

Kidnapped by My Mate Novel

Chapter 26 –

Filed To Story:

I found myself lifting my hands from between us and running them over his face. I caressed the frown lines and traced his jaw, mouth, nose, and eyes.

His face was gorgeous, and I found myself wanting to memorize and touch every part of it.

He relaxed a little bit, but his breathing was still coming out in quick pants. I leaned my forehead against his.

“Grayson, wake up.”

He stirred a bit but didn’t open his eyes. I groaned. Man, can this guy sleep.

It would have been kind of adorable, but I really needed to go to the bathroom. And Grayson squeezing me definitely wasn’t helping.

So I did the only thing I could think of: I placed a gentle kiss on his neck. And then I continued up to his face—to his jaw and around his lips.

I felt guilty kissing him without his consent, but I didn’t stop. I mean, I was molesting the guy while he slept, but I loved the feeling of his skin on my lips.

It sent electric shocks through my system and made my brain all foggy. Plus, I was sure that he wouldn’t have minded if he were awake.

I finally kissed his lips. Fireworks exploded as I moved my lips against his. It took my breath away.

And then, suddenly, I was on my back and Grayson was on top of me, kissing the living daylights out of me. I groaned.

Well, I guess he’s awake now.

I had forgotten that my goal in all of this was to wake him up. I’d been too consumed with kissing him to even pay attention to his reaction.

God, this mate bond thing must be really getting to me.

Grayson grabbed onto my legs and wrapped them around his waist, taking full control of the situation. Then he moved his hands to grip my waist under my pajama shirt.

His thumbs were grazing the skin right beneath my breasts.

I was running out of breath from our intense kissing. Noticing this, Grayson removed his lips from mine and moved them down to my jaw and neck, then to my collarbone and around the collar of my cotton shirt.

He paused just long enough to grab the bottom of my shirt and yank it up.

Unable to stop myself, I lifted my arms, allowing him to remove my top.

Grayson stared at my exposed upper half for a long moment, his eyes trained on my breasts. His gaze turned dark and stormy as it moved over my body, seemingly memorizing every part of it. The heat of the moment left me and was replaced by shyness. He was staring at me so intensely, and I couldn't help but hope that he approved of what he saw.

I had never been self-conscious of my body before—I'd had other things to worry about—but now I felt myself shifting and squirming in discomfort.

Grayson noticed this immediately and returned his gaze to my face. His expression softened. He reached a hand up and caressed my cheekbone gently.

"Every day I wonder how I got a mate as beautiful as you, how I got so lucky."

I blushed and squirmed some more, not knowing how to react to his compliment.

No one had ever spoken to me like that.

He smiled at me and lowered his face to mine to give me a slow but passionate kiss.

It wasn't like the kiss from before, which had been hot and demanding.

No, this one was sweet and loving and left my toes curling.

"By the way," Grayson said, lifting off of me just the tiniest bit, "I expect to be woken up like this from now on."

I laughed. "I had to pee and you weren't waking up. It was the only thing that I could think of. I didn't think you would mind."

He leaned down and kissed me again.

“I give you full permission to kiss me whenever you want, conscious or not.”

I laughed again and rose up to kiss his lips. He growled softly. When we pulled apart I asked, “What were you dreaming about?”

He leaned back. “What?”

“It seemed like you were having a bad dream. You were growling and almost squeezed me to death,” I said.

He sighed. “I was dreaming about your stepfather. He was hitting you and I couldn’t get to you.”

“Oh,” I said. I loved how protective he was of me. “But I’m okay now. You saved me.”

He ran his hand over the bruise on my cheek. “I’ll always save you.”

It was crazy how connected I felt to the man on top of me. It was like I’d known him my entire life. I couldn’t believe that only yesterday I’d been plotting to leave him.

Today, I couldn’t imagine my life without him. I would probably have had a full breakdown if he weren’t with me. Maybe our mate bond was getting stronger the longer we knew each other. I felt Grayson stroking my bare side, leaving pleasurable sparks running through me.

“What’s got you thinking so hard, beautiful?”

I smiled. “I...” I hesitated. Would it be weird to say something like this so soon in our relationship? I guess Grayson had already told me he loved me. How much more serious could it get?

“I was just thinking about the mate bond, as you call it. I think it’s getting to me.”

Grayson’s eyes sparkled with happiness.

“Do you now? And why do you think that?”

“I just”—I looked away from him—“this whole thing is crazy. I only met you a couple of weeks ago, but despite that, I still want to give this a try. Which is insane and I know that.

“But I don’t care. I just like you. A lot. I enjoy being around you and, um...touching you. I want to be with you no matter how crazy it is.”

Grayson grabbed my chin and turned my head to look at him. His smile was huge.

“You have no idea how happy that makes me.”

I smiled back at him hesitantly. “Really?”

He nodded and caressed my face. “Yes, really. And trust me, love, all of those feelings are more than mutual.” He leaned down and growled against my ear.

“Especially the touching part.”

He kissed my mark and I gasped. But he didn’t stop there. He kept moving down.

And down.

And then his mouth was on my breast. Half of me was ecstatic, loving every bit of what he was doing, but the other half—probably the more sane one—realized at that exact moment that I wasn’t wearing a shirt. How did I forget that?

I wasn’t even wearing a bra! I was just so comfortable around him, I hadn’t noticed that my upper half was completely exposed. I’d had an entire conversation with him while I was half naked!

I gasped and pushed him away from me. Thankfully, he allowed me to, and I grabbed the sheet and pulled it up to my neck, successfully covering myself.

Grayson growled and pouted when he could no longer see my exposed upper half.

“I’m sorry,” I said, feeling embarrassed. “I forgot I wasn’t wearing a shirt.”

I was way too comfortable around this guy.

Grayson chuckled softly and then sighed. He ran a hand through his hair, looking a bit pained, as if he were restraining himself.

“It’s okay, love. I was just hoping you wouldn’t notice and would let me have my way with you. I really don’t think it’s fair that I’m shirtless all the time while you’re fully clothed. I think you should stay shirtless too,” he said.

I raised an eyebrow. “Okay. I’ll just never put a shirt on again. I’ll just go out in public topless from now on. I bet all the men around us would really get a kick out of that.”

A loud growl left Grayson’s mouth, and he quickly grabbed my shirt that was next to him and put it over my head. I laughed.

Grayson lay down beside me once I had my shirt on and took me into his arms so that my head was on his chest. He kissed my forehead gently.

“You know, you have nothing to be embarrassed about. Your body is mine. All of you is mine.”

I rolled my eyes at his possessiveness. “Uh-huh, sure,” I said in a joking tone.

