert pack. It brings back bad memories for her."

"How so?"

I see hesitation in her eyes, but I need to know...I need to understand why Mum has a darkness in her...what if it takes me when I become a mother. What if it is hereditary.

"When she was young, younger than you are now. The Amber Desert pack was surrounding the borders of the Dark Phantom pack in an attempt to claim me back. I had escaped, finding out that I was pregnant with Than's child...and that once I gave birth he would have harvested my organs to save Alora.

His warriors scattered the borders, Hector refusing to give me up. Rosa was

looking for your grandfather at the borders, one of the warriors coaxed her off the pack grounds...pretending to be her mate."

"What?"

"He....he took advantage of her youth and naivety at not being able to feel the mate bond, but believing that he could.

It ruined her...until your Dad visited and claimed her as his mate."

"She was attacked, sexually attacked?"

"Yes I'm afraid so. Your Mum has demons that have never truly healed."

Everything makes sense now, why she has always been excessively protective not letting me be alone with males in the pack, not even my own pack members that are there to keep the alpha's daughter safe.

No wonder she lets her wolf take control, the memories must be too painful and

she blacks out.

"I had no idea."

"That is how they wanted it. That's

how we all wanted it...a fresh

ning

started. But can see now, we weren't recovering we were from the past...and it has now impacted our future. A mistake won't make again." She defiantly declares, her hand cupping the side of Alora's face.

I always wondered why Mum barely saw her parents, why I didn't have much of a relationship

with my own grandparents...not from any fault of theirs, or Mum's for that matter.

Returning to the Dark Phntom pack held dark memories for mum. Ones that she couldn't face.

"Where is he...is he here?" If he was still here I would punish him immediately.

"No, Hector killed him. From what I gather he didn't have any family left here. Don't hold it against the pack...one person's crime shouldn't lead to an entire pack's punishment."

I let her words sink in, take a moment to consider her advice.

"Thank you for telling me. I know it couldn't have been easy, but I appreciate your honesty." I stand at a gentle knock on the door. Kaia's panic stricken eyes dart to the door, before back to her sister where she tidies her clothing and hair

"Cleo?"

"Hmm?"

"Jace has loved you since you were born. Please don't hold it against him that he became confused, it must have been hard for those feelings to change when they did.

He just needed time...granted he's gone about it the wrong way...but his love for you is undying. Remember that when he tests your patience."

"I will." I move to the door, slowly pulling it open and stepping aside as Hector, Ezra, Jace and Jaxon enter into the room, preparing to carry Alora down to the waiting black van in the courtyard.

Her death needed avenging but for now we have a funeral to plan for, we need to say goodbye.

Chapter 573

- Jace -

The black doors close with a harsh bang, the van's engine firing back to life as it slowing moves away...taking my aunt on her last journey home.

Everyone was to follow, except Cleo and myself. We would leave in a few day's time when it was the funeral, I couldn't leave the Amber Desert pack too long...not until I secure the pack and ensure I will have a pack to return to.

It wouldn't be the first time in history where a pack has risen against an alpha.

"Alpha?" The black van moves past the gates in the distance as a male's voice steals away my attention.

I turn to find the leader of the small group of warriors approaching me. The ones that stood aside on their alpha's command as the pack was invaded by my orders.

He was tall, almost as tall as me, with black sleeked back hair, an army green T- shirt on that showed tattoos across his arms. He wasn't as bulky as me but he still had the muscles that could throw a mean punch.

"Sorry to disturb you Alpha at a time like this." His head is hung low, but he continues to look me in the eyes. Something tells me he knew not to turn his back on the previous alpha, that the trust wasn't two sided.

"What can I do for you?"

"You wanted a report at 8am this morning..." His silvery eyes continue to hold mine.

I did, it was already late afternoon, in the commotion of waking up to find Rosa in her wolf form...this morning's plans had been thrown out of the window.

"You best come inside then."

Heading back into the alpha house, I find Cleo already in the alpha office... checking through documents.

Her head whips up as I enter, the warrior following behind.

"Let's start off with your name shall we?" I place my hand out as a deep rumble emits from me at Cleo being on the cold hard floor...she looks up at me with those turquoise blue innocent eyes before taking my hand, allowing me to pull her up to her full height.

