

The Alpha's Little Rogue by Lovey Dovey #Chapter 11 - Read The Alpha's Little Rogue by Lovey Dovey Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Caden's POV She wants me to train her. I wasn't such an idiot that I couldn't put two and two together. Her wanting to learn how to defend herself only meant that she was planning something stupid in that head of hers. Maybe she was planning to find her mother's murderer or was planning to run away as soon as she could throw a few punches. Either way, I wasn't going to be helping out in executing any foolish plan of hers. If she was working on getting herself into trouble then she sure as hell was going to be doing it on her own. Her crestfallen face pinches at my heart but my resolve wasn't going to wither away just because she felt hurt. She was going to thank me when she still had her life. "No?" She echoes. "Why not?" I breathe in deeply, willing this conversation to be over already. "I don't want you to go and do something stupid." She throws her hands up into the air. "I just want to learn how to fight," she exclaims exasperatedly. "How is that doing something stupid?" "I know you're going to try to get back at the people who killed your mother." I might not know Alessia for that long but I did know some things about her. One of them being that she never backs down. She crosses her arms over her chest defensively and huffs. "How would you know what I'm going to do?" She asks with her chin jolting out stubbornly. The whole stance gave off a more adorable look than the defiant one she was probably going for. I force down an involuntary smile. "I can see the look in your eyes," I say, giving her a knowing look. Another thing about Alessia that I've picked up on is that she is a bad liar and by bad, I mean sweaty palms, stuttering, eye twitching kind of bad. "I-I wasn't planning on doing that," she stutters, her voice going high and low in several pitches.

Just like I said. A very bad liar. "I don't believe you," I tell her, curious to see just how hard she's going to try to convince me otherwise. "Caden, please." She holds my hand, shocking me with the touch. "Help me out here and I promise I won't try to run away again." I narrow my eyes at her. "You already promised me that," I remind her. She groans, stomping her feet on the ground. M & J M BBBBBBBBBB Chapter 11 96% 11:22 I roll my eyes at her childish behavior and brush past her. "So it's settled. You aren't leaving my pack and I'm not going to help you get yourself killed." Getting the last word in, I open the door and exit her room before she can declare that this war isn't over yet. I climb up the stairs to the top floor where my room is located. Opening the door, I shrug off my shirt and trousers, doing all that in the dark. Thank goodness for werewolves' heightened senses. Then I climb under my sheet and stare at my ceiling, my thoughts going back to Alessia like they seem to be doing nowadays. What exactly was I doing with her? I wasn't planning to keep her as my mate but I still haven't rejected her yet. Thinking about these things led me to emotions that I wasn't ready to decipher. You like her, Xavier taunts. That's why you haven't rejected her yet! 'I don't like her,' I snarl, even as my heart skips a beat at my words. I also wasn't about to decipher the reason for that. In fact, I wasn't ready to decipher anything. 'Which Alpha

do you think could be her father,' I ask, changing the subject away from my feelings for Alessia. There's no way of us knowing. Her mother ran away so it's possible that the Alpha in subject

doesn't even know he has a missing daughter." Another angle to it. If that's true then this situation just got a whole lot messier and complicated. "We aren't going to let anything happen to her, Xavier tells me. 'We'll protect her.'" We haven't agreed with a lot of things since Alessia fell into our life. This was one thing we both agreed on. "Yes, we will, I reassure. I close my eyes, willing my brain to quiet down and let me get some much-needed rest. If I'm going to deal with Alessia's continuous nagging tomorrow then I need to get some shut eye. At five am, I'm off my bed and sliding on my workout gear. Then I go downstairs to find, my pack members surrounding the dinning table and munching on a banquet. "Alpha," Alex says, nodding my way as a form of greeting from the seat where he sat with his arm around. his mate's chair. Scarlett smiles at me and I give them both a curt nod in acknowledgment. I head to the table, grab an apple off it, and continue my path to the door without talking to anyone else. I like heading to the training grounds first to get a head state before others start pilling in. The quietness helps ground me and calms me on the inside. dd MM BBBBChapter 11 ZN 96% 11:22 After a few minutes of doing my usual routine, people start milling in. Ever since the increase in rogue attacks, I have made it mandatory for everyone above the age of eighteen to have a session of training at least twice a week. If anything unfortunate should happen, I want them to be able to protect themselves and the young. Pouring my frustrations onto a punching bag, I keep my front to the entrance to take note of the people walking in. My punches slow down and I barely stop the bag from swinging into my face as I fix my gaze on who just walked in. It's Scarlett and chatting away beside her is...my mate.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Alessia's POV 96% 11:22 As I walk into the training ground with Scarlett by my side, I involuntary start searching for Caden and find him in front of a punching bag and... staring at me? Nope. Glaring. Definitely glaring at me. I trail my eyes down his body and have to take a moment to appreciate just how fine he is. Dragging my eyes back up his body to his eyes, I find him still glaring at me and that appreciation dies. I avoid his gaze, turning my head away from him and laughing at something Scarlett just said. Scarlett has proved to be a reliable person and maybe even a friend. She showed me to the training grounds and even promised to help me out with some basic training skills. She walks ahead of me and picks up two dumbbells from a shelf pushed to the wall. She brings it over to where I'm standing. "These are one of the lightest weights. We'll start with this and move on to some heavier ones. She passes them over to me and I take them from her, barely hiding a groan at their weight. These were seriously some of the lightest? "Ok," I say tentatively, wondering how many times I could lift this without seeming like a weakling. "Then afterward, we'll take some laps around the track in human and wolf forms. Then move on to some basic fighting skills, she informs, smiling reassuringly at me. "In no time, you'll be able to hold your own in a fight. "Thank you for helping me. I really appreciate this." I meant that. I want to learn how to fight and

defend myself and I'm grateful to her for helping me out. "Don't mention-" Scarlett gets cut off as Caden stands between us. His green eyes are lit with the flames of hell as they burn into mine. He grabs the dumbbells from me effortlessly. Showoff.

