

## Chapter 41 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

When Alaia took charge this morning at breakfast, I was so proud, and more than a little turned on. I would have never expected the shy and timid girl who walked into her dad's office that day to become the strong, commanding Luna she now was.

And I will admit there was a bit of possessiveness when she placed her hands on Matt.

I knew that he would never move on her and that her heart belonged to me, but the two of them had a connection and bond that no one could ever break. I wanted to be selfish and keep her all to myself.

The sound of the guys walking into my office pulled me out of my thoughts.

"I never thought a tiny little thing like bean could be so scary, but damn. I'll think twice before I get into a fight with anybody ever again," Kade joked.

"She made me break. I've never done that before, and she made me snitch like I was a little kid," replied Matt.

I laughed a bit before I tried to reason with him. "Alaia was in full-blown Luna mode, Matt. There was nothing you could have done, so don't worry about it. I know you wouldn't rat me out to anyone else."

We laughed for a little while longer about all being chastised like we were kids again before we moved on to the topic of the day: Francesca.

"Okay, Matt. I know this is not your favorite thing to do, but I need you to get Francesca here. Preferably today. She knows that Kade hates her, and she may still think I'm close to death, being that no one has seen her around since the bonfire, so you're up."

"How do you suggest I 'get her here?' We've never gotten along either, man."

"Doesn't matter, she's not marked, so she'll do whatever you want her to do."

Matt groaned when I said that. “I hate this shit. What’s going to happen when I meet my mate? She’s going to think I was just running through women for sport instead of waiting for her.”

“Everyone who knows you knows that isn’t true, Matt. I obviously don’t expect you to do anything with her. Just convince her to come to the packhouse. Once she’s here, I’ll take over.”

“You know I’ll do whatever you need me to do, Xander. I just wanted it on the record that I’m being used like a piece of meat. That’s all.” Matt flashed his signature smile, and I knew Francesca would be putty in his hands.

“Cool. So, while you’re out, Kade and I will be downstairs in the basement having a chat with Alexi, or whoever he claims to be today. I want nothing more than to crush his skull, but for Alaia, I’ll at least hear him out.”

“And what exactly is the plan when Francesca arrives?”

“I’m still working on it. Just link me when you are on your way back to the house so I can make sure everything is set.”

“Fine. I’ll head out now. I have no idea where she is, so I’ve got to go track her down.”

“Happy hunting!”

Now to deal with Alexi.

\*\*\*

Alexi POV

It had been a couple of days since I asked Alaia to help me kill Max, and I still hadn’t gotten an answer. I knew it was a lot to ask of someone, but I also knew it was the only way out of this mess. It would be tough to no longer be a werewolf, but it was better than the alternative.

When Max took control, I was a spectator in my own body, with no say over what went on. Nobody should have to live like that. Luckily, since Alaia suppressed Max, I’d regained all of the memories from when I was blacked out those three weeks. Now I knew everything that went on, and I could help to make sure it was done for good. I could survive as a human. And at least I would be able to see my pack again. That was all I really want.

I heard footsteps coming down the corridor, and soon my cell was being opened.

When Kade stepped in, I admit I was happy to see him. We’d become closer since I’d been here, and it was good having someone to talk to.

Then I saw something I thought I’d never see again. Xander stepped in behind Kade, looking even more pissed off than usual. This was not going to end well for me.

“Morning, Alexi. How are you feeling today?” Kade asked.

“Uhh, I’m good, thanks.”

I never took my eyes off Xander. He was going to kill me, I could feel it, and I at least wanted to see it coming.

A tense silence filled the air before Xander pulled up a chair and sat down. He leaned forward slightly, resting his forearms on his knees before he spoke.

“Alexi, I’m not going to sugar coat any of this. I want you dead. How you die is inconsequential, really, so long as your death comes at my hands. But my Luna wants you alive. She wants you to be happy. Now, unlike some people in this room, I actually care about her feelings and would never do anything that would hurt her. So, I won’t kill you today or tomorrow. But if you are ever a part of any other scheme to take her away from me, there isn’t a place on this earth you can hide that I won’t find you. And I will kill you, slowly and painfully, and I’ll enjoy every single second of it. I promise you this, on my honor.”

It felt like the temperature in the room had dropped thirty degrees.

Xander held eye contact with me the entire time he spoke, and I knew he meant every word he said. His alpha aura was thick in the air, and I had no choice. I had to submit. “Yes, Alpha.”

“Good. Now that’s out of the way, tell me how all this started and how you were able to use dark magic. Who is the witch that was helping you?”

I knew this question would come, and no matter what I did, I knew I would have to give answers eventually. So, I opened my mouth and told my story.

“I used to mess around with a chick named Victoria. We started hooking up right around my eighteenth birthday. She hated Alaia. Probably because she could tell that I was drawn to her even when I was trying to deny it to myself. Anyway, her best friend is a witch. Her name is Cora or something like that. After the challenge, I went to Victoria and asked for her help. I told her that I wanted to make Alaia suffer for rejecting me, and she was all too happy to help.”

Xander growled as he listened to me. Admittedly, it wasn’t my proudest moment, but I wasn’t going to lie about any of this anymore.

“So, you lied and said Alaia rejected you when it was the other way around? And how exactly were you two planning on making her suffer?”

Here it was—the moment I had been dreading.

“We were going to kill you . . .”

“Damn, you’ve got balls. I’ll give you that.” Xander was way too calm to have just heard that someone was planning to kill him. It was a creepy type of calm. But I continued with the story.

“So, I told her my plan, and she got me the spell I needed to transport my aura anywhere I wanted without having to actually be there. That’s how I was able to talk to Alaia that day at the training grounds.”

“You know you scared the shit out of her when you did that, don’t you?”

“Yeah, I know. I was just pissed off and hurt. I didn’t mean to scare Alaia like that. And using the spell was actually how Max had the chance to take over. It was like it opened the door to him that I couldn’t close. That’s when I decided to stop and just accept that she was gone for good. I mean, she immediately ran to another man for comfort, then left with him. That was all I needed to convince me. But Max refused. That was when he took control. He told Victoria that we were going to move forward with torturing Alaia. She gave Max a poison that would make Alaia paranoid. She’d think you were cheating on her or plotting against her or something like that.

“Victoria was on board with this because a crazy Alaia is a miserable one. And then she’d probably leave you, which would destroy her even more. Max liked the plan because it would drive a wedge between the two of you, giving him the chance to move in and take her back.”

Calm Xander was gone. His eyes were now jet black, and he was seething with rage, hearing all of the plotting that went on behind his back.

I looked over at Kade to see if I should keep going, and he nodded his head. So, I took a deep breath and continued.

“So, Victoria found some omega to sneak into Aaron’s alpha ceremony and slip the poison in Alaia’s drink. I guess that’s when her wolf kicked in, and you guys found out that something was up. Victoria and Max were pissed, and I was being pushed further and further away from the helm. I was starting just to get bits and pieces of consciousness, followed by long periods of being blacked out. Around that time, Max decided that my fake plan to kill you was now a real one. He needed you gone so that he could have Alaia. Obviously, Victoria wasn’t going to help with that part, so he told her that he didn’t want her implicated in any of this. She needed to lay low until you were dead, and then they could finish off Alaia before starting their lives together.

“Victoria then recruited her sister, Francesca, and she took it from there. She was the one who had the waiter poison you at the Luna ceremony, but she didn’t know that it would kill you. She just thought it would weaken you so the rogues could come in and take Alaia. Victoria kept that part a secret. Soooo, yeah. That’s pretty much it.”

The room filled with an uncomfortable silence.

Xander looked at me for a few more moments before he stood up and walked out of the cell.

When he didn’t come back, I looked over to Kade and asked, “He’s going to kill me, isn’t he?”

“I can’t say for sure, but . . . yeah. Probably.”

He then walked out as well, before locking me in.

Well, I can’t really say that I blame him.

\*\*\*

Matt POV

I’m a tracker and a damn good one at that, but how am I supposed to find a chick who thinks she’s murdered her alpha?

For all I know, she’s left the country, and Xander wants me to get her back to the house today.

I remembered that she used to hang around with another girl named Shelly sometimes, so I figured I would start there. She was also unmarked, so I should have been able to get something out of her. I walked into the common room and looked around. It was full of younger wolves playing video games or just sitting around talking. I found Shelly sitting on some guy’s lap, whispering in his ear.

I hated to be a cock block, but duty called.

“Hey Shelly, how’s it going? I haven’t seen you around here in a while.”

I walked over and plopped down on the couch beside her and the poor guy she was with and flashed a smile at her.

She blushed a deep red and swallowed the lump in her throat before she shuddered. “H-Hi, Gamma. It’s good to see you.”

“Just call me Matt. We’re friends, right?”

She tucked a strand of bleached blonde hair behind her ear and sat up straight, thrusting her chest out toward me.

Yep, this confirmed it. I definitely preferred brunettes.

“Sure, Matt, I’d love to be friends with you.”

“What the fuck, man?”

I figured I should probably let the guy off the hook a bit, so he didn’t feel completely emasculated.

Dude, just chill out. I just want to ask her a few questions. I’ll give her right back.

What do you mean ‘chill out?’ This is my girlfriend, and she’s fucking flirting with you like I’m not even here.

I didn’t have time for this shit; I already didn’t want to be here in the first place.

Listen, you’re going to calm down and relax. As I said, you’ll get her right back in five minutes—hopefully, less. Don’t fuck with me on this, or you’ll have bigger problems than your whore of a girlfriend flirting with guys in front of you.

I didn’t want to pull rank, but I was the third in command, and he needed to respect that.

He finally nodded, and I turned my attention back to Shelly, who was suggestively licking her cherry red lips at me.

“Wanna take a walk with me real quick? I promise I’ll bring you right back.”

Another smile had her on her feet and clinging to my arm in a flash.

“I’ll go anywhere you want me to. Just lead the way.”

Damn, I felt like some type of high-class prostitute or something. I mouthed sorry to her boyfriend before I turned and walked out of the room with Shelly following closely behind.

Laughter broke out in the room once we rounded the corner. That poor guy was never going to hear the end of this, but I had to do what I had to do.

As soon as we were outside, I stopped and turned around. Shelly was so damn close that she almost walked right into my chest, but I sidestepped before she could make contact. I already didn’t want to take her from her boyfriend, and I really didn’t want to send her back to him covered in my scent. She was staring up at me with a creepy-ass smile on her face. I needed to get this over with and get the hell away from her.

“Shelly?”

She didn’t answer; she just continued to smile and twirl her hair around her fingers.

“Shelly?”

