

The Alpha's Guardian Chapter 26

I'm up early as per usual, sitting at my spot at the kitchen counter with my gear on and ready to go at a moment's notice. Wade has been up and sitting in his office waiting for Alpha Liam to arrive. I nervously chew on my nails, waiting for the knock on the front door. I haven't seen Liam since I was 18 years old. He was my very first mission.

The only thing that rivals his fighting abilities is his ego. Liam is known throughout the werewolf community for being the fiercest warrior on the continent. His pack is strictly trained, eats only certain foods, and runs 50k daily after their shifts. He is frightening and s3xy and the only man I have ever fallen in love with. Even if he wasn't my fated other half. No Guardian bond break has hurt as much as ours did.

"Ali!" Wade says, waving his hands in front of my face.

"Sorry. What?" I ask, and he frowns at me.

"You seem worried," Wade says as he leans on the counter across from me.

"No. Just thinking about things." I smile half-heartedly and he eyes me up skeptically.

"Can I ask you a favor?" he asks, dropping his head and rubbing the back of his neck.

"Sure..."

"When I am mentally tired. I don't want to burden you. It's a part of your job. I get that but- It's easier for me if you just touch me, rest your hand on my shoulder, my arm, my hand. Anything."

I sit back and shake my head, opening my mouth to say no, but he stops me by pressing his fingers to my lips.

"I know it's not what you are used to. But you can pretend it's the healing hand when you are around everyone else. No one will know."

"You're serious?" I ask him, looking right into his eyes.

"Please?" he pleads.

I can see it, his desire to hold on to whatever manliness he thinks he loses by having me here protecting him. And I sigh heavily. If it helps ease his mind and keep his emotions in his own head, then it's worth a shot. I would rather not feel his feelings and his desire for me every night when he is too tired to maintain the barrier. I'm confusing it for my own desire, and I'm not sure I can handle that anymore.

“Fine.” I agree.

He pushes off the counter with a nod.

“Liam is going to be here in 10 minutes. He wants to meet at the training pitch. We should head out if we want to be there waiting,”

I stand up, reaching for an apple like I always do, and Wade snatches the last one right before I can grab it. I scowl at him while he laughs low and his eyes shine with mischief. My heart stutters for a moment

“If you can catch me, you can have it.” He says, running for the door. This as*shit knows I don’t have the same speed as an alpha wolf. But what he seems to forget is that the tree line leads straight to the pitch and no one can outrun me when I can fly between the trees.

I sprint out the back door and throw myself into the trees. I leap from branch to branch, running and ducking as I move like a nimble sprite through the air. Wade looks up at the tree line and smirks as he pushes himself harder. I push harder than I was before and suddenly I smell it. Amber and pine with a hint of tinniness. Blood. I stop immediately and survey the forest ground below me. Seeing nothing, I draw my blade.

I know something is down along the forest floor and I jump down, landing lightly on my feet. I spin my blade around me as I work my eyes through the shadows of the trees, looking for the source of the smell. A shiny brown wolf appears before me and sits. It tilts its head and whimpers. This is a pack wolf, I can tell by the healthy sheen of its coat. But it’s not from this pack.

-Alpha. Visitor in the forest. I’ll catch up- I link Wade.

A snap behind me has me spin just in time to avoid a large tan wolf with a black muzzle. I sigh in relief as it lands on the ground and turns to face me. It morphs into a gorgeous man with Ice-blue eyes and sandy hair. He grins as he storms over to me, embracing me in a massive hug. We stumble backward into a tree trunk, laughing.

“Liam!” I breathe.

He places one hand on the tree behind me and lifts his other to stroke my cheek. Our gazes lock and my breath hitches. Liam has always been someone who takes what he wants and lays claim to what is his. He had been that way with me once. Though, I refused him because of wanting to find my mate.

“My Ali.” he smiles and leans in, placing his forehead against mine. “God, I’ve missed you”

A low growl emanates through the trees as Wade emerges from the shadows, looking massive and furious. I breathe in sharply as I take him in. His deep green henley has its sleeves rolled up, revealing bulging forearms. His jeans hug him just right in every way.

The rising sun shines through, landing right on top of his head, casting a glow that makes him look like an angel. Was he dressed like this all morning? because Damn, it's suddenly feeling like a tiny forest.

"Why does your pack member smell like blood?" I ask Liam.

"You always did have the best nose, Babe." He says and Wade tenses at my side.

"Babe?" he whispers, looking down at me.

"He calls every woman Babe" I shrug.

"This is Ada," Liam states, pointing to the wolf. She nods at us. But she doesn't change form. "We had a run-in with some rogues on your pack borders. They just hang out around the line, it seems?"

"Yes, when they aren't attacking us," Wade says.

"Well, I'm Liam." He says, stepping forward and shaking hands with Wade.

