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ELLE

Being on the same page with Kade was something that made my heart flutter in a foreign but welcome manner. I was glad to know that I had not been the only one feeling that way. I had been afraid to say anything incase it was just one-sided for the time being, but it was not that at all. It sounded so sweet to hear those three words from his mouth.

“Tyre is jumping at the bit, demanding to know when he gets time with Faye to complete their bond,” he said with a sigh.

I could tell that Tyre could be just as annoying to him as Faye was to me when she wanted to. We were perfect complements, so it would only make sense that they would be perfect complements too.

“Faye’s doing the same exact thing. Although, she took it a step further and threatened to lock us both out of the driver seat if we don’t give her an answer.”

His eyebrows raised right up in surprise with my words. “Is that something that she can actually do?”

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Faye pushed forward and cupped his cheeks before pulling his face closer.

“Are you willing to risk it?” she asked. He shook his head slowly, making her smile. “Yes. It’s something I can do, but I would never do it to you and Tyre. If I had been here when you talked to Grant, I could’ve given him full control. Both Elle and I are her descendants. My ancestors were created from Selene’s essence. Elle was created from Selene’s lineage.”

Why did she never tell me that? I swore that she liked him more than me sometimes. I just heard her tinkling laughter in my head at my thoughts. See? She did not even deny it.

“So, all of Elle’s family would be descendants too?”

She tilted her head while she thought about how to explain it. I was not privy to her mind like she was when I was in control, but I supposed there were many things that I could not know until it was time to know it.

“Yes and no. Elle’s DNA specifically contains traces of Selene’s DNA. Think of it like a trait. Sometimes it’s dominant and sometimes recessive. Elle got the

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dominate one. All of her family has the potential for it, but not all have that actuality of it. Some of them do have the actuality but not all. That's all I can say for now on that. You'll find out as soon as we go on a visit. I suggest that we also take Gabriel and Apollo," she said before relinquishing back control to me.

I growled at her cryptic bullshit. Kade could see and feel my frustration. He simply chuckled before kissing me to melt the frustration away. His lips were lethal alright as he killed my frustration without effort.

"I see why you say she's cryptic. Apollo's been dying for a mate, so perhaps she'll be along the way too."

"Perhaps. Either that or you have horrible taste in music, and we need Apollo to fix that," I said cheekily.

He growled at me before deciding to pay me back by tickling the shit out of me. No. Any other form of torture but this would be welcome. I was too damn ticklish, and I hated it. I tried squirming out of his hold, but it was of no use. I laughed so hard that I cried. Only then did he let me go with a smug smirk



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of victory.

“I’ll get you back for that,” I warned him.

“Can’t wait to see what you have in mind.” He waggled his eyebrows suggestively which just brought a blush to my cheeks, thinking about what we just did.

Sex with Kade was a new experience every time. He was sexy and sensual all wrapped up in the package of a dominating Alpha. He knew exactly what my body wanted, what it needed even if I did not, and proceeded to give me just that.

I was not certain if he was afraid to let go because of my past and all, but it was completely different with him. I craved it when it came to him because I trusted him and needed him to let go just as much as he needed to as well. A simple command or praise could flood my body with excitement, and his mere touch was enough to flood it with carnal desire and need.

My stomach growled, letting me know that it needed more sustenance than Kade’s cum. By the way, that tasted like the finest delicacy in the world. It was slightly salty but had a hint of the cinnamon from his scent. It was a good thing that it did not

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taste like espresso or else he would never be allowed to be far from me since it would call out to the coffee lover in me. I would become an addict.

“We still have a few hours until they get here. I forgot to make sure that we had someone cooking, so I should go see if anyone had plans and help out,” I said, reluctantly pulling myself away from him.

“No need. Apollo, Lucinda, and a couple of our warriors are cooking for everyone tonight. However, they refused to tell me what it would be so that they could make it a surprise.”

He placed a kiss to my shoulder before getting up to grab one of his shirts from his bag and gently cleaning me up. He never had to do that, but I sincerely appreciated the gesture. He kissed my lips before placing the shirt in a laundry bag that he had.

“That’s very kind of them, and thank you,” I told him.