"What on earth do you think you're doing here?" He grits out, the vein on his neck popping out and distracting me for a second. Would that vein suddenly burst out one of these days? I trail my gaze away from it and back to his gaze. "Scarlett is teaching me how to fight since you wouldn't." That's right girl. Stand up for yourself. So what if he looks like he's five seconds away from strangling me and dumping my body in a dumpster? It's not like he can do that with all these witnesses. He couldn't...right? He turns over to Scarlett and I open my mouth, ready to defend her if I need to. Hold this for me, I hand the dumbbells over to her and Scarlett wordlessly takes them off Chapter 12 his hands. He turns back to me with the fire still present in his eyes. "Come with me." He places his hand on the small of my back. To anyone, it looked like he was being a gentleman and guarding me out of there but I knew better. I was about to get an earful from him out of the view of these unsuspecting people. I could have stood my ground and prevented him from dragging me out, but something tells me that would just make my situation worse. "I can walk by myself." I whisper, taking care to keep my voice low to prevent the people with super hearing from eavesdropping. I could bet my left ear that half the people in here were straining their ears to get a whiff of our conversation. "Shut it. We'll talk when we're out of here," he whispers back and continues leading me away from the training grounds and in the direction of the pack house. When we're a few good feet away, he stops and lets go of my back. I almost whimper at the great feeling of loss that comes over me. Another second and I would have been begging him to put his hand back on me. Thankfully he starts talking. Or rather, yelling. "What is wrong with you?!" He asks exasperatedly. "Do you just purposely go against my words to

try and get a rise out of me?" I scoff. "You think highly of yourself don't you." As soon as the words are out of my mouth, I regret it. Why do I keep digging my grave deeper? Caden on the other hand looks about ready to burst into flames. If he was an animated character, I was very sure that he would have flames coming out of his head. Of all the things I expected, it wasn't for Caden to just sigh and for his shoulders to deflate. "Just go back to the pack house," he says, turning around and already dismissing me like I was an irate child. That's it? He's just going to walk away without even yelling or warning me off. Like he couldn't even be bothered. Like I wasn't worth it. I must be a sucker for punishment. That's the only reason why I stop Caden by yelling, "I'll tell people that we're mates. Almost dramatically, Caden turns around, that fire back in his eyes and it makes me...happy? Was Caden right? Do I get off on riling him up? He walks back to me., What did you just say?" In a show of saving face, I cross my arms over my chest and jolt my chin out. "I'll tell people we're mates if you don't let me train." Figuring out that the ball was in my court, I take it up a notch, "and you'll be JJ MMB B B B B B B B B Chapter 12 UZN 90% 11:22 training me yourself." What better way to learn something than to learn from the best? Caden looks at me unbelievably. Then he chuckles. That chuckle turns into a laugh and that laugh turns into a full-blown, belly-rumbling, knee-slapping laughter. What the hell? Did I just break Caden?

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Caden's POV Was she seriously blackmailing me right now? The chit has some backbone that's for sure. N 96% 11:22 I can't help but laugh at her attempt though. It's almost pitiable. 1 "Why are you laughing?" She asks, looking at me anxiously and a little worried. Can't say I blame her though. 1 straighten up and wipe off a nonexistent tear from the side of my eye. "You're funny. You know that right?" I tell her, giving her what possibly is the first smile that she has received from me. "I'm not trying to be funny," she spits out, her brows furrowing in barely concealed anger. "I meant what I said." The smile on my face disappears. "No, sweetie, you weren't being serious." I stalk over to her while holding her gaze, making sure she can see the look in my eyes that was probably murderous. "If you're being serious then that would mean that you were blackmailing me," I trail off. "You wouldn't be stupid enough to do that, would you?" Her mouth closes and opens like a fish out of water. A smirk makes its way to my face. "That's what I thought." As expected Alessia has no heat to her words. "Go to the pack house," I say in a firm voice, letting her know that I was tired of her nonsense. I turn around and start making my way back to the training grounds, the conversation with Alessia already pushed to the back of my mind.. "Caden!" Alessia yells out to me. I barely stop myself from rolling my eyes as I turn to find her glaring at me. She matches over to me and pokes me in the chest. "I'm been serious here." The shock at having her poke me in the freaking chest fades away and makes way for anger. I grip

her hand tightly, exacting more force than needed. Alessia whines and her eyes fall to the fist clenching her hand. Breathing in slowly, I release a bit of pressure from my hold but still keep her in my grip. "We both know that you aren't." I hold her gaze, daring her to tell me otherwise. Right in front of me, her whole resolve crumbles. "Why won't you teach me?" Her eyes water and my chest squeezes. "I just want to learn how to defend myself. What's so wrong about that?" The anger in me goes out as a teardrop rolls down her face. CS & MM GGG GGG GGG Chapter 13 *UIN96% 11:22 "You're going to get yourself hurt," I husk out, trying to remind myself why teaching her to fight was a bad idea. "I won't," she promises earnestly.. I know she's lying. There's no way she's going to give up a chance of getting her revenge and I just realize that nothing I say or do will change that. So, instead of trying to stop her, why not just help her? At least this way, I can keep an eye on her and make sure she is actually properly trained for whatever idea she has cooked up in her head. I can feel my resolve wither away before I even open my mouth, Tll teach you." Her eyes brighten up as a huge smile takes over her face. "No more blackmailing. One word about us being mates and I'll end the training," I push out. It's not like I thought she would really spill out our secret but it's better to be safe than sorry. "I won't. I promise," she rushes. She makes a notion of zipping up her mouth, locking it, and throwing the keys away. I fight away the smile that's trying to make its way to my face. Smiling about her silly antics will just make her feel more comfortable around me and think that she could try something of this sort again. Better to shoot it down before it happens. "Let's go back to the training ground." I let go of her head and started walking back to where we

