

# The Alpha's Guardian Chapter 31

"Stop fvcking around. There is no way you can know that." I say annoyed.

"Samuel told me. He told me that when you get out, you will know it too." Liam reaches for me, trying to pull me close. I feel sick and confused as I push him off. Liam is my mate? How would he and Samuel know this? How could Samuel keep it from me, and how long has he known? My stomach feels sick. Has he been lying this whole time to keep me as a guardian?

"Ali," Liam says softly, trying to reach for me again.

"Stop. Liam, that's enough!" I say angrily, my hands up defensively. Slowly, I back away from him and he stays rooted in his spot. I spin and run towards the woods as fast as possible, mind linking Wade.

-Forest now. North of the training center-

Wade doesn't answer, but I know for a fact he will show up. I stop at a small creek that gurgles and bubbles over the large rocks, hindering its progress. Each ripple reflects the sun that refracts off its surface. This tiny little haven in a world that is feeling increasingly suffocating.

"Ali," Wade says from behind me and all my tension melts. I feel as though I can think and breathe again as I turn and find him watching me with worry.

"I needed some space to think. But I can't leave you unguarded." I lie. I needed him, his presence to help bring back my calm.

When I was with Liam, I learned to harness my anger, my skepticism. I hated the world and how harsh it was, so I was determined to be harsher. Liam thrives off being the toughest, fiercest warrior, and I learned that trait from him. Love was a weakness, and you are only as strong as your weakest point. So if you love someone strong, you are also stronger. But watching the others I protected over the years love on their mates made me think. Maybe there is more to the mate bond than love based on a mutual desire to be the best.

Then I met Wade. Admittedly, it wasn't a great first impression, even if he was poisoned and disoriented. But even in that state, he put others before himself. Everything he does seems so selfless because he loves so much, he feels so much. I glance at Wade as he saunters over to a tree and sits down, leaning back on its trunk. He looks so relaxed right now. Even with everything on his plate.

"It is so peaceful out here," he says wistfully, as he lays his head back on the bark and closes his eyes.

A content smile plays across his lips as silence follows his voice. The only sound in the forest is the forest itself and that of the nature which inhabits it. I find myself drawn to him as I walk over and sit next to him, resting my head on the trunk.

“Aren’t you going to ask me what is wrong?” I ask him.

“Are you going to tell me?”

“I’m not sure I want to talk about it,” I answer. He chuckles softly.

“Then no, I will not ask what is wrong. If it’s heavy enough that you need to share it, you know where to find me.”

I laugh harder than I mean, too. I look over at him and he smiles, pleased with his joke. Of course, I know where to find him. We are attached. He gently reaches out and tucks a loose hair behind my ear, his thumb lingering on my cheek slightly before dropping it to the grass.

“I’m here if you need someone to listen, Ali. I know that I’ve been hot and cold lately. I don’t mean to be, but if you need a friend. I’m here to listen.”

I smile tightly and nod at him, trying to keep the tears at bay. I am so confused by him. But the more I am with him, the more I am beginning to understand why the council thinks he is so special. He is unique, empathetic, and genuine, and, from what I can tell, he has no ulterior motives or desire to move up in the realm of alpha-ships. He is what an Alpha should be.

“What time are we leaving?” I ask.

“It’s an hour and a half drive. He is expecting us at five for a pack tour, dinner is at six, meeting with him and two other alphas at 8:30. I figure we will stay there and return early in the morning.”

“Good to know,”

“I asked Francis to get the vehicle ready at three for us to take off.”

“We should probably head back and get ready then,” I say, stealing another glance at him.

He is unlike anyone else I have ever met. Wade sighs heavily as he pushes himself to stand and turns around, putting his hand out before me, offering to help me up. I slide my hand into his and the tingles that once were shocking pop gleefully across our skin and I breathe in relief.

I know they aren’t the mate bond, but even the thought that I am destined to be with such a man makes me feel like maybe all this killing and fighting has been worth it to get

where I am. I stare at our enclosed hands as Wade rubs his thumb along the top in circles and slowly moves to pull it back from my hand. Panic rises when I realize this feeling of comfort is only fleeting. I have never been one to run from my problem.