"Ozborne Alpha."

"Well Ozborne, my Luna and I are very interested to know why your group of fighters seem to have different sanctions from the rest of the pack?"

"We were assigned to protect the alpha family."

"From?" I rest my back against the desk, Cleo standing to my side.

"May I speak freely?" His eyes move between the two of us as I view him with caution. I was raised with the Dark Phantom warriors, I knew their characteristics...but here I was starting from scratch.

"Yes, you may." Cleo's voice is strong as she gestures for him to continue.

"The Amber Knights..."

"The Amber Knights?" I repeat, did I hear that correctly.

"Yes Alpha...we were created as the last level of defence for the alpha."

"Last level of defence?"

"Yes Luna, for him and the former luna to escape."

"Typical...not willing to go down with their sinking ship." Cleo growls out, as she looks up at me.

"I think I've put you out of a job then."

I

my eyes locked on Cleos.

she was gorgeous even

when angry.

"It would seem that way..."

"Are you surveillance trained?" I drag my eyes away from her, back to him.

"Of course."

"Good, I need you to find out where the former Luna has escaped to. Do you think you can do that? Are you willing to do that?" This would be the testing time of knowing who here I can trust, and who here I can't.

His eyes flicker between mine and Cleo's, another male looking at my mate even in a subordinate way makes my teeth clenched together. His eyes shoot to the floor when am not subtle in pulling her in to me, keeping the horny and possessive wolf in me at bay...for a little while longer.

"Are you willing to help us hunt down the luna that left her son to die?" I rumble out.

"Yes."

"Good, report back to me every forty eight hours...and take the beta with you."

"The beta?" His eyes widen at my request.

"If he happens to get injured...it wouldn't be a bad thing."

"Sir?"

"I'm in the market for a new beta...do this well, and that could be you." Do I really have to say it in layman's terms.

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"Understood." With a deep inhale, he understands what I am asking of him. I don't want the beta to take one step back on this pack lands...if he dies, then so be it.

"Ozborne, before you go...Luna Cleo and I need to go off site in a few days time...any trouble makers within the pack? I don't want to come back to anarchy."

"As long as you can secure the pack's future and safety, then they will be yours to command." He offers out before leaving the office.

I like him already, he doesn't sugar coat things...he reminds me a lot of my friend Colt, who Callie and I own the beach club with.

I couldn't have a beta around that had spent his life in servitude to another alpha, one that I had just killed and taken over the pack of.

"Jace, about Zane." Cleo shifts next to me.

"You want me to let him pack his bags and walk off into the sunset? Because he'll only go find Medea."

"Actually no, I think you need to see something."

I follow Cleo as she moves out of the house, my eyes taking in her figure...I could already

see how much her cleavage has changed, fuck I noticed that the night of the dinner, when everything imploded in on ourselves.

All I want to do is touch her, claim her, but I

need to remember that I need to do right by her, that I have time....we have time.

"Where are we going?"

"To the beta house." She cryptically replies, not giving me any further information.

I follow her, through the beta house front door...up the stairs, where she gently knocks on a door before a feminine voice responds.

My eyes widen to find a female chained to the bed post, who starts to kick out as Cleo gains distance.

"Freya...he chained you?" Cleo growls out in disgust.

"Cleo...who is that, what's going on." The female looks to me in fear, her body pulling in on itself...into a protective ball by the head board.

I growl out in warning when Cleo moves to break the chains holding the female...they weren't even silver, or wolfsbane soaked...just normal chains. It's as if she wanted to

remain chained to the bed.

"I heard growls, and gunshots." This female looks up at my mate as if she idolised

her.

"Has Zane not been in?" Cleo's eyes move to mine.

"No...why? What's going on?"

"This is Jace, my mate...he is now the new Alpha of the Amber Desert pack."

"New Alpha? I felt a change in the pack bond...is that what it is...where's Than?" I take a step closer, she seemed to have a deteriorating mind and I didn't want her too close to Cleo.

"Than's dead. I killed him, I am your new Alpha, and Cleo is my luna."

As I take another step closer I notice the signs of red marks upon the female's arms.

"Cleo, what is going on here?" I demand out.