She finally heard me and jumped back a bit. “Sorry, handsome, I guess I was daydreaming. What did you want to talk about?”

I had lost all patience with this whole thing, so I just ripped the band-aid off. “Where is Francesca?”

She frowned when she heard my question. “Why are you looking for her when you have me right here? I’m much better than she could ever be.” She made a move forward to wrap me in a hug, but again, I sidestepped.

She frowned once more, so I gave her my most innocence smile and said, “I just need to talk to her. Please?”

She moaned out loud as she fought off a shiver. And I’m also pretty sure that I’d just caught the scent of her arousal.

Gross.

“Oh, well, she’s in her apartment in Jade City. She moved there a couple of weeks ago. I can text you the address if you give me your number.”

“Can you just tell me? I’m sure I’ll remember.”

Smile.

“747 Oak View Place, Apartment 29.”

“Thanks, Shelly, I’ll see you around.”

I quickly turned and walked away, not even waiting for a response. I felt terrible for leaving her dazed, confused, and, no doubt, crazy horny, but that was her boyfriend’s problem now.

Xander owed me big time for this shit.

FORTY-THREE | VIVID DREAMS

## Chapter 42 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

Matt had found Francesca and was now on the way to get her. I have to admit that I found it hilarious how pissed he was with his encounter with Shelly. Matt was the calmest of the trio by far; usually, nothing could rile him up. But, apparently making him flirt with random females that he had no desire to spend real time with was the exception to that rule. It was still funny, though.

Anyway, as soon as he found his mate, this little advantage of ours would be gone, so we needed to use it while we still could.

I was lying down on the couch in my office when Kade walked in. Since he had been taking care of everything for the pack the last few weeks, I didn't say anything. "Shouldn't you be over here doing some paperwork or something? Your businesses aren't going to run themselves," he said as he sat down at my desk.

"You're right; they aren't. But that's what you're here for."

"Not really, no."

"I've got to figure out what to do with Alexi, and Francesca, and whoever that Victoria bitch is. They threatened the wellbeing of my mate and tried to kill me, and somehow, they are all still breathing. Add to that, I've got to find the best way to announce to the pack and my mother that we have a pup on the way, without them smothering Alaia to death. So, for now, contracts and permits can wait a few days. Besides, if shit hits the fan, my dad can always step in to cover for me."

"Alright. So, what have you got so far?"

"As much as it pains me to say this, I'm not going to hurt Alexi. You guys were right, he did a lot of stupid shit, but nothing he actively took part in was worth dying over. Alaia should find a way to help get rid of his wolf if she chooses to go that route."

"He thinks you're going to kill him."

"I know. Let's keep it that way for the time being. I deserve to have a little fun, too."

"And what about the sisters?"

"Oh, both of those bitches are going to die. I'm just working on the when and how." There was no way they were going to get away with this. Especially Francesca. I had warned her, and still, she didn't listen.

"You sure that's what you want to do? Killing rogues is one thing, but killing two likely psychotic and obsessed sisters for revenge is totally different."

I sat up and looked Kade in the eye. "You think this is about revenge? After everything that they did, all the lives that were put in danger because of them, you think I'm just after revenge?" I couldn't believe he thought that low of me. "It's my job to protect this pack. They threatened my life, the life of your Luna, and our future alpha. Not to mention all the warriors who could have been hurt when the rogues attacked, or when you guys went to rescue Alaia. This isn't about revenge. It's about neutralizing a threat. No one threatens this pack, Kade."



I could see that my words had an impact on him. “I apologize, Xander. I didn’t mean any disrespect; I just wanted to be sure your head was in the right place on this. I’m behind you 100%.”

“Good. Now, do you think we could get Alexi to find Victoria for us? I don’t think Matt would be cool with us pimping him out a second time on this.”

Kade roared with laughter. “I was really looking forward to seeing it, though. And if Alexi doesn’t want to help, there’s always me. I’m slightly offended that I haven’t been objectified as part of this operation yet.”

“You’re a good man, Kade. I guess we’ll just have to wait and see if your services will be needed or not.”

\*\*\*

### Alaia POV

After breakfast, I went and found Cassie for some girl time. I hadn’t seen her or little Sophie in almost a month, and I missed them terribly. When I got to her cottage, I found her outside planting flowers in her garden while Sophie chased a puppy in the yard.

“These are beautiful, Cassie. You really have a gift.”

“Thank you, Alaia. I love gardening and having the scent of fresh flowers around the house. It really brings me peace. So, how are you feeling today?”

“Can’t complain. I’m back home, and Xander is awake, so I really couldn’t ask for anything more.”

Cassie stepped closer and lowered her voice before she said, “No, how are you really feeling?”

She then looked down at my belly then back at my face before she smiled.

She knew I was pregnant, but I hadn’t told her yet. If one of the guys had told, I’d make them pay for sure. “How did you know? Who told you?”

“Well, you just confirmed it, babe. But first of all, you smell different. I guess it’s a mix of you and Xander in a way, but you smell like cinnamon rolls. I’m actually kinda jealous, when I was pregnant with Sophie, I smelled like hotdogs.”

I had to laugh at that. Nobody wanted to smell like hotdogs for sure.

“Second, your already flawless skin is glowing and third . . . I see your bump.” She shrugged her shoulder and went back to her gardening while I took a seat beside her in the grass.

“Shit, I thought I was covering it up pretty well. We are going to tell the pack soon, but we were just taking some time to celebrate together before we involved everyone else.”

“I get it. But you’ve maybe got a few more days before your belly will be huge. Pups grow crazy fast in the last three months, so you may want to make your announcement here quickly.”

“I’ll do that. So how have you been? I’m sorry I haven’t been by to check on you since I got back.”

“Alaia, it’s not like you were away on vacation. You were kidnapped, sweetie. It’s not your job to come check on me. We’re fine. You just focus on making sure your mate and your pup are good.”

She was right, but I still didn’t want to forget about my friends. They mattered to me, too, and I wanted them always to know that.

Just then, Sophie and her puppy ran over, and both jumped in my lap.

“Hi, Luna! Where have you been? Is Matt with you? He never said if I could keep him or not. This is my puppy, Coco. You wanna pet her?”

She hit me with a barrage of questions, and I had trouble keeping up.

“Sophie, baby, give the Luna some space. I know you’re excited to see her, but you can’t jump on her like that, okay?”

“I just wanted to play with her.”

Sophie hung her sweet little head and pouted. I was this close to scooping her up in a hug before Cassie looked over and stopped me.

“Don’t do it. Do not get fooled by the cute face and pout, or you are going to be in a world of trouble when that cinnamon roll of yours is done baking.”

“Cinnamon rolls? I love cinnamon rolls! Can I have one, too?”

Cassie and I laughed before she said, “Maybe later, much, much later.”

Sophie looked at the both of us confused before she got up and took off with Coco again.

I hung around for a bit longer before it became clear that both Sophie and I needed to go down for a nap. I said my goodbyes and kissed Sophie’s chubby cheeks before I headed for home. I took the long way back to the house, enjoying the scenery and sounds of my pack out enjoying their lives. It really was a beautiful area, and I was proud to call it my home.

While walking up the driveway, I saw Matt hop in his car and start it up. I waved at him, causing him to slowly drive over before he rolled his window down.

“Hey, bean. What are you up to?”

“I just came from visiting Cassie and Sophie. She asked about you, you know.” I raised my eyebrows at him before I bent over laughing.

“Very funny, bean. You have no idea how much this sucks. Xander is actively using me for my body; I feel so dirty.” He rubbed his hand across his chest like he was trying to wipe it clean.

“You’re such a goofball, Matt. Where are you heading?”

“I told you, Xander is using me for my body. I’ve got to go out and seduce Francesca into coming back with me.”

“Yuck, that does suck. Well, good luck with it, and make sure to take a long hot shower when you get back to wash off the smell of skank. I’d hate to have to avoid my best friend just because he stinks.”

“Thanks for the advice, bean. I’ll talk to you later.” He rolled up his window before he offered a quick wave and sped away.

Poor guy.

\*\*\*

My bed was calling my name, and I needed a nap more than my next breath.

I walked past Xander’s office and ignored my urge to go in and check on him. He was an Alpha and didn’t need his Luna hovering over him as he worked.

But I did mindlink him.

Xander, baby?

Yes, little one?

Don’t overdo it today, okay? If you feel yourself getting tired, there is no shame in you taking a small break.

Alaia . . .

No, Xander. I just got you back, and if you don’t take care of yourself, then I will. Please, do this for me.

Alright. I won't push too hard. Are you going for a rest? You sound tired, beautiful.

I am. I'm heading to the room now. Talk to you later.

I walked into the room and stripped down to my bra and panties. Since I'd been pregnant, I found that I could only sleep in my underwear or nothing at all, but I was sure Xander didn't mind. I slipped under the covers, and as soon as my head hit the pillow, I was pulled down into dreamland.

\*\*\*

I am at your mercy, Mistress. Do with me as you please.

Holy shit! Was that Xander as a submissive? This dream was going to be so good!

On your knees now, hands behind your back.

This was like watching a super sexy movie, but it was starring my yummy man and me. I had never had such a vivid dream before, but I definitely wasn't complaining.

I was wearing black thigh-high boots with a lacy thong and matching bra. My hair was straightened and flowed down my back, and I wore smoky eyeshadow and deep red lipstick.

Damn, I look hot as a dom.

Xander did as I had said and kneeled in the middle of the floor and placed his hands behind his back.

I walked a circle around him and just took in his sinfully scrumptious body. Oh, I was about to dominate the hell out of him. You will only address me as 'Mistress' or 'Ma'am,' understand?

Yes, Mistress.

Hehehehe, this was awesome!

What is your safe word?

Amethyst.

That made me pause. What was Xander playing at?

Why Amethyst? I just had to know.

If it gets to the point where you may get me to break, it will likely be Amethyst in control. So, I'd just talk directly to her.

Was that a smirk? He was smirking at me!

Ohh, dream Xander was being a dick, huh? Well, we'd see about that.

I grabbed a handful of his curls and pulled his head back, making him look me in the eyes. Get on the bed, now. On your back. Once he was positioned, I opened my bag of tricks and grabbed some handcuffs and a pair of silk scarves. I placed the cuffs around his wrists and attached them to the bedposts. Then, I took the scarves and tied his ankles to the lower posts. I purposely made the bindings extra tight, making him wince. It was only a dream anyway, so why not?

I then flipped my bag over and dumped it out on the bed. I saw a small leather whip that looked interesting, along with a ball gag, some nipple clamps, a cock ring, and a small compact vibrator. I didn't know what I would do with all of it, but I took all the toys and lined them up side-by-side on the bed.