He squeezed my side in warning and I laughed. I nuzzled my face into his neck, simply breathing in his scent and enjoying being in his arms. We stayed like that for a few minutes.

Everything just felt so peaceful, so right.

But then I took a deep breath. “There’s something else you should know,” I whispered.

Grayson moved me slightly so he could see me. “Okay,” he said.

I could already feel the blush spreading up my neck and into my cheeks. Grayson ran his hand up and down my back in a comforting way, obviously noticing my anxiety.

“I’ve, um”—I hesitated—“I’ve never done anything like, um, that before.”

Grayson raised an eyebrow. “That?”

I shifted and shut my eyes tightly. I had no clue how he would react to what I was about to say.

“I’m a virgin!” I blurted out.

I opened my eyes slowly when I didn’t hear Grayson respond. He had an amused smile on his face.

“And you’re worried about how I’ll react to this?”

I nodded slowly, confused by his reaction. “Well...yeah.”

Grayson’s smile widened as he brushed his hand across my cheek. “I already knew that, baby.”

“What?” I asked as I sat up. “How could you possibly know?”

He shrugged. “I can smell it.”

“You can smell my virginity?” I asked in shock.

Grayson nodded. “A male wolf can smell the virginity of his female, or the lack thereof.”

My jaw dropped. “So you’ve known this entire time?”

“Of course,” he said. “And it makes me happy to know that I’ll be your first.” He pulled me closer to him and rubbed his nose lovingly against my cheek. “And your last,” he whispered.

I laughed nervously and tried not to reveal how much his words were affecting me.

Hot sparks were traveling through my body at the thought of what he was implying.

“You’re very presumptuous, aren’t you?”

His lips were hovering over my mark as he said his next words: “You don’t think I’ll be taking your virginity?” he said seductively.

The truth was that I was pretty sure he would be the one. But I didn’t need him knowing that. I wasn’t ready, and I didn’t want him confusing my agreement with being ready.

Plus, he didn’t need a bigger head. “Well...I, I don’t—”

Chapter 27 –

Filed To Story:

He kissed my mark gently and it sent my entire body up in flames. I gasped and turned my head to the side to give him better access. He chuckled against my skin.

“I can’t wait to be inside you, hearing those noises you make when I kiss you, and making you feel things you’ve never felt before.”

I gasped at his words, and a quiet moan left my mouth. I pushed my body closer to his. I honestly couldn’t wait either.

“But right now,” he said between kisses on my neck and around my mark, “I know that you’re not ready. I also know that you need to go pee.”

He lifted the blanket away from me.

“So you better get going before I decide to keep you in this bed forever.”

In a daze, I got up and followed his instructions, walking to the door of the bathroom and closing it behind me.

I sat on the bed late in the afternoon, watching Grayson pack up our hotel room as we prepared to go home. We would board our flight tonight around midnight Paris time.

I had tried to help, but he'd just growled at me and told me to sit down. Tired from our adventure-filled day, I hadn't bothered arguing.

We'd spent the day seeing everything there was to see in Paris, and it had been absolutely amazing. My face hurt from smiling so much. I was still smiling as I watched Grayson move around the room, glancing at me every once in a while and smiling back at me.

Everything about him was perfect. I couldn't help but admire the way his body moved and how his large muscles flexed. He was breathtaking; it was hard to believe that a guy like him would want a girl like me.

"Grayson?" I asked him hesitantly.

He looked at me with a raised eyebrow.

"Please don't be mad," I said as I wrung my hands.

He turned to me fully. "Okay, now you've really got my attention."

I took a deep breath. "We can't go home yet," I said.

His expression turned shocked. "What? You've been begging to go home for weeks.

I thought you were excited." He came toward me and sat down next to me, taking my hands in his.

"I know, but that was before I visited my mom. I can't leave her. She needs our help. Carl is basically a monster."

Grayson sighed. "Yes, I agree with you there. I already have it under control."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I sent one of my men to watch over your mother and send me daily updates. I wish that there was more I could do, but I need to get back to my pack. Once everything is under control there, I will revisit the situation and evaluate how your mother has been treated, and then decide if she needs to be brought to Minnesota and asked to join our pack."

I shook my head. "But what if something happens? I can't just leave her here. We have to go help her now."

"Someone will watch over her and will intervene if anything happens," Grayson said.

"I cannot just simply take someone away from their mate. Carl's wolf will not allow it. He may not seem like it, but he is a powerful werewolf. He is the gamma of the main pack of

Paris. He has a lot of power. There is no telling what he could be capable of if his mate was taken away from him.”

I nodded reluctantly.

He reached up and cupped my cheek gently. “I know that I would never give up if I lost you. I would tear the world apart first.”

I leaned in closer to his touch, loving the feeling of the sparks running through my body. “Okay,” I whispered.

That made me feel a little better. There were so many questions that I had for my mom. I just couldn’t bring myself to believe that she never wanted to see me again.

Not after how happy she’d been to see me before Carl showed up.

But she had survived this long without me. She could go another month, right?

Grayson wrapped his arm around my shoulder and pulled me close to him.

“Please don’t worry too much, beautiful. I will take care of everything.” He bent down and kissed my forehead.

I leaned into him further. I couldn’t help but trust him.

As Grayson and I boarded his private jet to head back to Minnesota, my stomach rolled with nerves. Mainly because I was about to get back on a plane and I couldn’t help but still feel terrified of flying, but also because I was about to go back to Grayson’s home and meet his pack. How was I supposed to help Grayson lead a pack? I could barely pay my rent every month. What if they didn’t like me or thought that I was unworthy?

I knew Grayson could sense my anxiety. He kept one arm safely around me at all times and was always rubbing either my back or arm—as if to remind me that he was there and I had nothing to worry about.

The private jet was bigger than I’d expected, with several rows of seating and a sofa in the back. When we reached our seats, Grayson pulled me to his chest before I had the chance to sit down. He placed me on his lap as he sat in his own chair.

At first I didn’t mind. I simply rolled my eyes and allowed him to hold me. Feeling his arms wrapped around mine was honestly helping to calm my nerves. We stayed like that for a few minutes before the plane moved.

Then I quickly tried to stand and take the seat next to us, but Grayson just tightened his grip on me.

“What are you doing?” I gasped.

Grayson acted like he couldn’t hear me and rubbed his nose up and down the side of my neck. I shoved his face away from me and tried to get out of his lap. He didn’t budge.

“Seriously, Grayson! Let me sit in my own seat!”

He pretended to think about it, then shrugged. “Nope.”

I gaped at him. “What do you mean, ‘nope’?”

“I mean you will be sitting right here for the flight. And no one is going to argue with me about it,” he said as he held me closer to his chest.

