

1 Fated Mate

Caroline POV

My name is Caroline Caster. I'm twenty years old and the only child of Alpha Cain of the Fire Ring Pack. My father had hoped for a son but after he lost his fated mate, he was never able to have another child. He took a chosen mate when I was three years old. They were never blessed with a child. Despite his desire to have a son, he has never been unkind to me, just indifferent. He has given me all the things I have needed except affection. I'm grateful for all that I have, but it would have been nice to feel important to my father. Despite being the perfect daughter, he doesn't truly see me. He doesn't truly want to. I am a means to an end. He is waiting till I meet my mate so he can make him the next Alpha of our pack. As my father says "a woman is to stand behind her mate, not in front of him. She builds him up and makes sure he has a soft place when he is done ruling the world." I can't even begin to say how many times I have rolled my eyes in my mind at those words. "Caroline, come to my ome now." My father's words in my mind bring me out of my thoughts. "It sounds like he still has a stick up his a**" Clover my wolf says. I stifle my laugh but she isn't wrong.

My muscles ache and I'm covered in the lth of training. Most women in my pack would be repulsed by the state I'm in, but I love it. Training is my favorite part of the day. I was happy to put my father's Beta, Chris, on his a**. If my father ever knew that his most trusted men train me against his orders, I hate to think of what he would do to them. They are loyal to my father but don't agree with his view of women. I'm so grateful for all they have done for me. My fighting skills are better than any warrior in our pack. I may only be twenty, but I am a force to be reckoned with. If only my father could look past the fact that I have a v**a and realize that I should be the next Alpha, but nothing will change his narrow-minded misogynistic ways. I think things would be different if my mother was still alive, but I have no way to know for sure. My mother died while giving birth to me. I wish I got to meet her, but I'm grateful that my father met my stepmother, Candy. She has always treated me like her own daughter. She is beautiful and honestly, she looks like my older sister despite her age. I've heard so many stories of evil stepmothers like in fairy tales, but she is nothing like that. She agrees with my father about the fact that women shouldn't train or become Alphas. She tells me I will be the perfect Luna for a strong Alpha. I have realized that my only hope is that the goddess blesses me with a mate who believes I'm worth more than party planning, omega schedules, and bearing pups.

When I reach the pack house, I use the rear entrance so I don't run into my father. Hopefully, he is already in his ome. I hate lying but I have to protect those that are putting their own a**es on the line for me, so I will. I reach our ome and I'm grateful that I find it empty. I hurry to my room and lock the door behind me. I peel the clothes from my body and head for the shower. I make the water as hot as I can stand it. It feels good against my sore muscles. I watch the dirty water spiral around my feet. Reaching for my lavender body wash, I scrub every inch of myself. When I'm satisfied that I'm clean, I hop out and dry. I run the brush through my long black hair before I pull it into a pony tail. I head to my closet and pull on a blue sundress and a wedge sandal. I take the stairs that lead to the second ome. As I walk down the hallway toward my father's ome, I stop walking. The scent of citrus invades my nose and Clover is losing her mind. I reach the ome door and take a deep breath before I turn the handle. When I open the door my eyes land on the most handsome man I have ever seen. He is on his feet and has his arms wrapped around me, before I can even ask his name.

My father's laugh gets my attention. It's a rare sound and it sounds wrong coming from him. "I guess I won't have to make you take Donovan as a chosen mate. It seems the goddess agrees with my choice" my father says. I see Candy standing behind my father. She is smiling from ear to ear. She knows how important it is for me to have my fated mate. I'm happy to have found him, but a part of me is still angry that my father thought he could make me take a chosen mate. Donovan pulls his head from my neck and looks into my eyes. "You are so beautiful. I'm a lucky ba**ard to have such a beautiful, strong mate." His words make my insides flip. Maybe the goddess has answered my prayers and given me a mate who will actually want the real me. "I, Donovan Leaf James, accept you, Caroline Irene Caster, as my mate." "You can add and Luna Donovan, you will be the Alpha when I step down" my father interrupts. I bustle at his words and Donovan seems to notice. He looks in my eyes and I nod. He repeats his acceptance and adds the word, Luna. I smile "I, Caroline Irene Caster, accept you, Donovan Leaf James, as my mate and Alpha." I feel the bond start to snap into place. "Take your mate to your room and complete the mating, Caroline" my father insists.

