

My Visions His Reality Chapter 51-60

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Chapter 51

Everything was slipping from my fingers and I wasn't able to do anything. Time felt like sand and my circumstances seemed like a cruel joke of life. I would do anything to rewind time and live through the time I was beside Zara once more. Nothing mattered anymore.

How could situations even change that suddenly? I woke up beside Zara sleeping beside me. I may sound like a creep but I watched her sleep for a long time, how her hair moved with every breath she took, **and** how her naked chest moved up and down in rhythm. She looked so peaceful that I didn't move. And now, I wish that I hadn't.

Maybe if I didn't feel the need to pee and take a shower afterward, everything between us would be alright right now. Who am I kidding? I fucked up and I fucked up bad. It's really funny how I fuck everything up, how people leave whenever I come close to them.

My body felt on auto, I didn't know how my hands were moving, where my legs were taking me if they were even moving. I had completely zoned out and my body felt heavy. My chest felt constricted as if I couldn't breathe.

My gure landed on my bed where just a few hours ago, me and Zara had made love. I could still picture her face as she asked me to **mark** her, how amazing it sounded when she **said** she loved me. What would have happened if I had marked her last night?

My wolf had retreated in the back of my mind and had refused to talk to me. He felt betrayed by its human. He never liked it whenever I slept another female, he wanted me to wait for our mate, and being the douchebag I am, I didn't listen to him. I could feel him somewhere in the deep recesses of my mind but he was continuously refusing my advances to approach him. Not having my wolf at this time left me feeling hollow,

with deserted, and like a shell.

My gaze finally landed on the only other person in the room, Natalie. She looked horrible and that's just putting it mildly. Her eyes were red and she was now softly sobbing. These three girls were so close and inseparable and I had to come between them and destroy what they **had**.

Whatever Natalie and I did, it was completely **out** of the blue. There were no emotions involved, just pent-up frustration. She did catch me hooking up with someone at a party and confronted me about it. How our fight led to tearing each other's clothes off, I would never know, It seems stupid as I thought about it Stupid and unrealistic.

She was horrified when she woke up the next morning and I wouldn't lie, it did hurt my male ego a bit. But as her reasons became clear. I was ashamed of myself. She was worried that she had ruined a lifetime of friendship and here I was, sleeping with anyone who had a vagina, It was pretty clear who deserved Zara and who didn't.

I took in my near nakedness and the fact that it would help me in shifting, which would make it easy to catch up to Zara. I needed to talk to her and explain everything. Things I hadn't told her yet, about me and my life. She deserved to know **them**, even if it was too late. My wolf whined at the thought of being **away** from his mate.

Go after her, my subconscious screamed at me, which pulled me out of my depressing thoughts,

I rushed towards the door of my room but paused before opening it. I took a deep breath before turning around to face Natalie **again**. Let me talk to her first. She nodded, without looking up to meet my eyes. She put her head in her hands and her body shook as she broke down into soft sobs. I'm sorry! With that I pulled open the door to run after my

mate

I ran down flights of stairs in a hurry to catch her. I had no idea if she would listen to **what** I had

to say, but I had to give it a try.

I must have waited too long because Aiden's car, which was earlier parked in the driveway was nowhere to be seen. Well, if Aiden let Samantha drive his car, he is already in too deep. Lucky bastard!

I had to make a decision and I had to make it quick. I run down the front steps making my mind shift and make my way to Zara's home through the woods. It would take less time and if I'm lucky I will get there before them and corner her before she could hide in her home.

I called out to my wolf to support me in the transformation but he didn't answer. I landed on my own two feet, still in human form. Well, that's **just** great! My wolf couldn't have chosen a better time to cut me off. He has caged himself so deep, it would be impossible for me to shift right now.

I curse out loud at the sky and run as fast as I can to my car. I grab my keys from the stand and jump in the driver's seat. I spot my leather jacket in the passenger's seat and immediately thank my stars for some luck. Zara's parents would turn me away if I arrived at their doorstep half-naked.

I hastily wore it and the most amazing smell of chocolate and pines engulfed me. I forgot I had given it to Zara because she had been feeling cold a few nights ago. Our scent calmed **me** a lot and I took in a few desperate breaths to placate my wolf

I start the car and race the car down the fucking roads to reach Zara's place as **fast as** I possibly could. **Various** thoughts about what I should talk to **her** about, enter my mind

I turned my car and I watched **as her house** came into my view. I noticed Aiden's car parked in her driveway and wondered if he was dropping her. It has seemed to become a **habit**, me fucking up and he driving Zara home. A habit which I was

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I parked in car on the curb and got out of it as soon as I could. I leaned against the door of the car **and** took a deep breath in.

I heard the sound of the door opening and out came Samantha with Aiden's keys dangling from her hand. So, she did drive his car. A rueful smile made its way onto my face at the thought..

As if seeing my beta's mate gave me some strength, I straightened my shoulders and walked around the car and **into** her **line** of view. She must **have** smelt me before she heard me because her eyes whipped up to meet mine.

She stopped walking and her eyes practically bulged out of her sockets. Okay?!

She stood frozen on the steps as I walked **towards** her. Something must have snapped out of her daze **because** she nervously tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear and looked down at her **feet**,

Before I could ask how Zara was feeling or if she was ok, Samantha nervously shook her head as if she already knew what I was going to ask her. "She doesn't want to see you" Her voice came out small and unsure and I think I knew why. I opened my mouth to say something, but again she

beat me to it..

Alpha. With that, she hastily got into Aiden's car and drove back in the direction of her home.

Alpha?! I'm sure she didn't call me that until a few hours ago. Even though I completely deserved it, didn't mean that it hurt any less. It sounded **so** impersonal as if she and I didn't spend so much time together, like we were never friends. Well, after what I had done, I wasn't really surprised she was treating me this way,

One problem at a time!

I took a deep breath and climbed the remaining steps to Zara's front doors. **I** had no idea if her parents knew anything but after what I had experienced with Samantha, it would just be better if I assumed the worst

Without thinking anymore, I rang the doorbell and prayed for her mother to open the door, and her brother would do too. Anybody but her father. If he came to know about this fuck up of mine, I would probably be six feet under, werewolf or not

I thank the gods when I see the charming face of my **mate's** mother standing at the doorway. She is smiling, so that's a **good** sign.

“Harper, what are you doing here?” She asked me in her usual chirpy voice and I wish I could share her enthusiasm.

I casually shrugged, hoping to play it cool. “Just wanted to talk to **Zara,**”

“Oh, I'm sorry! Come on in. She told me you were still sleeping and she decided to let you sleep.

So, she **hadn't** told them yet.

I gave her mother one of my charming smiles while my insides were swirling with anxiety.

“Oh, go **on upstairs**” She teased me and unexpectedly a blush rose to my cheeks at how brazen she was being even though it **was** working in my favor.

I climbed a few steps when her voice called me out again. I turned around to **face** her. “No funny business under this roof

I nodded my head, no way was anything like that going to happen anytime soon.

After hastily climbing the rest **of** the stairs, I walk **and** stand outside her door.

I sensed just one heartbeat on the other side of the room. She was here.

I could hear her heart pump more fiercely than a few seconds before. She knew I was here, on the other side of the door, ready to **talk** to her.

I took a deep breath and grasped the doorknob. No point in knocking if she already knew.

Here goes nothing!

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I could tell you the second the energy around me changed and the exact moment I felt Harper standing on the other side of the door to my bedroom suddenly, I wanted to throw the door open and be embraced by him.

messes and apologizes thereafter. Well, this time it wasn't any

far. I had my instincts **lead** me, and look where that got me. Fucking nowhere!

I knew he needed to talk because that's **what** always happened, didn't it!! He creates m small me ss we were talking about; this was pretty **big** and he **had** to understand it.

I was tired, so damn tired. I shouldn't have to do this every step of the relationship. It felt as if I was crossing some sort of checkpoint and already waiting for the next **one** to come. There's only so much I can take

I sat down on my bed and **faced** the door, not entirely ready to face the person I loved, not sure how I would be able to discuss with him how he had gotten my best friend pregnant

I heard the doorknob spin and the door swung open to reveal a flustered Harper. **The** sight of him made my heart soar and sore at the same time. It's weird how circumstances bind us

would make anything better.

Whatever he was going to say, he better say it fast because I don't think anything he was going to say would

Harper must have realized he would not be greeted with hugs and kisses because he sighed and slowly **stepped** inside my room.

