## **Chapter 9**

## ELLE

This was a turn that I never imagined my life taking. Selene promised me that I would love the changes that would happen, and I most certainly did so far.

Kade was a sinfully sexy gentleman who showed me what a true mate should act like. His scent was reminiscent of cinnamon espresso which definitely called out to the java lover in me. It was the most incredible scent in the entire world. I would never tire of being around it. When I first smelled it on Gabriel's shirt, I was incredibly confused. It smelled a thousand times better than Eric's scent ever did.

Kade was every bit the dominant Alpha type with his broad shoulders and muscles that even his shirt and slacks could not hide. They fit him like a glove which allowed me to see that he had a chiseled body underneath them. It clearly showed his power. His auburn hair had some waves at the top, and I had the urge to run my fingers through it. Those grey eyes of his were a shade I had never seen before. He commanded respect when he spoke with that silky smooth voice of his. All in all, he was a dream that I never wanted to stop dreaming about.

I was embarrassed that my mate and his pack had front row seats to the shitshow. This past month was spent paying me back for embarrassing the Alpha family's son and thinking that I was better than them. Those were their words, not mine. Mine would be that I knew I was better than them. I was a decent human being while they were not. My heart longed to protect others instead of controlling and abusing them.

I would always hold the scars on my body, but I would not have changed a single thing of how I stood up to the Alpha family. I would do it exactly the same way each and every time. Gabriel picked up the pieces like he always did. He cleaned my wounds and held me, telling me that I would get through it. I was certain that he thought of murdering the entire Alpha family every which way and in very graphic detail.

Gabriel stood between Eric and I without an ounce of fear or hesitation. He finally got to confront them for their shit. Selene told me not to fear for Gabriel because Kade would not allow anything to happen to either of us. She was certainly right about that as she always was.

We all heard stories about the Nightshade pack. There was an air of mystery regarding them, but there was an undeniable truth in the stories. The Nightshade Alpha was not someone to mess with. I understood why that was once he got the Council involved. I was not entirely certain what they did, just that it angered Alpha Andrew something fierce. It was very amusing and a long time coming. Omegas had no voice for so long. Not anymore though. Gabriel and I were giving them the voice they always should have had in the first place. Kade was making all of this happen.

"We've verified that he is her fated mate. There is no longer an issue," Council Member Thompson said.

"I want a tribunal," Alpha Andrew said loudly.

Kade looked at him incredulously. I was not certain what a tribunal even was. "On what grounds?" Kade asked.

My mate's arms crossed over his chest, straining his shirt further, and showing more of those delicious tattoos of his. I wondered how much of his body was tattooed. I took my eyes off my mate because this was not the right time to be distracted with such thoughts, and he was very distracting indeed.

"It doesn't matter if you're her mate or not. I hold the rights to her per blood oath," he said smugly.

I loved how I was nothing but property to him. That was all our kind was after all. We were a possession of his and used for his personal benefit.

"Did you ever enter into a blood oath with Alpha Andrew?" Council Member Thompson asked.

## "Absolutely not, sir."

I would never do something as stupid as that. Blood oaths were serious business and were unbreakable unless both parties decided to break it. Alpha Andrew would never break it, so I would have been stuck in service to the Devil himself.

"Her parents did when they left her at our boundary line. The oath states that she'll remain here in exchange for me taking her in," he said.

His words caused a lot of confusion. Was it possible? He told me that I was found there not given away. I would not trust a damn word that came from his mouth because he was a lying manipulative asshole.

"That makes absolutely no sense. You always insisted that you randomly found me there. You never once mentioned a blood oath or my parents. When I questioned you on it as a pup, you backhanded me for even asking," I said, shaking my head. I was fuming with the audacity of this man.

I felt Kade's gaze on me, but I did not look because I was worried about what I might find in those grey orbs of his. He found out a lot about me tonight, and I wondered how much he was willing to take before he thought I was not worth the trouble any longer. Finding one's mate should have been an easy affair. This was anything but. He did not deserve any of this, and I felt extremely guilty about it all.