came from. I don't have to look back to know that she's hot on my heels. She appears beside me. "Thank you so much for doing this." "Thank me by not doing something foolish," I mutter, already feeling a pinch of regret settle into my chest. I hope I wasn't helping her head to her doom. Pirts WPI We get back to the training ground and I immediately head to the shelf of dumbbells, ones. that I dropped off with Scarlett. I walk over to Alessia and hand them over to her. "Do fifty," I instruct and take immense pleasure in watching her eyes turn to saucers. Maybe Alessia will run off and get rid of this idea, and I won't have to worry about her doing something stupid. But then her face hardens as she does the first lift and I worry that I may be wrong about her. She doesn't look like she is about to back down anytime soon. Thirty minutes later, Alessia is panting as she does the last one and hands the dumbbells back to me. I conceal my surprise and take them from her. Ok, so maybe she was able to withstand that but will she be able to last till the end of the session? Dropping the dumbbells back onto the shelf, I pick up a pair of punching gloves next and walk back to her. dd MMG B B B B B BGG B Chapter 13 She fixes her gaze on the gloves in my hand and I can just feel the dread that washes over her. Ok, so maybe I'm being a bit hard on her but she did ask for this. I'm just giving her what she wants. 065 11:22 "Wear this." I pass them over to her and watch as she pulls them on, barely concealing a few whines that I know are products of her screaming muscle, I c o c k my head to a punching bag hanging from the ceiling. "Let me see how hard your punches are. I want to know what I'm walking with."

By the time I'm done with her, Alessia might just be begging me to leave her alone.
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Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Alessia's POV Everything hurts. I feel like I've been run over by a truck, pushed off a cliff, and then slammed into a wall repeatedly. I can't move off the bed but I also know that I can't stay in bed for the whole day. Not after basically begging Caden to help train me. It will just give him the perfect excuse he needs to end our sessions. My rise off my bed is filled with groans and whines that I'm sure woke up the entire pack house. I'm a werewolf with super healing strength but da m n, this pain is something else. By the time I've managed my way out of the bed, all my muscles are screaming at me and my shaky legs. seem about ready to give up at any moment. I manage to force myself to head into the bathroom and do the least I can in my morning routine. I'm pulling on my workout gear when my door flies open. Thankfully, I'm in gym shorts and I still have my tank top from the previous night on but I still find it right to call him out on it, "can't you knock?" Caden simply closes the door behind him and walks into the room. "You were late. You were supposed to be at the training grounds ten minutes ago." He stands in the middle of my room and trails his gaze up and down my body. "What's wrong with you?" He asks, an eyebrow arched. He must have noticed the awkward way I was standing and the pain I'm very sure is written all over my face. "Nothing." I force out, placing a smile that ends in a whine as I stretch the muscles on my face. Godddd, I feel like I'm being pierced with a thousand needles. "Are you hurt?" He tersely asks and grips my arm. "Where are you hurt?" 1 yelp, curling my bottom lip in to hold out a

scream. That hurts,” I whimper, trying to pull my arm out of his hold. Caden drops it like it was laced with wolfband. “You didn’t have a cold bath after our session?” He

asks incredulously, looking at me like I’ve grown two heads. “Cold bath?” I ask confused. Cold bath? How on earth was I supposed to know I was meant to take a cold bath after those exercises? That was the first time I so much as threw a punch so how was I supposed to know that? Caden groans and runs his fingers through his hair as he stares at me like he doesn’t know what to do with AS & AMB GB BBBB Chapter 14 me. “You aren’t going to the training ground today.” Caden states, looking at me with something akin to worry. “No.” I rush out, knowing this was what would happen. “I want to learn. I’m not that hurt. I make a show of clenching my fist and punching the air but it ends in a yell. “You are going to hurt yourself more than you would learn anything. He walks into my bathroom and I follow him mindlessly. “What are you doing?” I ask as he crunches down beside the bathtub and fills it with water “Running an ice bath for you,” he replies without looking back at me. Then he stands up and looks down at my body. “Undress. I’ll be back with some ice soon,” he says, heading out of the bathroom and leaving me standing alone. After a second of wondering what was happening, I peel away the clothes off my body as slowly as I can and wrap my naked body in a fluffy towel. I hear the door to the room opening again and then Caden appears in the bathroom doorway with a bag of ice in his hand. He walks over to the bathtub, not even sparing me a gaze, and pours the whole bag into it. 1 inch over to it, thinking about how cold it was going to be. Some puff of icy smoke was coming out of it and I wasn’t looking forward to sinking into that icy hell. “Get in,” Caden says, dropping the empty ice bag on the bathroom counter and turning to face me.