Xander's eyes widened a bit when he saw what I had waiting for him. Do you know what you're doing with all that, little one?

I grabbed the whip and quickly flung it across Xander's inner thigh.

It's Mistress! Thwack! Or Ma'am! Thwack!

Xander hissed at the contact, which made me smile. I needed to dream like this more often.

I looked over my other tools of torture and picked up the nipple clamps.

I attached them tightly to Xander's chest and gave them a gentle tug.

How does that feel, baby?

They feel good, Mistress.

Just good? I asked, giving them another tug.

Ahh, they feel perfect.

I could see that. Even in my subconscious, Xander's dick was pleasure-giving perfection, and it was standing to attention from the pressure I was applying to his nipples.

I picked up the cock ring and looked it over. It didn't look like it would fit around Xander's girth, but it's my dream, and it's what I want. So, on it went. I shimmied it down his shaft and around his balls. It was perfect.

Do you really feel that I need that, Ma'am?

Did I think he needed it? Not at all. Xander could go for hours and never miss a beat. But I was curious. You need whatever I say you need. Are you questioning me?

He smirked. Again! What is up with dream Xander? It looked like he needed to be taken down a peg or two.

I pulled my thong off and threw it across the room. Xander Black was about to be my sex toy, and I was going to wear him out. I then climbed up the bed until I was hovering over his exquisite face. Eat! I sat on Xander's face, and he began to ravage my honeypot.

It seemed like dream Xander's tongue is just as skilled as the real one. He slowly swiped his tongue along the edges of my slit again and again.

My body was tight with anticipation; I needed him inside me desperately.

It was like he knew what I needed because he did the exact opposite. He moved from his deliciously slow licking to a gently suckling on my bud.

I dipped my back at the contact, pushing myself further into his waiting mouth. I began to wind and grind my hips on his face, trying to increase the friction he was so determined to withhold from me.

I felt a vibration in his chest and realized that he was laughing. He was enjoying torturing me. Just when I was going to get up and tear into him, he plunged his tongue deep inside my core and began to lap up all my juices.

I could feel that his face was covered in my essence, and that made me even wetter. I picked up on the rhythm of his tongue and began to roll and bounce my hips along with it.

He was eating me like I was his last meal, and he wanted to savor every salty, sweet drop.

I reached down and buried both my hands into his curls and held on tight, causing a deep, sexy growl to bubble up from his chest. The muscles in my body wound tighter, and I knew he was close to pushing me over the edge. My thighs clamped down on the sides of his head, and my breathing labored. I was so close.

Then he stopped. He fucking stopped!

When I realized what had happened, I pushed myself back and looked down at him.

Untie me, little one. Now.

What the fuck was happening? I watched myself crawl off the bed and remove the scarves from his ankles before moving up and undoing both his wrists.

As soon as he was free, Xander was off the bed and had lifted me up in the air.

My legs went around his waist as he wrapped his massive hands around my ass to hold me firmly in place.

He licked the seam of my ear before he whispered, “Now I’m going to show you who’s really in charge.” With those words, he slammed himself into me. This man pounded into me with purpose, clearly establishing his dominance.

The sounds of his balls slapping against my skin were ringing through the room, mixing with the animalistic moans and groans coming from our mouths.

I had wanted him inside of me, and now I had every single inch. Tears rolled down my face as he pulled out as far as he could then slammed me back down, penetrating my inner core with every thrust.

You’re such a good girl for Daddy, aren’t you, baby?

Y-Yes, Daddy.

He started walking toward the wall, and soon my back was pressed up against it. This just gave him the leverage to pump into me even harder. Sweat slid off my body, and my eyes rolled all the way back. He had never fucked me like this before, and now I was addicted. He brought a hand up and wrapped it around my neck, applying gentle pressure.

You’re going to take all this dick, baby. It’s all for you.

My back slammed into the wall, knocking the little bit of air in my lungs out in sharp spurts. White spots began to cloud my vision before I started to cum. I squirted all over Xander. He was now covered in my nectar from head to toe. I felt myself clench down on his dick, making him squeeze a little tighter on my neck and pound into me even harder. My cervix was taking a severe beating, and it made me cream on him all over again.

Good girl. Cum for daddy. Give me all of it!

My body was becoming jelly. I was sure I was going to pass out.

No! Open your eyes. Look at me, little one!

I snapped my eyes open and latched on to Xander’s.

He was covered in sweat, and I just had to taste him. I leaned forward and licked the side of his face from his jaw to his temple.

He moaned, then before I could register it, leaned forward and buried his teeth in my mark.

White-hot heat shot through my body straight to my crotch, and I gushed all over him again. Instead of the dancing white spots, this time, they were black, and they were moving in to take me out. I was done; this man had thoroughly fucked me into submission.

A few more intense pumps of his hips had him roaring in my ear. You are so FUCKING TIGHT, baby. I love how well you milk this dick. He came with such force that it felt like a fire hose being opened inside me. I felt every spurt of his seed as it coated my inner walls and began to slowly slip out.

My lungs were an inferno, I was drenched in sweat and the mixture of our juices, and my bones felt like jelly. I was spent. This man had used my body so thoroughly that all I could do now was sleep.

My body went completely limp, and the darkness took me.

\*\*\*

A bright light pulled me from my slumber, and I shot up in bed.

Looking down, I saw that my mattress was absolutely soaked in my juices. Their scent filled the entire room.

“Best. Dream. Ever!” I said out loud.

“I’ll have to agree with you on that, little one.”

My eyes darted over to the seating area, and I saw Xander sitting there, eyes full of lust, staring at me. “H-Hey, I didn’t know you were in here.”

He stood up slowly and began to walk over. I felt like the prey about to be taken out by a predator.

“I wasn’t originally. I was in my office working. That was before you somehow mindlinked me and pulled me into your dirty dream.”

Holy shit! I did not do that. “You saw that?”

“You were a very sexy dom, baby. I loved watching you work. But we both know who’s really in charge, now, don’t we?”

My mouth went dry. I tried to swallow before I whispered: “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. And for the record, Daddy is willing to fuck you into submission whenever you need me to.” He leaned down and licked my mark, making my entire body shiver. Then he stood up and headed for the door.



“I’ve got work to finish. See you later, Mistress.”

I threw myself back on the bed.

Ugh!

Damn these powers!

Damn these hormones!

And damn that delicious man of mine!

FORTY-FOUR | SLEEPING PILLS AND WOLFSBANE

## Chapter 43 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Matt POV

It took me a little over an hour to reach Jade City and find Francesca’s apartment. Of course, there had to be traffic the entire way, making an already miserable trip even worse.

The things I did for my pack.

I stood outside Apartment 29, trying to pump myself up for what was behind the door. “Just get it over with, Matt. You’re making it more than it has to be. Just knock and take it from there.”

I knocked on the door and waited a few seconds before I heard shuffling on the other side.

“Who is it?”

“It’s Matthew. Open up, Francesca.”

“M-Matthew? What are you doing here?”

Shit, she sounded nervous. I couldn’t get her to come with me if she wouldn’t open the door.

“I’ve been looking for you, babe. Please open the door so that I can see your face. I just want to know you’re okay.” Lies. I heard at least three deadbolts disengage before she cracked the door open and peeked out.

“Are you by yourself?”

“Of course I am, I want you all to myself.”

She looked apprehensive about letting me in.

On the one hand, I was the Gamma of the pack whose Alpha she thought she had murdered. On the other hand, I was Matthew Stone, and unmarked females could not resist a Stone man. Okay, it was showtime.

“Where have you been. I’ve missed seeing your gorgeous smile around the packhouse.” I ran my hands through my hair, making sure that my arms came up just high enough to lift my shirt and flash my abs.

When I noticed her looking, I gave her the brightest smile I could muster before I added, “Can I come in and sit with you for a bit? I just want to spend some time with my favorite girl.” I was going to hell for this for sure.

She blushed a deep red before she nodded her head and stepped back, opening the door for me.

When I walked in, I noticed that the place was completely bare. Francesca was basically squatting here. There was just a small TV on a milk crate streaming Netflix. Nothing else: no furniture, no decorations, no nothing.

This chick was hiding out for sure.

“Sorry it’s such a mess. I wasn’t expecting any company.”

“Don’t worry about it, princess. What do you say to a little Netflix and chill? If you go grab some blankets, I can make us a couple of drinks?”

Smile. Francesca bit her lip and quickly nodded her head. “Okay, yeah. That sounds perfect. The kitchen is right around the corner, and I’ll be right back.”

“Don’t take too long, okay?”

“Uh-huh . . . yeah, okay.”

I felt terrible for how flustered I was making her. But I was on a time crunch and needed to get this over with. I walked into the kitchen and grabbed two bottles of water from her fridge. I slipped a few extra-strength sleeping pills into one and shook it up, making sure it dissolved completely. There was no way I was going to try and drive all the way back home with some horny chick in my passenger seat. I’d probably crash trying to fight her off me. I then walked back to the living room and waited for Francesca to come back.

When she did, she looked like she was changing her mind about me being there.

I guess those couple of minutes being away from me had cleared her mind a bit.

“Matt, it’s cool that you came all this way to see me, but I don’t think this is a good idea. I think you should—”

I did the only thing I could think of and took off my shirt. Not my proudest moment, but she forced my hand. It was a hot day, and the trip had made me a little sweaty, which, in this case, worked to my advantage.

“Holy fuck!”

“I’m sorry, but it’s so hot in here, sweetie. I just need to cool off for a second. I can put this back on if it makes you uncomfortable,” I said while waving it in her direction.

Yes, I was fanning my scent straight at her head-on. I was pulling all the stops here.

“If you never wore clothes ever again, I’d be 100% cool with that.”

She walked over and ran her hands down my chest and traced my V-line.

I really wanted to puke on her, but I kept my cool. “Let’s save that for later. Come over here and sit with me.” I took the blankets she was holding and laid them out on the floor. When I sat down, I patted the spot next to me before she shyly walked over and joined me. “This is nice and cozy. Here, I grabbed you some water; you’re going to want to hydrate,” I told her while passing the bottle over.

Her jaw dropped when she picked up what I was insinuating. For a girl who got around as she did, I was actually surprised.

I brought my bottle to my lips and chugged it down, with Francesca eye-fucking me the entire time.

She then fumbled with her cap before turning the bottle up and guzzling the contents in one go.

This was going to be easier than I thought.

I smiled at my good fortune, but she took it as an invitation to pounce on me. Before I could fully react, she had straddled my lap and was grinding against me.

