

Chapter 126 - He Stole My Heart, I Stole His Child

Bailey POV

A wolf. I am a werewolf, at last. No, not a werewolf.

I am a Lycan.

My son told me this would happen, as did the goddess. When the power in the blood from the dagger seeped into my soul, even in the blackness that consumed me in my death, I knew. I knew my son was with me. I knew we were saved. I knew that the world would be changed forever.

My son. My extraordinary, brave, and intangibly amazing son saved us, just like I knew he would.

My body feels strong, capable, like nothing could threaten me again. The weight that felt like it was crushing me before my death is gone. Despite my massive size, and being heavily pregnant, I feel lighter than ever before. There are no more strains on my body or my soul from the curse. I didn't realize how heavy the curse really was on me until I was saved from it. Without the burden of it crushing me from the inside out, I feel invincible. I feel like this is what I was born to become.

Taegan looks hauntingly beautiful in his beast form, but I can still see my little boy watching me adoringly in his glowing crystal blue eyes. The power in him is just like I thought it would be. I remember feeling this same power in him in my last few dreams. Those dreams were almost intangible to me before, but now they are all coming back to me. The veil on my human mind was lifted when my son changed me.

When I hear my mate's questioning voice calling my name, I look over and see him walking towards me, taking long but hesitant strides up the hill, his bloodshot eyes wide with disbelief. He is a mess, blood staining his neck and naked torso. His hair is full of debris and he has dirt smeared and caked all over his body. I want to go to him, but I need to get back to my human body first.

Taegan, or actually his Lycan counterpart, something I will have to get used to, helps me to figure out how to shift back. His magic latches onto me and guides me through the process, creating the guiding sensations in my limbs and body, showing me how to focus my mind to force the shift.

When I am back to being human, I'm relieved to see that my son is too. I want to pull him to me and cherish the feeling of him in my arms, but that will have to wait. I can tell by the way he is hurrying to a neatly folded pile of clothes that he wants to get dressed before he does anything. I'll have to wait to smother him with my love and praise until later.

Plus, his father is staring at me like I am a ghost. I need to reassure my mate that I am alive, our daughters are safe, and everything will be okay. I don't know if he will believe me, or even forgive me after everything we went through tonight, but I need to make him my first priority right now.

When he is standing before me, staring down at me, like he doesn't know what to do or how to react, I try smiling hesitantly up at him. "I told you I would be okay," I whispered.

His eyebrows pulled down deeply, his mouth going slack. He raised a hand, placing it on the side of my face, gently at first, like he was scared I wasn't really there, and touching me would make me disappear. A strangled gasp leaves him, and he grips my face suddenly in both of his hands, pulling my face up to meet his as his mouth covers mine in a fevered frenzy.

The sparks between us are stronger than before, causing both of us to get lost in the sensation of the restored bond. My taunt belly is pressing against him, the babies kicking inside me, but not distracting either of us from the relief of being together. Both of us are alive, and now free from this curse.

I don't realize either of us are crying until we pull away from one another, each of us panting for breath while moisture falls from our eyes. A broken sob leaves him. He rests his forehead on mine, his arms wrapping tightly around me, like he will never let me go.

After tonight, I'm sure he won't. I'm okay with that. I even think that I deserve to be locked in our bedroom for a few days after all the deceptive behavior I had to display to prevent my mate from taking matters into his own hands and risking his life. I'm not sorry for doing it. I'd do it a thousand times again as long as the outcome remained the same. Axel is very much alive with me, no matter how pissed at me he might be after this.

At least he is alive. I can handle his anger. I can handle the consequences of deceiving him. I could never handle losing him.

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Axel POV

She's alive. She's not fucking dead. She's alive.

When I felt the bond flickering inside me, the threads that bound us that I thought were forever broken fusing back together, that's when the fog of madness, the need to kill, to avenge my mate rescinded, and I was finally able to register the words my dad was trying to say to me.

Taegan was back and he was saving his mom.

When I looked up at the cliff and I saw the giant monstrous beast standing over my once dead wife, I knew it was my son. It's strange, because he was unrecognizable to me, all except his eyes. Those eyes were a window into his soul. Not just his soul. I could see and sense that there was another presence with him now. A fierce, supreme presence, one that would scare the shit out of anyone else.

Not me. That creature was my son. He had come to save his mom, just like she told me he would.

I think it was his scent, or maybe it was just my father's intuition inside me. I just knew, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the giant creature who had just plunged a fancily engraved knife into my once dead wife's chest was Taegan, and everything really was going to be okay.

I should have felt angry, murderous seeing the knife lodged into my mate's chest, but I could start to feel her in the bond, the sensations coming from her building by the second. There was no pain. No anguish. There was something holy about the power surging through her and it was all originating from her chest; from that knife stabbing her there.

I watched in wonder, no longer fighting my dad for freedom. I was completely still and just watching Bailey transform into something else. I could feel it. I could feel her. I could feel the power growing inside her, and it almost took my breath away. I was never able to feel her this strongly before. I could feel her in the bond before, but not like this.

She was turning into a wolf.

No, not a wolf. A wolf, even an alpha wolf, is too weak to describe the power I feel building and expanding inside her. She was something divine. She was something holy, created in the heavens itself. As the transformation took over her body on the outside, I was in awe of how divine that creation actually was.

She was glorious. Beautiful. She glowed with a heavenly radiance that I could never describe. She was as beautiful in this new form as she was in her human form. From her fluffy cheeks on her face to the fluffy cheeks of her ass, she was stunning, and I just laid on the ground gaping at how alive and how stunning she truly was.

She looked like an angel in the form of a wolf.

Fuck, was I dead? Is that why I can feel Bailey the way I can right now? Am I dead?

No. If I was dead, my fat-ass father wouldn't be on top of me, crushing me right now, pinning me to the ground. He's staring at Bailey and Taegan in fascination too. I shift back to human form and roll out from under him while it takes him a few more seconds to realize I'm not fighting him anymore.

I want my mate. I want to see if she's real. If she's really alive.

She ends up shifting back to her beautiful true form before I finish making my way up the hill. I could feel her. Feel the shift overtaking her, but it is shadowed by this omnipotent energy, which makes it harder for me to believe that she is really okay now. Doubt fills me, my thoughts going back to thinking I might really be dead and she is an angel in heaven.

When I'm standing before her, reaching out to touch her and I can feel that she is real, an overwhelming happiness explodes inside me.

She's alive. She is real and alive.

Fuck, I've never been so relieved in my life. The emotions inside me are going haywire. My mouth is on hers, absorbing every feel of her, inhaling all of her vanilla scent. She's really alive. Fuck, I thought my world was over.

She is crying, but not like I am. My sobs are choking me, my face burning and itching from the endless tears falling from my bloodshot eyes. I went through hell tonight, and I thought the worst. The absolute worst. Nothing could ever describe the feeling of your mate and the bond being torn away from you, and the feeling of your mate slowly dying and being able to do nothing.

"Why?" I choked out, "Why, Bailey?" I shook her slightly with my crazed confusion. She knew. She had to have known that this would happen. That's why she felt so off today. Why didn't she tell me?

"I love you too much," she says softly, stroking my face. "I couldn't choose a future that didn't have you."

I stroked her hair back from her face, furrowing my brows in confusion.

"Axel," she places her hand over mine, "If I told you I was going to die tonight, what would you have done? Even if I told you the rest, that I wouldn't be dead for long, and that our son would come back and save me, what would you have done?"

My insides twist just hearing her say that she died. It's a nightmare I've had for years after hearing of the curse. I swore that I would never let it happen. If it came down to it, I would die in her place. I would find some way to take her place. Her dying was something unacceptable in any aspect to me.

That's why.

That's why she didn't tell me.

"I'm so mad at you," I told her in a strained whisper. The words are empty, my relief and gratitude too great to feel much of anything else.

“I’m mad at myself too, but I’m not sorry. I can’t live without you, Axel.”

A choked sob escaped me, my eyes closing as I soaked in her presence, absorbing all the love radiating out of her. “I can’t live without you either, Bailey. But, please, don’t you ever fucking put me through that again.”

