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## Andrei POV

“ Sage please wait” I called out to her as she took off, though I was surprised that instead of taking off for the forest she was actually going home back to the pack house. When I first brought her outside I was a little worried she would run and she looked like she would when I brought her closer to the forest.

I catch up to her, easily falling in line with her. “ Look I’m sorry I didn’t mean to freak you out” I tell her reaching for her hand and am surprised when she doesn’t pull away.

“Why are you apologizing? I marked you not the other way around” She says, her cheeks turning red. Was she embarrassed or angry, both? It was so hard to tell with her sometimes, she was so hot and then cold the next. I knew it wasn’t her fault and if roles were reversed I wouldn’t trust me either. Her vibes suggested she was ticked off but the blush on her cheeks made me think otherwise when she wouldn’t meet my gaze, her eyes staring straight ahead and she actually led me back to the packhouse stopping next to the door.

“What did Donnie do to Sierra?” She asked and I felt bile rise in my throat. I let her hand go and placed my hand on the scanner, preferring to have this conversation inside at least she couldn’t escape me.

The door opens and I place my hand on her lower back giving her a little push but she doesn’t move, instead folding her arms across her chest and glaring at me defiantly, I was shocked she is so timid but she clearly didn’t like that I upset her wolf, finding it funny she was so protective of her wolf when they are technically the same person yet the first place she turns to is her wolf form when she is petrified of me but now she was demanding I tell her.

“I will tell you but inside please”

“Why can’t you tell me out here?” She says her tone is sharp. I fought the urge to smile as much as it irritated me, her wolf may fear me at the moment but it was clear the bond was

working because no matter how terrified she was of us she looked quite firm now and unafraid. Deciding not to lie to her I tell her.

“Because I worry you will try and run when I tell you, she took it the wrong way, please just come inside Sage” I ask her motioning for the door, but my words must have made her uneasy as she stared at the door before looking back at me. She swallows now wondering if it is a good idea to go inside but she hesitates a moment before stepping inside. I leave the door open deciding to see if she would run, maybe if she doesn’t feel like a prisoner the temptation to leave will leave her when she realizes she can walk out the door anytime. She looks at it as I walk past her.

“You’re not going to close it?” She says, making me stop and turn to look at her but she was closing the door before she turned around, her fear wafting to me which confused me because she was the one shutting the door.

“I think she fears what’s outside more” Donnie tells me just as she turns around to face me. She looks at me nervously and I watch her.

“You could have left it open” I tell her but she shakes her head.

“What if someone got in”

“Someone or one of my pack members?” “Anyone” She whispers so low I barely heard her.

“Anyone or other men?” I ask her knowing the answer but I wanted her to acknowledge the fact she just locked herself in the house with me.

“You wont hurt me, well you don’t want to anyway” She whispers.

“My pack won’t hurt you, they aren’t monsters Sage, Zane hasn’t hurt you”

“No but he says weird things” She states, making my brows furrow.

“Like what?” I ask her. She shrugs before answering, stepping closer, she can’t fear my Beta. I know Zane would never harm her and is already protective over her, he knows a pack needs a Luna.

“ I don’t know, it’s like he wants me to fear you” She says and I ponder her words.

“What sort of things does he say that bothered you?” I ask her.

“Nothing really, just that I shouldn’t upset you” She answers and I sigh. He is talking about Angie. I loved Angie and I still love her and probably always will, but she liked pushing my buttons but she grew up differently then I did. Woman didn’t have much say in my pack but now I would do anything to have her attitude and rage back just to hear her voice again. Yet losing her brought me Sage and I won’t make those mistakes again.

“Angie upset me a lot and liked to get under my skin” I chuckle remembering she would challenge me on everything, everything she had an opinion on but I know she was raised to be a strong independent woman and looking at Sage she was the complete opposite. Sage was timid and frightened and knew nothing but pain. She was suppressed not only by those that harmed her but also herself, ruled by her fear and I didn’t want her to fear me or anything. I wanted her to know she would always be kept safe with me.

“You hurt her then?” She asks, chewing her fingernail. I shake my head.

“No of course not but the day she died we had a fight, so I thought I would teach her a lesson for trying

to overrule me and locked her in the packhouse with my Beta. She was causing quite a stir with the other she-wolves and they were going against their mates. So I thought if I punished her by locking her up they would back down”

“Did they?” She asks.

“No, Angie was right and then they died because of my belief that that’s how things were run, maybe if I listened they may have stood a chance”

“What do you mean?” She asks curiously, it felt weird talking about Angie but I could see Sage was curious about her and what sort of woman she was.

“Angie was the only girl in her family and grew up with five brothers, she was raised to be strong, strong like her brothers, trained and independent. She didn’t like that I wouldn’t let the she-wolves train, I didn’t think it was necessary and Angie loved training, she came to training one morning and I told her to leave, that it was no place for she-wolves and she of course refused and said she would challenge anyone who dared tell her she wasn’t good enough, she challenged Zane” I tell her.

“Did she win?” Sage asks, her eyes burning brighter and I smile at her liking the eagerness in her eyes.

“Yes, barely but she had a point to prove and she proved it, though I think Zane let her win because he liked her, liked that she challenged me. My father said it would cause an uprising but he welcomed it and said times changed and that a lot of the elders of the pack were outdated. But when the other she-wolves started challenging their mates and refusing their chores wanting to work and train like the men, it caused issues so I was stuck. I had my men wanting me to refuse them. My father wanted me to do as Angie asked and I was

mad so I locked her up for causing trouble. My father hated the way it was run too, said we should take note of the way other packs run things how they do, we ran it like that because a lot of the pack members were older and that’s how they liked things. My father didn’t agree but it kept the peace. So I decided to lock her up, telling my pack members that no matter what status

there would be punishment for causing trouble within the pack. I locked her up to stop the protests while I visited my sister planning on sorting out training for the woman when I got back”

“So you were going to agree?” She asks and I nod.

“I thought I would handle it when I got home and let her start training the woman to give her something to do, but I never got that chance” I tell her taking a breath, she had moved

closer and I could see her hesitate like she didn't know whether to comfort me or slap me for my stupidity.

“ I came home to find all our women dead. Our children, the elders. If only I had started training our women to be warriors all along they would have fought back but yet all they could do was run. My father was basically the only one at the pack with training besides my Beta and Angie, they never stood a chance”

“Angie sounds like a true Luna, strong” She whispers and I could see she meant her words but it also upset her, she was the opposite to Angie and she knew it. I grip her chin between my fingers tilting her face up.

“And you will be just as strong, stronger. I will make you the Luna you were born to be, no one lives through what you did and survives if they are weak, you are stronger than you know, a bigger warrior then half my men to survive what you did and still be able to keep on living” I tell her. Her brows furrowed and I know she doesn't feel strong, she feels weak and breakable.

“And soon you will be kicking my ass on the training field” I tell her, and she chuckles softly, shaking her head. She looked different and I realized it was the first time I heard her laugh.

“That's wishful thinking, ” She says.

“Come on” I tell her tugging her toward the kitchen, she follows before stopping at the basement door and staring at it.

“ Is the person still alive?” She asks, I swallow and shake my head, pulling her away from the door and into the kitchen.

“Why?” She asks as I grab some bottles of water from the fridge and hand one to her.

“Why what? Why did I kill him?” I ask her. She nods trying to unscrew the cap on the water bottle. I watch her struggle with it, amused before she goes to set it down on the bench but I take it from her twisting the cap off and handing it to her.

“I couldn't very well leave him alive after what I did to him” I tell her and she looks away, her eyes darkening like she doesn't agree.

“Why do you like killing them?” She asks, turning to look at me. I say nothing, not wanting to lie to her but that isn’t my only reason for killing them, I need to find their hideout.

“If I wasn’t your mate would you have killed me?”

She asks.

“No” I tell her but she doesn’t look convinced. “No? But I am a rogue” She states.

“You’re also a woman” I tell her and her brows furrow.

“Why are men different?” She asks but I have no answer for her. They just are, they stand a chance against me. A woman wouldn’t and it would feel wrong to kill a woman.

“I don’t know” I tell her truthfully.

“Then why kill them, Sierra said she heard you say all the rogues should die, that you killed him and she could hear that you were enjoying it, that it turned you on, that you want to hurt me” She says not sure of the words leaving her lips. Donnie had fallen silent and I could feel his guilt.

“Do you want to hurt me?” She asks.

“No, not in that way Sage, not like the rogues”

“But you still want to hurt me?” She asked and I could see her confusion.

“No, I would never hurt you. She just took something I said out of context”

“I don’t understand?” She mutters, though I could see she was trying to understand, wanting to but it also scared her.

“Donnie didn’t realise the link was open, the Rogue said something and I replied but she took it wrong and freaked out blocking him out before he could explain” I tell her, I would never do anything to harm her, not after seeing the way they kept her. I wouldn’t trigger her like that.

“Then what did you mean?” She asks curiously.

“It doesn’t matter, but I would never do anything that would bring you harm Sage” She chews her lip trying to figure out if

she should trust me.

“I don’t like you killing them, or hurting them” She says softly.

“I can’t promise I won’t Sage and you can’t ask that of me when you don’t understand what is going on, I have no choice. I need answers but I promise I have reason for it”

“But you all so enjoy it, causing them pain I mean?”

“I won’t lie to you, so yes it helps me sleep ” I tell her knowing how fucked up that sounded. She looks appalled but says nothing, her eyes darting to my neck. She looked at my mark and her eyes flicker and I couldn’t tell if she was angry about marking me or if she blamed me for it, yet I would be lying if I said I wasn’t happy she did even if it was by accident.

“Are you going to mark me now because I marked you?” She asks and I could smell her fear perfuming the room, she was more scared of me marking her then me admitting I liked killing the rogues.

Is that what she was worried about?

“Only when you ask me to and not before ” I tell her and she lets out a breath looking relieved.

“You should shower, you have grass in your hair and mud” I tell her walking over to the kitchen sink. I went to wash my hands so I could make lunch but she was still standing there looking unsure.

“What’s wrong Sage?”

“Nothing, nevermind” She says her blush returning and she looks away about to rush out and away from me. My lips tug up, whatever she wanted she was too embarrassed to ask.

“Sage?” I ask quickly, gripping her hand and stopping her from running from me.

“What is wrong?” I ask her and her cheeks burn hotter as she looks up at me before looking away.



“She wants you to shower with her. She was too embarrassed to ask” Donnie says, surprising me.

“She wants us to?” I ask him yet Sage wouldn’t meet my gaze.

“Yes, Sierra told me” He says, at least she has stopped blocking him, but her mood shifts were giving me whiplash, one second petrified of me the next wanting me near.

“The bond is confusing her, she doesn’t know what she wants” Donnie tells me.

“Come on, let’s shower” I tell her to see if she refuses but instead her eyes light up before she nods, stepping closer and letting me drape my arm across her shoulders and I pull her closer, her hands going to my chest as I inhale her scent as I press my face into her neck.

“You don’t have to be embarrassed about wanting me near or wanting to touch me Sage. I am yours, I wouldn’t have said no” I tell her. Yet in a way I could see how wanting that would scare her knowing her past, it would feel weird seeking out contact when the only thing she ever got from it was pain and fear, so yes I could understand her hesitance to ask now that Donnie pointed it out. I tug her out of the kitchen heading upstairs to the bathroom, loving the feel of her so close and her scent invading my senses.

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## Andrei POV

Zane's voice in my head woke me from the first decent night's sleep I got. A growl escapes me as my eyes fly open to him yelling for me to wake up through the mindlink. I quickly suppress it when I see it is still dark out, looking over my shoulder Sage was still sleeping soundly. I rub my eyes trying to wake up before replying to his incessant calling.