## "If you're being truthful then prove it," Kade challenged.

Alpha Andrew's eyes flashed dangerously with that challenge. It would not even be a fight because Kade could destroy him without even exerting much effort. There was no delusion when it came to who was the stronger Alpha here. When his wolf let his aura out earlier, I watched in amazement as it affected them. It was also very hard to keep my mind on the task at hand when I felt it.

"I will at the tribunal. It's my right to have it once the request is made. I'll only present the oath there where the interaction is legal and assured to be upheld," he said triumphantly as if he won.

"Very convenient," Kade said, scoffing. "Fine. However, I won't leave her here alone. I'm not going anywhere."

That angered Alpha Andrew even more. Surely he did not think that Kade would just up and leave me in his hands after everything that went down. He would not trust Alpha Andrew to throw away a tissue let alone ensure the safety of his mate. Alpha Andrew had never been the brightest.

"Elle, do you feel safe here?" one of the Council members asked me. I turned to her and shook my head.

"Absolutely not," I said without hesitation.

There had never been a single day in this pack that I felt safe. The first time I was beaten was when I was six because I accidently ran into Eric and knocked him down. The first time I was raped was when I was eleven. The first time I was whipped was the same year. My body held many scars, so I hoped that Kade would still accept me with them.

"Very well. She'll remain here if you insist Alpha Andrew, but Alpha Kade and Nightshade pack members are free to remain here too under our full protection. The tribunal will be set for three days' time. We'll also be bringing some of our own warriors to ensure her safety. Keep in mind that we don't tolerate any type of abuse. You'll be held liable for anything that is witnessed while here whether from you or from your pack. Do you still wish to proceed?" The same Council member asked.

The sheer anger radiating through him was positively amusing. How long I wished for him to be put in his place, and now he was getting his ass handed to him on a silver platter. He was not the top of the food chain right now. I wondered how he felt to be positively powerless. He was getting a brief glimpse at the life he forced us to live. He would never be forced to experience the full truth, but a brief glimpse was good enough.

"I do," he gritted at as if those two words were painful for him to verbalize.

"Very well. Our warriors will be here in an hour. They are to be accommodated once they arrive."

The Council member walked away to make the call to his warriors. It thrilled me that they would be here because none of my people would be hurt while they were here. Perhaps the Council would do something about the way we were all treated in this pack. It would help me feel more at ease with them being here while Gabriel and I left. I would talk to Kade about what they did and ask his opinion on it. Both Gabriel and I would do anything to protect them just like we had been doing for years.

"There's plenty of rooms in the Omega quarters if everyone would rather stay there instead of the packhouse. It's nothing special but a lot more welcoming than here," I offered.

It was a safe bet that they were not too happy with the Alpha family right now. It would at least get them out from the line of fire and animosity because the Alpha family sure as hell was not happy with them. I would feel better if I knew they were safe.

"We'd appreciate that," Kade said with a smile. Then he turned to his people. "Go ahead and grab your bags from your rooms. Apollo, would you please grab mine too?"

The way that he treated his pack members was how an Alpha should. He talked to them with respect. He did not order Apollo but asked instead. I could not wait to get to know him better because he seemed like a great man and great leader.

One of the Council members came over and told us that we were free to go and would be in touch with Kade tomorrow.

This entire night had been crazy. I never would have imagined that this had been Selene's plan at all, but I was incredibly happy, nonetheless. I was blessed that Selene chose him for me. I could not imagine having a better mate than what I had witnessed tonight. He did not even know me but made it abundantly clear that he would not let anyone harm me.

We headed out once everyone came back with their things. Kade was on one side of me. Gabriel was on the other.

Angry warriors lined up outside the packhouse. They knew what was going on but seemed to have been warned to not attack. Normally, we would be beaten and bloodied on the ground if one was this angry. We would be dead if it was all of them. Gabriel and I made eye contact with them, angering them even further. They always demanded absolute submission from us, but we did not have to abide by those ridiculous rules any longer.

