

## Fated to my Enemy by Diane Doherty Chapter 41-50

### Chapter Forty-One

#### Alpha Blake

I was sitting in my office trying to get some work done. Aspen had gone with Ryley and Channing to the cabin for the night. I haven't spoken to her since last night and I haven't been able to stop thinking about her. Maybe if I would have stayed the night with her? She could have woken up in my arms and then maybe she would see how perfect we are for each other.

My phone rang on my desk where I had placed it. Looking at the screen, Aspen's name popped up. My stomach tightened with worry as I answered the phone.

"Aspen?"

"Dad, we need you. The Shadow Moon pack beta crossed the fence and he's threatening Ryley. Channing called Walter but we need help." Aspen yelled into the phone. He was breathing heavily like he was running.

"Where are you? Are you hurt?" I growled, my blood boiling. I was already up from my desk and rushing to the garage to my truck.

"Not hurt. Ryley told us to get back to the cabin. But Dad, she's on her own. The beta had warriors with him." He yelled in despair.

"Aspen, get to the cabin and wait for Walter. I'll be there as soon as I can." I ended the call before I mind-linked Luca.

"Garage now. Shadow Moon is attacking Ryley's cabin."

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"What the f\*ck?" Luca replied. I didn't answer. I picked up my speed to get to the garage. My stomach twisted painfully. If anything happens to her, I will rip that pack apart, and not even the council will be able to stop me. I tried to call Ryley but it went straight to voicemail.

"F\*ck," I growled, frustrated. Luca met me at my truck.

"She isn't answering," I told him, climbing in behind the wheel. Luca took the passenger seat. I immediately called Aspen back. I needed to know what was going on. The call went through the speakers before I ripped out of the garage and away from the pack house. This, two-hour drive was going to be hell.

"Dad?" Aspen answered.

"What's going on? Are you boys at the cabin?" I rushed out. My heart was pounding in my chest.

"Channing and I are at the cabin. Channing has Walter on the phone. But

Dad, we heard howling.” He said in despair.

“I’m about to go get her. I won’t let that f\*\*ker kill her,” I heard Channing growl out.

“And she would never forgive herself if anything happened to you. She told us to go back to the cabin.” Aspen told him.

“How far out is Walter? I’m on my way now with Luca. We should be there in an hour.”

“Walter is about ten minutes out.” He answered.

“Does Ryley have her phone?” I questioned.

“I don’t think so. Did something happen? She seemed off today?” Aspen asked. I quickly looked at Luca who was staring at me.

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“Not that I know of. But what happened? Why did the pack attack?” I exclaimed, speeding down the road that exited the pack. I was easily doing double the speed limit.

“I don’t know. Walter couldn’t be here until later so Ryley wanted to walk the fence. That’s when we saw the pack. Dad, he was planning on killing all of us. If Ryley can’t defend us, they will attack the cabin.” He breathed out. I could hear the panic in his voice. He was scared and so was I. I gripped the steering wheel until my knuckles turned white.

If anything was to happen to any of them, there was nothing that was going to stop Gunner.

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‘Aspen just stay on the line with me. We will be there as soon as we can. Stay indoors and lock everything. Only open the door for Walter and Ryley.’ I explained.

“Dad, what if she’s hurt? We should have stayed to protect her.” Aspen cried. And listening to my son cry, broke my heart.

“Aspen, her job is to protect you and Channing. And she is doing that. If she can kick my a\*s, I know she will be okay.” Luca tried to reassure him.

“He’s right, son. You did the right thing. She wouldn’t have been able to think clearly if she was worried about you two.” I told him.

“Walter’s here,” I heard Channing call out. I heard a bunch of m\*\*fled noises and a door slamming.

“Where is Ryley?” I heard Walter exclaim.

“She hasn’t returned,” Channing answered him. I could hear the despair in his voice.

“I’ll go get her. You two stay here,” he commanded.

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“Walter, my beta, and I are on our way,” I yelled through the phone. I knew Aspen had me on speaker.

“Good. It would seem my son needs a good a\*s kicking.” He scoffed. I heard more rustling before I heard gasps. I couldn’t make out what was happening. “There’s so much blood,” I heard Channing cry out. My heart twisted painfully and I increased my speed.

“What the hell is happening?” I screamed.

“Ryley’s back but shifted. She is covered in blood Dad. I can’t even tell what color her wolf is. And I don’t know if it’s all hers or not. She’s limping.” Aspen said panicked.

“She went into the bathroom and closed the door. She hasn’t shifted back. I don’t know how bad she is. And Walter doesn’t want to leave us to find his son.” He cried.

“Dad, there is so much blood.” I was ready to rip the steering wheel off the column. My blood was boiling with a fury I don’t think I’ve ever felt before.

“Stay in the cabin, I’ll be there soon,” I told him before ending the call.

“Blake you need to calm down. We don’t need to start a war,” Luca spoke to me calmly. He has seen firsthand the kind of monster Gunner can be.

“It wouldn’t be a war. It would be an execution.” I growled, adjusting my grip on the wheel. There was nothing Luca could say to reason with me. Ryley was hurt and that f\*\*ker was going to pay.

## Chapter Forty-Two

### Alpha Blake

When the cabin came into view, I felt like I could finally breathe. Walter was waiting on the porch as I parked my truck beside his. As soon as I opened the door, I could smell blood. Gunner let out a growl as I slammed the door closed and rushed up the stairs of the porch. There was a trail of blood leading into the house.

“Blake, wait,” Walter called out as I stormed into the cabin.

“Dad,” Aspen exclaimed, rushing over to me. I pulled him in for a hug. And when Channing got close enough, I pulled him in as well. The relief I felt was short-lived as I spotted blood on the door to the bathroom.

I let go of the boys. They were okay but now I needed to check on Ryley. Most of the blood had been cleaned up. But the blood on the door scared me. She must have walked in as her wolf. It would explain why the blood was lower down the door.