I hopped up and grabbed some clothes. I opted for some skinny jeans and a sweater. I did not want the sleazy Elder to look at me like he had before. I closed my eyes and fought against the memory of that night. The pain and was unbearable, making

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me wonder if my body would finally succumb to the years of damage.

“You never need to thank me for taking care of you. It’s my pleasure to. Like I said, our pack runs differently. None of us mind cooking and cleaning. Now, do you want to tell me what all that disgust and shame you are feeling is about?” he asked, as he turned me around to face him.

If I told him that I did not want to then I knew he would not push. However, this was him, and he had a right to know what he was walking into tonight. I nodded and pulled him back over to the bed. He leaned against the headboard and pulled me onto his lap. We were still naked, but there was nothing sexual about this right now. It was merely for comfort and support.

“The Elder never mentioned which pack he was from whenever I was around but was boasting that he knew enough inside secrets that could burn the pack down from within. Alpha Andrew taunted him by asking if he wasn’t worried about what his Alpha would do if he found out, but the Elder just laughed and said that it wouldn’t be a problem for much longer. I’m assuming him coming here was after you started your mate tour. I believe that he was

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planning on taking you out and absorbing your title," I began.

Kade's eyebrows scrunched together, and his jaw clenched so hard that I was afraid it would break. He placed his face in my neck and breathed in my scent to calm him down.

I could feel the betrayal through the bond that he was feeling, and it broke my heart. Kade was a good Alpha that truly cared about his people. The betrayal stung even more for him because the Elder was holding a status that should have also been looking out for and protecting his pack. That was not what was happening here.

"Please go on," he said as he pulled away from my neck.

I moved his arms around me because this would be harder for him to hear. I was certain he could feel my hesitation, so he complied and kissed my forehead.

My lungs took in a deep breath to steady myself. He had every right to know for two reasons. One: he was my mate. Two: It was his pack's Elder.

"I wasn't the only one that he touched, but I was

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the worst. I was brought up onto the stage in front of all the guests, and the reigns were handed over to Dulaney. He showed the Elder how much pain my body could take by slicing me up and doing a lot of shit that Gabriel then cleaned and took care of once I eventually staggered my way back home later that night. Dulaney then handed me over to the Elder. It was bad and brutal and made some of what Dulaney, the warriors, and even Eric ever did pale in comparison. He kept telling me how much I was enjoying it and how he'd come back for me when he took your pack over. I'd be his whore because I'd never be worthy of being his Luna."

Kade was silent as I explained because he was stuck inside himself, stuck in the thoughts, and stuck in the fury. Said fury would be enough to have brought me to my knees if I had been standing. There was remorse and guilt there too.

I watched as tears fell from his eyes. He hugged me to him without uttering a single word. Minutes ticked by slowly until he eventually pulled away. I leaned down and kissed away his tears just as he had done for me earlier. My heart broke for how much pain this was causing him.

"Darling, I'm so sorry for what he did to you. If I

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had known then he would've been dead long ago. He won't get away with any of this. He will pay for each ounce of pain that was inflicted upon you and everyone else," he promised me. His voice held nothing resolute determination.

"It's not your fault. It's his. You've done nothing but treat me right and show me how I should be treated. You've shone me the truth of what it means to be loved. I'm honored to be your mate. I hate that you feel guilty at all for what he did because that's not on you. I just didn't want you to be blindsided at all tonight."

He nodded and kissed his mark, the one that he placed there with love and care. I kissed mine too because it was the bond that wove us together. The connection between mates superseded any other possible connection and bond.

"He's going to flip his shit when he sees me tonight," I said with a dark chuckle. That was the part that which I was looking forward to.

"Oh yes. He certainly will. We never told them who my mate was or her rank at all. He had no way to guess who it would be since the Alpha bastard was too caught up with planning your kidnapping to call

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him," he said with a devious smirk.

I was glad that we were on the same page with this because I wanted to see the panic in his eyes as recognition overcame him. Would he be truly remorseful? That was highly doubtful because he was someone with a twisted soul. What was he willing to do to others if he was willing to brutalize me? Were there some in his own pack that he threatened to secrecy?