I brielly wondered which one of my parents let him in, now that both of them had warmed up to him. The thought irked me beyond limits but my thoughts came to a halt when I realized Harper had closed the door softly before moving slowly towards me.

I could feel my body growing stiff with every step he took in my direction. I took a deep breath when I felt him settle on the bed beside me.

Well, at least fir had the serve to leave some distance between us.

He groaned

and yet so far.

loud which made me look at him closely. He was looking at the door and I was watching him, wondering how he was so close to me

chand through his hair in frustration and finally looked at me. I wanted to forget everything and get lost in the green pools he called eyes. Zara. I never meant to hurt you" Yeah, that's what everyone says "**You're** my mate, I can't hurt you." Yet **you** did!

I waited for him to say something meaningful something which he meant.

Tuck Where do I even start?" He ran his hand through his hair once again, messing it up even more. I bunched my hand in my lap to stop them from teaching over and patting then down.

Harper took a deep breath **and** I watched how frustrated he was Frustrated with life and the situation we were in.

Do you remember told **you** that white wolves have problems conceiving with their mates? What has that got to do with anything! I nodded

"And do you remember the lore and that I never really had a good example of mates, one **I** could follow!" I weakly nodded. He had told me this after I had asked him why he had **slept** around with everyone even when he knew he had a mate waiting for him, the same day I had proposed we just tamed friends

"Well, it's true" Harper chuckled but it didn't sound happy at all. I had this uneasy feeling in my body and I knew whatever he was going to tell me, I wouldn't like in all

He had a faraway look in his eyes and I felt his body go rigid with every according to my grandparents. They were attached to the hip Wow, I wonder what changed.

he spoke. "Well, my parents did too. They loved each other so much.

"Ser, we werewolves are part

are partly animals and our animalistic instincts take over most of the time. Do you know what is the most primal urge?"

I didn't answer **him**. I could feel

it was a rhetorical question and he didn't look like he wanted to be interrupted.

The most primal instinct of any animal is **to** procreate, to have babies, and ensure the survival of their species. The males of any **species always** know how to impregnate the female, even when nobody teaches them that

"So, after a werewolf couple has mated and a couple of years pass, their wolves make them want to have babies, to create pups. It's pretty Most mated couples conceive in a few months

La

normal.

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“So, after my patents were done with all the fooling around, they decided to try for their pups, Harper out air quotes when he said “fooling around” and I watched him silently

“They knew that they would experience difficulty in getting pregnant but they knew they loved each other and promised that they would get through everything together. They had marked each other by then **and** were committed for life.

“My father was 20 and my mother was 15 when they met each other. They both realized that it was high time to have pups after three years. Harper turned his head and his green **orbs** stared into my blue ones. “Do you know what were their **ages** when they finally conceived me?

I gently shook my head and I wasn't **sure** I wanted to know, I didn't have a good feeling about this.

Still looking into my eyes, Harper went on. “My father was 40 years old when they finally conceived me.”

He left the sentence hanging in the air and I gasped out loud. 17 years? Harper's parents tried for seventeen fucking **years** for a child.

Would it be the same for Harper and me? I suddenly remembered how he had mentioned that fertility reduces drastically when a werewolf is mated with a human. I felt a tear slip from my eye at the thought of what we would have to face in the future if I decided to stay with him. I **hastily** wiped the tear away before he could wipe it himself.

Harper's face softened when he caught me doing that but he made no move to touch me and I was glad he didn't

They stood strong and kept trying for ten fucking **years**. They loved each other and tried the best they could.”

“Everything went downhill when one day my mom caught my dad sleeping with a widowed pack member I gasped and I felt another tear slip

my cheeks

“All their promises went down the drain after that because instead of confronting my father, as my mother should have, they started sleeping with other unmated wolves in the pack. I didn't know what to say but I didn't need to say anything because Harper was the one doing all the talking

“My mother had suffered through so many marriages but she easily conceived so many my dad” His expression morphed into one of disgust and I couldn't help but be saddened at the thought.

by times when she mated with other pack males. The same with

“A few years in

in things

get so bad that my mom moved out of my dad’s room. She took up residence on another floor, far **away** from him and neither of them had any problems with the arrangement”

Fuck! That was so

to messed

up

“They still kept trying but it had become more of a duty than an art of **passion** or love. I don’t know how their wolves felt during those seven years and I don’t want to be. Your wolf shuts you out when you sleep with someone other than your mate and when it **happens** for too long, your connection to your wolf breaks, which is painful and life-threatening. If you survive, you will be depressed for the rest of your life, because you won’t be able to shift anymore”

“My mom used to temporarily shift in my dad’s room whenever she was the most fertile, per her monthly periods: Harper gulped and I could see tears shining in his eyes. That to control myself not to comfort him and rub his back.

You know, when my mother conceived me, she wasn’t even sure if the baby’s father was my dad. My mom had to go through a paternity test to make sure whose baby it was. They both had slept around so much, with absolutely no regard to their mates and mate bond

I felt

sorry for him. I did. I came from a family where my parents were madly in love with each other and still strong as ever. They made me believe in love and I could understand how the opposite had worked for Harper. If my loving parents could make me believe in love, couldn’t Harper’s parents’ damaged relationship **have** taught him otherwise?

My dad finally stopped sleeping with other women after **I** was conceived but my mom didn’t. She slept with other males even when I was growing inside her. Wow, now that’s a different kind of messed up.

“My dad slowly realized how he and my mother had lost crucial years of their life sleeping around when they should have cared for each other. He begged my mother to stop and she reluctantly conceded to his demands

They started from scratch again and my dad fell in love with my mom **once** again but my mom didn’t, I don’t know why, I don’t know how but **I know** that she didn’t. He loves her so much and

she just doesn't.

He shrugged but I could see the strength it took for him to act **casually** about it all,

“She doesn't sleep around with anyone but the magic between them isn't there anymore. I have never seen any magic between my parents whatsoever. I have always seen them fighting. They used to fight so much, all the damn time and I remember how I used to escape to my grandparent's house when I was old enough

A tear slipped my eye when I imagined a seven-year-old boy with green eyes crying over his parents fights and running in the woods tonight grandparent's house, just to get a semblance of peace.

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Harper reluctantly moved forward and cupped my cheek to wipe away the tear and I let him. I leaned into his touch and after a few seconds, he slowly withdrew his hand away.

“I know my grandparents had a rocky relationship too and my great-grandparents before that. Stories like these aren't a secret. Everyone in the pack knows them but they are chicken to say anything about it.”

“I started taking the mate bond for granted because seeing other mates didn't help at all. They didn't go through what my parents did and so their love and closeness meant nothing to me. Other mates didn't exactly set a good example for me. As I grew up, I realized that I had better chances of staying happy if I chose a mate instead of mating with my destined one.”

“And I was going to do exactly that until I saw you. My wolf was instantly in love with you and it took ounces of willpower for me to stay away from you. My dad made me realize how unstable our relationship could be in the future and told me **that** I wouldn't want to put you through all the **pain that** he had suffered in his life.”

“I was angry, I was so goddamn angry, Zara because I understood where he was coming from. I knew he was right. I knew that I had to let you go, let you fall in love with a normal human, and have human kids. Fuck! Even the thought pains me **now!**”

The thought of Harper being with any girl made my chest ache. I could only imagine how it would feel to him, knowing that the bond felt stronger

to him

“That night. I was so angry and I was hurting, So much. Blame me but I wanted to hurt you too. So, I seduced Natalie to sleep with me. She fought me hard even when I reached and stroked her wolf's desire, I knew she didn't want to betray you. But in some twisted way, I thought I could hurt you by sleeping with one of your best friends. I know it's fucked up and you probably won't understand it, but fuck!” He took a deep breath and ran a frustrated hand through his hair.

He

He got up from the bed and sat down in front of me. He slowly took my hands in his and looked me straight in the eye.

“Zara, I love you”

I love you too!

The words died in my throat: I

throat; I couldn't speak them but I'm sure my eyes conveyed to him what words couldn't.

He cupped my **cheek** with one hand and I leaned into his embrace. “Just promise me one thing.”

I parted my lips, silently asking him to continue.

“Please hold onto me. Don't let go of us

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Chapter **53**

For as long as I can remember, I have only seen my **parents** madly in love with each other. Sure, they had small outbursts and fights here and there, but on the whole, **they were as** loving **as a** couple could be.

I can't **stress** enough the **fact** that their compatibility affected me and my siblings. We had experienced love firsthand in our home which immediately made the **three** of **us** believe in it.