“Never again,” she whispers, staring up at me with those big, luminous eyes, now tinged in gold. “Now, I’m just like you. I can’t wait to mark you later.”

A humorless huff of a laugh leaves me. Shit. My mate can finally mark me. I can already feel our bond becoming stronger, and I can’t wait to see how it feels to be connected to her fully.

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Max POV

Taegan grabs my hand and starts to lead me down the hill. I try not to cringe away, feeling the power and magic still flowing out of him. He had just stabbed his mother with this hand. My grandson is ruthless.

Shit, I’m going to think twice before telling him ‘no’ about anything anymore. I’m fully leaving that to his parents now.

Seems I’ll be busy being a parent myself again now anyway.

We pass Katherine and the vampire lord cunt on the way down, Katherine stopping to welcome Taegan back and thanking him for coming when he did.

Taegan surprised all of us by letting go of my hand and going to her, giving her a big hug and thanking her for taking care of his mom for him. She is all flustered now, and I think if she could cry, she would be. Antonio leads her to continue walking up the hill, bundles of clothes in his hands. He hands me a pair of sweatpants with a nod, then they continue up to my son and daughter-in-law.

“Still hate that fucker,” I muttered, slipping the sweats on, lifting my knees to my chest to stretch the fabric since it was too small for my size. I know he could hear me but he didn’t react. Katherine does, though. She turns and glares at me before turning her nose up and continuing up the hill.

“Be nice, grandpa. He saved mom,” Taegan huffs, pulling on my hand again.

“I thought you saved your mom with your magical stabbing bullshit,” I grumbled.

“Language,” he narrows his eyes at me, “You’re about to meet Grandma Thyra’s son. Don’t say bad words for at least 3 sentences when you meet Rian. You look scary enough as it is.”

“Kid, you are the last person on earth that can accuse someone else of looking scary. Don’t feed me that bullshit.”

Shit, he’s right, though. I want to make a good first impression. “Fuck, I’m meeting her brother too, aren’t I?” I asked, looking down the hill at the large fairy man standing next to my mate and her son. He must feel my eyes on him, because he looks up, scrutinizing me, and I suddenly feel self-conscience of my rough fucking appearance.

“Yep,” Taegan, the brat, laughs at me. I growl, but then sigh. What the fuck is the fairy going to do? I’m already mated with Thyra. I’d like someone to try to take her from me. I straighten my shoulders and hold my head high, trying to look more confident than I feel right now, covered in mud, blood and other shit. I at least look better than my son. Axel looks like complete shit.

Everyone does. This was not a pretty battle. Vampires and werewolves are getting medical help from Archie and the medics that just showed, many apologizing to one another. I really do need to thank Antonio. He sacrificed a lot to help Bailey tonight. I still don’t like him, but I appreciate what he did.

Taegan runs off when we reach the bottom of the hill, waving high to several of the warriors, most of them looking at him like he’s about to sprout two fucking heads. I can’t say that I blame them. He came to a stop by Addison, and even though I wanted to go to Thyra and meet her son, I couldn’t when I saw my granddaughter lying on the ground unconscious. Thyra seems aware and smiles at me in understanding before I jog the distance to Aly.

Addison has a young vampire cradled in her arms, sitting on the cold ground beside Aly. Aly is bundled in a thick blanket to protect her from the cold winter night air, but the girl isn’t. I know she’s a vampire, but she still has to be cold in this weather. I’m freezing my nuts off.

I dip down and lift Aly in my arms and Taegan looks at the girl Addison is holding, scrutinizing her face.

“Miss Addison? I have to let my Lycan come forward and kiss her eyes. Don’t freak out, okay?”

Taegan could probably sense Addison’s apprehension of Taegan after his little display on the cliff. She still nods, shifting the girl on her lap to give Taegan better access. Taegan’s eyes began to glow that eerie fucking blue that will probably haunt my dreams now, then he dips his head and places gentle, lingering kisses on both the girl’s eyes.

When he pulls away, she sucks in a haggard breath, her eyes fluttering open as she begins to pant, her chest heaving with surprise. She turns her head in every direction with jerky movements, then her eyes fall on my grandson.

“You,” she gasped, “Did you.....did you talk in my head?”

“Yep,” he laughs, a big smile on his face, “I said, don’t fall in love with me. I’m only kissing you this once to save you.”

She makes an appalled face and I roll my eyes. He may be some freaky monster on the inside now, but he is still the same smartass flirt.

Addison's face broke into a heartfelt smile, full of alleviation and tenderness, resting her face on the side of the girl's. "Thank the goddess you're okay," she whispered, making the girl even more flustered.

Taegan pulled on my pant leg, pulling the too small sweats down a little in the process, but with my hands and attention focused on Aly, I didn't bother trying to pull them back up. Everyone can be graced with the sight of my crack for a few minutes. I kneel on one knee so Taegan can reach his sister, and he repeats the process. I can tell he is being more tender and loving to Aly, even the thing inside of him he calls his Lycan is watching her with a loving expression.

My Aly sucks in a breath, her eyes popping open. She looks around and when her eyes land on me, the smile that spreads on her face makes my breath catch.

"Gi-paw! My gi-paw!" she squeals, wiggling free from the blanket to grab hold of me. I squeezed her against my chest, tears filling my eyes. I missed this little girl so much.

"I'm back, baby girl," I whispered roughly.

"My gi-paw! You bring Aly peg-sus?"

I choked on a laugh. Fuck, looks like I'm buying a fucking pony soon.

"Aly, what about me?" Taegan says, pulling on the blanket to get her attention. She turns and looks at him, then squeals excitedly, reaching out to go to him, yelling, "Tay Tay". I let her go to him, needing a moment to get my crying under control.

Annoying fucking snickering behind me catches my attention, and I turn to see Casey and Nate staring at my ass.

"He came back with a fucking tramp stamp," Casey elbows his father-in-law.

"With his mate's name on it," Nate holds a hand over his mouth to try and stop his annoying fucking laughs.

"It's so pretty."

"His sister has my name in the same place."

At that, I turn and growl at them, about to rip Nate's fucking head off for having the fucking nerve to take shit about my sister the second he gets done checking out my ass.

"Oooh, the alpha looks happy to see you. He missed you," Casey elbows Nate.

“He’s looking at you, you little shit,” Nate tells him back.

“Both your asses are about to find out just how much my foot missed being lodged inside of them if you don’t quit running your flabby cunt-shaped mouths-”

“Grandpa!” Taegan kicked my shin. I growled, looking down at him, but he nodded his head to the side of us with a smirk.

I looked in that direction to see my mate pressing her lips together, her eyes wide with amusement. In front of her is a little boy who looks so much like her it’s uncanny, and beside her is the man who is obviously her brother and the Fairy king.

“Fuck,” I muttered, then winced as I slipped up again.

Taegan is chortling beside me. Aly is pulling on my arm to get my attention, and I lift her from my grandson’s arms, taking her thick blanket too to help cover some of my filthy chest. Nate and Casey are snickering like teenage fucking girls, and I swear to myself that they are both eating shit later for fucking with me right now. It’s not the fucking time for their shit.

“Mom, is that him?” the little boy looked up at her. She rests her hands together against his chest and nods. He looks impressed, making me feel better for a moment, until my eyes move to the other person standing with my mate.

“Brother,” Thyra smirks at me, then looks up at the man who is exuding so much power and disapproval, “This is Alpha Max Kissinger. My mate with a dirty mouth but a pure and loving heart.”

“And a tramp stamp,” Nate snorts.

Shit, am I going to fuck him up later for that.

2.47 He's Mine Too

Chapter 127 - He Stole My Heart, I Stole His Child

4 weeks later.....

Thyra POV

“Mom, do we really have to go over there?” Rian asks me, his voice whiny and reluctant.

I pressed my lips together, then let out a heavy sigh. Adjusting to living here for Rian has been hard, but I'm determined to make it work. Max is doing his best trying to make it work too, being extremely patient with Rian's sometimes rude behavior. It's helping a lot, because Rian actually loves Max, but Rian is still weary every time he knows we are about to be around a lot of others in the pack. Pack life is very different from the fairy courts. Hell, human life in this world is very different from the fairy courts. Rian is used to the luxuries of a prince, and life as just my son and the stepson to an Alpha wolf has been a hard adjustment.