"Wade. And it appears you are familiar with my guardian, Ali."

Liam smiles wide again, his perfect teeth on full display.

"Oh yeah, I'm familiar," he answers suggestively. "Well, shall we head to training, then? Once I see them spar, I can get an idea of who is worth training and how long it will take for them to be any good."

"Sounds good," I chime in before Wade has the chance.

I reach out and touch Wade's hand momentarily. He visibly relaxes and glances at me, offering a reserved smile, and my heart falls. I don't need to be in his head to know he is hurting somehow. I use my healing hand to take his pains and that's when his leg pain becomes mine again. He had been controlling his pain much better since detoxing and I had forgotten that it still causes him such grief.

Wade jerks his hand away and lengthens his stride, putting distance between us. He has never fought me on sharing this pain before. And after taking even just a tiny portion, I can tell that his run had caused it to flare up. He catches up quickly to Liam and both men walk side by side, looking tense and large. Wade works to hide his limp, and it hits me. He doesn't want to seem weak in front of Liam.

Wade is jealous.

"Your Ali?" He says, raising an angered brow and tossing a pair of shorts at Liam, who I didn't even realize was stark n*ked. I peek at him as he steps back to pull on his shorts,

and he sends me a lustful smirk. I immediately walk over and stand next to Wade, where I belong.

The Alpha's Guardian Chapter 27

"Ali!" Liam calls to me from the training arena. "Come and spar with me!"

I shake my head no as I stand near Wade, who talks with a few of the guest warriors. Liam doesn't like my answer. He jogs over and reaches for my hand, which I move behind my back.

"Ah, come on, babe. Let's show everyone how good of a fighter you have become."

Liam places his hands on my shoulders and pulls me towards him. Reaching across, I grab his right wrist, spin underneath, and put Liam in a submissive position. He chuckles at me and reaches out, swiping my leg, placing himself between my thighs. He reaches up for my arms, trying to pin them.

I place my foot on his leg, duck under his arm, and kick with all my might, sliding out from under him. Shifting my weight, I roll to the side and pop back up on my feet. I step next to Wade again. I place my hands behind my back, at attention. Liam chuckles loudly and stands. He saunters over, smirking at me like I'm some prize in his little game.

"If you won't spar with me, then I shall try your Alpha. I know you'll just step in. I always get what I want Babe. you know that." he whispers in my ear, his hot breath tickling my neck.

I turn my gaze to him, our noses touching. To me, this isn't sensual. Right now I'm pissed off he is trying to play a game when I am here working. I take what I do seriously. I have changed since he knew me.

"I am not the same person you knew 7 years ago. Do not trifle with me, Liam. You are not mine to protect anymore. I will hurt you if I have to."

"I don't think you could hurt me if you tried, plus you love me and you know it."

I can feel my cheeks flush red and I hate that he still has this hold on me. Liam and I learned a lot from one another. I spent 6 months with him. All day, every day near him. He was my first bond, and I swear a part of me stayed with him when we broke the bond all those years ago.

I'm bowled over by the weight of jealousy and anger that comes through the bond with Wade. Turning, I look over my shoulder and see he is no longer talking to the warriors. They are all watching Liam and I. Fuck. When did this turn into entertainment for

everyone else? I know they can hear everything happening. In fact, I'm damn sure that Liam is banking on everyone listening in.

"Alpha Wade is a formidable fighter. I'm sure he is more than capable of protecting himself against you. Though, since protecting you I have picked up new trades along the way."

"Oh, like what?" Liam says, bringing his head to my neck to nuzzle it. I push him off and he laughs.

"You are here to train the pack, Liam. Not play with me like I'm some fun toy. Go do what you came to do." Anger flashes in his eyes.

"I will not have an omega tell me what to do, Ali." He says lowly. "Unless it's in the bedroom."

I shrug at him and his insult. When I was with him, such words would break me down, destroy me. I've since learned to love who I am. Omega and all, it is no longer an insult to me but to the people I represent. A flash of movement catches my eyes. Before I can comprehend what is happening, Wade is standing between Liam and me.

"Watch what you say, Alpha Liam," he says sternly.

Liam chuckles and turns to walk away, but fakes out, whipping back around and tackling Wade. The men roll around in the dust, grunting trying to gain the upper hand. After a moment, Liam emerges on top and pummels down on Wade. Each strike to his ribs feels like a ton of steel ramming me in my chest. I can feel the bruises forming on me as Wade's eyes flash in worry and he turns to look at me with sad eyes.

-Focus. Liam has his left leg positioned wrong. Use it-

Wade shifts under Liam and grabs hold of his leg, flipping him over and rolling on top. He lands a few blows before Liam throws him with his legs over his head. Wade rolls out of it and lands with one knee up and rises. He shifts into his massive wolf and growls.

"Finally, a real fvcking fight." Liam shifts into his wolf and prepares for an attack.

