

DENIED BY DESTINY: TRAPPED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE MATE BOND

Chapter 21



Bond 21

Hector POV

imminent threat.

Than hasn't given me a chance to think, which no doubt was part of his strategic plan. His warriors remain positioned away from our borders. Close enough to keep a watchful eye on movement in and out of the pack grounds, but too far away for me to consider it an I can't do anything about him being on neutral land.

I've increased numbers on our borders, even calling upon our reserves which were retired warriors or female warriors that were trained but on break from having children.

We will remain on high alert until he makes his move.

She's awake.

His words keep coming back to me.

She's awake.

But why then leave her, why come searching for Kaia and try to make a claim on her. He might as well as pissed all over her at the banquet ball.

It took all my inner strength to keep her pregnancy a secret. I wanted to wipe that smirk of his face, to pain him as he has pained me. Oh how I would have

loved for him to know I possessed his child in my pack. His child, the heir to the Amber Desert pack...now under my control.

I was in this for the long game now, I needed to remind myself that.

This was a chess game and Kaia was my Queen piece now. An heir is the most important thing for an alpha, for our legacy to continue.

He'll choose Kaia, he has no choice... he'll have to.

I haven't been ignoring Kala...every second of my time has been consumed by pack defence.

She didn't confirm that Than is the father but he has to be. Why else would he stroll in and put his hand on her in an attempt to win her back.

My wolf was continuing to frustrate me. To him Kala was a lone female, pregnant and in need of protection still. He doesn't like the idea of her returning to the Amber Desert pack but what choice have I got.... I need to save her somehow.

I find Kala with some of the young males and females at the training grounds.

Any young sexually charged male could be forgiven for flirting with a beautiful female, but something in my gut didn't like my young trainee warriors getting touchy feely with her.

It must be the desire to protect the baby. Even if it is his.

I watch from a distance. How she interacts with them, how she giggles at their jokes and unconsciously

touches her lower belly every now and again.

A comfort touch, a bonding touch.

That's why she left...she must have found out she was pregnant at the same timing Alora woke up. A love triangle hard to bring a baby into.

She was protecting the baby from him, and I would help her to achieve her goal.

They feel my aura pour out onto them, a warning to stop showing off and continue with their training. Their eyes snap to me leaning against a tree, before their necks turn in a sign of submission. Seemingly confused by their sudden change, her eyes find mine, before she looks back at her new friends who walk away, breaking out into a routine run.

"They weren't doing any harm..." I hear her mutter, her voice carrying slightly in the wind.

"Let's just say, if they knew your condition....then they wouldn't be so forward." I mind-link her, pushing off the tree and heading in her direction.

"They were just being friendly..." She responds as I stop beside her.

"Hhmm." I have a feeling she doesn't know exactly how attractive she is.

"Walk with me?" I extend my elbow for her to take, keen to discuss her hurried exit from her previous alpha in more detail.

"You didn't answer me last night, when I mentioned the baby's father."

"There's not much to know."

"I think there is. His warriors remain close to our borders, and show no sign of leaving. I think they are ready to attack at any moment to claim you back..."

"Claim..." She scoffs as if such a thing was the last thing on Than's mind.

I don't think it was. He was possessive, arrogant and greedy...he would think he deserved her as well.

"You surprise ree, you don't think he wants you?"

She stops in her tracks, forcing me to stop along side her. She unlinks her arm from mine, taking a step back from me.

"Alpha Hector...he mustn't know about the baby...I'll have to tell him one day...but not yet. It's too soon.

You understand?"

"Yes I understand..." I know what she was expecting of me, I understand she doesn't want Than to know. But in no way did my response make a promise to not tell Than. I can't give up on my only hope.

Chapter 22



Kaia POV

Hector still remained an enigma to me, but hopefully an enigma that I was starting to unravel, I think like me, he found trusting difficult.

His reputation as being a cold ruthless alpha is warranted, but within his pack he was respected. and that's how a leader should be. Firm but fair.

I was starting to believe I could trust again, that I have found someone to put my faith into again and who won't let me down.

I admitted to Hector that Than is the baby's father. Yet he hasn't exiled me, called me an enemy of the pack. I thought he would.

I

!

I

though

he would toss me out not wanting to get involved with other alpha's dramas, let alone the enemy alpha.

even

Start to

I haven't been open about my relationship or lack of relationship with Than, it was still hard for me to discuss. Who has a mate that doesn't claim them, rather preferring to pine after someone only half alive. How do I to explain the circumstances of finding out that Than refused to claim me. Yet, h Yet, here I am pregnant.

Alpha Hector j wouldn't believe me...

Just

I was feeling settled as a welcomed new member of the pack.

Everyone taking the time to converse with me on my morning and evening walks.....I even was starting to watch how they train, it's been a while since I trained like I used to.

