

Fated Rejection - Fated Claim

Chapter 5

KADE

“You ready for this trip? It’s about a four-hour drive so not too far away,” Apollo said. He was my best friend and Beta. He was damn good in both roles.

Was I ready? No. Did I have to go? Yes.

I was twenty-four and had yet to find my mate. Normally, that would not be a big deal. However, being the Alpha of a prominent pack set certain expectations upon my shoulders. I took over as Alpha six years ago after my father died in a rogue attack. Our Elders had been trying to force me into taken a chosen mate in order to strengthen the pack for the past year, but I adamantly refused. I would only accept the one fated to me. She would be my equal in all ways. They struck a deal with me that they would lay off entirely on the whole chosen mate thing for two years if I visited various packs in order to increase the likelihood of finding her.

This was the third pack that I would be visiting but at least it was not too far away. The first two were complete duds, but I would keep going because I refused to take a chosen mate. My wolf Tyre also refused a chosen because our wolves would only find their true completion with their fated mates. I would never condemn my wolf to being incomplete. I might be a jackass, but I was not a monster.

“Not a bad drive. I know that Alpha Andrew was eager for this treaty talk and wasn’t entirely thrilled when I had to put it off until we got back. Too bad. He wants our help not the other way around,” I said as I slung my duffle bag over my shoulder.

Apollo snorted at that. He knew all about Alpha Andrew because Apollo was my information seeker. If there was something he wanted to know then he knew how to get it. We had to know the ins and outs of the packs that wanted our assistance and alliance. We refused to blindly offer our assistance and support. Our pack's protection was our top priority and having a treaty with a potentially problematic pack could end up harming ours. It was something that we would never do.

The plan was to spend a couple of days there while we assessed the pack to see if it was the right fit or not. We would examine everything from security to pack ideals and everything in between.

Treaties meant that our pack was allied with theirs. If they needed support then we would help them and vice versa. It could be with anything from wars to financial assistance. Treaties could be beneficial, so it was our responsibility to decide if those benefits were worth potential risks.

“Demi was at their son's birthday party a month ago where he found his fated mate and rejected her for being an Omega. She wouldn't get into all the details because she knew that we'd flip our shit but did say the girl suffered through some heavy pain because he tried to demean her but refused to accept that treatment and was a complete badass doing it. Hopefully we get to meet that girl while we're there,” Apollo said.

My eyes shot to his with that. Why would the son do that? Neither Tyre nor I could comprehend rejecting your fated mate at all but especially because of a stupid title.

“Just because she's an Omega? When did that become a disqualification to a mate-bond? The Goddess pairs people for a reason. Good for the girl. Their son sounds like a real bitch and wouldn't have made much of a mate in the first place. Can't wait to meet him,” I said, flashing my friend a dangerous smirk. Neither of us played with shit like that.

Anyone who would throw away a fated mate-bond like that was an idiot. It did not matter what the girl was raised as. She was born to be a Luna and handpicked by the Goddess for that purpose.

It would not matter if my mate was an Omega, rogue, or even human. A mate was a gift that completed us. A mate-bond did not equate to love, but it did connect two people in the most intricate way possible, entwining their souls together as absolute equals in all ways.

While he drove, I had him go over what we knew so far about this pack's needs and resources so that we were both on the same page.

Alpha Andrew and Luna Ashley had a medium-sized pack with approximately three hundred pack members. They focused heavily on warriors but were not the most protected. It was possible that it was just a status thing instead of an actual role. That possibility was idiotic and opened their pack up to outside danger. A pack could easily fall if their defenses lacked.

“What are they offering in exchange for our assistance?” I asked since he stopped and cleared his throat.

“Is that all you're worried about?” he teased.

“Yes. Humor me,” I deadpanned.

“They're offering security in the form of their warriors,” he said, snorting.