Wade leaps towards Liam, who jumps to the side. They circle each other, looking for an opening, both lunging and missing. Liam takes the upper hand by leaping on Wade. Liam claws at him as Wade twists and gets his teeth in Liam's hind leg, tossing him to the side. I can feel the claws marks slicing through my skin as they transfer. Blood soaks my tank top and drips down the back of my tactical vest.

Wade tosses me a worried look, and I nod at him. The wounds hurt like hell, but they aren't terribly deep. Liam is at least pulling his punches and swipes. Liam takes advantage of Wade's glance and tackles him to the ground. They bite and claw at each other angrily,

never causing severe damage. Until Liam forces Wade onto his hind legs and then tosses the full weight of his enormous body onto it.

A pop erupts, followed by another, and it knocks the wind out of me. Pain floods through my thigh as I get the full weight of his fresh injury. Turning to the side, I vomit as I see the strange bump in my leg. I hear nothing, see nothing as I sweat feverishly. I try to separate myself from the pain, to breathe through it, but who am I kidding.

As a kid, I heard that breaking your femur is the most painful thing that can happen, more painful than giving birth. Now, clearly, I have never given birth. But I have been severely injured and on the brink of death. Nothing comes close to touching this pain.

“You ok?” the warrior standing next to me ask.

I spit the bile out of my mouth and nod. I glance over and she notices my legs, her eyes bulging.

“Woah sh!t!” She screeches. “How the hell did that happen?”

Within a moment Wade is next to me, sliding his arm around my back and providing me with support. I breathe in deeply, doing my best to ease the pain.

“What the hell is wrong with her?” Liam asks. Looking concerned.

“I told you I had new moves,” I say, trying to sound humorous.

“What the hell does that mean?”

Wade leans down to pick me up, and I put my hand on his chest.

“No, no, just help me walk,” I say firmly.

“Ali, your leg is broken.” Wade scoffs.

“Will someone explain what the fvck is going on? How the hell did you break your leg standing there?”

“It’s the Guardian bond,” Wade says, annoyed. “You injure me, she gets the wound.”

“What?!” Liam sounds irate. “Why the fvck wouldn’t you tell me that?”

“I assumed you knew, you know since you were her first.”

I offer Liam the only smile I could muster.

“Like I said, new tricks,” I say.

“Let me at least take you to the healer,” Liam says, stepping forward.

“I’ve got it. Please continue to train.” Wade says.

“I’m coming over for dinner to talk to you,” Liam says, stepping into me and reaching out to touch my face. Wade leans down and scoops me up.

“If she is up for visitors, I’ll send Kane to fetch you so you can have dinner with us.”

-Don’t fight me on this. I am carrying you and that’s final, plus the look on Liam’s face when you’re in my arms is worth you scolding me later- Wade links me.

From fierce guardian to tug-of-war toy between two alphas, my how the mighty has fallen.

The Alpha’s Guardian Chapter 28

Wade POV

Having Liam here is supposed to be a relief. Instead, I feel like I’m in high school fighting for the attention of the popular girl who only looks my way because she has to. Ali is her own person. I have no claim on her. Other than this bond that I’m realizing is making my life harder than it needs to be. My head feels like a war zone of emotions that aren’t mine vs emotions I shouldn’t even be having for someone I can’t have.

That’s what makes it even worse. Wanting to lay claim to her, to hold her close and make her mine, but knowing she can’t ever be. Unless, by some twisted fate, she turns out to be my actual mate. But until then I get to watch the man she loves relentlessly throw himself at her. To top it all off, he is the Alpha of the most prominent warrior pack. I’m just some weak lowly Alpha who needs protecting.

“Alpha” Ali calls to me softly.

I shift in the chair to look at her. She is propped up in my office so I can work and she can be near me if I need her for anything. Not sure what makes her think she can protect me in this state, but I’d be lying if I said I didn’t want her company. When she isn’t near me, I feel on edge and I miss her presence.

“Yeah?”

“Relax. Liam will train your warriors well.”

“Yeah. I’m sure he will,” I say, looking back down at the papers on my desk.

“He trained me,” she says reassuringly.

I can't help how much I hate those words. They feel like daggers in my heart, knowing he knew her first. Jealousy rages through me like an unchecked beast and I try to control it.

"I'm aware," I say through my clenched teeth. "Seems like he trained you in a lot of things."

"He trained me in combat, Alpha Wade. There is no reason to be jealous."

"It's not me. It's this stupid fvcking bond you forced on me. This isn't me. I'm not a jealous person by nature. But the way he was with you, how confident he seemed touching you. That implies that he knows you. Intimately." My words sound accusing even to my ears and I mutter, annoyed with myself.

"It's not what you think..." she starts, and I can tell she is lying.