"Why don't you want to go?"

He scrunches up his nose. "They are just so loud and uncivilized."

I almost snorted. He's not wrong, but that is exactly why I love it here. No one puts on airs or uses fake niceties. This is a simpler, more honest environment. "I like loud and uncivilized," I smiled at him, "It will be fun."

He pouts his lips, "Fine. If Taegan is there, I guess it will be fine."

Even though Rian is having a hard time adjusting, he is getting along really well with Taegan. Taegan really didn't give him a choice in the matter. He told Rian, "We're friends because I can't think of you as my Uncle. You're coming over tomorrow to play Mario Kart with me, Callum and Adam."

After that, Rian was only eager to do something if he knew Taegan would be there too. Taegan is very dominant in his friends' group, and I think Rian needed that. He wanted someone to tell him, no, demand of him that he was going to be his friend and have fun with him. He may be a prince, but he is still unsure of his place in the world, and having someone like Taegan step up and tell him exactly where his place was at any given moment made him feel less uneasy.

I start packing the food I made into thermal bags, while Rian is sitting at the breakfast bar watching, fiddling with the gaming device Taegan made Max buy him, when Max comes stomping inside in a huff, kicking the snow off his boots by the door.

"Fucking shit, its cold," he growls. He notices us after a few seconds, then smiles lazily. "Oh, good. You both are ready. Let me get clothes on that are not covered in sweat and muck, then we can go."

I smirked knowingly at him. "Did you guys get it done?"

He grins smugly. "Oh yeah. Axel should be pulling in any second with the other part of the surprise."

"What surprise?" Rian asks.

Max chuckles deeply, coming over to ruffle his hair and kiss the top of Rian's head. Rian acts like he doesn't like it, pushing his hand away, but he can't hide the happiness in his eyes every time Max shows him fatherly affection. I can't either. It makes my heart throb every time.

"You'll have to wait to find out," Max tells him before coming over to me in the kitchen. He cradles my face between his hands, kissing me deeply, too deeply in the presence of Rian, but Max isn't one to hold back his affection.

"Mmh, I feel better now," he smirks after pulling away from me, "That heated me right up."

"Gross," Rian sticks out his tongue, making us laugh.

Max starts walking back to our room to change, and Rian hops off the stool to follow him, still pestering him about the surprise.

I know what it is. It was a team effort from all the men to get it up and ready in 4 weeks. Axel wanted it ready before Bailey gave birth, and with hard work they got it done. Rian will love it, and I love Max for making sure the surprise was for him as much as the other kids. He has stepped up to the role of father, exceeding the chosen task. That's what it was for Max. A choice, and he chose to love Rian as his own son.

I was worried when they first met. My brother didn't seem to like Max and his rough demeanor much, but Rian was fascinated with him from the start. The first thing he asked was "Is that blood in your beard?" Max tried to rub it out with a gruff, "Yeah," but then Rian said, "Wow, you were the one fighting that big one. You must be the strongest one here."

That was all it took for Max. He was smitten with the praise and Rian was smitten with him. No matter what my brother thought about him, I knew he wouldn't care. Rian was his only concern.

Saying bye to my brother was a scene. He seemed reluctant to leave me and Rian, and I could feel his yearning to bring us back with him, but he never voiced it. That can only mean that he knew this was where we were meant to be. He gave Max a very firm handshake, both men measuring each other's worth in the act, then he left to go back to his kingdom with the promise to both me and Rian he would visit. I think that was also a slight threat to Max, but if Max cared, it didn't show.

"Come on, dad. You can't leave me in suspense. That's rude," I heard Rian tell Max as they both came back out of the bedroom, Max in new, clean clothes with an amused look on his handsome face.

"I'm a rude guy. Ask your mom," he snickers.

Oh, yeah, he is downright rude 90% of the time. I love it. I wouldn't have him any other way.

"Rian, go get on your shoes. We need to go," I told him.

He grunts disapprovingly. “You have to tell me in the car,” he tells Max, running off to the door to slip on his shoes.

“Boots today, Rian. You’re going to need your boots,” Max tells him.

Rian made a horrified expression. “We are going to be outside?”

“For a bit, yeah. Just to see your surprise.”

Rian sighs, “This surprise had better be amazing.”

“I hope so. I put a lot of time and thought into it, especially yours.”

Rian blushes, feeling guilty about his sour attitude. I know Max wasn’t offended, just gently helping Rian to realize that he was the one acting rude right now.

“I’m sure I will like it,” Rian mutters. “No, I’ll love it. I know I will.”

Max grins, coming over to get the food bags from me and another kiss, then walking back to get his boots back on after leaving me breathless. “I know you will too.”

When we get to the Alpha house, Rian is quick to run off to Taegan’s room, where I hear multiple kids yelling. Probably getting excited about a game. Max leaves me at the door, waving at Bailey quickly as she blows him a kiss, then runs around the other side of the packhouse to help Axel and Nate with the surprise.

Archie is in the kitchen making coffee, talking with Phoebe. He had taken her under his wing to start tutoring and mentoring how to be a Beta, since Taegan demanded rather forcefully that that’s what she was meant to be. Phoebe didn’t know how to react at first, but he had a private meeting with her and after which she took the opportunity head on. She is eagerly training to become a Beta now.

Taegan wouldn’t tell us what he told her in the meeting they had, and when Addison and Stephanie asked Phoebe, she wouldn’t tell them either. She just said she knew she wanted to do it and would work hard to be worthy of the title.

After Taegan woke her, curing her from the danger of becoming a rogue with the ‘rebirth’, which is what he calls it, she doesn’t have the aura of a normal vampire. I’m curious what Rieka and Taegan have in store for her. I’ve learned to just trust them. Whatever is going to happen doesn’t need any of our interference or they will tell us. We have all learned that the hard way.

Bailey is sitting back in a recliner, pillows stuffed on either side of her. She is so pregnant now. Just lying back in the chair, you can see the twins doing cartwheels inside of her, their little hands and feet leaving white outlines on her stretched, exposed belly.

Poor thing. She can't stand to have fabric over her belly unless it's super soft. She says everything is itchy and has taken to just wearing cropped shirts or sports bras with fuzzy cardigans over them.

She tries to get up to welcome me, but Courtney pushes her back down with a stern look, and her mother starts to get all flustered over her, trying to get her arranged to be comfortable once again. I hurried to bend over her and give her a hug so she didn't try to get up again.

"You poor girl," I murmured in her ear, then stood back up. "One more day."

"It can't come fast enough," she groans. "My poor bladder."

"Your poor everything," Quinn snickers. "Your mate's powerful sperm is to blame."

"Y'all talking about me?" Casey comes walking in from the side door with Rick, both of them with babies in their arms.

Courtney giggles, sending him a seductive look that makes me think they have a secret between them that will come out soon. They just had a baby too. Her father is going to wring Casey's neck.

"Your mate isn't the one with two babies treating her bladder like a spring board right now," Bailey narrows her eyes at him, "And I would wait to say anything until after these two are out of me. I'm not going to be happy for you guys until then."

I knew it. Bailey's senses are stronger than anyone else's except Taegan's now.

"Rude much?" Casey huffs.

"What are you talking about?" Quinn asked, looking between the three of them, while taking Bethany from her mate. Rick seems reluctant to give the little girl up, but Bethany dives for Quinn with a giggle and "mama", so he has to let her go.

"Nope. Two days," Bailey stops Courtney before she can tell them. "Two more days then you can tell. You guys need to have a gold plate engraved for Nate's plaque first, anyway."

"Oh my gosh!" Quinn squeals, catching on. "Are you....?"

"Two days!" Bailey yells, but Quinn is already hopping on her feet with Courtney, making baby Bethany giggle.

"Congrats, man," Rick pats Casey's back.

"Don't tell the old man," Casey grins, "I enjoy telling him almost as much as I fucking enjoy making them."

“Gross,” Rick turns his nose up at Courtney and Courtney sticks her tongue out at him.