When the door was right in front of me, I twisted the handle to find it unlocked. I swung the door open and let out a growl at what I saw.

“Blake, what the hell?” Ryley screamed as she covered her breast with one of her arms. She was damp from just showering. A towel was wrapped around her hips as she looked in the mirror at the wounds along her side.

The wounds were still healing, and blood was coating the white towel in red. I couldn't even think at that moment. I didn't snap out of my haze until I was back in my truck. That f\*\*ker was going to die for threatening my sons and Ryley.

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“Blake, calm down. I know you're upset.” Luca yelled as he took the passenger seat.

“I will not calm down. He hurt her and he will f\*\*king die.” I growled as I started the truck.

The back tires spun as I whipped down the driveway at dangerous speeds. Nothing was going to stop me from getting to that beta and his alpha.

Ryley

Lily limped back to the cabin. We may have gotten a few scratches but the other wolves had it worse. Lily wasn't taking any of their s\*it. And I was now feeling it.

“Mom, oh my g\*d!” Channing exclaimed. He tried to approach me but Lily shook her head and the three of them stood back.

“Are you okay? My dad is on his way,” Aspen said. Lily gave him a nod. F\*ck. That's all I needed was an angry alpha. Lily let out a sigh. This was not how my relaxing day at the cabin was supposed to go.

I didn't want to shift back in front of the boys so Lily limped through the cabin, pushing open the bathroom door. She whined as she pushed her shoulder against the door, closing it behind her.

I hissed and groaned as I shifted back. I had a few deep scratches down my ribs on my left side. I crawled over and turned on the shower. The adrenaline was starting to leave my system and my entire body ached.

“Mom?” Channing called out from the other side of the door.

“I'm okay, sweetie. I'm just getting cleaned up.” I yelled over the noise of the shower.

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“If you need help, just call out.” I heard him say. I leaned back against the tub,

trying to find the strength to get into the shower so I stop bleeding all over the floor.

"I'm healing you as fast as I can but I need food and rest," Lily whined.

"I know. I'm sorry." I breathed out. I gasped and groaned as I moved into the tub under the shower. As soon as the water washed over my cuts, I hissed. I wish I could have killed that f\*\*ker but he was Walter's son. And I love Walter too much to hurt him like that.

I stood up and washed off all the blood and dirt from my body and hair, letting the water run clear before I shut it off. I wrapped my hair up in a towel before wrapping one around my hips. I needed to get my cuts bandaged.

The cuts were deep and still bleeding as the white towel turned crimson. I sighed as I looked at it in the mirror above the vanity. I let out a scream when the door to the bathroom was thrown open, hitting the wall. Blake's scent hit me. And so did his fury.

"Blake, what the hell?" I yelled, turning away from the door, covering my naked breast. The tension was thick even when I jumped from the sound of the door slamming close. Blake didn't step inside. And I heard the front door slam and the mirror shook.

"See you didn't have to kill that f\*\*ker, Blake will," Lily said and I grumbled.

I pulled out the first aid kit and wrapped my torso up before wrapping a clean towel around myself. Then I opened the door of the bathroom to find the boys sitting on the couch and Walter sitting at the dining table.

"Boy, why don't you pick a movie to watch? Walter, are you staying?" I asked him.

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"I'll stay. And I think we should talk about what happened." He said.

"We can talk in the morning," I told him before entering my bedroom. I put on a pair of pajamas before brushing out my damp hair. When I was ready, I went back out into the living room with a blanket and a few pillows.

After moving the coffee table out of the way, I sat down on the floor in front of the couch. I patted the floor on either side of me so the boys would come to sit with me.

"Do you have any pain meds? My head is killing me." Aspen asked as he sat down beside me. I moved a pillow to my lap.

"Lay down," I told him as Channing rested his head on my shoulder. I felt so relieved having both the boys with me and safe. I licked a couple of fingertips before rubbing Aspen's temple. Luna wolves can heal using their saliva and blood. Channing turned on a movie as Walter moved into a chair beside us.

"I'm thankful you're safe, Mom," Channing whispered, kissing my cheek.

"I'm not going anywhere, sweetie," I told him as I rested my head against his. I

don't remember the movie starting as I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

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Chapter Forty-Three

Alpha Blake

I slammed on my brakes as I came upon the gate of the Shadow Moon pack. I rolled down my window as a warrior approached.

"Be calm," Luca grumbled.

"Alpha Blake? I wasn't aware of your visit." He told me.

"Neither was I. Unexpected events occurred and I need to speak to the alpha and his beta." I demanded. The warrior nodded but the gates never opened.

My patience was growing thin the longer I waited.

"I'm sorry, Alpha Blake. There was an incident involving Beta Chris earlier today. He is unable to meet with you. Alpha Phil is on his way." The warrior informed me.

"Tell your alpha I'm here because of the incident involving his beta," I growled.

I couldn't hold back any longer. Making me wait at the gate was disrespectful enough. And I don't know what Chris told his alpha.

"I'm sorry, alpha, I'm just following orders." He said.

"We'll wait to speak with the alpha, thank you," Luca called over me to the warrior. I shut off my truck and hopped out of the vehicle.

"Tell your alpha he has ten minutes before I'm going in," I ordered.

"Yes, Alpha Blake," the warrior stammered as I leaned against the front bumper.

"Blake, stay calm." Luca mind-linked me. But there was no being calm.

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Now only did that ba\*\*ard threaten my son, the future alpha of the biggest pack known to our kind. But he threatened two people I care deeply for. And he hurt one of them. He knew she was under his father's protection and he did it anyways.

A few minutes later, a vehicle came speeding up to the gate. Alpha Phil jumped out of the passenger side once the vehicle came to a stop in front of the gate. His gamina climbed out of the driver's side. The warrior I was speaking to earlier opened the gate for his alpha.