I pushed all thoughts about him out of my mind for now and got dressed. My eyes drank Kade's look in. He was wearing a pair of dress slacks with a dark navy button down. I bit my lip and rolled up the sleeves on his forearms before making sure that two buttons on the shirt were undone.

Everything within me appreciated this man more than anything else I had ever encountered before. I was not blind and could appreciate if a guy looked good or not, but all paled against what stood before me.

"Very sexy," I cooed appreciatively.

"I can say the same, darling," he said, slowly sweeping his eyes over all of me and clearly enjoying what he saw by the way that he had to

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readjust his pants.

I smirked and opened the door for us. Apparently, everyone was over in the packhouse cooking. It made sense because there were many new additions to the party. We walked in companionable silence all the way over. Silence was never awkward around him, and it just let us be present in the moment.

Denny launched himself at me when he got close enough after we entered the doorway. I caught him with ease and flung him around which always made him laugh. His laughter was completely adorable. I was so thankful that his brief time here did not ruin him.

“Hey little man. How are you doing today? Staying out of trouble I hope,” I said with a mock glare which he totally saw through. His little dimples pulled his lips upwards into a smile.

“I am, Miss Elle. I promise. Mom and Dad said that we’re moving with you all tomorrow. Can we visit the frogs before we leave?” he asked hopefully, peering up at me with that childlike innocence that I was bound and determined for him to keep.

I ruffled his hair until he chuckled, luring my smile out as well. My heart was always happy around

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pups. Hopefully, Kade and I would have them one day as well. He would make the best father.

“Of course, we can, and we’ll take some pictures too.”

Denny looked at me like I was his hero, and that thought was liberating. It was healing. I wanted to always be his hero, but I knew that life was never void trouble and nightmares. However, I wanted to preserve that idealism for as long as possible.

Kade knelt down next to Denny and cupped his ear as if to tell him a secret. Even though we could hear Kade, Denny still felt special thinking that only he could hear.

“Miss Elle told me about how you like amphibians and reptiles. We actually have a little preserve in the pack that someone made that has plenty of both. I think she’s looking for a special helper if you’re interested.”

Denny’s head nodded so quickly I was afraid that he was going to get whiplash. In that one gesture, Kade won over the little man. This was why I fell in love with him. He cared deeply and wanted to make his people’s lives better. I saw that from the first day. I saw that from the way he spoke about our

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pack. I saw it from the look in his eyes when he talked about the role I could have to help our people.

All of the Blue Crests came over to see how I was doing. I loved them with everything inside of me. They cared about me just as much as I did them. They also congratulated both of us on the official mating. I blushed furiously, which just made Kade snicker.

“You’re a badass yet have such a deep blush. It’s adorable,” he whispered to me.

“I’m not adorable,” I huffed. “I’m fierce, can rip a rogue’s throat out without exerting effort, and ...” I trailed off.

“Can’t finish a sentence,” Gabriel piped up.

I let out a warning growl to which he just winked. He was a pain in the ass, but he was my pain in the ass.

All of the Blue Crests were instructed to take a seat, and all of the Nightshades brought our plates out to us. I was incredibly proud of this new pack that we would become part of. I would officially be joining after supper. I could already link with Kade via the mate-bond, but I needed to be able to link with the

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rest as well.

It was something new to be catered to. None of us really knew how to handle it. Catering to others had been my entire way of life for the past thirteen years. It would definitely be a transition that we would all have to make. None of us would be able to comprehend the change until we experienced it for ourselves.

“You guys really outdid yourselves. Thank you so much,” I told them.

They prepared steak, potatoes, salad, and rolls. The aroma was heavenly, and I could not wait to taste it. The steak looked delicious and juicy. I was certain that I was probably not the only one salivating over this.

“We hope everyone enjoys. Who’s responsible for the garden behind the house?” Apollo asked as he poured himself some water from the pitcher.

“Mrs. Croft, the woman that raised me for three years, was responsible for designing it and teaching me how to take care of it. Once she was gone, I took over and taught some of the older ones how to do it. We have some specific green thumbs that are responsible for it now,” I said with a snicker at the

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end.

