

## Denied 581

### Chapter 581

"I love your optimism, don't ever lose it." He pulls me into his arms, before placing

a lingering kiss upon my lips...one that he is hesitant to pull away from.

So I do it for him.

We needed to face the music.

I open the front door, almost tripping over luggage left in the centre of the hallway. Jace is quick, taking a hold of my elbow to stop me from toppling over.

He twists himself in front of me, kicking the luggage to the side not caring who it belonged to...but I already had a sneaky suspicion of who was leaving tonight.

Now ahead of me, he doesn't wait...he moves into the living area where our families stood together...with a very clear divide between Callie and her parents.

Jace's annoyance hits me through the mate bond.

"This is outrageous, I demand to know what has happened for our daughter to be so cruelly casted aside." Alpha Bill growls out, Luna Louise scowling out at everyone within the room.

Her eyes coldly holding even Josie's before they lock onto mine.

Her arms were crossed in front of her, Alpha Bill's finger pointing out at our families as they stood over Callie in a single arm chair...her head in her hands, her eyes slammed shut.

Heads turn when Jace and I enter further into the room, most release the tension in their shoulders...all but Kaia. She was poised, she was ready for a fight.

"What is going on?" Jace growls out, his voice not apologetic for demanding to know why Callie's parents were not only still here, but why they seemed insistent on refusing to leave his family alone to grieve at a time like this.

"Good, you are finally here. Do you know how long we have been waiting for you to come here and explain yourself?" All eyes remain on Jace and myself, the eyes of our loved ones moving to our necks...smiles erupting out onto their faces when they notice the sore red marks upon our skin.

"You don't talk to my son that way." Kaia snarls out, her body preparing to attack as her shoulders were hunched over and her feet rolling forward.

This pack is in mourning, I would have thought that goes without saying." Jace grunts out, placing me in between Jaxon and Knox, before taking a step forward. Not only shielding me, but every member of our families.

"Yes, well...we are sorry for your loss but.." I'm shocked at Alpha Bill's blasé mention of Alora's death. How he even waves his hand out as if it was something

that could be swept away.

"But?" Jace seethes out.

"We deserve an explanataion."

"What is there to explain. Cleo and I are fated mates, Cleo is pregnant with my child, I have receded my title of the Clear Waters and have taken on the Amber Desert pack. I have marked another, my true mate."

A moment passes when they stare between Jace and then myself, their eyes

moving down to my stomach...something that makes even Jaxon shift at my side.

At his brother's movement, Jace's

head moves back towards me biel

eyes following their line of vision. He takes a deep breath in through his nose, his jaw tensing...

"You lied to us." Callie's mother snarls out to her.

"Yes." Callie bluntly responds.

"Why?"

"You know why." She sighs out, pain registering in her eyes.

"We are leaving, now." Luna Louise declares, Callie's eyes shooting to Jace, terrified.

"No, she stays here." I can't help but feel jealous as he argues against her parents, for her.

"This is a family matter."

"Callie is my family, we are business partners after all."

"Callie?" Kaia calmly calls out her name.

"I would like to pay my respects if that is okay with you?" Her head lifts up, red puffy eyes inform me that contrary to her reluctance to speak out, she's been struggling with her parent's angry outburst.

"You are always welcome with us, I hope you know that." Kaia softly offers out.

"If you remain here, you can forget about the pack, about returning. You can forget about that." Luna Louise leans forward, coldly hissing into Callie's ear.

"Get out, before I throw you out!" Jace darkly threatens, his body trembling with rage.

Chapter 582

- Cleo -

"How dare you, how dare you talk to us in the manner. Where is your respect." Luna Louise's shrieks, seemingly put out by Jace's threat of removing them if they did not remove themselves.

"Respect? How could I ever respect you...I know what you did, I know what you have done." Jace growls out, his thick alpha aura continuing to swirl around us all.

Rather than heed his warning, to my surprise, Luna Louise actually snarls out my mate. Sending me into instant defensive mode.

I take a step forward as Luna Louise flashes her teeth at Jace. I'm not the only one to take a menacing step forward, Kaia and Josie do the same.

It was female on female surrounding our male...but whereas they gain distance I am stopped, by Jaxon's arm that pulls me back.

Fury ignites within me, I'm not going to shift...I'm just backing my mate, reminding this female of where she stands. That nobody threatens my mate.

It would be the same if our roles were reversed.

Jaxon's protectiveness is because I am pregnant, I know it...but in the heat of the moment it angers me, that I would be treated so differently.

"Get off me." I seethe out to Jaxon, I have no qualms in telling him to back off. He doesn't frighten me like he does others, sometimes even his own family.

"Not a chance." He scoffs next to me, only riling me up even more.