Hell, I'm stubborn enough to look at the problem and run full force towards it. But this problem, this claim from Liam, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't afraid. Afraid because if he is right, and he is my true mate. Then I will be losing Wade, and what I feel for him in this short time, feels like more than a bond. It feels like life or death without him.

I crawl into the passenger side of the truck begrudgingly. It's strange how 2 hours ago we were in the forest and I was thinking about how much I care for this a\*\*\*\*\*e who refuses to let me drive. I usually like to trek through pack lands and get a lay of them before we go, hence why I walked to this pack and had my bike shipped. But with Wade's leg bothering him and the distance we had to travel, I felt it was best to drive.

And Wade has the coolest massive souped-up truck in a wicked cobalt blue paint job. I swear the moment he saw my happiness about it; he decided he would crush my dreams. The engine rolls to life, vibrating through my ribcage and I can't help the giddy grin that graces my face. I look over at Wade smiling and find him staring at me, laughing.

"I promise you can drive it on the way back." He says, and I roll my eyes.

Ok, maybe he isn't completely an a\*s.

"Fine. But I get to pick the music." I say, and he chuckles as we back out and drive down the road.

"Ok seriously, this truck is insane! It has to be custom. I didn't think this pack had a big-money reserve?" I ask, running my hand along the dash and over the leather seats.

"My pack does well. We have investments outside of the pack. We are modest because pack money goes back to the pack. This truck, however, was a gift from my parents when I turned 18 and became the Alpha. My dad did a lot of the upgrades himself."

This is the first time he has ever mentioned his parents. I look at him, feeling sad. And then he laughs.

"My parents aren't dead, Ali. You don't have to feel sad. My sister married into an international pack in Europe. She has 2 pups and my parents live there half the year and here the other half. Who knows if you stay long enough you may get to meet them." He slides me a reassuring smile and my stomach flops and then rolls.

I'm not sure how long I will be here and the thought of missing out on seeing his functional family makes me feel sick. Hell, just the thought of not being with him makes me feel sick.

“Ok, what’s up. I can feel your panic and anxiety. It’s not like you.” he says, his eyes focusing hard on the road.

I hate that when he asks me my first thought is to open up completely and tell him everything from the beginning. I want him to get to know me. My past, my present, and my future that I desperately and trying not to envision with him. Because the more I envision it, the more I panic about what Liam said.

“Liam is my mate.” I blurt.

My cheeks heat red and I can see his hands tighten on the steering wheel as his knuckles go white. A stab of heartache pierces my mind and then disappears within a moment’s notice. I curse myself internally. Real fvcking great Ali. Super graceful nose dive into the sensitive topic surrounding your bond.

“How do you know?” he asks, staying calm.

“He told me,” I say honestly.

There is a moment of silence, and then the heavenly sound of his laughter breaks the tension.

“I’m sorry.” he releases one hand from the wheel and wipes a stray tear. His laughter is contagious as I laugh with him.

“What!” I demand, enjoying the lightness in the conversation now.

“He told you? What, he was trying to k!ss you or something and you pushed him away and he just whipped out ‘I’m your mate’ and you believed him?”

“Uhm...”

“Ali. You told me you can’t find your mate and your mate can’t find you when you are a guardian and wearing your amulet. So how would Liam know?”

“He said Samuel told him.”

“And Samuel would know? That makes no sense. How could Samuel know who your mate is? And if by some miracle he deduced it, it doesn’t speak highly of your fatherly figure, Samuel, to tell Liam and not you.”

“Maybe I should call Samuel-” I am interrupted by the ear-shattering sound of metal on metal.

Everything spins as broken glass floats around my head as I move in slow motion, looking over at Wade, who is reaching out for me. I feel his hand grab me and pull me to his body

as we flip front over end several times and land with a thundering slam. My ears ring and my shoulder hurts. Blood drips into my eyes as I turn and see Wade wrapped around me in a protective barrier, unconscious.

## The Alpha's Guardian Chapter 32

"Wade," I say, trying to wake him up. He groans slightly and opens one eye, looking at me. His eyes grow dark with worry as he sits up fast and reaches out to touch my bleeding forehead.