Kade looked at me curiously, so I jutted my chin out towards Sydney and Tatum. They were sixteen-year-old gifted twins.

Sydney had long blonde hair, hazel eyes, and curves that any woman would die for. She was fairly outgoing and could make anyone smile.

Tatum was quieter than his twin with the same blonde hair down to his shoulders and hazel eyes. He was only a couple of inches taller than me but muscular. Gabriel took him under his wing when Tatum went through some things that threatened his sanity. Gabriel made him into a fighter.

'Holy hell. Their gifts are really fucking powerful. Has anyone taught them how to hone it?' my mate asked me.

'I tried my best, but there was only so much I could teach since I didn't understand it.'

"There's plenty around the pack that you could help with if you two want to continue with your green thumbs. It's entirely up to you," Kade said.

They looked taken aback but nodded and thanked

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him. We would talk to them all tonight about their places in the pack, but right now we had other things to focus on. We ate and talked amongst everyone, and it was a miraculous sight indeed. I was thankful that everyone was getting along so well. The people from here only had issues with those they needed to. Everyone else was fine.

Kade had been shocked that everyone was so welcoming initially, but that was because we knew what it was like to have undo hostility thrown on us. Nightshade was nothing like Blue Crest, and the people here saw that immediately.

Once the meal was over, Kade folded his hands on the table and looked around at everyone. Each person gave him their full attention. It was not because they feared him that they did it. It was because they respected him and followed him that they did. He was an Alpha that everyone would be proud to follow.

“The Elders will be here in about an hour, so I need to do something that I really wished I did not have to, but you’ll understand why once we’re done with it. All Nightshade please line up shoulder to shoulder,” Kade said before standing up as well. He held his hand out to me, and we walked over

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together.

They all did as he asked but were confused about what was going on. I could tell that Kade truly hated this because he wanted to trust that loyalty meant everything to his pack members, but the Elder made him realize that it was not always black and white.

“I’m going to ask a single question to each one of you. When I ask it, you need to answer it. I swear that I would not do this if it was not necessary,” he said with the corners of his lips turning down.

He, I, and Apollo started at the end of the line and asked each person the same question. “Are you betraying this pack?”

Person after person answered in the negative which was confirmed by Apollo to be truthful. Each time he asked the question, I felt the guilt and the pain hit the bond. He loathed doubting his pack. He loathed needing to question any of them. It hurt him to do it, and I hated that. I tried to send reassurance each time, and he squeezed my hand with appreciation. We were in this together.

“Like I said, I wouldn’t have done that if it wasn’t necessary. I don’t want you to think that we doubt

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your loyalty, but let me explain why I had to ask. One of our Elders came to this very pack last month. He's been plotting to get rid of me and has shared our pack's secrets with outsiders. He also took advantage of some of the people here. We didn't know until earlier today which Elder it was, but Luna kept detailed records of such incidents and was able to even show me a memory of what they looked like, confirming who it was. Three of the packs that we have contacts with also did the same thing as they did," Kade explained with barely contained rage.

I watched all of their faces, and they were pissed off. Their loyalty was never in question because these were the people who did not care that the traitor was an Elder of the pack. All that they cared about was that the Elder went against the pack and against those here.

"Which Elder is it?" one of the females asked.

Kade's molars ground together as he tried to reign in that fury. He hated this Elder even more after what I shared with him. I would be surprised if he was able to keep from killing the Elder tonight, but I had faith that he would be able to handle himself.

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“Elder Elwyn,” I supplied because I knew Kade was really fighting his instincts. Those instincts demanded justice for what the Elder did to the pack and to his mate.

Their jaws nearly hit the floor with that bit of information. He had fooled everyone apparently. Kade said that he came from a long line of noble Elders. This one just chose to sate his own greed and deviant desires instead of protecting his pack.

‘Who else did he harm?’ Kade asked.

‘He beat Eloise and Carmen. He forced Eloise to give him a blowjob. Luckily, he didn’t touch Carmen like that.’

I sent him a visual of what the two looked like, and his fury skyrocketed more that he saw how young Eloise was. She was fifteen.