"Than commanded Freya here to punish herself for helping your mother and Alora to escape the pack.

She returned, only to be commanded to the point of insanity...my arrival here triggering her to harm herself again....."

"What?"

"Than and Zane just let it happen. In fact Zane thought he was helping her." "Why are you telling me this?"

"So that you can see how deeply your mother still affects this pack. They may rise up against us Jace, but we need to be patient, we need to remain fair. They need time adapt. If we return to anarchy, then

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so be it...but together we will earn their trust, we will show them that there is another way.

Your Mum and my Mum will not want much to do

with this pack Jace, we make the decisions...we help our families and friends when the time comes.

But from this moment on...this pack is our number one priority, we owe it to them. We owe them a clean slate."

I couldn't love her more if I tried, she

was glowing. She blew my mind of how strong, how forgiving she is. Yes was right, if she and I were packalso.

having a clean slate...starting afresh, then we owed it to this

Chapter 575

- Cleo -

Freya needed help, she needed constant watching...something I can't do for her. How could I settle her at the alpha house only to leave in a few day's time, it wouldn't be right by her.

But that didn't stop the guilt at watching her being admitted into the psych ward at the hospital.

She seemed absolute fine in my time here, I would t have thought anything out of the ordinary...then snap...suddenly, it's like she's a different person. How Than's abuse in power really has affected her.

She was also about to feel the break of the mate bond, not only could she not be alone in the alpha house for that...I also needed to protect Jace, protect myself and our baby.

Do I agree with Jace's order for Zane to "go missing" on a mission...no, but I understand it is what is necessary for the future of the pack.

Zane being beta opens up the opportunity for Medea to hurt us. To control him for revenge.

He also allowed his alpha to do this to his own mate, this was what really played on my mind.

Above all the mate bond should be protected, seen as sacred. He failed her, and now they would both pay the price.

With any luck she won't understand why she feels the tether of the mate bond, her mindset was deteriorating by the day.

I now need the doctors to watch her, she needed to be in the hospital with people around her twenty-four hours a day.

"Luna?" One of the doctor's steps out of her room, his eyes moving up from her chart and onto me. I needed to trust them, I needed them to know we planned on

a future here...and there was no time like the present.

"I need you to contact the Red Thorn pack, ask for Doctor Sophia."

"For any partifucular reason Luna?"

"You need to request all of my medical records, even ones off records. Tell her I demand it."

"Are you unwell?"

"No, I'm pregnant...and I haven't had any checks or scans..."

He holds his gasp at my announcement, whether he already knew or not, he wasn't letting on. I didn't know who Than may have already told.

"Congratulations, I'll make the necessary arrangements. I'll get word to you..."

"You can mind link me." Jace's stern voice commands out from behind me. He wasn't happy that I had just shared our news, but I had a feeling I wouldn't regret it...I had faith in the pack.

"Yes Alpha!" The doctor tilts his head slightly in a sign of submission to Jace, before moving along the corridor.

"I did think of having her at the alpha house...in...I still don't know her

name. In your Mum's auntie's roo But she's not safe to be left alone right now."

After all that had transpired, I still didn't learn her name. By the time she had left she looked decades younger thanks to Josie's healing

abilities, but she was still a mystery

tome.

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"If she is a danger to herself..." Jace takes a step forward, looking through the glass at Freya.

"She is.." I sigh out.

"Then she is a danger to the pack, to you. You are doing the right thing."

"Her only crime was trusting the wrong people. Why did Kaia let her come back here."

"I don't know, there are things we may never know the answer to.." His voice trails

off as he pulls his phone out of his front pant's pocket.

"Jaxon is calling."

"Go...I'll catch you up."

"Not a chance! I meant what I said, you don't leave my side."

"Then I'll come with you."

As we leave the hospital, Jace's hands grip tightly around my body as he is listening to Jaxon's update over the phone.

Since Jace became the new alpha, my wolf has gained energy by the hour.

I won't be able to shift, not until I have given birth but she seems to be siphoning

energy from the mate bond, from Jace's closeness.

The buzz between us like a fully charged battery.

"You've got to be shitting me?" I can't help but lean my ear, pushing on my wolf's extended hearing to listen in on the phone call. Since my wolf's energy has increased Dam

able to hear and see further.