I'm often talking to the younger trainees....and I could be wrong but Hector often seemed to get jealous of the younger males.

Or, maybe he was simply just thinking a pregnant female shouldn't be hanging around males that aren't the baby's father.

Either way I didn't want to put him in a tricky situation of having to force a mate bond that he doesn't feel because I claim I can... I've been there myself and I wouldn't wish that on anyone. couldn't do that to another.

My thoughts were in overdrive at present, overthinking what I could have done differently at the banquet.

How maybe I should have been more prepared with responding to Than...I really hoped that he wouldn't have shown up. But this was Than, and he

seemed to have a way of inserted himself into my life. He couldn't keep his mouth shut, he had to be one up on Hector, telling him I am his wife. Trying to get a rise out of the Dark Phantom alpha. Knowing I am here, he won't stop until he has me back. My well conceived plan to hide out in the notorious Dark Phantom pack has failed. Chapter 0022

As much as I want to stay, I know I can't...not now. Not without putting the people of the Dark Phantom pack members in danger. I can't have their safety on my conscious, not when I put it at risk just by being here.

A ring on the front doorbell pulls me out of my thoughts. Aubrey answers the door and walks back into see me in the living room. "Kaia....the head pack doctor is here to see you..." She considers me for a moment with worry.

"Really?"

"I'll send him in." She walks away, back towards the front door to escort my visitor in. Once the doctor enters the room, Aubrey returns leaving us alone, which I am grateful for.

I wasn't ready for my pregnancy to be known amongst the pack members yet. Not that I don't think Aubrey was a gossip, but I still wanted to keep my news secret for a little bit longer.

"Kaia, finally....you haven't booked your scan. I had the system flag you up." He gives me a look of being displeased with me. For not following up with him. A look only a doctor could give.

I had planned to, but then my plans went up in the air when Than arrived and I had to admit some half truths to Hector.

I'm not sure, it's not safe here for me anymore. I'm no longer hidden. It is only a matter of time. before he attacks, she only has a matter of time. She's awake now and he will be feeling the pressure. didn't want the pack to invest in me and my future, if I didn't plan on remaining here.

"Yes, I've been a bit preoccupied."

"I can do tomorrow...the day after...otherwise we are looking into next week."

The doctor pulls his phone out assessing his own calendar, before looking at me expectantly.

"Erm, I'm not entirely sure..."

"About?"

Abou

"How long I am staying..."

"I see...well the baby needs to be checked over, it's important to rule out any minor issue at this early stage."

"I don't want to waste your time."

"Kaia, I am a doctor...my time is never wasted, even if it really is." He chuckles to himself, I'm lost on his own joke.

"Erm.."

"She'll make it tomorrow Doctor and I'll escort her myself to make sure she attends." Hector's voice. comes out of nowhere, my head whipping around to find him standing in the hall way as if he was heading out of the front door.

"Very good Alpha "

Chapter 23



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Chapter 24



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Chapter 0024 Chapter Alora POV

"I'm sorry I haven't been here....I'm sorry for a lot of things. I've let you both down." I sigh as I wipe away years of built up dirt that has covered my parent's grave stone. They died within 6 months of each other.

I lost Dad first, and then Mum. It's hard to lose a mate...and my parents were fated mates. Their bond the strongest I've ever known.

They say a grieving mate never fully recovers and I did try to pick Mum back up, but in the end her heart was just too broken.

I watched her slowly become a shadow of
f herself.

Losing Dad was incredibly tough, but to lose Mum and so soon, already
grieving, was life changing.

The Alpha and Luna, Than's parents, took me in. Offering me shelter and
some sense of normality. For that, I will always be grateful to them. No matter
what has since past.

From an early age, Than and I had always been inseparable, so I imagine for
them it made sense as I was always at the alpha house most days.

With their help I managed to move on from the death of my parents, although I
think you just get used to the grief rather than moving on from it.

It never leaves you, you just learn to live with it.

I was able to breathe a little lighter, knowing Than was always with me.

I

Then it all went wrong....

And I couldn't n't see a way out, taking wolfsbane being the only option.

And

I shake my own head as I relive past memories that still haunt me.

With a prayer of peace to the moon goddess for looking after my parent's
spirits, and sparing me, I lay down the white roses that I had cut earlier from
the alpha house's back garden. I kiss the head stones. before standing up, a
twinge hitting me in my back. I've been trying to train again but my stomach
still hurts and so does my lower back. Which prevents me from pushing
myself too hard.

Which I desperately need to do, I have no muscle whatsoever..no ability to defend myself in a fight.

Something was also plaguing Than, this security threat taking up most of his time. Every time I ask he brushes it off and changes the subject, which isn't like Than at all.