"Alpha Blake, this is an unexpected visit," Alpha Phil said as he approached me.

"I think you know perfectly well why I'm here," I scoffed, not bothering to shake his hand.

"If this is about the incident at our borders with the rogues then I don't see why that is any of your business." He retorted. I almost punched him in the face when the f\*\*ker smirked.

"They weren't rogues. There were two lone wolves under Beta Walter's protection and Alpha Blake's son." Luca told them while Gunner let out a growl. Both men and the warrior blanched.

"Your son?" his g\*\*ma stammered.

"I'm going to make this clear, so you f\*\*kers understand the gravity of what your beta f\*\*ken did. Not only did he threaten two underage wolves but he crossed the border to attack someone on her property. Someone under his father's protection and now mine. And the only reason I'm not rushing into your pack to kill that f\*\*ker is because I respect his father. But this is your one and only warning. If any of your wolves cross the border onto her land, I will declare war. Do you understand?" I demanded.

"All of this is over a rogue she-wolf? Must be some good p\*\*sy," I

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didn't let him finish as I punched him in the jaw. And I didn't stop at one punch. He was a b\*\*ody mess when Luca pulled me off of the pathetic alpha. Luca pushed me up against the grill of my truck.

"Are we clear?" He turned to ask the alpha and his g\*\*ma. His g\*\*ma was helping his alpha stand up, with the help of the warrior.

"Clear," the g\*\*ma answered.

"Didn't realize you were a dictator?" Alpha Phil mumbled, spitting out a mouth full of blood. I chuckled, shaking my head.

"If I was, you would already be dead and your pack would be mine.

Remember your place, Phil. Even without the larger and stronger pack, I could still kill you. And if any of your pack members are involved in hurting or threatening those three again, I will make it my mission to destroy this pack." I told him firmly. Gunner was one of the strongest alpha wolves in my generation. Phil would be nothing to take down.

"And now that you understand, Phil. I expect your beta not only apologize to my son but also Channing and Riley. It will be done tomorrow before they return to my pack. Understand?" I demanded. Gunner growled his approval.

"Understood, Alpha Blake." The alpha finally answered after a very moments of contemplating. He wasn't going to win against me and he knew it.

"Good. We are done here," I said as I walked around to the driver's side of the

truck. I shook out my bruised and bl\*ody knuckles before getting in behind the wheel. Luca followed suit and took the passenger seat.

We were driving for about ten minutes before Luca let out a sigh. I knew he wasn't happy about the way I handled the alpha but I care about them. And I protect those I care about.

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"What?" I grumbled when he didn't say anything.

"That wasn't how I thought things were going to go." He answered.

"And how did you think things were going to go?" I asked him. And he chuckled.

"I didn't think the alpha was s\*\*pid enough to challenge you."

"I didn't think he would just hand over his beta. His loyalty is to his pack first. I wouldn't have had any respect for the ba\*\*ard if he would have just bent to my will." I shrugged, looking at my knuckles gripping the steering wheel.

"Now, what's the plan?" He questioned.

"Now, I go back to the cabin and you drive back to the pack. I'll drive home with Ryley and the boys tomorrow."

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Chapter Forty-Four

Alpha Blake

When I pulled up to the cabin, the sun had already set. Walter was sitting on the porch. I'm sure he was waiting for us. My hands were still covered in blood but all my wounds had healed. One of the perks of having an alpha wolf, you heal faster than average wolves.

I hopped out of the vehicle and Luca took my spot after gripping my shoulder. I gave him a nod. I knew he was worried. My anger doesn't make his job any easier but he would do the same if it was his mate and son.

I watched as Luca drove away before walking up the porch steps. I took the chair beside Walter. He looked worried and deep in thought as we sat in silence.

"How are they?" I finally asked. Walter let out a breath.

"They are all sleeping in the living room. Did you kill him?"

"I didn't see him. But I did give the alpha a g\*\*d-a\*s kicking. And Chris will be here tomorrow morning to apologize. I don't know the story as to why he hates



Ryley so much but he had no right to attack her.” I said and he sighed.  
“My boys have always disliked Ryley. I met her when I was in the city dealing with some paperwork after my mate’s death. They believe she was taking advantage of my grief but that wasn’t the case. I just couldn’t tell them the entire story. It was Ryley’s story to tell and if I wasn’t there to witness what happened, I probably wouldn’t have believed it myself.” He explained. I wonder what more Ryley was hiding.

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“And you and her?” I questioned. I know it was an awkward question but I needed to know. He looked at me before shaking his head.

“Our relationship was never like that. I think of her as my daughter. It was fate when I met her. She may believe I saved her and Channing but she gave me a reason to keep going. My boys were grown and didn’t need me. But Ryley and then Channing, they needed me. And they made me feel important again.” He confessed.

“Riley seems to have that effect on people.” I shrugged before leaning back in the chair.

“Ryley is special. When I met her, she was broken. Everything she has done has been for Channing. Most wouldn’t have survived going through even half of what that poor girl has endured. But even at the lowest point in her life, she can make others smile. She helps others, even when she has nothing. And if you hurt her, I will kill you. She won’t survive another heartbreak. So if this is just a ploy to get laid then move along, alpha.” He said.

“I’m trying to gain her trust. I don’t know her story but I care about her. And my son cares about her. I trust Aspen with her. I know she would do anything to protect him. Just like I would do anything to protect her and Channing. I want her to move to my pack. I know she doesn’t want to be a part of a pack but I want her close.” I told him.

“You’ve always been a good alpha and an even better man. Your father was the same way. He may have had a pack to take care of but his family always came first. And if you want her, it will be a battle to break down her walls but I assure you, she is worth it. She deserves to be happy and loved.” He stood up from his seat and walked down to where his truck was parked.

“Take care of them. I have a son to visit.”