"What?" I ask annoyed. I hadn't slept so deeply since before Angie died and Zane and his big mouth had to ruin it.

"9 were spotted along the border scouting" He says and I force myself to my feet. I walk out of the bedroom and down the hall toward my surveillance room, yet I couldn't feel the unease of trespassers close to the borderline. Surely I didn't sleep that deeply that I ignored it. Flicking on the screens, I scan

them but nothing seems amiss. I change the camera angles scouring every inch of the borders but still nothing.

"I see nothing" I tell Zane.

"Me either but border patrol was adamant they saw them, they seem to have fled then" Zane says but now I was awake I knew I wouldn't be going back to sleep anytime soon.

"Get everyone on patrol to meet out the front of the Packhouse" I tell Zane before walking back to my bedroom to retrieve a shirt. Stepping out of the walk-in robe I tug my shirt over my head before seeing Sage sit up looking at me sleepily.

"What's going on?" She asks while yawning. She turns her head to the windows.

"Nothing go back to sleep" I tell her but she was already swinging her legs over the side of the bed.

"Where are you going?" She asks, walking into the bathroom and closing the door. I wait for her to come out and she walks back toward the bed. But instead of climbing in on her side she lays down on mine pressing her face into my pillow before sighing. I chuckled at her. It was clear she was not completely

awake and by the time I walked over to her she was asleep again purring in her sleep.

“Huh well at least we don’t stink, she clearly likes our scent”. Donnie says watching our mate as he peered through my eyes. I tug the blanket up before walking out and down the steps. I could hear my men gathering out front of the Packhouse already and picked up my pace as I rush down the steps before they started waking everyone. I walk toward the front door placing my hand on the panel and the locks groan and twist before the handle jolts. I push on it and step outside into the cool brisk night air. It was a full moon tonight lighting everything up. I shiver, I loved full moons, there was always a thrilling buzz in the air on full moon, something energising that made Donnie want to howl at the moon and the stars while running wild in the forest and give into our most primal instincts.

By the looks of my men they wanted to do the same and I see a few faces that weren’t even on patrol tonight but were clearly too wired to ignore the moon calling to them.

“We didn’t wake up Luna?” Casen asks, he was one the youngest left in the pack, luckily he asked to do scout training and had been with us, he was 17 and looked so much like his mother with his long blonde hair and hazel eyes, his eyes looking at me worriedly like he thought he was in trouble.

“No Casen” I tell him and he lets out a breath. Casen and his identical twin brother who wasn’t amongst this lot were the youngest that survived the massacre of our pack. I was one of the oldest Zane and I are only three weeks apart and which would now make our pack the youngest pack in the country and also the smallest, leaving us open to this nightmare we were currently living in. All made worse by the fact that we were once like those we were up against and desperation and fear make people willing to do anything.

“How many and which one of you saw them?” I ask them and Casen and Malik both put up their hands. Malik was in his mid twenties and after Casen and his twin brother Vince lost their mother leaving them Orphaned both boys moved into his place when it was rebuilt to keep an eye on them. Malik lost all 7 of

his siblings and his parents in the massacre along with his mate and I know having the twins with him had helped keep him sane.

Malik, just like Zane and I had known each other since we were kids and all still rogues, we all lived in the same camp which made all this harder on us knowing all too well the desperation of being rogue and the lengths you would go to just to survive.

“And your positive they were rogues” I ask him and he nods his head once before holding up a rolled up piece of paper.

“Yes Alpha” Malik said, stepping forward with a map in his hands, he showed me the perimeter

near the river where we found Sage. I let out a breath knowing it must be the same ones that we keep catching snooping around the perimeter.

“They never crossed the river, just ran along it” Malik tells me.

“None of them said anything or tried to cross over?” I ask.

“No, they knew we were there, and I alerted Zane. We watched them but they just watched us back before eventually leaving” Malik explains.

“We could hunt them?” Zane suggests but I wave him off, torturing them was not getting us anywhere.

Only dribs and drabs of information but rogues were unpredictable. The only thing that was predictable about them was they never stayed in one spot too long. Always on the move looking for shelter or food, scavenging which is what made me nervous about them loitering around my pack.

Since the massacre we have been attacked numerous times by rogue packs, our small numbers made us a target for them, easy pickings and if our roles were reversed I would do the same thing. It wouldn't take much to overrun our pack. That is why we have the measures we do, the only thing on our side is all our men were trained and warriors but our numbers were small and I knew there were rogue packs bigger than my pack.

Knowing that made me worry, I could ask Kat for help, but I don't want to run to her every time I need help. No brother wants to run to their little sister for help, she should be asking for my help not the other way around and she also had gifted twins to deal with and adapting to motherhood which I knew from my phone calls she was struggling with.

“What do you want to do?” Zane asked and I could see they were waiting for orders and would follow me blindly and give in to any demand because they knew no matter how fucked Angie's death made me.

My pack was family, and I would do anything to keep them safe, they knew that and trusted that, I just hoped I didn't let them down.

“Nothing, just stay vigilant while I come up with something” I tell them when they all suddenly drop to

their knees and bare their necks. Zane remained standing with his eyes on the door behind me and I looked over my shoulder to see Sage step outside rubbing her eyes and yawning before she gasped when she spotted our men on their knees and necks bared to her. She looks confused before her face turns scarlet when she realizes they are on their knees for her. They may be a rough bunch but they knew to show respect to their Luna, or any woman there was no place safer for her and being the only woman at the moment I knew they wouldn't hesitate to kill for her or die for her.

Sage hesitates for a second, her cheeks burning before she walks over, her hand slipping into mine and I look down at our clasped hands before giving hers a squeeze to reassure her. Zane clears his throat awkwardly and I stare at him and he nods toward Sage who was staring at the men on their knees.

Sage tugs my hand drawing my attention to her. “ Rise ” I tell them when I realize she was mortified that they would take a knee for her, yet she was their Luna even if she didn't realize that fully they would all die for her. Zane once again clears his throat, his eyes darting to Sage again and I turn to look at her trying to figure out what the heck he was trying to get my

attention for when I see her dressing gown undone, her cotton shorts exposing her legs and the burns that cover her thighs.

Sage was still half asleep, completely unaware. They didn't bother me yet I knew she was self conscious of them.

I go to tug the strap and close it subtly when Casen the little shit happened to look up and I swear that kid has no filter. "What happened to your legs, Luna?" He blurts out like an idiot. Sage looks down before gasping and tugging my dressing gown closed. Zane kicks Casen in the thigh and growls at him.

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"I meant no disrespect, I was curious" He shrieks rubbing his thigh and Sage shockingly growls at Zane for kicking him.

"No need to kick him, he is just a boy" She snaps at him making me smirk though Casen looked offended now.

"I assure you Luna I am no boy" He says wiggling his brows at Sage this time Malik who is kneeling beside him smacks him up the back of the head.

Sage laughs softly, raising an eyebrow at him before shaking her head at his words but doesn't seem bothered by him. Even I found it hard to be mad at the twins with their angelic baby faces and it seemed luck was on his side because if he upset her she didn't show it and instead answered him.

"Wolfsbane" She answers and he hisses and grits his teeth and I see a few of the men cringe, all of us have rubbed up or against wolfsbane in the past and know how painful it is. Poor Casen would probably feel like shit if he knew the extent of how she obtained those burns.

Sage stares at them curiously and I could feel how clammy her hand was becoming, hearing her heart rate rising but she remained at my side looking at each of them.

"Did something happen?" She asks, looking at me for an answer.

“Just rogues on the borders, they won’t get in” I reassure her and she nods.

“Dismissed” I tell them, turning to Sage but she was staring at the moon now before turning back and watching them leave, moving between the houses and back to the borders.

“That boy seems nice,” She says.

“His name is Casen and yes he is. Trouble maker but he is a good kid unfortunately he has a tendency to speak before thinking” I tell her and she shrugs.

“It didn’t bother me, I could tell he meant no harm by asking, I would be curious too” she says. I

pull her inside out of the cool breeze and shut the door.

“How many are on border patrol tonight, don’t you think he is a little young to run patrol?” She asks.

“20, he likes doing it, keeps his mind off everything plus it is a full moon. They hate being locked inside on a full moon” She nods before looking at me.

“Were you going for a run with them, you can go. I will be fine on my own” She says.

“No, I was just checking on them, besides Malik is probably kicking his ass right now for what he said” I laugh, knowing Malik, he is probably giving him a tongue lashing while kicking his ass to the border.

“He wouldn’t hurt him though?” She asks worriedly.

“No, Malik is his carer, Malik looks after him and his twin brother. We may be rough around the edges but we are not child abusers Sage ” She lets out a breath before walking toward the kitchen and I follow after her and watch as she walks to

the fridge and grabs a bottle of water out before offering me one. I shake my head and she closes the fridge. I look at the clock on the door of the fridge and see it is only 3AM. Damn Zane waking me up.

“Are you coming back to bed?” She asks, looking up at me. Her eyes flicker black for a second and I know Sierra is observing and Donnie instantly reacts to seeing her, lurching forward and making me stumble forward as he fights for control. He had been constantly pestering me wanting to speak to Sage so he could apologise. I force him back with a growl and he recedes whining in my head.

I half expected her to freak out but she was just staring at me curiously. I grip her hand tugging her back

to the bedroom. She instantly removes my dressing gown and climbs in bed before placing her bottle of water on the bedside table.

“Can I ask why you hate rogues so much?” She asks. I watch her for a second while she gets comfortable before climbing in next to her. I knew it was pointless, I wouldn’t be able to fall back asleep but I would wait until she does before getting some work done.

“I don’t hate rogues, not all rogues anyway”

“Not all rogues?” She asks and I know she still considers herself a rogue.

“I used to be a rogue, I know what it’s like out there, my entire pack or what’s left of it were originally rogues. I was born rogue and remained rogue until I was teen when our pack earned enough money to buy the land and build this place”

“You were born a rogue, yet kill rogues?” She says, her eyebrows scrunching up.

“Yes, I was a rogue like you, when my father came to the pack when I was 11 our rogue camp had grown but we were without a leader, the elders in our camp asked him to become Alpha”

“Ok so your dad abandoned you then come back but what about Kat?” She asks and I sigh.

“Kat’s father is my biological father but he isn’t my dad” I tell her, yet saying those words didn’t feel right anymore. Derrick had been good since coming back into my life and I hated to admit it but I had slipped a few times and called him dad.



Remembering the man that was around briefly but was a good father before he left. Sometimes I see that man still in him and I love seeing him be that man he once was for me with Kat. But the damage was done and I don't think it can be repaired. Also the guilt that comes with calling him dad when I was raised by another man, one who showed me what being a man is and loved me like his own made me feel like I was being disrespectful to the man that raised me. I knew deep down he wouldn't mind because he

was the sort of man that forgave easily and understood me but that didn't make the guilt any less.

"Derrick Kat's and my father. He left when I was young and never returned when he found his mate, then he had Kat with Katherine. Same father, different mothers" I tell her and she nods finally understanding.

"So why do you hate some rogues then?"

"Because rogues helped the man whose pack attacked mine, he is dead now but the rogues are still alive. But that isn't the reason I have been hunting them it is part of it but not all"

"What's all of it then, I want to understand," She says, reaching for her water.

"My pack isn't even a quarter of the size it once was, we used to be the second biggest pack, now we are the smallest in the country and a pack of rogues has realised our Pack is smaller than their rogue pack, seeing it as an opportunity" I tell her not wanting to scare her but maybe it will help if she understands.

"They want to take over your pack" She says letting out a breath.

"What will you do when you find this rogue pack?" She asks.

"Not sure but from what information I have received they outnumber us, and they have been getting closer and closer to the border, some even have slipped through" I tell her hoping she doesn't think I can't keep her safe here.