I look at my towel-clasped body and then back at him, hoping he gets the memo without me having to spell it out for him. “Soak in it for twenty minutes at least,” he mutters, heading for the door. “I’m going over to the training grounds and you’re not to leave the house in my absence.” Did he really think I would run away in this state? And even if I did, how far would I get before he caught up with me and dragged me back? Something tells me it won’t be that far. “After the cold bath, you’ll pretty much be back to normal but I don’t want you heading over to the training ground,” he bites out. “Your session with continue tomorrow.” I nod, waiting for him to get out so I can soak into what I hope will soothe my worn-out muscles. Throwing one last gaze at me, Caden walks out of the bathroom and out of the room, closing the door behind him with a click, I sigh outwardly, dropping the towel to the ground and rising a foot into the bathtub. A shiver runs down my spine from the temperature but overall, it isn’t as bad as I thought it would be. 2/3 Chapter 14 I immerse my whole body in the water and rest my back against the edge of the bathtub. Closing my eyes, I breathe out deeply as I feel my muscles loosen up. I don’t know how long I stayed in there but by the time I open my eyes again, the ice in the bathtub is almost fully melted and my skin has turned puffy. I climb out and nearly moan at the soft relief of no more sore muscle. That bath worked like magic and I hate to say it but maybe Caden isn’t all that bad.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Alessia's POV Dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, I find my way out of my room and into the main room. Aside from my experience with Julianna, no one else has given me grief. Add in the fact that Scarlett is an amazing person and I feel like I owe it to myself to try and make friends with the people living here. I don't know how long I'm going to be staying here and finding new acquaintances seems like the next best thing to do. mission! With my mind, I stand at the entrance to the room and start scouting for a possible friend and come up short. Most of the people around seem half my age and the ones closer to my age are moving around the house hastily, obviously occupied. They don't look like they'll be willing to stop what they are doing to make friends with me. It finally dawns on me that everyone else is at the training grounds and my mood immediately deflates. Dejected, I turn around to head back to my room and spend another day with only myself for company. "Alessia," a tiny voice squeals and it grabs my attention to the little girl running towards me. She stops in front of me with a huge smile on her face and I knee to get to her height. "Hey, Lucy. How are you doing today?" I ask, looking at her pink dress that is covered with glitters. Seems like someone is having a lot of fun. Unlike me. My mood turns sullen again as I'm reminded that I have no friends here. "Chef and I with some of my friends are making biscuits. Do you want to join us?" Her eyes hold hope as I contemplate my options.. Staying in my room all by my lonesome self or joining Lucy and some other kids to make biscuits that we'll probably end up eating. It wasn't really a hard choice.

"Of course, I would love to join you." I smile at her and get up to my feet. Taking hold of her hand- because it's so freaking cute and tiny, I lead us into the kitchen where a dozen. little kids are surrounding a woman that seems to be in her late fifties. "Mrs Smith," Lucy calls out as we draw closer to the lady. "I brought a friend along," she announces, and a dozen eyes belonging to little kids settle on me. I squirm under their watchful gazes. Kids could be brutal sometimes. "Hey, dear," the woman greets me with a smile on my face. Her eyes narrow as she observes me. "I haven't 1/3 J J ☐ 96% 11:23 Chapter 15 seen you around here before." Then she makes an 'O' shaped sign with her lips. "You're Caden's guest. right?" I may just be imagining it but when she said guest, it sounded like she was implying something else. "Yes, I am," I answer back with a smile. "I'm Alessia," I introduce, waving at the little kids still watching me inquisitively. "Come sit with me." Lucy tugs on my hand to get my attention. I look down at her to find her pointing at the counter that has several stools around it. Following her to the counter, I place her on a seat and take the one beside her. Now v seems like the perfect time to ask the questions that have been pondering my mind for a while. And who better to ask than an unsuspecting kid who probably has all the answers I need? "Lucy," I call out in a low voice and she lifts her head from the coloring book that she's intensely focused on. "Yes," she answers in a tiny voice.

"Is Caden your father?" I mutter. Her face scrunches up in utter disgust. "Ewww. He's my big brother." The instant relief that I feel is almost embarrassing. Jeez, I need to get a grip on myself. Now that it has been brought up, I just realize that I haven't caught a glimpse of their parents. Did something happen to them? I'm just about to ask her the

next question on my mind when a bowl lands in the middle of the table, making me jump out of my skin like I've been caught with my hand in the cookie jar. I trace the hands holding the bowl up to the face of Mrs Smith. "Ok kids, let's huddle up and make some biscuits," she says cheerfully and a crowd of children surrounds the countertop a second later, each trying to hop onto a stool. y pushes her coloring book to the side and focuses all her attention on Mrs Smith. Lucy "Alessia, you'll be my assistant today." Mrs Smith says it in a firm voice that lets me know, that she wasn't asking but telling me. I get down from my seat, helping a little boy who was standing on the side climb onto it. Moving over to Mrs Smith's side, I help her pull out the rest of the ingredients that will be needed for the biscuits. When all of our items have been assembled on the countertop, we start directing the kids on what to do. We help the kids pour the flour into the bowl and add the butter. It's a messy but fun job. I watch as the kids manage to get more flour on the floor and themselves than into the bowl. @S & AMB B B B B D D D D Chapter 15 96% 11:23 After that stressful experience, Mrs. Smith and I decided to add and stir the other ingredients ourselves. After the batter is ready, we let the kids fill the various shaped pans with it.