"Ali. We share our emotions, and yes, you are great at keeping yours locked away, but I can hear your heartbeat. I don't know if you are lying to me or yourself, perhaps both. But let's stop with the pretenses."

This isn't exactly how I expected this day to go down. But if we want this bond to work for us and not against us, maybe we need to air things out. She sighs and throws her head back, exhausted.

"Ok," she says, pushing herself up higher in her seat. "Yes. Liam and I shared something special."

I scoff, trying not to let her words hit me.

"Don't be so dramatic. I don't mean s3x. I fell in love with him. He was brazen and rash and he taught me a lot. I loved him and he wanted me. I denied him because I want that with my mate."

"So you never, erm.." I clear my throat.

"Not that it's any of your business who I sleep with on my own time, but no, what we had were stolen moments. Never anything more. I have told you repeatedly that I respect the mate bond above everything else."

"Do you still..."

"Love him? I don't know. We have both changed so much. I'm not sure you can love someone the same way after so many years apart."

"What does it feel like?"

"What does what feel like?" she asks, trying to sit up further.

“To be in love,” I say.

It’d be a lie for me to say that I’ve never had feelings for someone else, but I never had a connection strong enough for me to even think that love was a possibility. Maybe it was because I was smart enough to not get attached knowing that eventually, they would find their true mate. Trudy was necessary only because I was worried that my wolf would take over.

“Well, it’s hard to explain.” She says, sounding more like someone who is uncomfortable than someone who doesn’t have the answer.

“You could try.” I prompt her. She sighs heavily and nods.

“It’s kind of like you can’t wait to see them. Just thinking about them brings a smile to your face,”

In the middle of her explanation, Kane mind links me.

-Alpha! Trouble at the training center-

-Rogues?-

-No, Alpha Liam-

I stand up abruptly, surprising Ali, who is still explaining love.

“I will be back,” I snap.

“Oh, hell no. Something is up. I’m coming.” She moves to stand up and winces in pain.

“No offense Ali, but I can’t afford to have you slow me down with your broken leg.” I make my way around the desk and she reaches out, grabbing hold of my arm. I push down the tingles that are there and look her in the eyes.

“Alpha-” she says, her eyes pleading with me.

“I won’t have you getting another injury. Lay still, I’ll be right back.” She nods reluctantly.

When I walk into the Training center, I see Liam pacing angrily. No one is training as they mill about looking for someone to direct them. I’m losing faith in this Alpha as a trainer and it’s only the first day. His eyes lock on me and he storms over.

“What the fvck is this?!” he seethes, pointing to a beat-up Mason who is getting back to his feet.

“It looks like a warrior you took it too far with.” I spit back at him, crossing over to check on Mason. His nose has a sick bend to it and is gushing blood. He holds his shirt to it with one hand and clutches his side tightly.

“He is an Omega!” Liam says angrily, pulling on Wade’s shoulder forcing him to look at him. “Omegas have no place here! I want him gone.”

“You are here to train my pack members, Alpha Liam. He is a pack member.” I say calmly.

“Oh please. Barely. We all know the only reason we keep Omegas is because they know our secret and will do whatever we tell them to do.” Liam sneers.

“Fvck you,” Mason spits blood at Liam’s feet.

Liam’s eyes grow dark and he growls menacingly, moving to Mason. I grab hold of Liam’s hand and he spins his fury at me.

“He insulted a visiting Alpha. He needs to be punished.” Liam’s eyes are completely black.

“Was the beating you gave him for just being an Omega not enough?” I ask him, trying to keep my anger in check.

“No. If he had a wolf, I’d demand it be stripped, but since he is too weak to have one, I want the next best thing. I want his life.”

“No,” I say, knowing full well that this could start a war.

Alpha Liam’s warriors could wipe out our entire pack in half a day and walk away, barely breathing hard. But I refuse to punish a kid to death for defending his own honor. I square my shoulders and stare at Alpha Liam, waiting for his retaliation.

“The fvck did you just say to me?” Liam says, standing straighter and stepping closer to me.

This is my realm. This is what I am used to. My whole life, I have defended those who couldn’t defend themselves. I lost myself when I was being poisoned, but my mind is now clear. I’m stubborn as hell and I will give my life for any of my pack members.

“Alpha Liam. You are a guest here on our pack lands. On behalf of my pack member-”

“Omega”

“PACK MEMBER. I would like to offer our sincerest apologies.” I correct him.

“I want him punished. Fvck that, I want the top omega punished.” Liam says, now pacing back and forth.

“You can punish me,” I say, knowing full well he won’t lay a hand on me. Not if he really cares for Ali. Not now that he knows my wounds are also hers. Liam’s eyes flash in a murderous rage.

“Oh, you sound so tough.” Liam mocks “You are pathetic. Hiding behind Ali like a cocky child, knowing Daddy will save him.”