"I don't like you torturing them. In a way I can understand but no one's life is worth a little bit of information Andrei" She

says chewing her thumb nail like she thought I would become mad at her voicing her opinion.

“Sometimes it is necessary Sage”

“Is it though, making someone suffer for gain, is it really necessary or just a quick way to get what you want, a way to make you feel in control?” She says. I don’t bother answering because she was right.

“You should sleep, we have a big day tomorrow, well today” I tell her.

“Doing what?” She asks, yawning while snuggling under the comforter.

“Going to see my sister and you can meet our niece and nephew, Kat invited us over for lunch” I tell her and she smiles and nods before closing her eyes. I watch her sleep and when I am sure she is asleep, I climb out of bed and head for my office.

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## Ezra POV

It was early morning when I finally walked in the door after patrol duty. The sun is just starting to come up. I close the door as quietly as possible before reaching down and tugging my shoes off and placing them by the door. I head for the showers on the bottom floor. It had been a few weeks since the twins were born and we were all dead on our feet, functioning on autopilot, our days blurring to one long never ending one. Mateo barely leaves the house and Kat is suffering from baby blues. I don't know what we all thought parenthood would be like, we all had ideas but didn't expect it to be this tiring.

They never slept or if one did the other was awake screaming the place down. Yet as I step further into the house to head toward the bathroom downstairs. I stop when I see a figure on the couch and Mateo's scent hits me, making me wander into the living room. I look over the back of the couch to find him asleep with Marabella and Eziah on his chest.

I run my fingers through his hair but he doesn't stir completely out. I was about to go shower before stopping once again. Paranoia eating at me, in case his arms go limp and he drops one. I know he would never forgive himself so I quickly walk back over to him and walk around the couch. They are both rolled up tightly in their blankets looking like baby burritos. I carefully take Marabella first before slipping my hand under Eziah's butt to the back of his head and picking him up and cradling him in my other arm.

Mateo is still dead to the world and I chuckle at the sight of him, surely he couldn't be comfortable sleeping like that but I wasn't game enough to wake him knowing he wasn't getting much sleep. I was faring a little better than the both of them, sleeping in the spare room so I could help with training and border patrol but still the extra work was slowly catching up with me.

I quietly walk upstairs to the bedroom and into the nursery. I place Eziah in his crib before turning to put Marabella in hers

when she starts to stir. Shit! I think to myself, my paranoia was going to wake the entire bloody household up.

“Put her in with Eziah ” Maddox says in my head and I turn looking at his crib for a second. Kat was going to kill me. She was paranoid about SIDS, constantly checking they were breathing and tucked in their blankets tight enough, even the position they lay in had her up and checking them. The word was even banned from the house, just mentioning SIDS was a bad omen Kat would say. But Maddox had been saying to put them together since they were born, yet we never tried it not wanting to upset Kat.

“I place Marabella next to him before grabbing the little baby blanket and tucking it into the sides of the mattress to hold them in place. Marabella squirmed a bit and I held my breath as I watched her, waiting for her ear piercing scream when she turned her face toward Eziah, both of them breathing in each other’s faces when she huffs before going back to sleep.

I quietly sneak out, tip toeing and making sure to avoid the one creaky floorboard in this room, every time one of us left the nursery was a mission. Since they have been born I have learnt how noisy the house is. I knew every floorboard on this floor that creaked, knew which door handles jiggled too loudly, every noise this house made, had us cringing as we stepped out of the nursery, like playing a game of hopscotch to avoid any noises that would wake the twins. Using the bathroom up here was a huge no, no if you didn’t want Kat to skin you alive. The pipes always groaned so if they weren’t awake, I never used it. Grabbing the baby monitor, I find Kat sleeping face down, spread eagle on the bed naked except her bra. I shake my head when I see my pillow propped under her and can guarantee it will be covered in breast milk.

“We need to tarp the bed, those boobs are like fountains now” Maddox says and I stifle my laugh.

I head back down the stairs and slip into the bathroom and turn on the shower. I placed the baby monitor on the sink basin where I could still see it. It had a little camera so I could see them sleeping in Eziah’s crib. I strip off before hopping under

the hot spray and wetting my face before grabbing the soap and washing myself.

I was halfway through my shower when I felt Mateo stir, the bond coming alive with the buzz of his energy when I suddenly feel his panic course through me. Hearing his frantic footsteps made me rush out of the shower wondering what was wrong with him. Rushing down the hall and turning into the living room just as he bursts out of

it, colliding with me and knocking me to the ground flat on my back. His panic stricken face looks at me, confused.

“What is it”

“The babies— ” But I cut him off.

“In their crib, calm down they are fine” I tell him, gripping his face in my hands and he lets out a breath.

“I thought?” He shakes his head, trying to regather himself.

“Thought what? They got up and walked out the front door” I ask him with a laugh. He swats my chest with his hand.

“No, I don’t know, I freaked out when they weren’t in my arms” He says rubbing a hand down his face.

“ I didn’t want to wake you ” I tell him, sitting up and so does Mateo who was still on top of me. He holds his hand out pulling me to my feet and I head back toward the bathroom and Mateo follows me in.

“I will make you coffee” he tells me before noticing the monitor and looks at it before his head whips in my direction.

“Kat will flip out if she finds them like that” He says, seeing them both in the same crib.

“They shared a womb together, they will be fine, and they are still asleep. Marabella stirred but instantly stopped when I put her in bed with Eziah” I tell him, stepping back under the water to finish my shower.

“Well you can deal with her than”

“I will she doesn’t scare me,” I tell him. Mateo folds his arms across his chest and leans on the basin with a smirk on his face before he raises an eyebrow at me.

“Really? Then why did you bail the other night and leave me to fend for myself when you washed the baby’s clothes in the wrong washing liquid. She bitched me out for a good half an hour about chemicals and reactions to baby skin”

“I had work to do”

“Liar, you bailed the moment you saw her walk out of the laundry with their clothes in her hands, bloody chicken”

“ I am not chicken, she was in a mood and wanted blood”

“So you did run from her wrath” He says. I chuckle, shaking my head knowing I was guilty.

“You abandoned me and let me take the wrap for it,” Mateo says, clicking his tongue before smiling. I laugh watching him slip out of the bathroom. He was right, I would take on the world for Mateo but if it comes to me facing Kat, he is on his own. She was hormonal. One minute she was perfectly fine the next she was getting upset at me for breathing too loud or crying over the simplest things. Or demanding to know why I am angry when I am not, that’s just my face, why can women have resting bitch face yet I can’t?

I shower quickly before hopping out and drying myself when Mateo walks in with some boxer shorts for me. I take them from him before slipping them on. Mateo grabs the baby monitor and we both walk out to the living room and flop on the couch. My feet were killing from being on them constantly. I reach for my coffee, taking a sip of it before placing it back on the coffee table and sitting back.

“F\*ck I am tired” I mumble, but I still had pack training at 10 A.M., then Andrei and Sage were coming over at 1.

“You can go climb in bed with Kat, I will stay up and wait for them to wake” Mateo says but I shake my head, turning and putting my feet on the couch before grabbing his arm and tugging him over to me and between my legs so he is laying with his cheek on my chest. His stubble was scratchy and I let

out a breath relaxing. I can't even remember the last time I spent much time with either Kat or Mateo. Life was chaotic and there never seemed to be time or when there was, everyone was too tired or I was in and out and we were like ships passing in the night.

"No, lay with me for a bit" I tell him, wrapping my arms around his shoulders and tugging him closer. His warmth and the smell of his skin was calming. His scent was overwhelming me yet I ignored my own desire just wanting him close.

"I am thinking we should alternate, I want to get out of the house" Mateo says and I look down at him and he turns his face to look up at me. Not this again! I groan internally.

"Are you sure, last week you said the same thing and every hour you were coming back home to check the twins" I tell him. He would feel guilty leaving them and miss them like crazy, then he would feel guilty for leaving Kat even though I was here, then feels guilty because I was doing his jobs so he can stay

home. Mateo falls silent.

"I don't mind doing your workload, I know you hate leaving the house" I tell him and he nods.

"Yes but it drives me nuts being stuck in the house," He says with a laugh.

"How about instead of jumping back into a full schedule you just let me know when you want to work instead of changing rosters etc and confusing everyone. Maybe see if Kat wants to come, she hasn't shifted in a while and it is making me anxious" I tell him knowing her moods get worse without shifting.

"Maybe Andrei can convince her but will you be right with them on your own?" Mateo says and I nod.

"Yes, if not I can ask Marge to come over, she is always offering to help if Kat would let her" I tell him.

"Sounds like a plan" Mateo says, shifting closer and lifting his head so he is leaning over me. I grip his shirt tugging him to

me, my lips pressing to his and his instantly part as he kisses me back. I smile against his lips before my tongue slips in his mouth and I grip the back of his neck tugging him closer and holding him there not wanting it to end. Mateo groans and I could feel his hard cock pressing against the inside of my leg. I reach between us grabbing him through his flannelette pajama pants and he groans into my mouth before grinding his hips against me, his hand fisting my boxer shorts.

F\*ck I loved this man, loved both my mates, I missed this, missed being with them. Mateo tugs the side of my pants down, his hand gripping my h.i.p intending to h.i.p me over when we hear Eziah cry out.

Mateo sighs, pulling away and dropping his forehead on my chest in frustration.

“ I will go” I tell him and he sits up to let me up. I peck his lips heading for the stairs.

When I returned with Eziah, Mateo had passed out again on the couch. “Come on little man lets feed that turn turn” I tell Eziah who was munching on his fist. I go to the kitchen to make a bottle from the breast milk Kat has stored in the fridge.

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## Sage POV

We drove to Kat's Pack, it wasn't like what I expected. It was so much larger than Andrei's Pack and picturesque. The Pack house was a mansion and I had never seen a house so large. It was three stories and had gardens and looked like something out of a movie, not a thing out of place, even the hedges trimmed perfectly. Andrei pulls over just as a man walks out of the treeline completely naked. He had dark hair and was athletically built, muscle on muscle with some serious Alpha vibes coming off him and it made me uncomfortable and I wondered who he was.

He was good looking but in a different way to Andrei, he was so clean looking despite having clearly just shifted, whereas Andrei was more get your hands dirty and hands on and reminded me of someone that does hard labour, his build was bigger, whereas this man had an 8 pack Andrei was too big for that yet packed with muscle and his body hard like a rock. Andrei clears his throat awkwardly, pulling my gaze away from the man who suddenly stops before covering himself with his hands as he looks at the car.

"That is Ezra Kat's mate, eyes off" Andrei tells me. My mouth falls open, at his words, shit I upset him.

Andrei growls and this Ezra taps on his window, his hands covering his privates and I keep my eyes to the front. I don't understand why Andrei was angry. I was just wondering who he was.

"Sorry didn't see your car until the last second, you must be Sage? I'm Ezra" He says, making me look over at him, I wave awkwardly.

"Hi" I sat just as awkwardly. He smiles looking back at Andrei whose jaw was clenched. Exactly what does one do exactly when someone is standing there naked, not that it bothers me so much, with werewolves nudity was expected but I didn't fancy shaking his hand knowing it was just covering his junk.

“ I promise, I usually wear pants you just caught me coming home” Ezra adds and I nod keeping my eyes ahead.

“It’s fine brother, go get dressed and let Kat know we are here” The man nods and turns to walk away when Andrei calls out to him again.

“Is Derrick here?” Andrei asks.

“Don’t think so but he said he was coming over” Ezra tells him and Andrei nods before winding his window up.