We pop the pans in the oven while the kids help to clean up the mess they made. Two rolls of kitchen paper and ten napkins later, the kitchen starts to go back to its former glory. The ding of the oven pulls our attention back to our baked goods. The kids shuffle and jump on their seats as Mrs Smith brings out the pans. She doesn't bring it to the counter knowing that the kids will probably jump onto it and end up hurting themselves. While the biscuits cool down, we bring out some sprinkles and any other thing that will be nice to have with the biscuits. The front door opening, followed by the sound of loud voices have the kids getting down from their seats. to greet the adults.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Caden's POV I enter the pack house to see Lucy running towards me like she always does. "Hey sweetie." I greet as she jumps into my open arms. I set her on my hip and wiped the flour stain on her cheek. "What did you do today?" I ask, already knowing the answer. "We made biscuits," she replies excitedly. "I can see that," I say, dusting a speck of flour from her hair. She's going to be needing a very long bath to get all this from her body and hair. "Alessia helped us," she announces just as the subject of our talk steps out of the kitchen. She walks over and stops in front of me. "How did the training go?" She asks. I can't help but notice how domesticated this is. It looks like I came home from work to be greeted by my wife and sister at the front door. It leaves me feeling uneasy. "It was ok." I set Lucy down on the ground and she flies into the kitchen, leaving Alessia and I in a bubble of awkwardness. Alessia clears her throat and shifts on her foot as she looks around her. I take a good look at her and notice that just like the other night, the shirt she has on is falling off her shoulders. I made a mental note to remedy that and now seems like the time for it. "Follow me," I order, taking hold of her hand and dragging her towards the door. "Where are you taking me to?" Alessia asks but that's the only objection she makes. She doesn't try to pull her hand out of my hold or dig her foot into the ground. I smile at that. It seems my little brat is learning quickly. My thoughts halt as I register that I just referred to Alessia as mine. When did I start

thinking of her in that way? "Answer me." Her whining pulls me away from my thoughts. Stopping in front of a Toyota Camry that was hardly ever in use, I gesture for her to get in but she just stands there and keeps staring at me. I huff, walking around the car to the passenger's side and pulling open the door for her. Then I

dramatically bow down and gesture a hand into the car. "Would you please do me the honor of getting into the car?" I ask, my tone dripping with sarcasm. She crosses her arms over her chest. "Not until you tell me where you're taking me to. You could be driving Chapter 16 G 9 me out to the woods to bury me in a ditch for all I know." *UIN 967 11:23 With a groan, I consider actually following through with that idea. Why was this girl so insufferable "I'm taking you to get a new set of clothes," I admit, already regretting the kind act. Maybe I should have given this task to someone else. If only she didn't tend to try and run away at every chance she got. "Oh," she mumbles dumbly. "You could have simply told me that." With an eyes roll, she walks to my side and slides into the car. Rolling my eyes as well, I shut the door and round the car to the driver's seat where I slide in and insert the keys into the ignition. The car was so out of use that I silently prayed for it to still be working when I turn it on. on Thankfully, the car roars to life and I shift it into gear, peeling out of the driveway where it was parked. I continue driving without a word from Alessia and I appreciate the peace and quiet for however will last. When we get into town, it changes. "Why did we have to go into town to get me clothes?" I don't have to look at her to know that her nose is scrunched up in confusion. long it "The mall in our territory isn't much." In fact, a lot of us had to go into town when we needed certain

things. It wasn't that we didn't have good malls or stores in the pack territory, but they were just some things that you will find at a better quality outside the pack territory. Clothes happen to be one of them. I pull up in front of a two-story building called Fortmate Gorcery and Mall. It was a place that my pack members regularly frequented and a place that I've visited myself. Turning off the engine, I shift my torso sideways to face Alessia. "Behave well when we get inside. You can't let anyone know you're a werewolf. That means no funny business," I warn sternly. Alessia nods and I grab the keys out of the ignition and get out of the car. I'm rounding the car to get to Alessia's side when she slides out of the car. "Follow me," I tell her, walking in front of her and leading her to the entrance? We get in and I immediately head in the direction of the mall. Alessia follows closely behind me but I don't let my guards down just yet. This was exactly the kind of scene in the woods before she hightailed it when I wasn't looking. I push open a pair of glass doors and hold them open for Alessia to pass through. The mall we're standing in isn't overly fancy. They had the basic wears that someone would need and each item was in various sizes and different shades. The variety was one of the reasons why this mall was well known. Chapter 16 1 DZN 965 11:23 "Pick out whatever you need," I tell Alessia who is simply staring at the mall with a neutral expression on her face. "I'll pay for whatever you pick out," I add, in case her thoughts were leading her down that path. "Ok," she mumbles, still staring at the space and rack of clothes around us. "I'll be over there." I point over to a chair pushed to the wall where I could be able to have an unobstructed view of the entire store and Alessia. Walking

over to it, I settle down and get ready for what I know is going to be an unbearably long time.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Alessia's POV I watch as Caden takes a seat on the chair pushed over to the wall. Walking over to the racks lined up. I start browsing for anything that might catch my eye. As much as I hate depending on someone for my basic necessities, I also hate wearing someone else's clothes. I might just so happen to hate the latter a little bit more. So here I'm, accepting Caden's help and looking for new sets of clothes. I pick out random clothes off the rack that happen to catch my eye. Throwing one look back at Caden to find him still staring at me, I walk into the changing room and shut the door behind me. In the privacy of the changing room, I peel off my clothes and put the first outfit on. It's a cute sweatpants with a matching shirt. It's a nice and comfy outfit that I could wear around the pack house. I try on all the outfits, sorting them out into two piles; the ones I was buying and the ones I was keeping back on the rack. Currently, the two piles were almost equal in height. I pick up the last outfit and wonder why I had taken it off the rack. It was a pretty little black dress that had a scatter of gems around it. It's the kind of dress you would wear to a fancy event or a dinner date. Things that I would never be able to attend any time soon. So why did I pick out this dress? Opening the zipper, I pull on the dress and struggle to zip it back up. With a gasp, I admire the image staring back at me from the mirror. I don't think I've ever had something this pretty. Or expensive. I run my hand over the bodice, marveling at how the light catches on the gems at all the perfect angles. It's such a beautiful dress. Too bad I couldn't have it. With a sigh, I reach behind me to unzip the dress to put it back on the shelf. I stiffen as the zipper refuses to give out. No matter how much I tugged on it, it didn't give way.