"Sh!t, is that from me or your own injury?" he whispers.

"I'm not sure," I answer honestly.

I Take a moment to look around and notice we are still in his truck that's turned onto its side on Wade's side of the vehicle. I make my way to a standing position and help wade out of his precarious position. Wade effortlessly breaks out the windshield and we crawl out, surveying his truck, trying to understand what the hell happened.

"Damn." a voice says from behind us.

Turning around, we find a tall man sauntering towards us with short jet black hair and gray streaks at his temple. He sports a wicked scar down his cheek and a lingering smirk.

"Can we help you?" Wade asks. The man chuckles and shakes his head.

"Looks to me like you're the ones who could use some help." he smiles a brilliant white smile as he continues towards us.

"We can manage just fine," I say defensively. The man chuckles again, stopping ten feet before us, and shakes his head.

"Oh, I think not. You see. You two are coming with me. You have a meeting."

"Yes, we do, but not with you," Wade says, I can see his old injury is bothering him again as his leg shakes. He steps up to me, wrapping his hand around my waist, and I know he is trying to calm himself and use me to hide his only weakness.

"Listen. We can do this one of two ways. I can shoot your boy up with wolfsbane while you try to fight and save him and yourself. We outnumber you, though. Even for you Guardian, I hardly think 60-70 wolves is a fair fight. Or you both can come nicely and have a chat."

My heart falls. I have only ever been able to maintain a decent fight against 8 wolves at the same time, And it nearly killed me and my client. I talk a big game but when it comes

to protecting a client, I need to do everything to protect them while fighting. . I turn to see eyes glowing in the woods and men stepping forward from the shadows. He wasn't kidding. He has an entire army with him.

"Are you the Rogue King then?" Wade asks.

"Huh. You aren't as dumb as you look. Yes. I am." he does a fake bow which elicits a laugh from Wade.

"You compliment and insult me at the same time. I know you aren't the rogue king." Wade smirks. "Simon."

The rogue turns pale as he flits his eyes around to the other surrounding us.

"What makes you think you know who the rogue king is?"

"I have my sources," Wade shrugs.

I am shocked by all the knowledge that Wade is dropping on this unsuspecting wolf named Simon. I know Wade is smart and determined, but I think I have been underestimating his resourcefulness. In the pack he is open and kind, never appearing superior to his members. But here, right now, he is oozing strength and confidence, and holy sh!t is it attractive.

"No matter. Either way, you guys are coming with us."

"That's fine. I think I would rather talk with the Rogue King himself." Wade says, stepping forward.

Pulling me along like a walking stick. The rogues lead us along a dark windy path in the woods until we come into a parking lot where we are loaded into an SUV.

-How are your injuries?- Wade asks through the mind link.

-I think they are ok. I can already feel my cut healing and I have a bruise that is already healing across my chest from the seatbelt.-

-You weren't wearing a seatbelt.- He reminds me.

-But you were.-

After a moment of silence, I look over at Wade.

-thank you for grabbing me before I went out the windshield- I say through the link.

Wade reaches over and gives my hand a quick squeeze, moving to take it away, but I hold it tight. I look out the window as I cling to his soft warmth for life, relishing the peace it brings me, just knowing he is here.

We come to a stop at an abandoned warehouse, and the door opens for us to hop out. We slide off the seat and follow Simon into the building, walking down the short hallway and turning to enter a vast room that looks more like a lobby. I do a quick scan of the room looking for weaknesses, exits, all while trying to plan an escape route for us. Guardian training 101, find yourself in a situation, calmly assess, and find the exit.

They lead us through the lobby and back towards a large metal door that is opened, and then Simon gives me a shove and shuts the door behind me. I whip around and find that Wade is no longer with me.

-Lower your barriers so I have easier access to you if you need me- I mind link Wade

-Be safe.- he says and I breathe a little easier.

I turn and look around the room. A small, warm light illuminates the room from its perch on an enormous wooden desk. The walls are filled from top to bottom with bookshelves full of books for all walks of life. I scan the room looking to the very back and find a male figure sitting at a desk writing something.

“Rogue King, I suppose?” I ask.