Just like how **I** feel up believing in love, maybe the same worked for Harper, but in a different way. It would be pretty easy for me to say that he should have learned from their mistakes and a path of his own.

For once, if I could put **myself** in his **perspective**, I think I could understand where he was coming from. He didn't know any better, he never knew **things** could be any different than his parents or his grandparents.

He **was a** misguided teen who had responsibilities of a whole pack thrust upon him from a very young age. He grew up believing that his life with his mate would be more than difficult. I can only imagine how frightened he must have been when he found out that I was his mate. He knew having me **as a** mate only meant more complications, which he tried to avoid in his twisted ways.

I could understand where he was coming from if I let go of everything for a few seconds and think everything from his perspective.

But that didn't mean that it made everything alright. I could explain the situation from different angles and excuse his behavior using various arguments but nothing could make me forget what he did.

Well, he wanted to hurt me and his mission was now accomplished.

I wanted to forgive him and let everything go as I looked into his soft green eyes, but that wouldn't be right. I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I let the bond work against me. I wouldn't let it blind me as it has done before on countless occasions.

I just couldn't forgive him, not right now, at least. The wound was too fresh.

And that's exactly what I told him. I looked into his green eyes, the very same eyes I had fallen in love with, and told him, "I just can't let go of everything that has happened, Harper."

My heart hurt because his face fell as soon as I said those words but I had to strengthen myself. I knew I would feel this way and I was prepared for it. It was high time that I put myself before the bond between us.

"If the child is yours, Harper, I don't think," I took a deep breath and ran a frustrated hand through my hair, "I don't think--"

"I understand!" He gulped and looked down, his muscles tensing at my words. "I think it would be best if Natalie took a paternity test."

I knew what was Harper trying to do. He was desperate and was just grasping for straws now. Anything he could find that could still salvage him.

But that **was** the thing, I had no idea if we were still salvageable. I just didn't have the heart to tell him that.

Instead, I said, "I think so too."

But **call it** a gut feeling or whatever, I knew what the result was going to be.

I could feel the coolness of the metal bench seep into my bare thighs. I wouldn't have worn a short skirt if I had known the hospital would have such uncomfortable seats.

My **gaze** involuntarily moved from person to person in the small waiting room. Expectant mothers smiling and chatting with each other and other women present for their regular checkups. I was pretty sure none of their reasons for coming to the hospital was half as entertaining or dramatic as mine. Certainly, none of them had come to the hospital with their ex-best friend and ex-boyfriend to see if they had conceived a baby together.

Honestly, I had no idea what I was doing here!

I shifted uncomfortably at the thought. I thought if **I** occupied my mind with something else, the irony and bitterness of the situation wouldn't

haunt **me**.

I sneaked a look at the two people sitting **across** from me and couldn't help but wonder how drastically our world had changed in such a short period.

I hadn't said a word to either of them since I had entered the room. Me and Harper had decided yesterday that it would be a good idea to not disclose anything to anyone about what had happened. So, Samantha and Aiden had no idea what kind of storm was brewing right under their

noses. Moreover, **they were new mates** and I didn't want to trouble them with everything that had been happening.

We had decided that **we would** only disclose the pregnancy to Harper's parents and only if the baby was Harper's. We hadn't exactly planned anything **because** I just wanted to **leave** as soon as possible. I couldn't handle looking **at** either of them.

So, all in all, nobody knew that the three of us were sitting in the waiting room of a hospital, eagerly waiting for our appointment, or rather Natalie's appointment.

A nurse walked opened the door and slipped inside the room. She held a clipboard in her hand and had been calling out the names of people to check in for their appointments. She once again looked at the clipboard and called out for Natalic.

My thought process halted and I felt sweat form in various parts of my body. This was it, I guess.

Natalie and Harper both stood up from their respective seats and the nurse smiled at them. "The doctor will see you both in a couple of minutes. Go down the hall and step inside the second door from left."

For the first time since I entered the room, I looked both of them in the eye, only to find both of them looking at me, gauging my reaction. Looking at the both of them together, ready to go for the paternity test made me realize I wasn't exactly needed here at this moment.

They both looked like shit and I took pleasure in seeing them like this. I mean, I shouldn't have, but I did. Seeing them distraught and out of focus, made me happy because they had done the same thing with me.

Natalie opened her mouth to say something but before she could, Harper gave me a subtle nod and walked away in the direction of the room they **were** asked to go to.

I released a deep breath as I watched the both of them disappear down the bend in the hall. I just couldn't bear to look at either of them and yet, here **I** was waiting for their paternity test.

Again, what the fuck am I doing here?!

My weary gaze moved again from person to person and I recognized several people from the pack. They tried more to seek my eyes and gave me subtle nods or bows as a form of respect for their future Luna.

Future Luna?! I scoffed at the thought.

I wonder how the pack would **feel** when they came to know that their alpha had impregnated another, she-wolf, when their Luna was all fine and dandy.

That was exactly why we had decided to keep this matter a secret. It wouldn't do any good to publicize this situation before knowing any of the **facts**. Otherwise, it would be full of chaos.

Well, that's what the future alpha thinks about it anyway!

I pulled out my phone from my jeans pocket and started playing with it. Anything that could not make me think about anything would be a

welcome entertainment.

“Zara? What are you doing here?”

My phone slipped from my hands at the sound of the familiar voice.

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I cringed as **the** sound of my phone hitting **the** floor echoed in the room. I **just** hope that it wasn't broken. I don't think I could handle more stress

at the moment.

I gingerly looked up to find Eva smiling down at me. I nervously gulped while I was freaking out on the inside.

Why the hell **do these** kinds of things always happen to me?!

“T'in, Hi, Mrs. Cain.” I quickly picked up my phone and stood up from my seat to greet her.

She crossed her arms and sighed mockingly. “Oh Zara, how many times have I told you to call me Eva?”

I chuckled nervously and fiddled with the ends of my shirt.

What **are** you even doing here?

“**Well**, I’m here for my sonogram.” She laughed while roaming her hand over her belly affectionately.

Of course! Eva was pregnant so she was bound to go to a doctor’s office. Pregnant women go for regular checkups. Stupid Zara!

It was just my luck that she had a check-up on this very day.

I mentally **face**-palmed myself and gave a nervous laugh. I was sure I sounded like a dying hyena.

She smiled at me and then sat on the seat next to me. This can’t be good!

Instead of running away from my ex-boyfriend’s mother, I sat beside her, waiting for her to say something and end the awkward silence.

“So, how is everything between you and Harper?“, Eva asked me and my eyes whipped to meet hers.

I think **I** liked the awkward silence better.

What was I supposed to say? That her son, who I was in love with, was now my ex-boyfriend and had had sex with my best friend, had possibly impregnated her and now I was accompanying them both for their paternity test. Sounds like a really good story, but not one you tell a pregnant woman who already had a history of miscarriages.

I smiled weakly at her, not knowing what to say. “Yeah, things are.....good.”

She beamed back *at* me and I immediately felt guilty of lying to her. She had been nothing but good to me, had accepted me from the start and **here I** was, lying to her face.

‘Oh, wait till he marks you and completes the mating process.’ She sighed dreamily and I subtly took her features in.

Pregnancy had done Eva wonders. Her skin was practically glowing and she had this graceful aura around her that all pregnant women seemed to

have.

Out of nowhere, an image of Natalie in her second trimester flashed in my mind. How she would look with that ethereal glow and a motherly grace. A bolt of jealousy ran through me. If the

paternity test ran positive, which I had a feeling that it would, she would be having a baby with the guy I was in love with. I should be doing that, he was my mate, not hers.

My thoughts **were** interrupted when I realized Eva was still speaking. She had stopped talking about the mate bond and was instead talking about how Sebastian and she acted in the early years of their mating. Something Harper would not like to listen to. As she kept talking about her husband and mate, I realized that Harper was wrong about one thing. He had said that his father had started loving his mother again but his mother never did. By the way, she was talking about Sebastian, there was absolutely no doubt that she loved him. She must have stopped showing it because she didn't want to get hurt anymore, mate or not. She just wanted to protect herself from both her mate and herself and I respected her decision.

Because that **was** exactly what I was doing, protecting myself!

“Where's Sebastian anyway?”

“He had to park the car and fill out some form downstairs at the reception.” I nodded at her response and **we** started talking about other topics which helped me forget why I was sitting in the waiting room in the first place.