Nasty!

I placed my hands on her nonexistent hips and held firm, instantly stopping her dry humping session.

“W-Why’d you stop? I w-was just getting s-started,” she slurred.

“I just need to use the restroom real quick. Stay here; I’ll be right back.”

I rolled over and flipped her over onto her back before I jumped to my feet.

“I l-like it r-rough! You want to tie me up, s-sexy? M-Maybe spank me, I’ve b-been so b-bad.”

I grabbed my shirt from the floor and quickly walked to the bathroom, locking myself in.

Just a few more minutes, and she’d be knocked out, and I could finally go home.

Xander, I don’t know how you ever dealt with this chick, but this shit is not cool.

Have you got her? How long until you’re back?

I don’t know, maybe an hour? There was traffic on the way here, and the pills haven’t fully kicked in yet.

What pills? Wait, you drugged her?

Fuck yeah, I drugged her! Was I supposed to put her in a car with me while she was awake? She would be trying to suck me off before we even left the parking lot!

Laughter, Xander, was laughing at me now. I really wanted to kick his ass.

I’m glad this is all so funny to you. Now I’ve got to go and get your psychic bitch of an ex in the car without looking like some crazy kidnapper.

I heard even more laughter before I cut him off.

“Fucking Alphas . . .”

I placed my ear to the door, listening for any sign of life on the other side. When I was satisfied that Francesca was comatose, I opened the door and walked back to the living room only to get a very unwelcome surprise.

This chick was totally naked and spread eagle on the blanket.

Her mouth was wide open, and a thin stream of drool was sliding down her face.

“Oh, come on! Can I please catch a fucking break?”

I opened the front door and looked around to see if anyone was lingering in the parking lot. When it seemed clear, I walked back to Francesca and rolled her up in the blanket like a slutty burrito. I hoisted her up in my arms and carried her to the door, checking again to see if anyone was around. When I was satisfied that no one would see me and call the cops to report a kidnapping, I rushed over to my car and placed her in the back. I wasted no time before hopping into the driver’s seat, starting the vehicle, and speeding off.

I swear, if this bitch woke up before I made it home, I was burning everything down.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

I had intended to go out for a run with Alastair, but being pulled into Alaia's dream was a bit distracting. It was so real like it was actually happening. I could still taste her on my tongue, smell her on my body, and feel her in my hands.

I didn't mean to take charge of her fantasy, but I'm a Dom, and it's just what I do. Maybe one day, I would let her take full control, but today was not that day.

I was back in my office when I got the mindlink from Matt that he had found Francesca. Now it was time for me to get things ready for her arrival.

I still wasn't entirely sure what we were going to do with her once she got here, but what I did know was that this was her last stop. She wasn't leaving this place alive; I'd make sure of that.

I had to admit that I never thought things would come to this. Francesca was always obsessive, even before we slept together, but after three years of zero contact, you would think she would move on.

That just shows how crazy she really was, which made her a danger to my pack.

Matt, what's the status of things?

She's passed out in my backseat, and we're on the way back. There's no traffic, so we should be back in a little more than thirty minutes.

When you get here, take her down to the interrogation room. I'll be waiting for you there.

I'm not sure how long it's going to be until she wakes up, man. I gave her three sleeping pills.

I'll wake her up, don't worry about it. See you soon.

When I'd finished with Matt, I linked Kade to come to my office. I was starting to form a plan and needed his help.

He showed up a few minutes later with a huge sandwich and a smile on his face. "One of the new omegas has a thing for me. Every time I see her, she's giving me food. I could get used to this."

"Kade, that's what the omegas do. They cook, or they clean. She's doing her job, not trying to do you."

Kade's face dropped a bit before he shrugged a shoulder and bit into his sandwich.

"So, Matt is on his way back, and I've got an idea of how I need all this to go down. Matt's done his part, and now you're up."

"I'm ready, boss. What's the plan?"

\*\*\*

Matt POV

I made it back home in record time and pulled my car into the garage. I really didn't want the pack seeing me carrying a body around, even if she was still alive.

I pulled Francesca out the backseat and tossed her rolled-up form over my shoulder before I made my way down to the interrogation room in the basement. When I got there, Xander and Kade were waiting in the hall for me.

"You sure you didn't kill her, man? She looks pretty out of it," Kade stated.

"She was alive when I put her in the car, that's all I know."

Xander stepped up and lifted Francesca's head a bit so he could take a closer look. "She's alive. Let's just strap her into the chair and get started."

I walked in and saw the space was almost empty. There was a table with a bag on top of it in one corner and one chair in the middle of the room.

I propped her up in the metal chair before I remembered.

"So, just an FYI, she's naked under this blanket, guys."

"Why the fuck is she naked, Matt? What happened?"

"Listen! You assholes sent me into the fucking lion's den with nothing to protect myself. She was suspicious about me being there and was starting to shut down. I took things up a notch, and then she decided to get naked before the pills kicked in and she passed out. I wasn't going to take the time to get her dressed again, so I just rolled her up and brought her here."

"Matt, have an omega bring some sweats or something down here. Kade, get her dressed, then strap her to the chair."

Kade began to protest, but Xander quickly stopped him. "Matt has done more than enough, and she can't see me yet. That leaves you. Just do it."

I walked back upstairs and snagged the first omega I could and asked for the clothes. She brought me a gray sweatsuit before hurrying back to her cleaning. When I got back downstairs, the guys had Francesca lying in the middle of the floor, still wrapped up.

I passed the clothes over to Kade, who quickly unwrapped the blanket and shoved Francesca into them. He then lifted her into the chair before securing her ankles, torso, and hands with zip ties.

Xander walked over with a syringe filled with a thick brown liquid and passed it to Kade.

“What’s that?” I asked.

“It’s wolfsbane. This shit will absolutely wake her up. Kade, get her started, and I’ll be on the other side of the mirror.”

Once Xander was out of the room, Kade injected the wolfsbane directly into a vein on Francesca’s neck.

Within about ten seconds, she drew in a sharp breath and started screaming at the top of her lungs as the liquid burned through her system. She tried to thrash and kick, but because of the restraints, all she could do was move her head. Her eyes were wild as they darted around the room, trying to take in her surroundings. When they landed on me, realization finally struck, and she knew she had been set up.

Kade stepped in front of her, pulling her attention from me before he leaned down to her eye level.

“Rise and shine, Franny. It’s time we had a little chat about why you killed Alpha Xander. I’m going to ask you some questions, and if you even think about lying, I’ll shoot so much wolfsbane into your body you’ll be begging me to kill you. Do you understand me?”

Fat tears rolled down her face as she stared up at Kade, wide-eyed and terrified.

“Please, Beta . . . I did—”

“It’s Alpha now! You killed Xander, and now it’s my turn to return the favor.” He walked over to the table, opened the bag, and pulled out some pliers and a blow torch. He then stood in front of Francesca and lit the flame, running it over the pliers until they were red hot.

When he was satisfied with the temperature, he leaned over her and said, “Let’s have a little fun, shall we?” before he clamped down on her middle finger and snapped it in half.

Screams filled the room, echoing off the bare walls. The smell of Francesca’s burnt flesh permeated the air and made my stomach roll.

This was going to be a long night.

## Chapter 44 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Kade POV

The sounds of Francesca's screams were starting to drive me insane.

Matt stood watch in the corner of the room, never moving like he was told.

We wanted her to think that I was 100% in charge here, and no one else.

“So, if I'm correct, you had a run-in with the Luna before her welcome bonfire, didn't you?”

“No, no, no. I didn't. I was nice to the Luna. I just wanted to introduce myself.”

“Really? So, Kimmy Black is lying about the encounter in the dining hall?”

In her panicked state, she wasn't thinking clearly and not realizing that we already knew the answers to all the questions we were asking her. I was just letting her dig her own grave, and she was doing a damn good job.

“Yes! She's lying. I never said anything disrespectful to the Luna.”

“So, are you calling the Luna a liar as well?”

“Y-You spoke to her?”

“Of course, why wouldn't I?”

“But I thought the King of the Rogues had her . . .”

Gotcha, bitch. “And who told you that? If you had nothing to do with all of this, how would you know who took our Luna?”

Her eyes darted across the room, trying to land on anything that would help her out of this situation. “An omega. I heard them talking. I think it was them; they didn't like the way the Alpha was treating them. They said he was abusive and would sometimes call them to his quarters and rape them when he hadn't found his Luna. But even after she arrived, he didn't stop. It was the omegas, I swear.”



Came up with that right on the spot, huh? This chick really was crazy.

“So, the omegas who were being brutally raped by the Alpha were somehow able to contact the ‘King of the Rogues’ to have the Luna kidnapped?”

“Yes! They said that he wanted the Luna in exchange for killing the Alpha. When I found out, I was terrified, so I ran away. I couldn’t stay knowing what they had planned.”

“When did you find out?”

“Find out what?”

“That they were planning to kill the Alpha!?”

My outburst caused her to recoil in her chair. I believed that she really thought I was buying all her shit. “A-Afterwards. After Alpha Black was already poisoned, and the Luna was gone.”

I nodded my head, then walked back to the table, picking up another syringe.

“Do you remember what I said when I first woke you up about lying? Apparently, you didn’t understand me clearly. So here, I’ll show you.” I shoved the needle in her arm and pushed the wolfsbane into her system, causing her to scream out in agony. “I don’t like liars, Francesca. And I don’t like hurting you, but I will for as long as I have to until you tell me what I need to know.”

“Please, please, please, please, please . . . I’ll tell you . . .”

“So, I’ll start over with an easy one. Did you have anything to do with what happened to Alpha and Luna?”

Francesca held her head low and whispered, “Yes.”

“What part did you play?”

“I was in charge of finding the omega who did the actual poisoning. I gave him the vial and told him what to do. I also told the Rogue King details about the ceremony so they could take the Luna and kill her once they were done with her.”

“And why did you do all that?”

Francesca lifted her face, and I saw nothing but fury in her eyes. “Because she was a stupid little cunt who wasn’t worthy of sucking Xander’s dick, let alone run this pack. He was mine, and always would be. I wasn’t going to let some little girl come in and take what belonged to me!”

Well, I wasn’t expecting that.

“Every time, those fucking witches screwed things up for me. I had been working for years to get him to accept me. When we slept together, it was because I had used a spell on him. It was supposed to make him fall in love with me, but it didn’t fucking work, and the next day I was nothing to him, just like before! I was happy when that bitch was attacked at her brother’s Alpha ceremony. I wish she would have died there and never even came to our pack. I would have soothed Xander’s broken heart, and he would have had no choice but to love me. But no! She’s some special fucking wolf that isn’t affected by dark magic. So, we had to change tactics. I didn’t want him dead, just her so he could be mine.”