“You shouldn’t stare Sage, I don’t like you gawking at other men, or if you are going to, don’t do it in front of me”

“ I wasn’t gawking, Andrei. He just appeared. I was wondering who he was”

“You were perming, don’t try to deny it, Sage you are sitting right beside me” Andrei says when Sierra adds her two cents worth. “He is jealous, Donnie just lost his marbles at me too” Sierra tells me and I roll my eyes. Andrei growls, making my eyes dart to him to find him watching me. I could feel how angry he was through the bond, simmering and bubbling like a pot of boiling water.

“You know that is rude right, rolling your eyes?” He says and I am shocked by his change in attitude.

“I wasn’t rolling them at you but Sierra, she said you’re jealous” I tell him.

“Of course I am, I just caught you perving on another man” He says like it is so obvious with his

temperament.

“I was not perving Andrei. I have no interest in your sister’s Mate. I was just wondering who he was, that is it” I tell him, unclipping my seatbelt.

“Just keep your eyes to yourself, Kat is possessive. I want her to like you” He says, does that mean she doesn’t like me? Kat seemed nice when I met her but I barely knew her. Surely she couldn’t hate me.

“Possessiveness seems to be a family trait with this lot” Sierra mumbles to me. I was still stumped that we were even having this argument. Did he seriously think I was attracted to Ezra?

“I am not attracted to your brother-in-law Andrei” I tell him with a sigh, hoping he drops this conversation and stops making me feel uncomfortable. I rub my arms with my hands not really knowing what to do, do I get out, should I wait? I wanted to see Kat again but now I didn’t know if it was worth causing more arguments by me going in there, maybe I should wait in the car. I was never good around other people and I suddenly wanted to go home not wanting to offend anyone further.

It was a pleasant trip and we talked the whole way. He even explained Kat’s strange relationship with not one but two mates, so why did I have to notice the man step out of the trees and make things weird?

Now I was questioning everything and feeling like shit. I was unsure how to reassure Andrei that I wasn’t perving just simply trying to figure out who it was and you can tell a lot about werewolves by their build.

The man was too pretty looking for my liking, Andrei though was more manly looking and handsome in a different way or maybe I was biased seeing as Andrei is my mate and the bond had been growing stronger with each passing day.

Andrei lets out a breath rubbing his temples. “I’m sorry Sage, I’m just on edge because I haven’t marked you yet, just ignore me” He says pulling his keys from the ignition.

“Come, Kat was asking about you the other day, we should go inside, they are waiting” He says opening his car door. I open mine and step out

into the sun. The sun is warming me up and Andrei walks over to me and stops beside me and I grab his hand. His hand grabs mine, engulfing it before he starts rubbing circles on the back of it while we walk toward the huge house. Before we reach the door it swings open and Kat comes out. She looked tired but happy as she stood on her tippy toes to hug Andrei. He let my hand go to hug her back and pecked her cheek, she was so

short compared to him her feet leaving the ground as he stood upright to hug her, looking at them you wouldn't think they were related he towered over her or maybe that was because he was Alpha.

"Hey sis" He says and it was weird watching him with her, he places her pack on her feet and she smiles brightly at me before hugging me and then gripping my face.

"You ok?" She asks and I nod smiling at her, even tired she was so bubbly it was hard to not find her smile contagious.

"Dad should be here soon, he just messaged" Kat says walking inside and into the living room. Mateo was sitting on the couch when we walked in and he called out to Andrei.

"Finally you are here, maybe you can talk some sense into your sister for me" Mateo says and Kat growls at him.

"Why, what's going on?" Andrei asks, walking around the couch and sitting in the one across from him. I see two babies in his arms snuggled up nice and warm. Both of them wide awake and staring at their father. Mateo gets up walking over and offers one of the babies to Andrei who instantly snaps her up. I assume she is a girl because she is in a pink blanket. Though I was shocked when he handed the son to me. I look at Kat unsure but she nods encouragingly to let me know I could hold him so I hold my arms out and Mateo places the boy in my arms.

I made sure to support his little head but he had good neck control as he peered around before peering up at me. His gold eyes staring at me and I had never seen eyes like theirs before meeting Kat, they look otherworldly and so bright.

"Well first, Kat hasn't shifted in god knows how long because of the pregnancy and then never leaving home, but that's not all Ezra put Marabella in Eziah's crib and she found out and lost the plot and reckons it is dangerous, yet they slept soundly so we want to put them together to try and get some

sleep, kat says no because of the Ssss" He suddenly cut off with a growl from Kat.

“Don’t you say it, you know I hate it being mentioned” Kat growls, cutting Mateo off. He throws his hands up in the air before falling back on the couch behind him.

“See what I mean?” He says waving at his mate.

“Saying the word isn’t a bad thing, there should be more awareness about it kat, more research” Andrei says though I was a little confused but I wasn’t willing to ask seeing how upset Kat just got over whatever Mateo was about to say.

“I am sure it is not that big of a deal for them to sleep together, maybe that’s why they aren’t sleeping Kat, they can safely co-sleep together” Andrei says before looking down and cooing at the baby in his arms her little mittened hand escaping the blanket and Andrei shakes rubs her covered hand.

Andrei told me about Marabella and Eziah making me wonder if that is why her hands are covered yet Eziah’s aren’t. I didn’t understand how it worked but believed him, there was just this weird air around Kat, something that warned you she was more than an average werewolf and something dangerous.

Looking at the twins I got that same vibe.

“As for the shifting, you know you need to shift Kat, you don’t want to risk exploding around them do you?” He says, nodding to the babies in our arms.

“No, of course not but I am worried my milk will dry up or something” She says, walking around and sitting on the couch next to Mateo. Ezra walks out with a tray of coffee, placing it on the coffee table just as the front door opens.

An older man comes inside, Kat sticks her arm over the back of the couch waving at him.

“Hey pumpkin” the man says and I realise the resemblance between Kat and him instantly and know this is their father though Andrei must take after his mother I couldn’t see many similarities beside the eyes and lips.

“Hey dad ” kat says smiling and the man rubs his hands together excitedly coming over to us before reaching down and plucking the baby from Andrei’s arms. He cradles her before turning to me.

“You must be Sage” He says, leaning down and kissing my cheek.

“Nice to meet you I’m Derrick, since no one decided to introduce me” He says looking at both Kat and Andrei. “The rude ones dad” he says and I smile. He sits next to Andrei on the couch. Andrei reaches for his coffee and I could feel something through the bond, like he was unsettled. He has a few mouthfuls before putting it back on the tray.

“How are you son?” Derrick asks Andrei, the tension between them awkward and I felt strange feelings I couldn’t understand through the bond coming off Andrei.

“Good Derrick” He answers flatly before reaching over and fixing the baby’s mitten that was coming off Marabella’s hand while his father held her. I stared down at Eziah before Andrei leaned over my way and I could tell he was itching to hold him. I never pictured Andrei to be a family man, more like the sort of person who would have a kid because it

was expected, yet seeing him with his sister and the way his eyes lit up around his niece and nephew.

I realize I got it wrong, he did want a family. He takes Eziah from my arms, rocking him back and forth and rubbing his back. I watch as Andrei sniffs his little head.

“ I love baby smell ” He says, smiling down at his nephew. I feel my heart twist feeling all his love for them through the bond yet I won’t be able to give him that, shit we haven’t even kissed let alone got to that stage, but I knew now how gut wrenching it must have been for him to find out he was stuck with a mate that can’t give him a family. When he said he didn’t care I had hoped that maybe this could work but now seeing him holding them and speaking baby talk to them, I wondered if he would still think that after a few years when that really hits home that I can never give him kids.

“Won’t be long and you will hopefully have some little ones to Andrei, now you have a mate” Derrick says, I swallow watching Andrei’s reaction to his father’s words. I knew Derrick didn’t know but it still stung seeing the hope in his fathers eyes.

Andrei doesn't answer for a few long seconds when his eyes flick to me and he grips my knee and I see Kat watching me out of the corner of my eye. I look at her and it is like she is looking straight through me, a far away look in her eye.

"You boys should start the barbeque sometime today, I am starving and I am sure Sage is hungry" She says suddenly and Ezra and Mateo suddenly start doing paper scissors rock before Ezra groans and gets up when loses.

"Come Andrei, we are on cooking duty" Ezra says and Andrei hands me back Eziah.

"Go on you two can go too, up and out of here" Kat says dismissing Mateo and her father.

"But I won" Mateo whines and I smile at him, he seemed like a sulking child right now.

"I never said you have to cook but outside now" She says pointing to the door. Derrick laughs, handing Kat Marabella back and Derrick pats Mateo on the chest on his way past.

"You heard her, up probably best we leave anyway unless you want to sucked into girl talk"

"Ah fine, I could use a beer or ten anyway" He says with a sigh following Derrick out.

"Sorry about my father" Kat says and I nod, Kat had gifts. I didn't try to understand them, just accepted she had them.

"How is my brother doing?" She asks, sitting on the couch beside me.

"What do you mean?" I ask her.

"I mean with the killing of rogues, has he stopped torturing them?" She says.

"You know?" I ask her and she nods, brushing her daughter's cheek gently. I smile watching her, she was a few years younger than me, yet she seemed older in some ways.

I shrug not wanting to get Andrei in trouble off her but I also didn't want to lie to her either.

“He doesn’t have any down there at the moment” I tell her and she lets out a breath.

Fated To The Alpha by Jessica Hall Chapter 152



## Andrei POV

It was a nice day today as I helped Ezra start the barbeque. I started chopping onions while he cooked when Mateo and my father walked out to join us with beers in their hands. My father offers me one but I shake my head.

“Can’t I have to drive ” I tell him and he shrugs before sitting at the outside table next to where I was chopping onions.

“Sage is quiet” He says and I look over at him. “Yeah she isn’t used to people” I tell him.

“Is she adjusting ok, Kat said she was scared of you, she seems fine around you now?” My father asks and I bite my tongue to stop from snapping at him. I would happily talk about anything with him but her and our relationship, though when Ezra asked I knew I had no choice but to answer, they seemed to have a keen interest for some reason that unnerved me.

“Yes, she let me sleep in the bed with her the last few nights, she marked me by accident which has

helped massively because she can feel everything I do” I tell them with a shrug. I see Mateo look at Ezra funny, making me suspicious.

“What?”

“Nothing, we just want this to work out is all, she seems nice. Timid but nice” Mateo answers and I change the subject not liking their interest in my love life.

“Did you have a pack member named Lyle that recently passed away in the last few months?” I ask looking over at Ezra. He stiffens, his lips pressing in a line before he swallows, his eyes darting to Mateo making me look over at him. Mateo rubs a hand down his face and sighs. Looking back at Ezra he looked gutted making me wonder if they were close.

“Sorry bro, I didn’t realize you were close with him” I tell him, passing him the chopping board of cut up onions. He

scrapes them on the burner before handing it back to me.

“I wasn’t close to him, I barely knew him, he was new to the pack” Ezra says while flipping the steaks.

“Is there a reason you are asking about Lyle Wesson?” Ezra asks me.

“Yes actually he was Sage’s first mate, I wanted to take her to visit his grave if he was buried here” I tell him and Ezra flinches and grips the barbeque not realizing where he was grabbing and puts his palm half on the hot plate, he drops the tongs in his hands before burning himself again as he goes to retrieve them from the hotplate.

“You right, here let me take over” I tell him, taking the tongs from his grip. My father gets up moving so Ezra can sit down and Mateo leans over to look at his hand.

“It’s fine” Ezra snaps at him but Mateo growls at him and grabs his hand jerking it towards him.

“Seriously it is already healing just f\*cking leave it” Ezra says his eyes flickering to Maddox. Mateo ignores him before leaning down and running his tongue over his palm and Ezra growls at him but lets him, knowing Mateo wasn’t going to back down from him. I always found witnessing their relationship interesting. Ezra was the Alpha Male over them, and Kat softened him sort of.