I couldn't find the white dress anywhere. Surely I would have kept it? It would have been too special to throw away.

But then I wasn't in the right frame of mind back then. So much had happened and maybe my timelines were crossing.

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I was on my way to meet Than at the pack hospital to meet my doctor for a check up. To see how my physio was doing and hopefully he'll be impressed with my vocal improvements. v eyes.

"There you are...are you okay?" Than kisses the tip of my nose before placing his thumbs under my

Have you been crying? Your mascara has run."

I was at the cemetery. I needed to check on them." I close my eyes as he wipes away at my smudged

mascara.

I did at the beginning..

"You don't need to explain, I understand. It would have been too hard for you."

My hands grip at his wrists, as he kisses my lips gently.

He's

waited for me all this time. He has nothing to explain to me.

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Than joins me in the privacy of the doctor's office, where I am given a check up and bloods are taken.

"How are you feeling in general?" The doctor asks me as he labels small vials of my blood to be sent off for testing.

"My strength is slowly rebuilding and my speech.....

love peatly von

"Has come on leaps and bounds." Than squeezes my hand that is clasped within his, as it lays neatly his lap. As always, my biggest cheerleader. "My stomach does still ache and I've been getting sharp pains in my lower back."

"Sharp pains?" The doctor replies.

"Yes...here." I use my free hand to indicate exactly where, being met by the doctor's eyes that flash to Than for a second before looking back at me. "I see. How long have you had the pain?"

"It's been getting stronger over the past day or two. What do you think it is?"

"It could just be your body getting used to working off the machines...having to now work for themselves."

They'll be

be okay though? I won't have any long lasting issues?"

His eyes dart again to Than, who holds the doctor's gaze in an odd way.

"Kaia...what you took was very strong. We may not know the full extent for years to come."

A low threatening growl sounds from Than's chest, his aura emits from him. suddenly making the room. suffocating

"But, I'm sure your age will play a key factor in your recovery. I'm sure things will be just fine."

There was something laced behind the Doctor's tone some kind of forced response.

Chapter 25



Chapter 0025 Chapter 0025 Alora POV

By the time my doctor's appointment had finished, Beta Zane was already waiting for Than outside. Some kind of security development that required immediate attention. Whatever was happening. Than would have to tell me soon. I will be sworn in as Luna when the timing is right and become just as responsible for the safety of the pack.

I get it, I'm still recovering. But I'm not talking about going out on border patrol, Whatever is happening, he can update me from the safety of the alpha house. As hard as I try, I I couldn't get the photograph or lack of wedding dress out of my head. Something was niggling within me, my wolf growing stronger by the day and picking up on something strange.

of

I walk home alone, getting the odd look from pack members who don't seem keen to return my friendly smile. They were angry at me, angry for what I put their alpha through. I'll have my work cut out to prove I can be the Luna they deserve. As soon as I close the front door behind me, I hear Freya calling out to me from the kitchen.

This was another thing, Freya was the female beta...she should be assisting Zane...not babysitting me.

At least she was alone and I plan to use that to my advantage.

I walk straight into his office, knowing exactly what I want and where I safely put it back..

It was a gusty day outside, yet bright sunshine still roared through the windows lighting Than's office perfectly. However, I still find myself needing to turn his desk lamp on, just to inspect it closely one more time.

I've always had a soft glow, an olive type skin tone....but the me in this photograph is glowing. Not a person that woke up, got married and then went back into a coma.

I didn't look half dead, even now my skin colour was still greyer than usual. I was still recovering.

Freya??" She replies half listening as she is busying herself by the sink.

"Why can't I remember this?"

"Remember what?"

"This?" This?

She turns to look at me, her eyes reacting where her lips are now tightly closed. Her eyes widen as she looks at the photograph held out in my hand.

"Why can't I remember this?"

Her lips start to turn white from the pressure she is applying to keep quiet. Her chest has stopped inhaling air as she seems to be holding her breath. Her reaction was the confirmation I needed. "I won't tell Than or Zane, I promise. My mind is confusing memories and I can't place what should have been

the happiest day of my life. Please Freya, otherwise I'll have to ask Than, and I don't want him to think my memory is...

She shakes her head, keeping her lips sealed tightly.

"Please Freya." I reach for her hand over the kitchen island that separates us. She must pick up on my desperation because her shaking head finally turns into a slow nod.

"It's not your memory." She cuts me off, her lips already regaining a pinkish tone to them.

"It's not my memory...what does that mean?" My hand lets go of hers and travels up to my temple, slowly rubbing at the headache now developing.

"You can't tell Than or Zane that I told you.."

"I won't."

"I

I mean it Alora, I've been given strict instructions to not mention her." Her eyes display the seriousness of the situation

"Who?"