I could not contain my laughter. How ridiculous was that offer? We would never need their warriors because theirs were probably complete shit ones compared to ours. Our warriors took their roles very seriously and worked their asses off to make it up the ranks. It was a grueling process that was not for the faint of heart. Warriors were the first-line of defense for our pack. They protected our people and took that duty with the utmost important reverence because it meant the deaths of their family, friends, and pack members if they failed. We had a larger pack

with a little more than five thousand pack members. We had about two hundred warriors, but that number increased as we brought more members in.

“Do they know how many of us are coming along?” he asked me.

“They didn’t ask. I didn’t tell. They either want our help or don’t. We’d be idiots to go in without our people,” I said. He hummed his agreement.

Gamma Dayton was riding with his mate. Tanya was our Lead Warrior. She was ecstatic to tag along because she had been taking care of her parents over the past few months while they recovered from a bad accident. We also had ten top warriors that she personally selected. An additional team of thirty warriors was stationed halfway here ready to be called up just incase we needed them for anything.

We took our security very seriously. Us going into an unallied pack was a time to be cautious because they could have any number of intentions. It could be a ploy to get us within their territory just as easily as it could be simply for a treaty negotiation. My Alpha mind had to always consider each potentiality and decide how to proceed. We did not trust easily because trust had to be earned. Our pack had been burned before because of misplaced trust. We learned from our mistakes.

It was the middle of the afternoon by the time that we made it to their border. Two guys in uniform approached our car. I rolled down the window and somehow managed to contain my snort. They looked at us through slitted eyes and blank faces. They were trying to be intimidating but severely failed the mark.

“State your name and business,” the one with his arms crossed over his chest barked at me.

‘Let’s give them hell,’ Tyre said, smirking at me.

“Alpha Kade of the Nightshade pack. Your Alpha called us for help, so we decided to come on down,” I said with an unreadable mask on.

Tyre released the full-force of his aura but directed it just to them. His aura was very powerful, so it was no surprise when the men paled and stood back nodding their heads quickly. They changed their tune awfully quick.

“Follow the brown wolf down to the packhouse, Alpha Kade,” he stammered.

I rolled up my window without responding. Tyre was laughing his wolf ass off, and it was taking everything in me not to break my stoic face until they were out of sight.

Our pack always loved pulling rank when people tried their macho bullshit. Our pack had a reputation as one you did not want to mess with for a reason. Respect was given when it was shown. However, we would swiftly and easily strike anyone else down if they threw the first punch.

“This is why we had to come. C’mon. Just admit that this is going to be a fun time. Nobody messes with us, and there’s a reason for that. Cheer up, old man. Here’s to finding the badass girl who put the birthday boy in his fucking place,” Apollo said, clapping my shoulder.

Yes. I could not wait to meet her. Hopefully I would get my chance. I heard how much pain a rejection caused, so I could only imagine that she had to have the strength and character of a true warrior to withstand it. I admired the fact that she refused to submit to the asshole.

This pack was not too impressive so far. There were some woods surrounding it, but I did not really see anything special in the way of entertainment or shopping. It could be further back in the pack, so I would have to ask for a tour later. We saw one school, but it looked a little rundown. Where were all of the finances going to?

Apollo let out a whistle as the massive three-story packhouse came into view. That would be where the money went to. An Alpha who benefited when a pack did not was an Alpha that should never have been given a

pack in the first place. It was despicable. Our pack was thoroughly taken care of before we were. Our pack also had many business ventures that helped support everyone, and we taught any curious member how to benefit from those themselves as well.

No wonder he needed someone to come in and save his ass. This was a disaster waiting to happen. I was almost afraid to see what type of Alpha he was.

Three people stood out front of the lavish packhouse in designer clothes as if that made them the pack's leaders. I already did not like this pack. The son looked like he had seen better days. Apparently that rejection was taking its toll on him. He definitely deserved that. I hoped the girl was not suffering the same way. Alpha Andrew was dressed in a black tailored suit with a gold Rolex on his wrist. The Luna wore a skintight red dress that dipped dangerously low into her cleavage with black stilettos. Every piece of her look was meant to convey sensuality and expected a lustful response.

'He doesn't think that parading her around us would benefit him. Right?' Apollo asked with a grimace.