The figure freezes and turns. He rises from his chair, growing taller until he reaches 6’4”. He saunters towards me, the lights above casting shadows that hide his face from my eyes. Until he stops on the other side of the large table and his eyes meet mine. My heart races and my breath hitches.

“Hello, my little Ali-bee.” he says, smiling sweetly. The same smile he had when he showed up for my 9th birthday with the gift I asked for. The same smile my father had.

“U-uncle Corbin?” I gasp. He nods in affirmation, tears brimming his eyes.

“You remember me,” he says, pleased.

“How could I not?” I say, flabbergasted. “I lost everything because of you.”

His demeanor falters as his smile fades.

“Yes, well, not everything is as it seems.”

“What does that mean?”

“All in due time.”

“Why am I here?” I ask, getting right to the matter at hand. I can’t handle a family reunion right now.

“I want you to help me.” He says.

“Why would I ever help you?” I spit at him.

“There is so much you don’t know, Ali.” he breathes.

“Well, give me a summary.” I shrug, pulling out a chair and taking a seat.

“In due time. For now, I need your help to organize a meeting with the committee.”

“No,”

“Ali...”

“You have given me nothing. I don’t trust you. The committee is a vital part of the werewolf community. Why would I give you access to them when you are a rogue?”

“Because I can give you the answers you have been searching for since you were left all alone wandering in the woods.”

## The Alpha’s Guardian Chapter 33

\*Wade POV\*

Simon sits across from outside the door that keeps Ali separate from me. It took countless days to figure out Simon’s name and not a single person has been willing to divulge if they even know the Rogue King’s real identity. All that surrounds him is shrouds of mystery and fierce stories about what made him a rogue. What I learned from my sources about Simon is that he is loyal, angry, and always willing to fight for his king.

I tilt my head, looking him over. His salt and peppered black hair makes him appear older and his scars paint the picture of a seasoned warrior. I expected him to fit the description Trudy gave of the man that provided her with the pansy that poisoned my pack. He smirks at me when he sees me sizing him up.

“Sorry boy, I’m not into men,”

I chuckle at him. He is trying to piss me off, but not just for his pure enjoyment. No, he is trying to get me emotionally compromised so he can get answers from me. Unfortunately for him, if he is searching for answers about the committee giving me a guardian, he will be sorely disappointed, because I have none.



“Just ask your questions, there is no need to insult me,” I say stoically.

Simon looks at me strangely, then leans in.

“Why are you so important to the committee?”

“Got to admit, Simon, I was hoping you had that answer for me. I have no idea why they think I’m so important,”

“Your little girlfriend didn’t tell you?” he sneers. I don’t like his tone but I have to admit I like the idea of Ali being my girlfriend.

“You mean my guardian? No, Ali didn’t tell me. She also doesn’t know.”

“You’re full of sh!t.” He says, doubtfully.

I shrug my shoulders.

“I just assumed someone was trying to kill me.”

“Kill you?” he laughs menacingly. “In order for someone to want to kill you, you would need to be significant.”

“Significant enough for your Rogue King to continually attack my pack.” I retort.

Simon rolls his eyes and huffs back into his seat.

“He heard a whisper, and he followed it on the wind,” he says begrudgingly.

“Oh, and what whisper would that be?”

“Wouldn’t you like to know?”

“I mean since we are bonding and all that,” I say, smiling sweetly at him.

Simon looks me over again and stands up.

“Stand up, Alpha,” he demands.

I sigh in annoyance, but I comply and stand. He is almost 2 inches shorter than me and much lankier. He squares his shoulder and glares at me.

“You’re big. I’ll grant you that, but I know your weakness, Wade.”

He smirks at me sickly and takes a step back.

“Which one? I have many,” I say nonchalantly.

“Oh, I know full well how many weaknesses you have. We have been scouting you for years. I’ve watched you train yourself and not your pack. I’ve lurked in the shadows when you thought no one was around to hear you scream in agony.”

I grow still watching him, trying my best to keep my resolve. One day, two years ago, I had trained and trained and trained. I wasn’t able to get the move I was working on down. After 12 hours of trying and failing because of my leg, I ran to the woods and sobbed in pain. I waded into the cold creek waters and released into the babbling brook my anguish, frustrations as I cursed the heavens for my plight.