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I headed into the cabin, locking the door behind me. I didn't need any surprises. I smiled when I looked toward the couch. Ryley was sleeping with her back up against the couch with Channing resting his head on her shoulder, sleeping. Aspen was lying with his head on a pillow in her lap, she had an arm draped over him. My heart swelled as I sat down in the chair, watching them sleep.

"This could be our family." Gunner purred, finally calming down after what happened earlier.

"I want this to be our family. I want Ryley. I don't care about her past as long as we are her future." I told him. I didn't have the heart to move them. Instead, I watched them before I fell asleep.

I awoke to the smell of coffee. Opening my eyes, the floor in front of the couch was now cleaned up.

"I put the boys to bed. It's early and they are still tired." Riley said as she placed a mug of coffee on the table beside me. She had a mug in her hand for herself as she took a seat on the couch beside me.

"How are you feeling?" I asked her, taking a sip of my coffee.

"I'm okay." She mumbled as she cuddled into herself.

"I'm sorry, Blake." She whispered. I put down the mug and moved to sit beside her.

"This is not your fault," I told her before she broke into s\*bs. I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her against my chest.

"He could have hurt the boys," she sobbed, as she gripped my shirt and burrowed her face into me.

"But he didn't. And the boys may not have their wolves yet but they are strong. And I know you would never let anything happen to them. I

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trust you to take care of my son, Ryley, that hasn't changed." I said into her hair as I held her close. She nodded against me.

"How are your wounds?" I asked her after her s\*bs had calmed down. I knew she needed to get her emotions out after the scare she must have had.

"Healed. I was more worried about the boys." She answered, wiping away her tears as she pulled away from me. I didn't push her but I knew the wounds couldn't have healed that fast. There was too much blood and I saw the lacerations. They were deep.

"Thank you for keeping them safe. And you don't have to worry about Chris or that pack again."

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## Chapter Forty-Five

### Former Beta Walter

Walking into the pack hospital, I felt disappointed. My sons were not raised like that. We all had a hard time after their mother's death but that is no excuse for what he did. They were all angry the day I brought Ryley home, even though none of them lived at home with me. All three of them were living at the pack house. They all had their own lives. While mine had just died. Ryley has been the rock I needed after my mate died. We were both broken but we were there for each other. She included me in her life and Channing's life. My sons all have mates and kids but our relationship has been strained. I try to be there for my sons and grandchildren but my boys don't make it easy for me. But with Ryley, she has always included me. She was the daughter I was always meant to have and I know my mate would have loved her. She would have taken her in, just like I did all those years ago.

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A nurse pointed me in the direction of Chris's room. I could hear yelling coming from inside the room. There were three voices and I knew all three. I quickly knocked before entering the room. Chris was sitting on the edge of the bed. His shoulder had been bandaged. He also had scratches down his chest. Alpha Phil was standing by the bed and my youngest son, Evan was standing by the window.

"Beta Walter, finally. Maybe you can talk some sense into your son." Alpha Phil exclaimed, throwing his hands up. He was sporting a black eye and a split lip. Blake did a number on him.

"This is his fault. How could you give the cabin to her?" Chris growled. I took a seat in front of him so I could explain.

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"I didn't give her the cabin. She bought half of it and I gifted my half to Channing." He let out a growl and I held up my hand.

"Let me finish. You boys haven't been out there since before mom died. And Ryley loves that place. Almost as much as your mother did. She has been the one taking care of it. She knows how important that place is to me and she has done so much to make sure it stays perfect." I told them.

"Dad, we are just concerned she is taking advantage of your kindness. We know you have money and this could all be a ploy to get into the will." Evan said. I looked at him and then back at Chris, who was nodding his head.

"If this is about money, she has paid back every dime I've ever given her with

interest. Which I put away to help pay for Channing's college and hockey. This was never about money. This was about a young woman who needed help. I had the means to help her and I did. And she gave me purpose again. I pray none of you ever have to deal with the death of your soulmate." I explained. I have told them this all before but they never seem to believe me.

"Now, Chris, you will go apologize to Ryley and Channing tomorrow. And if you boys are so worried about where my money is going, then you three can have it all. It has never been about the money. And if any of you needed help, you could have come to me." I said, standing up from the chair.

"Dad, this wasn't just about money," Evan sighed.

"Then what? I've tried to be a part of all of your lives. But all you have done is push me away. Ryley hasn't needed my help financially in years and she still includes me in everything. I'm invited to every holiday and everything that involves Channing. She has even invited all of you out to the cabin. She has been trying." I retorted. We have

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had this conversation numerous times over the years.

"Dad, we were trying to protect you." Chris sighed.

"I'm a grown-a\*s man, I don't need your protection, son. And if you three would have taken the time to get to know her, you would have loved her like I do. Like the daughter, I was never given. But instead, the last seventeen years have been wasted on your resentment. You attacked her and threatened her son. Someone, I care for as a grandson. And now it's time to make this right. It's her choice to not join a pack. And if you would have taken the time to get to know her, she probably would have trusted you enough with her story. Now, I will drive you over there in the morning." I told him.

"And you will also apologize to Alpha Blake. We don't need a war, Chris. I would like to keep the biggest pack as our alias and not our enemy." Alpha Phil said. Chris and he have been friends since childhood. I knew he would defend him, but he was st\*\*id if he thought he could take on an alpha like Blake.

"We'll both see you in the morning, dad," Evan told me. I gave him a nod.

"Are you okay?" I asked Chris.

"Nothing that won't heal," he shrugged.

"Good. Get some rest and I'll see you in the morning. And if you need anything, you have my number." I told him, before heading for the door to leave.

"Dad?" He called out. I turned to look at him.

"Thanks. And I'm sorry."

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## Chapter Forty-Six

### Ryley

After my emotional breakdown on Blake's shoulder and the boys were awake, I sent them to the dock to go fishing. I needed a moment to myself to comprehend everything that happened yesterday. And by working through everything, I was also cleaning. I knew Walter wanted to start construction on the extension we had planned. He may have sold me this place but he will always be allowed to be here. This will always be his second home.

