

## Chapter 32 - Denying the Alpha

FAITH'S point of view

You really do look lovely”, Kyle praises me as the door shuts behind us. “Can I maybe hold your hand?” He asks a little nervously. It’s cute.

“I would love too” I didn't wait for him to make the next move, I just slipped my fingers in between his, and his massive hands closed around mine.

For a brief moment, we stayed on the small porch, simply staring at one another. I don't think either of us quite knew what to say next. But I didn't mind. The silence gave me time to appreciate the moment with him. And it was a beautiful moment.

“Shall we” he gestures towards the shimmery purple GT mustang. I didn't know much about cars, but I would recognise that brand of car anywhere. It was my father's dream car. I never understood why he didn't just buy one. He always said that it was too expensive just for him and that the money belonged to everyone in the family, so it didn't seem right. I think he put so much into everything he did for us that he deserved it anyway.

“Are you okay?” He squeezes my hand gently.

“Oh yeah, I'm fine. I'm sorry, I was just looking at the car.” I had to drop his hand to climb into the seat. It felt cold from the loss of contact. He slid into the driver's seat and started the car.

“So you like mustangs, do you?” He seemed happy that I would.

“They are my dad's favourite. I love them because they remind me of him. They are the only brand of car I know though.” I shrug. I could pretend to know about cars in an attempt to impress him, but I would just end making a fool of myself.

“I bet you miss them a lot.” He gave me a sorrowful look.

“I miss my parents every day, but it's getting easier, and I have my Aunt and Uncle, who have been great.” His hands just on the centre console? Does he want me to hold it again? Or would that be too clingy? But why else would he put it there

Stop. You are overthinking it. Just take his hand. He asked you already. Is sapphire right? Should I just grab it?

Of course, I'm right. Don't you ever question me again. She sassed me. She's lucky I love her.

Okay, I'm going to do it. I say.

We drove to the restaurant mostly in comfortable silence. Our intertwined hands kept me calm and feeling secure. I wish I could call my father and tell him about the mustang.

We pulled up outside a smaller middle class restaurant. Kyle was quick to get out of the car once we had parked. Before I could collect my clutch, he had the passenger door open. He held his hand out to me like a gentleman. I took it and smiled like a fool. The gesture was so sweet. My cheeks would surely tire before the end of the night.

"I hope you don't mind. I wasn't sure what you liked. This place has a little of everything, and so I was sure they would have something you'd take a fancy to."

"I'm not really all that fussy when it comes to food. I love most things except for avocado, tomatoes and pumpkin." Was that too much information?

You are here to get to know each other, bombard that hunk. He needs all the tips he can get. We can be a lot to handle. Would I ever make it through this date with all of Sapphire's little side comments?

Girl, you never used to question yourself like this. I'm just here to be your confidence till you find it again. Wow, she was coming out with some harsh truth tonight, I thought sadly. I did use to believe in myself more.

Can you blame me? The man who was supposed to be designed for me. Love me in every way, though I wasn't good enough. But I try not to wallow, I'm here with Kyle, and he's saying and doing all the right things. That's what I should be focused on.

Of course, I don't. This isn't me blaming you. This is me supporting you.

I keep the link between Sapphire and me open in case I need it later, but I drop the conversation for now.

"Why do you hate those things?" Kyle asked as he yanked the restaurant doors open for us.

“I don’t know. I just do.” I shrugged. “ I don’t like the way you can taste the tomato juice on everything it touches. Avocados taste like wet grass, and pumpkin doesn’t need a reason. It just tastes awful.”

“Is that you not knowing something?” He chuckled lightly. Was he always going to make me blush like this? It feels like he does this every time we speak.

I wish he’d light a fire under you in other ways if you catch my drift. I defiantly caught Sapphires ‘drift’. It was incredibly hard not to, but I chose to ignore her. I couldn’t think about him in the bedroom if I was going to have to speak coherently. Just the thought of him naked made me moan. I may be a virgin, but my thoughts were far from clean.

“Are calling me a know it all sir” I slapped my hand to my chest on mock offence, to which he feigned pure horror.

“Of course not my good. Lady, I would never.”

We reach the front of the reception. The counter is attended by a boy no more than 16. He’s short, has bad acne, and his hair is choppy and weird. His deep disapproving scowl tells me that this is the last place he wants to be.

“Welcome to brumbies. How may we be of service today?” He asks with a snivel. Hmm, the poor thing must be sick. I wonder why he would show up to work like that.

“Reservations for Vasey”, Kyle tells the boy. He flips open a little black book on the desk with a bunch of names and times scribbled down in messy handwriting. He crosses Vasey off of the list and hands us a menu each.

“Follow me, please” He gestures towards the back of the restaurant. I’m a little disgusted when I see the human wipe away his dripping nose. He’s lucky werewolves don’t get sick. That was gross.