“We are done with the **test**“. **Harper's** voice broke our conversation and both of our **eyes** snapped up to **see** a flustered Natalie and a nervous Harper standing side by side,

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The both of them looked genuinely shocked and I wanted to bang Harper's head against a wall. Didn't he see his mother sitting beside me!!

“What test?” Eva asked eyeing the three of us, awaiting an explanation. Well, I don't have one!

“It's nothing. I **had** some stomach cramps and Harper helped me to the doctor's office.” Natalie rushed through her words which I knew she only did

when was nervous.

Eva nodded and accepted the bullshit explanation we gave her.

I stood up from my seat, **ready to** get away with this awkward situation as long as possible. “Well, I will see you soon, Eva“,

Eva smiled at me. “Girl. I hope my boy brings his mate to the pack house soon.”

I laughed nervously and I felt guilt creep up my pores at the way I was lying to this lovely woman.

“I have to be at home soon. Bye.” I said and both Harper and Natalie enthusiastically nodded at Eva. Not at all suspicious!

“I didn’t know you guys would be here.” I turned my head to see Sebastian walk into the middle room with the authority of a full-fledged alpha.

Could this situation be any weirder?!

He covered the distance between the door and us in a few short strides and came to stand beside his wife. He put a gentle hand around her shoulders while she subconsciously leaned into his warmth.

I looked away from their embrace as I felt jealousy course through me. That could have been me and Harper right now. He could have marked me by now and we could have been full-fledged mates.

I must have zoned out because when I caught onto their conversation, Sebastian was patting Harper on the back with a huge grin on his face.

“Well, Zara’s the best thing that has happened to you, son. Take care of your mate“.

My eyes subconsciously met Harper’s green ones and an involuntary blush coated my cheeks at the words of the father of my mate.

He’s taking care of me, I thought sarcastically.

“You will have to come and collect your test results the day after tomorrow, Alpha.” All of our heads turned to see a doctor speaking to us while looking down at a clipboard.

Oh shit!

Sebastian’s eyes

furrowed in confusion. “What test?”

Eva opened her mouth to speak but the doctor beat her to it. “The alpha“, the doctor pointed to Harper, “and Natalie took a paternity test together. They will get their results the day after tomorrow.”

The doctor respectfully bowed to his Alpha and Luna, oblivious to the tension in the room, and walked out.

Sweat formed in various places of my body and I couldn't muster enough courage to look in anyone's eyes. Eva now knows that I blatantly lied to her **face** ten minutes ago.

A deathly silence ensued before Sebastian spoke again. "Explain. Right. Now."

This was his alpha voice because I felt compelled to answer him myself. But the command wasn't meant for me, it was meant for his son. Harper nervously met my eyes and I could see his Adam's apple bob up and down in his throat. He opened his mouth and told his parents what had transpired in the last few days.

I sneakily peeked a look at both of their faces and I could feel them getting angry, disappointed, surprised, and in the end, helpless.

My **eyes** met Eva's and **I** knew she was hurt by the fact that I had lied to her a few minutes ago.

"We **were** waiting **for** the results of the test before disclosing it to anyone." I nervously shifted my weight from one foot to another.

"What do you guys plan to do?" Sebastian's voice was tight and tired. How happy he would have been if he hadn't met us here.

"If the child turns out to be mine, me and Natalie have decided to abort it. I don't think either of us can go through with it. It was a unanimous

decision.

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Chapter 54

Wait, what?!

When **were** they going **to** tell me that?

My gaze moved to Natalie's and she nodded in response to Harper's words. I would need a lot of time to process this.

Sebastian tightly nodded and a tear slipped out of Eva's eyes. I felt like crying myself. What was happening in my life? Since when did it become so packed with drama?!

The farewells didn't take long after that. They wanted to get away from us as much as we wanted to get away from them.

Before anyone could propose giving me a lift, I slipped out of the hospital and ordered a taxi home for myself.

I wasn't certain how I was supposed to feel. I felt happy that my friends were being thoughtful about the whole situation and not being entirely selfish and careless.

I lay in my bed as I imagined various scenarios that night, wondering what would the test results say.

I didn't know when I closed my eyes but I felt a wave of calmness wash over me.

Because...

I was falling and floating at the same time.

, 830 Views,

Chapter 55

I had no idea why Zara acted surprised when I told her that and Natalie decided to abort the baby if it turned out to be my child. And if it didn't turn out to be mine, then the decision to keep the baby would be solely Natalie's.

I loved her, more than anything and she would be a fool if she thought I would let go of her that easily.

Having a child with Natalie would mess up the situation on so many levels. Me and Natalie would be parents of a baby and where exactly would Zara fit in the picture?

Zara was my mate and I would try as long as it took to make her believe that I was sorry about what I did. Having a child in the equation would make the situation unsalvageable.

Sleeping with Natalie was a mistake and whatever reasons I come up for my actions could never redeem me. I was smart enough to know that. I had made shitty choices and now I was suffering through the consequences.

My wolf had been constantly whining and whimpering at the loss of our mate. I tried hard to placate my wolf so that we would get our mate back. It **would** take some time but I deserved the torture. I would go through hell if it meant I would get another chance with her. It was clear to everyone that I didn't deserve her but I needed her more than anything and I would let go of everything else that mattered to me if it meant that we could be **together**.

I wasn't the only one hurting in this disturbing turn of events. Natalie had cried so many times in the past couple of days that I wondered how she was even able to stand straight. I knew how much Zara meant to her and one stupid drunken mistake was going to cost her a lifetime of friendship. I bet she now regrets the *day* she even saw my face. She was blaming and cursing herself over and over again and I felt helpless as I realized I was the cause of the rift between them.

If the stupid doctor hadn't poured his guts in the waiting room, my parents would have been oblivious to everything and would have come to know about it if only the situation demanded it. But the werewolf couldn't exactly disobey an order from his Alpha, could he? It resulted in it being both of my parents being hugely disappointed in me. They never put it in words exactly but they had hoped that I would take a different course of action with my mate than the one they had taken. They didn't want me to follow in their footsteps and till now, that was exactly what I had done.

Saying I was ashamed of myself was an understatement. I was disgusted with myself.

I sat on my bed with a variety of thoughts running through my head a mile a minute. Today was the day of the revelation. After being asked by his alpha, the doctor had promised *to* deliver the result of the paternity test himself. It wasn't a personal matter anymore; it was a pack matter.

Zara hadn't talked to me in days, hadn't let me come near her in days. I knew I deserved it but I missed her, the feel of her soft body against mine, her smell in my sheets, and her soft lips against her mine. I could feel my wolf yapping and happy every time the sweet scent of chocolate and pines hit my nose. I could feel my wolf become weak otherwise.

In my office. Now.

My father had more or less ignored me after that day in the hospital. I knew he was disappointed with me. He had, countless times taught me the importance of a mate and I had done everything in my power to belittle and deceive mine.

My mom was troubled a lot too and I knew she was trying not *to* take much stress because of the baby inside her.

I knew that both of them felt that their life teachings for their son were a waste. If my actions had been satisfactory, I could have contradicted these allegations but I couldn't.

I took a deep breath and walked out of my room, on my way to the Alpha's office. I had come here many times and it always seemed unreal to me that I would sit in this very room one day and look over pack business.

As I neared the office, the sweet smell of chocolate and pines flooded my senses and my wolf started to stir from his deep sleep. Nowadays, he only seemed to make his presence whenever his mate was around.

I hastily opened the door and my eyes met the sight of my mate, sitting on an armchair. A smart move on her part, if she wanted to stay away from both me and Natalie because the only other seat apart from the armchair was a three-seater couch, where mom was already sitting.

I walked over to the couch and sat down next to Mom. I didn't want to and I knew she didn't want it too. But she was sitting in the middle of the couch, which would result in Natalie not sitting side by side, and the only other seat was taken by Zara. It was very thought out.

Before my eyes could snap back to Zara and peruse her, the door opened again and Natalie entered. I didn't look up, instead I looked down. I cursed myself and my stupid head for landing me in this situation.

"I had the doctor send me the results of the paternity test today." He picked up an envelope which had the hospital's logo on it. My eyes zeroed on the open flap and I knew that he had opened and checked the results. What was with this man and building suspense? Just tell me what the

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Chapter 35

goddamn results said.

But he didn't need to say **it** out loud. I had been feeling queasy about the results and when he opened his mouth to confirm what I already knew, bile rose **my throat**.