“Oh, you wanna bet?” I asked stubbornly as I pushed him away once again with much more force. His grip on me still didn’t loosen. The plane was moving faster.

“Grayson, please! This isn’t safe! I have to sit in my seat and put on a seat belt.!”

He pushed his face into my neck and then brought his lips to my ear. “Calm down, Belle. I will not let anything happen to you.”

His calming voice made a little bit of the tension leave my body.

“What about seat belts?” I asked shakily.

“I hired the best pilot that money can buy. I promise you that nothing is going to happen. And if something happens, then my arms will act as your seat belt.,” he said.

Is he stupid or something? “Um, I don’t care how strong you think you are, Mr.

Werewolf Alpha Thing, if this plane crashes into the ocean, your arms cannot save me!”

He smiled a bit. “Let’s put that theory to the test, shall we?” he asked.

I shoved at him yet again, really putting all of my strength behind my blows to his chest.

“No! We are not doing this! Let go of—”

Suddenly, Grayson clamped his giant hand onto the back of my neck possessively, forcing me to turn and look at him.

He brought my face so close to his that our noses were almost touching, and I watched as his eyes darkened substantially, the presence of his wolf becoming clear.

I swallowed hard.

“You will sit here for the entire flight and that is final. Am I clear?” Grayson asked, his voice an octave lower than usual.

At first, I couldn’t speak. I was too consumed with staring into his eyes, watching his irises swirl. His grip on the back of my neck tightened.

“Belle, give me your word.”

I nodded my head quickly, afraid that he would turn into a wolf if I disagreed.

“I’ll stay here.”

Grayson grunted his approval.

“Good. Now come here.”

He released his grip on my neck and gently brought me closer to him so I could lean my head against his chest. Then his hands made their way under my shirt, where they rubbed my back in a soothing way, just as he had done on the flight to Paris when we’d first met.

His touch calmed my body by a lot, and soon I was completely at peace. Grayson pressed a soft kiss to my head.

It surprised me how quickly he could go from dominant alpha male, demanding respect, to my sweet and loving mate who I knew would never hurt me. After a few more minutes, the plane was officially in the air. And, amazingly, I was fine.

“Hey, Grayson?” I whispered as I tilted my head up to look at him.

“Yes, beautiful?” he asked.

I took a deep breath. “I love you.”

Grayson looked taken aback for a moment, but soon his face broke out into a breathtaking smile. In a flash, his lips came crashing down into mine.

Once he released my lips from his, he looked at me and smiled widely.

“I love you too, Belle. More than you’ll ever know.”

“Aaawww,” someone suddenly said next to us. “It feels like my heart is about to explode from the cuteness.”

Both of our heads snapped up. Our eyes connected with Kyle’s: he was sitting in the row next to us with his elbow on the armrest and his chin propped up in his hand.

I couldn't believe I hadn't noticed him sitting right next to us. Of course, that meant he'd been present for my entire confession of love to Grayson. How embarrassing!

Grayson growled loudly and bared his teeth at him.

"Find somewhere else to sit, Kyle. Go bother the pilot or something."

Kyle raised his hands in surrender.

"Just thought we could all keep each other company during the flight home." He stood. "But I can see where I'm not wanted."

He saluted Grayson, winked at me, and then took a seat as far away from us as possible.

I looked back at Grayson. "Well, that's certainly one way to ruin a perfect moment,"

I said, playing with the collar of his shirt.

Grayson shook his head. "Kyle is a good gamma, but I'm considering killing him right now."

I ran my hand through the side of Grayson's hair. "Shall we try it again?" I asked.

Grayson raised an eyebrow. "Try what?"

"Grayson," I started, "I love you."

He smiled softly and then brought me forward until my forehead met his.

"I don't think I'll ever get sick of you saying that," he whispered to me. "I love you too, Belle."

Chapter 28 –

Filed To Story:

It was the middle of the night, so I knew that I probably wouldn't have to meet many people tonight, but I was still nervous. I was about to start my new life in my new home with a man I had only met a few weeks ago but somehow loved. If that wasn't enough, I was supposed to help him lead with no experience of leadership.

I mean, I barely knew anything about werewolves, and now I was about to become

'luna' of an entire pack. How did that make sense?

We were sitting in the back of a car that he had left at the airport. Grayson, always knowing when I was feeling uneasy, wrapped a comforting arm around me and gently pulled me to him.

He rubbed his nose against the side of my head.

"What's bothering you, baby?"

I shrugged and snuggled closer to him, not really wanting to get into it at that moment. I could barely speak through the lump in my throat.

As if he knew what I was thinking, Grayson said, "Everybody is going to love you.

You have nothing to worry about. You are going to do great."

Still in his arms, I turned my head to look up at him. His eyes were gentle and soft as he gazed down at me.

"Are they going to be okay with a human being your mate? Being their luna? And what is everyone going to expect of me? I don't know anything about leading a pack. How am I going to be any help to you?"

Grayson pulled me closer to him. "My pack will automatically love you as their luna. They felt the connection between us the moment that I met you, just like I did.

They know I've found my mate and their luna, and they can feel your strength.

They trust me as their alpha and trust the Moon Goddess's choice for my mate.

"You may not know it, but you have all the qualities needed to be the perfect luna.

We will ease you into your new job and you'll learn over time. And I have complete confidence that you will find being a luna more enjoyable than you thought. You were born to lead by my side."

I swallowed. Jeez, I'm not feeling any of the pressure now.

I nodded. "Okay," I said. "I can do this."

Grayson kissed the top of my head.

"Yes, you can. And if it makes you feel any better, the only person that you're going to have to meet today is my beta, Adalee."

“And my mate, Elijah!” Kyle yelled from the front. “He’s up waiting for me to get home.”

Hearing the excitement in his voice, I smiled.

“Do you think you will be able to handle that? You won’t be too overwhelmed?”

Grayson asked me in a worried tone.

I knew that he was desperate for me to be happy with his pack. It was almost cute how worried he was. My heart melted a bit. I took a deep breath and turned my body fully so that I was facing him.

“I’m going to be fine. Just stay with me, okay? I don’t think that I’ll be able to get through this without you by my side.”

Grayson smiled and then leaned down and kissed me gently on the lips.

“Always. I’ll never leave you.”

I felt the love that I had for the man sitting beside me grow. I smashed my lips into his and wrapped my arms around his neck. Grayson moaned against my mouth.

“Okay, so while you guys make out, I’m going to go see my mate,” Kyle said.

Before I could even look at him, I heard the front car door slam and the faint sound of Kyle’s footsteps running away. Out the window beside us I saw a giant house with multiple stories. It looked more like a hotel than a house, really. I couldn’t help but gape at it.