'That's probably exactly what he thinks because he has her pulled a few inches in front of him instead of beside him. Could he be any more obvious?' I retorted.

I took a deep breath and got out of the car. As much as I wanted to just cut the trip now and leave, I could not do that. When I was approached about this travelling thing by the Elders, the Moon Goddess insisted that I see it through because it was important. Who was I to argue?

Not everyone was granted an audience with her, but she met with me when she bestowed a special gift to me in order to help my pack flourish. She gave me the gift of being able to pinpoint other gifted wolves on the day of my Alpha ceremony. That was one reason why our pack flourished so much because it was a safe haven for those wolves so

that they were not just used for their gifts. We taught them how to hone their gifts, and they chose what they did with them. Most chose to use them to help the pack prosper. A few chose not to but that was okay too. Only they should be able to say how it was used. It was theirs after all.

Both of us grabbed our bags before approaching the trio. The rest of our people filed out and joined us. Alpha Andrew's eyes swept around at everyone, and I noticed him swallow hard. However, he did not say anything about how many of us came along. Smart move.

"Welcome, Alpha Kade. We hope you had a good trip," Alpha Andrew said, flashing an overenthusiastic smile that was as fake as him.

"Thank you for having us. The drive was easy," I replied without returning his fake enthusiasm. That shit would not work with us. "Let me introduce my Beta Apollo and Gamma Dayton," I said gesturing to them in turn.

"Nice to meet you both. This is Luna Ashley and future Alpha Eric. Our Beta is currently tied up. We still have two hours before dinner if you would like to get settled in," he offered.

I looked around at our people before nodding to him. Apollo and I always tried to take in the opinions of our team members. There were times when it was not feasible to do so, but we preferred to do it whenever possible. Not all Alphas and Betas worked like that, but we did.

Luna Ashley told us to follow her to the guest rooms that were made up for our stay. There was enough to accommodate everyone.

We stepped through the threshold and Tyre perked up before laying back down. Odd.

The interior was beautiful but showy with high contrast between dark and light. The walls were lined in artwork. Not very good artwork but expensive ones, nonetheless. The entire thing bled money. Our own

packhouse was large but homey. It looked lived in because people lived there. We had a communal entertainment areas and libraries where our pups and pack members hung out and grew up. Our leadership lived in the packhouse. There were a few other families and also the occasional guest. We had an open-door policy because sometimes people just needed a place to get away from their realities. It was a family setting just like a packhouse should be. This place was sterile and had not an ounce of looking like a home.

We walked up the stairs to the guest wing, and Tyre perked back up without laying back down this time. He was immediately antsy and freaking out. That was when I smelled the one thing I was afraid I would not find. The most invigorating scent of jasmine with hints of cherry wrapped around me, but she was not here at the moment. The scent was weak, so it had probably been hours since she was right here where I was walking. At least now I knew what pack she was in, and we would not be leaving here without her. Tyre and I were understandably excited.

“Alpha Kade, your room is right here,” Luna Ashley said as she stopped in front of my door and pushed it open. “The rest of the rooms in this wing are also available, so please feel free to find your own rooms,” she said before bidding us goodbye.

I grabbed Apollo and pulled him into his new room because I sure as hell was not going to be in the room that the not-so-subtle Luna wanted me in. That would be disastrous. I had no delusions that she would try something if given the opportunity, so there would not be an opportunity at all.

“This is your room. I’ll take yours,” I said.

The scent was stronger in here. I left the room and went to the next one, which was originally going to be his, and the scent was just as strong. Okay, that was fine then. I did not mind changing.

Apollo looked at me like I was insane when I came back into the room without saying anything. I was following my nose. Her scent was like crack and I needed it. Every shifter learned about a mate's scent. It was the most intoxicating scent that you would ever experience as it appealed to every cell in your being. It was the first thing that mates noticed about one another. You could have smelled them every day for your entire life before the mate-bond was able to snap into place, but it became overwhelming and overpowering the second that you smelled it after the bond was possible.