"Alpha, Luna, the pack and family are in morning. I'm sure you understand that emotions are running high...perhaps we should think about getting you both home.

I'm sure Callie will follow in time." Mum is the only female to take a step towards Luna Louise in a non-intimidating manner. A diplomatic move.

"No, she has made her choice very clear...again. It stands that you have no place within our pack, that you are not welcome back." Luna Louise raises her chin, almost looking down at us all, but more so at her own daughter.

"I understand." Callie mutters out.

"Then you understand we will be forced to make suitable arrangements to secure the future of the pack, which will no longer involve yourself. We will do as we see fit." Alpha Bill sighs out.

"I wouldn't expect anything else."

What was I missing, what is it that Jace knows but I don't. Secrets, they shared secret.

They were leaving, yet Callie was staying.

Why was she staying, why was she clinging on to a mate that wasn't hers...to a family that wasn't hers.

Am I being unreasonable...

My walls are up, they have to be. I'm not sure what to make of what I am witnessing, of how Jace even crouches down to check on Callie...holding her face in his hands.

The way he touches me.

"You have a home here, a home with me. You stay as long as you need... understood?"

"I don't want to..."

"Nonsense Callie, you are part of the family now." My heart sinks at Kaia's words. part of the family. As angry as I have been at him, I'm starting to understand why Jace did what he did

Maybe it's the mate bond manipulating me to seeing his version of events, maybe it's now knowing how much he loves me....how I can feel his love for me coursing warmly through my veins. How much he wants me to be safe.

But how could another female pretend to be someone's mate, when she knew I was his mate.

How could she do that to another female.

I thought girls looked after girls. I could never have done something so harrowing to another female.

I only accepted Than's proposal when I knew his mate bond was broken.

She knew, she knew all along, she had to. From the moment she answered the bedroom door in her red lingerie....just the image makes bile rise up to the back of my throat.

He claims he had not been with her, but why was she semi naked in front of him. In such an intimate location, his old bedroom.

can feel my wolf's unease at Callie remaining here, of her closeness with Jace.

What if she tries to take him off me again....

I could feel myself spiralling, maybe it was lack of sleep, maybe it was pregnancy hormones...but I couldn't ignore the worry gripping at me.

I should be confident in my mate bond, have no doubt of my mate's affections...

that they are only for me. That I am the only one that he wants.

I know I am...but what if she wants him, what if she takes him from me.

"Cleo?" I must have spaced out, because I hadn't noticed Jace move to stand in front of me.

I scan the room to find all eyes on me, the front door closing...meaning Mum had managed to remove Alpha Bill and Luna Louise from the room, cleverly diffusing a rapidly

deteriorating atmosphere.

Even Jace's aura is calming as he stands before me, his eyes calming as his wolf

is pushed back.

My eyes stop on Callie, hers watching mine intently.

"Cleo?" Jace's voice calls my name again, I didn't even notice he was touching

me.

My eyes move down to my arm, Jaxon's hand now gone..replaced with Jace's. My eyes move to the side of me, to Jaxon who was watching me with concern edged in his eyes.

Chapter 583

"Are you okay?" Jace's voice enters into my mind, his eyes similar to that of his brother's concern.

How long had I spaced out for. How long had I allowed my mind to wander...

"Yes..." Thankfully my voice sounds stronger in my mind than if I were to speak my answer.

"Are you sure?"

"I think I need to sleep." I cut the mind-link, moving away.

"Hey Cleo." Jace tries to pull me into him but I've stepped out of reach, turning my back on him as I head towards the hallway.

I needed to be alone, I needed to sleep.

"Excuse me, I think I need rest." I offer out to the room before heading towards the stairs.

Jace didn't join me in the night, even if he had slept in the same bed and risen before me to check something within the pack lands...his scent was missing. No trace of it.

Meaning I had spent the night alone.

Something that hadn't satiated my anger from last night. Even as I stood in the shower, I could feel my hands scrubbing that little bit harder upon my skin.

"Cleo?" Josie calls out to me from the bedroom as I was in the ensuite.

"Josie?"

"A few of us are going swimming this morning, did you want to join us?"

Swimming, most likely with Callie...no...no swimming wasn't something I needed right now.

I needed to work off this frustration in me, this rising anger. I needed to train, to run...something a bit more vigorous than a gentle swim.

"No, but could you ask Ares to wait for me."

"Sure."

Tomorrow was the planned date for Alora's funeral. I just needed to get through today, then tomorrow would be a day spent in sorrow and sharing of fond memories of Kaia's sister.

I just had to survive today, put aside my anger...try and work it off before it exploded out of me.



No matter how much I try to think of something else, all I can think of is Callie in her red sexy lingerie.