When Addison and her mate show up with Lucy, who is as thrilled to see me as I knew she would be, Courtney and Quinn start to bring out all the food, laying it on the counters like a buffet with Archie’s help. Rick and Casey were given the task of kicking the 7 boys off the video games and Stephanie and I helped get all the kids washed and ready to eat at the table. The house feels overrun with little people and I love it. Every time Aly calls me ‘Ty-ma’, I can understand why Max spoils her so. I’ll give her anything she asks for when she looks up at me with those big blue eyes and calls me that name with her little whimpering voice. Not just me, but Rian too, tends to go out of his way to make her happy. I watched the boy give her a piggyback ride pretending to be a pegasus for 10 minutes the other day just because she started to whimper about Nelly being back home in the fairy realm. Even now, he’s coming to the table and taking the chair beside Aly before someone else can.

“Wow, it smells amazing in here,” Axel says as he, Max and Nate come in from the cold. He stops by Bailey, resting his hand on her belly and whispering something in her ear with a smirk. She blushes and smacks his shoulder before telling him to go make her a plate because she’s not moving again until she has to pee.

Max comes over to kiss me, then calls out to Katherine, “Someone is waiting to talk to you outside.”

She looks at him with confusion, but then gets up to see who it is. I look up at Max expectantly, wanting to know too, so he whispers in my ear, “The leech fucker brought 3 surprises for Addison and Steph’s kids. He just wanted to tell Katherine bye before he headed back.”

“Aww, that’s too bad. He should stay.”

He grimaces. “We’re tolerating him again because of his help with Bailey, but I don’t think Axel can stand being around him for that long. He sure as shit won’t be happy breaking bread with the fucker.”

I groan, but I understand. When I found out about what happened with Antonio in the clinic while we were gone, I was pissed too. It was typical Antonio behavior. The behavior he has displayed the past few weeks, though, has been anything but typical Antonio behavior. He sent gifts to Addison to give to the kids, even buying her a new Suburban which she surprisingly accepted. Max told me that Addison would never accept gifts from her father in the past.

He seemed to be trying to change, demanding nothing in return. I hope he and Katherine can repair their relationship in the future. I would probably not have wished that for him before I met Max, but now I can’t even imagine being without the one I love by my side. I want them to be happy too, especially Katherine. She is Joseph’s daughter, afterall. I know my friend would want his daughter to be happy.

Everybody eats, most of the women eating in the living room with Bailey to keep her company, while the men struggle with the kids at the table. It is comical to see all these big, tough wolfmen

being the caretakers of little children in this setting. Fiona and I are the only ones helping the men with our grandkids, but neither one of us complains. Fiona only had one child too, it seems, for medical reasons, so she cherishes any time with her grandbabies, just like I'm beginning to with Aly and Taegan, and I'm sure I will with the new babies when they come tomorrow.

When all the kids are done, Rian and the twins, Preston and Peter, lead the riot to demand their surprise. They have almost all the kids chanting "SUR-PRISE, SUR-PRISE," even Aly and Conner. Bethany, who is sitting on Rick's lap and sharing bites of his food, is not joining in the chaos. She seems content just watching it and getting cuddles from her dad. Taegan is grinning ear to ear, and I suspect the kid already knows what's going on. He always knows what's going on in and around the pack.

"Calm your horses, everybody. Damn," Casey smirks.

"Yeah, reign it in, kids. Geez," Nate grins.

"Ready to take them out there, old man?" Axel laughs, cleaning the barbeque sauce off his daughter's face.

"I don't know," Max tried to keep a smile off his face. "I'm kind of full. I think I'm more ready to take a nap."

"Aww, come on, dad. I waited so patiently," Rian pouts at him.

"Hmm, well, since you've been so patient..." he scratches his chin, pretending to think deeply, weighing his options, "I guess we can go out and see it now," he smiles.

"Yay!" All the kids cheered, getting up to grab their shoes and get ready to go out in the snow. Taegan was the only one taking his time, stopping by his mom to make sure she was fine since she was staying back with Katherine, Fiona with baby Casper, and Lucy before he headed out. Axel checks on her too one more time, making sure her water is full and she doesn't need help waddling to the bathroom before he heads out the door.

To my delight, Aly wanted me to hold her on the way out of the house and around the packhouse. Rian and Max both pout, but she is firm that she wants 'Thy-ma' to hold her outside. She wants me to use my magic to keep her warm in the snow, but I'm not telling them that. Rian could do the same, and Max would just go buy a heated blanket or something. I enjoy holding her close when I can. Everyone is always fighting for her attention, so I gotta take what I can get.

Coming around the packhouse, our large group of rowdy kids and adults walked up the new trail Max had plowed this morning to the stables and corral the men had been working on the past several weeks. Most of the kids looked confused, some gasping and saying "wow", not sure what exactly it was they were 'wowing' at. Taegan is laughing, then grabs Rian's hand and they sprint off together ahead of everyone else.

"What dat, gi-paw?" Aly turns to Max.

“Come here and I’ll tell you,” he smirks at me, holding his hands out to the little girl. She thinks about his offer, gripping my shoulders tightly as I use my magic to recede the warmth I’m giving her just a little bit to sway her to stay with me. She shivers, then shakes her head giggling.

“Thy-ma tell Ay?” She tilts her head at me.

“Of course I will, baby. I bet we can beat your grandpa there.”

Max’s eyes sparkled with the threat of the challenge. Before Aly and I can start running, he sprints off with a loud laugh, avoiding running into everyone else. Aly giggles and squeals as we chase him, and right before he reaches the stable doors, I flick my fingers, making my mark zap to life on his ass. He falls down on one knee with a loud roar, gripping his ass cheek. He’s unable to recover before Aly and I sprint past him, touching the barn door first.

“Did you really think you stood a chance?” I chuckled, spinning Aly around as she cheered about winning.

“How could I ever stand a chance with your ass zapping finger powers?” he growls.

“Oh, my,” Nate reaches down and smacks Max on the side of his ass he isn’t holding, making him snarl. “I would love to hear all about this ass zapping finger power that you got, my favorite sister-in-law. Teach it to Fiona for me. She likes it when we get kinky.”

Max growls at the mention of his sister.

“Gotta have the tramp stamp for it to work, Uncle Nate,” Axel patted his shoulder and smirked down at his father. He walks over to me and holds out his hands to Aly, and she eagerly goes to him now that we’re out of the cold.

“Really?” a slow grin spreads on Casey’s face as he comes to stand by his father-in-law. “So it’s a tramp stamp and like an electric dog collar.”

"That's worse than being fucking whipped," Nate snickers.

“Son of a fucking duck, what the hell? Do you both have a fucking death wish, or just a fucking word count you have to reach by the end of each day?” Max pulls himself off the ground, flinches at both the men, making them jerk back in surprise. Casey even screams, hiding behind his father-in-law. They look all buddy buddy right now, and I’m tempted to tell Nate that his partner in crime got his daughter pregnant again. I don’t like them picking on my mate. That’s my job.

Max pulls me to his side, and I wrap my arms around his waist. “Sorry for doing that in front of everyone. I was just thinking about winning.”

He smiles lazily down at me, “Honey, you can do whatever you want to my ass any time you want,” he then smoothly dips down and whispers in my ear, “As long as I get the same privileges.”

I bite my lip as dirty thoughts enter my brain. “I think Rian needs a sleepover with Taegan tonight,” I told him in the link.

He chuckles deeply. “I think my daughter-in-law is giving birth in the morning. We might have to have the kids with us for a few days.”

“Shit,” I said out loud, having forgotten.

He grins, then leans down again to whisper, “Maybe he can ride his surprise with Taegan for a few hours and we can sneak back to take care of that ass real quick.”

“You don’t do anything quick,” I stared up at him, wanting so much to say yes.

“You’re right, honey. I don’t. We will figure something out.”

Fuck, I love this dirty, dirty man and his deep, sexy voice. I forget we’re surrounded by other people for a minute.

“Keep it in your pants, you two. There are kids present,” Axel teases us, making me blush.

“Like you fucking do, you bleached-bearded brat,” Max growled at his son, making Axel chuckle.