Kade's hand went protectively to the small of my back. I looked up at him and noticed the anger in his eyes even if he contained it from being seen anywhere else. He was pissed off with how they were looking at me. The asshole warriors looked like they would murder me if they had the opportunity but never would have that opportunity again.

I moved his hand off the small of my back and laced our fingers together instead. He smiled at me and gave my hand a gentle squeeze.

There was no way that this was how he imagined meeting his mate. There was a lot of baggage that came with me apparently.

Why was Alpha Andrew so keen on keeping me here? He did not care about me whatsoever. Was it just petty bullshit or something more? I had to imagine that there was more at play here.

"Right up here," Gabriel said.

Our house was a simple two-story design with a garden out back that gave us our fresh foods. There was also a large chicken coop out there too that homed about thirty chickens. We were fairly self-sufficient. We had to be since nobody looked out for Omegas except for the lot of us.

Gabriel opened the front door for us. I was a bit surprised to see most of our people still awake and waiting in the dining room. Their eyes went wide when they saw all of Kade's people come through the door. Nobody came here except us. Now, we had many newcomers who clearly did not look like a Blue Crest Omega. Our people looked hesitant because of how everyone treated us in this pack.

Destiny approached me, looking me over from head to toe. She had been in the kitchen with the rest of the staff tonight.

"What the fuck happened? We all got sent away, so we waited here for you two to come home," Destiny said. She was a tough woman who was the typical mothering type, making sure that we were all taken care of.

"It's a long story that we'll explain if we get java," I said, desperately needing a pick-me-up. The events of the night were catching up to me.

She gave me an incredulous look as if offended that I would require coffee in exchange for an explanation. I leveled her with the same look. I was the most stubborn person that any of us knew.

"It's already waiting for you as well as some food if you're hungry. We knew you all hadn't eaten," she said.

I nodded, so she went to get that squared away. I scrubbed my hand over my face before turning to everyone. This was a ridiculous mess that they got caught up in all because of me. I hated that so damn much. What did they think of their future Luna? It was almost a laughable question.

"There's food for everyone if you're hungry, or we can show you to a room. It's up to you," I said.

I felt very awkward addressing them because of the situation surrounding them being here. I hoped that they did not resent me for it all. Meeting me kind of threw a wrench in their plans.

"We'll hang out with everyone here," Apollo said after he looked around to gauge everyone's choices. I liked how everyone got input instead of just Kade and him.

I told everyone to feel at home and take a seat. They all smiled at me before sitting down at the tables.

Apollo leaned next to my ear and whispered, "stop feeling guilty. There's absolutely nothing for you to feel guilty about." He winked at me before taking a seat.

"Apollo's gifted as well," Kade explained for context.

"Gotcha," I said with a chuckle.

It was interesting that his pack had gifted wolves. They might be the only two, but I had only met three other gifted wolves that I knew of.

I led Kade over to the table where Gabriel and Apollo were chatting. I was glad that they seemed to have hit it off. Gabriel was a great guy, and I could not wait to see him flourish outside of this pack. He would not have to live by some ridiculous standards that dictated who he was and what he could do. It did not seem that Nightshade worked like that. I could not wait to find out what it was like there. A different life awaited us.

The delicious aroma of meatloaf wafted towards us. I was practically drooling as they started bringing plates out.

Kade's people all hopped up and asked to help carry things. Our people were highly surprised because we were never treated with kindness like this. I smiled at my mate because I could tell that this was not them putting up a front or anything. It was genuine.

Kade set our plates down and took his seat next to me. Faye was beside herself, demanding that I get closer to take in more of his delicious scent. She had absolutely no shame at all.

'Cool it. We don't want him to think we're fucking crazy on top of all this bullshit,' I hissed at her.

'Humans are stupid sometimes. When I get to meet his wolf, I'll rub my body all over every single inch of his muscular Alpha body so that every she-wolf will know that he's mine. Why don't you just rub yourself on him now? He's the sexiest man I've ever seen. Do it. Rub him,' she said.