I was busy doing laundry when there was a quick knock at the door. I called out for them to enter before scolding myself for being so st\*\*id. It could have been anyone and I just invited them in. Looking outside the bathroom door, which also holds the washer and dryer, I see Walter, Chris, and Evan.

"There's my girl, how are you feeling?" Walter asked me as I exited the bathroom.

"I'm good. The boys are out at the dock and I'm trying to get this place cleaned up. I may not be able to get here until after school starts. Channing has found a summer hockey team to play on while we are staying in Blake's pack." I told him as he gave me a side hug.

"Chris, Evan, I'm surprised to see you here. How are you feeling, Chris?" I asked him.

"Nothing that won't heal," he shrugged. I gave him a nod.

"Would anyone like a coffee? And please have a seat." I motioned to the table. I didn't want things to get awkward with the lack of

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conversation.

"Coffee, would be great, thanks sweetie," Walter kissed my temple. They all took a seat at the table as I gathered mugs for everyone.

"I didn't expect you this morning," I said as I set down the mugs. I then grabbed the coffee pot and milk before sitting down at the table. The sugar was already at the table from my breakfast coffee.

"I wanted to come over and apologize for how I acted yesterday," Chris said. I stopped mid-sip of my coffee.

"Oh." I stammered. This was unlike him.

"Alpha Blake spoke with the alpha," Walter said. That would explain why Blake's hands were covered in dried blood this morning.

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“Regardless, whatever Blake told your alpha was most likely about his son being present,” I said, as I put down my mug. My hands were beginning to tremble and I placed them in my lap.

“Ryley, I’m here to apologize to you. This doesn’t have anything to do with what Alpha Blake told Phil.” Chris sighed. I wanted to call bu\*\*\*hit but I kept that to myself. Blake is not someone you want as an enemy and his alpha knows that.

“I appreciate the apology, Chris. I do. I hope we can move forward and be more civil to one another.”

“Dad, told us, you bought this place,” Evan spoke for the first time.

“Yes,” I answered.

“I paid full market value. I would never take from Walter.” I rushed out, defending myself.

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“I didn’t say that. But this was our mother’s favorite place, and now you own it.” He said.

“Are you asking if you can visit?” I questioned, confused.

“Would you allow that?” I looked at Walter. I’m not sure how to feel about this sudden change.

“We are planning on having an extension built. But after it’s all finished, I’m sure we can all sit down and come up with a schedule. If that works for you, baby girl?” Walter answered.

“I know how special this place is for all of you and I don’t want you to feel unwelcome here. I’m sure after the renovations are finished, we can come up with a plan so we can all enjoy this place.” I told them.

“And why would you do that?” Chris retorted.

“Because I love Walter and he loves you. And I know how hard it is to lose a parent. If I had anything from them, I would want to hold on to it.” I explained. Just then the front door opened and the boys came in with Blake following behind them.

“Mom, are you okay?” Channing rushed out, looking around the table.

“What the hell is he doing here?” Aspen growled. Blake grabbed his arm in warning.

“I came here to apologize for my actions yesterday. I was out of line.” Chris said, standing up from his seat. Evan stood up as well.

“You must be Alpha Blake,” Evan held out his hand to him.

“I am, yes. And this is my son, Aspen.” Blake answered shaking his

Chapter Forty-Six

# 288 Vouchers

hand.

“Granddad, why are they here? He hurt Mom,” Channing scoffed.

“I’m here to apologize,” Chris told him.

“And we don’t accept your fake a\*s apology. The only reason you are here is because Blake threatened your alpha.” He retorted.

“Channing,” I scolded, standing up from the table.

“Mom, you know it’s true. If Blake didn’t do what he did, neither one of them would be here.”

“Channing’s right, I’m not buying this cr\*p,” Aspen agreed with him. I walked over to the boys, now standing in front of them. I took hold of one of their cheeks so they would look at me. Both of them leaned into my touch as they looked down at me

“Ryley, he could have killed you,” Aspen sighed and my heart ached.

“Chris and I had a disagreement. I believe the issue is settled. And I’m accepting his apology. No matter the reason why he is here, he is Walter’s son. We love Walter and that love extends to his family. I would love nothing more than for us to be a family.” I explained. I looked at both of the boys before gazing at Blake who was standing behind them.

“I accept your apology. But I don’t trust you. And if you ever hurt my mom again, wolf or not, I’m killing you,” Channing growled out, looking at Chris.

“I would expect nothing less,” Chris told him.

“Why don’t you boys get packed up? I’m just going to finish cleaning and then we will head home.” I said. Both of them gave me a nod

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Chapter Forty-Six-

before heading to their room.

Chapter Forty-Seven

Alpha Blake

“Channing, I’ll see you this weekend,” Walter called out. He looked over his shoulder and gave him a nod before following Aspen into their room and closing the door behind them.

I moved closer to Ryley, taking a hold of her arm. She jumped before turning to look at me.

“Are you okay?” I asked her, stepping even closer to her. Her stòrmy grey eyes had so many emotions swirling. This situation has her worried. She wants to protect her and Channing but she also wants to help Walter.

“Yeah, I’m okay,” she whispered, wrapping her arms around herself.

“We’ll take our leave now, baby girl. I’ll see you on the weekend.” Walter told her, pulling her in for a hug.

“Thank you for stopping by, all of you,” she said before kissing his cheek.

“Maybe, after all the work to the cabin is done, we can all get together,” Evan told her.

“I’d like that,” she told Evan with a smile.

“I’ll walk you out,” I announced to the men. I followed them outside leaving Riley in the kitchen area. I closed the door behind us. I wanted to have a word with Chris.

“Alpha Blake, I already know what you are going to say and you can

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Chapter Forty-Seven

288 Vouchers

save it,” Chris said as I walked down the porch stairs.