Each stall is labeled with the child’s name who is getting the horse or pony inside. Axel got Aly a white pony, currently wearing ribbons in its mane. She is squealing so loudly in excitement that Axel has to cover his ears, then he has to try and calm the pony when it gets spooked.

Taegan walked right to his stall, not even checking the name, and inside was a beautiful and sleek black steed. It’s huge and has beautiful feather-like hair, even around its feet. A normal 6-year-old, well, 7-in-two-weeks-year-olds, would be apprehensive about approaching such a large animal. Not Taegan. He walks right up to it, gliding his sure hands down its sides and whispering to it.

Rian is dancing on his feet in front of his stall, eager to open it but waiting for us.

Not us. Max. He wants Max to go in with him.

Max lets me go and comes next to Rian, placing his hand on his shoulder. “You ready?”

Rian nods eagerly, making both of us laugh.

“I searched all over the continent to find this girl. She’s a sweetheart, but fierce when she needs to be. She was the prettiest one I’ve ever seen and without a doubt the smartest. Reminds me of someone we both love, so I figured we would both naturally love her.”

He winks at me, making my heart flutter. I love this man so much.

Max opens the stall door, and inside is a beautiful chestnut-colored mare. She nods her head, blowing out hot steam from her nostrils like she is excited about finally meeting Rian. Rian grins widely, then looks up to Max, wrapping his arms around his waist.

“She’s perfect! I love her!” he exclaims. “Thank you so much, dad.”

“Yes,” I grinned, coming up behind Max and wrapping my arms around his thick, firm waist after Rian calmed down enough to start stroking the horse’s nose. “Thanks for being such a good dad to him.”

He turned his head to grin down at me, “You don’t have to thank me for that. He’s mine now, just like you.”

2.48 Forever Love

Chapter 128 - He Stole My Heart, I Stole His Child

3 weeks later....

Axel POV

“Are you sure you don’t mind keeping them all for the night?” I asked Thyra and my dad, thinking that they were both crazy for offering.

“Boy, if you don’t move your ass and get out of here, I’ll move it for you,” Dad growls at me, then goes back to cooing and sweet talking to Lauren, like he’s not a total fucking grouch.

Thyra sends him a disapproving look, then grins at me, cradling Leah against her. “We’re fine. I’ve been looking forward to this for a while now. Don’t ruin it for me. Go enjoy time alone with your mate and leave us to enjoy time being grandparents.”

I hesitate at the door, looking into the living room to see Aly cuddling between the two boys on the couch, each of them with one of her arms in their lap, being forced to rub it while she watches the show Taegan just put on for her. Rian even lifts a piece of popcorn from his bowl

beside him and puts it in her mouth for her. She's got everybody but Bailey trained to do her bidding.

"Go," Thyra huffs at me. "We will be fine."

"Okay," I sighed, "Call me if it's too much. I can come right back."

"Fuck, Axel. Fucking go!" Dad growls, kicking the door shut right in my face.

"Jackass," I mutter.

"Annoying fucking brat," Dad mind linked me, having heard me. He has to share grandparent time with Katherine now, which he's been an ass about since she practically lives with us. He's been begging for time with them exclusively for a while now. It's funny that he doesn't mind sharing with Thyra, but will tug-o-war with Katherine for whichever baby she is holding when he comes over.

Fuck, I'm tired. I do probably look like shit too. Two babies means twice the work, around the fucking clock. I don't know how Bailey does it when I'm at work during the day. She has her mom to help her, but it's still a lot of work, especially with two other kids to look after.

Thankfully, Aly treats her new sisters like baby dolls and isn't very worried about sharing attention yet. I can see tantrums begin forming periodically, like when Dad is paying attention to the twins and not her, or when Katherine is singing a song while rocking one of the twins, but Taegan senses them too and will distract her.

He's always been mature for his age, but after getting back, that maturity has sky-rocketed. I feel, more than ever, that he is a grown man in a young boy's body. He says really intelligent things at times that completely throw me off, and he is always snickering to himself with his eyes glowing blue. He told us he's talking to his Lycan when he does that, but that concept is hard to grasp.

I wonder if this was how Bailey felt when she first learned that we were werewolves? It was hard for her to wrap her head around that for a while, thinking we were some freaky cult obsessed with teenage paranormal romance movies.

Taegan will sense the tantrum forming in Aly, and before she can even get her lip to fully quiver, he pops into the room with a "Hey, Aly, let's go do this," or "Hey, Aly. Let's go get a snack." We have even started to let him take Aly for walks by themselves. Bailey will start giggling at me whenever I get worried, telling me, "I doubt anyone is safer to be with than our son."

What I really find unbelievable is when Taegan will shift and let Conri, the creepy and colossal canine, out. The giant Lycan is just as gentle and loving to Aly as Taegan. Aly doesn't find him scary at all either. It's like she has two brothers in one body. Conri came out to train with the warriors for the first time a few weeks ago, and it took Aly running on the field from the

sidelines where she was supposed to be playing with Conner, running straight for her big brother's Lycan for the warriors to not fear my son any longer.

Conri stooped down, caught Aly mid-run, then threw her in the air while she squealed and giggled wildly. He spent the rest of training carrying her on his shoulders, acting like her living puppet as she pulled on his ears and told him where she wanted to go. He didn't look as scary with a tiny girl on his massive shoulders bossing him around and him acting all obedient. The warriors and other pack members quit being scared of Taegan after that. He never took offense to their behavior, but I was getting fucking pissed. I was about to kick major ass until that happened.

Now, everyone treats Taegan as they did before. The warriors even get brave occasionally and try to challenge his Lycan. No one has beaten him, but they're not too terrified to ask for a rematch.

I park my truck in my spot outside the house, furrowing my brows when I see all the nights are off. Katherine went to see Antonio tonight, but I thought Bailey would still be up waiting for me. Maybe she was too tired. She's probably already taking advantage of the night without kids and knocked out in bed.

Opening the front door, soft music drifts out of our bedroom, sounds of water lapping in the tub mixed with it.

Well, at least she is still awake. She's just taking advantage of bathing alone for the first time in weeks, it seems. I'm glad she's a shifter like me now. She has werewolf healing, so healing from her c-section from the twins only took her a few days. She was suffering for 6 weeks after Aly and couldn't take baths during that time.

I pulled off my shirt and walked into the bedroom, needing a shower too before I passed out, but when I walked into the bathroom, all thoughts of going to sleep were gone.

Bailey is in the bathtub, just like I thought she would be, but so is something pink buzzing under the water, lit up and glowing under the surface of the thick, fragrant bubbles.

Bailey's head is tilted back on the edge of the tub, her mouth slack, her body lightly swaying in the tub making the water move back and forth. She senses me and opens her eyes, biting her lip and grinning seductively. Her heavy breasts are floating on the water's surface. Her hand moves to pull at one of her erect nipples, making her moan.

"You're back. I thought I'd get myself warmed up for you," she whispers in a sexy husk, making my dick twitch painfully in my jeans.

"Is that a fucking vibrator?" I growled, pissed she's letting something else give her pleasure besides me.

She giggles, rocking her hips with more gusto, making water spill from the sides of the tub as she moans sweetly. She begins to pant, pulling more aggressively on her pebbled nipple, and the scent of her pussy leaking its delicious juices fills the air. She's huffing hoarsely, sucking in small desperate puffs of air, the light beneath the bubbles moving with the rhythm of her body. Her back arches and her eyes close as she whimpers with an orgasm.

Jealousy fills me. Even if it's for a fucking toy, I don't want anything to please my woman but me.

I growl deeply, taking long strides to get to the bathtub in 3 steps. I reached into the water and pulled the toy out of her, resisting the urge to lick it clean and nearly ripping it in half as I tried to figure out how to turn it off. This thing is going in the fucking trash. I don't know where or why the fuck she has it, but I'm about to show her exactly why she doesn't need it.

I tossed the offensive pink object across the bathroom, making it thud loudly against the wall before falling to the floor.

"Hey, that's mine," Bailey pouts.

"The fuck it is," I growled, bending down and lifting her from the bathtub, groaning when I could see how wet her pussy was from the thing. "Where the fuck did you get that?"