I felt Grayson’s hand on my leg, running up and down it.

“How ya doing, baby?” His voice sounded hesitant as he watched me react to his vast estate.

“I just...,” I started. “Wow.”

Grayson nodded as he looked at the house.

“That’s as good a reaction as any. This is the pack house and your new home. It houses over five hundred werewolves. Many of the other pack members live in houses on pack lands as well, but this is the largest.”

I swallowed and let out a shaky breath of air. “And you live here as well?”

“Yes,” Grayson said. “We both do.”

I nodded. “Well...,” I said slowly. I looked at him, grabbing his hand and squeezing.

“I guess it’s time for us to start our new life together, huh?”

He squeezed my hand right back and smiled widely.

“After you,” he said, gesturing to the car door beside me.

Once inside the house, the first thing I noticed was that the inside was just as magnificent as the outside. I walked into the grand foyer with my chin to the floor, barely able to contain how beautiful it was. A large, winding staircase greeted me, seemingly going up for at least six floors.

Pillars surrounded us in a circle, and my cheap, not-so-white-anymore sneakers met what seemed to be expensive wood floors that turned into marble as you went through more of the house. All walls were painted pristine white when they weren’t covered by giant windows. Wooden beams were on the ceiling, giving the entire house a very cabin-like vibe. It was absolutely breathtaking.

I hadn’t even noticed that Grayson was watching me, gauging my reaction, until he tightened the arm that was already tightly wrapped around my waist.

“What do you think?”

I couldn’t stop looking around me. “I don’t think I’ve ever been anywhere as nice as this,” I said in awe. I looked up at Grayson. “You didn’t tell me you were this rich!”

Grayson chuckled. “I’m not. This is all the pack’s money at work. I’m just in charge of it.”

“But you’re the one who gets to decide how to spend it, right?” I said.

Grayson thought about it for a moment. “I suppose.”

“Then you’re rich,” I said. “I don’t think I’ve ever had more than a thousand dollars in my bank account, except for when I saved enough to go to Paris. I’ve always been living paycheck to paycheck.”

Grayson growled next to me and wrapped both arms around me, pulling me to him so that my back was pressed against his chest. He then leaned down so that his chin was resting on the top of my head.

“That will never happen again. Not as long as I’m alive.” He pressed a hard kiss into my hair.

The determination in his voice made me shiver.

Suddenly a woman stepped up next to us and cleared her throat. She was tall and fit, with beautiful red hair. She was absolutely stunning.

“Alpha, Luna,” she said, acknowledging both of us with her head bowed. Then she got down on her knees and tilted her neck to the side, showing us the porcelain skin of her throat.

I pressed further into Grayson, not really sure what was happening or how to respond.

Grayson leaned down so that his mouth was right next to my ear, his hot, minty breath fanning the side of my cheek.

“She’s baring her neck to us just like you did to me a while ago. It’s a sign of respect.

Be prepared to be greeted like this for the rest of your life,” he whispered. He stood straight again.

“Hello, Adalee. It’s great to see you again. I hope my absence didn’t make your life too hard.”

The minute that she was addressed, she stood quickly and smiled, losing all formality in her stance. She rolled her eyes and laughed a bit.

“You know perfectly well that this was probably the worst couple of weeks of my life. You are never allowed to leave for so long again. Your job is way harder than it looks.”

Grayson chuckled. “It’s nice to finally get some recognition. Thank you for all of your updates. They definitely helped keep me up to date. You did an amazing job while I was gone.”

Adalee smiled brightly and then let her eyes drift to me. She approached me slowly, never letting her smile drop.

“It is so nice to meet you, Luna,” she said in a kind, genuine tone. “I was unbelievably excited when I felt the alpha’s connection to you.”

I nodded hesitantly, taken aback by her up-front kindness. Although, it made me feel better that my first interaction with someone here seemed to be going okay so far.

“Um, thank you,” I said.

Adalee came closer to me and then reached out her hand to shake. “My name is Adalee, the beta of this pack. I hope that we can be good friends.”

I smiled back. “I’m Belle.”

Grayson squeezed my side.

“But you will not call her that,” he said to Adalee.

Adalee rolled her eyes. “I know that. I’m not some idiot who wants to have an angry alpha hunting me down for disrespecting his mate.”

Grayson growled lowly while I just laughed. “I really hope we can be friends too,” I said genuinely. She seemed to be really nice. Maybe I’ll actually be able to fit in around here.

Adalee beamed at me.

“Oh, Luna! I have someone for you to meet!” Kyle came running into the room, pulling someone along with him.

He wrapped his arm around the other man’s waist and smiled. The man was blond and well built, with stunning gray eyes and a ready smile. He looked at all of us nervously as he entered the room, and immediately bared his neck to Grayson, Adalee, and me.

“This is my mate, Elijah,” Kyle said as he looked at Elijah lovingly, wearing an enormous smile.

“It’s nice to meet you, Elijah,” I said. “I’m Belle.”

Grayson growled. He leaned down so he could talk to me.

“Stop telling people your name. Only I am allowed to call you that.”

I just rolled my eyes. “I can tell people to call me whatever I want,” I said.

Grayson ignored me, but I could tell that he wasn’t happy with my response. He looked back at Elijah. “This is your luna. You are lucky to be one of the first in the pack to meet her.”

Elijah nodded but didn’t look up.

Kyle laughed. “You can look up now. They’re not as scary as they seem.”

Elijah slowly raised his eyes and scanned the room, looking at everybody but Grayson. “Sorry,” he said as he smiled at me. “I’m not used to being in the same room as the four most powerful members of the pack.”

“Me? Powerful?” I scoffed. “I don’t think so.”

Elijah laughed. “You may not feel like it, but you have the power to make anyone in this pack do whatever you want.” He glanced at Grayson nervously.

“Even the alpha. Some would say that you are the most powerful member of this pack.”

I looked up at Grayson questioningly to see if that was true. He met my gaze and did not deny it.

“Come,” Grayson said as he pulled me away and toward the large staircase. “We’re going to bed.”

The others bowed their heads in respect as they watched us go.

As we turned off the path that had led us through the Minnesota wilderness, and onto a long pebbled driveway that would take us to Grayson’s home, it felt like there was a bundle of nerves sitting at the bottom of my stomach like a rock.

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You have nothing to worry about. You are going to do great.”

Still in his arms, I turned my head to look up at him. His eyes were gentle and soft as he gazed down at me.

“Are they going to be okay with a human being your mate? Being their luna? And what is everyone going to expect of me? I don’t know anything about leading a pack. How am I going to be any help to you?”