"The woman in the picture...it's not you."

"Who is it?"

"That is the Alpha's wife."

"Wife?"

Men

I felt like my heart was dropping, from a great height. As if I was plummeting to the ground. My stomach giving that weightless feel.

The kitchen island is the only thing holding me up, my legs are threatening to collapse from under me.

Wife?

A wife that looks like me?

No that can't be tight.

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"I don't understand, why does she look like me..." My question is cut short when the front door opens I am only just quick enough to hide the photograph in my back jean pocket. Than's roasted chestnut and cinnamon scent travels ahead of him with the aid of the windy weather invading the alpha home. Her arrival is announced by the high heels that sound against the wooden floored hall way.

ant:

Freya uses the opportunity to not only evade me but the impending torturous questioning of Luna Medea. I adore Than's mother but she can be domineering and Intense. * She was dressed as any powerful Luna should be; white trouser suit, sunglasses and nude high heels.

"Alora, I can't believe it...look at you." She opens her arms out to me and I push off the kitchen counter that had been holding me up with Freya's truth bomb, and run into her arms. After a short embrace, she pushes me out from her, cupping my face i

Chapter 26



Hector POV

"Are you ready?"

"Yes Alpha." Kaia is quiet this morning, engrossed in her own deep thoughts. My wolf has always had a sympathy for single mothers, and I can feel him starting to feel protective of Kaia.

Which will go against my plan in the long run.

He mustn't get attached, and must should I.

The pack's head doctor is already waiting for us by the main reception when we arrive at the pack hospital. He walks us through the many hospital corridors towards the maternity ward.

I must admit, I've never really been in the hospital since it was built. I've never liked visiting hospitals, too many bad memories on my part that still threaten to haunt me.

The strong smell of sanitising fluid being my main trigger.

The hospital seemed to self manage itself. I only cast an eye on the financials and patient figures every month, I never get involved with day to day operations. That, I leave to Ezra and the head doctor.

The doctor seems to pick up on Kaia's anxiety, as do I. He doesn't miss a trick and immediately starts checking her stats, behind a screen as I wait patiently but remain in the same room.

Kaia clearly had trust issues and there's no doubt why.

Than...

The fact that she didn't want him to know about the baby gave off red flags to me. An heir is very coveted within alpha bloodlines and if he already knew, he

would have attacked my borders and pack by now. No he is knocking on my door for another reason...

"Alpha, Kaia is ready." The doctor breaks me out of my thoughts as he walks around the screen, indicating for me to join them.

I am not prepared for the emotional entanglement of seeing his baby on the screen.

His baby that grows within Kaia's tummy, is now a member of my pack. As an Alpha I feel a level of protection for this new life.

I made an oath as alpha to ensure each and every pack member's life thrives and protect them for years

to come.

But there's the fact that it is Than's child.

I can't deny the way my blood starts to heat at the thought of Than, and that his heir is in my pack. An heir that would betray me the moment he or she finds out their father was alpha of another pack. Not just any other pack...an enemy pack. But I could finally see Than be beaten, finally make him choose against her and she'll come running back

to me.

"Here we go....it's still early days but you can see the baby is growing nicely. Here are the arms.....and those are the legs...."

My eyes flash from the screen onto Kaia as she clutches on to her stomach, the baby giving a strong kick on the scan video, earning an adorable chuckle from the mother.

"Do you want to know the sex?" The doctor turns back from the computer screen to ask Kaia, who is already shaking her head.

"No...No I don't care...as long as the baby is happy and healthy, that's all I care about."

And I believe her.

Kaia is uncomplicated. With her there is no drama, no guessing her next step. She still has secrets that much is true but as I continue to make time for her, she will open up more. She has no game. She has been betrayed by Than as has many. Her eye's light up at the sight of her own child within her. Her hand now resting on her lower stomach, now stroking it gently.

I am captivated by her in this moment, she reminds me of my own mother. Someone I try not to think about too often.

Can I protect this child and give it the life I wanted for myself?

Yes, I think I can.

Kaia's eyes look to me as a smile creeps on her face.

"Thank you Alpha."

"What for?"

"For encouraging me to come, I needed this."

Her smile was starting to do things to me. Her eyes glisten as they hold a hope within them. A look that! hadn't seen in her eyes before.

She was enchanting... beautiful. I wanted to kiss her, to see what it felt like...what she tastes like.

But was I only thinking of kissing her because of who she resembled...because of Alora. Was my own mind trying to trick me. To claim something that wasn't mine. The alternative.

Yet Kaia didn't seem to scream alternative, although she is a double, she seemed to have an originality about her. Something, for the first time in years, I was perhaps ready to investigate more.

Chapter 27



Kaia POV

Something had changed with Alpha Hector, he was now going out of his way to spend more time with me.