She giggles and shrugs, wrapping her hands around my neck. "You don't want to know."

"Yes I fucking do," I snarl, carrying her to the bathroom counter, setting her plump ass on the granite so I can unbuckle and pull down my jeans.

"Your cousin," she giggles as I make a disgusted face. I'm getting that brat back later.

Bailey's eyes are twinkling mischievously, making my anger rise. Fucking hell, she's playing with me right now. Her pussy is so wet, sweetening the air around us with her lusty aroma. I rubbed my aching cock up and down her slick folds, envy filling me that a toy made her get like this and not me. She wraps her legs around me, digging her wet heels into my ass, jerking me towards her and making my dick bury deep inside her tight pussy in a quick, forceful thrust. I groaned loudly, not expecting the sudden movement, and fucking just like that, I nut deep inside of her.

"Now we're even. Wanna see who can make the other get to 3 first?" Her hot breath fans over my ear, making a shiver run up my spine. She is clenching her pussy around my dick, milking me and making my lower body go fucking weak.

"You wanna play, baby, we will fucking play," I growled, lifting her by her plump ass, my hands bruisingly tight on her soft flesh. My mouth is on hers, my tongue moving against hers, swallowing her soft moans as I use my strength to start lifting and rotating her on my cock.

Fuck, it's been fucking weeks since we've had sex like this. Months, actually. Yeah, we would play lightly after the curse was lifted, and I'd try to make sure her needs were met every chance I could. I was still treating her like she was breakable, I guess, and didn't want to strain her too much. That's out the fucking window now.

We are kid free and I'm giving her my dick all fucking night. Screw sleep. I'll sleep in my office tomorrow if I fucking have to. I'm going to beat my wife at her little game, and then I'm going to drive every fucking orgasm I can out of her until the sun comes up.

I kicked off my pants that came all the way down to below my knees as I walked into our bedroom with my wife in my hands, my dick still plunged deep inside of her. I crawl on my knees up the surface of the bed, making her gasp as each thrust pushes deeper and deeper inside her pussy.

"I want to be on top," she whimpers as I begin to lay her wet body on the bed.

"I think you've had enough control for one night," I growled, dipping my head down to kiss her neck.

She giggles slightly, "Oh, Axel," she sighs. She wraps her legs around me, using a surprising amount of strength to twist us around, making her hover above me, a smirk on her seductive expression. I try to grab her waist to twist us back around, but she catches my hands, forcing them against the mattress on either side of my face. "I only let you think you have control, baby. This is my game."

Fuck, was she always this strong? No, she wasn't. She was pretty easy to dominate in the bedroom, but I can see that won't be the case any longer.

Her large tits are pressing into my face, the soft, pillowy flesh making my dick pulse as they bounce and they press into me. I love her curves. I love every inch of her perfect body, which is making it so much harder to hold back and not lose myself to the pleasure as she bounces on top of me. She is holding my hands tightly in hers as her round hips move and circle, moving up and down on my cock.

Even her pussy is soft and juicy, making controlling my lust impossible. She's lethal with her movements. Her breathing ragged and her face contorted with pleasure. Fuck, if I had use of my hands, I could rub her swollen clit until she exploded, but there was no getting out of her vice grip.

Unless.....

She's lost in her own sensations, moving like a fucking porn star on top of me. When her tits bounce near my mouth again, I suck her nipple into my mouth, biting hard on its peak. She screams out, her grip loosening enough for me to get free from her hold, and I quickly move one hand to her pussy, pinching her nerves tightly, my other hand doing the same to her tender nipple, making her milk leak out all over my chest.

She throws her head back with a scream, coming undone. Just in time too. I've reached my fucking limit as I empty my balls out inside of her at the same time.

I recover before her. Her first dick-induced orgasm in weeks seemed to be too much for her to process. While she was still comatose from her orgasm, I flipped us over, and started pounding into her, giving neither of us any time to catch our breath. I don't need it. Just watching her cum on top of me was enough to get me at full mass again, ready for more. I could never get enough of Bailey. She is like oxygen to me, and I didn't realize how much I was struggling to breathe until I walked into that bathroom and saw her pleasuring herself.

"This is my fucking pussy," I growl, lifting her legs and watching her thighs jiggle with each of my thrusts. "I'm the only fucking toy this pussy needs."

"Yes!" she cries, arching her back, gripping the sheets to try and keep herself in place. It's a losing battle. This game she started is too. I can already feel her walls tightening around me again. "Axel," she whimpers, reaching for me, "Come here."

I bent over her, kissing her lips, then started to trail my lips down to her neck, nibbling on my mark. She's so close. So fucking close to number three.

Right before she gets there, she grabs my shoulders, pulling me flat against her. I feel her mouth on my neck, and it isn't until I feel her teeth elongate that I realize what she's doing.

Her canines sink into my flesh, making my body sing as the sparks come alive inside me, shaking me to my very core. My insides are on fire, sweet tingles moving through each of my limbs with her venom and DNA.

She won. I'm coating her insides again with powerful spurts, my balls tightening so much, it feels like electricity is buzzing inside them.

"I won," she giggles after licking my new mark, making the wound close.

I can feel her. Oh, I can fucking feel her like never before. I can read every emotion running inside of her right now, and every single one is screaming her love for me. Tears began to flood my eyes, feeling her devotion and trust in me. She is mine, forever, and now everyone can see that I am hers.

"I love you, Bailey," I choked out, resting my head against hers.

She smiles sweetly, her dimples deep in her cheeks. "I love you too, Axel. You will always be able to feel my love for you now. You never have to feel uneasy again."

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Katherine POV

Lying in Antonio's bed, tangled in the sheets with him, basking in the afterglow of our lovemaking, a sated smile rests on my face. Tony kisses the back of my neck, then runs his nose down my spine, making me grin from the tenderness of his touch.

"I missed you in my bed, my love," he purrs seductively in my ear.

I bite my lips together to keep from saying "me too". I did miss this. I missed him. But I don't want him to think I am ready to come back yet. I don't know when I will ever be, but I know it is not yet the time.

The past several months with my daughter have been the past of my life. I finally feel like I have a second chance to do the right thing and be there for her. I'm not going to put anything before my daughter's needs ever again. As long as I feel like she wants me and needs me in the pack with her, and as long as her children, my grandchildren need and want me, I will be there for them.

I love Antonio, but I put him first for decades. I owe my daughter for all the times I wasn't there for her. I owe it to myself. I can have an eternity with Tony. I only have so much time with my daughter.

"How long can you stay, Rina?" he husks, his mouth moving to the sensitive spot behind my ear.

"Morning," I murmured, "I am going to Max and Thyra's to help with the babies in the morning."

"Mmh," he grunts, pulling me snuggly against him, his chest pressing into my back, making me squirm when I feel his member still excited against me.

He doesn't want me to go. I can feel it in him, but he won't say it. He never says it anymore. He just graciously takes any time of mine I can give him, never making me feel guilty for the time we have spent apart.

After the hospital incident, I spent weeks without contacting him. It wasn't until that night the curse was broken I even thought about starting to let him back into my life. It wasn't until Bailey told me to tell him thank you on her behalf, after he disappeared with his men without even saying goodbye, that I started to freely reach out to him again.

It started small. I called him to ask him to meet for a drink in town, in a private room at the back of the Beta's bar. We sat and talked, sipping on wine. I talked. He listened. I told him about my grandchildren, and about how Aly started to call me Kiki. He would ask questions about my life with my daughter, and seemed genuinely happy for me.

When I told him about Addison and Stephanie adopting the three vampire children, he asked me many questions about them, wanting to know what each child was like. He wanted to know everything about them, even what they liked and what sizes of clothes they wore. I know he



wanted to start building a relationship with Addison before, but he never showed interest in Stephanie. I think that is why she remained closed off to him.

That night, he asked me so many questions about Stephanie and the kids, then during the next week Addison kept getting deliveries for all of them, all gifts from her father.

She met with him a few times over the past several weeks, and I believe he even has a meeting with the entire family coming up soon. He didn't tell me any of this. Addison would come talk to me whenever I was visiting my mom. He wasn't trying to make up with his daughter and her family to impress me. I still haven't told him that I knew.