Pain is a funny thing. It can warp a mind. For so long I looked at myself as someone who was getting stronger, the pain became more bearable. But there are days when I’m limited because my muscles are still tattered in my thigh. Those are the days I try to push through, make my body do what I know it can’t to prove that I’m not weak. I always fail.

Those are always the days I break. He had watched me break under the cover of the shadows. Now it’s a question of whether he knows the real reason. If word gets out that I’m not up to standards, many alphas will come to try taking over my pack. I’m already fighting rogues. Adding packs to the mix would be our downfall.

“Ah. See, now I see an emotion I can work with. I can destroy you with just a few simple whispers.” He smiles happily.

“You think I care about you destroying me? My only concern is for my pack. My downfall is something I don’t fear.”

“Haha! You only care because an Alpha needs his pack to be an alpha.”

“I would step down in a heartbeat if I felt someone else could take care of my pack the way I feel they deserve. But I have yet to find an alpha who treasures all his pack members, not just the ones graced with a wolf.”

Simon takes a step back, looking me over. He tilts his head, looking for any truth in my words. I’m not sure if he finds what he is looking for, but he clicks his teeth and walks back around, and takes his seat.

“Alpha Wade, have a seat. I would hate for your leg to act up,” he says, looking smug.

My muscles tense and I sit down. So he knows about my injury.

After what feels like forever Ali, steps out of the office and Simon stands.

“Alpha, he wants to see you,” Ali says, not looking at me. I eye her suspiciously and try to mind link her, but she ignores my attempts. I Stand and square my shoulders as I walk

into the office, reaching out and squeezing her hand as I walk by hoping my touch will help her the way her touch always helps me.

The metal door clanks shut behind me as I make my way towards him at a steady pace. He stands up and reaches out to shake my hand. I weigh not shaking it vs shaking it and decide that offending the guy who has been killing my pack members might be a bad political move.

“Alpha Wade. thank you for coming.”

He says, sitting back down at his desk. I quirk a brow at him in mild amusement.

“Like I had a choice?” I ask.

“Well, it was very nice of us to give you a ride after your tragic accident.” He smiles.

I already know I don’t like this guy, but the way he went about getting a meeting by destroying something I love and injuring someone I care about makes me hate him even more.

“What do you want, Rogue? King? Rogue King? What do you prefer? I’m not sure how to address the king of outcasts.”

“Corbin will do just fine.” he smiles again.

“Fine. Corbin, why am I here?”

“Because I want your help,” he says.

“Help with what?”

“To bring down the Committee.” He says with a satisfied smile.

## The Alpha’s Guardian Chapter 34

“And what would you do once we take the committee down? I suppose you would proclaim yourself the king?” I ask, not bothering to veil my contempt for him.

He shrugs with a wry smile. And I run my hand over my face, chuckling.

“No.” I shrug, feeling lost for words. “No, I will not help you.”

“I know we have had our differences in the past, Alpha Wade.”

“Differences? DIFFERENCES? Poisoning my pack for years, killing my pack members in attacks, attacking the children? That’s what you consider a difference of opinion? You’re fvcking crazy.” I bellow.

Corbin sighs and leans forward, resting his elbows on the desk in front of him.

“I can assure you, I seem like the bad guy, but I am not. I understand my actions have spoken much louder than the words I am speaking. But I truly have the best in mind for the werewolf world.”

“Explain to me how attacking me and taking out my pack helps you achieve your goal.”

“You are important,” he says as if it’s the clearest answer ever.

I groan in annoyance. It seems to be the only consistent thing in my life, hearing how important I am yet never being told why.

“I just want to protect my pack. I want no trouble from you or anyone else. So no. I will not help you take down the committee.”

“I would recommend, for the safety of your pack, that you reconsider that position, Alpha Wade. There is a war brewing and your pack is at the center.”

“I will take that as a threat.”

“I suggest you do,” he says, trying to maintain his composure, but I can see his anger slipping through.

I stand and stride towards the door with haste.

“Alpha Wade,” he calls and I stop with my hand on the doorknob. “I am guilty of many things, but you are mistaken when you say that we have been poisoning your pack for years. That wasn’t us.”