Grayson pulled me closer to him. “My pack will automatically love you as their luna. They felt the connection between us the moment that I met you, just like I did.

They know I’ve found my mate and their luna, and they can feel your strength.

They trust me as their alpha and trust the Moon Goddess’s choice for my mate.

“You may not know it, but you have all the qualities needed to be the perfect luna.

We will ease you into your new job and you’ll learn over time. And I have complete confidence that you will find being a luna more enjoyable than you thought. You were born to lead by my side.”

I swallowed. Jeez, I’m not feeling any of the pressure now.

I nodded. “Okay,” I said. “I can do this.”

Grayson kissed the top of my head.

“Yes, you can. And if it makes you feel any better, the only person that you’re going to have to meet today is my beta, Adalee.”

“And my mate, Elijah!” Kyle yelled from the front. “He’s up waiting for me to get home.”

Hearing the excitement in his voice, I smiled.

“Do you think you will be able to handle that? You won’t be too overwhelmed?”

Grayson asked me in a worried tone.

I knew that he was desperate for me to be happy with his pack. It was almost cute how worried he was. My heart melted a bit. I took a deep breath and turned my body fully so that I was facing him.

“I’m going to be fine. Just stay with me, okay? I don’t think that I’ll be able to get through this without you by my side.”

Grayson smiled and then leaned down and kissed me gently on the lips.

“Always. I’ll never leave you.”

I felt the love that I had for the man sitting beside me grow. I smashed my lips into his and wrapped my arms around his neck. Grayson moaned against my mouth.

“Okay, so while you guys make out, I’m going to go see my mate,” Kyle said.

Before I could even look at him, I heard the front car door slam and the faint sound of Kyle’s footsteps running away. Out the window beside us I saw a giant house with multiple stories. It looked more like a hotel than a house, really. I couldn’t help but gape at it.

I felt Grayson’s hand on my leg, running up and down it.

“How ya doing, baby?” His voice sounded hesitant as he watched me react to his vast estate.

“I just...,” I started. “Wow.”

Grayson nodded as he looked at the house.

“That’s as good a reaction as any. This is the pack house and your new home. It houses over five hundred werewolves. Many of the other pack members live in houses on pack lands as well, but this is the largest.”

I swallowed and let out a shaky breath of air. “And you live here as well?”

“Yes,” Grayson said. “We both do.”

I nodded. “Well...,” I said slowly. I looked at him, grabbing his hand and squeezing.

“I guess it’s time for us to start our new life together, huh?”

He squeezed my hand right back and smiled widely.

“After you,” he said, gesturing to the car door beside me.

Once inside the house, the first thing I noticed was that the inside was just as magnificent as the outside. I walked into the grand foyer with my chin to the floor, barely able to contain how beautiful it was. A large, winding staircase greeted me, seemingly going up for at least six floors.

Pillars surrounded us in a circle, and my cheap, not-so-white-anymore sneakers met what seemed to be expensive wood floors that turned into marble as you went through more of the house. All walls were painted pristine white when they weren’t covered by giant

windows. Wooden beams were on the ceiling, giving the entire house a very cabin-like vibe. It was absolutely breathtaking.

I hadn't even noticed that Grayson was watching me, gauging my reaction, until he tightened the arm that was already tightly wrapped around my waist.

"What do you think?"

I couldn't stop looking around me. "I don't think I've ever been anywhere as nice as this," I said in awe. I looked up at Grayson. "You didn't tell me you were this rich!"

Grayson chuckled. "I'm not. This is all the pack's money at work. I'm just in charge of it."

"But you're the one who gets to decide how to spend it, right?" I said.

Grayson thought about it for a moment. "I suppose."

"Then you're rich," I said. "I don't think I've ever had more than a thousand dollars in my bank account, except for when I saved enough to go to Paris. I've always been living paycheck to paycheck."

Grayson growled next to me and wrapped both arms around me, pulling me to him so that my back was pressed against his chest. He then leaned down so that his chin was resting on the top of my head.

"That will never happen again. Not as long as I'm alive." He pressed a hard kiss into my hair.

The determination in his voice made me shiver.

Suddenly a woman stepped up next to us and cleared her throat. She was tall and fit, with beautiful red hair. She was absolutely stunning.

"Alpha, Luna," she said, acknowledging both of us with her head bowed. Then she got down on her knees and tilted her neck to the side, showing us the porcelain skin of her throat.

I pressed further into Grayson, not really sure what was happening or how to respond.

Grayson leaned down so that his mouth was right next to my ear, his hot, minty breath fanning the side of my cheek.

"She's baring her neck to us just like you did to me a while ago. It's a sign of respect.

Be prepared to be greeted like this for the rest of your life," he whispered. He stood straight again.

“Hello, Adalee. It’s great to see you again. I hope my absence didn’t make your life too hard.”

The minute that she was addressed, she stood quickly and smiled, losing all formality in her stance. She rolled her eyes and laughed a bit.

“You know perfectly well that this was probably the worst couple of weeks of my life. You are never allowed to leave for so long again. Your job is way harder than it looks.”

Grayson chuckled. “It’s nice to finally get some recognition. Thank you for all of your updates. They definitely helped keep me up to date. You did an amazing job while I was gone.”

Adalee smiled brightly and then let her eyes drift to me. She approached me slowly, never letting her smile drop.

“It is so nice to meet you, Luna,” she said in a kind, genuine tone. “I was unbelievably excited when I felt the alpha’s connection to you.”

I nodded hesitantly, taken aback by her up-front kindness. Although, it made me feel better that my first interaction with someone here seemed to be going okay so far.

“Um, thank you,” I said.

Adalee came closer to me and then reached out her hand to shake. “My name is Adalee, the beta of this pack. I hope that we can be good friends.”

I smiled back. “I’m Belle.”

Grayson squeezed my side.

“But you will not call her that,” he said to Adalee.

Adalee rolled her eyes. “I know that. I’m not some idiot who wants to have an angry alpha hunting me down for disrespecting his mate.”

Grayson growled lowly while I just laughed. “I really hope we can be friends too,” I said genuinely. She seemed to be really nice. Maybe I’ll actually be able to fit in around here.

Adalee beamed at me.

“Oh, Luna! I have someone for you to meet!” Kyle came running into the room, pulling someone along with him.

He wrapped his arm around the other man's waist and smiled. The man was blond and well built, with stunning gray eyes and a ready smile. He looked at all of us nervously as he entered the room, and immediately bared his neck to Grayson, Adalee, and me.

"This is my mate, Elijah," Kyle said as he looked at Elijah lovingly, wearing an enormous smile.

"It's nice to meet you, Elijah," I said. "I'm Belle."