Tantalizing sparks covered my hand. My eyes met his, and a sinful smirk graced his lips. My eyes were focused on those lips, and I wondered what it would be like to kiss him. I had never kissed anyone before. That was the one thing they did not take from me. I desperately wanted to kiss him though.

"What in the world has you blushing so hard?" he asked.

I just shrugged and averted my eyes from his because I was actually considering following through on Faye's suggestion.

Gabriel started chuckling because he knew damn well what Faye was like. She was my voice of guidance but also my voice of trouble. She was extra, and sometimes got me into a lot of trouble, but it was always worth it.

"Her wolf is very wise but really fucking mischievous too. You're going to have your hands full with those two," Gabriel said.

I leaned over the table and plucked his forehead. "Traitor," I hissed.

"Don't worry. I won't use her against you unless it's amusing," Kade said with a chuckle. "If it helps, my wolf said that if you didn't like me that he would shift and win you over for us."

My eyes met his and noticed the telltale gold shimmers in his eyes that showed that his wolf was forward as well. Alphas had an easier time with sharing control with their wolves. I could not wait to meet him. His eyes would be golden given the gold shimmers. I bet he was magnificent.

"Well, he won me over with that offer, and you won me over immediately. So, we're definitely in a good spot," I promised.

My eyes greedily swept over the meatloaf, glazed carrots, mashed sweet potatoes, and homemade bread. This looked amazing, and I was actually starving. This meatloaf recipe was one of my favorites.

"I didn't realize that Paula was cooking tonight."

"She didn't. She made it for you since you had a shit night and had a feeling that we'd have visitors," Destiny said.

Paula was gifted with having inclinations of events. She was not a full-blown seer or anything, but she did get hunches and feelings about things such as this. Hence, how she knew we would have all these visitors.

"Paula is one of the new Omegas. Her mate and pup also joined very recently. They weren't expecting the life of a Blue Crest Omega, but they refused to become rogue because of their pup," I explained.

Kade shot me an appreciative look. I did not want him to feel awkward or left out of the conversation. This was a completely different environment for them to be in, so I could only imagine what it was like for them right now. I wanted him to see that he belonged here with me even despite the circumstances.

"How many people live here?" Kade asked.

He bit into the meatloaf and let out a low groan when the flavors hit his tastebuds. I chuckled because that was the same reaction that I had whenever I ate something good. It was nice to see that we had that in common at least.

"There's about fifty Omegas in the pack currently, and we all live here. It's like our own packhouse and tribe. We all share the responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning. Nobody comes here but us, so it's the one place we don't have to worry about people starting shit," Gabriel explained.

A cup of coffee was set down in front of me with a not-so-subtle look pointed at me. They wanted to know what went on. There was no doubt that the truth would get skewed to make us into the bad guys.

"Let's make some introductions first. This is Alpha Kade of the Nightshade pack and the rest of his pack members who came with him for that meeting the Alpha family wouldn't shut up about for the past month. During supper, Future Alpha Douchebag decided to be a bitch like always, but Gabe stepped in between us and went all out. Alpha Kade and I recognized at supper that we're mates, and suffice to say that the Alpha family wasn't thrilled. Alpha refused to let me go with him, so Alpha Kade called the Council in. There will be a tribunal in three days, but the Council will have their own warriors here until then. If anyone mistreats you then you better let us know because the Council warned them that they didn't tolerate abuse at all," I explained.

Everyone exchanged a look with one another before turning back to me. They were shocked, and I could not fault them for that. There was not a single day that went by where we were not mistreated.

"Are you being serious right now that they can't do anything to us?" Fiona questioned with a bit of skepticism.

"They can't. The Council already warned Alpha Andrew that they'll be watching, and he was held accountable for anything that happened. Don't hesitate to let us know. I promise you that the Council won't turn a blind eye to how you're treated here. You have the full support of our pack in any way that we can help," Kade said.

My heart fluttered with that declaration. He did not have to do anything for my pack members. He was not obligated whatsoever. I did not even realize what was happening until I did it. I leaned over and kissed his cheek.

"Thank you," I said with a smile.

**Comments** (14)