Of how she thought I was house staff. How my mate was showering in the background...she must have seen him naked. Seen what is mine.

They must have been sexual, how could they not have been.

These damn pregnancy hormones!

I should eat, but the need to burn off these dark thoughts, this jealousy within me was more important right now. This possessiveness I was feeling, I'm not sure how to handle the intensity of it.

Dressed in sports legging, a sports top and a hoodie, I walk downstairs...to find Ares waiting at the bottom, and he wasn't alone.

Josie stands next to him, watching me walk down with a curious look upon her face.

I don't look but I can feel him

watching me. See him in my

peripheral vision. I was too angry to look at him, he must feel the anger radiating off, humming through the mate bond.

Unlike last night, I wasn't willing to rein it in any more.

I hear inaudible whispers coming from where he is sitting, Callie on the sofa next

to him as they both look at a tablet, Jaxon stood behind them also watching it.

Again, I don't look...but I can feel of three of them looking at me, discussing me. My jaw tensing even more.

"Not swimming?" Jaxon isn't as subtle as he calls out to me, my annoyance peaking when I have to turn my head to answer him.

"No I'm in a fighting mood this morning." I use the stairs to tie my trainers up, my bump felt bigger today and I didn't want to squish the baby just to put some shoes

on.

Something I noticed when I woke up, the baby has grown. Something I reached over to excitedly tell Jace, but he wasn't there.

Again...I was alone.

I didn't need him beside me 24/7, but he had already missed out on so much...I didn't want him missing out any more.

I'm not being melodramatic, I'm trying to be understanding but he isn't really helping himself.

"Erm...maybe..." Josie looks at me, panic in her eyes as I turn to straighten up, readjusting my waistband that was now digging into my tummy.

"Josie, I'm pregnant...I'm not going to break from a little work out with my brother." I'm short with her, and I'm never short with her...with anyone. She was my best friend, she was just looking out for me.

I know this, but I just needed to get out of here.

I needed space, I needed to train.

"Ares?" I call out to my brother. I marking Jace and by being marked by him, I had

lost my mind-link with Ares...something I hadn't prepared myself for.

I head towards the door, movement coming from the living room...to hell if he thinks he is stopping me.

I turn when my own brother doesn't follow me, to find Jace leaning casually against the hallway wall, a smirk upon his face as his heated gaze bores into me. "You're not training!" He commands through the mind-link.

"To hell I'm not." I growl back out through the mind-link, a mental middle finger up at him.

If you don't spend the night with your mate, then this is what you get the next day. Perhaps he'll remember that tonight.

Chapter 584

- Jace -

This place feels different to me now.

I feel less connected with it, which is odd because I hadn't ever taken on the alpha title from Mum, and neither has Josie yet.

Technically nothing has changed, I meant the same to the Clear Waters pack as I did a few days ago...but now as the alpha of the Amber Desert pack, being here...there is no doubt in my mind that I have made the right decision.

That I wasn't meant to rule this place, Josie was.

I'm going to miss these damn views though.

Even in the darkness of night time, as the moonlight cascades upon the gentle sea waters ahead...offering a fluorescent beam for miles, you can still make out just how beautiful it was here.

This place truly was picturesque. An unmatched landscape that I'll need to go out of my way to find in the Amber Desert lands to try and compete with.

Try, and fail.

"Congratulations, you are a marked man!" Jaxon pulls my eyes away from the gentle waters.

"That I am." I smile back at my brother who slowly approaches me, it would seem he also was struggling with sleep at the moment.

I don't think I will be able to rest properly until our auntie is laid to rest and Medea

is caught. No matter how long it takes I will find her, I will kill her.

"You did right not to wait." Jaxon claps me on the back, pure happiness for me buzzing through the triplet bond. I wish I could see him with a mate, with a child

on the way.

"Yeah well, we've already wasted too much time, I wasn't going to wait for a ceremony. Also, the pack needed to know from the outset who was in control, and that is now Cleo and I."

That sensation of happiness fizzles out and is replaced with a level of sadness. He crouches down, collecting a stone from the ground only to throw it into the waters below.

"You're just so far away." He sighs out.

"I've been far away for a year Jaxon, at least you know where I am now."

"That's true, just... things keep changing. First Josie, now you."

"Hmmm." He was right, things were changing...things had changed.

"Now a baby..." He blows his cheeks out, yes...the biggest change of all. "A baby."

"You are going to be a father."

"Fuck, I'm going to be a father." I chuckle out, I was still trying to get my head around that, I need to let that sink in a little longer.

There was a time I had given up on the prospect of having children myself.

Something I was certain I wanted at the time but now I know my first child is already cooking, I can't believe how excited I am.