“Do you now? And what was I going to say?” I questioned, amused by his tone. If he thought his brother and father could save him from my wrath, he was delusional.

“Come on, we saw the way you looked at her. This is not just about your son being there. And I didn’t know he was your son or I never would have,” I didn’t let him finish.

“Threaten a wolf-less teenager? This isn’t about the who. Even if I wasn’t an alpha, I would never put up with you threatening a she-wolf and two teenagers who haven’t shifted yet. However, you feel about Ryley and your father’s relationship shouldn’t have been handled that way. And if you have taken the time to get to know her, you would know that Ryley is a good person. I’ve known her for weeks and I trust her with my son. All of you need to work on your own relationship. But know this, if you ever threaten or hurt Ryley in any way, nothing will protect you.”

Walter came closer and squeezed my shoulder. He’s a good man, and I’m hoping I won’t have to kill his son. Chris gave me a nod.

“It was good to meet you, Alpha Blake,” Evan said. I nodded and they all climbed into Walter’s truck. I watched as they drove away before heading inside the cabin. I found Riley in the kitchen, washing dishes.

She was staring out the window as she mindlessly washed. I walked up behind her and placed my hands on the counter on either side of her.

“What’s out there that’s so interesting?” I asked, leaning in. She jumped, dropping the glass she was washing into the sink. Thankfully, it didn’t break.

“F\*\*k,” she cursed, panting. I spun her around before she could pick

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Chapter Forty Seven

288 Vouchers

up the glass again.

“Ryley, breathe,” I told her as I rested my forehead against hers. Our moment didn’t last long as the door to the boy’s room opened and she pushed me back.

“Is everything okay?” Aspen asked.

“Yep. Ryley was just going to go pack up her things while I finished cleaning up.” I answered, not taking my eyes off of her. I couldn’t read her. She was building up her wall again. She gave me a tight smile before heading into her room.

“Dad, did something happen?” My son questioned as I moved to the kitchen sink to finish washing the rest of the dishes.

“Why don’t you two get the living room cleaned up? Ryley was nice enough to let us go fishing this morning, the least we can do is help get this place cleaned up.”

After everything was clean and Ryley’s SUV was packed up, I hopped in behind the wheel. Ryley didn’t say anything as she took the front passenger seat. The boys sat in the back. Both of them had earbuds in and were looking at their phones. Ryley watched out the window as I pulled away from the cabin.

The vehicle was silent and I could feel something was wrong with her. I leaned over and placed my hand on her thigh, squeezing it. She looked at me, giving me a tight smile.

“What’s bothering you?” I asked her and she sighed. She looked back at the boys before turning her attention back to me.

“I want to believe Chris but I can’t. If it was just me, I could do it for Walter but with the boys being involved, I can’t. If anything would have happened to them, I don’t know,” Her voice cracked and she

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looked away. Tereld hear her heart pounding in her chest. I squeezed he thigh  
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“I won’t let anything happen to your or the boys. And what happened westerday will never happen again, you have my word.” I told her

“But,” she stammered.

“No buts. I trust you and I know you would have died to keep my son safe. This doesn’t affect that trust. And if it wasn’t for your love for Walter. I probably would have killed him. He should be grateful that you love his father so much.” She nodded, before leaning her head back against the seat. She placed her hand on top of mine as she looked out the window again. This is something I could get used to.

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Chapter Forty Eight

Chapter Forty-Eight

Ryley

After what happened yesterday, the feelings of self-doubt have been bubbling to the surface. The idea I couldn’t protect the boys weighed heavily on my heart. I’ve always been able to protect Channing because we were never involved with other wolves but now things have changed. I underestimated the hate wolves have for outsiders. And even though I’ve known Chris for years through Walter, I was still an outsider. At least in the human city, no one knew I was different.

The drive home was quiet and I was relieved when Blake finally pulled up outside the house. I needed to get out of this vehicle. Blake was smelling too good and if the boys didn’t interrupt earlier, I’m not sure what I would have done. There’s something about him, I can’t shake. I want to be able to trust him but the idea scares me to death. No matter how much my heart cries out for him, my logic is saying no.

I was just about to open my door and climb out when Aspen leaned forward, in between the two front seats.

“Dad, I want Channing and Ryley to come to dinner with us tomorrow. I’ve been telling Grandma all about them and she wants to meet them.” He told his dad. Blake just looked at me.

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“He asked me earlier but I told him it was up to you seeing it’s your parents.” I shrugged. I didn’t want to impose or overstep.

“We will be having dinner in the pack house around seven tomorrow evening, if you would like to join us?” He asked me.

“Only if you are sure,” I told him. We stared at each other and I could

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Chapter Forty-Eight

288 Vouchers

feel the boy's eyes on us. The tension started to build before Blake finally answered.

"I'm sure, Riley. You and Channing are always welcome."

"Okay," I nodded before getting out of the vehicle. I needed a moment to breathe. I can't believe I agreed to meet his parents. Even if it's just as his son's best friend's mom.

The boys grabbed most of the stuff from the back before heading into the house. I watched as they both went in like they owned the place.

"I think Aspen is spending the night," I said, shaking my head.

"Is that okay? If not I can tell him to get his a\*s home," Blake chuckled.

"It's fine, really. I enjoy having him around. As long as it's okay with you. I know you said that nothing has changed but," I couldn't finish, guilt twisted my stomach painfully. Aspen was all Blake had left of his mate and I could have gotten him hurt or worse killed.

Blake grabbed my hand and spun me in against his chest before resting his hands on my hips. His smell was intoxicating as I looked up into his amber eyes. No one has ever had this hold on me, not even Channing's father.

"Ryley, you have no reason to feel guilty. Aspen has been trained without a wolf and he has been trained with Gunner. He could have handled himself. Like I'm sure Channing would have. Thank you for protecting him and making sure he was safe. I trust that you will always take care of him," Blake said, and tears p\*\*cked my eyes.