But Mateo, despite being his Beta, also had influence over him. Mateo never backed down from him and I think sometimes Ezra likes it, likes having someone to order him around and scold him though I am sure Kat gives them both hell, but Mateo was the balm to Ezra’s stressors, someone to take control when he didn’t feel like it even if it was just simple things most of the time. I could see Ezra liked when Mateo made decisions for them because it meant he didn’t have to make them himself.

“ I didn’t know Lyle had a mate, Maddox didn’t mean it” Ezra says.

“Yeah Sage said something along those lines” I tell him and he looks over at me.

“Huh, what happened with Sage?” He asked and I could see the confusion on his face like he was trying to figure out some hard math question. “When she stumbled across him, he told her his Alpha attacked him but he didn’t mean it”

“Maddox only attacked him once and that was when Maddox killed him”

“Killed him? No, he was still alive, Sage tried to heal him, the rogues killed him in front of her” I tell him wondering now if we were talking about the same person.

“Maddox seems pretty sure he killed him, that was the night I marked Kat and absorbed the darkness from her, making Maddox blind with rage. When did Sage meet him?”

“A few months back, they stumbled across him just over the border and brought him back to camp, she said he was nearly dead and she healed him or tried to, but then the rogues realized they

were mates when he tried to free her so they ripped him apart, then tossed him back where they found him just on your borders” I tell him. Ezra seems to think for a second before walking off inside and I see Mateo mindlink someone, his eyes glazing over.

“ Is he alright?” I ask Mateo who shakes his head.

“No, he locked his wolf up after that night and rarely shifts now because he is afraid of killing his pack members” Mateo says when Kat and Sage step outside. Sage still had Eziah and Mateo reached behind him with his arms out. I watch Sage place Eziah in his arms, yet Marabella wasn’t with Kat.

“ She is asleep. I put her down for a bit” Kat says, answering my thoughts. Ezra returns with a dark expression on his face with a photo in his hand.

“Oi what’s wrong?” Kat asks him, but he shakes his head instead approaching Sage who steps back from him, confusing his expression for anger yet I could see killing Lyle was eating at him.

“He won’t hurt you, Sage, ” Mateo tells her, touching her arm. She swallows and Ezra hands a photo to her before sitting down next to Mateo and reaching for his son. Sage stares down at the photo before swallowing, her eyes turning glassy.

“Lyle ” she breathes before biting her bottom lip.

“You know him?” Mateo asks her. She nods her head staring down at the picture in her hands which appears to be some Pack ID photo.

“Yes he was my mate, the rogues killed him” She says softly and Ezra lets out a breath and I see Kat run her fingers through the back of his hair. Ezra leaning into her touch like she would make him feel better.

“I didn’t kill him” He breathes out.

“No, rogues did, they tore him to pieces” She says before offering the photo to him. He shakes his head pushing her hand back toward her.

“Keep it” He says and her eyes dart to me. I could see the question in her eyes, wanting to know if she was allowed to or if I would be offended if she did. I suddenly felt guilty about earlier and my overreaction to her looking at Ezra. Now she was worried about me getting angry over her dead mate, I realized how foolish I was.

“Keep it” I tell her but she shakes her head.

“No, it’s ok” She says, still trying to give it back yet I could tell she didn’t want to.

I reached over, taking it from her and looking at the man in the picture, he would be her age, with Dark hair and soft features. Looking back up, I found everyone staring at me, but Sage was looking at the picture in my hands like she was scared I was going to do something to it and was fighting the urge to snatch it from me.

I place it in my pocket. “We can put it in a frame when we get home” I tell her and she lets out a breath.

My father pats the chair next to him and she walks around the table before sitting next to him. My father had been quietly observing and I knew he was burning to ask me questions. I could practically see the cogs turning in his head. I plate up the steaks and sausages before placing them on the table. Kat walks inside before returning with salad and plates and bread.

“I was actually wanting to speak to you about something” I tell my father looking over at him as I sit down beside Sage.

“What’s that?” He asks, turning his attention to me.

“Wanted to see if you would come over home a for a bit, I need help with some Pack issues, and my new Beta could use some pointers on the shit he is supposed to do”

“Not Beta blood?” he asks .

“No, Gamma. But he struggles with the responsibilities, he is used to being their friends and not their boss, they run all over him forgetting he is now my Beta” I tell him and he nods.

“Sure, I can head over tomorrow if you want, how long should I pack for”

“However long you plan on staying, I need your help so if I can steal for a week or so would be good, if Kat doesn’t need you” I tell him and he smiles like a kid on christmas.

“Sounds good ” He says, biting into his sausage sandwich.

“I’ m good, I have Mateo and Ezra to help with kids” Kat says looking just as excited as our father at the idea of him staying with me for a few days. Hopefully he will be able to help with the rogue issue, I could use a fresh set of eyes on the situation, preferably one that won’t cause issues with Sage, she didn’t understand the danger we were in of losing everything, and I won’t let anyone walk in and take my Pack so I am willing to do anything to keep them Safe even if she doesn’t agree with my ways.

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## Sage POV

Lunch was nice with Kat and her family and I found myself not wanting to leave, liking having another female around, someone I can kind of relate to. Derrick Andrei's father said he would be over tomorrow sometime to help Andrei with whatever Andrei asked of him and eventually we left.

Walking back to the car I climb in the passenger seat and Andrei gets in the driver's seat and starts up the car.

"Seat belt" Andrei growls, making me realize I hadn't put it on. I roll my eyes but clip it place and he

reverses before turning the car around and driving down the long driveway. When we reach the end instead of turning toward the highway he turns heading into town and I look at him questionably wondering where we are going now. As much as I didn't want to leave Kat's, I kind of missed home. The town was small as we drove through it and I could tell it consisted of only werewolves.

A few people on the streets nodded to Andrei as he drove past despite him not being their Alpha and I knew it was out of respect for Kat. Andrei drove towards the edge of town before pulling up at what I first thought was a park with its picnic areas and bench seats and giant trees creating shade along the edges of the white fence that surrounded the place. The lawns were well maintained and I realized we were at a cemetery. Andrei parks the car under a tree and stares out at the gravestones letting out a shaky breath.

"You ok?" I ask him before reaching over and grabbing his hand.

"Yeah, I just haven't been here since her funeral" He says, staring out at the cemetery. I could see a man in the distance tending to some of the graves and cleaning them and figured he must be the graveyard keeper.

Andrei squeezes my fingers before opening his door and getting out. He walks around the back of the car to the trunk and pops it open and I climb out of the car to see what he is doing. He places a cardboard box on the ground before

shutting the trunk. He picks it up with one hand before reaching in his pocket and pulling out a piece of paper and opens it and reads it.

I noticed each row of graves was marked with a number and Andrei grabbed my hand and tugs me along the rows, careful not to step on anyone's

grave before stopping next to a black headstone with silver writing on it. I looked down at it and read the name expecting it to be his mate Angie but instead it read. Lyle Wesson and his date of birth along with the picture I had in the car.

"He is younger than I thought," Andrei says, looking at the headstone.

"Yeah he is three days younger than me" I tell him and he nods before kneeling. He rummages in the box before handing me a cloth to clean the dust from the headstone and I wipe it over while he continues pulling things out. I wipe the headstone over which was pretty clean before sitting next to Andrei on the grass and he hands me a small plastic pot with colourful pansies in it. I stare at the flowers and Andrei digs a small hole in front of his headstone with his claws and hands.

"Want some help?" Says a voice behind us and I look over my shoulder to see the keeper. He was in his mid forties and was wearing overalls and a wide brimmed hat.

"No, but can you take that box to Angie's grave please, I will be over there in a second" Andrei tells him and I could tell they knew each other. The man nods and bends down, picking it up.

"I will make sure they both stay well watered Andrei" The man tells him and he nods. I turned back to Andrei whose hands were now covered in dirt.

"There now you can plant it, I wasn't sure what flowers you like but they looked pretty" He said and I nodded before carefully removing them from the pot and dropping them in the small hole. I push the dirt back over it before patting the dirt around it. Andrei then opens up a water bottle and pours

some on the soil watering it. We sat there staring at the grave. Andrei was a man of few words yet I didn't feel uncomfortable and he didn't seem mad that he was visiting my mate's grave. After a few minutes I got up. I missed my mate yet I barely knew him.

"You want to go already?" Andrei asks and I nod.

"Yeah, let's go visit Angie's now" I tell him, looking for the man with the box but I couldn't see him.

I offer Andrei my hand and he takes it letting me help pull him up before tucks me under his arm leading me to yet another grave.

This one was all white marble and covered in flowers and pictures, teddies and even a necklace hung on top of the grave. I find his mate was only 18 when she passed away but she was pretty and in the picture she looked lively and happy. Her grave

also had beloved daughter, sister and Mate written on it. Looking at Andrei his eyes darken and I sit next to her grave before opening the box and rummaging around it while he was frozen in place staring at it.

I pull a small pot of lavender out and place it beside me. Looking up at Andrei he was no longer looking at the grave but watching me with a strange look on his face before his eyes lost focus and he growled, making me jump. Yet he didn't seem angry but

like he wasn't exactly present either and was reliving some memory he didn't like. I reach up tugging his hand and his eyes refocus and he shakes his head. Through the bond I felt fear which I thought was odd.

"Are you going to plant her flowers?" I ask him, ignoring the feeling I was getting through the bond.

When he doesn't answer I start digging a small hole next to her grave. I didn't want to disturb the other things on her grave that were placed and there wasn't much room.

"Here I will do it, you will get dirty" He says kneeling beside me and pulling a bit more dirt out. I hand him the pot of



lavender and he takes it, pushing it in the hole.

“Angie liked lavender” He said and I nod seeing another one on the other side of the grave that someone planted. I unscrewed the lid of the water bottle and hand it to him before carefully wiping her headstone with the cloth which looked like it was regularly cleaned and maintained by her family.

“Her family was all from this pack” I ask Andrei.

“Yeah she had five brothers and her parents here and I think an aunt but I never met her” Andrei says

and I nod sitting beside him.

“Argh Angie hated those flowers always made her sneeze, ” He says pointing to some gardenia’s on the grave next to hers.

“Lavender was her favourite and pink roses” he says, patting the soil down and watering the lavender.

“What’s your favourite flower?” Andrei asks me while sitting back and rearranging some of the things on her grave that had fallen over.

“Some would call it a weed” I chuckle and he raises an eyebrow at me.

“What is it then?” He chuckles.

“Dandelions” I tell him and he shakes his head. “That is because it is a weed” He chuckles and I shove his shoulder.

“Why dandelions?” he asks.

“Because they are a rogue unwanted plant and grow freely” I tell him and his smile slips slightly yet I didn’t mean it to upset him. I just liked that you couldn’t control where they popped up.”

“My father hated them when I was kid and was always pulling them out of the lawn and said it ruined his grass” I tell him with a chuckle.

“So you did live in a community before being rogue” Andrei asks and I nod.

“Yeah, we were not part of any packs but for a while we lived amongst the human communities before a

pack caught us and kicked us out, then after that we moved around everywhere, joined a few rogue camps but never stayed long until those rogues caught us and killed him” I tell Andrei.

“Well you never have to worry about that again, you have a home now, you just have to put up with me”

Andrei says before laughing.

“You’re aren’t so bad” I tell him and he stands smiling to himself before offering me both hands and I take them, letting him pull me up. He bends down grabbing the empty box off the ground before grabbing my hand and lacing his fingers through mine. Both our hands are covered in dirt as we walk back to the car before he stops discarding the box in one of the bins next to a picnic table with bench seats.

“Hold your hands out” He says and I do and he pours water on them so I can clean them. I do the same for him before tossing the water bottle in the bin. Andrei dries his hands on his jeans and I walk over to him wiping mine on his shirt to dry them.