Neither of us says anything as we are led to our table in the back along the edge of the balcony, but we remain inside.

“A waiter will be with you shortly”, he sniffled. “Can I get you anything until then?”

“Just a pitcher of water, thank you”, Kyle answers. The host nods to show his understanding and slumbers off.

“Have you been here before?” I ask.

“Yes. Many times. They have great food. This is where I tend to hold most, if not all, of my alpha meetings. If it’s just one on one, I’ll do it at the office, but if there is more, it’s

better to do on mutual territory. This restaurant is out of pack borders but not so far out that I can't make it back to the reserve if I need to in a hurry." He points to the thick Forrest that surrounds the cosy restaurant.

"The Forrest is quite large, but the pack is just on the other side of those trees."

I stared off into the distance. I longed to run through the thick brush. I hadn't taken Sapphire out for a run since we arrived at Waning crescent. I longed too, but Amelio and Amy had been busy since my arrival, and I was hesitant to go out on my own. I hadn't had the chance to meet other wolves yet, and I was afraid that the others would think Sapphire frightening since they had yet to be around her.

"Do you think maybe before we go home tonight that we could go for a run?" I ask Kyle, hopeful that his answer is yes.

"You wanna go for a run with me?" He asks, surprised, although I'm not sure why it would.

"If that's okay with you?" I don't want to ruin any plans he has, after all.

"Duke would love to meet Sapphire." He says happily.

Oh my god. I can't wait to meet Duke. Sapphire is over the moon. She never got the chance to meet Grayson despite being his first mate. I think she was lucky. It would have only been harder for us to leave otherwise. It was hard for me to break that attachment I already had to Declan. I was glad she didn't have to go through that with his shameful wolf.

"Sapphire is very excited to meet him," I tell Kyle, but it was Duke that I hoped was listening.

We chatted politely until the waiter came a few minutes later.

"Hello, I'll be your waiter this evening. What can I get you?" the bubbly older lady asked, hand hovering slightly over the worn notepad.

I had been so busy chatting happily away with my mate that I hadn't even glanced at the menu yet.

I flicked it up and had a very quick scan of the items. They had an impressive amount of dishes for a suburban middle class restaurant, I must say.

"May I have the sirloin steak, please, the 400 grams, with the side of chips and a generous serving of gravy." I didn't miss the look of surprise that filtered across the kind

ladies face, but she chose to ignore it as she scribbled my order furiously on her little book.

“And how would you like that steak cooked there, honey?” her eyes darted up momentarily while she waited own still poised.

“Rare, please.” we wolves liked our meat red.

“And for you, sir?”

“The lobster please with shaved black truffles on the side. I don't want anything bigger than one and a half pounds. Boiled and then roasted on your wood fire, I like my shell roasted. I want the meat buttery soft. I'd rather it a smidge undercooked than to be chowing down on tough lobster. I'd also like a bottle of viogner to go on the side. Thank you” he handed the menu back without so much as even looking at it.

“Viogner?” I can't help but question.

“It's a white wine, sort of fruity. It goes really well with the lobster.” He explains. I feel so uncultured right now.

“I have never heard of it,” I admit.

“Do you not drink?” Guilt marred his face. It was plain to see that he had some regret for not checking with me first.

“No, I drink. I enjoy the occasional spirit here and there, but I don't tend to like wine.” It was a little bitter. In my opinion, I preferred things that were salty or sweet.

The lobster was placed in front of Kyle moments before another server arrived with my steak.

I noticed the sweet little old lady hanging by the table. For a moment, I thought she might be waiting for a tip, but she was waiting, watching my Mate. I almost growled at her for eyeing what was mine. I was proud of myself when I managed to reign it in. We were around too many humans.

I watched curiously as he slipped a small bowel under the tail. In one swift motion, he twisted the bottom clean off. I almost puked as I watched this gross greeny substance seep from its body.

“It's perfect. Thank you,” he says to the lady. She smiles gently at him and wanders off to the following table.

“What?” Kyle asks. He has only now just noticed my sickly unease.

“What is that?” I ask of him incredulously. I have never seen such a thing.

“This”, he scoops up some of the greeny gunk “, it’s tomalley. It’s the best part of the lobster.”

“It looks like regurgitated spinach.” I shouldn’t judge a person, and I wasn’t, but that looked distrustful.

“Have you never even lobster” the man looked genuinely offended.

“Uhm, no.” I didn’t like seafood. I had a highly sensitive sense of smell, and to me, seafood, well, it stunk. And I don’t like stinky foods.

“You have to try this.” He extends his fork to me. He must be crazy. I am no expert, but it could be poop. It came out of the tail. Hard pass.

“No, thank you.”

He simply popped it into his mouth. At least I wasn’t thinking about kissing him so much anymore.