Grayson growled. He leaned down so he could talk to me.

"Stop telling people your name. Only I am allowed to call you that."

I just rolled my eyes. "I can tell people to call me whatever I want," I said.

Grayson ignored me, but I could tell that he wasn't happy with my response. He looked back at Elijah. "This is your luna. You are lucky to be one of the first in the pack to meet her."

Elijah nodded but didn't look up.

Kyle laughed. "You can look up now. They're not as scary as they seem."

Elijah slowly raised his eyes and scanned the room, looking at everybody but Grayson. "Sorry," he said as he smiled at me. "I'm not used to being in the same room as the four most powerful members of the pack."

"Me? Powerful?" I scoffed. "I don't think so."

Elijah laughed. "You may not feel like it, but you have the power to make anyone in this pack do whatever you want." He glanced at Grayson nervously.

"Even the alpha. Some would say that you are the most powerful member of this pack."

I looked up at Grayson questioningly to see if that was true. He met my gaze and did not deny it.

"Come," Grayson said as he pulled me away and toward the large staircase. "We're going to bed."

The others bowed their heads in respect as they watched us go.

Chapter 29 –

Filed To Story:

I let out the biggest yawn of my entire life as Grayson and I walked up the stairs. I leaned heavily against him, letting him lead us to his room. He chuckled and swiftly lifted me into his arms. I sighed happily and nuzzled into his chest.

I felt his lips on my head.

“I feel like two human newlyweds as I carry you off to our honeymoon,” Grayson said.

I laughed, “Yeah, it really feels like that.”

“Well, this is the beginning of our new life, so it might as well be our honeymoon.”

The only difference was that newlyweds knew that they were going to be together forever. Who knows if Grayson will really always want me?

The thought of Grayson getting tired of me and not wanting me in his life anymore made me suddenly sick to my stomach.

Who would’ve thought... Only a few days ago, I was plotting to get away from the man holding me, and now I was panicking over whether we would be together forever.

As we came to a set of wooden doors, Grayson stopped and kicked them open. He walked us into a huge room that was just as nice as the hotel room we’d stayed in while we were in Paris.

I gasped. “This is your room?”

Grayson nodded and set me down on my feet. “Our room.”

I turned to look at him. “You mean you want me sharing a room with you?” I asked, shocked but secretly relieved.

I didn’t even want to think about what it would be like to sleep without him now that I’d gotten a taste of what it was like to spend the night in his arms.

“I keep forgetting how little you know about the werewolf culture and how different it is from the human world. Yes, you will be sharing a room with me. I’ll never have it any other way,” he said. “You’ll always sleep with me, unless I’m away on important business that I’m unable to bring you along for. So I hope you like this room, because it will be yours for the rest of your life.”

I swallowed hard. “Really?” I looked around, taking in the huge California king-size bed, the walk-in closet, the separate living space, and the en suite bathroom.

I figured I could live with this being my room for the rest of my life. It was three times bigger than my apartment back home.

“Yes,” Grayson said. “No arguments.” His arms were suddenly around me again, pulling me in so that my back was flush against his chest. “Tonight we will get some rest, and then tomorrow I’ll give you a full tour of the pack territory so you can get to know your new home. How does that sound?”

I smiled. “That sounds amazing.”

Grayson smiled back. “Someone will bring your suitcase up tomorrow morning, but the closet is fully stocked with a brand new wardrobe for you, so I doubt you will need any of your old clothes ever again.”

My stomach dropped at the way he said ‘old clothes’—as if he was disgusted by the things that I’d been wearing before. Did he not like my old outfits? Did he think I looked bad?

I looked down at what I was wearing at that moment. What about now? I suddenly felt self-conscious.

Grayson watched me cross my arms over my chest and make my way to the huge walk-in closet. Over half of the closet was taken up with women’s clothing, all in my size.

I ran my hand over some of the pieces and frowned. It was all so beautiful and expensive—nothing like the clothes that I was wearing now. I turned to look at Grayson, who was leaning casually in the doorway, watching me. He frowned.

“You don’t look happy. What’s wrong? Do you not like the clothes?”

I suddenly felt extremely guilty. I am given a closet full of expensive and beautiful clothes, and instead of acting grateful, I become defensive and bitter?

“No!” I said quickly. I walked over to Grayson and wrapped my arms around him. “I love them. Thank you. They’re amazing.”

He leaned down and placed his lips softly on mine. When he lifted away from me he said, “I know something is wrong.”

I sighed and leaned my forehead against his chest. “Did you not like my old clothes?”

Grayson immediately pushed me back gently so he could see me.

“That’s what’s got you so upset? You think I don’t like your clothes?” he asked.

I looked down at my jeans and worn-out sweater, then shrugged my shoulders.

“Isn’t that why you bought me all these new clothes?”

He shook his head and chuckled.

“Baby, I love you no matter what you’re wearing. You could wear a paper bag and I would still think you looked beautiful. I got you all of this because I want you to have the best in life. There was nothing wrong with your old clothes.” He put his hands on either side of my face and smiled down at me. “I’m going to spoil you for the rest of your life.” He bent down and kissed my forehead. “Better get used to it.”

I smiled at him and then placed my lips on his.

“Thank you,” I whispered. I turned to look back at all the new clothes and sighed as Grayson hugged my waist and placed his chin on the top of my head.

“I don’t think I’ve ever had this many clothes in my life,” I said.

Grayson chuckled in response.

“Well, I’m exhausted,” I said, letting out a huge yawn. I turned to look at Grayson. “I think I’m going to get ready for bed. Did you get me pajamas?”

“Actually, no,” Grayson said.

I raised an eyebrow at him. “All of these clothes and you forgot to get me pajamas?”

“Actually, when I asked someone to get you clothes, I specifically asked them not to get you pajamas,” Grayson said.

“What?” I took a step back. “I don’t care how horny you are, I am not sleeping naked.”

Grayson laughed loudly. “That is not what I meant, gorgeous.” He grabbed my waist and rubbed along my sides. “I didn’t get you any pajamas because I want you sleeping in my clothes for the rest of your life.”

He walked over to a dresser and took out a pair of his boxers and one of his shirts.

It was so huge the bottom would probably reach my knees. I smiled at him. I couldn’t help but swoon a bit.

“Why do you like me in your clothes so much? I think I’ve spent more time in your clothes since I’ve met you than in mine.”

Grayson smiled back at me. “And that’s exactly how I want it to be. I want you smelling like me.”

My brows knit together. “Why?”

“It’s a werewolf thing. Males like their mates to smell like them to let all others know that they are taken.”