Liam steps back swinging his arms in annoyance, his warriors stand at attention behind him. On closer inspection, I swear I can see a little embarrassment in his right-hand trainer, Ada’s eyes. Then he stops and points at me as if in thought.

“Do you even know why the council is protecting you? I bet you feel so empowered having the best guardian here to protect you. Do you know why they sent Ali to you? Because you need the most help. You have the weakest pack in the region. Weak packs result from weak leaders.”

Growls echo loudly throughout the training center, and I turn to see all my warriors behind me, backing me up. Their loyalty gives me the strength to keep calm. Liam looks a little taken aback by their loyalty in the matter.

“Alpha Liam. I need to know that I can trust you with my pack. You do not have to like me, but if you are incapable of training them without bias, I will find a new trainer.”

He laughs loudly. Looking back at his warriors, who are standing as still as statues, with no emotions on their faces.

“The only reason I am here is because of Ali. She called in a favor with Samuel. You are such an insignificant blip on the alpha radar that when you called several alphas, they had to be reminded who you were. Do you know how Samuel described you? The weak pansy Alpha. I don’t know how you are important, but don’t let it get to your head. You are still weak.”

“Did you really think she called him without my knowledge?” I say smirking at him. I enjoy it when people underestimate me.

The Alpha’s Guardian Chapter 29

Ali POV

“Robin,” I say, smiling as I limp into her room.

“Ali!”

Robin looks over from her bed, and her face brightens up. She still looks pale, but at least she is awake and smiling. I can feel some tension in my shoulders melt away at finally

being able to land my eyes on her. I hate that she heals like a human. That's how it is with born omegas, though. They get to know the werewolf world from the inside without ever fully experiencing it.

I was fortunate enough to have been born with a wolf. Because they ripped my wolf from me before my first change, parts of her still live inside me. Like healing abilities, speed, smell, and strength. Tearing every part of her out would have killed me since we are woven together until the wolf can be their own unit and thus the change occurs. I was strangely blessed in that way. It is uncommon to separate a child from their wolf before the wolf fully develops since it's essentially the same as a death sentence.

"How are you feeling?" I ask her, lowering myself into the seat beside her.

"Not terrible. I'm going to have an epic scar for sure," she says, looking proud.

"I'm impressed with you," I say honestly. I have seen many wolves watch in horror as their mates die in a battle. Not that they want them to die, but they panic, and freeze and they are just too late in getting there. Not Robin though, no she threw herself on top of her mate to save him.

"Grandma is NOT impressed," she says, rolling her eyes.

"No? I can't say I'm surprised by that one."

"She is mad at Isaac. She won't even let him come see me." Robin says, looking sad.

"He is your mate. His werewolf healing ability can extend to you if you are near him." I say, getting worked up.

"I know. But Grandma doesn't believe it. She said it is so rare to find your mate before you are of age." Robin plays with the fringe on her blanket before looking up at me expectantly.

"She isn't wrong. It is pretty rare." I say and Robin's face falls "But, rare and never aren't the same thing. Plus, the entire pack was poisoned for the past 2 years. It has many repercussions. It makes the animalistic side come out more. This means that it's entirely possible that Isaac was affected, and so was his wolf. But there are rules surrounding early mates."

"I figured there might be," she mumbles.

"How is mason enjoying training?" I ask her, changing the subject.

"He only went the first day," she says, looking at me strangely.

"What do you mean? That was 3 days ago."

“He said that Omega’s aren’t welcome in training.” She shrugs. “He wouldn’t even come out of the shadows to talk to me. He insisted the lights be turned off. Which makes me think something is wrong.”

I stand from my chair quickly and hobble towards the door. This boy is infuriating, he told me he wanted this. I insisted that he train. I peek my head out the door and look back at Robin. I have no idea where his room is.

“The last door on the right,” she says, smiling softly.

I move at an impressive speed for someone restricted and pound on his door. I can hear him groaning in annoyance and the heavy pad of footsteps within. This kid better have a damn good excuse.

“What?” he shouts.

“Mason,” I say sternly. There’s a silence and then he sighs.

“Yes?” but there is no move to open the door.

“Open this door or I will break it down.” I threaten.

The door cracks open, revealing only a sliver of his face through the darkness inside. The area surrounding his eyes is a sickening shade of brown and blue that morphs into a red mark. Fury ignites in me, and I force the door open and turn on the light. Next to his bed are thawed-out ice packs, bottles of pain medication, and used discarded bandages.

“What is this?” I say, trying to control my emotions.

“Rough day at training?” Mason says, trying to make light of the entire ordeal.

“Oh, and why is that?”

“Said the wrong thing to the wrong person?” he says, offering me a smile. His swollen split lips stretch across his teeth and he slightly winces in pain.

“Mason,” I say I’m no longer controlling my rage.