Anxiety starts crawling up my spine as I realize how screwed I was. With one last attempt, I try to get the dress off by lifting it up my body and over my head. This just worsen my case and nearly got stuck on the way up. I push it back down my body and pant from a shortage of breath. The only thing I've managed to achieve was to shorten my breath and nearly dislocate my arms. Dread slams into me as I realize what it is that I have to do. I need to call out to Caden and ask for his help. "Caden," I whisper yell, knowing he'll be able to hear me just fine. "What's the issue?" Caden's voice comes from the other side of the door and I close my eyes, breathing in deeply to prepare myself for the embarrassing moment about to happen. Chapter 17 "I-I'm stuck in my dress," I whisper, wanting the ground to open up and swallow me. "Please come in and help unzip me. I don't want to rip the dress I would have to buy it if that happened and the money wasn't a meager amount. The door squeaks open to show Caden with a confused expression on his face which lessens when he sees me in the dress I'm in. I turn around, mostly to hide my red face and also for him to help with the stuck zipper. "I tried it on and it got stuck. Could you help me out of it?" I feel his heat behind me before I feel his touch. His hand slides up the center of my back in search of the zipper and finds it at the top of the zipped-up dress. He pulls on it but it doesn't make it less stuck. Caden's hand reaches for my hair, his fingers brushing my nape as he moves my hair over to the side. Goosebumps break out over my skin at the graze and I hope that he

doesn't notice it. Though I doubt it went past him. He doesn't comment on it though. He tries again and this time, after a few seconds of him pulling on the zipper, I feel it slide down as I finally breathe freely without the tightness from the dress. I know my bare back will be exposed since I had taken off my bra while trying to get into the dress. The dress had a built-in bra so there had been no need to wear one in the dress.. I hold the front of the dress and quickly turn around to face Caden.

I stiffen as our eyes lock together. His pupils are blown out and I gasp at how dark they are. Clearing my throat, I pull my gaze away from his. Thank you for that, I mumble, waiting for him to move out of the closet so I could pull this dress off me and shove it back into the rack where I found it. Caden's gaze is still locked on mine as his eyes roan over my face and lower. One second he's staring at me as though he doesn't know if to kiss and then in the next second, that look completely disappears. "I'll be outside," he announces in a monotone. I nod, not knowing what other answer to give. Caden walks out and I quickly jerk the dress off my body. Adding it to the pile of things I wasn't taking with me, I pick up the two piles in separate hands and walk out of the changing room. Time to get this over with T

Chapter 18

hapter 18 Caden's POV I'm fighting with my wolf as I move back to where I was formerly seated. She's our mate. Why can't we have her?!' Xavier growls, his teeth baring at me. sway We can't. We just can't. We have fought about a lot of things and most times, I let Xavier have his because he always wanted what was best for us. This time, I'm not giving way for him. Alessia may be our mate but that was going to be it. We aren't going to mate with her or stake our claim on her. Overall, everything will be so much easier if I just reject her and put an end to all this, but for the life of me, I can't do that. I can't bring myself to say the words. G o d knows I've tried to do so countless times. Xavier shuts me out and I sigh, knowing that I'm going to have to increase my runs to get him back on my good side and even that may not work. I'm well and truly screwed. Five minutes later, Alessia steps out of the changing room with her previous clothes back on, holding onto two piles of clothe I stand up and walk over to her. "You're done?" I ask, ready to go back to the pack house and recollect myself. Being alone in Alessia's space is a dangerous thing. "Yes, I just need to put this pile away, she answers, looking down at the pile on her right hand where on top of it is the black dress that she got stuck in.. I take them from her hold. "Go wait in the line. I'll put these away and meet you there." I take away the pile of clothes before she can voice out a complaint. She nods and walks in the direction of the check out where there's a bit of a line. I wait until her back is turned to me before I move for a rack and put back the clothes, minus the black dress. That one is coming home with me. Then I quickly pick out a plain white T-shirt and some jeans, bundling the dress in the middle of them. I walk over to Alessia and hand my credit card over to the cashier when it's time for her to ring

up our items. Thankfully, Alessia's gaze is fixed on something else so she doesn't notice when the lady adds the black dress to our bag of clothes. I quickly sneak the

dress into the bags containing my clothes and hand over the other bag to Alessia. "Thank you," she says as she takes the bag from me. "I'll find a way to repay you. I promise, she whispers. "Ok," I answer, knowing this is what she needs to hear to feel alright about accepting my help. Something tells me that she wasn't used to being dependent on anyone other than herself. "Let's go back to the pack house."