"Can't sleep?" Jaxon asks, looking behind to the area he had just come from.

"Might as well push through, I'll catch up tomorrow. Ezra's not in the right mindset to keep on track of the borders, and I didn't want to put Mum on that tonight." I respond.

Alora was part of this pack for a long time, they...like her family were in mourning.

She was their alpha's sister...she was their beta.

Tonight a soft border cover was being run, and I didn't mind being available to watch the borders whilst here.

Fuck, I'm alive because I dodged that bullet.

Sleep deprivation was the last thing on my mind right now.

The rest of the night is quiet, Jaxon and I remaining on border patrol meeting up again every hour to check in on one another.

Breaking up that thinking time with conversation when coffee wasn't available out here.

By the time the next shift arrives it is already 6am. We both return to the

alpha house to find only Callie up,

sitting by herself in the living

room...looking as if she hadn't

gotten any sleep.

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"If you didn't sleep, you should have joined me on the borders." I move next to

her, my body melting into the comfort of the sofa.

"Not only am I imposing, now you trust me to watch the borders?" She tuts back at

me, clearly still reeling from her parent's last night.

"Callie, like Mum said, you are part of the family now."

"You say that now." She groans out to me.

"I'll say that always."

"You might want to check in on Cleo before you invite me over for the holidays." "Why?"

"Why? You are kidding right?" She turns to face me, her eyebrows raised.

"Cleo is fine, you don't need to worry

about her. She just needs time to let the last couple of days sink in that's all. Both of us do. I don't even exactly know the size of what I have just taken on." Something else I needed to add on to my list of things to do upon our return.

## Chapter 585

"Here, that's what online maps are for." Jaxon passes me his tablet from behind the sofa, showing me a map of the Amber Desert area.

He spends the next hour showing me possible areas of expansion, of where I could build a local town to maximise a stream of regular revenue that would benefit the pack.

Offering jobs to pack members as well...something very much worth further consideration.

Josie and Knox both join us, huddling closely on the sofa opposite...Knox whispering into Josie's ear. My gag reflex wasn't that strong after pulling an all- nighter.

I launch a cushion at him...if he had that much energy he should have joined Jaxon and I last night at the borders.

"Where were you last night?" I growl out to Knox.

"In bed, with me." Josie growls back.

"Exactly, you are on borders tonight..."

"Alright, alright." He places his hands out in defence before throwing the cushion

back at me as Ares enters into the room rubbing his eyes still half asleep.

He got a good couple of hours and yet he yawns like he's not slept, fucking teenagers.

"You, also on borders tonight. It's time you got used to other pack's borders." Launching the same cushion now at him.

"Why?"

"Well when I plan on taking your sister away on romantic breaks, it's you I'm going to call upon for border back up."

"Fuck that. I'm going for a swim." Ares back-steps, heading back the way he came.

"Wait up, I'll join...anyone else?" Josie jumps up, looking at us all expectantly.

"Sure." Callie offers out...looking at me to join.

"I guess a morning swim wouldn't hurt."

"I'll get my swimmers." Josie declares only to return minutes later with a towel in her hand, whispering to Ares who seems to be looking towards the stairs.

"Everything alright?" Knox twists his neck as he remains on the sofa to look at his mate, my sister.

"Yes, the only one not swimming is Cleo." Josie walks to the doorway, keeping her voice low.

"And me now it seems." Ares sighs out, his head rolling back in frustration. He was sixteen, what did he have to be frustrated about.

"Why?" I press, his eyes meeting mine as he seems unsure of answering.

"She wants to train." Josie shrugs out, her eyes also on me.

"Train?" Did I just hear her correctly.

"That's what she says."

We all hush down when footsteps are clearly heard coming down the stairs, a sensation of anger ploughing into me for the first time this morning. Hell, Cleo was

veet



pissed...and I was her number one target it would seem.

I didn't need to have access to the mate bond to know that, I could tell instantly from the way she refuses to look over at me.

From where I sat she'd easily be able to see me from the bottom of the stairs, she was making a point of not looking at me.

"She hates me." Callie whispers next to me.

"She doesn't hate you." I click my tongue back at her, no the aggressively charged energy almost pulsating out of Cleo was for me and me alone...I think.

"Not swimming?" Jaxon just can't help himself. His question earns a viciously cold glare to be shot his way, at all three of us in fact.

"No, I'm in a fighting mood this morning." Cleo's eyes rest on Callie's for a second too long.

"See I told you, absolutely hates me. She thinks I've sucked your dick."

"She doesn't think that."

"Of course she fucking does, I would!"

I move off the sofa, watching her as she ties up her shoelaces. I lean against the

hallway wall, casually letting my alpha aura roll off me.

