

## Shifting interest

Madison POV

"What do you mean, moving in?" Madison asked. She understood all the words, but they weren't registering in her brain.

"They want...." Nathan sighed heavily, running a hand over his face, "She'll be moving in so that I can prove I haven't made a rash decision once I reject her. That should be able to soothe and satisfy all the parties involved." Nathan nodded his head, speaking more to himself than to Madison.

Madison's shock turned to anger as she wrenched herself free from Nathan's hold and turned her back to him. She felt anger and fear consume her.

Being in Lauren's proximity would surely cause Nathan to be drawn to her. Madison had seen her fair share of mates who refused the bond only to give in when they couldn't deny the pull. This was going to be a nightmare.

"Maddie..." She heard Nathan's pained voice as he came up behind her.

"Where will she be staying?" Madison asked.

"She can sleep in a Goddess damn tent for all I care," Nathan growled. She turned to face him, putting her hands on his chest to calm him. She felt his heart thudding in his chest wildly as his brows were furrowed together in anger.

"Nathan, that will surely start a war." Madison chuckled. She couldn't deny that she loved the way Nathan was indifferent towards his mate.

"I don't want this, Maddie, you have to believe me." Nathan voiced as his eyes pleaded with her to believe him.

"I know." Madison sighed, snuggling into his chest.

"It's going to be hard, but we'll pull through, Mads, I know we will. Have faith in me, that's all I'm asking for." He uttered, kissing the top of her head.

"When will she be here?" Madison asked begrudgingly.

"Tomorrow," Nathan answered, his grip on her tightening. He felt just as afraid as her with this turn of events.

The following day, after their early morning training, Madison and Nathan walked hand in hand back towards the packhouse, ready to take a steamy shower together like they did every Saturday morning.

Nathan walked through the door of the packhouse first and pulled Madison along before turning around and pushing her up against the wall, kissing her passionately. There was something about getting hot and sweaty from working out that got them all worked up.

Madison let her head fall back as Nathan's lips moved from her mouth to her throat. Goddess, this man knew what he was doing. It was like he had grown an extra pair of hands. She felt his hands everywhere.

She felt heat pulling in her stomach as she wrapped her legs around him. An approving growl rumbled in Nathan's chest as she threaded her fingers in his hair.

"Nathan," She moaned with her eyes still closed.

It was when she heard an angry snarl that her eyes snapped open, bringing her out of her lust-induced haze.

Her eyes collided with cold blue ones.

Nathan turned around with a look of indifference on his face as he faced a pissed-off-looking Lauren.

Lauren Barbey was the name of Nathan's mate. She was from the well-known and well-established Barbey family. The Barbey's were a rich family, known in the werewolf and human world. And when I say rich, I mean rich rich. They came from old money.

One of their ancestors had started Barbey Transport. It was an international company specializing in the transport of just about anything. They also had their fingers in the oil business.

So, like I said, rich.

"Lauren." Nathan nodded his head towards her, trying to be polite.

"Well, this wasn't the welcome I was expecting," Lauren sneered.

"So, where will I be staying?" she continued. Madison looked around and saw that Lauren had brought a lot of suitcases. How long was she planning on staying?!

"In one of the guest rooms on the second floor," Nathan said without emotion.

"What?! Why can't I stay with you on the fourth floor?" Lauren whined, tossing her long blonde hair over her shoulder. Madison had to repress the urge to snarl. What did she mean, 'with you'?"

"Madison and I share a room, Lauren," Nathan explained with an exasperated voice. "We don't want you on the same floor as us. We can get pretty loud." Nathan drawled out. Madison's eyes snapped to him before moving back to Lauren.

To her satisfaction, Lauren's cheeks were starting to tinge pink as she balled her hands to fists.

"Nathan, I am your mate. Does that mean nothing to you? How can you disrespect me like this?"

"Listen up, Lauren," Nathan said in a dangerously low voice while stepping closer to her. "If it were up to me, I would reject you. I have chosen Madison as my mate. We're planning our marking ceremony. I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, but you will never be my mate." Nathan said, stepping backward.

He took Madison's hand in his before pulling her along toward the elevator. Madison watched as Lauren stood still as a statue. It was obvious that she was trying to hold back her anger. But Madison didn't care. She was in complete awe.

She looked up at Nathan as he pressed the button to their floor with love in her eyes. Butterflies fluttered in her stomach.

He was face to face with his fated mate. The smell of one's mate was enough to bring anyone to their knees, but not Nathan. He chose her. Again.

Nathan walked out of the elevator and pulled Madison with him. When they entered the room, Nathan let go of her and walked toward the bathroom, and started the shower.

When Madison entered, he was already stripping. She couldn't help but let her eyes slide over his pronounced abs before they moved to his eyes again. But Nathan wasn't looking at her and there was no trace of the passion that had burned between them only moments ago.

"Are you alright?" She asked him. His green eyes snapped to hers.

"My fated mate is moving in with us, and you're asking if I'm okay?" Nathan asked her, before stepping toward her and cupping her face in his hands.

"Are you okay, Madison? I'm so sorry that this is happening. Everything was going so well. Perfectly well, and now..." Nathan pressed his forehead against hers as he closed his eyes.

"I'm okay, Nathan, just afraid," Madison admitted. "Afraid of losing you." She added after a moment of silence.

Nathan responded by pressing his lips to hers in a tender kiss. Madison reciprocated and deepened the kiss, pulling his bottom lip into her mouth. Nathan groaned and pulled Madison closer to him. His hands wandered to the zipper of her sweater as he slowly unzipped it without breaking their kiss. He carefully slid it down her arms before discarding it on the floor.

Next, Madison pulled back before slowly sliding his pants down while Nathan did the same to her. After discarding her sports bra, they stepped into the shower together.

Nathan pulled her into him again as the water cascaded on their heads and down their bodies. His lips met hers in a needy kiss before he pulled back, took ahold of a sponge and started washing her slowly. It was the most intimate thing that Madison had ever experienced. Without words, he continued to wash her slowly.

When Nathan was finished, Madison took the sponge from him and returned the favor. When she hugged herself to him, she felt the evidence of his desire for her pressing against her stomach.

But Nathan didn't pin her against the wall and pound into her furiously this time.

This time, he slowly helped her out of the shower and dried her off before doing the same to himself. He pulled her along towards their bed and gently placed her down as if he was afraid of breaking her.

There he started placing agonizingly slow kisses all over her body, before sliding into her and slowly making love to her.

"I love you, Maddie." He whispered while he lay on top of her as droplets of sweat dripped from his wet hair. He had made love to her for hours, making her come several times in the process.

It was perfect. Other than Lauren moving in, that was.

Maybe they could make it through this after all.