"Now, go get some rest." He kissed my forehead before he let me go. I watched him walk toward the pack house, wishing he would have stayed. But not having the guts to admit it out loud.

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Chapter Forty Eq

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"What the hell is wrong with me?" I breathed out when he was out of sight.

"You love him," Lily purred and I groaned.

"Shut up," I grumbled, walking into the house.

"Or you can leave the boys here and let me pounce on the alpha. It's a win-win," she continued, ignoring me.

"Will you stop?" I exclaimed. The boys were watching tv in the living room,

while I made my way up the stairs to my room. I needed a bath and a book.

“Mom, can we order pizza?” Channing called out from downstairs.

“That’s fine, sweetie,” I yelled back.

“Do you want anything?”

“I’m okay. I’m just going to have a bath and then go to bed.” I called back before walking through my room to the bathroom to start the water. While the tub was filling up, I walked back into my bedroom to get the book I was reading.

When did my life become so complicated? I thought to myself as I went back into the bathroom and stripped off my clothes. I climbed into the steaming hot water, finally feeling like I can relax.

“It’s only complicated because you are making it so. We could join this pack and be the Luna we were always meant to be. Blake will protect us from our mate. And if the ba\*\*ard is smart, he won’t challenge him.” Lily said.

“He has already claimed another, Lily. He wouldn’t be able to challenge Blake. But how do you know Blake even wants me? And all

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Chapter Forty-Eight

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the b\*\*\*\*hit I bring. It’s not fair to him.” I sighed.

“You can always tell him the truth about everything and let him make that choice. He wants you, Ryley. Who wouldn’t? And you deserve to be happy.”

“Lily, we come with a lot of baggage. And Blake has enough to worry about with Aspen and his pack. I don’t want to be a burden and I also don’t want to relive the past. I don’t want his pity.” I told her. She whimpered before retreating to the back of my mind.

I wish I wasn’t broken. I wish I could trust my heart. If I was stronger I would be able to have Blake and not fear rejection. If I told him my story and he rejected me, it would be like my mate all over again. And my heart isn’t strong enough. So, I will put my heart back in the box I have built and throw away the key to keep it safe.

Chapter Forty-Nine

Alpha Blake

“What the hell are you doing? Go back to her!” Gunner roared in my head. But I kept walking towards the pack house. I needed time to think. After everything

that had happened, I knew I wanted Ryley to stay here. The thought of her leaving in five weeks is making me anxious.

"Then why are you leaving her? Go back and tell her how you feel." Gunner scoffed.

'And I will, just not tonight. She's been through enough." I retorted.

"You could just hold her." He suggested.

"We aren't there yet. And she has enough to worry about. This is something we have to take slow, as much as I don't want to. I don't want to overstep and have her completely shut me out." I sighed. I wanted this to work so badly. I didn't want to go back to an empty floor. I would much rather have us all under one roof. But I know Ryley has been through a lot. And this is to prove to her that I still trust her with Aspen.

The next morning, Luca was waiting for me at my office door. My lack of sleep did not put me in a good mood and I just wanted to get through this day as painlessly as possible.

"Wow, you look like s\*it. Did something happen?" Luca pointed out as I approached him.

"Thanks," I grumbled, unlocking my office door. I stepped inside and

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Luca followed me, closing the door behind him.

I sat down behind my desk and turned on my computer while he took one of the chairs in front.

"What?" I grumbled out when he didn't say anything.

"You're very grumpy for someone who just got laid by the hot little blonde down the hall?" He scoffed.

"F\*ck off," I growled and he chuckled. A growl rumbled from my chest. and he held up his hands in surrender.

"Fine, don't tell me. Aspen will fill me in later." He said shaking his head.

"There's nothing to tell. She was feeling guilty about putting Aspen in danger." I sighed.

"Why do I feel like you aren't telling me everything?" He c\*\*ked his eyebrow.

"I wanted something to happen. It seemed she was lowering her walls but then this happened and she clammed back up again. And I don't know what to say," I shrugged.

"You could just ask her out?"

"And if she says no, then what? It would make whatever our relationship is now, awkward." I huffed.

“I don’t know how to help you, Blake. If you want to move forward with Ryley, you are going to have to take a chance.” He shrugged and I sighed. He’s right but I’m not sure how to proceed. I always had Mia, or I didn’t care. I care about Ryley and her son. There is more to lose if I f\*ck this up.

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Chapter Forty Nine

288 Nouchers

“I’ll figure it out. Now, what’s up?” I asked him.

“I know your parents are arriving this afternoon but Alpha Dorian Woods from the Evergreen Pack is asking for your assistance with rogue attacks,” Luca explained.

“And why ask me for help?” I questioned. Alpha Dorian has a fairly large pack. It’s my understanding he joined packs with the Aurora Mountain pack.

“He said the rogue attacks are escalating and more calculating than normal attacks. And he’s hoping a second set of eyes will help eradicate the problem.”

“Fine. Tell him I’ll meet with him tomorrow afternoon.” I breathed out. It must be bad if a strong alpha like Dorian is asking for help. Luca gave me a nod, before standing up from his seat.

“Before you go, can you change the menu for tonight’s dinner? Ryley and Channing are coming to have dinner with us.” I asked him, as I signed into my computer. I didn’t need to look at him to know he was wearing a smirk.

“You got it,” he said before I heard the door close. I leaned back and let out a breath. Now I just have to handle my mother this evening. No pressure. Dating is hard. The mate bond makes this so much easier.

I was buried in my work when the door to my office was thrown open. I didn’t have to look up to know it was my mother. I love her but she is very demanding and over the top. She’s an alpha’s daughter and you can tell.

“Son, this is not the greeting I was expecting,” She scoffed and I sighed.