"But of course, Natalie will go **for** an abortion as you guys have mutually decided. All of us solemnly nodded and pretended that this was the solution to **every** problem **we would face**.

"We **can't**." A small **voice spoke** up and a tense silence settled in the air. My gaze held Zara's unchanged form. She looked so small, she looked like she **would** crumple in herself. **Her** eyes **were** red-

rimmed and swollen and I fought the urge to go to her and put my arms around her. I wanted her close to me, for both me and my wolf's sake but I knew my limits.

"What?" My mom was baffled. She couldn't fathom the reason why Zara would want her best friend and her boyfriend (?) to bring up a child together. What was she trying to do?!

"I had a dream last night." Her voice **was** growing smaller by the minute and all thanks to the werewolf hearing, I was able to hear it. She sounded exhausted and worn down.

My whole body became rigid as soon as I heard those words. She had a dream? As in a dream with the moon goddess? Ordinarily, I would have rejoiced at the fact that my mate had the moon goddess visiting in her dreams but now, as I took in her body language, I knew I wouldn't like the words I would hear.

"That child in her is going to be the next alpha." She held her gaze at Natalie's stomach. What?!

"What?" Dad voiced the question that **was** raging in my mind.

Her **gaze** met mine and she gave me a sad smile. A smile that sent lightning bolts through my chest and made my body hurt. "Me and Harper will **never** have children."

My wolf howled and whimpered inside my head at the words that left Zara's mouth. I heard them too but I had difficulty in processing them. I had heard the words, the sentence but the meaning had yet to register in my mind.

Mom gasped and I felt Dad sit a little straight in his chair. I could see a tear slip down Natalie's cheek and saw Zara pull her legs towards her chest, **as** a form of shield.

"Well, that changes things," Dad said and my head snapped to meet his gaze.

"No, it doesn't." My voice **was** strong and steely. I didn't care if I wasn't going to have children with Zara. She was my mate; I was supposed to spend my life with her and that **was** exactly what I wanted to do.

My wolf whimpered and retreated at the back of my head. He didn't know who to choose, his pup or his mate. He was distraught and exhausted. Above all, he hated me. He hated how he **was** in this position because of me.

At this very moment, I hated myself. Fate was playing a cruel joke on me because I never imagined in my wildest dreams that I would ever be in

this situation.

"Sit. Down." My father's stern voice rang out in my ears. I didn't realize that I had stood up but I wasn't going to budge, not now.

My mom was in shock and Natalie was silently sobbing.

Zara looked smaller than she ever had done before she raised her head and gave me a soft smile.

"Don't you get it? She planned it. It was meant to happen.

I ran a frustrated hand through my hair and pulled at the roots.

“What the hell **are** you talking about? Who planned it?”

“The goddess. Her voice came out small but I knew everyone in the room heard her as a silence settled in the room, unsure of which action to take

I felt a pain in my chest as I saw a tear slide **down** my mate’s cheeks. How many times she must cry because of me?!

, 786 Views,

Chapter 56

No matter how many times I repeated the facts in my head, I couldn’t get used to them. Simple facts laid out so indifferently by the woman they claimed was the moon goddess.

Me and Harper are not meant to have children.

The child in Natalie’s womb is going to be the Alpha after Harper.

If the moon goddess had planned it all along, then why the fuck she strung me along? Why flying fuck did she introduce me to this new world, only to create situations where I could play no part in it. It just didn’t make sense and I was already damn tired by trying to contemplate everything that was happening.

“What do you mean?” My head snapped up to meet the tearful eyes of Natalie. Why was she crying? Nevertheless, I meekly nodded,

Her shoulders racked with sobs again and she determinedly shook her head. “No way.”

Sebastian’s body had become tense since I had spoken and for good reason too. Despite his harsh demeanor and ignorant attitude, I knew he was rooting for me and Harper. Besides being a father, he was also the alpha of his pack and was responsible for the well-being of all of its members. And making sure that the alpha line continued after him was his duty and responsibility, which I knew he had no intention of backing away from. “No, it does. If the child inside you are meant to be the next alpha, I’m not going to take any chances with it.” He snapped and I felt a coldness settle

in the room.

“I can’t have the child. It doesn’t matter if it is Harper’s.” She sniffled. “I haven’t found my mate yet; he will reject me if he finds me pregnant with some other guy’s child. Her shoulders shook as sobs racked her body.

Well, then you shouldn’t have slept with someone else’s mate!

Even then, I felt a sliver of sympathy for her and her mate. Her mate and I were the only two people who would be drastically affected by this course of action.

Sebastian slammed his hand on the table and I jumped up from the sound. His eyes flashed black and I knew that his wolf was making an appearance.

I don't bloody care what you want to do Natalie. As your alpha, I order you not to abort this child."

She whimpered and bowed at the dominance of her alpha. She meekly nodded but I knew she didn't want to. Hell, everyone in the room did. "Now if you all will excuse me, I have some things I would like to discuss with my mate." That was our cue to leave and I gently got up from the comfortable armchair I was sitting in.

I reached the door first and twisted it open. I couldn't get out of the room fast enough.

Zara

I turned around as Sebastian's voice called out to me. I took in his tired features and saw how exhausted he must be with everything going on.

His face softened as he looked at me and I nervously gulped at the soft look.

"Let Harper take you home."

I didn't want to argue anymore, so even though I didn't want to, I nodded.

Harper knew I didn't want to speak to him so he didn't make any advances or small talk, even though I knew it was killing him. To be this close to me and yet so far away. Well, it was time his actions caught up to him. I was done feeling sorry for him.

After an awkward ride, which felt longer than it should have, he parked the car in front of my house.

Without saying goodbye, I went to my room and snuggled deep into the sheets.

It has been two days since we came to know about the results of the paternity test and I couldn't have enough guts to go to the school. I made up some excuse for it and my parents seemed to believe it.

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Chapter 36

They knew something was up but they didn't push me. They let me have my own space and I was glad for it.

Neither Harper nor Natalie had tried to call me and I was really glad for that, I needed as much distance from these people as possible.

Samantha and Aiden tried calling me and texted me several times. They didn't know what was going on but I assured them that everything was fine. In reality, everything was far from it.

As I lay on my bed, I could feel that my body was done sulking. I wanted to go out and be the girl I always was before I got caught up in this fucked

up werewolf drama. And I **was** glad that this realization hit me when there was enough time for me to get ready for school.

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Taking a deep breath, I decided that sooner or later, I would have to face the world and I wanted to get it over with soon. I got up from my cozy bed and walked into the en suite to do my daily routine.

With leaden legs, I got into my car and drove to the school. I could see that my parents were surprised to see me up and about but didn't ask me any questions. I was really glad they knew when to give me space and not ask questions which would hurt me more.

I made every attempt to avoid running into Harper or Natalie. Samantha and Aiden *too*. So, pretty much everyone I knew and talked to. Needless to say, I felt pretty lonely in the classes and breathed a huge sigh of relief when the lunch bell rang.

Time and again, I noticed how a few werewolf teens gave a small bow to me which made me feel extremely uncomfortable. It would be a complete shock to them when they come to know about the surprise in Natalie's womb. I tried to picture how the pack would react to the news and failed to come up with a realistic response. I took a deep breath and put a stop to all the masochistic thoughts running through my head.

I couldn't sit with my friends but I could go out for my lunch break and have some much-deserved "me-time".

As the bell rang, I made my way over to the girl's washroom where I was shocked at the sight in front of me.

No wonder I hadn't seen Natalie in the hallways or in the last class we shared.

Natalie was passed out in the girl's washroom and I wondered for how long she had been there.

Panic rose in my chest as I remembered that she was pregnant and her fall could have hurt the child inside her. I may be upset with her but I wasn't

a monster.

I quickly dialed for emergency services and told the lady about Natalie's condition over the phone. The principal, being a werewolf didn't question me as an ambulance came into the school. I told him that she collapsed inside the girl's washroom and would need immediate serious medical assistance.

I got inside the ambulance without anyone questioning me. The perks of having a werewolf alpha as your mate!

I was surprised how calm I was acting, while a tornado wreaked havoc inside me.

During the two days I pondered over the situation, I realized that the most innocent person, even if you could call it that, was the child himself. It shouldn't have to bear the brunt of my hatred, even if I hated its parents, which I doubted I did.

Despite what the existence of the child would do to me and Harper, I realized that I didn't want it gone. Call me stupid, but that was how I felt.