Wow.

“The Luna was pregnant. Your actions caused her to lose her pup. Our future Alpha.”

Obviously, a lie, but she didn't need to know that, and I wanted to see if she would finally show any signs of guilt or regret.

Francesca looked me in the eye before she threw her head back and started laughing hysterically. “Oh, that’s perfect. At least I finally get something out of this. I lost Xander, but she basically lost him twice!”

I was seething with rage listening to the way she tried to play Xander and Alaia. I would protect them with my life, and to her, their lives meant next to nothing.

I was done talking. Francesca had already confessed enough to justify what would happen next. “At the bonfire, Xander promised you that you would pray for death if you ever did anything to his Luna again. Do you remember?”

She scoffed and shrugged and shoulder. “Xander’s not fucking here anymore, now, is he?”

Just then, the door to the room burst open and in walked Xander, pure hate and ferocious rage rolling off him in waves. His eyes were jet black, his canines had extended, and his claws were protruding from his fingertips.

Alastair was taking control, and there was nothing anyone could do to stop him.

Francesca looked like she had seen a ghost. Her eyes were bulging from her head, and the cockiness that was once plastered on her face was replaced with sheer terror. Tears streamed down her face when she finally spoke. “Xander, my love. You’re alive? How are you alive? They said you couldn’t survive, that you wouldn’t survive. I’m so happy—”

She was cut off by Xander running toward her and shifting in midair. Alastair towered over Francesca’s seated form and snarled down at her.

“You were right, Francesca. Xander’s not here anymore. But Alastair is, and he’s much worse. Matt and I will step outside so the two of you can get better acquainted.”

As the door clicked behind me, I heard one final scream before I walked away, leaving Francesca to pay for her crimes.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

Standing behind that mirror watching Francesca made my blood boil. I could handle the lies about being an evil rapist abusing the omegas in my pack. My reputation was beyond reproach, no one would, nor could, ever believe something so insane. But to hear that she tricked me into sleeping with her? I knew that I was never attracted to her, but I still took her to bed. I never understood why, but afterward, I knew it would never happen again. And the way she spoke about Alaia, wishing her dead for no other reason than my heart belonging to her. She would have never stopped until my mate was gone, and I couldn't take that risk. But the biggest slap to the face was her joy at hearing that her actions had led to the death of my unborn child. Who could laugh at something like that? This woman was a monster that I had to save my pack from.

I made my way to the door of the room and tried to calm myself, but when I heard her say, "Xander's not fucking here anymore, now, is he?" All calm was out the window. She had no remorse, and she clearly never would.

When I walked in, I was livid. Never in my life had I wanted to kill more than I did at that moment.

And she dared to address me by my name and not my title, which was a blatant sign of disrespect. We were not friends or lovers. We were an Alpha and a member of his pack, nothing more.

I gladly took a step back and let Alastair take control. He was better suited for this, and she deserved the best torture and death I could provide. We didn't hear when Matt and Kade left the room; all of our focus was on the blubbering mess sitting before us.

The room, which previously smelled of cheap perfume, fear, and burnt flesh, now had the added scent of warm piss as a puddle quickly formed underneath her. I wanted her to know why she was about to die. I wanted the last words she ever heard to be those of her judgment. There would be no doubt how or why she ended up here.

Since Alastair obviously couldn't speak verbally, we mindlinked her instead.

You tried to kill my mate and my child, then lied about my relationships with my pack and used a spell to force me to sleep with you. And now you act as if I should be happy to see you?

"No, please, let me explain, Xander. I didn't mean for—"

Stop lying to me! I heard it all. And when I make a promise, I keep it. One of us isn't leaving this room alive. Shift! Now!

She looked at me, shocked, not understanding what I wanted from her.

You will shift into your wolf, or I will tear you to fucking bits right here and right now.

“Please, Xander. I’m not a warrior. I won’t survive one minute against you. I’m begging you, please, have mercy.”

Shift!

I used my alpha tone, and she had no choice but to comply.

Her transition was slow and painful. The wolfsbane was still pumping through her system, which made it almost impossible for her wolf to come forward. As her limbs changed to her wolf’s, the zip ties popped off, finally freeing her from the chair. She threw herself to the floor and writhed in pain, and her bones popped and broke before relocating themselves. When she was finally in her wolf form, I saw how pathetic she indeed was. Francesca was a small, frail, dirty brown, whose head barely came up to my chest. Her body shook violently, her head hung low, and her tail tucked between her legs.

Alastair began to circle around her, then snorted in disgust.

I can have her dead in five seconds. What’s the point in all this?

She didn’t just double-cross a man; she double-crossed a werewolf, an alpha. When she meets her end, it will be by the hand of that very alpha.

So be it.

Alastair lunged at Francesca, who tried to leap out of the way but wasn’t quick enough. He clamped on to her hind leg and shook his massive head, snapping it off entirely before spitting it out.

Francesca howled in pain as she looked down at her foot. There was no way she was making it out of this room alive, but if by some miracle she did, she would be forever disfigured.

While she was distracted, Alastair turned around, kicked out his foot, and made contact with her ribcage, hurling her into a wall.

Bones snapped from the blow, as well as the impact with the wall. It took her a few seconds to recover before she slowly stood on her three shaky legs.

When she tried to back into a corner to protect herself, he swiped his paw out across her face, stopping her in her tracks.

Her left eye was destroyed and began to ooze.

As Alastair's long claws moved downward, they ripped open her jaw, exposing her teeth and bone underneath.

Blood was pouring from her wounds and coating the floor, causing her to slip and slide from the lack of traction. She lowered her head in an attempt to concede the fight and save her life, but Alastair's fierce growl let her know that was in no way an option.

Xander, please—

Alastair cut her off by pouncing onto her back and biting down. With a swift and powerful shake of his head, he snapped her neck like a dry, brittle twig before dropping her lifeless body to the ground. He took a few steps back before allowing me to regain control and shift back into my human form.

Kade and Matt walked back into the room, passing me a pair of basketball shorts to throw on. "What was the point of having her shift? Alastair could have just taken her out as soon as he walked in," Kade asked.

"No one would question why she was killed, once the recording of her confessing becomes public. And there was no way she would win a fight against an Alpha, but I didn't want it said that I didn't at least give her a chance. Just going in and killing her while she's strapped to a chair wouldn't have been a fair fight, having her shift allowed her the best possible outcome."

I looked around the room, then down at myself, and saw that I was covered in blood. I would need to get cleaned up before Alaia saw me. I would let her know what happened, but she didn't need a visual.

"Can you two get this cleaned up? I had a hole dug outside the border that can be used. She lost the right to be buried amongst our pack on our land."

"I'm already on it, Boss," Matt assured me. "I have a couple of guys on the way down now to have the body discreetly removed, and the omegas will have it all cleaned up shortly after."

"Thanks. I hope you two understand that this isn't over yet. We still need to find Victoria and the witch. I think that since Victoria is one of Aaron's pack members, he could decide what happens to her, but the witch is fair game. Then we have to get rid of Max and settle on what will happen with Alexi."

"Yep, we've got it. We'll make sure this is all wrapped up soon."

The cleanup crew came into the room, and after addressing the three of us, they swiftly went to work.

I turned and walked out, making my way to my bedroom and shower. As the warm water began to wash the night away, my thoughts drifted to Alaia and my pup. It was time to make the announcement to the pack and look forward to our future, the future that Francesca tried so many

times to take away. Now her life was over, and Alaia and I were bringing a new one into the world.

That's what I called karma.

FORTY-SIX | BETTER THAN SEX

## Chapter 45 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

I could feel that Xander was stressed, or at the very least, he was upset, so I went to go and check on him. I found him standing in the shower, letting the water wash over him. How long he was there for I couldn't say, but judging by the lack of steam coming off the water, I would say it was a while.

I stood right at the door and called out to him. "Xander?"

I got no response. He had one arm propped on the shower wall, his eyes were closed, and his head was tilted down toward the floor. His mind was somewhere far away from here, and I needed it back.

"Xander? Can you hear me?"

When I again didn't get an answer, I stepped under the water and reached up to cup his face.

I was right about the water; it was freezing, and he didn't seem to notice at all.

When he finally registered my touch, his crystal blue eyes shot open, then focused down on me.

"Alaia, baby, what are you doing? We need to get you dried off and warm. The cold water isn't good for you and the baby."

But I didn't move. I stood firm and looked up at the man I loved.

"What happened, Xander? Why are you standing under a cold shower clearly lost in your own thoughts? What can I do?"

"It's been a long day, little one. I'm just a bit tired."

“Is this about Francesca? I know you sent Matt to go get her.”

I knew I was right without him having to answer me. And I knew that he would tell me whatever I needed to know about what had happened. But I also knew that whatever happened affected Xander, and I wouldn't make him relive it. At least not now.

When he opened his mouth to respond, I shook my head.

“You don't have to tell me. That's yours for now, baby. I know that you did what you felt necessary at the time. I support whatever that was 100%.”

“Thank you, Alaia. I don't regret my actions, but I just wonder if I could have done anything differently to prevent it from coming to this. I guess we'll never know now.” It seemed like his mind was going back to the abyss again before he shook it off and shut the water off. “Come one, beautiful. I need to get you out of these wet clothes. Why would you step in the shower fully dressed?”

“I felt that you needed me more than I needed to be dry. Was I wrong?”

His eyes shined before a breathtaking smile claimed his face. “You're not wrong; I always need you. More than my next breath.” He then began to remove my clothes before letting them drop to the floor. He spun me around and rang the water out of my hair, then wrapped it up in a towel. Finally, he reached outside the shower door and grabbed a giant fluffy robe he helped me into before he stepped out and draped his towel around his waist.

“Did you have dinner yet? If not, I thought we could have something brought up and just hang out in front of the TV,” I suggested.

“Sort of like a date night, that sounds good. What did you want to eat? I'll get someone started on it.”

I walked into my closet to get some comfy clothes while I thought of what little bean and I had a taste for. Then it hit me. “I'll need pizza, Doritos, chocolate cake, and Snapple.”

I heard Xander chuckle at my order. He knew that I had a special love affair with food, and he wouldn't dare criticize the eating habits of the woman carrying his child.

When I walked out of the closet, I saw he was mindlinking someone, so I went and sat in the seating area.

“Geoffrey will have the food up to us in twenty minutes. Luckily for you, the omegas know that you love Doritos and Snapple and now keep them stocked, and Mrs. Dyson made a large chocolate cake this afternoon. Geoff is making your pizza now, so we're all set.”