Goddess, this man is relentless. "Cain, calm down. They have accepted each other. I'm sure they would like to speak for a few minutes before they complete the mating", Candy says, and I couldn't be more grateful. I take Donovan's hand and lead him out of my father's ome before he can say another crass word. We reach my room and once we are inside, Clover is pushing me to claim him, but Candy's right. I would like to at least to know him before he takes me to bed. I lead him over to a sitting area and he follows me without protest. "Donovan, why don't you tell me a little about yourself." He smiles "I'm twenty-three years old. I'm a warrior from the Blood Moon Pack. I have two sisters who are both mated to warriors." "How did my father find you?" "He had visited our pack and told me how impressed he was with my fighting ability. I think he was more excited that I have Alpha blood in my family line if I'm being honest. He is a pretty intense man." I laugh "that's putting it lightly." He takes my hand in his and the tingles dancing on my skin nearly takes my breath away. "I mean no disrespect, Caroline, but your father seems to think that women are incapable of leading. He sounds like a jacka** when he speaks like that. I do not share his feelings. I want us to rule the pack together. You are my mate and my equal." I silently thank the goddess for sending this man to me.

Six Months Later

It's hard to believe that my father has been gone for a month. We had our ceremony shortly after we completed the marking and mating. Candy and my father decided to travel after they passed the titles to us. They were returning from a trip when they were attacked by rogues. My father was the target and Candy barely survived. I sat by her bed and when she finally woke up, I feared she would die of a broken heart when she learned my father had perished. It took her two weeks before I could get her to leave their room. She seems to be doing better and she has been helping me with my Luna duties to keep herself busy. I'm glad to let her plan menus and parties. It gives me more time to train. I don't have to do it in secret anymore. Donovan stayed true to his word and encourages me to train. I am a part of every meeting and decision that is made for the pack. I truly feel like he is the perfect mate.

I dress in my workout clothes and head out to the training field. I start to spar with Chris. He rushes me and I move to the side while I do a kick that takes his legs out from under him. I stand over him and he smiles up at me. I reach down to grab his hand to help him up when I get a pain in my stomach that knocks the wind out of me. "Caroline, what's wrong?" "I'm not sure. I've never felt anything like this before." "Let's go, we can get you checked out" Chris says, concern evident in his voice. "It's ne, just give me a minute." I have my hands on my knees sucking in lungs full of air. I start to run through what this could be in my mind when I think about when I had my last period. I start to panic because I can't remember. "Clover, what's wrong with me?" "Listen to Chris and go to the hospital" she says before she puts a block up. What the hell is she keeping from me? I manage to stand up straight. "Chris, don't say anything to Donovan. I'm going to get checked out and I'll tell him anything I find out." I can see he wants to argue but he just nods. I start to walk toward the pack hospital when the pain completely subsides. I'm tempted to just head to my room, but the thought that I might be pregnant is very real in my mind. I reach the hospital and one of the nurses rushes to me. I'm sure Chris linked her that I was on my way. "Luna, please sit down and I'll take you to the back." I roll my eyes but do as she asks. They take some blood work and I wait for the pack doctor to come to update me.

The door opens and I expect to see Dr. Nelson step inside, but to my surprise, it's Donovan. I'm going to kick Chris's a**. "Do you want to tell me why I had to hear from a nurse that my Luna is in the hospital?" I roll my eyes. What the hell happened to patient confidentiality? "I'm ne Donovan. I was having some pain in my stomach and I thought I should just be checked out." I see a pained expression on his face and I grab his hand. "Hey, I'm ne. It's probably just cramps." He smiles and bends down to press a soft kiss to my lips. A throat clearing brings us out of our moment. Dr. Nelson steps in with a huge smile on his face. "I have great news, Alpha and Luna, you are expecting." My hand goes to my belly. I'm going to have a pup. After the ultrasound, we learned that I'm only two weeks pregnant. I laugh when Donovan scoops me up and carries me back to the pack house. "I can't believe we are going to have a pup", he says, and his smile is contagious. We reach the pack house and when we step inside Candy rushes over to us. "Are you alright, Caroline?" "Yes, I'm ne. Donovan is just being silly. I'm pregnant, not incapacitated." She places her hand over her mouth. "Oh, my goddess that's wonderful news." Clover growsl in my mind but I can't have much time to think about it when Donovan heads toward the stairs. I can feel her sadness and anger. "Clover, we're going to have a pup." "I know precious girl." "Are you alright, Clover?" "I will be. We can talk about it later, just be happy now."