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Leila sniffs back her tears and wipes the few drops that escape as she blinks with the back of her hand before she shuts the door slowly and drags her heavy feet towards Adaline.

“Come, sit beside me,” Adaline pats the space beside her on the bed.

Leila sits, watching Adaline’s soulful expression closely, her heart thuds gently and Leila surprisingly feels calm when Adaline rests her hands on her thigh to stop Leila from shaking her legs.

“Tell me the truth Leila, do you love Tatum?”

Leila freezes, not expecting that line of questioning from Adaline but the woman asks in such a calm and gentle tone, bereft of any hostility and even if Leila thinks it is the wrong decision, she replies.

“Yes, I’ve always loved him.”

Adaline smiles broadly, heightening Leila’s confusion.

“I know, it is quite obvious. Now tell me, what do you think of me, an evil mother in law? A vindictive bitch?”

Leila looks away from Adaline’s peering eyes. If they are having a heart to heart, it is better to tell her how she really feels.

“Troublesome maybe but not evil and I would never think of you as a bitch, mother. You forget but I do not, you were my role model growing up, it was you who named me at birth, you used to really love me but somehow things turned sour between us,” Leila replies and goosebumps rent her skin as tiny teardrops break loose from her sombre eyes.

In her younger years, there was no one fonder of her than Adaline, she may have been the daughter of the head warrior but she was more known for being the god daughter of the Luna. In fact, it was Adaline's fondness of her that fostered her early relationship with Tatum.

But as the years went by, Adaline's doting morphed into loathing.

"I have not forgotten, my little spitfire," Adaline addresses Leila with her personal nickname for her for the first time in years and her own eyes coat with tears.

"I am a mother and something you will learn soon is that we place the happiness of our children above all other things. I do not hate you, nor do I mean to unnecessarily create trouble for you but you see, Tatum found his mate and I didn't want you around him anymore, that's why I changed.

"Nothing in this life can bring a truer happiness and peace to a werewolf than being with the one the goddess ordained for them and I want my son to experience that but you are standing in the way."

Every word that comes out of Adaline's mouth is like ice being dumped on Leila as realisation after realisation hits her and she just stares blankly at Adaline, unable to utter a word, despite the storm of different painful emotions wading through her.

Adaline takes her hand and squeezes it, a distant smile on her lips. "Do you know who the original Tatum is?"

"Original Tatum?" Leila retorts, her sullen eyes filled with confusion.

"Yes, the original Tatum. He was my first husband, my first love and the epic love of my life," Adaline replies and Leila is beyond stunned to hear

those words.

Adaline was married before she married Alpha Darren?

Adaline looks up and sighs deeply before she continues.

“Tatum and I first met when I was about fifteen and he was seventeen, our chemistry was.....off the charts, the love was amazing and everything was perfect. He was everything I ever wanted in a man and much more, everyone supported our union even at such young ages but my world was quickly turned into hell when a year later, Tatum found his fated mate,” Adaline pauses and takes another deep sigh.

“I thought that was it, I thought it was over but then, he did the unexpected. He rejected his mate for me, that was the height of his love, nothing could top it and the following week, we got married with a promise not to touch me until I got my wolf and rejected my own mate for him. Well, the short story goes like this.

“I had turned eighteen, hadn't met my mate, it was the werewolf games and Darren, the newly installed and hot headed Alpha of the Blood Oak pack claimed me as his mate during the competition, I tried to reject him and told him I was already married but he would not have it. He went straight to my Alpha and threatened to rain hell and brimstone on our pack if his mate was not given to him and to send a message, he plucked out the left eye of our Alpha's Beta. Back then, Darren was ruthless and vicious unlike the one you know now. Left with no choice, I divorced Tatum, packed my bags and left for the blood oak pack.”