My musings were interrupted when an unconscious Natalie was put on a gurney and carried into the ER. While the doctors checked on her, I called Sebastian and told him what had transpired.

I waited in the waiting room, not wanting to leave without knowing what happened to Nat and her child. Fifteen minutes later, a doctor called out **for** Natalie Simpson, and I **was** snapped out of my thoughts.

Sebastian promised me to call him when I knew what exactly happened and that was what I did. I dialed his number, which he had given to me for emergencies a while before, and waited for the call to go through. He would not like what I would say.

"What is it?" Sebastian's voice sounded tired and pitied him.

"She hadn't eaten in two days and became unconscious," I said as a wave of rage washed over me. I got it that she didn't want the child but she also knew that she couldn't abort it. I had expected her to take care of the life growing inside of her and not disregard it completely.

Sebastian sighed. "I should have known she would do something like this."

"If you knew, why the hell did you let her out of your sight?" I snapped.

A growl came from the other side and I gulped. I should think twice before being rash with an alpha.

Sebastian sighed again. "I thought she was more responsible than this." So did I.

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Roolsh

Chapter 56

This **leaves** me no choice, then.”

“What **do** you plan to do?”

“I thought we would have a few more weeks.”

A wave of apprehension rose inside me at his words.

“What exactly do you plan to do, Sebastian?”

His next words caused a wave of hurt and uncertainty through me but I knew it was a desperate and much-needed measure.

“We are going to announce to the pack that the heir of the pack is on its way.”

, 781 Views,

Chapter 57

Sebastian **went** against **protocol and** asked Natalie’s parents **to** come into his office the day **Natalie** was hospitalized. He wanted to explain the situation to her parents **before** they heard it from a doctor or any outsider. As far **as** I know, they didn’t exactly take the news very well. But they couldn’t **exactly** do anything.

I had no idea **why** but Eva always kept me in the loop with everything that had been going on. That was how I knew that Natalie’s parents were informed **before** her **pregnancy** before **the rest** of the pack and that **was** how I had known that today was the day Sebastian was going to make the **pack announcement**.

Seb was taking everything seriously. **It** was only **yesterday** that I had found Natalie unconscious in the girl’s washroom and today he was going to announce the pregnancy **to the** pack.

For obvious reasons, I had no plans to attend the announcement. Today was a Saturday and I had full plans to watch a comedy movie to try my **depressing** mood and spend time with my family. I had been neglecting them for so long and I felt guilty for doing so. They were an amazing bunch **of people** and didn’t deserve this treatment.

I opened my laptop and flicked through the varying choices Netflix provided me. Sometimes, I spend so much time deciding on a movie that it **frustrates** me to no end. As soon as I decided on a movie, my phone rang.

Huffing, I picked it up and without looking at the caller ID, accepted the call. Eva's pleasant voice rang in my ears and I felt my lips twitch in a smile.

Eva, hi.

*Zara, **I just** wanted to let you know that we **are** done with the announcement." I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. "Things were awkward but it's **done**." She chuckled nervously and I could feel the waves **of** exhaustion in her voice.

I didn't know what to say to that. What did she expect me to say to that? Things were awkward, that was what she had managed to say.

I could only imagine how awkward it would have been if I had been present during the announcement. The murmurs, the voices, and the sad looks **on** the pack member's **faces** flashed through my mind. I shuddered even thinking about the rumors that would flow about the school now.

Oh, I said.

That's not why I'm calling **you**, though. Me and Sebastian want to talk to you." She sounded nervous, which in turn made me nervous.

"Really?"

Yeah, and **we were** wondering **if you** could come right now. I promise it's nothing drastic." She added hastily and I mentally groaned at the thought of not being able to watch the movie I decided upon.

I understood the fact that there was no need for me to listen to anyone who was a werewolf, especially after what Harper had done to me but I didn't **have** it in me to just ignore them altogether.

I clenched my eyes together, already knowing that I would end up going to meet with the Cain's.

Yeah, sure. Everything alright?"

"Everything's good. Well, **as good as it** can be."

After saying quick goodbyes **to** Eva, I picked **up** my **car keys** and checked out my attire. Considering it was all right, I went down the stairs and told **my** parents that I **was** going **out** for a while.

Before **they** could reply, I was snapping my seatbelt shut and zooming down the driveway. As much as I didn't want to be involved with Harper right **now**, I couldn't deny **the fact** that the **were**

wolf world **excited** me. It somehow made me feel at home and made my blood race, both in a good and bad way.

I knew it was unhealthy and with the way things **were** going, **I** was bound to get hurt. More hurt than **I already was**. I shook my head to **clear these** thoughts from **plaguing** my mind and **held** onto the **steering** wheel tightly.

The guards let me pass through the security checkpoints without a fuss and **I was** soon parking on the driveway to Harper's house or should I **say**, the **pack house**.

I didn't want to run into anyone else I knew, lest the situation be awkward. I could only imagine what **big a** surprise the announcement would **have** been for Aiden and Samantha. I especially didn't want **to** run into them.

I climbed the **stairs** and thanked the gods that **I** didn't come across anyone, which would have been otherwise, I stood in front of the door to the

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Chapter **37**

Alpha's office, ready to knock. I had no idea who was in that room or why I was called here right now.

Before I could knock, Sebastian's voice from inside the room made me jump in surprise. "Zara, come in."

I squared my shoulders, turned the doorknob, and entered the room. Eva was sitting in the chair while Sebastian was standing behind her, his hands protectively on the back of her chair. Harper wasn't there and I had no idea if I was pleased or disappointed. I had not seen him for three days and an itch had begun to settle in me, just to see him. I knew it was wrong and even that I should stay away from him, but I couldn't help the **way I** felt towards him.

"Hi", **I** squeaked and internally cringed at how nervous I sounded. Could they sense how nervous I was?

Eva smiled warmly at me and quite surprisingly, Sebastian did too. He pointed to the chair in front of me and I sat down on it.

I didn't dare ask them how the pack meeting had gone. I didn't want to ask how was Natalie if she was taking better care of herself and the baby. And I certainly didn't want to know how Harper had been and where he was right now. I bit my lip to stop myself from asking these questions and stamped down on my masochistic tendencies.

“**We** have been thinking and considering something.” Eva said nervously and leaned forward in her chair. I didn’t say anything, waiting for her to **get** on with it.

“We know, that, um, things have been stressful for you lately.” She smiled nervously. Stressful?! Is that the word she wants to use?!

Sebastian sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose in exasperation. I moved my gaze from him to Eva and back again. What were they trying to say?

“We were wondering if you would like to get away from this place for a while, away from all the drama and heartache.”

“What?” I asked, stunned by what Sebastian said. They were talking about me making a trip or something right now?! I couldn’t even wrap my mind around it. That had come out of nowhere.

“Oh god! Seb?” Eva turned in her seat and admonished Seb. The big man retreated a little and grunted. A smile graced my lips at the exchange. “**We** were just talking about how you were caught up in everything that has been going on and how it must have caused immense pain and heartache.” I shifted uncomfortably in my seat at the effect of her carefully thought-out words.

“It’s not that we are trying to get rid of you. We don’t take you as a burden which we have to get rid of! We genuinely care about you and it doesn’t matter that you are our son’s mate.”

Sebastian nodded. “We believe we have wronged you on some level. Speaking from experience, I know that going away will clear your head a little and put things in perspective for you. So, we just wanted to put it on the table for you, the thought of going away for some time.”

Their words **were** feeling in my head and I failed to grasp them. “You’re asking me **if** I want to go on a trip?”

“Not a trip, exactly,” Sebastian said

It’s hard to explain.” Eva smiled. I couldn’t smile back. “We just want you to get away from all the pain, confusion, and heartache that our son has caused you, that our people **have** caused you.”

I cringed **at** our people part. They must have noticed because they hastened to clarify that they meant werewolves.

“But it’s the middle of the senior **year**.”

“**We know** that. We just wanted to propose the idea to you. Think about it and let us know what you decided on. We will take care of everything else.

Eva nodded. “Just find the answer to one question: would you like to get away from everything for a certain period and find peace?”

Out of all the things **I** had imagined they wanted to talk about, this was the last on my mind.

“We came to this conclusion an hour **ago**, right after we were done with the meeting. Some things are best said face to face.” Eva smiled and I nodded, my head still in a **daze**.

I opened my mouth to **say** something but was **cut** off by the sound of the door being violently banged against the wall.