"You're not training." I command out,

unable to stop my lips from moving into a smirk. She looked fucking hot in her worn out attire, and that anger aimed at me was making her even more irresistible.

"To hell I'm not." She growls out through the mind-link to me, before leaving through the front door.

"Follow her, don't let her train." I point at Ares.

"My sister wants to train, she can train. You're not my alpha!" Ares growls out at me, as he follows his sister out the front door.

Fucking alpha born teenagers.

"I'm telling you...she thinks I have

sucked dick. Josie, what would

you

think if Knox had a friend that pretended to be his mate?" Callie asks my sister, my ears feeling violated.

"I would think you had sucked dick." Josie nods calmly.

"See!" Callie places her hands out, agreeing with Josie. "Go to the alpha office, wait for me there."

"What am I waiting for?"

"For the two of you to hash it out."

Chapter 586

- Cleo -

"How much longer?" Ares' long sigh only adds to my irritation. He was meant to be helping me, not moaning at me...which is all he has done since following me outside.

"Why, got somewhere to be?" I pause, panting out as I try to catch my breath. "Yes, I want to swim."

"Ares, you are the future alpha of the Red Thorn pack. You need to train."

"I train plenty, and this isn't me training...this is me being a punch bag. If you have issues with your mate use your voice, not your fists." He was right, but I wasn't ready to hear that just yet. I wasn't at the stage where I was thinking rationally again.

"Are you telling a pregnant woman what to do?"

"No, I'm telling my sister not to stew over miscommunication..."

"Miscommunication?"

"Whatever has got you in this foul mood, talk about it. Don't stew on it, that's what Mum does..."

"I'm not Mum." I growl out at him.

"Precisely, you aren't Mum."

I let my brother's words sink in, yes Mum would let herself get so uptight about things that her wolf would take over.

But this is different, not only am I in control of my wolf...she's so drained still that there is no possibility that she would take over and push me out.

"Just talk to him, tell him." He removes the boxing mits off his hands, dropping them to the ground at my feet before placing a kiss upon my cheek.

"He's just proven how much he loves you, just tell him what is troubling you. A problem shared and all." He whips his head to the side where Jace has been standing the entire time watching me box train with Ares.

With a deep inhale of air I let my shoulders relax, rolling my neck out to remove any remaining tension my body, just as Jace moves towards me...his eyes that of a hunter.

"Feel better?"

"A little." I grunt out, removing the boxing gloves and picking up the pads off the ground, heading back towards the training hut.

Kaia had invested a lot of money into the training

practices of the Clear Waters pack, including a new training centre build years ago, but the old wooden

hut still housed the equipment.

The equipment that didn't need to be kept under lock and key anyway.

One thing they didn't train with was weapons, something I'm sure Josie will start to implement as her first act as the new alpha.

He follows me all the way to the training hut, an amused smirk across his lips... one that does

nothing to maintain the calmer state of mind I had been in whilst training. I could feel his amusement through the bond, if anything he was just making me more agitated.

"I don't need a chaperone." I chide out as I hanging the boxing mitts back up.

"I know what you need." My senses overload as he takes a long stride closer to

me.

"Oh yeah, and what's that."

I gasp out as he spins me, his hands gripping on to my hips as he back steps me deeper into the hut, kicking the door shut behind him.

Any morning sunlight disappears the moment the door is closed, only small beams of light traveling in through gaps in the wooden panels, which aids

towards not being plunged in complete darkness.

"You need reminding of who exactly

you belong to." He purrs out as his lips move to my neck. He was fast, sucking on my mate mark, leaving my body quivering with desire.

"Belong?" I push him back, he wasn't having me that easily.

"Do you not belong to me?" He quirks an eyebrow at me.

"No, not today."

"Making me work for it today are you?"

"When I wake up in bed alone..."

"I was watching the borders all night, Ezra wasn't up for it, and I didn't want to ask

Mum to do it. Trust me, if I had made it to bed last night..."

My resolve was softening, I had just assumed he had given someone else his attention all night. This is stupid, I was his...why was I acting like a jealous female. "You've not slept?"

"Jaxon and came back, found Callie alone downstairs..." I cut him off with an aggressive roar, my wolf feeling strong enough and feisty enough to tell him to watch himself.

"Is this what this is about... Callie?" He withdraws his face slightly, looking directly into my eyes. Making me feel like I am the one in the wrong, that I'm being

unreasonable.

Maybe in the grand scheme of things I am, but for all I knew they were planing on spending a life together only a few days ago.

"Jace, don't do that. Don't make me sound like a bitch. I'm not being a bitch. But you must see it

from my point of view. You were fated mates with a female, preparing to make her your Luna..."