“Sorry, Mom, but I do have work to get done,” I said as she came

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Chapter Forty Nine

298 Vouchers

around the desk.

“Fine, just give me a hug and I’ll forgive you,” She demanded. I closed my eyes before rolling them. I didn’t need her to see that. I stood up and hugged

her. My father had taken a seat in a chair in front of my desk. He was holding in a snicker.

"Dad, good to see you," I said after my mother let me go.

"Enough small talk. I want to hear all about this woman, Aspen has been telling us all about," She said and she sat in my father's lap. Even being a grown man, this is still awkward.

"There's nothing to tell. Aspen is friends with her son. And she is working on the pack accounts." I answered, sitting back down.

"And she is single?" My mother questioned.

"She is."

"And you two are together?" She pushed. My mother was anything but subtle.

"We are friends."

My father interrupted her before she could ask me any more questions about Ryley.

"And what is this business with the Shadow Moon pack?"

"That's handled. But how the hell did you find out about that?" I asked him, confused.

"I was alpha, son. Alpha Phil's father, Alpha Mel called him. He didn't want whatever happened to start a war." My father explained.

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Chat Forty-Nine

288 Vouchers

"Well, there isn't going to be a war unless someone from the pack hurts Ryley or Channing."

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## Chapter Fifty

### Ryley

I buried myself in work so I wouldn't have to think about meeting Blake's parents at dinner. My stomach twisted into knots just thinking about what they will think of me. Which is ridiculous. I haven't cared what people thought of me in a long time, but I want his parents to like me. And now it was time to leave my office to go get ready, but I was far from being ready to get ready.

What the hell do I even wear to something like this? And what is this? If I wasn't secretly in love with him, I wouldn't care. I shouldn't care. It's not like we can be together and have this big happy family.

"It's not a secret and we could if you would just tell him how you feel." Lily

scoffed. I ignored my wolf. I know what she wants and I feel guilty enough about not being able to give it to her. But she wasn't there. She doesn't know that pain, and I never want her to.

I walked out of the pack house after locking up my office. My personal life may be a mess but at least I haven't found any more missing money. If this keeps up, I'll be done here before the summer is over.

"And how do you think leaving here will help? Channing will miss everything he has here and so will you. Distance won't make those feelings go away, Ryley." My wolf scolded me as I walked into the house. The boys were sitting on the couch watching a movie. I didn't answer my wolf. Deep down I knew she was right but I didn't want to admit it.

"I didn't think I'd find you two home," I said, walking into the living room.

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Chapter Fifty

288 Vouchers

"I had some schoolwork to finish." Channing shrugged.

"And I didn't want to be home alone," Aspen said.

"Okay. Well, you two have an hour before you have to get ready for dinner." I told them and they both nodded, keeping their eyes on the TV. Boys. I thought as I made my way to my bedroom to shower and find something to wear. When I was done getting ready, I wasn't sure about what I was wearing. My hair was curled and my makeup was light. The dress I chose was crimson. It was tight and the skirt fell below my knees. It was high-waisted and the top hung off one shoulder. I paired it with black heels. But now, looking in the mirror, I was thinking it was too much.

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"Mom, come on, we are going to be late," Channing yelled. I took a deep breath and one last look in the mirror before grabbing my purse and leaving my bedroom.

"Da\*n," Aspen whistled as I walked down the stairs.

"It's too much, isn't it?" I questioned, stopping halfway down.

"Not enough." He grinned. Channing smacked him in the chest.

"Mom, you look nice. Now, come on. You don't want to be late?" I took another deep breath before walking down the stairs. Aspen opened the door and I locked it when we were all on the porch.

We all walked together and the closer we walked to the pack house, the more my stomach knotted. My palms were clammy and my heart was pounding in



my chest. I've been in meetings with very powerful people but I've never been this nervous before.

"Then handle it like a business meeting. You are going to go in there

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Chapter Fifty

288 Vouchers

and win these two over. You can do this Ryley," Lily exclaimed, giving me a pep talk. It's just a business meeting, nothing more. I can do this. I repeated to myself as I walked into the pack house. I followed behind the boys as we walked across the main floor to the dining room.

The moment my eyes met with Blake's the room stood still. He looked the same as always but he stole my breath as I watched him, watching me.

Everyone else faded away as I made my way to the head table where Blake was now standing.

"Grandma, Grandpa, this is Channing and his mom, Ryley," Aspen introduced us, pulling my attention away from Blake.

"Alpha and Luna Orion, it's very nice to meet you both." I held out my hand and Luna Orion pulled me in for a hug.

"It's so nice to finally meet you. I've heard so much about you and your son from Aspen." She exclaimed. She pulled away, just enough to look me up and down.

"And please call me, Elizabeth." She gave me a warm smile and I returned it.

"This is my mate, Blair," she introduced her husband.

"It's nice to meet you, Alpha Blair," I reached out and shook his hand.

"Blair, please. It's nice to meet you, young lady." He smiled. Blake and his father looked so much alike. But he shared his mother's amber eyes.

"Have a seat, dinner will be served soon," Blair said. Blake sat at the head of the table with his father and mother seated to his left. I sat on the other side of Blake with the boys.

A server came by to fill the glasses with water and to take our drink

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order before dinner. I've been served on before at a pack house, but it has always felt weird to me. And right now is no different.

I stuck with water so I didn't make a fool out of myself in front of the former Alpha and Luna. It was bad enough that Blake witnessed me drunk.

“So, Ryley, what do you do for a living?” Blair asked, taking a sip of his whiskey.

“I’m a forensic accountant. Blake hired my firm and that’s why I’m here.” I answered. The boys were snickering about something beside me as I took a sip of my water.

“And have you found anything?” He questioned.

“Dad, we can talk business later,” Blake scolded.

“I have, and I’m sure Blake will forward you the reports,” I answered politely. I noticed his mother was staring at me intently.

“Ryley, you don’t have a mark,” Elizabeth said.