All three **of** us jolted in our seats and our **eyes** snapped up to see **a pack** member, panting at the doorway.

“Alpha, you have got to see this.

, 745 Views,

Chapter 58

Me, Sebastian, and **Dan** (the pack member who had barged into the meeting room) left the room as soon as we overcame the shock of someone interrupting the meeting. We had left Eva sitting in the armchair because she wouldn't be able to run during her pregnancy. After so many miscarriages and considering her age, it was the responsible choice.

The three of us bound down the stairs, into the foyer, and burst through the front door of the pack house. Before I could say anything, Dan shifted into his brown wolf and sprinted in the direction of the forest. Sebastian gave me an apologetic wolf, shifted into his massive white wolf, and in the same direction that Dan had run.

I huffed angrily. Couldn't have Dan said that shifting was required?! I wouldn't have taken the trouble of running down the stairs then.

If I had any more doubt that it was Samantha, it was cleared after I saw a huge black wolf close to her. I recognized the wolf as Aiden and a smile graced my **face**.

I hadn't seen both of them in quite some time, especially since I had come to know about Natalie being pregnant with Harper's child. I had hidden this **fact** from them because of many reasons. And now, after attending this morning's pack meeting, they must have come to know about it. I had no idea what they were feeling and they couldn't exactly talk because of being in their wolf forms.

I didn't know what to do, or how to act and I hated it. This was my best friend and her boyfriend, who happened to be a very good friend of mine too. I should feel comfortable with them and not the way I was feeling now. It wasn't their fault and nor it was mine. The situation was indeed fucked up, in more ways than one.

Both wolves circled me, one on either side. I had no idea what they were doing and I held my breath. I knew they would never hurt me but it still **set** me on edge.

The next second, Aiden's huge wolf sat down and Samantha's wolf prodded me toward him. I was confused for a second but then it slowly registered with me. They wanted me to get on Aiden's back. They wanted to take me somewhere, preferably to the place Dan and Sebastian had run off to. As if sending my question, Samantha just nodded and nudged me again with her muzzle towards Aiden.

I grasped Aiden's black fur and pulled myself into him. He huffed and I didn't bother hiding my giggle. I felt his whole body move underneath me and I relished the feeling. I had only ridden on the back of a wolf twice or thrice but I could never forget how much exhilarating each experience

was.

My gaze moved onto my hands which were holding Aiden's black fur and my eyes suddenly flashed to the other times I had ridden on the back of a wolf. Harper's Wolf. Harper's white wolf and suddenly my mood plummeted.

Before I could continue my depressing train of thoughts, Aiden took off in the direction where Dan and Sebastian had run off. I looked back to see Samantha catching up with Aiden and a smile graced my face at the rush of wind against my face.

In a few minutes, we were riding through the woods. Up ahead, I could see a huge crowd gathered, facing away from us. This was it. Beyond the **crowd** was the thing that had been so horrifying to Dan. I gulped nervously.

The crowd slowly parted to make way for their future beta, even though he was still in wolf form, his pack mates must still recognize him, seeing that he had been shifting in front of them for so long.

The air around smelt **of** death and the murmurs and distressed voices of pack members made me mentally ready that whatever it was, it was something bad.

Well, the future beta and the Luna! I reluctantly added. I didn't ponder much on the fact that the pack meeting held today could very much change the outlook of the pack members on me and I found that I didn't care about it. At least, not yet.

The crowd parted and I saw Sebastian's tense back and I immediately knew something very bad had happened. He looked shaken and his fists were clenched by his sides.

When I could finally see the center of attraction, I gasped. The scene was so revolting that I wondered who, in their right mind could have done such a thing.

I felt whimpers coming from behind me and noticed that Samantha's wolf was now curled up beside Aiden's, her nozzle underneath his.

It looked like the person was beheaded at the same time he was undergoing shifting from his wolf form, which caused his entire body to freeze up to that moment. His body was morphing and his bones must have been rearranged to look like a human.

His hollow eyes looked at nothing in particular and his face portrayed the shortening of his nozzle. **Like** his face, his body had too, frozen mid-shift. Bones protruded in unnatural angles and the fur must have been receding.

The head and the body were set on different spikes, with blood all over the surface. It was a recent act too, because blood from the head kept sliding

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down.

On closer inspection, a note was posted on the dead wolf's body.

Hello Daddy!

The note meant nothing to me and I didn't have the strength to decipher it. All my focus was captured by the scene. The scene was so gruesome and horrifying that I felt bile rise in my throat.

Just then a wail rose in the air and my head whipped to check the source of the agonizing sound. A young woman, in her early twenties, stumbled out of the groups. Tears streamed down her cheeks and she walked in a daze towards the macabre corpse on spikes.

I didn't know what was happening but by the looks of it, everyone else did. The woman stumbled and sat down in front of the spikes and cried in her hands. "Elijah", she screamed into the air and it was then that I understood that they were mates.

An agonizing pain wracked my heart and I knew I was feeling a sliver of what this girl was going through. Nonetheless, it was enough to bring tears

to my eyes.

Suddenly, I was engulfed in a pair of arms, and sparks and tingles shot through my body. I didn't need to open my eyes to know whose body was stopping me from viewing the horrific and heart-breaking scene.

Harper's hands pulled me flush against his body and my head rested on his bare chest, his heart thudding in rhythm. I put my arms around his torso, desperate for the comfort my mate provided me.

I knew that it was wrong and that there were a lot of things going on between us right then. We needed to solve them before getting close to each other and drawing comfort from each other's presence.

All rational flew out the window when my body connected with his and suddenly any thoughts of going away seemed terrifying.

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Being enveloped in Harper's arms had brought a feeling of peace to me. I had even felt the tingles that I didn't feel a few weeks ago. The fabled tingles that ran through your body, brought you to your knees and gave you a high dose of sheer pleasure, Being in your mate's arms had some benefits.

It had all felt right at the moment. But then as I laid in my bed that very day, it had never felt so wrong. The dynamics of our relationship weren't that simple and I didn't think it ever would be.

I knew the bond between us would only work towards bringing the both of us back together and it's pretty needless to say that it would be a very unhealthy move.

Moreover, I would be bruising my self-respect and dare I say it, ego if I were to even think about getting back with him under these circumstances. I wouldn't have to think twice about it if the fucking bond hadn't messed up my mind and the realization only made my resolve harder than it was before.

I had no idea what Sebastian's motive behind offering me a getaway was, but the more I thought about it, the more appealing the idea of going away for some time, seemed to me.

It **was** embarrassing to admit that I didn't even think twice about the poor wolf who had lost its life in such a brutal way. I was only thinking about my relationship problems like an obsessed teenage girl who was fucked in the head. And I didn't want to be that girl. I wanted to get my priorities straightened and sorted out.

The very next morning, I called Sebastian on his cell and told him that I would be happy to take his offer if it still stood. I couldn't make out his feelings by the sound of his voice, it was smooth and detached as always in the matters of business.

I would have given anything to figure out the thoughts racing through his head. We worked out all the details of my travel and I couldn't have been happier with the decision I had taken. A decision that filled me with happiness.

Sebastian had assured me that he would take care of my parents. As the school was controlled by werewolves, he could come up with some kind of paperwork that would explain that I was working on some sort of project that was essential for my college applications. As a student who had a good GPA, I knew my parents would be convinced to let me go away for a few weeks. If all reasoning failed, Sebastian had implied that he would just use his compulsion to convince my parents. I did feel a little guilty when he said it like that and I was hoping that it wouldn't come to that.

I knew I would be gone for at least a month or two and being the dork, I couldn't help but wonder how I was going to cover all the syllabus I would be missing. Sebastian must have rolled his eyes when I mentioned this point.

He offered me two options. He could enroll me in the school's distance program for the time being or he could talk to the principal of the school of *the* area I wanted to go to. I could join the school for the time being and not miss out on any syllabus. Being the suck-up I was I decided I wanted both of the options. That way I wouldn't be giving up on my schooling experience and still know what syllabus was being covered back home.

I was worried about Harper coming after me because if he found me then all this trouble would have been for nothing. It pained me to imagine being away from him but I knew it needed to be done. I had no idea if we would ever work out in the future but I knew we were toxic right now, Harper wouldn't let me go if he even had a whiff of what we were planning, even though he would agree with the reasoning. Werewolf alphas were crazy that way.

Sebastian hesitated before answering this doubt of mine. I knew he couldn't promise that the trip would be a secret from Harper. Sooner or later, Harper would come to know about my departure. The both of us had an idea how Harper would react to such a condition and neither of us wanted to witness it.