I catch parts of the conversation, but not all of it...however I can feel my face

paling when Callie's parent's are mentioned.

With a dissatisfied growl, Jace hangs up...pushing on the hospital doors a little too forcefully.

He lets his arm hang out, keeping the door open for me to move between him and the door...before closing it behind him.

Chapter 576

"Everything alright?"

"Not really no." He grunts back as he moves me towards the car we arrived in to bring Freya to the hospital. I reach out to open the door myself but he is there before me, already opening the door for me...his hand stretching out to help me inside.

I suppress the desire to roll my eyes...I was pregnant, not incapable.

But things were still fresh between us, I wasn't tip toeing around him...but I still needed to appreciate that he had just given up everything for me...we needed some adjusting time. Some time to get used to being just the two of us.

We were still very much finding our feet.

I didn't want to press him, I didn't want to demand that he tells me things...not if he doesn't think I don't need to know.

I trust him wholly. However, I can't help the sinking feeling in my heart at the mention of Callie, of her parents.

I turn my head to hide my disappointment at the mention of her name, only for his

hand to land upon my thigh...drawing my attention back to him.

"Callie's parents are refusing to leave, refusing to understand what has happened."

"Happened...they must have been notified about Alora." I can't help the small scoff that escapes me, what else did they need to know.

We had lost somebody dear to us, the packs were

in mourning...

"Why Callie is no longer going to be the Luna of the Clear Waters pack. Why my sister and her mate are taking on the leadership."

Anger boils up within me, Alora had died. My mate, who they thought was Callie's mate, had been nearly killed by that same bullet and they were concerned about titles, about status.

"They refuse to leave until they see me, which means..." He cuts himself off with a growl, but I already know what he is about to say.

"You need to go to the Clear Waters early. I understand." Everything was still a mess, in disarray...it would take time to clear things up.

Not just internally...but externally with the wider shifter community.

"It's not ideal, but I owe it to Callie..."

My jaw tenses at the mention of her name, at how protective he is of her...even still.

"I can stay, keep any eye on things and join you for the funeral."

"No, you are coming with me...that is not up for discussion."

"What of the pack?"

"We will hold a pack meeting this afternoon. That should put their mind's at ease...hopefully."

"This is such a mess." I sigh out as the alpha house comes into view.

"Maybe a few days away will do us some good, we can get the house decorated

in our absence. Come back to our house...how we want it."

"Are you sure this is what you want?"

I have to ask just this one time.

Doubt was such a dark demon as

festers beneath the surface...he

Sit

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came here to bring me back. Not to take on a pack and all of its

problems.

He slams the breaks on the car, his arm shooting out to stop me from hitting the dashboard.

"I don't want you to ever ask me that again.." He seethes out.

"Jace..."

"I don't ever want you to think that, do you hear me?" I can hear the anger in his voice, watch the way his chest starts to move more rapidly, signally his wolf's rising anger. This wolf sending me a warning not to ask that question again.

He starts the car again, continuing on the path that leads to the alpha house.

It was a fair question, and one I had

to ask...even if just the one time.

couldn't see into his mind yet, couldn't feel his emotions...and now couldn't Callie's parents were demanding to see him.

What if they make him change his mind, what if.....

The car comes to a halt outside of the alpha house, I move to open the passenger door when he is already ripping it open, reaching for my hand and moving me out of the car.

"Jace...what are you doing." I look behind, he hasn't even closed the car door as he continues to push me into the alpha house.

"You need to feel me, you need to know this is all I've ever wanted."

"Jace..." I exasperate, confused by his rushed movement. Only for him to slam the front door behind me, locking it...his lips crashing into mine with a need, a desperation to claim me as his.

To make me his forever.

Chapter 577

- Jace -

I kiss her, kiss her with uncontrollable passion.

I needed her to know what she does to me, how

much I wanted this...how much I want her.

My mouth crashes into hers, tasting her...my tongue needing to touch hers, to taste hers.

She's already pulling at my waistband, her fingers having roamed my muscular physique...it would seem she needs me just as much as I need her.

I'm already ripping at her clothes, my mind entering into a lustful haze that starts to impact my vision.