Each time I mentioned my own place he would brush it off with a, "Let's see show we." 1

He won't want me here with a newborn baby screaming the house turn, waking him up at night, not when it isn't his but his nemesis's.

He has even gone as far as invite me to a pack security meeting. Something Than never allowed, even though I was his wife and the destined Luna...or so I thought at the time.

The meeting is intense, covering each angle of potential outcome of the Amber Desert warriors still skirting around the borders of the pack. Not making any movement to be interpreted as an act of war, but a reminder that they were still there...waiting...ready. Beta Ezra leads the majority of the meeting, his eyes flickering to mine every so often, as he mentions the alpha and the pack.

I don't know why, I held no loyalty to the Amber Desert pack. But knowing that I was married to the Alpha, Ezra could be forgiven for listening to his wolf's calls of warning.

"Kaia, is there anything you would like to add?" Hector calmly asks me in front of his beta and heads of departments.

What do I say? That I appreciate their protection but let's not dance around the subject...he is here for me? That he will attack, not if but when.

And it is only a matter of time.

"I may be his legal wife but unfortunately I wasn't privy to pack meetings, so there isn't a lot of information I can give, or any tactics I know that could help."

"You were his luna, no?" A male asks me, I think the head of training.

"I wasn't permitted to carry out luna duties, that still remained with his Mother. I am sorry." I shrug, sincerely feeling a disappointment for not being able to help them further.

"No need to apologise Kaia." Hector offers before moving on to discuss the increase of training and the use of weapons if necessary.

The meeting continued until late into the evening and the extra cups of coffee I had to keep my mind focused when they were talking about attack formations, had kept me awake until the early hours of the morning.

Before finally falling asleep, I stared out of the bedroom window trying to see if I could spot Than's warriors in the distance, cursing at him and them for already impacting my new life.

I didn't wake up until late morning, having missed breakfast which I felt guilty for. The Alpha and I eat breakfast and dinner together, I missed not seeing him this morning.

I was alone in the house, or so I thought.

Aubrey had gone home until lunch time and I used the privacy to check on my emails from the comfort of the living room sofa.

Unashamedly spread out giving my back a rest, the laptop resting on my stomach.

Checking my emails, I find a new message from my contact that was helping me find Father.

An old friend that had become a tracker.

I never asked where he was because he did some private jobs for the human government, but he agreed to keep trying for me...to keep sending me updates.

I had written to him to say if Father was at the Dark Phantom pack, that it was undercover because there was no obvious evidence of him being here. And I wasn't ready to ask Hector yet.

Not with the baby now taking my top priority. If news got out that this baby was my Father's grandchild... Than's warriors would be the least of my concern.

He says there is a possibility that he travelled towards the coast in the attempts to go overseas. That I should remain patient while he checks human CCTV records of the most popular ports and sea terminals. I don't know, doesn't sound like Father to go to the busiest ports...

I'm not sure what happened, but I must have fallen asleep in my sprawled out state on the sofa.

I wake up with a start when the laptop is lifted from my stomach and I panic...did I log off from my emails?

I pull the laptop back, in my moment of sleepiness still, yanking it back.

"Kaia, its only me." Hector looks down at me, his forehead showing frown lines from my reaction.

My eyes try to focus back from my sweet slumber.

"Come, I have something to show you." He takes hold of my hand, pulling me gently up from the sofa, carrying the laptop in his other hand. Thankfully the screensaver had kicked in, my emails logged out. "Alpha?"

"How many times, you can call me Hector." He chuckles as his thumb starts to stroke the back of my hand that was clasped into his.

Tingles...tingles that stop me in my track, powerful tingles. I look down at my hand, the crackling feeling of tingles erupting on my skin like two live wires mixing energy. How can he not feel this.

I can't peel my eyes from his thumb touching me, affectionately stroking my hand.

"You okay?" He looks down at our hands, his eyes following mine to see what I was so intently viewing. Judging by his lack of reaction, no he can not.

"I have a surprise for you..." He pulls me into his office, my mind now cloudy from the sensation he was

+25 B

causing, but not himself experiencing.

"Ta dah!"

I'm already speechless but even more so when I see a white wooden desk positioned next to his.

"I'm not following..."

Was he expecting a new member of staff to join him today. Had Ezra found his mate and she was to wo next to Hector carrying out pack administration duties? Hector lets go of my hand, the sudden coldness at his lack of touch making me want to grab hold of his hand and never let go again.

He places my laptop onto the desk, before looking at me expectantly...

"I thought we could work next to each other." He smiles, a particular smile that I don't think I have witnessed on his lips before.

In all my years as Than's supposed luna, he never let me work next to him in his office, he never granted me such a position of trust. "What do you think?"