What monster does this to a 16-year-old boy? There is movement in the hall behind me and I know it’s Wade. I’m not even trying to keep my mental barrier up because all I can focus on is the thought of murdering the as*shole who hurt Mason.

“Ali, what’s wrong?” Wade asks when he reaches my side. I look over at him as he looks at Mason, and I can tell he is not shocked. It hits me that he knew. He knew that this was how training was going and said nothing. The guilt through our bond says more than enough.

“You knew?” I see the turning my anger to him.

“Yes,” he says calmly.

“And you didn’t think to tell me?” I yell.

“I thought to tell you but chose not to,” he says

“What?”

“This is a pack issue. You have your orders and your place here. You don’t need to interfere in our affairs.” Wade says, void of emotion. He then turns and walks back down the hall. I leave Mason and totter my way after him, fuming in anger.

“Alpha!” I call to him. He ignores me and continues to walk out the front door and towards the forest line. I know he is weary and runs down with Liam being here. Every time we go to the training center or when Liam is in the room, he makes advances on me. Wade pretends to not notice. I can only assume my admitting to once-loving Liam is putting a strain on him.

I reach out when I close in on him and touch his arm. The sparks almost shock me at how strong they are. Wade turns to face me, his eyes closed. He is exhausted and run down. I know he has been working tirelessly through the night trying to get any answers he can for why this is all happening to him. He wants to know why the committee has decided he is so important. To be honest, I’d love to know their reasoning too.

“Ali,” he whispers exasperated.

Slowly his eyes flutter open and he looks at me. For the first time in my life, my mind goes blank. The sun shines above us and his beautiful eyes look so lost and forlorn. My chest aches and I want to heal him and all his pain. I reach my hand out to touch him, but he pushes it away, taking a step back from me.

“Let me help you,” I whisper.

“I’m not so weak that I can’t carry my own burdens,” he says, growing angry. “Is that what you see when you look at me? Is that why you feel the need to always jump at every bump and bruise to heal me?”

“What?” I say, completely taken aback.

“I don’t need you to fix everything, Ali! What I need is for you to let me run my pack how I see fit. What I need is for you to not heal me every time I look mildly uncomfortable. I am not some broken unfit Alpha who needs saving.”

“You’re not a damsel in distress?” I joke, hoping to break the ice a little. I fail.

“I am an Alpha. Not some fvcking Princess that needs saving. For fvck’s sake! Is that all I am to you? A fvcking Joke?” he asks belligerently.

“Woah,” I say, not knowing how to respond to his break. Because seriously, how the hell do you respond to that?

“No wonder you love that as*shole alpha.” he chuckles dryly.

“Excuse me? You asked me a question, and I was honest. Don’t you dare throw my honesty back at me.”

“You choose when you are honest!” he fumes. “Did you really think I didn’t know you called Samuel to get a trainer here?”

“I did that to help you and the pack.” I shoot back.

“No, you did it because you were worried I would fail. Just be honest, for fvck’s sake.”

“I did it to help you,” I say weakly, walking closer to him. My heart hurts knowing that he is viewing himself as some failure.

Admittedly, when I first arrived here, I couldn’t understand why he needed to be protected. Why he was deemed so special, but the longer I am in this pack, the more I see it. How he interacts with his members is rare. He is honest, kind and loves them all fiercely. He treats his Omegas with kindness and they are all loyal to him. Well, now that he isn’t suffering from the side effects of the poison.

“What is this all really about?” I ask softly. His eyes turn cold and he looks at me.

“It doesn’t matter. You are here to protect me, that’s all.” And he turns to walk away.

“Wade!” I yell, knowing dropping his title will get his attention. And it does. He freezes with his back to me. And slowly turns around.

“My job is to help you. In any way that you need it. Not just sacrificing my life for you, but talking to you, being your confidant, your friend. Why are you fighting it so much?”

“Fine. You want to know what’s bothering me? All of it?”

“If it helps ease your mind, then yes!” I shout, throwing up my arms.

Finally, he is getting it. He rushes over to me and reaches out, grasping me by the back of the neck. Roughly, he tucks me into his warm chest. He pulls his face to mine and stops just before my lips. I close my eyes, waiting for them, but they don’t come. Only his hot breath prickles my lips. Slowly, he presses his forehead against mine and breathes deeply.

My mind hums with emotions that aren't all mine. Feelings of frustration and heartache. The lust and desire that used to be at the forefront of his mind have morphed, matured into something more sustainable. Something like love. My eyes fly open and I find him looking right into me. He looks so sad, so broken. My heart is in my throat as I try to form words. Never have I experienced anything like this. Never has someone been so raw and open with me before.

My heart races as he continues to release all of his emotions. And then, in an instant, they are all gone. Locked away from me. My mind chases after them, pleading with them to come back out. And when I stand there for a moment reeling from what I had experienced, I notice that my feelings, my emotions mirror his, exactly.