We weren't going to make it upstairs, one thing was for certain.

She pushes me into the wall, her hands pulling at my waistband again, this time releasing my rock hard dick and gripping it in her hands.

I moan out, the fucking sensation of her touching me the best feeling in the world...until I was thrusting inside of her.

I twist us, placing her up against the wall, my hands roaming over her as I rip off her top, and pull her own leggings down, to reveal a matching set of black lace underwear, fuck me.

It may be black but the lace meant I could see her hard pert pink nibbles through the material.

I pull her bra cups down, placing her nibbles in my mouth where I suck and bite down...earning a lustful moan from her.

Just touching her wasn't enough, I needed to be inside of her. I needed to claim her again.

Moving my hands down to her hips, under her thighs I hoist her up, wrapping her legs around the back of me as I move her towards the stair case. But with her sucking on my neck, nibbling at my

ear, I cannot wait.

I lay her down on the stairs, my lips temporarily hushing her moans of pleasure until they move back down her body, licking from her jawline all the way down to her belly button.

"Jace...shit.." A smirk escapes me as her body buckles as my hands cup her lower core, heat and

dampness already exuding out of her.

I didn't need to see if she was ready for me, there was no doubt about that.

Each part of her was perfection, from her blonde long hair, to her soft skin...to her turquoise blue eyes...her curves and even her scent.

She was made for me, she was a goddess in human form, she was mine.

"I need you. Now." I groan out in pleasure as she holds my shaft in her hands, pulling me closer towards her, to her entrance where I thrust in, her tightness preparing to send me over the edge just from that one movement alone.

Upstairs was long gone, there was no point of even trying to get us to move

upstairs. I would claim her and mark her here... on these stairs.

I had waited too long already, I refused to wait any

longer.

I should have marked her at the hotel, I won't make that mistake again.

She deserved it so be on a floating mattress, under the moon lit sky...but my goddess was earth bound...and I won't nearly lose her again.

"Jace...hmm."

I was in control, she was melting beneath me. Yet she had the power to destroy me.

My tongue silences her moans again, forcing itself into her mouth as she fights me for power for the kiss.

She's fighting me for control, when was already deep within her. I let her take control, let her pull back...biting on my lower lip and dragging it out as she breaks apart.

"Easy.." I growl out as she nips on my lip, breaking skin. I lift her up, moving her so that I can push deeper inside of her, yet still have her neck in poised position.

I keep thrusting into her, her body moving with mine as she rocks her hips back and forth, chasing her own release, Lean feel my own skin on fire from her closeness, from her touch. Each pore, each hair moving like a gravitational pull to be in her.

Tingles continue to erupt all over me, I have to push back on my own desire for

release...not until I saw to it that she climaxed first.

I can feel her walls starting to tremble, feel her orgasm building. Her resolve crumbling.

Chapter 578

She was mine, she is mine.

She screams out, her orgasm hitting her at the same time that I sink my teeth into her neck.

Pushing through skin and tissue until I hit against the bone.

The metallic taste of her blood floods into my mouth as my teeth sink into bone, marking her...claim her finally as mine.

She screams out my name, her emotions her memories...flooding through me as the bond strengthens that little bit further.

The unbreakable bond between us moving that one more step closer to being completed once and for all.

Her emotions plough into me as she opens up to me, as she succumbs to the pull of the mate bond once and for all.

Her juices surround me, as I continue to thrust in and out, the sounds of our bodies moving echoing around us.

The aroma from her juices becomes too much as I continue to chase my own rhythm...my seed releasing into her.

If she wasn't already pregnant, I would ensure that she was. The drive to make her mine, for me to have countless children with her...

"Jace." Her heavy eyes widen as I hear her plea...she was moments from falling asleep. A marking from an alpha wolf was notoriously difficult to immediately bounce back from. Her body was already needing time to recover.

After licking her mark to help speed up the healing process, I lean my neck towards her, her fingers digging into my skin as she craves me, just as I crave her.

Her sweet nectar spilling out on to her thighs, mixing with my own, as I withdraw from her.

She runs her fingers through my hair, not being subtle as she pulls me closer to her, her teeth sinking into my skin...hitting bone.