So, Sebastian promised me the only thing that he could, that he would try to contain him as much as possible.

Sebastian had earlier mentioned that the destination options were open to me and I knew I wanted to get created on that front, at least. I wasn't a total sucker.

"I have always wanted to see New York. Or maybe San Diego. Or Nashville. Someplace Nice." I had already started daydreaming about soaking up the sun on one of the Californian beaches.

A sigh was my only response and alarm bells started ringing in my head.

"You can't go that far, Zara."

“Well, why the hell not?”

Another sigh. “Because of the bond.”

Well, fuck the bond.

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“Your mate bond is still new and you’re already having problems. Cue in distance and it will **cause** you gut-wrenching pain as the days progress. The bond will want you to be near **to** your mate, and do things that I believe you will regret later.”

Well, if you knew about this part, why didn’t you tell me about it before? What good is putting distance between me and Harper, **if I** couldn’t put enough of **it**?!

Then where **do** you **suggest I go**?” I sighed and rubbed my temple to calm the frustration and helplessness boiling inside me.

“I think your best bet would be Mylta!” I could sense the hesitation in Sebastian’s voice and for good reason.

The second nearest city to Arada was a day away and was more of a quiet little town. Mylta was a budding coastal town that had the most beautiful beaches **ever**. The coastal town, Mylta was a favorite spot for us Aradans to vacation.

Like I said, it was only a day’s drive away. I wanted to put more distance between me and Harper and Sebastian knew it too. I wanted to go somewhere where Harper couldn’t travel on a whim and catch up to me.

Well, it was as good as I was going to get.

“Where are you going to stay?”

“I could rent an apartment,” I said, hesitantly but I knew it wasn’t going to be that easy. No one gave accommodation to minors and that was exactly

what I was.

“Zara, I know your sister is attending her college there and I know that she’s also rented an apartment.” Oh god, no.

I didn't like where this was going.

"I don't want to stay with her," I mumbled but I didn't get my way because the bastard used compulsion on me. In his defense, he told me that he would feel much better if I stayed with my sister, instead of being alone.

So, here I was, driving in my BMW, on my way to my sister's place, sighing every second, already dreading what the future had in store for me.

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Having her in my arms after such a long time felt so amazing, so fulfilling. Granted, it has only been a few days but still, being away from your mate is torture. A torture I had been deliberately inflicting on myself.

As much as I knew my mate, I knew that she needed time alone to sort things out in her head. So, I gave her exactly that. Time!

It had been so fucking hard to stay away, though. It hasn't been long since I accepted her as my mate. As a result, the bond between us twists and forces us to be closer to each other and complete the mating process. My wolf had been restless for so long, all he could think about these few days, apart from the problems I caused, was the pleasure of marking our mate, of marking Zara.

My wolf would hound me with vivid images of the mark she would proudly wear on her shoulder when my canines would finally pierce her soft skin. My wolf reminded me that I could then, hear her voice inside my head all the time, I would be able to hear all her thoughts about everything.

As of now, marking her was another matter. Talking to her, hell, even looking at Zara seemed to be a big treat nowadays. She had been avoiding me like the plague and I didn't blame her. That didn't mean that it didn't hurt, even though it was my own doing,

I had been staying in my grandparent's cabin these days, mustering the courage to man up and talk to her. Being in that cabin often reminded me of the first time we had sex and how I accepted her as my mate.

That time seemed so far away. It was almost surreal how much of a gigantic mess I had made and thrust Zara into her.

Sometimes, I wondered if she would be better off without me. She would be without all of my baggage and all the emotional drama I carry with me; I was sure of that. But being without me, also meant she would have to be with someone else and the thought alone sent pain in my heart. I could feel my wolf whimper at the back of my mind.

With these kinds of thoughts running through my head these past few days, I was glad to have Zara close to me. Though I would have liked it a hell of a lot more if the situation had been a happy one.

The scene was horrific even for a werewolf like me, who has grown up seeing blood and gore almost every day. But the way Elijah was killed was a new kind of brutality and I felt a shudder pass through me as I think about how painful his death must have been.

Elijah was a good guy, somewhere in his mid-twenties. Did not harm anyone and minded his own business? His loss was great and even greater for his mate. I'm pretty sure everyone was brought to tears by her heart-wrenching cries. It even made my heart squeeze and when I had my mate in my arms. I thanked the moon goddess that it wasn't Zara. I know that it was selfish of me to think like that but I don't know what would happen to me and my wolf if something happened to Zara.

Hearing her cries gave me a sort of a reality check too. It was like headlights flashing some message inside my skull. The message is that life is too short and people die. If life was that uncertain, I had no plans to leave things between me and Zara in the grey area anymore.

But before I could do anything, my dad reminded me that I had alpha duties. He had been planning on giving up on his position as the alpha for some time now and thus, I had been slowly taking over the commands and tasks. So, it was no surprise when he told me to go to Elijah's mate and calm her down.

I didn't want to leave Zara but my wolf understood the gravity of the situation and it wasn't like I wasn't going to talk to her after I was done with the crime scene itself.

I had managed to calm down Zara a little and had asked Aiden to drop Zara home.

I had taken Elijah's mate in my arms and tried to soothe her the best I could. I practically carried her to her home and looked after her. She was traumatized and shivering so badly that my heart went out to her. Losing a mate is one of the most dreadful things that can happen to a werewolf and I would never wish it upon anyone. Seeing this young girl, who was only a few years older than me, made me sick to my stomach. I finally helped her pop a few pills which had thankfully made her sleep for a few hours.

She was a transfer from some other pack. I went to the Alpha's office and pulled out her transfer records. I called her parents, already dreading giving the bad news. The call was emotional and distressed and the parent had promised me that they would be in the pack lands by tomorrow evening.

I slumped back in my chair and breathed a sigh of relief.

“Well, that **was** something

I stretched and felt some of my muscles **relax**.

A knock on the office door brought a rigidity in my stance. "Come in." My alpha voice boomed and the door swung open to reveal Aiden.

Aiden walked inside and settled in the chairs opposite the table. "I ran into the alpha a few minutes ago. He wants the both of us to head the

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investigation about Elijah's murder, seeing as we both will take over the designated posts

I nodded and took a deep breath in. "I have a few **things** I need to do before:

Aiden nodded like he understood, which he probably did. As the beta and my best friend, he knew me well. He knew my chain of command and my mindset and whatever was troubling me.

"How are things with you and Zara?" He asked tentatively. Ever since the pack announcement, most pack members kept frowning, me playing, and disgusted looks. Of course, they didn't have the nerve to say anything to my face but I knew people talked and a drama as big as this, couldn't catch everyone's attention.

"Nonexistent." I ran a frustrated hand through my hair and got up from the chair, determined to change the situation between us.

Harper? Before I could say goodbye, Dad's voice rang through the mind link.

Yeah?

Did Aiden tell you that I want you to lead the investigation about Elijah's murder?

Yeah, Dad. I informed his mate's parents and they will come by tomorrow. Meanwhile, someone is looking after her.

That's good. When can I expect your first report about the murder?

I have a few things to sort out first. Then I will get back to the report.

Son, I expect the first report by nightfall.

I sighed and slumped back in the chair. Aiden playfully raised his eyebrows and I snorted.

‘He expects the first report by nightfall. I huffed.

Playing

Alpha and Beta was not as fun as it had seemed to be when we were kids. As kids, we just saw the power and overlooked the responsibilities and it was all coming down to bite us in the ass.

“Well we should start working, then. He stretched and popped his knuckles.

“Yeah, I guess we do.” I smiled and we both went through the file of Elijah’s murder.

I don’t know why but I had a feeling that Dad had deliberately kept me in the office tonight. Funny. My wolf **was** acting restless but I couldn’t pin it on anything particular. I tried to get rid of the uneasiness and focused on the files.

We barely kept going through the file photos and the tracker’s report. We practically worked till the next day because we couldn’t conclude,

We couldn’t make out anything. We didn’t know who attacked one of the pack members so cruelly, if it was a single person or a group if it were rogues or some pack casing unnecessary trouble. The pack tracker could only trace the unknown scent a few meters outside the pack boundaries. And we had no motive whatsoever.

Just a stupid note to confuse us even more.

We **weren’t** mulling over the strange murder when I suddenly felt a stabbing pain in my chest and felt my wolf whine at the back of my head. What the fuck was happening?!