"Yes but Callie and I have never, ever...been that way."

"Yeah right."

"I assure you, Callie and I have never been together. We are purely platonic, I thought you would have picked that up through the mate bond."

"I..." I let my mind cast back to when I marked Jace, flashes of some of his memories come back to me. But they are mainly of his family, of me...not of Callie.

Chapter 587

"You've blocked the memories of her." I seethe out, what was he hiding. He looks into my eyes puzzled until I see realisation dawn upon his face. Whatever it is, it's enough for him to hit the side of his head.

"Shit, yes...but not for the reason you think. It's not my story to tell. Cleo, you are my life, nobody

will ever come between us."

I could feel the pull of the mate bond, feel its need for us to be as one. Feel it

trying to thaw my frostiness.

"Is this you jealous..."

I very carefully bite down on my tongue that wants to argue back that he killed the male that wanted to make me his luna.

That he has been jealous too without understanding what agreement was in place. He acted out in anger, letting his emotions get the better of him.

But I don't, I know for a fact that will just escalate things further.

"I'm just struggling with why she is still here that's all. And don't tell me you wouldn't be feeling the same."

"You're cute when jealous."

"Jace." This was serious. But he has a way of making me laugh, of me not being angry at him for too long.

I couldn't bear to remain angry at him, it just wasn't who we were. That wasn't us, even when I thought he had another; yes I was angry, I was upset, but I was willing to support him.

Even if that meant moving into the shadows so he could have his time in the spotlight. Loving him in secret and unrequitedly.

"Look at us all alone in here, not an eye on us.." His lips move back to my neck, any hint of an argument disappearing, as his tone turns playful.

Excitement rushes through me, instantly replacing the anger that had been bubbling up again as he moves his hands from my hips...his fingers stretching back on my legging waistband.

"I'm sorry my love, I didn't come to bed last night, let me make it up to you..." He whispers into my ear.

My eyes move down as he pulls at my waistband more, pulling down my leggings. A satisfied growl escapes him as he removes the thong next, making me step out of the clothing...I was naked from the waist down.

I swallow down on the moan that wants to escape me as his hands slowly trail up my legs, my inner thighs...spreading my legs out slightly.

His lustful eyes look up at me as his tongue stretches out, licking between my lower core and the sweet firm nub of my clit.

I was unable to stifle my wanton moan that time. He sucks on the nub, my hands moving to his hair, locking him in place...I needed more, I wanted

more.

"Let me remind you that I am yours, only yours." He coos through the mind-link my head tilting upwards just as his tongue invades my lower core, pushing into

me.

My body melts under his hold, my back pressed back against the wall as he lifts me up onto his

shoulders more, his reach only deepening within me as I let any doubt, any jealousy melt away from his touch.

I was holding on to a past, I needed to think about the future.

"Fuck...I'm..." I mutter out through the mind-link until I forget how to use words.

Any thoughts abruptly abandon me

as I pant out, his tongue thrusting into me at a faster rate as I feel my walls starting to clamp down feel my orgasm surging forward



I try to move when I hear voices outside. Complete panic taking over me that we

are about to be caught but he holds me in place, refusing to let me go.

I grip at his hair, my hands firmly locked on his head when my orgasm hits me, my walls crashing down onto his tongue that continues to move, lapping up all my juices.

My head tilts upwards as white stars take over my vision, complete euphoria hitting me.

When I have ridden out the wave of my orgasm, he slowly pulls out of me, his hands holding me upright as my legs become numb. He stands up, holding me... his hands cupping at my bare ass as he hoists me up, holding me.

"You have no idea how much I want to ravage you right now..."

"Then ravage me." I pant out.

"Oh I will, but this equipment is about to be used...and I don't want anyone seeing my luna naked...that privilege is only for me."

He gently places me back down on

my feet where I pull my bottoms back on, smoothing down the back of my hair. We step out of the training hut, thankfully, going unnoticed as we head back towards the alpha house.

Until Jace stops just outside.

"I need you to speak to her, I need you to hear her out...will you do that for me?"

His hand cups the side of my face, a plea to his voice.

"Where is she?"

"She's in the alpha office."

I turn to look at the alpha house, this was important to him...that I couldn't deny.

"What she is going to tell you is difficult for her, I need you to be patient with her." "I can do that for you."

Chapter 588

- Cleo -

I was riding high off my post climax bliss until my hand pushes down on the door handle, where I enter the alpha office, to find Callie sitting down by the window.

She shifts as she turns to find me entering, I think it's the first time I have ever seen her lacking confidence.

"Is Jace not coming in?" She looks behind me in slight panic, her eyes widening as it dawns on her it was just me and her.