I could feel the hardness of his stomach and the bulk of muscle under it making my face heat. We showered together but I never really touched him, tending to stick to my side of the shower. Even in bed I never really touched him, let alone run my hands over him like that. It was comforting knowing he was there while I was exposed. I knew he wouldn’t let anyone hurt me, and I trusted him not to either.

“You right there” he asks amused at me drying my hands on his clean shirt.

“Yep” I chuckle.

Andrei grabs my wrists when I pull away wrapping them around his waist and stepping closer before wrapping his arms around me. I let out a breath resting my cheek on his chest and inhaled his scent, loving the warmth radiating off him. I feel his nose in my hair as he does the same. His scent was intoxicating and his closeness soothing.

“Come on, we should head home before it gets too late” He says and I look up at him. His eyes flicker to Donnie for a second and I smile up at him. “Hi Donnie, ” I tell him and he smiles before his

eyes flicker back to Andrei’s hypnotic eyes. He leans down pressing his lips to my forehead and my heart skips a beat.

“Come on” He says letting me go and I walk to the otherside of the car waiting for him to unlock it before hopping in.

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## Katya POV

Ezra had barely said a word since Sage and Andrei left, instead storming off to the room and shutting the door softly though I know he wanted to slam it, and wanted to break something. He was angry but I don't know what he was angry at, I don't think he knew either. Maddox had been whining for weeks wanting out, but since the twins were born it was only when Maddox had forced control a few times that he was able to get out and a lot of it had to do with me pulling on him through the bond to help Maddox reign over the tight control Ezra had over him.

"You two are just as bad as each other, you realize that right?" Mateo asks me where he was feeding Eziah the last remnants of his bottle. The kid was feeding a machine while Marabella was the smaller one, though she cried way more. She rarely settled so I was surprised how long she had slept for today, both slept rather well.

"I don't know what you're talking about" I tell him while yawning and placing Marabella's half drunk bottle down on the counter. She was already asleep and I brush her cheek with my fingers and she stirs.

"You need to burp her, she will scream the place down otherwise" Mateo says, his eyes on Marabella in my arms and I glare at him.

"I know Mateo, no need to state the obvious" I snapped at him. He lets out a breath before muttering under his breath. I maneuver Marabella over my shoulder and rub her back while she sleeps hoping she

burps. She is a colicky baby and her screams of pain made me want to tear off my ears. She had a set of lungs on her and when she became too upset she had a tendency to unleash her powers, another reason I don't want her sleeping in her brother's crib. What if she kills him by accident?

"You know you could try not snapping and snarling every time you speak to us" He says getting up and walking out of the

kitchen. Guilt smashes into me. I know I am short tempered but the idea of leaving them here just so I can run around like a wild animal scared me. I hear the TV flick on in the living room and sigh before walking out of the kitchen and toward the bedroom only to stop when I see Mateo sitting on the couch and decide to join him.

“ Shh, he has just fallen asleep ” Mateo whispers, bouncing the rocker with his foot. He leans over pulling the other closer and gesturing to Marabella over my shoulder. I lean toward him and let him take her and he carefully places her in her rocker before he starts bouncing it with his foot too.

We watch the news in silence enjoying each other’s company when I hear movement upstairs.

“Think he is alright?” I ask him, looking at the ceiling.

“Well he’s been locking Maddox up, I’d say he is feeling pretty shitty right about now” Mateo says just as Marge comes out with the folding. I get up moving to the other couch to help. It had kind of become an afternoon ritual. We would watch the 6 o’clock news and fold the day’s laundry together. She was like the only person I really had interaction with besides Jasmine and my mates and I hadn’t realised the time.

We were halfway through the folding when Ezra finally came back down stairs. Mateo looked over the back of the couch at him before looking back at Ezra as he headed out the door, his brows pinched together and I knew he was feeling Ezra’s tumultuous thoughts through the bond.

“Just go, I don’t need your help here” I tell him knowing he wanted to check on him. He sets the timer on the rocker letting it rock itself.

“Stay with Kat?” Mateo asks Marge and I am shocked by his words.

“Of course, Mateo. I don’t know why you bother asking anymore son I would never say no”

Marge says as she folds baby clothes. Did they realize I was right here and I could hear them? I didn’t need a babysitter to

watch my own kids. Not wanting to get into an argument with Marge here, I let it slide. Mateo walks over bending over to press his lips to mine but I pull away reaching for a towel. Mateo sighs heavily like the weight of the world was on his shoulders before gripping my chin and forcing me to look at him but I glare at him instead. His words stung like he was implying that I can't look after our children and am incapable of keeping them alive for a few hours.

"Don't..." He doesn't finish, instead sighs shaking his head. "I will be back soon" He says, pressing his lips to my forehead. I knew he could feel the rage bubbling up in me and he stopped at the entryway but Marge waves him off completely oblivious to the fact there was going to be hell to pay when he gets home.

I continued folding trying to ignore how much his words hurt me, I was seething. After a while I got up. I was becoming too riled up and I don't understand why it bothered me this much but it was making my blood boil within my veins.

"You alright Love" Marge asks looking up at me.

"Yeah, I was going to make a coffee, do you want one?" I ask her. It wasn't her my anger was directed at.

"Sure, I can help you get the little ones to bed after if you like, save you walking up the stairs twice" She offers and I nod walking into the kitchen. I make coffee for both of us trying to feel for Ezra and Mateo when lust hits me through the bond. A growl escapes me of annoyance. Not that it bothered me they were f\*cking I was just to pissed off to see anything but hurt and betrayal right now. I knew it was irrational but it just fuelled my anger more.

I grab the coffees off the bench trying to distract myself from my bleeding anger. The fact it was a

full moon the other night wasn't helping. I haven't shifted in months and the passing fazes of the moon always affected me oddly, yet this time it was becoming too much everything weighing down heavier and then Mateo had to ask Marge to babysit me like I was f\*cking child that needed minding.

“You sure you are alright love, you have been awfully quiet this afternoon, are you hungry? I can heat up the leftovers from last night for you” She asks.

“No I am fine” my tone was a little harsher than I intended. Marge nods, taking the cup from my hands and giving me an odd look. I sat down wallowing in my own anger and self pity, trying to reign in control of my emotions, they were always wild and feral but I usually only needed to be close to one of my mates. Their scents soothing and calming the monster I can become but not right now, it was festering with no outlet.

Marge places her mug down on the coffee table getting up and reaching for Marabella, my eyes darting to her movement. “I will take her, you take Eziah” I tell her, noticing one of Marabella’s mittens had fallen off. Marge nods, scooping Eziah out of his rocker, her arms mimicking the movement of the rocker so he doesn’t wake. I do the same with Marabella and follow her up to the room. I go to tell her about the creaky step but she steps right over it taking the next, in fact her feet missing all the creaks on the old floors and my brows pinch together.

“Marge has Mateo asked you to help me before” I ask her, suspicion gnawing at me making me think back to everytime, I have woken and thought Mateo or Ezra weren’t here but found Marge with the kids and suddenly one of them pops up out of nowhere. Her movements were too precise like she knew how to get into the nursery and out without stirring them or me. Or maybe it was just paranoia setting in from not shifting and the craze of being a Gemini wolf setting in, but when she doesn’t say anything instead placing Eziah down in his crib it makes me alert.

“Marge?” I ask her, about to place Marabella in her crib before stopping.

“Yes dear, did you say something?” She asks. I moved to Eziah’s crib. They settled earlier together.

Maybe we can try for one night and see how it goes. I think to myself placing her down in the crib beside Eziah and tucking them in. Marge turns the light projection on and stars appear

on the roof while it softly plays a lullaby before walking out of the room and I follow after her.

“I was wondering if Mateo has asked you to help me before?” I ask her as we start down the steps.

“I really don’t mind, I love pups such innocent little things” She says but evades my question which irked me to no end.

“So he has asked you to watch over me?” I press.

“They just worry dear, I really don’t mind. Beats sitting at home by myself” She says with a shrug.

“They, so Ezra has asked too?” I ask, my stomach sinking. What the f\*ck did they think I would do that they were worried of leaving me with my own children.

“Coffee?” Marge says, suddenly darting past me with the coffee cups and heading to the kitchen. I watch her dart off quickly before chasing after her.

“You know something don’t you, don’t they trust me?” I ask her, grabbing her arm in what I thought was a gentle manner until she jerks away from me and my claws slip down her arm. The coffee cups shatter on the floor as they slip from her fingertips. I reach forward to heal her but she shakes me off.

“Shit sorry Marge, are you ok?” I ask her but she steps back. I pass her a tea towel and she wraps her arm.

“I’m fine dear. It’s ok, I know you didn’t mean it” She says as I bend down to pick up the broken glass.

Her voice sounded far away for a second and I looked up and swore I saw her eyes glaze over for a second but she smiled at me.

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I go back to picking up the glass and dumping it in some paper towels, wrapping it up and putting it in the bin.

Marge unravels the towel, her arm already healed and I let out a breath of relief when I hear Marabella cry out and I cuss under my breath before heading for the door when Marge rushes past me.



“I will check on them” She says blocking the door before slipping out it.

“No, sit down. I will go, just wash the blood off” I tell her, trying to slip past her but she grabs my arm gently.

“No, it’s fine Luna. I don’t mind, how about you make the coffee” She says, her eyes darting to the stairs nervously.

“Marge, are you afraid of me, I didn’t mean it” I ask her before forcing myself in her head. Her memories become mine. I filter through them seeing the countless times she had been asked by Mateo or Ezra to watch me while they ducked off without me knowing while I was asleep or preoccupied. The way she would find an excuse to remain in the room with me when they went somewhere. I stepped away from her, shocked at what I saw.

“Kat?” Marge says but I force myself back in her head seeing us in the kitchen, the strange eerie glint in my own eyes as I gripped her arm, burning gold eyes staring at me before my claws slipped out cutting her, the fear she felt when I said I would get Marabella. Yet it wasn’t fear for herself, it was fear for my children and I could see she was willing to die then let me go to them right now making me frown. My heart pounds loudly in my ears. They were monitoring me, watching me, conspiring against me. All of them were like I was some monster.

“Kat breathe, it is just the new moon, they worry about you is all. They would never do anything to upset you” Marge says.

“You all think I would hurt my children?” I ask her, my voice eerily calm even to my ears. I tried to shake the feeling off knowing it wasn’t me but it was coiling around me and strangling me in a vice and I recognised it but still couldn’t fight it off as it threatened to swallow me.

Madness creeps in, trying to take a hold when Marabella starts wailing loudly before being joined by Eziah’s cries.

“It’s just the postpartum and you are not shifting ” A growl cuts her off and she steps back hitting the wall before I realize

it came from me, shocking myself for a second and my baby's cries reach my ears. I force myself out of it heading for the stairs to try to settle them.

Marge on my heels but I pay her no mind as I rush to my babies. "Luna, let me, your mates are almost here" Marge says, stunning me.

"What? You called them home?" I ask spinning on my heel towards her just as the front door smashes against the wall downstairs. I look over the balcony, their scent wafting to me and a growl escapes me of pure rage at seeing them acting like I was some kind of monster that would hurt my own children.

"How could you?" I ask her, feeling betrayed.

"Luna, I meant no disrespect. Alpha just wanted to ensure"

"Ensure what?" I snap at her when Ezra appears on the stairs behind her with Mateo. I look at him. My blood was boiling with betrayal and rage.

"Outside, now Kat" Ezra commands his aura washing over me but it only angers me that he would try to get me to submit to him.

"Nice try Ezra, I aint f\*cking Mateo. I am not your little bitch on some f\*cking strings, how dare you try command me" I spit at him. Mateo growls at my words and I turn to head for the stairs intending on ignoring them.