“Why should I believe you?” I scoff.

“I’m not sure you can in most regards, but I thought you should know. You are misplacing the blame when it comes to the poison.”

I yank the door open, fuming and frustrated. Being cordial with the man who has led to the death of so many pack members may just be the hardest thing I have ever done. I am shaking with the urge to kill him, and my wolf is wanting to avenge his beloved members. A hand reaches out and takes mine and a wave of calm washes over me like water in the sea lapping over a shore. Each wave ebbing at the anger I so fiercely want to hold on to. I breathe deeply and look over at Ali.

Her eyes scan over me as she reads my expression.

“Drop the barrier if you need help,” she whispers.

Simon’s laugh rings through the room and he stands from where he had been sitting. Pointing at our entwined hands, and chuckles once more.

“She is your little girlfriend.”

Ali stands stoically beside me, not bothering to acknowledge his comment. It’s obvious that she is choosing to not respond because it’s beneath her to explain the Guardian bond to someone like Simon. But I can’t help but feel excited she doesn’t deny it. My heart swells with confidence and I zero in on the lanky man.

“We are leaving,” I say simply.

“Yeah, sure sure,” he says smiling.

When we pass Simon, he reaches out, grabbing the crook of my arm.

“Hope your leg does ok with the long walk,” and he smirks.

I pull my arm from his thin long fingers and toss him a snarl. He backs away, smirking.

Ali and I walked for an hour in silence. The only thing on my mind is getting back and getting hold of Alpha Nick and his group. The last thing I need to do is offend them by being a no-show. I slide a glance over at Ali and see her straggling a little behind me. I stop abruptly and watch as she walks past me in a daze. Her expression seems confused, and she seems to be working something out in her head.

“Ali,” I call out to her softly. She stops and looks at me, concern crossing her brow.

“Alpha, are you ok? Is your leg bothering you?” she asks.

“No, I am fine. But you, however, seem to be lost in your mind.” I crossed over to her and poke her forehead. She smirks.

“Sorry, Alpha. I’m just trying to understand why the Rogue King wanted to see you,” she says. She looks around the forest, not making eye contact.

“Who says he wanted to see me?” I scoff.

“Why else would he take us for a chat?” she quips, sounding grumpy.

“He wanted you, Ali. Not me.” She freezes like a deer caught in headlights. I eye her up suspiciously. I can tell she is hiding something.

“What?” her voice sounds squeaky.

“Everything he said to me was just him trying to cover for something, pretending like he needed my help.”

“Maybe he does?”

“Highly unlikely.”

“You are important, Wade. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be here.”

“So everyone keeps telling me,” I grumble.

Silence falls over us again, but unlike our usual calm type, this one feels heavy and stifling.

“So Francis and Sammy are having a baby. That’s cool.” Ali says, trying to break the strange tension. I chuckle. She has no idea how bad of a subject change this is.

“Yeah, don’t congratulate Francis on it,” I say curtly.

“What?”

I sigh heavily. Might as well tell her.

“Pansy can be fatal to wolf pups. Apparently.” I say, trying not to be emotional.

This is my best friend’s child, my niece or nephew, my would-be newest pack member. The possibility of its death weighs heavily on me for not doing enough to protect our pack. Also, because the woman who poisoned us did it because she wanted me. I know Francis and Sammy don’t completely blame me, but I know Francis feels weird about it.

“What?” Ali breathes out. “Have they gone to a doctor?”

“That’s where they have been, Ali. The doctor said the child seems to be growing ok, but the likelihood of its wolf surviving is extremely low. And we know if the wolf fully dies in a child before their first transformation, that the human side also often succumbs.”

“Their baby is dying,” Ali says, and I can hear the crack in her voice.

I stop and look at her. Her eyes light up with realization.

“That’s why you didn’t want to fight off the rogues, and why you agreed to speak with Corbin.”

“I needed to see if he matches the description of the guy Trudy is claiming gave her the poison. Also, because I don’t have a death wish and we were severally outnumbered.”

“Liam would have fought to the death,” she says and I freeze.