"No, he wants us to talk alone. He says you have something difficult to share." "Does he now?" She sarcastically chuckles out, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Isn't that the truth?" A low rumble escapes me, I was reaching out here. She better not leave me hanging, this would be the deciding moment between us.

"The truth, I don't know where to begin with the truth."

"Well you need to start somewhere, because right now you look like a stage one cling-on. Clinging

on to my mate, to his family. He's already assured me that you two have never been sexual.."

"No, absolutely not. You can trust us on that." She looks appalled by the thought of being with Jace, something that she didn't show when she was all over him since returning to the Dark Phantom pack.

"How so.."

"Because he isn't my type."

"But you were willing to be his mate, to be his luna. To take him from another."

"I didn't know until the night of the dinner party, that was the first time I knew of it. If I had known before then, I would have never agreed to it."

She looks back at the window, her eyes looking to the views that would have been hers.

Now they aren't even Jace's anymore.

The only other free chair was at the alpha desk and I wasn't going to sit in that,

not when it very much was still Kaia's until Josie takes it on.

So I remain standing, leaning against the edge of the desk, taking most of the weight off my feet.

I had a feeling I was going to be in here for a while, that I needed to be comfortable.

"I remembered you."

"What do you mean?"

"The bedroom door, you were there when I answered it, I thought you were a house maid."

"I had just found out I was pregnant, I was going to go to the beach club to see him. But he text back to say he was home..."

"Shit, and I opened the door in my lingerie. I'm sorry to have done that to you."

"You didn't know what you were doing..." I shrug out.

"No, but I agreed without really finding out why he had run, what he was running from and for that I am just as much to blame as him. I truly

am sorry." I look into her eyes, she meant every part of the apology.

"Thank you."

"I'm surprised you didn't attack me for being with your mate, especially pregnant.

Your wolf must have been ready to kill me."

"I didn't realise it was the mate bond." I uncross my arms, my palms now resting

on top of the desk...my demeanour in a more open posture. I was slowly thawing out towards her.

"What do you mean?"

"I've loved Jace all my life. I've never once expected for him to be mine. When I heard he had a mate, it wasn't a shock, I knew that day would come, I had prepared myself for that day.

Why would I fight against it, my

feelings towards him had always been one sided. Of course he would have found his mate. I was ready to accept that, ready to find my mate that would...I hoped...surpassthe feelings I had for Jace.

But when I found out I was with a child, his child...I couldn't do that to his mate, I

couldn't do that to my future mate. It felt easier to be alone. Or to be in a relationship of my own choosing."

"I wish you could see how he sees you, how wrong you are." She means well but her answer is a standard answer, one based on not knowing Jace's and mine's true relationship. How we grew up...how things, then changed when he turned eighteen.

My mind casts back to the night of Kaia's and Hector's wedding, when he

shunned me in front of everyone, then left for almost a year.

Chapter 589

I appreciate her words, but she doesn't know the story behind us, how for the last year I hadn't even seen him.

I hadn't seen him since turning eighteen years old, I wouldn't have recognised the mate bond without not seeing him.

Just like I wouldn't have done if my mate was a stranger to me.

It wasn't about not being worthy of him, it was just not thinking I was that lucky in life.

"I had to abandon my mate..." She offers the words freely, but her eyes slam shut

in pain.

"Excuse me?"

"My mate is back at my parent's pack, I was forced to abandon her in order for her to remain alive."

Wait...

"Her?"

"When I say Jace and I aren't sexual, I mean it."

"I don't understand."

"What has Jace told you."

"Honestly nothing, he's even blocked any conversations between the two of you out of the mate bond. Whatever he is shielding, it's to protect you."

She slowly nods, before moving more to face me.

"The plan was simple, Jace would return to claim Clear Waters and I would be his Luna to then regain my parent's trust, and take on my family pack in time. I had been exiled..."

"Exiled?"

"They wouldn't kill me, not as the lone surviving heir, not after the death of my brother. He was meant to be the heir. When they found out that my mate was a female, it went against their beliefs... "I couldn't imagine losing Ares, but to then lose your mate and pack..."

"You didn't fight hard enough."

"It wasn't so much a fight, than a torture. Forcing me to reject her."

"They punished you for being in love with someone of the same sex?"

"Punished me, and made me reject her."

I could see the sadness in her eyes, the memories flooding back to her as her hands clench into tiny balls.

"No...where is she?" Alpha Bill and Luna Louise...they made her to that? They tortured their own child...

"At the pack, I left so she could remain. I left everything I knew, to keep her alive. That's how much I loved her."

"Loved?" It sounds like a love like theirs would never fade.

"You're right, I still love her. I may have rejected her but I will always love her. "

"That's why your parents turned on you last night" Everyone has their own issues, everyone is battling something in silence. I didn't think it was possible but my love for Jace has just doubled, he was willing to help her, willing to protect her.