MBBBBBBBBBBI *四匡 95% 11:23 Chapter 18 I lead her back to the car, opening the back seat and throwing our bags on the seat. Then we slide into the car and I drive us back to the house. When we get to the house I park out in the front and leave the engine running. "Take your bag. I want to go park the car at the back," I tell her and watch as she gets out and opens the back seat. She pulls out her bag and just before she closes the door, she mumbles another quick thank you. For some reason, I find myself smiling as I back the car and drive around to the garage to put it away. Grabbing my bag from the back seat, I lock up the car and start heading for the front of the pack house. Just as I'm about to turn the handle on the front door to open it, I hear a conversation from the other side of it. "You s l u t! Are you throwing yourself at Caden to get new clothes?" An irritating voice asked. I immediately know who the voice belongs to and my blood boils as I twist the door knob and push the door open.

I find Julianna all up in Alessia's space and backing her into the wall. My wolf growls, seeing red and I feel my claws dig into my palm. Moving over to them, I stand behind Julianna and Alessia's eyes flick up to mine. She must have seen the danger in them because hers widen. "Julianna," I growl lowly under my breath, fighting to keep my wolf in check. Goosebumps break out over her exposed back and her spine stiffens as she turns to face me. "A- alpha," she stutters, bowing her head down. "What how on earth do you think you're doing?" I step into her space like she did with Alessia. "What a guest into my pack and this is how you show your hospitality? By harassing her and questioning morals?" She must have realized just how much trouble she's in because she breaks into a sob and falls to her knees. "Forgive me Alpha. It wasn't my intention." "Don't apologize to me. Apologize to my guest who you offended," I whisper darkly. Julianna nearly falls onto her butt as she turns around on her knees to face Alessia. "I'm very sorry for insulting you. Please forgive me." By this time, we're already drawing a crowd as people hurdle up with confused expressions on their faces, wondering what the fuck was happening. I need to end this. "Next time, I won't let you off this easily," I growl at Julianna. "Get out of my sight." She scrabbles to her feet and flees out of the room, shoving and pushing through the crowd. 2/3 && MNB
BBBBBBBBBB1 Chapter 18 N Alessia is still pressed to the wall and staring at me with the same expression on the crowd's faces. Confusion. 95% 11:23 I clear my throat and turn my gaze to the crowd. Within a second, they're tripping over each other to get out of my view.

With one last glance at Alessia, I pass the now-empty hallway to my room. On the way up the stairs, I remember the dress I got for Alessia and turn around to head for her room instead. I open the door slowly to find the room thankfully empty. I quickly drop the dress on her bed and exit the room like I was never there. MM BB BBBBBBBB I

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Alessia's POV 95% 11:24 I walk behind Caden as we move deeper into the woods. We come to a halt and I nearly bump into him because I'm staring at his ass instead of looking at where we are headed. Caden throws me a look with a raised eyebrow that is answered with a blush from me. I can't explain it but something has changed. At least something has changed for me. I no longer hate Caden as much as I wished I did. It started when he defended me from Julianna and then finding the black dress that I wanted on my bed created a turmoil of conflicting emotions within me. Then when I tried to thank him for the dress, he shut down my attempt by reminding me that I had promised to pay him back for the clothes. I mean, I'm meant to hate him because he's keeping me imprisoned but then, if he did let me go, where would I even go to? Basically, Caden is the only hope I have and in a way, I'm thankful that he hasn't dropped me on my ass yet. Wait...is this what they call stockholm syndrome? Am I in love with my kidnapper? I'm pulled out of my thoughts by Caden's harsh tone. "I said undress," he bites out, letting me know that this isn't the first time he has said those words to me. A tint of embarrassment in the form of a blush graces my cheeks and I turn around to do as he said, knowing that there was no way he was going to let me go behind a tree. Not after the trick I pulled last week. In fact, I'm ever surprised that he's letting me have a run. However, he did heavily threaten me and provide me with vivid images of what he'd do to me if I even thought about running away. I quickly strip down and just as I'm about to take off my last piece of clothing, I hear Caden shifting. I shift as well before turning around to face a wolf with a midnight black coat. Xavier. I found out Caden's wolf name from Scarlett and I've been itching to get a good look at it since then.

Apart from the brief moment that it displayed its strength by slamming me into the ground, I haven't gotten a glimpse since then. 'He's beautiful, Zuri breathed out with a sigh, and so strong! I have to agree with her on that. Xavier is beautiful. His coat is dark and glows in the night light. He is about the height of an average man and he's huge. Walking closer to him, Zuri rubs her snout on his fur, feeling the soft fur. 1/3 13 0 0 Z 11:24 Chapter 19 Xavier in return nudges Zuri away with his head pressed into her side. It almost seems like they're playing with each other. Something I never thought to be possible. When Xavier growls lowly and pushes Zuri again, I definitely know that he's playing it with her. It makes the big black beast less scary and maybe even a little adorable. Zuri runs a bit to the front and looks behind her to check if Xavier is following and sure enough he's directly behind her. She then strutters for a bit before turning around to wait for Xavier to join her. When he gets to her side, she rolls onto him and pushes both of them to the ground. Just as I'm sure that Xavier is about to have our heads for that trick, he rolls us over so he's on top and then he buries his face into Zuri's shoulder, using his fang to graze her flesh. After a few seconds of doing that, he lifts his head up and rubs his snout on Zuri's. They play around for close to half an hour and Zuri has the time of her life; playing with Xavier and running freely in a wide space. I know that she's going to be talking about this for days to come. We later shift back to our human forms and change back into our clothes.