"I love it." A squeal escapes me, as for a moment I forget he can not feel the mate bond, and I am pregnant with another male's child.

In the innocence of my jubilation I run up to him and fling my arms around his neck, having to go on my tiptoes just to reach up high enough. "Thank you." I whisper before realising how close I am to him.

He looks down at me, his scent radiating off him and his grey-ash eyes igniting with a fire within them.

Mesmerised by his eyes, I realise I am staring for too long, an awkwardness takes over him and he unwraps my hands from around his neck.

I don't let the awkwardness continue as I immediately sit at the desk pretending to type away at my laptop, earning an amused chuckle from my alpha.

Chapter 28



Alora POV

Between Freya avoiding me and Medea taking up most of my time, I didn't have a chance to push for more information.

But today would give me more answers, Freya was due back in as Medea had to go out with Than somewhere. She could no longer hide from me.

"Freya has just mind-linked me, she's got a sickness bug." Than announces at the breakfast table.

Unbelievable!

"Oh dear, we don't want that in the household, especially with Alora still recovering."

"I'm fine." I chirp out, desperate for answers. Freya could give me all the germs possible, I won't be waiting another day.

"Don't be silly dear. Than, I'll stay behind and keep an eye on Alora while you continue with our plans alone."

"Are you sure mother? You don't mind?"

"Of course not." Content provided by .

With Than's mother here I was starting to feel more like a prisoner than someone recovering. I couldn't go anywhere at the moment, her orders for me to not push myself too far were, I'm sure, meant for my own good but her actions were suffocating. "Where are you going?" I ask Than as he stands up.

"I just need to check the shift change for the off site warriors, nothing to worry about."

"Can't you do that through the mind-link? Exactly how far away are they?"

"Hush Alora, you don't need to worry yourself with such matters. Thankfully I am here now to help Than while you concentrate on yourself."

My only option is to get 100% better and then she can go back into retirement. I sound ungrateful for the woman that took me in, but there's a reason the alpha parents retire and back off.

"I won't be long..." Than walks over and lifts my chin up with his thumb, placing a tender kiss on my lips.

He prolongs the kiss, maybe he can pick up on my unhappiness. As always I melt when he kisses me... tingles erupting on my mouth that I don't think I'll ever get used to. I don't remember dreaming whilst I was asleep, but I'm sure if I did, it was of our kisses. "I'm out of pain relief pills, I'll have to pop to the doctors...alone." I use our closeness and the fact that Medea isn't considering as an opportunity to press the point I need to be alone when I go to pick up drugs.

I don't plan to pick up drugs, but Than doesn't know that and I don't believe for one minute that Freya is sick.

I let myself into the Beta house. She won't answer me even if I did ring on the doorbell.

I've armed myself with soup to cover my story of why I am here, just in the off chance that she is laying in bed, head in a bucket. But as werewolves we tend not to catch human germs...her claim is a bold one. I walk into a blacked out living room, with a duvet on the sofa and the television paused. The smell of popcorn cooking in the kitchen makes my jaw tense...what a liar.

She walks in, a scream escaping her from the fright of finding me sitting on her couch. She almost drops her bowl of popcorn, I suppose in the dark room and only just reawakening, I might look like a ghost. "You aren't supposed to be here?"

My back straightens as I hear the disapproval in her voice.

"Why because you are so sick? Surely popcorn is the last thing you would want."

"I've been ill all night and fancied trying something light."

"Don't play me for a fool Freya, you've been ignoring me...and don't deny it."

She sighs as she walks over to me and places the popcorn down.

"I said too much....the other day."

"You didn't say enough..."

"Alora..." Her hands run through her hair.

"No, enough." I jump up from the sofa, my own frustration taking the reins.

"And that's another thing...I am Than's mate, you are supposed to address me as Luna. Not once have you done so...or Zane, why?" I'm not a status person by any means, but it hadn't escaped me that they both hadn't addressed me as such. "The pack was told not to overwhelm you."

"This pack is a lot colder towards me now...shit, I thought they were angry at me."

"They are confused...I'm sure if they thought they were coming across as cold they would be mortified."

I can't be mad at them, not if they've been ordered by their alpha to do something. I'll just have to make an effort to show them I am fit for purpose. I take a deep breath in to ask my next question, a question I knew would be hard to seek answers to. "Who is she?"

I thought Freya would hold a protest, but she seems quite open to answer my questions.

"Her name is Kala. She returned from college with Alpha Than and they married. She became Luna of the pack, but she was never allowed to carry out Luna duties." "Why?"

"I suppose Alpha always hoped you would return to us. And you have."

"He married another?" I shake my head in disbelief.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I don't know..." Freya seems saddened by her admission, as if she actually cared for this Kaia.