"If everything had gone to plan, you would have taken her back?"

"That's if she's still unmated, if she's moved on..."

"You don't know?"

"I've not stepped one foot in my old pack, not had any communication with my parents until I returned with Jace to the Dark Phantom pack. It Kaia that reached out to

them."

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"That's a little manipulative to involve the Varon's like that." I raise an eyebrow at her, letting her know I didn't like that.

"Yes, but that was Jace's idea. He knew his parents would want to vet their son's in-laws."

"What are you going to do now?"

"I have the beach club, I can run it with Colt, keep Jace's share in it safe."

"You would be without a pack?"

"I'm without a pack now Cleo."

"Why don't you just take the pack from your parent's, take your birth right."

"Because it isn't my birth right, it was

my

mother's. I'm not trained to be

alpha,

I wouldn't know the first thing

about running a pack..."

"But I do, and I would help you, as would Jace."

"It's too late." She shakes her head, defeatedly.

"It's never too late Callie, not if you truly want something." I push off the desk, letting my stature grow to my full height.

"I can see why he loves you. Why he thought a life without you would be better for

you."



"Jace underestimated how strong I am, how much I will fight for what I want. If you want my help, I will fight with you."

Chapter 590

- Jace -

Today had been weighing heavily on all of our minds, the day we finally said goodbye to

Aunt Alora.

We all stood in silence, our heads bowed as we stood on the beach, the golden sands underfoot as we gave thanks to the moon goddess. Gave thanks for her presence in our lives.

Mum had made one request for today, that it doesn't close on a sad note...but on a happy one.

She has lost half of her soul, half of her heart.

I know it because that is how I would feel if I ever lost Jaxon or Josie. We aren't just siblings, we are one of the same.

Connected by more than blood, connected by a triplet bond...something Mum also shared with Alora. Not just sisters, but twin sisters.

Granted, they didn't even know of each other, their bond only connecting when they were in their adult lives. But that connection, once made, cannot be undone.

Not even by death.

Mum will now forever be a half of herself. She will never recover from this.

It was fair to say that Mum's retirement started today, that the ceremony planned

at short notice for Josie and Knox this evening is the happy note she needed to end the day on.

She needed today to be about more than saying goodbye to her sister.

What a better send off than using the Clear Waters to send Alora's body back to the moon goddess.

It was nearing sunset, the moon already prominent in the sky, yet the sun still held its heated gaze upon the landscape before us.

The waters, as always, were tranquil. The glistening waters offering a sparkling wonder to where we were sending Alora, on a small wooden raft covered in roses.

Rather than sending her back into the ground, we were sending her out to sea.

Josie was the best shot amongst us, her task was to send a fire-lit arrow into the waters, hitting the raft at the opportune moment.

Alora was dressed in white, her hair plaited like a Greek goddess, free flowing down by her shoulders. Gold leaves planted into her hair, like a crown for a princess. She was the pack's princess after all.

They had taken her into their hearts, been the family she had needed for such a long time.

Her hands held crossed over her torso, a bouquet of white roses tied together in her hands. She looked peaceful, she was finally resting.

A tear-stricken Mum takes a step closer to her, her hands resting upon hers as

she says her last goodbye. Until they were reunited once more.

Poems had been read, prayers had been made...it was now the last part, the final act of separation between them.

One part of them remaining living, the other returning back to the moon goddess. This was the hardest part of all, relinquishing her body...her soul had already left us. Her soul was with their mother, there was no doubt about that.

Forever in the love of the mother she never met, I have to believe a

rejected mate bond is broken for eternity, Chan had gone to hell, or if the moon goddess had spared

him then she would have at least honoured decisions made in her living life.

I have to believe that.

My breath catches as Mum whispers a last goodbye before launching her sister into the

tranquil peaceful waters.

She had belonged here all along.

We watch, in silence as the raft moves further out to sea.

Knox takes a subtle step forward, lighting an arrow with the flamed torch

embedded into the beach ground.

He passes it to Josie, who wipes away her teary eyes, clearing her vision as she takes the arrow,

placing it in the bow and aiming it up to the sky.

Her shot hits true, her aim right on target. She was the best shot of us all.

The fire catches onto the raft, spreading slowly when suddenly it bursts into flames, engulfing

the entire raft. Her body burning with it.

I didn't realise how tense my body was,

until her hands were

touch relaxes me,

encourages my body unwind..her touch soothing me.

"I'm sorry." Her sorrow through the mate bond is painful, her voice breaking in my

mind.

"Me too." I pull her into my arms, inhaling her scent, letting my skin seek hers out even more.