I wiggled my butt in the chair, doing my happy dance. Fresh homemade pizza was music to my hungry ears.

Xander stepped out of his closet in just some thin, gray sweatpants that made my mouth water. It seemed that I was hungry for more than just food.

I looked him up and down before the words came spilling from my mouth. “My God, you’re sexy.”

As he threw his head back and laughed, my eyes wandered to his bobbing Adams’s apple. I wanted nothing more than to suck and lick and bite all over it.

Xander saw the lust in my eyes and said, “Be careful little one. You don’t want to start something you can’t finish. And I doubt you want to miss out on the food you have coming.”

“Can’t we just have a quickie? Please?”

He leaned down to me, grabbed the back of my head, and attacked my mouth with a kiss. His tongue twisted and tangled with mine as he probed and explored.

When he finally pulled away, he said, “When have I ever been quick? You know better than that. I will take my time with you each and every time. This body of yours deserves hours of worship, not just a few minutes.”

Damn him and his smooth-talking ways.

He went over to the bed and grabbed a blanket before returning to the couch and draping it over me. He then sat down, placed my feet in his lap, and began to give them the most fantastic massage while I searched for what we were going to watch.

“Is there any part of you that isn’t magically delicious?”

He laughed before he asked, “Did you just reference the Lucky Charms’ slogan?”

“I’m hungry, and my hunger manifests in strange ways. Do not judge me!”

“No judgment here at all, love. And to answer your question, I’d say no. There isn’t any part of me that isn’t magically delicious, but only when it comes to you.”

“Good answer, sir. Damn good answer.” I flipped through the options before I found one of my all-time favorite movies and squeaked in delight.

“The Godfather? I didn’t know you were a fan.”

“I’m a fan of all old Italian mobster movies, especially The Godfather.” When I was getting settled in, Geoff knocked on the door, signaling my dinner had arrived.

A foot massage from my favorite man, watching my favorite movie while eating a few of my favorite foods. This would spoil me for sure.



Xander went to the door, then walked back, rolling a tray filled with hot, super cheesy pepperoni pizza, a massive bag of spicy sweet chili Doritos, ice-cold strawberry kiwi Snapple, and a humongous slice of chocolate cake.

My happy dance went into overdrive when the smell of the pizza hit my nose.

“Geoff says that he hopes you enjoy, and congratulations on the pup.”

I was almost too caught up on the euphoria of pizza to notice what Xander had just said.

“Wait. What? How does he know about the pup?”

“Babe, you have a bump. A noticeable one. And an appetite. We were going to tell them all soon anyway, just a few people will know before the rest.”

“I guess so. Well, no big deal. We will tell everyone tomorrow. Tonight, we watch the greatest movie of all times and stuff our faces.”

I didn't even make it one hour into the movie before it was watching me instead of the other way around.

The combination of food and foot massage quickly knocked me out, and I wasn't complaining.

I felt when Xander lifted me up and carried me to the bed before laying me down and snuggling in behind me. He placed his face in my hair and breathed deep, letting my scent carry him off to dreamland along with me.

\*\*\*

When I woke up the next morning, Xander was already up and dressed.

“Good morning, gorgeous. Get dressed quickly; we're having breakfast with the pack to announce the pregnancy. You've got twenty minutes.”

“The entire pack? Seriously?”

“Well, no, we didn't have time to plan for so many. This will be about a tenth of the pack, the head families, and such. Letting them know is essentially letting the whole pack know. The existence of their future Alpha will be common knowledge by lunchtime. That is if they haven't already smelled the cinnamon rolls and figured it out themselves.”

“So, I really do smell like cinnamon rolls, huh? It makes me want some with my breakfast. Is that weird?”

He laughed and leaned down to peck my lips. “Everything about you is weird, and it's just how I like it. Go get dressed; I'll make sure you have cinnamon rolls ready.”

I took a quick shower and pulled my hair up in my messy bun. I decided that I didn't have to try so hard to cover my belly anymore, so I grabbed a navy blue maxi dress and my gray Chuck Taylors and pulled them on.

Xander was working on his phone in the seating area when I finally walked out of my closet. It was then that I remembered that when he took over as Alpha, he also took over three businesses. I don't know where he found the time to do everything, and do it successfully, but he did.

"I'm ready, babe. Do you need me to help with anything?"

"Uhh, nope. I think the kitchen staff has everything handled. You just need to relax and enjoy yourself."

"I meant with work, Xander. I can help you juggle some of the business demands if you need me to. I know you've got it all under control, but remember that I'm your partner in all of this, and not just pack stuff."

"I could use some help getting some contracts organized and a few other things. We'll take a look later on, okay?"

"Sounds good."

We walked down to the dining hall together, talking about all the work he does outside of the pack and how Kade and Matt help keep him sane and things running smoothly. It made me happy to know that he had help before I came along and didn't have to do it all alone.

Arriving at the dining hall, I saw we were the last ones to show up. Everyone turned to give us their attention, which made me a bit nervous. I squeezed Xander's hand a little tighter, and he instinctively took a small protective step in front of me to shield me from all their glances.

"Good morning, everyone."

"Good morning, Alpha," they all replied in unison.

"Thank you all for changing your day around to come on such short notice. It's truly appreciated. The reason your Luna and I have asked you here is to make an announcement." He gave my hand a reassuring squeeze and pulled me to stand in front of him. He leaned down and placed a hand on my small bump, causing excited gasps, whispers, and murmurs to fill the room. "Today, we celebrate the existence of a new life. We have been blessed, and in a few months' time, your future Alpha will be born."

The room boomed in celebration and congratulations. The pup heard all the commotion and decided to give a few well-placed kicks to join in on the fun.

"Little bean has got some seriously strong little feet and legs. These kicks are insane."

“What else would you expect from a child of mine?” Xander asked with a healthy look of pride on his face. He was going to be such a good dad.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw that same blur of black hair and crystal blue eyes that greeted me when I first arrived at the house.

“Ahh! I’m going to be an aunt? I’m so fucking excited. I hope it’s a girl, or a boy, or—”

Kimmy was cut off by the ice-cold glare of her mother, who had also walked up to us. “We’ll talk about that mouth of yours later, young lady,” she said while looking Kimmy right in the eyes. She then turned her attention to Xander and me. “I am so happy for you two and this pack. This is the best news that any of us could have ever asked for.” She gave me a tight hug, then Xander, before she stepped away to speak with Kimmy.

Just then, I was hit with a wave of nausea that made me dry heave.

“Baby? Are you alright? Do I need to go get the doctor?”

I just waved him off. “No need for the doctor. Just some orange juice, please. Nausea only comes when I’m hungry, and the orange juice helps to get rid of it almost instantly.”

He helped me into my seat before waving over an omega who was carrying the carafe of juice. She poured me a huge glass and set the carafe down on the table before backing away. She must have known because I downed the drink in seconds and was moving on to my second in no time.

“Okay, I’m good now. Let’s eat,” I said with a smile.

Everyone took their seats as food began to fill the table.

True to his word, Xander somehow managed to have large cinnamon rolls the size of my face and smothered in icing prepared, as well.

I took one, cut into it, and watched the steam rise from its gooey insides.

When it touched my tongue, I shamelessly moaned out aloud. “Xander, be careful with these. They are almost better than sex. Almost . . .”

He faked being offended and snagged a bite for himself to verify. “I see that I’m going to have to step my game up. I can’t have a pastry trying to take my spot as the top pleasure giver.”

“I’m willing to volunteer to help out your cause, but right now, this pastry and I have unfinished business.” I destroyed that cinnamon roll in record time then grabbed another and placed it to the side.

When an omega came by to check on us, I passed the sweet treat over to her.

“Would you please have this wrapped up and set aside for me? I’m afraid they will all be gone soon if I wait any longer.”

“Of course, Luna.”

She took the plate and walked back toward the kitchen.

“Is that a snack for later?” Xander asked.

“No. It’s for Alexi. We all enjoyed sweets when we were kids, and cinnamon rolls were some of our favorites. I just figured he could use something sweet and happy to help him remember the good times.”

“You’re a really good person, little one. Have you decided if you’re going to help him with his wolf?”

“I have. If it’s what Alexi really wants to do, then I’ll do whatever I can for him. He deserves to be happy, too.” Finally, having made my decision, I felt lighter than I had in a while. Now I needed to go and share the news with Alexi.

\*\*\*

After breakfast finished and the last few pack members left, I told Xander I would meet him in his office at noon to see what I could do to help with work. I then went to retrieve Alexi’s surprise before heading down to the basement.

Kade was already down there, waiting to unlock the cell door for me. “Hey, bean. How is your day so far?”

“No complaints here. I was just given massive amounts of delicious foods, so you know I’m happy. Did you miss breakfast? I didn’t see you or Matt up there.”

“Yeah, I woke up late. It was a long night. Sorry I missed out on the cinnamon rolls, though.”

“Don’t worry, Mrs. Dyson is making me another pan as we speak. I’ll make sure one is reserved for all of my guys.”

He gave me a quick smile and hug before opening the door for me.

I walked inside to see that Alexi was almost back to normal, but he looked a little sad. “Hey, Alaia. It’s good to see you.”

“Good morning, Alexi. What’s going on today? You seem a bit down.”

He stood up and stretched before pacing the room.

“Just a bit stir crazy is all. I really feel like a run, but obviously, I can’t let Max out, so I don’t know what to do. Since I’m still a werewolf, and a Beta at that, it’s hard to turn that part of me off when it still exists right beneath the surface.”

I thought about it for a minute before I came up with an idea. “You probably just need to stretch your muscles a bit, right?”

“Yeah, pretty much. I have a lot of pent up energy I need to get rid of, and I haven’t worked out in weeks.”

“Would sparring help? We have an indoor sparring ring, and I’m sure one of the guys would gladly partner up with you for a few hours. What do you think?”

He thought for a few seconds before smiling at me. “That’s perfect, Al. I can get the exercise without needing to shift. Thanks!”

“Let me clear it with Xander first, and I’ll let you know for sure. I don’t think he’d have a problem with the idea, but it’s still something he should make the call on.”

“You’re a great mate, and an amazing Luna, Al. Xander is a really lucky guy.”

I heard Kade growl behind me, causing Alexi to put his hands up and take a couple of steps back.

I turned to Kade and rolled my eyes at him. Can’t these guys even let me receive a simple compliment? Overprotective much? “Thank you, Alexi. Anyway, I came down here for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to give you this.” I passed him over the plate.