“I thought that was why you bit me,” I said as I brought my hand up to touch the mark on my shoulder.

Grayson bent down and placed a gentle kiss on the mark, causing delicious sparks to spread up and down my body. I gasped and brought my body closer to his.

I felt Grayson smile against my skin, enjoying my reaction to his touch. He lifted himself away from me and kissed my forehead.

“Until we’re fully mated, my wolf will be crazy possessive of you. I will do whatever it takes to make sure that everyone knows you’re mine.”

I gulped at the intensity of his voice. I knew I should be mad that he was referring to me as his—as if I was some sort of object for him to possess—but I knew that he meant no harm by it. It was normal for him. I smiled and lifted my lips up to his. He growled against my mouth. His arms slowly circled my middle and then lifted me off the ground.

Wrapping my legs around his waist, he carried us out of the closet and over to his bed, never removing his lips from mine. Our kiss had now gone from sweet and loving to intense and wild. It was like neither of us could get enough of each other.

He laid me down on the bed and crawled on top of me; his hands traveled all over my body, including places only I had touched. After a while, I separated my lips from his, needing to catch my breath, but was surprised that I didn’t want him to stop.

I trusted him and wanted him to keep going.

Grayson sat up quickly and yanked his shirt over his head before leaning back and pressing kisses all along my neck and down to my chest. His hands drifted lower, along my waist, gripping it tightly. I spread my legs a bit, and he immediately grabbed them to spread them wider.

He placed his body between them, growling as the lower halves of our bodies connected.

“Grayson,” I moaned out, feeling intense sparks travel between us and knowing that it was our mate bond becoming more powerful.

It made me crave more, and I couldn’t help but press my chest up against his, wanting to feel his skin against mine, desperate to feel the sparks everywhere. I ran my hands down his back, feeling his powerful muscles strain and relax beneath my touch as he continued to kiss my mark and throat, leaving hickeys that I was sure would be there in the morning.

I grabbed the bottom of my T-shirt, wanting to take it off, but couldn’t because Grayson was pressing me down. He must have noticed me squirming, because, without taking his lips from my skin, he grabbed the end of my shirt.

I expected him to pull it over my head, but instead, he leaned back and looked at me.

He was asking for my permission.

I nodded my head quickly, ready to beg him to take it off.

My shirt was ripped within seconds and thrown across the room. I gasped.

“Grayson!” I yelled. “You ripped it!”

Grayson growled loudly in response. It was then that I noticed just how black his eyes were. His wolf was in control. But I wasn’t afraid. I felt better that his wolf was here, looking down at me.

I felt safe.

His lips smashed down onto mine once again, and he wasted no time in grabbing onto my bra and ripping it in half as well before throwing it across the room to join my ruined shirt.

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Seriously?” Although, I guess it didn’t matter since he had just bought me an entirely new wardrobe.

He didn’t respond, too busy staring down at my breasts. I felt self-conscious but tried my best not to lift my arms and cover myself as his hungry black eyes studied every inch of my exposed skin.

I propped myself up onto my elbows.

“Grayson?” I whispered.

His eyes snapped to mine. He placed his palm on my cheek. “I am so lucky.” He touched his forehead to mine and then kissed me once again.

“Tell me if you need to stop, Belle,” he whispered against my lips.

I smiled and pressed my lips against his, then said, “I don’t want to stop.” I put my hands on either side of his face.

“I’m ready.”

His thumb ran over my bruised cheekbone that seemed to be getting more swollen every day. “Are you sure?” he asked.

I nodded my head. I’d never been more sure of anything in my life. I wanted to be with the man I loved in the most intimate way possible. I wanted to complete the bond.

“I’m sure.”

His face broke out into a huge, breathtaking smile. His hands were immediately on my pants, yanking them down my legs. He was moving faster than I’d ever seen him move.

Within seconds, I was naked beneath him. Okay, then. I guess this is happening.

He began kissing his way down my stomach, and I gasped, feeling my back arch of its own accord when his lips touched the insides of my thighs.

I squirmed as he left open-mouthed kisses all around the area. It still wasn’t close enough to where I wanted him most. He chuckled softly and grabbed my hips to settle my movements.

“Patience, baby. I’m going to make you feel so good.”

I couldn’t wait.

His lips were back on my thighs, drifting closer and closer to their final destination.

I arched my hips hungrily and let my eyes flutter shut.

But then he stopped.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me,” I heard him growl.

Chapter 30 –

Filed To Story:

My eyes opened. Grayson was leaning back, staring straight ahead of him. His eyes were a gray color, one I’d never seen them before. He looked angry—pissed actually.

“Grayson?” I asked. Did I do something wrong?

He looked down at me and his eyes softened a bit, turning back to their black color.

He ran a hand through his hair and let out a sigh that turned into a growl.

“Shit!” he yelled.

He gazed into my eyes and then at my body, looking like he was about to kill someone. “This is really perfect fucking timing.”

I sat up and grabbed the sheet beside me, covering myself. “Grayson, what’s wrong?”

He stood next to the bed and grabbed his shirt off the floor. “Kyle just mind-linked me.”

I knit my brows together, watching him pull on his shirt. “Mind-linked?”

Grayson nodded his head. “He talked to me in my mind.”

“You can talk to people in your mind?” I asked in shock.

“Yes, and someday you’ll be able to, too, but I can’t explain it right now,” he said. He sat down on the bed next to me and grabbed my face gently in his hands.

“Baby, I am so, so sorry, but I have to go. It’s an emergency.” He glanced down at my sheet-covered body once more and tightened his hands into fists.

“Fuck!” he yelled as he stood up. I watched him walk over to the door, where his shoes were.

“Please know that it’s killing me to leave you like this,” he said as he put on his boots and growled in frustration.

“Why don’t you take a shower and get ready for bed, and I promise I’ll be back before you fall asleep.”

“So I didn’t do anything wrong?” I asked quietly once he had his shoes on.

His head snapped to me. “No, no, baby, of course not!” He walked back over to where I was still sitting in the bed. “Fuck, you’re fucking perfect,” he said, placing his forehead on mine and then gently kissing my lips. “And we will be finishing this later.”

He licked his lips and kissed me one last time before walking over to the door.

“What happened then?” I asked right before he left.

He turned and looked at me. “Vampires have broken into our territory.”

I woke up the next morning feeling cold and groggy.

I hadn’t slept well. After Grayson had left with his shocking news, I’d taken a shower and put on the ‘pajamas’ he’d given me.

Then I’d sat on the bed for a couple of hours, waiting for him to come back, worried out of my mind. I didn’t know anything about vampires, and, although Grayson had promised he would be okay, I couldn’t control my anxiety.