I hate when she says his name so informally. It only serves to remind me that their relationship is one that is very different than ours. Theirs is far more intimate and ours is merely a working relationship.

“Yes, well, I’m not Alpha Liam,” I say, sighing.

She looks at me and smiles softly.

“I am well aware, and I appreciate your brains more than his brawn.” She moves to me and drops a kiss on my cheek. She steps back happy with herself and my shocked face, I assume, and turns on her heels, trekking away.

The tension has definitely shifted. I smile and scramble after her like the love-struck fool I am.

## The Alpha’s Guardian Chapter 35

Ali POV

For years, I had assumed my uncle just ran off and became a rogue. I could imagine him pillaging villages and leaving people for dead, much as he had done for my family. I can’t say that I blame our old alpha for being so angry at Uncle Corbin. He ruined the largest peace treaty in the history of werewolves. I remember the whole pack was bustling with excitement, setting up for the ceremony that would unite the rival packs with ours through the union of marriage between our Alpha’s daughter and the rival packs Beta’s son.

The only problem was that his daughter, Gail, never showed up. They sent every tracker to find her. What they reportedly found was her dead in the arms of Uncle Corbin. Uncle Corbin ran from her, and it was determined he had killed her in cold blood out of jealousy. My father, being the Beta and older brother, was given the punishment. When mom spoke up about how unfair that was, she and I were added to the sentence. 3 more innocent lives were ruined because of his delusional thought that the alpha’s daughter was his mate.

I slam my sword on my desk, groaning in frustration. All my unresolved emotions from childhood are flying back at me from every direction. Relief that I’m not alone when it comes to family, hatred for what he did to our family, desire for revenge for what was not only stolen from my original pack but also from me.

Had he just not been so selfish, could I have lived out a good life? Maybe I wouldn't have had to kill and bond myself from alpha to alpha. Maybe I would have loved being a little housewife with the apron baking pie waiting on her doting mate to walk in the door. Ok, probably not all that. But it all could have been so different. I could have had a family. A proper home.

I groan again in frustration. I hate this train of thought. Thinking of the past gets you stuck in the past. And I can't afford to go back to being weak and whimpering. The morphing of me into a guardian was a good thing. Not to mention that I am excellent at it. I'm a badass omega who takes shit from no one. Well, other than the committee.

I pull off my tactical vest, tossing it to the side, and then gingerly strip off my tank top. I knew I would ache once we stopped moving, which is why I insisted on running back when Francis met us at the border with a truck. I had approved of Wade going with Francis as I actually trust him, and I was fast enough to beat them back to the packhouse.

Unzipping my pants, I step out of them, toss them to the side and step into the bathroom, turning the faucet on. I realize I left my towel in my room and turn to get it and notice my room is pitch black. The back of my neck prickles with awareness. Someone is in here. Using the light from the bathroom, I ease myself to my desk and reach for my sword, only to find it not there.

I have two options right now. I could call for help from Wade via the mind link, or I can murder someone in the dark while wearing only my bra and panties. Seeing as keeping Wade safe is my one and only priority, I'm going to have to suck it up and use my feminine prowess to the best of my ability.

Suddenly, the bathroom light flickers off and I sigh heavily. I hate fighting in the dark. Not that I'm bad at it. It just requires much more honed mental acuity and I'm already tired. I close my eyes and focus on my other senses. I hear a creak from over my left shoulder, so I duck and spin wide to my right, sweeping my leg out. A thud and a groan assure me I've indeed hit my target, and I leap onto my attacker's stomach.

Reaching out, I grab hold of what I hope is their collar and try to hold them still as I connect my fist glancing off the side of their cheek. A near miss. Suddenly, my body is lifting as a large hand rests on my waist and flips me with ease. The attacker, who based on the proportion of their hand size and their waist that is now firmly situated between my thighs, is very much a male.

A hand glides down my bare leg and I feel it. I'm not sure I would have noticed it had I not been forcing my other senses to be more prominent, but ever so slightly, I feel the dull pang of tingles across my skin. My first reaction is to freeze. And then at a moment's notice, I snatch the hand, yanking it across my chest, throwing my legs up and over the male's shoulders, and put him in a rear-naked chokehold. I apply extra pressure on their elbow, threatening to break their arm.