He even purchased three mares for the children a few weeks ago when I mentioned the men in the pack building the stables for the kids. He contacted Axel, bought the pack horse trailers and other equipment they would need, and asked nothing more than to include Addison and Stephanie's kids in the surprise too.

Axel told me all of that. Even though Tony was on pack lands that day, he never mentioned why he was there. He just asked me to meet him for dinner later that week. When I told him that Bailey was giving birth the next day, he just smiled and said congratulations. He then sent gifts for the twins and Bailey later that week, never telling me. Bailey mentioned it to me after opening them.

I reached out to him the following weekend, asking to have dinner. He excitedly agreed, and when the night was over, we parted ways, no more than a kiss on my hand between us. He never once asked for me to come back. I expected it and was nervous about how to respond, but it was a needless worry.

When Bailey told me that she wanted time alone with Axel tonight, she suggested that I have a date night with Tony instead of spending the night with mom, listening to her snore with QVC running on her TV all night. Chris and Dusty have practically moved in with mom now too, and spending the night with their muted grunts in one room, my mother's snoring in the other, I readily took Bailey's advice and called Tony, asking if his evening was free.

I expected to find evidence of other women being here, but there was nothing. Even all my belongings were as I left them years ago. I know he had many lovers at the same time before me, and I thought he would go back to that lifestyle without me around. He didn't. In the entire mansion, there was not even a hair from another female. Even the bed sheets had my scent lingering on them from the last time I slept there.

Tony really is changing.

"Are you tired, my love?" Tony whispers in my ear, "You have to get up early. You should get some sleep."

I turned in his arms, looking up into his handsome face. "I'm not nearly tired enough to sleep," I smiled seductively up at him. "Do you think you could help me out with that?"



He chuckles, kisses my head, pulling one of my legs up over his hip. “I’ll see what I can do.”

## 2.49 My Past, Her Future

# Chapter 129 - He Stole My Heart, I Stole His Child

Max POV

Today is the fucking day. I’ve been planning this shit for weeks and I want it to go fucking perfectly.

“Dad, where are we going?” Rian asks me, pulling on the hem of my shirt.

“Right now? To drop you off at the packhouse with your brother.”

He scrunches his nose. “It’s weird to think of Axel as my brother.”

“Why is it weird?” This is the first time he’s said it was weird. I thought he liked being Axel’s little brother.

He shrugs. “The kids at school said it was weird.”

I groaned deeply, wondering whose daddy I was going to be fucking up in the near future. “Do you think it’s weird that Axel’s your brother?”

He stares at the ground as we walk, kicking a rock out of the way. “I didn’t. I thought it was pretty awesome, but then people at school said it was weird that I’m only a year older than my nephew.”

“Huh,” I ran my hand down my face, “What did Taegan say?”

“Nothing. He isn’t in my class. He did tell a boy to apologize to me in the cafeteria once for calling me tinker bell, though. He said if he heard it again he would beat his daddy’s butt and make him watch.”

That’s my grandson. “Rian, if boys are trying to make you feel bad, they’re probably fucking jealous. You are the only kid in that school that can say you are a prince and the brother of their Alpha. You have many things that make you stand out, like your good looks and having the best looking mom there is.”

“I doubt they care about that,” he grunts.

“They better fucking not.” I huff. She’s mine. “What I’m saying is, they are trying to put you down to make themselves feel better. Tell them that, and if that doesn’t work, tell me who their dad is and I’ll beat their asses. I’ll make everyone watch.”

Rian laughs. “My uncle, the king, said violence is bad. He said it is only to be used in dire straits. Never for vengeance.”

I snort. The man beheaded a man for fucking with his sister. If that’s not vengeance, I don’t know what it is. “Yeah, yeah, that’s fine in some places, but this is a pack. There is a hierarchy and sometimes we have to forcefully remind people where they rank.”

“By beating up their parents?” Rian tilts his head.

“Sure,” I huffed, no longer following my own logic. I just know someone is getting their ass beat if kids keep picking on my kid.

“Why am I going to Brother Axel’s office?” Rian asks, making me smirk as it reminds me of the old nickname that Taegan once called his own father.

“Axel is taking you and Taegan to have fun before getting ready.”

“Ready for what?”

I smiled widely, “For your mother’s surprise.”

His eyes go wide, and a bright smile lifts his face. “The surprise? The one you asked for my uncle's help with?”

“That’s the one,” I chuckled.

Rian throws both of his hands up in the air, silently cheering. He has been helping me plan this for weeks too. Well, he helped pick out the ring and tried to help me get in contact with his uncle. Taegan was the one who really helped me get in contact with King Aengus. Rian and I tried for a week to figure out how, but then Taegan waltzed into my house one day, iPad in hand, and had Luna Carli from Miami on the other end.

Carli had connections with the Southern Fairy Queen, and was able to relay a message to Thyra’s brother. He came to visit me the following day, and I was able to finally ask him the question I’d wanted to for some time. He even agreed to be here tonight for Thyra’s sake. I can tell he still doesn’t give a shit about me, but he wants her to be happy.

Axel and Taegan are waiting for Rian outside the offices. Axel has that annoying smirk on his face he’s had every time he’s seen me for the last week. If I hear him call me old man while congratulating me one more time, I might choke him.

He starts to open his mouth, but I hold my finger up in warning. “Don’t you fucking say a word.”

“Geez, dad,” he tried not to laugh, “Can’t a man tell his father hi?”

“You can’t, dickhead,” I growled. “Don’t let your smartass attitude rub off on Rian. I’d like to have one son that doesn’t drive me fucking insane all the time.”

“Hmm, on that note, come on, Rian,” Axel starts pushing the boys towards his truck. “Let’s get you a milkshake while I tell you all about our big bad father’s fear of needles. We can go get our ears pierced together after I’m done telling the story of how he screamed like a girl when Archie had to give him an anti-venom shot once. Really lightened the mood during battle.”

“Axel,” I snarl.

“Ears not good? How do you think we would look with a belly button piercing?” Axel lifts up his shirt, looking down at his stomach.

“I think you won’t look as good as Miss Carli with one,” Taegan said.

“Who’s Miss Carli?” Rian asks.

“You’ll meet her one day,” Taegan grins, his eyes briefly turning that eerie blue glow, then going back to normal so fast, I almost missed it. I can tell by his smile that he is keeping something to himself.

I let them go, waving bye to the boys and flipping Axel off as they left the parking lot, getting annoyed when he responded by blowing me a kiss.

I hurried over to Bailey’s as she was waiting for me. She and Aly are helping me to get the dinner party ready while Katherine babysits the twins. Fiona took Thyra to a spa about 45 minutes from the pack. I hope Bailey and I can get done before they get back.

We drove together to town, heading for the pack’s dorms. The pack housing in town looks like a fancy hotel, it being a lot newer than the packhouse. There is a great room Bailey had organized to be set up with tables and chairs for a family dinner with everyone tonight. We just have to decorate it. Nate and all of his family are coming, including all his grandsons. Courtney is about ready to poop the new one out. If she goes into labor tonight, she had better cross her fucking legs and not sneeze, holding the kid in until I’m done. Archie, Rick, Quinn and their two little ones will be here. Addison and Steph won’t be there, though, but I think Phoebe is coming with Archie. Steph said the twin boys wouldn’t make it through the dinner without ruining the surprise.

Even Lucy agreed to come tonight, despite not liking Thyra very much. She is still convinced that Thyra had her eyes on Joseph, no matter how much we tell her it wasn’t like that. Thyra said to let her continue thinking it. She didn’t want to burden the old woman with the truth of why

Joseph and Thyra were together so often at the end of his life. Ignorance is bliss, she says. In this case she might be right.

Bailey does the finishing touches on the room, laying down table cloths, arranging the centerpieces, getting the flatware and table setting arranged, along with the name plates. Aly is helping by sampling the candy set in little bowls along the table's center. I do all the menial things she asks of me, wanting to help, but feeling like I'm lost most of the time. I'm sneaking candy with Aly in no time, just entertaining her and going over with Bailey what I plan on saying later.