I feel my head turn woozy...fuzzy as the bond between us completes...her emotions continuing to plough into me, the pack bond strengthening to welcome the new luna.

"I love you." She whispers out as she retracts her teeth, her limp body dropping into my arms.

Her heavy eyes look up at me with pleasure, happiness...exhaustion.

"I love you." She'll never understand the depths of how much I love her, how I will never be satiated enough...I will always want more of her.

Always.

I gently pick her up in my arms, walking us up to the top of the stairs... before pausing. I stare at the upper level, at similar closed doors not providing any indication of her room.

"Third room from the left." I smile out as her voice pushes through my head, the mind-link between already existing.

I kick the bedroom door open, her scent overwhelming me...so this would be our room for the time being,

There was not a chance in hell I would take her into the alpha room...not until each wall was

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repainted each carpet was ripped up and replaced. Any traces of the previous alpha gone, eradicated from this house and pack lands.

I lay her gently on the bed, before moving to the ensuite to run the shower.

Leaving the water to warm up, I head back into the bedroom, picking her back up off the bed and into my arms.

"You need a shower first."

"I need you." She moans out, reaching for me.

"You have me."

"I need more."

"You will, but first shower and sleep." I chuckle out, pulling her back into my arms and carrying her to the shower.

I hold her, standing her up, lathering her up with shower-gel...washing her juices off her thighs.

We stand together, neither of us prepared to move. Her back resting into my chest as I bare her weight, she was almost asleep.

My hand cups her belly, my fingers drawing circles around her belly button...as I earn a moan from kissing her neck, my mark.

I calm my mind, let my ears ignore the sound of running water to concentrate on

her heartbeat...when I hear another.

Our baby's.

This, her...she's all I ever wanted. I

tried to push her away but she is

tenacious, she's strong, I should have seen it. I should have all along that no matter what I

I

attempted she would be my home, that she is my everything. And so Will be our baby.

Chapter 579

- Cleo -

Jace has called an emergency pack meeting this night.

We had already gone one night without explaining what was happening to the pack, without sounding them out as a whole group to make them see that we meant no harm. That we will treat them as we would our family packs. This couldn't wait, even as tired as we both were...and now needing to drive during the night to Clear Waters...this needed to be done. We didn't have time to rest, even though all I wanted to do was sleep, I couldn't.

To be marked by an alpha is rumoured to be exhausting, energy consuming...and they were right. Even if I wasn't lending my energy to grow our child... I think I would feel just the same from Jace's marking.

The most obvious place to hold the emergency meeting was the pack hall. It was large enough to house most of the pack members in seats, the rest were having to stand up at the back.

It was just Jace and I standing before them, on the stage that I presume is used for pack meetings, for events... meaning we were the focal point in the room and all eyes were upon us.

When Jace marked me I felt the completion of not only our mate bond, but of the pack bond. He was now the alpha, and the bond was transferred to me as his marked luna.

I could feel their emotions, a mixture of excitement for change... for a shake up....but also fear.

Fear of the unknown, of the notorious Dark Phantom's alpha's son forcibly taking over the pack

I can feel the change in their emotions, but as they all stare blankly up at us both...I cannot decipher who feels what. I cannot make out from the crowd who we can trust and who we can't...not yet anyway.

"I've called this meeting tonight to put your minds at ease." Jace's voice projects above the low general rumbles of the gathered crowd, bringing any noise except his to complete silence.

"My Father, the Alpha of the Dark Phantom pack was the original heir of this pack...and I have now taken it on."

"Taken it on? You murdered our alpha!" A male grunts out from the crowd, my eyes searching for signs of who had just shouted out.

"Yes, I killed Alpha Than...but not before my own Aunt...an innocent bystander.." Jace keeps his calm, remains level headed as he responds to the male that had interrupted him.

"You invaded our lands in the middle of the night, each and every one of you that trespassed was not innocent." Another tells out, my eyes zooming across the room as it comes from the back right corner.

"My Aunt was murdered by the previous luna, a silver bullet shot at her that was aimed for me. Even though I was winning, she fired out...the rules were broken."

"Where is the beta, why is he not here?"

"The beta is off site." I respond out, ensuring my voice can be heard all the way at the back.