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“As you can imagine, I hated Darren, with every breath that I took, with every cell inside of me. I couldn’t stand him but I quickly discovered that the mate bond isn’t something you can fight, the goddess made us for each other for a reason. No matter how much I tried, I couldn’t resist him and he tried to win my heart, not relying on the mate bond alone but the irony is, the mate bond is still the reason he thought to do so.

“I watched Darren turn from a ruthless, vicious and desperate leader to the most kind, sweet and loving Alpha, the version you all see today and it is all because I was put in his life to temper his anger, to guide his rage and to nurture his ego. That is what the mate bond does, it searches for the deepest, most innate good in our mates and helps us bring it out and I want my son to experience the same.

“Leila, if you love Tatum, if you really love him, you will let him go,” Adaline concludes and as she stands up, she runs her hand down Leila’s hair twice, giving her a sombre smile.

“Think about it, little spitfire,” she says in a whispery tone. “That child inside of you is the next Alpha of this pack, no one, not even Carmela can object to it. Take heart in knowing that the next Alpha of the strongest pack in the world is your seed. Do the right thing Leila, let him go.”

Leila’s heart rips into a million pieces.

The mate bond.....

So that is why Tatum cannot seem to resist Carmela, that is why even if he seems to be in love with her, he cannot let Carmela go either.

It is because of the mate bond, his heart may be with her but his mind is

torn apart by something supernatural that he cannot fight.

But why does it have to be Carmela, someone as evil as her doesn't deserve Tatum.

Does she still stay and fight or does she heed the words of Adaline and just leave Tatum's life?

She heaves a deep sigh but her heart aches from a deeper pain and she calls to Adaline who is almost at the door.

"Mother," Leila says in a sullen tone, her blue eyes full of mixed emotions of sadness and pain, a sliver of hope flickering in them.

"What if you're wrong? What if this Tatum is like the original Tatum, willing to sacrifice his mate for the woman he loves? I'm still here even if Carmela has returned, it has to mean something."

Adaline scoffs ever so softly and bites down on her lower lip and she gazes at Leila with an icy edge to her eyes.

"It does mean something, you are carrying his heir and as for my Tatum, he died of a broken heart because of that decision, that will— not be my son's fate," Adaline replies in a cold whispery tone before she leaves the room, slamming the door gently.

Leila wails as the door closes, like it jammed against her heart and the flood gates break, pouring tears from her eyes like a torrent, her pain is palpable, her anguish gut wrenching, her despair frightening and she collapses to the floor and clutches her chest, physically trying to reach for her heart to see if she can soothe it, if she can quell the immense pain battering it mercilessly.

She loves Tatum, she really loves him and she doesn't want to let him go.



Later that evening, Leila makes her way down the stairs to make preparations for dinner. Tatum never showed after he left, he spent all that time with Carmela, his fated mate.

Is this bond as Adaline described, something she can really fight against?

Adaline's love story was quite epic, nothing like she shares with Tatum and even that could not defy the mate bond.

Is it not better for her to allow Tatum to experience this love of a mate?

Is she not being selfish to her own wolf by ignoring her message to find their real mate and get his mark so they can be together again, all because she wants to be with Tatum?

She halts halfway down the stairs, hearing Adaline and Carmela's voices coming from the living room and she cannot help but eavesdrop.

"You are taking this too far mother, pick out a wedding dress when Tatum hasn't even proposed to me?" Carmela says, chuckling lightly.

"He will, soon. So we have to be ready when he does, we cannot waste even a second to have the wedding after that," Adaline's tone is firm.

"But why the rush, I would like to enjoy my fiancée period for a while."

"Don't be a fool," Adaline reprimands Carmela in a fierce tone. "You must be Luna before Leila puts to bed, otherwise her child will be eligible to become the next Alpha of this pack. They may both be my blood but I would rather have the son of the phoenix Luna rule this pack than that of a woman with no wolf."

Leila gasps, clutching her hand over her mouth. Adaline lied to her. It was

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never her intention to see her child become the next Alpha.

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