My eyes landed on the bed. Bingo. I grabbed the pillow and brought it to my nose and inhaled deeply. A low rumble left my chest. This scent was heavenly, and I could not wait to smell it straight from the source. I would bury my face in her hair, neck, or anywhere just to smell it at its full concentration.

“What the fuck is your problem? Did you drink some of their Kool-Aid?” he asked.

I glared at him but went into the bathroom and found the towels also smelled like her. Who the hell was she? I needed to find her, but I did not want to look like a lunatic. That would not be the best first impression at all. This first impression was going to be very important, and I wanted to present my best self. She needed to see the real me. The real me was not crazy. Well, sometimes people accused me of it when I made decisions based on blind faith. Those decisions always worked out positively though.

After supper I would ask for a tour. That way I would have a better chance of finding her. I would be able to cover a larger portion of the territory. Surely, somewhere would have her delicious calling card.

“She's here. Her scent is in this room and yours. You're still taking this room though. Jasmine and cherry. Fuck. She smells amazing,” I said taking another whiff of the pillow.

Tyre was imagining rolling around in her scent. He wanted her to scent him, and he would scent her. Luckily, a wolf would not find that crazy. Wolves placed great importance on the action. He also wanted to carry around his Luna's scent for all of our people to get acquainted with it because protecting her would be their top priority.

“See? I knew this would be a great trip! Now you won't be forced into any more packs. The third pack at that. We finally have a Luna,” Apollo said, pulling me into a bro hug.

I was ecstatic. This was why the Moon Goddess insisted on this pack tour. It was definitely worth it. I wondered what she was like. If her personality matched her scent then I was sold. I was a firm believer that mates were paired up for a specific purpose. She would be my perfect completion and complement. Tyre was trying to imagine what her wolf looked like. Tyre was a massive pure black wolf with bright golden eyes. He was big even by Alpha standards and was very smug about that.

I had everyone pile into the room. They needed to know what I found out because it directly impacted them. They needed to know that they were to protect their Luna if anything were to go down. I would also be contacting the backup team to ensure that they knew the stakes as well.

My eyes looked around at our team, and I was incredibly proud to have them by my side. I grew up with most of them, but a few joined us within the past five years. They were the best leaders our pack could ever have. Warriors were considered part of leadership in our pack because of how important their role was.

“I have an announcement just so everyone is on the same page. Somewhere in this pack is your future Luna. I'm not sure who she is, but her scent is in the rooms here and in the packhouse, so I'll know once I come across her. Just stay alert because we can all sense that this pack throws off some negative vibes” I said.

This was a big day for our pack because it meant that we would have both an Alpha and Luna to lead. My mother died when I was seven, so our pack did not have a Luna since then because my father never took another mate. The widower became half of what they were once their fated mate died since half of their soul died along with them. The only way that one could hope to overcome some of that was to take a chosen mate. It did not hold the same level of bond as a fated bond had, but it was still a mate-bond. My father could never bring himself to allow another she-wolf to take the place in his life and heart that my mother once held.

Everyone had smiles on their faces and congratulated me. They also acknowledged that they understood the potential implications.

I took my bag into my new room because Apollo could deal with being fondled if the Luna tried anything. Apollo felt like I was betraying him, but I told him to take one for the team because today was about me. He just flipped me off and shut his new door with a huff.

I grabbed a quick shower so that I could get ready. Even these towels had her scent, so I was happy to dry off with it. That was something that I would keep to myself because that would seem fairly creepy out of context. I would also never tell her either because that would be a recipe for awkward.

I threw on some black slacks and a navy button-down shirt. I rolled the sleeves up on my forearms and left the top two buttons undone. My auburn hair was shorter on the sides and longer on the top with a bit of natural wave to it. Some of my tattoos could be seen, so I hoped she did not mind tattoos. I loved them and had quite a few.

‘What do you think?’ I asked Tyre.

‘I think you have a decent shot. If she’s not sold then I’ll shift and win her over for us,’ he said with a shrug.

My wolf was a bit of a dick at times, but he was the best wolf I could have ever been paired with.