Whispers spread amongst the crowd, hushed accusatory tones of where the beta couple were... of talks of the female beta being in hospital...

"Female beta Freya is in hospital." someone's voice rises above the whispers.

"We heard she was in the psych ward. Is that true?"

"I wouldn't usually disclose private medical details, but yes... Freya is in the psych ward." I sigh out.

"Who are you do to decide such a thing."

"She is your Luna, that's who." Jace growls out, his patience wearing thin with the crowd in front of him. This was testing for all of us and they had every right to ask questions but we weren't required to answer them.

Jay holding this meeting Jace was already showing how committed he was to running this pack, for finding a

peaceful conclusion.

I will not have his reputation, or mine for that matter, questioned by members of the pack that not only betrayed his mother...but also betrayed their own female beta.

I find it hard to believe that they didn't know what was happening to Freya.

"I want you to listen to us very carefully. I don't know what was tolerated before, what was socially allowed within this pack... what would cause you to turn a blind eye...but it stops today.

Chapter 580

I am legally the Luna of this pack, Alpha Than signed the deed himself.

Alpha Jace, on defeating Than is now the Alpha of this pack. This is a new start, this is where you think carefully about the pack you want to live in, the pack you want for your children to grow up in." I let my Luna aura roll off me and into the crowd staring back at me.

"There won't be a future, not if the Dark Phantom alphas take over, we will lose our identity, we will become a group pack."

"You already were, from the moment I signed those papers. From the moment Alpha Than invited me on to the pack lands...from when you all greeted me, welcomed me into your fold."

"How do we know that you will do right by us?" A male demands, his doubt earning a growl from Jace who takes a step in front of me, preparing to shield me if necessary.

"Because I have rejected my claim to the Clear Waters pack, I will remain here with my mate...and we will raise our child here. We offer you a future, a secured heir for the next generation....a do over. If you are willing to accept it."

It was more unnerving than I thought it would be to leave the Amber Desert pack grounds for the first time since arriving here.

So much has already changed in just over a week.

I had arrived hopelessly trying to secure the future of my unborn child, but leave with a mate, my child's father by my side, the opportunity to secure a future to rule our own pack

The meeting ended with the pack agreeing to give us a chance, to give us time to show them what type of leaders we can be.

Without a beta onsite to watch over the security of the pack in our absence, they agreed to maintain the border shift pattern until we returned.

That they would keep things smoothly running until we returned.

Right now, we couldn't ask for any more than that.

We needed people we could trust, we needed a new beta...we needed warriors that were committed to our cause. We couldn't afford to trust warriors just because we had inherited them from the previous alpha...we needed to consider all options.

I could feel Jace slightly anxious at also leaving the pack grounds so soon. As we move out of the gates, he even stops for a moment...talking to the guards before driving off.

We had a drive ahead of us but nothing compared to the four to five hour trip to the Dark Phantom lands...at least the Clear Waters was closer to us here, something that I think would be beneficial to Jace's relationship with Josie.

They were extremely close, the triplet bond between them unbreakable.

Arriving at the Clear Waters pack, it was the middle of the night. We both expected to find the alpha house still... everyone being asleep but when we pulled up it would appear each and every light was on.

Any chance of people being asleep inside, a minimal.

The pack was in mourning, the arrangements for Alora's funeral would have been planned out today by Kaia and Ezra.

But as I opened the car door, I could hear shouting

even from standing outside of the alpha house.

Whoever was yelling didn't understand the importance of a mourning pack.

"Fuck's sake." Jace moves around the front of the car to stand next to me.

"What?"

"Callie's parents...I'm sorry." He loudly sighs, his head even rolling back as he closes his eyes to look up at the moon. If I didn't feel his frustration at himself through the bond, I would certainly sense it from his movement. He needed to forgive himself, he needed to move on.

I guess that was hard though when his fake ex mate and her parent's were inside his old house.

"It's okay...we will sort this out together." I could see the guilt clear in his demeanour, his frustration of bringing this down upon us.

Of them causing more issues for us when we were already dealing with so much already.

"I'm sure they will leave once they understand we are mates." I'm hopeful, something that Jace doesn't seem to share. He places an arm around my waist, the other moves up to cup the side of my face.