He looked at it like a kid in a candy store, and it made me feel thrilled to see. “I knew I smelled cinnamon rolls, but I just thought it was you. This is amazing.” He ripped the plastic wrap off and shoved a huge bite into his mouth.

When I heard him moan, I laughed. “Almost better than sex, right?”

“No, this is so much better.”

He took another bite, and I heard myself say, “You’re just not doing it right or with the right person. Nothing can ever be better once you find the right person.”

Alexi looked up at me, shocked at what I had said. When his eyes, which seemed to fill with more than a little bit of lust, stayed on mine a little longer than he liked, Kade stepped forward and growled again, this time much louder.

“Sorry, guys, that was my fault,” I said, trying to clear the air. I reached out and touched Kade’s arm to calm him down a bit.

He soon started to relax and took a few steps back to the wall.

“Anyway, besides the snack, I wanted to let you know that I’m willing to help you with your wolf. Whatever you need for me to do. I just want you to finally be happy.” I stood up and began to head for the door. “I’ll go see Xander about the sparring and let you know in a bit, okay? Enjoy your cinnamon roll.” I walked out before he could respond. Things had gotten awkward in there thanks to my mouth, and I needed to create some space quickly.

Kade locked the door and looked over at me like a disapproving older brother.

“Don’t look at me like that, okay? It wasn’t intentional. I was just trying to make him feel better.”

“Bean, he’s still in love with you. You can’t say things like that around him. In his mind, you are his ‘right person.’ Got it?”

“I’ve got it. I need to go see Xander. Thank you for everything you’ve done to help with this mess so far. You’re amazing.”

“More amazing than Matt?”

I laughed and said, “Not even close, but still great, though. I’ll see you later. And go see Mrs. Dyson about your cinnamon roll.”

I made my way up to Xander’s office and walked in. He was on the phone, so I sat silently and waited for him to finish. When he was finally done, he looked up and smiled.

“You’re earlier than I thought you’d be. How is Alexi?”

I wanted just to discuss the sparring and be done with it, but I had no secrets when it came to Xander.

“He’s okay. Can I show you something?”

He looked at me curiously before saying, “Okay.”

I sat in his lap and placed my forehead against his. I closed my eyes and replayed the memory of what had happened in the cell, and transferred it over to Xander.

His hands possessively gripped my hips and pulled me closer as a growl rumbled from his chest.

When I was all done, I leaned back, but couldn’t bring myself to look up at him yet. My hands in my lap were suddenly extremely interesting. “I’m sorry, Xander. I didn’t mean to do or say anything that would cause any issues.”

He lifted my face to meet his. I could see that he was still a little angry, but he was trying to cover it up. “Alaia, Kade was right. Anyone can see that Alexi is in love with you. Just because you have moved on, doesn’t mean that he has.”

This made me sad. Why couldn't all the people I cared about just be as happy as I was?

"Alaia, you have moved on, haven't you? Do you still have feelings for him?"

I was surprised by the question. Xander was the love of my life and my reason for breathing. I could never love any another man the way I loved him. But Alexi was my first crush, my first mate. When I saw him on my birthday, I felt that mate bond, and it was intense. I had loved him, too. How could I tell Xander that although my heart now belonged to him, it was Alexi's first, and he would always hold a piece of it? "I have moved on, and I'm so happy with my life now. But I can't lie to you, I did love him once, and a part of me always will. Not the way I love you, but love is still love. I am so sorry about that."

Xander cupped my face and wiped away the tears I didn't know were falling.

"Don't apologize for the way you feel, beautiful. I understand what you are saying, and I'm not upset."

I looked up into his beautiful eyes and saw nothing but the truth in them. "Thank you," I whispered.

"Anytime. Now, about the sparring. I think it's a good idea. I'll even volunteer myself as a partner, or he can go against Matt or Kade. We can get a session going in thirty minutes if that works. I could use the workout myself."

"Okay, I'll link him now and let him know. Can you have the guys meet down there? I guess you can figure out the arrangements once you all arrive."

"That works. Why don't you go lay down for a bit? I'll come to get you after we're done, and we can go over the work stuff?"

I nodded my head and started the walk to the door.

Xander's reaction was a bit strange. I didn't expect it at all; then, he seemed like he couldn't get me out of the office quick enough.

I linked Alexi to tell him to get ready, then went to the room to lay down.

Something was going on in Xander's head, and I was going to find out what it was.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

I wanted to kill Alexi for something that wasn't his fault. It was like the Francesca situation all over again. The Moon Goddess had named him Alaia's mate first, and that bond had formed no

matter how soon after he broke it. I needed to talk to him man to man and figure all this shit out. Alaia didn't deserve to feel like she was doing anything wrong for the feelings in her heart.

I went down to the cells and unlocked Alexi's door.

He was obviously not expecting any company, as I found him on the floor covered in sweat pumping through push-ups. When he saw me, he hopped to his feet and nervously looked around.

"Alpha Xander, were you ready for the sparring session? I thought I had more time before someone would come to get me."

"Sit down, Alexi. I'm not Alpha Xander right now. I'm just a man talking to another man. So just relax, okay?"

He looked at me for a moment before he nodded and took a seat on his bed.

I grabbed a chair and sat down as well.

"Okay, so Alaia showed me what happened a little earlier." I raised my hand to stop him before he could say anything, I just needed to get through this. "I'm not here to attack you or anything like that. We just need to talk, so don't worry. Anyway, it's obvious to anyone with eyes and a brain that you are in love with her. Anyone would be. She is the embodiment of female perfection, so I cannot blame you at all. But, it's now clear to me that she still has love for you as well."

I watched him as I spoke. He remained tense, but when he heard my words, I saw happiness and relief bloom in his eyes.

"Xander, I promise you that Alaia hasn't done anything inappropriate, not since you found that she was yours, or ever, as far as I know. It's true that I love her, I have always loved her, but I lost that right when I rejected her. I hope you won't think any less of her because of the way she may still feel for me. She's moved on, and I've never seen her happier. I just want her to be happy."

I wanted him to be smug about her feelings for him. I had hoped that he would tell me how she would never be over him, that he'd always be her first love. But instead, he showed real maturity, sincerity, and selflessness. It was clear that he only wanted what was best for Alaia; his needs were no longer his priority.

"Let me ask you something. Why do you really want to get rid of your wolf?"

"It's simple. Mas is a threat to Alaia's happiness and wellbeing. It's not my job to protect her anymore, but if I know of something that can or will cause her any harm, I'll wipe it out in a heartbeat. Max has got to go. I can be happy as a human knowing that I did all that I could to keep her safe."



Fuck this kid and his perfect fucking answers.

Now I knew that I had to do this. It was my only option. I took a deep breath and looked him straight in the eyes. “Alaia loves you, and that is never going to change. And right now, she feels bad about it, like she’s betraying me for things placed in her heart before I ever came along. I never want her to feel that way. So, I was thinking, what if she was able to have and love both of us, at the same time?”

FORTY SEVEN | WHAT I WANT

## Chapter 46 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

收费已屏蔽

Alexi POV

I couldn’t have just heard what I think I heard. Or maybe I just misunderstood, that had to be it.

“Xander, I don’t understand what you’re saying here.”

“Don’t bullshit me Alexi, you understand perfectly fine. You love her, and she loves you. But she’s mine and I’m never giving her up to anyone. Putting my selfish possessive urges aside can allow her to be her happiest, and there is nothing I wouldn’t do to achieve that.”

“So we’d just share her? She’s not a toy Xander.”

Xander’s eyes flashed black for a moment before he blew out a breath from his nose.

“No, she’s not. She is a queen, my queen, and I want to give her everything her heart desires. If you are one of those desires then I won’t stand in her way.”

He was serious about this. And I could not believe it.

Would I finally have a chance to be with Alaia? She had been all I had wanted for years.

When she hit puberty and all of those amazing curves began to form, I would sit and daydream about licking every inch of them.

I wanted to rub my hands all over her perfect caramel brown skin and feel those thick thighs wrapped around me.

All the girls I was with were just sad stand-ins for the one I really wanted. I could never even cum unless I imagined it was Alaia under me.

But I needed to slow down. There had to be a catch here somewhere.

I cleared the lust from my mind and regained a bit of my composure.

“So how would this work? I just live down in the cells and occasionally come out to perform my job as her personal sex slave?”

That came out harsher than I expected and it clearly pissed Xander off.

He stood up and was ready to walk out.

“Fuck it. If this is how you’re going to react then I’ll just find some other way to make sure she never wants for anything. We spar in fifteen, get ready.”

“Wait! Xander, please wait. I’m sorry. It’s just you’re handing me all I’ve ever wanted and I don’t know how to take it. I’m just waiting for catch. There has to be a catch here, right?”

He sat back in the chair and scrubbed his hands over his face.

“I don’t know how it would work. I don’t even know if she would agree to it. But I do know that you wouldn’t be a sex slave, Alexi. You’d have a room on our floor, you’d be made a member of the pack, you could even have a position in one of my companies if you wanted. You can restart your life here. The only condition to all of this is that your wolf would have to be gone beforehand. As much as I trust you, I don’t trust him and I need all threats to her neutralized.”

I never even thought that this could be a possibility for me. I had no idea what I would do or where I would go after we killed Max. Maybe I’d be a rogue forever, but the idea of being able to have my angel wasn’t even a thought in my mind.

What I did know was that I would be an idiot to turn this down.

“If she’s okay with it, I’ll do it. I’ll do anything to make her smile.”

“Okay, good. Now I’ve just got to find a way to explain this all to her in a way that won’t make her feel dirty or unfaithful,” he replied.

“A lot of people take part on polyamorous relationships. It’s nothing for her to feel ashamed of. You can’t help who you love.”

He stood up again and reached out to shake my hand.

I got to my feet and gave him a firm shake.

“I wanted to think you were a spoiled brat Alexi, I really did, but I see that this is not the case. Thank you.”

“No, thank you. You’re putting her needs above your own and giving me a second chance at a happy life. I owe you big time.”

\*\*\*

Fifteen minutes later we were in the sparring gym with Matt and Kade warming up.

We decided to pair off; Kade and I as one pair with Alexi and Matt as the other.

Alexi and Matt were up first and I could see that the kid was a damn good fighter.

Being in the circle with him at the challenge was one thing but watching from the sidelines let me see everything clearer.

“Xander, what’s up man? You seem off in your own world today,” Kade leaned over and asked.

“I’ll explain to you later, after I talk with Alaia. I’ve just made a big decision that seriously involves her and I’m not sure how she’ll take it.”

“Was it a decision made for selfish reasons?”