"Where is she now?"

"I don't know, she left the night you regained consciousness. It caused an issue between Alpha and Zane, that much I know."

"There's nothing...no evidence of her, he doesn't mention her. Not even a stray hair in our bed."

"She didn't live in the alpha house.....she lived alone."

"Alone?" What kind of wife and Luna lives alone?

"You need to show me."

Ebony Woods Author

3 chapter updates in one go

thank you for all the gems so far.

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Chapter 29



Alora POV

Freya tries to turn back a couple of times but each time she is pinned on the spot by my determined stare.

Now wasn't the time for hesitation.

She leads me through the heart of the pack. Taking great care to avoid us being seen.

We keep to the side muddy tracks, keeping off the main path and cutting across gardens, hiding behind trees when pack members walk past.

My stomach hurts from trying to keep up, she's fast and I'm now realising I have a long way to go before I can defend this pack as the Luna.

Freya has to help me climb over a garden fence, pushing me up where the old me would have jump over it

in no time.

Before I know it I am entering a house that is built like any other pack member house. Generic...build from a similar design, built quickly to accommodate a growing pack. Helping to keep up with high birth rate years, yet low deaths.

Walking through the hallway, I notice immediately that the house has a lack of character. No personal items, no decor...not even a photograph.

Nothing to give away the person's identity.

Freya takes me upstairs first, not giving me the downstairs tour. Although, I could see the kitchen from the hallway... the house is small and compact.

It wasn't anywhere near the size of the alpha home. None of the pack houses were.

Walking upstairs, I suddenly feel intrusive, but Freya wouldn't have brought me upstairs for no reason at all.

"This was Kaia's house." She looks down at me from behind as she continues up the stairs, holding on to

the banister.

"This was her room." She points to the left as we reach the landing.

This house shows absolutely no signs of wealth, no sign of status...it's as if she were an omega. No sign of a pack luna living here at all, no sign of wealth or status. What exactly am I missing... Why was she here. What did she do for Than to put her here?

Swallowing the lump in my throat I dig deep for the courage to push the door open, to pry on her personal space.

Again, the room gives no sense of identity, it could be a hotel room for all I knew. Designed to satisfy the masses.

I hate to say it, but easily cleaned to house pack members after the death of the previous occupant. A conveyor belt, always moving.

My eyes look to the double bed, neatly made as if the person had a lot of time to themselves.

Did he sleep in this bed with her? How often did they have sex? Rolling around in the sheets, making her giggle.

Did he hold her, stroke her hair to sleep afterwards like me?

Nausea hits me from the thought of him being with another woman, especially one that looks like me.

"How long did she live here?"

"She was in the alpha house for maybe a year, then she moved here. I think she did it on her own accord, and Alpha didn't stop her."

In the corner of the bedroom, is a white single door wardrobe.

I can't help myself.

I am already pacing across the cream carpet, my hand held out before I realise what I am doing.

I pull open the wardrobe, foolishly hoping that this was all wrong, that Freya somehow had misinterpreted something.

A foolish girl's dream on my part I suppose.

It hangs there. Like some dark sordid weapon preparing to attack me, my body powerless to fight against

1. it.

It's metaphor of existence, a complete contrast to the beautiful whiteness of the well kept wedding dress simply hanging in the wardrobe.

I touch the intricate lace design, as if expecting it to turn to dust in my hands.

My chest starts to burn with the betrayal of perhaps our love not being as solid as I once thought it was. For him marrying another.

But then I did leave him first. Leaving him to pick up the pieces, forcing him to move on without me.

I didn't expect to survive, to come back.

Can I really blame him for seeking another in comfort.

"Where is she now?" I gasp out, my throat dry and sounding hoarse, my eyes unable to leave the wedding dress.

"I don't know, nobody knows."

"Does..."

This is hard for me to ask.

"Does he want her back?"

Was he looking for her, the security threat being a cover up. Was he combing the woods and other packs

for her...

"Yes, but not for reasons you think."

"What do you mean?"

"She took something, something Alpha says is vital to get back."

Vital to get back? Is that really why Medea was here...did this Kaia take something that belonged to them, to the pack.

I drag my eyes away from the dress, closing the wardrobe door, ensuring it clicks shut. As if it doesn't actually exist in there. Out of sight, out of mind.

I turn, facing Freya. How dare she take something from our pack. From Than.

Determination flows through me, my wolf springing forward...making her own vow in retrieving whatever it

1. is.

"Then I have to help him get it back."

Ebony Woods

Author

I'd love your feedback so far. Thank you for the gems, they make such a difference.

Chapter 30



Than POV

"You have enough men on patrol?"

"Yes Mother, I know how to run a pack."