"I know you are waiting for your mate, and I will honor and respect that. But I couldn't carry that alone anymore," he says, rubbing his temples and taking a step back. "I'm not someone who enjoys keeping secrets."

"Oh," I say, still feeling confused.

Wade chuckles, and the sound brings me back. I love his laugh.

"Did I break you?" he asks softly.

"No," I laugh. "You definitely caught me off guard. Thank you for being honest with me."

I sigh slightly and move to head back to the packhouse. Alpha Wade falls in line beside me.

"I called Samuel because I think your pack is different. It's worth ensuring its protection. I didn't mean to overstep."

"I knew you were doing it. There are eyes and ears everywhere in this pack. And I knew you would yield better results. I'm not naive enough to think that I have the skills to coerce people into helping a pack that can give them nothing in return."

"So you planned it then?" I ask, raising a brow.

"No, I just judged you right, is all. You can't help but help. It's why you are so good at your job. You have a gentle soul and a helping heart, Ali."

feeling awkward about the compliment I clear my throat and we walk on in silence for a moment. Then my mind wanders to Mason and I remember his face.

"Now about Mason," I ask, sliding him a sidelong glance.

"That's a question for your beloved Alpha Liam," he says.

The Alpha's Guardian Chapter 30

I've been wanting to check out training since Wade's hinting about Liam being the reason Mason was so beat up. But where Wade goes I go and where Wade stays, well I stay there too. Wade has been in his office answering calls, making calls, and researching all sorts of things, again. It's interesting how one minute it can seem like everything happens at once and there is almost too much to handle and then the next is so dull I could poke my eyes out.

"Yes. I agree, Alpha Nick. Yes, I am excited to meet with you as well. We will see you tonight." Wade says into his phone. He ends the call and slumps into his seat.

"Everything ok?" I ask him honing in on the dark circles under his eyes.

"Yeah. Finally making some headway. We are heading to speak with Alpha Nick tonight over dinner. He is about an hour and a half drive from us."

"Who is going to keep the pack in order?" I ask him. I know us leaving, even for a few hours will make him worry about leaving his pack in the hands of Liam.

"Francis is on his way back. He should be here any minute." I can hear the relief in his voice.

I have to admit I have missed Francis. When he is here I feel like I can breathe a little easier. He does a great job helping field Wade's alpha duties and asks questions that help invoke Wade's deeper thinking. He is one of the best Beta's I have seen, perhaps though, that is because he is so loyal to his Alpha and respects him rather than fear him.

There is a knock at the door and Wade tells them to come in.

"Alpha Wade. I would like to speak with you for a moment if I may?" she asks

"Sure, what's up?"

"Oh. um. Could we have your Guardian step out for a moment?"

"No," I say firmly.

"Then I need you to swear that what I say here stays here," she says looking me in the eyes, looking nervous.

"Of course."

Ada hesitates for a moment and then looks to Wade. Stepping further into the room she finds a seat across from his desk and takes it. Sitting silently as if waiting for permission to speak.

“Go ahead, Ada,” Wade says, sliding me a confused glance.

-I’m noticing it too Alpha- I say through the link

-She is acting very strange- Wade responds.

Ada clears her throat readying herself to speak and she looks up at Wade.

“At the end of our training, I would like to respectfully ask to stay and join your pack.” She says wringing her hands. Ada is a formidable warrior. She is quick and precise, seeing her look so meek and fearful is off-putting.

“Why is that?” Wade asks, looking her over intently.

“I...Uhm...Well, I found my mate” she chuckles, reaching up and rubbing the back of her neck.

“I see. And he is a member of my pack then?” She nods nervously.

“Who is it?” Wade asks and she bows her head in shame.

“Frank O’Dell.” Wade’s eyes widen and he looks over at me.

“Ada, have you had a mate before?” Wade asks her the very question that had been in my mind. We both know that Frank just rejected his first mate meaning if what she says is true, then she must have either lost or been rejected by her own as well. Second chance mates happen but it’s not common for a second chance mate to be found so quickly after losing their first.

“Yes,” she whispers tears in her eyes. “Alpha Liam forced me to reject him”

My heart pinches as I look over at Wade who refuses to meet my eyes.

“He must have had his reasoning?” Wade suggests

“Alpha Liam has a pack rule, any female who discovers their mate, upon accepting their mate, they become the ranking of the Male party. If I had accepted Jason, I would have been stripped of my wolf and made an omega.”

My fury grows at her words. There is some misunderstanding. There is no way that this is a rule. Liam wouldn’t dare do something so low and cruel, would he? I look over at Wade as he sits calmly and answers Ada’s questions about mates here in his pack. I can see her

smile becoming more genuine and happy the more she hears and learns. Wade, slides me a warning with his eyes and I mentally check my barriers that are overflowing with anger. I breathe deeply and do my best to listen to the conversation.