"You're not going up there, not while you are like this" Ezra says moving so quickly it was a blur.

Mateo darts past me heading to the room as I turn my glare on Ezra and shove him off. Marge had taken off no doubt because she was told to, but I was past angry. I was f\*cking livid they would all go behind my back and plot against me.

"Come on, let's go outside" Ezra says, reaching for me again.

"Don't touch me, you have all been working behind my back like I am a danger to my own children, I would never hurt them, how could you think such a thing?"

“No one said you would Kat, it’s just a precaution” Ezra tells me, but I could feel the darkness writhing through me, taste the venom filling my mouth leaving a toxic taste as my gums tingled and my canines elongated. My claws slipping from my fingertips as I tried to fight against shifting.

“Kat?” Ezra says his voice setting something off in my brain like an electrical current rippling right through every nerve ending and engulfing me in flames of anger till I could no longer see my mate, instead only see a man trying to hurt me, and destroy me. I lunged at him. Both of us smashed over the balcony toward the floor. Ezra growls before gripping me and jerking me to his chest before he pivots in the air and I land on top of him, knocking the air from his lungs and mine. He groans and I roll off him trying to catch my breath but it was like the air had been sucked out of my lungs as the shift makes me tremble, my body contorting, twisting and breaking. As I fight against the urge to shift.

I try to get to my hands and knees only to be flatten face down on the floor by Ezra’s body. “Calm down Kitty” comes Maddox’s voice, sending a shiver down my spine and he thrums, the sound making Ezra’s chest vibrate against my back. The frantic footsteps above us make me turn my head and look up and I spot Mateo on the top step. I blink trying to make sense of what was going on before my anger slams back into me and I toss Maddox off with such force he hits the stairs.

My anger forces the shift and I see black fur in my periphery before I run through the door, not seeing it closed. Splinters of wood smashing me and not a moment before my feet hit the gravel. I feel teeth wrap around my throat and weight on my back forcing me to the ground. Black fur catching in my line of vision. Maddox teeth embedded in my neck but not hard enough to break the skin, just firm and pressing letting me know he can take me down from the position we are in.

I squirm but my anger is already receding, having completed the shift, the moon shining down on my fur and I feel the heat of my anger start to dissipate as my energy starts recharging, harnessing the moon and its calming effects and I fall to my

side lying there. I feel Maddox's grip loosen before he starts licking my neck and nudging me with his nose.

I let out a breath before he drops next to me resting his head on my neck. His warm body calms me when I hear movement behind us making my ears twitch and Maddox looks toward the house before resting his head back on my neck. I see grey fur as Ares comes over to us, flopping down on the dirt next to both of us, he licks my cheek and Maddox's before tugging on my ear.

"All better now kitty" Maddox hums through the bond.

"The babies?" I ask them and Ares answers.

"Marge has them, she is in the nursery with them" He answers and I nod, closing my eyes letting the moon work its magic, the rest we could figure out and argue about later when I wasn't so volatile and at risk of biting one of them.

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## Andrei POV

We were going to arrive home later than expected after an accident on the highway left us stranded on the side of the road for hours while they cleared the road. We had been stuck here for ages already and my annoyance was growing. Hearing my phone ringing in the console. I reach over and retrieve it from the glove compartment before the noise could wake Sage who had fallen asleep with her head pressing against the window. I quickly answer the phone not bothering to check the caller ID and am surprised when my father's voice echoes to me from the crappy cell service out here.

"Hey Son" he says.

"Yeah what's up Derrick?" I ask him as traffic starts creeping past the crash site. I prop the phone on my ear as I steer around the barricades the police had set up. Looks like a tree had fallen across the highway and crushed a car beneath it.

"Kat had a breakdown, I was wondering if I could come over in a few days' time instead of tomorrow.

Just worried about leaving her" He tells me.

"What sort of meltdown, is she ok? I am still not far from her border. I can spin around if needed" I tell him, worry coursing through me for my sister. I knew she was struggling with everything and not shifting wouldn't have been helping but I didn't think it was extreme enough for her to break down.

"No, she is fine. Maddox and Ares got to her. She found out we had been monitoring her"

"Monitoring her? What for?" I ask. No one had told me they were keeping a closer eye on her.

"We didn't want to worry you since you have Sage to look after, but she has been exhibiting strange behaviors, I think she will be fine now though. She finally shifted but I want to stick around to make sure before heading over to your Pack, do you think you can manage for a few more days?" He asks.

“Yes of course I can, ring me tomorrow and let me know how she is please, Kat hardly tells me anything these days” I tell him.

“Of course son, I will see in a few days. Love you son”

“Ok talk soon” I tell him, hanging up. I toss the phone back in the glove compartment and Sage shifts in her sleep before shivering. I turn the heat up before reaching over the back seat to retrieve my jacket. I toss it over her arms to warm her before turning onto the twisting road that leads towards the mountain and our Pack. What should have been a quick drive home turned into hours of being stuck on the side of the road and my ass was killing from sitting on this leather seat for so long. Cracking the window slightly I dig through my pocket trying to find my smokes. Grabbing them out, I light one.

The moon was now high in the sky, not even the mountain could hide it from view. Fluorescent eyes in the trees was the first giveaway as we drew closer to the pack, the border patrollers following the car through the windy path running alongside us within the trees.

Going over the cattle grid I let out a breath seeing the pack houses come into view. We hid deep within the trees here at the base of the mountain. Our small town was branching around the mountain base, though it was a lot larger before the attack and we were slowly building it back up, but for the most part we were more focused on the security side. We could manage without the other stuff. All of us were used to living off the land having been rogues before an official pack and we all knew how to survive the wild, and sometimes it felt more homely living that way. Pulling up out the front of the packhouse. I see a few lights on in the surrounding houses. A few people walked around and chatted amongst themselves.

This place had grown lonely lately, we never realized what a big part the woman in the pack played, they were the ones that looked after all activities that brought us together as a pack, the luncheons and the pack parties, little things we didn't pay attention too and now we all just sat around mostly bored or

working ourselves to exhaustion so we didn't have to think of those we lost and the lifestyle we had grown accustomed to before it was taken away.

Opening the car door I climbed out to see Zane hop up off the grass, Casen beside him as they walked over to me. "Alpha" Zane said and Casen nodded to me. Casen looks through my window toward Sage sleeping and smirks before spotting me watching him and straightens up. Zane elbows him in the ribs making him grunt from the impact.

"What? The only thing to look at around here is your ugly mugs, I was only looking"

"Eyes off Casen you bloody horn dog" Zane says rolling his eyes. Casen shrugs not a care in the world and I could tell he has been drinking but I wasn't going to ruin his night even if he is underage, there wasn't

much to do out here and the other members would keep an eye on him and pull him up if he became too rowdy .

"Need something for my spank bank, picturing your face isn't working anymore" Casen says, nudging Zane back.

"Keep Sage from your filthy thoughts please" I growled at him.

"No promises Alpha" Casen taunts and I shake my head at him. Little shit was asking for a beat down.

"So why are you both over here, what is wrong?"

"We caught another rogue, got some information out of him" Zane tells me and I look toward the packhouse praying the rogue isn't in the basement right now.

"Tied to a chair at my place, didn't know whether or not to bring him to your torture chamber" Zane tells me answering my thoughts. I scrub a hand down my face trying to decide what the best thing to do is.

"What information did you get?"

"Not much really, just they sent him out to scout for food. Found out there was 140 in their camp mostly women and children, another camp not far from theirs is full of a band of

rogues up to no good. He claims his camp had nothing to do with the slaughter of our pack but I can't be sure"

"Just let me get Sage to bed, and bring him to the basement. Keep this one quiet this time, you wake her and I will skin your ass next time " I tell him.

"Yes Alpha, I will mindlink you when it is done" Zane says, walking off toward his place across from the packhouse.

"F\*ck! " I whisper under my breath before walking around to the other side of my car.

"You will ruin everything, are you trying to make her hate us?" Donnie snaps at me.

"No, but I need to protect our pack"

"Find another way, this is not the way Andrei" Donnie growls retreating to the back of my mind.

Stupid wolf, he was all for it before she came along and now he pretends he doesn't like hearing them begging for mercy.

I carefully open the door and grip her shoulder before she tumbles out. The movement wakes her and she yawns looking around while I unclip her seat belt.

"Finally we are home" She yawns and I like that she called it home. She climbs out of the car and walks over leaning against the concrete wall waiting for me to open the door. I place my hand on the panel hearing the locks groan before opening it. Sage wastes no time heading straight for the room while I switch the alarms off so they don't go off when Zane comes in later before following after her. When I walked into the room she hadn't even bothered changing, just flopped face down on the mattress.

"She is more tired than usual, " Donnie mutters to me.

"Pack training and leaving the house obviously a bit much on her considering she doesn't usually go anywhere" I tell him before walking over and tugging her shoes off her feet, she tries kicking me away and crawls up the bed before jamming her face in my pillow. I leave her to go shower but



when I come out I find her only wearing her shirt and panties, having kicked off the rest of her clothes.

And now she is sprawled out like a starfish on her stomach, one of her legs hanging over the side of the bed.

“She is a bed hog,” Donnie announces as I walk into the closet to retrieve some shorts. I slip them on deciding to get some sleep before Zane wakes me at some ungodly hour when he brings the rogue in.

“Where are we supposed to lay at her feet like a pet?” Donnie asks, I chuckle at his words, how could someone so small take up so much space? I slide in my side trying to steal my pillow that she stole before reaching over and grabbing hers.

Gently pushing her over to her side before giving up and deciding to suck it up.

“We aren’t built for smaller spaces” Donnie mutters to me. I roll my eyes at him before trying to roll her over, I eventually get her to roll on her side.

“Think she will freak out if I spoon her?” I ask Donnie but she was pretty much dead to the world, but she was also only wearing panties and a shirt, usually she slept with more clothes on.

“Only one way to find out” Donnie tells me, I roll into her but she rolls at the same time to face me before chucking her leg over my waist and burying her face against my chest. I tuck her closer, liking this position better before closing my eyes. I slept well until I heard the door downstairs close before hearing Zane’s voice through the mindlink.

“Tied and gagged, ready for you Alpha” and I realized he was leaving, not coming in. I tossed the blanket back to get up but Sage had moved and was half laying on top of me. I try to slide out from under her when she grabs the waistband of my pants.

“Don’t go” She mutters and I panic, freezing in place thinking maybe she heard Zane bring the rogue in. I lay back down deciding to ask Casen to train with her in the morning and I will deal with the rogue then.

If I get up now there is a chance she may wake up and come looking for me.

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## Sage POV

I slept like the dead, I felt exhausted for some reason but I was too lazy to move and comfortably snuggled against the warmth of my mate. Andrei moves slightly the movement making me roll and I realize I was actually laying on him when I slide off hitting the mattress. His arms wrap around me before I find myself facing him. He was asleep still, he moved, grabbing my bare thigh and lifting it over his waist. I try to remember coming home but don't remember getting out of my clothes. I lift the blanket relief flooding me when I see I have my shirt still on and I can feel I have panties on so I wasn't completely n\*ked. Lifting my head back up Andrei's eyes were open, scaring the living daylights out of me, not expecting him to be awake. My heart beat frantically before settling.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you" I tell him.

"You took them off, I didn't undress you" Andrei says, pressing his face into my neck and pulling me closer. I find that his presence and his closeness doesn't bother me so much and I now welcome his touch. I ran my fingers through his hair and I could feel him breathing against the hollow of my neck, his stubble tickling the skin on my chest.