I'd stayed up as long as I could before the jet lag had gotten the best of me, forcing me into a restless sleep. Once awake, I had rolled over to snuggle closer to Grayson, only to find that he wasn't in bed.

He didn't have his arms wrapped around me—wasn't caressing my face, my back...

Playing with my hair. I frowned and sat up. This was the first time since I'd met him that I hadn't woken up with him by my side. It didn't feel right. My anxiety immediately spiked as the events from last night came back to me.

Grayson never came back.

I got out of bed and put on some sweatpants before running down the hall, hoping to find another person. I eventually came across a kitchen and was relieved when I found Kyle cooking breakfast with Elijah.

They were both laughing and couldn't seem to keep their hands off each other. I couldn't help but smile. They seemed so happy. Noticing my presence, both turned around.

"Luna! Good morning," Kyle said.

"Hey, Kyle," I replied. "You two are adorable." I gestured to their entwined hands.

Elijah smiled and wrapped his arms around Kyle. He kissed his cheek. "Yeah, well, weeks apart will do that to mates."

"Speaking of mates," I said, "have either of you seen Grayson?"

Kyle frowned a bit. "I thought he would be with you, this being your first day as luna and all?"

I shook my head. "He was gone when I woke up. He never came back after he left last night because of...because of...the vampires."

Kyle turned to me fully, exclaiming, "He didn't?"

I shook my head and wrung my hands.

Kyle's brows knit together. "That's strange." He looked over at Elijah, who seemed just as confused as he was.

"What happened last night?" I asked.

"There were vampires on our territory, but we took care of them all in under an hour," Kyle said. "Alpha was beyond pissed that he even needed to be there. He said that he was

going back to you and to not bother him for the rest of the night unless multiple people were on fire and dying.”

This wasn’t helping my anxiety. All the different scenarios of what could’ve happened to him were running through my head.

What if they didn’t kill one of the vampires, and that one did something to Grayson?

“I’m sure there’s nothing to worry about. He’s probably just in his office. That’s where he spends most of his time,” Elijah said. “I can take you there.”

My heart leapt out of excitement at the thought of seeing Grayson. There was already a dull ache in my chest from being away from him for so long.

I desperately wanted to be back in his arms. “That would be great,” I said.

Elijah nodded and turned to Kyle to give him a quick kiss. “I’ll be back in a minute.

Keep making breakfast.”

Kyle frowned but nodded and kissed Elijah one more time.

Once at the grand doors of Grayson’s office, Elijah left me, saying that he could smell Grayson inside. I thanked him for guiding me through this enormous house. I knocked a couple of times on the door, waiting anxiously to see Grayson.

“Come in,” I heard his smooth voice reply.

I opened the door and stepped in. I was beyond relieved when I saw him and he didn’t seem to be hurt. His office looked exactly like how I’d expected: all dark wood, bookshelves, and windows, with a giant desk in the center that Grayson was currently sitting behind.

He looked much more intimidating than I remembered him.

I stood for a second near the door and shifted my weight from foot to foot when he didn’t look up at me.

“Hey,” I said, hoping to get his attention.

He glanced up at me for a second and then looked back at the computer screen in front of him. “Good morning, Belle.”

Well, that wasn’t what I was expecting. Usually, he was all over me, unable to keep his hands off me. And he never called me Belle, almost always opting for a cheesy pet name.

“How did you sleep?” he asked.

I hesitated, put off by his behavior. “All right. You weren’t in bed this morning,” I said. “It was weird not waking up in your arms. I missed it.” I paused. “I missed you.”

I blushed a bit, a little embarrassed by my confession of affection. But I also knew he would love to hear me say something like that.

Grayson glanced at me, then back at his computer again. “Yes, I decided that I had a lot of work that needed to be done after being away for so long, and it was better to get it done now than to wake you up.”

I guess that makes sense. “Oh, okay. Anything I can help with?”

Grayson shook his head, typing away rather than looking at me. “This is nothing that concerns you.”

I sucked in a breath. He’d never spoken to me like that before. “Oh...okay.” I crossed my arms in front of me. I took a step closer to him.

“Is everything okay? You’re acting a little weird. Did everything go okay last night?”

Kyle told me that you killed all the vampires.”

Grayson looked at me. His eyes were pitch black, which meant that his wolf was present. Was he...mad at me?

“I’m fine,” he practically growled out. “As I said before, I just have a lot of work to do.”

Okay, what the hell? Should I leave? I was beginning to feel like a nuisance.

“Well, um, didn’t you say that you had plans for me today? Something about showing me around? Should I get dressed and wait for you to finish?”

He sighed and leaned back in his chair. He ran a hand over his face.

“Look, Belle, I have too much to do after spending so long in Paris with you. I just don’t have time. Sorry, but can you ask Kyle to show you around?”

The ache in my chest grew at his words, but I tried not to let them affect me too much, knowing that he was just busy.

Part of me wanted to be angry, but I reminded myself that I shouldn’t have assumed he would want to spend every waking moment with me when we got back to the United States.

He had a job here—a big one. Thousands of people were counting on him.

“Yes, of course,” I said quickly. “I’ll talk to Kyle.”

When he said nothing back, I said, “I didn’t mean to interrupt anything. I’m sorry if I did.”

Grayson nodded.

“Yes, well, maybe we just make a rule that you don’t come into my office during the day. Then we won’t have to worry about you interrupting any important business.

I’ll come find you if I need you.” He looked turned back to his computer.

That’s when a giant ball formed in my chest and pushed its way up into my throat. I could feel the tears threatening to come out.

Why is this upsetting me so much? I’m not some clingy girl... I shouldn’t be so easily affected by such simple words. “O-okay,” I whispered.

Again, he didn’t say anything, obviously shifting his focus back to his work. That must be my cue to leave.

I took a few slow steps backward, desperately hoping that he would look up and say he was only joking and then take me into his arms. But he didn’t do that. He didn’t do anything besides type on his keyboard.

I turned and left.

Once I was out of Grayson’s office, I could no longer keep the tears at bay. I had been looked down on and disregarded before, but it felt ten times worse when Grayson had done it to me.

It felt like he had just plunged a knife into my chest and laughed.

One quiet sob escaped my lips, and I immediately covered my mouth. I was still right next to his door. I couldn’t let Grayson hear me crying. He would think I was pathetic.

All he had done was ask for space to get some work done, and here I was sobbing outside his door. God, what’s wrong with me?

When I’d imagined all of the things that could go wrong when I came here, Grayson not having enough time for me was not one of them.

I’d expected even less to be treated like a bother.

Couldn't he see how desperate I was for him to help me make the transition into his pack?
I knew nothing about any of this.