"Do you Than, because I've had to leave your Father for this shit show. 2 years, 2 years you've had her nicely controlled...then the moment you actually need her...she slips through your fingers." Mother slams shut an accountancy book which I still use as well as the computer, making sure everything is documented twice.

Just how she likes it.

"Does Kaia know?" She finally looks at me, her head having been stuck in the book for some time.

"No of course not."

"What about the pack?"

"What about the pack?" I moan.

"Have you put them under alpha command not to mention your wife to your mate?"

I didn't need to command my pack, I kept Kaia isolated and my pack know better than to mention Kaia to

Alora.

My parents were the ones to make it clear what was expected of the pack before I returned from college with Kaia, whilst Alora was in a coma.

"It's all under control." I pinch the bridge of my nose, trying to breathe slowly to keep my increasing anger at her interference under control.

I called Mother here to help look after Alora whilst I concentrated on breaking into the Dark Phantom pack but she got delayed. Now that she is here, she's trying to sort things for me.

Once a luna always a luna I suppose.

"Does Alora know what you need Kaia for?"

"No of course not Mother, you know Alora...she'd refuse."

"So what will you do?"

"The doctor will administer her a sleeping draft..."

"What and she'll just wake up feeling better? Like magic, poof...go to sleep and wake up a new woman?" I didn't appreciate the humour in mother's voice.

"She knows her body is healing...that it will just take time." I seethe out, taking a seat on the spare chair. Mother, of course, was sitting at my desk. Going through all my alpha documents, I couldn't hide anything from her. Even if I wanted to. I close my eyes and let my body slouch into the chair.

"You can't rest Than, you need to keep searching for her."

"No need.."

"You found her? Then where is she?"

"She's found refuge in another pack...don't worry Mother I am handling it."

"You need to demand entry from the alpha..." She slams her fist onto the desk, my eyes bursting open from the sudden loud noise.

"It's not that simple."

"Oh?"

If she thinks Kaia running was a shit show, her current location would be unfathomable to Mother. I prepare myself for Mother's onslaught of choice words.

"She's at the Dark Phantom pack."

"Hector?" She growls, her eyes flashing to that of her wolf.

"Than? Medea?" Alora's sweet voice sings out.

"We are in the office." I call to her, feeling the hot burning scowl of Mother's eyes on me.

Alora's voice being as important as a nightingale's morning chorus after a savage long night. She was always my light in the dark.

"What's going on?" Alora walks in, placing her arm affectionately on the back of my neck.

She adores Mother but she understands how intense she can be at times.

I reach behind and take hold of her hand, gently pulling her around the chair into me, on to my lap.

"I was just updating Mother with pack affairs."

"The security threat? Is it sorted?" Alora looks at me, before her eyes turn to Mother's.

"No, not yet dear. Things are getting more complicated than I realised. You'd understand wouldn't you, if Than had to go off pack lands for a few days, stay away.."

"Of course, do you want me to come, to help?"

"You help me just by being here, being back with me." I've only just got Alora back, there's no chance in hell I'd put her in a dangerous situation. Let alone give him an opportunity to see her again.

"And I won't go anywhere again, I promise." She means what she says, she cups my face with both her hands... her eyes looking deeply into mine. Her green eyes shining darker as her wolf starts to present herself. If we were alone I would have her over this desk already. "Then it's settled! Alora I will remain and help you in your recovery, get your training back on track for the ceremony," Mother breaks our lover's moment too abruptly for my liking.

"Ceremony..."

"Yes, you are Than's mate...you are his luna."

Alora doesn't reply she just gives a small nod, something she's always done when she found her to be overbearing.

Alora knew when to keep quiet in front of Mother. Whereas Kaia and mother clashed from the very beginning. "Is Freya with you?"

"No Medea, why would she be?"

Something feels off with Alora, her heartbeat is quickening and her cheeks are starting to turn a shade of

red.

"I was going to ask her to make us a drink..."

"You two are busy, I'll do it. I need to take my medication anyway. Shout if you need me,"

"We will dear." Mum sings out to Alora as she leaves the room.

"Focus Than."

Mother snarls at me for watching my mate walk away, watching her figure leave the room, envisaging

what I want to do to her.

"We need a plan of action."

"She refused to return.." I sigh, turning my full attention back to Mother.

"You spoke with her?"

"Briefly at the banquet the Dark Phantom pack was hosting. It took about 2 seconds before he walked over, trying to stir up shit." "Does he know, that she's awake?" Mother lowers her voice to a whisper.

"Yes, yes he knows."

"The longer she stays there, the more brainwashed she'll become. You need to get her out. You need to start applying pressure."

"My warriors are watching their borders like hawks, they can't move without me knowing."

"He's sneaky Than, he'll find a way. You don't have any time left, you need to get your warriors in line, that's an order. They need to attack."