The caterers came by the time we had the room ready, and Bailey shooed me away to head back home to get ready, telling me she had it from there. Her and Aly will be getting ready in Axel's old room in the dorms, the room she and him I guess had their first night in. I tried not to throw up when Axel told me. I don't like to hear about their love life. Axel would never give up the room after that night, and to this day still has it registered for his exclusive use in the pack files.

Driving back home, I risked mind linking my sister to see how close they were. She said they were about 30 minutes away by the time I pulled into our driveway. The perfect amount of time for me to get ready.

When I was planning all this, Bailey had asked me if I was sure I wanted everyone to be there with us. I guess some women might like a romantic evening alone with their loved one on a night like tonight, but I know Thyra would rather share this moment with all her family and loved ones. That's why it was so important to me to get her brother's permission and ask him to be there. Thyra spent so much of her life alone, without family or people to cherish her, she loves to just soak it in now. Her favorite place to be is in the middle of the chaos that is my family. Our family.

Having everyone there with us will only make this night so much more special for her.

I showered and changed into the outfit Fiona got me that matches every other male's outfit that will be there tonight. Well, everyone but the fucking fairy king. I wasn't going to ask him to match with us. It wasn't even my fucking idea. Fiona and Bailey said it would be fun and would make for a good picture to take for Thyra to cherish later. I can picture the face she would make staring at me, Rian, Taegan and Axel all wearing the same outfit, surrounding her. Bailey even found Aly a little dress that matched the shirt's print.

Right when I'm done getting ready, I hear a car pull in outside. I hurried to the front, just in time for Thyra to come walking inside the door.

"Hey, honey. Did you both have fun?" I asked, trying to hide some of my excitement as I welcomed her in.

She eyes me suspiciously. "What are you wearing?"

I looked down at my shirt and looked. Does it not look good? “Bailey picked it out,” I told her honestly.

“Hmm,” she runs her hands down my chest, her nails sending sparks fucking flying all across my skin, making me almost purr. “I didn’t think you would pick out something in a paisley,” she chuckles.

“I wouldn’t, but we’re having a family dinner tonight, and I know better than to not listen and do what I’m told,” I smirked, placing my hands on her lush hips, squeezing slightly, then kissing her lips to capture her laughter. “You all relaxed and feeling good from your spa day with my sister?”

“Yes, I very much am.” She goes on her tippy toes and whispers in my ear, “I’m exfoliated and smooth on every part of my body.”

A hungry growl rumbles deep in my chest, “I can’t wait to see myself later.”

“Why don’t you check it out right now? We can be a little late.”

It’s so fucking tempting, but I know if we start we will just miss dinner completely.

Not tonight. I’m not fucking missing tonight.

“We don’t have time for a full-course meal, but I can do something for you to tide you over until later,” I tell her as I grip her ass.

“Good,” she grins, “I want this mouth,” she licks my lips with a slow caress of her tongue, “on me. Everywhere,” then walks towards our bedroom, stripping as she goes.

Fuck me, we’re going to be late. She’s trying to make us late. Any other day, I would be all for it, but not today.

I ate her pussy like a starved man, making her cum twice in the span of 5 minutes. I’m fucking proud of my efficiency as I rearrange my hard dick in my pants, leaving her in a daze in the bathroom to get ready.

We are still a little late, but not enough to be noticed.

Thyra was surprised to see everyone in the great room when we got there. She’s even more surprised to see all the guys wearing the same shirt as me, taking out her cell phone and having me help her take pictures of all the kids.

Bailey is a fucking genius at seating arrangements. Thyra and I are surrounded by the kids, and my annoying brother-in-law and his loud-mouthed son-in-law are at opposite ends of the table, Archie with Nate to keep him in line, and Bailey between Axel and Casey to hit them upside the

head if she needs to. Courtney, who looks like she ate a child, can be worse than her mate sometimes, so I knew she wouldn't be any help.

Thyra rushed to take Leah from Axel when we first arrived, since Lauren was sleeping on Bailey, and now she is sitting in bliss while holding the baby, Aly on one side of her and me on the other. Rian is begrudgingly sitting on my other side. Aly demanded to sit beside Adam, Quinn and Rick's son, so we had to do some juggling around since that was supposed to be Rian's spot. Taegan and Rian are both good friends with the vampire boy, but I guess it doesn't matter when your niece or sister is starting to flirt with him. The kid is four years older than her, but she doesn't care. She has already declared that Adam is hers. If he's around, he is her first choice among the kids. I'm still her first choice among everyone, so I'm cutting the kid some slack for now.

After the food is served, Thyra and I take turns holding Leah so we can eat. Leah ends up falling asleep in Thyra's arms, so I happily end up just feeding her the rest of her food.

When dinner is done, and the wait staff hired by the catering company clear all the dishes, nerves start eating away inside of me. I know her answer already, feeling her love for me in every moment, in every day, in everything that she does for me. I'm still nervous as fuck.

Bailey elbows Axel to come and take their daughter back from Thyra, then she slips out of the room to make sure the dessert and surprise are ready. I know it's sappy as hell to write 'MARRY ME' on a cake, but Thyra wouldn't want an elaborate, fairytale proposal. She likes the basic things in life, without all the frills and scheming. She had that back in her realm and it never made her happy. That's all she wanted in love; someone straightforward who could give her untamed and raw. That's what I am, to my very core. A simple, untamed man who will be as raw as she lets me for the rest of our lives.

"He's here," Bailey tells me in the mind link. "We're ready. I'll slip back in and start dimming the lights. You got this!"

Fuck, I love Bailey. I couldn't have done this without her.

She comes back in, a bright grin on her face as she winks at me and begins dimming the lights. The only one she leaves on is the one right above Thyra and me.

The kids start to squeal in excitement, hushed whispers to silence them filling the room. Thyra looks around in confusion, then turns her beautiful face towards me in question. She must have guessed what was about to happen from the look on my face, because she suddenly gasped, bringing her hands up to her face as I stood up and reached into my pocket for the little red box. I pull it out, the smile hurting my face from being stretched so broadly. I dropped to one knee.

"Thyra. I'm going to need you to move your hands away from your beautiful face, honey, because I want to see you while I do this."

“Max!” she gasps, peeking at me from between her fingers, then stomping her feet on the ground excitedly. She pries her hands down to her lap, her eyes glistening brightly in the single light above us. “I knew something was up,” she hisses, making everyone laugh.

“I knew you would, honey. You are the smartest woman I know. That is one of the millions of reasons I want you to marry me.”

She giggled softly. “What are some of the others?”

“Well, for one, you’re the only woman in the world that could bring me to my knees.”

“Challenge accepted,” I heard Courtney mutter, making several people laugh. I ignored her and moved on.

“You are strong and beautiful, inside and out. I could watch you holding our grandbabies for hours, stunned at how perfectly you jumped into that role. You gave me the opportunity to be a father again, and I will cherish that boy as much as I cherish his mother. You make me stronger. We have overcome so much of our pasts together. Now I’m looking forward to devoting all of my future to you. I have one question,” I grin, watching a tear break free and stream down her cheek, “and I invited someone here to help me ask it.”

On cue, King Aegnus comes in, pushing a serving cart with a giant cake on top, the sparklers on top of it doing little to outshine his presence, but I’m fine with it. I feel a little smug at having gotten the almighty fairy king to push a cake into the room to present to his sister to ask his sister to marry me.

Thyra makes a slight choking sound seeing her brother, and he smiles warmly back at her.

“I believe this is for you,” he says, stopping the cake beside us so she can read it.

A choked sob leaves her and she dives forward, wrapping her arms around my neck. “Yes, Max. Yes, I will marry you.”

“Fuck, yeah you will,” I chuckled as our family cheered around us. Even King Aengus is clapping off to the side.

When I first saw Thyra around a year ago outside of that damn chicken coop, who knew this would be where we would wind up today? Who knew she would help me to overcome the past, and it would grant her the future she always wanted. She mended my broken past, and gave me her future. I will forever be thankful to the moon goddess for this precious gift and second chance at happiness.