“Wade,” I say calmly. “I’d really rather not break my own arm by breaking yours. Tap out.”

“Wrong Alpha, sweetheart,” he growls and at a moment’s notice, I’m lifted yet again and slammed hard against a wall.

“Liam?” I choke out as he forces his elbow up into my neck, removing my legs from the ground.

“You thinking about someone other than your mate?” he seethes, his hot breath stinging my face.

He snuggles into the crook of my neck, searching for my scent. Groaning in anger he then, reaches up, tangling his hand in the chain of my amulet, and rips it from my neck. Tossing it into the dark. He nuzzles harder into my neck, then moves, resting his head against mine. I take the moment to pull my foot up against the wall and, pushing with all my might, I tackle him back and onto a soft landing pad. He rolls on top of me and I bring my legs around his waist, attempting to force myself under his shoulder and around his back. That’s when I noticed it. Liam must have shifted on his way here. He is completely naked.

“Li-Liam.” I stutter out, the first time in a long time feeling like the small stature woman I am compared to these alpha males.

“Mmm, you smell so good.”

“ENOUGH!” I boom.

Liam freezes for a moment and removes his pressure from me. I kick his chest, pushing myself further up the bed, and notice a cool metal object with my fingers. I cling to it, feeling its oval shape, and breathe in relief. My amulet. I tie the broken chain and place it back over my neck, hoping it will help pull Liam from his lustful state.

The room lights up with a click of the switch and Liam goes rigid. Looking over relief washes over me as I stare at a worried-looking Wade.

“Ali,” he says, looking from me to Liam, confused. “Am I interrupting?” he asks.

I can see the shock on his face as his eyes flit between Liam and me.

“We are fine, Alpha Wade. This is an issue between mates,” Liam says, annoyed.

Wade freezes and looks at me for an answer.

“He was leaving,” I say, looking at Liam, who rolls his eyes, growing angry by the moment.

“I am your mate! We should be in the same room.” He demands.

“I can’t know my mate until I finish my mission here, Alpha Liam. So until they release me from my duties, you will remain away from me,” I say, my tone cold.

“I want you off my pack lands,” Wade adds.

Liam laughs and walks to the door, stopping to size Wade up.

“I’m here under committee orders. You don’t have the authority to kick me off.” he looks over his shoulder at me. “We aren’t finished yet.”

“That may be, Alpha Liam, but you are no longer welcome in or near my packhouse.”

Liam saunters out the bedroom door, disappearing into the hallway. Wade then moves closer to me, reaches down to my bed, and grabs a throw blanket, wrapping it around me. His eyes gravitate to my neck and he reaches out, stopping when he thinks better of it and points.

“I’ll fix it while you go get your shower?” he says.

Considering Liam just went all dominant male on me over my scent, I decide taking off my amulet probably isn’t a big deal anymore. Sighing, I hand it over to Wade. Wade refuses to make eye contact and stiffly walks away from me to my desk and takes a seat to fix my clasp. I can only imagine how seeing me like this must upset him.

I take my time in the shower, rinsing the blood from the accident from my forehead and scrubbing my body harder than necessary. After Liam’s touch, I feel grubby and dirty. I can’t help but feel overwhelmed with disappointment at the thought that Liam might actually be my mate.

When I walk out of the bathroom, I find Wade waiting for me. He quickly tosses the amulet over my head and takes a deep breath of air. Almost like he had been holding his breath. I eye him strangely and step around him, my foot landing on a makeshift bed.

“Uh, what’s this?” I raise a brow. He smirks at me.

“Ok, I know you will tell me, no but, I don’t like the idea of you staying in here alone when he is still on pack grounds and can get around undetected.”

“Hmmm...” my heart clenches at his thoughtfulness.

“I mean, if you want you can have the bed.” he smiles at me.

“Oh, you mean I can sleep in the bed that is mine?” I pretend to be flattered “My, what a proper gentleman,”

Wade smirks and crawls into his little nest of blankets.

“Hah! I’m already in bed, so you have to get the lights!” he smirks, looking like a giddy child and I chuckle at him.

I never know what to expect from him.