"That feels nice " He murmurs as my nails rake across his head. "Hmm" I hum back at him, also enjoying touching him when he suddenly rolls onto his back away from me. My leg on his waist moves up to his stomach, his hand on my knee holding it there.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, come here" He says using his arm I was resting my head on to pull me closer. I rest my cheek on his chest, his hand on my knee tightening when I go to move it before deciding to leave it there.

"You should go back to sleep, it is 4 am." Andrei says, looking over at the alarm clock on the bedside table.

"I'm not tired" I tell him and he nods before speaking.

“Yes, you have been asleep since before 7p.m., that is probably why. Just try to go back to sleep”

“What time is pack training?”

“8 a.m. today, I was thinking of letting you train with Casen today”

“You won’t be there?” I ask him.

“Zane will be, my men won’t hurt you, Sage. I have told you this” He says with a sigh.

“I know, I just don’t know them” I tell him. I run my fingers through his chest hair following the lines over his pec and stomach.

“You will in time, they won’t hurt you” He says and I move my leg when he grips my knee pulling my leg up higher and stopping my travelling hand from going lower. I like the feel of his skin under my fingertips. The tips of my fingers tingling, my leg over him tingling from the bond.

“Sage” He growls softly like he was going to say something else but stops himself.

“What?”

“Nothing, it’s fine, ” he says, letting go of my leg and catching my hand. He lifts my hand and I watch as he kisses my fingers before letting go. I move and he grabs my leg, stopping it sliding down lower as he rolls on his side again.

“Gosh you move a lot” I tell him now trying to get comfortable again.

“ Says the woman who takes up the entire bed and steals my pillow while climbing on top of me in her sleep” He says. My face heats at his words, I knew I

sought out his scent in my sleep but hearing him say it and knowing he realized it embarrassed me.

“Sorry” I mutter my cheeks flaming.

“I don’t mind, but your closeness can be difficult which is why I moved Sage ” He answers making me focus on the feeling through the bond. Arousal washing into me and my heart skips a beat knowing what he meant and why he kept moving my leg higher, I went to pull away.

“Don’t be scared, Sage, I am your mate. My body will react to yours, doesn’t mean I will do anything about it”

“but I am making you uncomfortable”

“Excited, yes, uncomfortable?” He shrugs tugging me closer.

“I like cuddling you, I just don’t want you to freak out when my body reacts to you” He says. I relax against him and he tilts my chin so I have to look at him.

“I will never do anything to make you feel uncomfortable Sage you have my word on that” He says before brushing his nose across my cheek.

I let out a breath and nod. I knew he wouldn’t hurt me, not intentionally anyway. His nose brushes mine and I suddenly wanted the distance closed. Wanted to feel his lips against mine, yet he didn’t move closer and I knew it was up to me to do anything because I knew he wouldn’t, out of fear of scaring me.

Sometimes I hated that I feared everything including my own damn shadow. But it was hard to enjoy skin contact when the only contact you experienced was brutal. I was comfortable around Andrei, but that didn’t make the memories stop but the bond pulled me one way while my brain pulled me the other like a tug of war, one that was exhausting. It made me wonder if he would get annoyed with me and toss me aside for someone better. Someone he could touch and hold without fear of breaking them, it must be frustrating having me for a mate and probably disappointing.

I reach up and run my fingers through his hair and his eyes closed a deep rumbling purr vibrating through his chest making me chuckle at the noise he is making.

“Something funny?” He asks, his eyes opening with a hint of a smile on his lips.

“You’re purring like a cat”

“I don’t purr, I growl”

“Call it what you want but it’s definitely a purr” I tell him. He laughs softly, finally gracing me with his beautiful smile, my eyes darting to his lips and I move my hand down to his cheek running my thumb across them. His purring stops and I find him watching me again.

“Is there something you want?” He asks and I could feel his amusement through the bond like he thought I was doing something funny. I suppose my actions would be considered odd with how hot and cold I was constantly. My face heats but I nod, too embarrassed to ask when he sits up slightly and moves his face closer, his lips nearly brushing mine. My heart beats erratically in my chest and I feel him smile against my lips as they brush them.

“Is this what you want?” He asks, his hand slipping into my hair and his nose brushing mine gently, I nod.

My entire body heats up when he presses his lips to mine. His lips mould around mine before I feel his tongue caress my bottom lip, his hand moving to the side of my face before I feel his thumb press gently on my chin while also tilting my face upwards and his tongue slips into my mouth.

Andrei groans his tongue playing with mine and I tug him closer not wanting the kiss to end, loving the taste of him on my tongue, and I think I found my new favourite thing, kissing him. I feel myself become light headed and I feel like I am falling despite laying down.

All too soon he pulls away with a chuckle. “Breathe Sage before you pass out” He chuckles and I realize the entire time I was holding my breath, which explains the light headed feeling.

He presses his forehead to mine.

“What am I gonna do with you?” He chuckles to himself.

“You could always mark me” I whisper and his laughing stops before he pulls away looking down at me. I chew my lips nervously shocked at what left my lips, but I found I meant the

words I spoke. I did want to be his mate, but would he want a broken one?

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Andrei goes to say something, when I hear a bang noise making not only me jump but Andrei.

“You heard that right?” I ask, making sure I wasn’t hearing things at the ass crack of dawn.

“Yeah must be someone needing to speak to me, wait here” He says climbing off the bed. Yet why wouldn’t they mindlink him, why bang on the door instead. I sit up watching him leave when the banging gets worse before I hear a man’s muffled voice yelling for help. I jump out of bed my heart pounding so loudly I could hear it, feel it in every pulse point.

“Stay in the room, ” Andrei says, closing the door, but I move anyway following him out.

“Are we under attack?” I ask him, suddenly petrified. Yet looking back in the room and out the windows I could see nothing, just the first glimmers of the sky changing to welcome the new day arriving.

“Go back to bed, I will be back in a minute” Andrei says but I clutch his arm not wanting to go without him when I hear another thump and Andrei growls frighteningly.

“That sounded like it was coming from inside” I whisper before stepping closer to the stairs, only for Andrei to pull me back, his behaviour seeming odd, if we were under attack why hadn’t his alarms gone off?

“Go back to the room Sage” Andrei says, pushing me toward it but I shake my head instead following him down the stairs when the man’s voice becomes louder and louder and I realize the noise was indeed coming from inside. I could barely make it out but it was coming from inside when I heard the bang again, my eyes darted to the basement door. My stomach sinks, and Andrei freezes on the top step.

“Have you got someone down there?” I ask him, though I knew the answer already by the man thumping on the steel door.

“Go back to the room” Andrei says walking down the steps and turning toward the basement door. I shake my head, refusing to.

“No, what are you going to do?” I ask him, rushing down the steps after him.

“What I have to do, Sage. Now go back to the room?”

“You can’t kill him. Andrei” I tell him. Andrei growls before turning on his heel and heading back toward the stairs but I run down them before he could reach them knowing he was intending on dragging me back to the room kicking and screaming. Feeling his annoyance through the bond.

“Sage!” Andrei snaps, and my pulse quickens at the anger in his voice and Sierra lurches forward with me.

“Sage just listen to him before you make him mad” “He won’t hurt us” I tell her ignoring her warning.

“You don’t know that” she retorts. Andrei angry was frightening and I nearly reconsidered running to the room as he stalked toward me, making me step back and suck in a sharp breath. My heart felt like it was doing backflips and my stomach dropped somewhere cold within me. I don’t understand why I was suddenly standing here and arguing with him but the bond was telling me not to back down from him, though I was pretty sure I was about to wet my pants the closer he got when he stopped letting out a breath.

“He is just rogue Sage, just go back to the room so I can deal with it”

“I am a rogue Andrei” I tell him my voice comes off stronger than I felt.

“It’s not the same thing”

“It is, you were a rogue once and shouldn’t you feel compassion for them not a need to hurt them” I ask him. The



banging starts again, my eyes darting to the basement door nervously before he has a chance to answer, I dart past him to head for the door when Andrei grabs me around the waist, making me shriek when my feet leave the ground. Andrei starts walking towards the stairs dragging me with him.

“No, you can’t keep hurting them, why do you keep hurting them” I scream at him before biting his arm trying to make him let go. He growls but doesn’t let go when the front door is suddenly swung open and Zane runs in. He looks to us on the stairs while I struggle to get out of Andrei’s grip.

“Alpha, what are”

“DEAL WITH HIM WHILE I DEAL WITH HER”

Andrei yells at him, cutting him off. Zane hesitates before I watch him head toward the basement door.

“Zane stop, don’t hurt him” I scream to him and he hesitates before Andrei growls at him and he yanks the door open. The frantic man barges past him heading for the open door trying to escape and I hoped Zane would just let him go when he got up

chasing after the man who was n\*ked.

“No, Zane please” I beg Zane as Andrei gets to the top step. The man looked petrified and wasn’t much older than us, how could they just want to kill him? He just wanted to escape, he wasn’t trying to do anything wrong. I clutch the bannister, one of my fingernails tearing off before I urge Sierra to shift just as Zane tackles him. They hit the ground and struggle trying to get the upper hand over each other. I feel the shift start to take over letting me slip out of Andrei’s arms. He growls being forced to let go and I drop to the ground at his feet before feeling Sierra recede again. I try to get to my feet just as the man escapes Zane and makes a dash for the open door but Andrei moves at blinding speed and by the time I get to my feet Andrei was in front of him.

“No Andrei just” I look up just in time to see Andrei snap his neck, my scream cutting off as I watch him let the man go.

The man's body falls to the ground at his feet just as Zane pulls himself up upright.

"Why? you didn't have to do that" I tell him tears burning my eyes as I rush toward the man. He was dead, his head twisted at an awkward angle, his frightened eyes peering up at me.

"You didn't have to do that, how could you?" I sob, he was a monster. This was someone's son, someone's family and he snuffed his life out like it meant nothing at all.

Andrei grips my arm pulling me to my feet, while I try to shove him away.

"It had to be done Sage, he is a rogue he would have went back to his camp and had them attack us"

"You don't know that" I tell him, anger seeping into my voice.

"I do know that-" He says as Zane approaches us.

"Alpha, I am sorry, I thought I tied him down well enough"

"You f\*cking thought wrong didn't you?" Andrei bellows at him and Zane flinches and so do I.

"Get out and take him with you" Andrei says, his grip unwavering on my arm as he starts walking toward the stairs.

Sierra was howling in my head at what we just witnessed and I can't believe I was going to let him mark me. Can't believe I thought I could be safe with him when he was clearly a monster.

"Let me go," I tell him, shaking my arm trying to get out of his grip.

"Sage enough, he is nobody" Andrei snarls at me. "Then so am I" I snap back at him.

"No, you are my mate, you should be on my side here, not some rogue's, mine!"

"He was trying to leave, he wasn't attacking anybody Andrei, why can't you see that?" I yell at him.

"He is a rogue, they want our pack, why can't you see that?" He asks.

“No, they just want a chance, but you’re right, I do see now, I see you’re a f\*cking monster” I scream at him, my voice breaking and becoming raspy from yelling at him and leaving me out of breath. He growls yanking me toward him and I whimper at his tight grip, his claws sinking into my arm when he lets go suddenly and I feel guilt smash into me from the bond.

He looks at my arm stepping toward me but I pull away from him and he hangs his head. My heart is pumping so hard I was sure at any second I was going to have a heart attack with the adrenaline coursing through my veins. Andrei turns on his heel walking back down the steps heading for the door and grabbing it, as Zane goes to close it behind him leaving me standing on the stairs. The door slams and my legs give way from under me. Anger and sadness crushed me at how cold and cruel he could be, the image of the man’s vacant eyes forever burned in my memories.

“Now what do we do?” Sierra asks me.

“I don’t know,” I tell her.

“His dad will be here today, maybe we ask him. He seems nice, maybe he can help us” Sierra suggests.

Next chapter