"Tell me about werewolves," I ask Caden when we're together again. The only things I know about werewolves are the ones that my mother told me about. She wasn't one of us so definitely there were stuff she didn't know about. "What do you want to know?" He asks, walking the path back to the pack house. "Everything," I answer. "Tell me about mate." That's one thing that has been bugging me ever since I found out I have one. I know nothing about mates. Like what are they to do together? What would happen if one decided that they didn't like their mate? Are they just forced to live together forever? A shiver goes through me at that thought. I can't imagine being forced to spend a lifetime with Caden when it's obvious that he doesn't want me as a mate. Caden stiffens and my brow furrows, What is his adversary to mates? First, he declares that he wants nothing to do with me and now, at the mention of the topic, he stiffens up. "Mates are chosen by the Moon goddess herself." He clears his throat. "They are meant to love one another, strengthen their mate bond by marking each other, mate, and spend their life together. "What happens when one doesn't want to mate or mark their mate?" I ask the question on my mind, waiting expectantly for an answer. Caden pauses, not saying anything for a while. "They reject them." Reject them? How does one do that? 2/3 & B DDDDDDDDD Chapter 19 95% 11:24 Something tells me that it wouldn't be right to ask Caden such a question so I keep shut. Besides, Caden isn't the only person that I can ask. I make a mental note to ask Scarlett about it the next time I run into her. We walk the rest of the distance in silence and I go up to my room, still wondering about how to reject one's

mate J

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Alessia's POV I'm angry at Caden. Then again, when am I not? I just can't understand him. His inscrutable facade annoys me and now, I'm trying to take that annoyance out on him. Keyword: Trying. "Harder," Caden growls, landing a blow to my shoulder and winding me. "You aren't going to knock out an opponent of twice your size with these weak punches." I upgraded from using a punching bag as my sparring partner and for the past few days, I've been sparring with Caden. It hasn't been easy. To think I thought Caden was difficult to bear when he was yelling at me from the side of a punching bag. Fighting him has got nothing on that. The fact that he isn't taking it easy on me makes me both happy and scared for my life. How long will I survive this training? My wondering thoughts leave my stomach exposed and Caden takes advantage of it, throwing a punch at me that leaves me with my butt on the ground. I've passed the stage of being embarrassed at how many people are witnessing my failure day after day. All I want now is to wipe that f u c k i n g smug smile that appears on his face every time I fail. "Get out of your head," he throws at me from my position on the floor. I huff. Of course, he noticed that I wasn't focused. He always does. I lift myself off the floor and back onto my feet, ready for another round with Caden. No matter how many times I land on my butt. I always pick myself back up and face him. "Again," he says, going back into position. We circle around each other for a minute and then I see it...my opening. A chance to finally throw what will be my first punch at Caden. I take it, rushing forward and going straight for my mark. Unfortunately, like I should have

foreseen, Caden dodges it like he always does and then I'm flying past him and heading straight for the ground.

I close my eyes waiting for the impact that doesn't come. When I open them up, I find Caden's face level with mine and his arms wrapped around me, holding me up and preventing another embarrassing fall. My eyes drift down to his lips, tracing the perfect bow with my gaze. When I lift my gaze back to his, I find them locked on my lips and my breath hushes, my tongue peeking out to lick my suddenly dry lips. I JJ HNB B B B B B BBG BI Chapter 20 11:24 eyes darken as they follow my movement and just as I'm sure that he's definitely about to kiss me, he pulls away. Back to square one. With a sigh, I wipe the feeling of hurt in my chest and pull away from his hold. I don't even bother to look around to see if anyone noticed our almost kiss. He clears his throat, the vein in his neck popping. "That's all for today. We continue from here tomorrow. I don't get any words out before I'm watching his back as he heads over to a group of teenagers. I sigh heavily, feeling totally exhausted from both the fight and Caden's mood swings. Is this how it's meant to be? Is he going to keep trying to kiss me and then pull away at the very last second? When Caden is done training me for the day, he leaves me to my own means and sometimes I continue training. Other times, I just head back to the pack house to lick my wounds while I soak in cold water. Today happens to be the latter. I turn around without looking at Caden and head for the exit. Halfway through my walk, I hear footsteps hurry behind me and turn around to find Scarlett trying to catch up with me. I stop and wait for her. She comes to a halt beside me and looks at me with something akin to pity that leaves me feeling

confused. "I saw you with Caden," she informs, that expression still on her face. Great. I bet the whole pack saw us. At this point, do people actually believe Caden's half-baked lies? I force a smile onto my face. "It was nothing. I just lost myself for a second there. Thankfully, nothing happened," I wheeze. I'm a terrible liar and Scarlett must have noticed it as well because her expression doesn't change. "Caden is just..." She trails off, looking for the right words to use. "How do you reject your mate?" I ask, cutting her off. Her eyes whip at me and widen in shock. "You want to reject Caden?" She asked, sounding astounded. I shake my head, keeping my eyes straight ahead. "I just want to know more about mates," I answer, telling the truth. The idea of rejecting Caden may have occurred to me a few times but it held no concrete. If our dynamic should change, it will be because of Caden and not because I rejected him. UZN 95% 11:24 Chapter 20 Scarlett sighs in relief, closing her eyes as she places a palm on her chest. What was that about? Is she holding out hope of Caden and me working out our differences? I'm almost tempted to tell her not to hold her breath. "To reject your mate, you have to say your name, position, and the pack you reside in. Announce that you want to reject them and that's it," she explains, using tiny gestures with her hands. It sounds so easy but I know it's anything but. "What happens afterward?" I ask. The mate bond destroys and the both of them are free of each other. Some werewolves aren't able

to bear the loss and end up running insane or going rogue." She shivers. Running insane or going rogue? Dear G o d, am I going to be stuck with Caden forever?

COMMENT