“So I can be with Frank here, keep my wolf and my warrior status?” she asks happily.

“Of course. That’s the natural course of things.” Wade says, flabbergasted.

“Are you guys not training today?” I ask curiously, breaking into the conversation.

“No, we are. Women get a week’s break once a month.”

“Why?” Wade asks, confused.

“For...*eh hem* our cycle,” she says shyly. “Liam doesn’t like us around during that time. He says we are too emotional and whiny. I faked it so I could talk to Alpha Wade. Frank said you would be welcoming and understanding. I just didn’t believe him.”

There is another knock on the door and it opens just enough for Francis to peek his head in.

“Just wanted to pop by and say hey. I’m headed over to the training center now to check everything out.”

“We will be right behind you,” Wade says as Francis closes the door. He turns his attention back to Ada.

“Anything else?” he asks her. She shakes her head no and stands.

“Thank you again, Alpha Wade. I promise to be a diligent pack member and work hard.” She walks out the door with a huge grin on her face, and before the door closes we can hear her shriek in happiness as a male voice greets her.

Wade stands from his chair and he walks over looking at me.

“Let’s go have a chat with Alpha Liam about you and me leaving”

“Oh good. I have some questions for him“ I say annoyed.

“Oh I am sure you do,” he smirks

When we walk in the entire building is full. Men and women are sparring in both human and wolf form and I smile with pride at how much these wolves are doing to improve so quickly. Pack members who had trouble keep focus are defending blow after blow as their confidence soars.

I steal a glance at Wade who is swelling with pride, like a father watching his kid succeed. Liam Saunters over and I double-check my mental barriers so that Wade doesn't have to be privy to the lust the closer Liam gets. He is looking delicious in his cut-off tank and loose basketball shorts, and he knows it. He has a deep smile on his face and his eyes darken as he flicks them over my body in approval.

"Ali, my love. You look divine as always." he drawls out. I am pleased to find that his sexy smile doesn't have its usual effect on me.

"Alpha Liam." I greet him and stand next to Wade who is impossible to read.

"Alpha Liam. Ali and I have to leave the pack for a short period of time. My Beta, Francis." Wade cranes his neck looking for him when he pops up his head and hustles over. Wade relaxes a little. And starts again.

"My Beta, Francis, will be in charge for the evening"

"Ok," Liam says his eyes are still lingering on me. I peek down at what I am wearing and find that I'm in my usual guardian attire.

"Alpha Wade. I really would love to have a chat with your guardian, if I may?" Liam reaches out and grabs hold of my hand.

"Be my guest," Wade says smirking deviously. I'm sure he knows I have a few choice words for Liam.

Alpha Liam drags me to the doors, pulls me outside swinging me around as he pulls me to his chest for a hug. I reluctantly reach my arms around his back and accept the embrace. He smells, woodsy and sweet and I relish the smell that elicits so many memories of the time we once shared.

Footsteps behind us force me to break out of the hug and I turn to find a still rough-looking Mason who is walking alongside Isaac. Isaac nods and waves where Mason glowers and steps into the training center. I can feel Liam tense up as he flinches for the doors.

"Um. Liam." I say pulling his attention. "Can you tell me what happened with that beat-up kid?"

"You mean that filthy Omega?" His words are full of ice.

"Excuse me?" I say trying to contain my anger. Liam sighs and runs his hand down his face.

"He disrespected me in front of my pack and his." My anger quickly subsides to pride, at the mention of Wade refusing to punish a young omega.

“How did he disrespect you?” I ask

“Omega’s don’t train. They cook and clean and stay out of the way. Why do they need to know how to fight?” His words disgust me as I look him over angrily, how could I have ever loved someone like this.

“So you let your warrior beat the sh!t out of him?”

“No, I did.” he smiles proudly and my heart falls.

“You beat up a kid?”

“He is barely a kid,” he rolls his eyes.

I pinch my eyes shut tight trying to keep from crying in anger. All I can see is Mason being stubborn and getting back up to take more hits and my heart feels like it’s tearing in half.

“He spat at me and told me to fvck off!” he shouts as if it’s some big deal. “And his Alpha refuses to punish him.”

“Fine. As head Omega, tell me how many lashings you demand.” I say squaring my shoulders.

“What?” Liam balks at me.

“Liam, I am the highest-ranking Omega here and you demand retribution.”

“You are hardly an Omega.” he scoffs.

“I have no wolf.” I remind him

“You are different,” he says, raking his hands through his hair.

“The difference is, you still trained me.”

“Because I love you.”

“You don’t love me. You want me because you can’t have me!” I say my voice rising.

“You seriously don’t know?” he asks, looking at me like I’m crazy. He paces away from me and spins to face me placing his hands on his hips waiting for me to connect the invisible dots and follow the conversation he is alluding to.

“Know what, Liam?”

“I’m your mate, Ali.”