“Ha! Absolutely not, the exact opposite actually.”

“Then she’ll understand. Bean is a good one, just explain whatever it is to her and trust her to make the right decision.”

“Thanks, I’ll do that.”

Just then I saw Matt take a step forward and land a punch right to Alexi’s nose before wrapping an arm around his head and falling backwards, flipping Alexi over onto his back.

“Fucking shit! I did not see that coming,” he said while laying out on the floor.

Matt stood up and helped him to his feet.

“Don’t worry about it, I’m quicker than people think. Don’t let the gamma title fool you, we all train to fight like alphas,” Matt replied.

“I’m really off my game here. You kicked my ass man.”

“You’re just out of practice, I’ll will all come back to you. How is your nose?”

“I’m pretty sure you broke it. I should be back to normal in a day or so, it’s no big deal.”

Matt, Kade, and I all tensed up making Alexi take notice.

“What’s wrong guys,” he asked, looking around at us.

“Bean is going to kick my ass isn’t she?” Matt asked looking over at me.

“Bean? Who is Bean? What am I missing here?”

I took a breath and let out a small laugh.

“Bean is Alaia, Alexi and-“

“Hahaha, because she’s so tiny??”

All of us had to laugh at that. It was clear that this name, which drove her crazy, was too perfect to ever go away. She would be "Bean" forever.

“Yes, because she’s tiny. Anyway, she damn near killed the three of us yesterday when our sparring got a little rougher than expected,” I finished.

“Bean doesn’t like ‘her guys’ bloodied up and I’m pretty sure you classify as one of her guys,” Matt said, looking a bit paler than usual.

“It was an accident, it will be okay. We’re wolves, we’ll heal.”

“Let’s just hope that’s how she sees it. But luckily it was Matt this time, and he’s her favorite, so I doubt she’ll kill him”, Kade teased.

“We’ll just end this here for now. Alexi, you should go see the doctor and get cleaned up. That will appease Alaia a bit. At least if she knows you’re not bleeding out on the floor she should be alright.”

“Okay, I can do that.”

“Good, then come to my office when you’re done. I want to continue our talk from earlier.”

I left the gym and walked back to my room. I needed to figure out how to tell my mate that I just recruited another lover for her.

Goddess, give me strength.

\*\*\*

Alaia POV

I was sitting in the sitting area of the room reading a book when Xander came in.

He looked a bit worried and I wondered if it had to do with our earlier conversation.

“Hey, Little One. I’m going to grab a quick shower then we can head to my office. That work for you?”

“Sure, I’ll be here waiting.”

I heard the shower start up but I couldn’t focus back on my reading. Something was really up and I was more than a little curious.

I tried, but after reading the same paragraph six times, I looked up to see Xander walk out of the bathroom and into his closet to get dressed.

I stood up, put my book away, and waited for him to get dressed.

He came out a few minutes later wearing loose fitting jeans and a black button up. Everything he did was so deliciously sexy, maybe we had time to- Wait! No, focus Alaia.

I need to figure out what’s going on with him, not jump his bones.

He must have noticed something was up with me because that sexy smirk of his played across his face.

“See something you like, Little One?”

“You know I do, but there’s no time for that. Let’s go,” I said while pulling him from the room and down the hall.

When we got to his office he went and sat at his desk and motioned me over.

“Okay, I know we’re here to figure out what I can do to help you with work but before we get into that, spill.”

He looked a bit confused by what I had said so I continued.

“You were pretty weird after we spoke earlier, are you sure you’re not upset with me?”

He took my hand and pulled me into his lap.

“I’m not upset with you, baby. I could never be upset with you for being honest with me.”

“Then what is it? Do you want Alexi to leave?”

I hoped that this wasn’t what Xander wanted, but his happiness was just as important as mine. If he wanted Alexi gone, I would have to accept it.

I held my breath as I waited for his answer.

“Alaia, look at me.”

I did as he asked and stared into his beautiful face.

“You love him, I know you do. I can feel your emotions, remember? When you talk about him, it’s different than how you talk about Kade or Matt or even Aaron.”

I felt my eyes go wide. He knew my feelings when I didn’t even understand then. And now those feeling would cause me to lose the best thing I had ever had.

The tears began to fall and I couldn’t stop them.

“I’m so sorry, Xander. I love you, so so much. You have to believe me, please! I didn't mean for any of this to happen, I just wanted to help him...”

“Shhhhh, it’s alright Alaia. I know that you love me. And you know that I love you. That’s why I made a decision.”

Just then I heard a knock on the door.

Xander cupped my face in his hands and yelled out “Come in.”

My eyes were closed as I leaned in to his touch. I had a bad feeling that this would be one of the last times I’d ever get to feel him like this and it broke my heart.

“Thanks for coming, have a seat,” I heard him say.

Time to be a big girl and face the consequences.

I opened my eyes and looked over to see Alexi sitting before me.

He really was going to get rid of him, or maybe the both of us.

Wait, why was his nose bruised? Focus, damnit!

“Alaia, calm down baby. This stress isn’t good for you right now. Just trust me, okay?”

I wiped my face and nodded my head.

Whatever this was, I’d deal with it like I did with everything else.

“Good, now just listen for a minute. I’ll explain everything.”

My voice came out so small and weak when I said “okay.”

Xander's eyes softened before he spoke.

"Alaia, you are my entire world and I can't even imagine what life would be like if I no longer had you. You make everything better without even trying. You are my everything.

You always think of others before yourself, but for once I want you to think about what will make you happy. Can you do that?"

"Y-yes, I can try," I said.

"That's all I ask. So you're probably wondering why I asked Alexi to come. I talked with him and little earlier and I came up with an idea. You don't have to do anything or decide anything right now but I want you to at least consider it."

Now I was getting nervous. What were they up to?

"Okay?"

"All I want is for you to be happy, always. The way you're feeling right now about your feelings for Alexi is the opposite of what I want. You can't help who you love, especially when the Mood Goddess herself deems it. So if you could have us both, love us both, without consequences, would you?"

What. The. Fuck!

My jaw dropped and I'm pretty sure I forgot how to breath.

I could have them both? What alternate 'sexual fantasy' reality had I stepped into?

This had to be a test. He was testing my loyalty and Alexi was in on it.

"What are you talking about, Xander. I don't need to have you both. You're all I'll ever need. I just want Alexi to find the happiness that I have, that's all."

Alexi spoke for the first time since entering the room.

"Angel, nothing and no one could ever make me happier than you. You're all I've ever wanted, I was just too stupid to realize it before it was too late."

I expected to hear Xander growl behind me or lunge at Alexi, but he was silent.

I stood up and stepped away from them. My mind was a mess and sitting between the two of them was not helping.

"What are you two playing at here? What is this?! I don't need this shit, I'm perfectly happy! Why are you doing this to me?!"

I started to breakdown. This was all too much to handle and I didn't know why they were springing this on me now.

Alexi looked over to Xander, seemingly asking for permission. Xander gave a firm nod before the both of them stood and walked over to me.

“Angel? We aren't doing anything to you. We're just asking what you want. Not what you need, but what you want. If you don't want this, then just say so and we'll never have to talk about it again. Just think about it.”

Alexi reached over and touched my face.

Sparks and warmth sprang forth making me gasp. He wasn't my mate anymore, I should not feel like this with him.

This was all so confusing, my mind was reeling.

Xander took my hand and led me over to the couch. He sat down on my left and Alexi sat at my right.

“Are you alright, Little One?”

Was I alright? I didn't even know how to answer that question anymore.

I looked at the guys seated beside me and at the worst possible time, my hormones decided to make an appearance.

I imagined the things they could do to my body. The feeling of having two strong pairs of hands roaming my curves, two mouths licking and sucking my breasts, two long thick dicks filling me to the brim and I instantly became slick with need.

I jumped up from the couch and backed away.

“Listen guys, I can't do this now. It's true that I love you Alexi but I don't know what that love means right now. And my hormones are going crazy thanks to this pregnancy and I don't want to make a decision that's fueled by chemically induced lust. Just give me a little bit of time, maybe a day or so. Would that be alright?”

“Take all the time you need, baby. We want you to be sure about this, we understand that it's a big deal,” Xander told me.

“A big deal” was the understatement of the century.

“Okay, I've got to go now. There is way too much going on here,” I said while waving my hand in their direction, “and I don't know how much more I can take. Bye!”



I ran from the room and shut the door behind me. I was two seconds from stripping them both down and having them fuck me over and over right there on the desk.

I need a cold shower. Immediately.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

“Well, that went better than I expected actually,” I said after Alaia rushed out of the room.

I could smell her arousal as soon as her juices started to flow. I would know that smell anywhere and oddly instead of being upset like I usually would have, I was turned on.

The idea excited her and I loved that.

There was no more submissive situation than being taken by two men at once, and I wanted to see that happen. I wanted to be one of those men.

“I guess we will just have to wait and see what she says. I hope it wasn’t too much for her,” Alexi replied.

“She was alright, better than alright if my nose was correct. We’ll just give her the time she needs. Until then I wanted to talk to you about something else.”

“What’s that?” He asked.

“I wanted to see if you would like to move from the cell in the basement to one of the spare rooms here. I think it would make Alaia more comfortable if she could see that you were becoming part of the pack and not one of our captives.”

“I’d love that, thank you. But I thought you wanted to wait for Max to be gone before you’d let me out.”

“Max has to be gone before things get physical between you and Alaia, if she chooses to go that route. But I trust you, and know that you won’t do anything to harm her or anyone else in my pack. You don’t need to be locked up anymore.”

Alexi looked me over before he laughed

“You’re really not an asshole, you know that?”

I couldn’t help it, I had to laugh along with him.

“I never thought I was, but I’m happy to see that others agree with me. Come on, I’ll show you to your room.”

\*\*\*

We walked down the hall and stopped at a room across the hall from the one I shared with Alaia.

It was one of the larger rooms with a nice view of the gardens in the back yard.

It was also one that was decorated by me, so it was much more masculine than some of the others.

It had thick grey carpet and a large king size bed. The comforter was navy blue and white, as was the rest of the decor.

The room was simple enough that he could make it his own, but nice enough that he would feel welcome.

“I hope this is alright. We can have whatever you need changed if you want.”

“It’s great, thank you. Not to diss your cells or anything, but I haven’t slept anywhere this nice for a while. Not since...”

“Since you left Opal Moon.”

“Yea, since then. So this is perfect, really.”

“Alexi. Do you want to go home? Just for a visit? I know you miss them and I’m sure they miss you as well. Especially your Father.”

“Angel has helped me talk to Aaron a few times, and they’re not ready for me to come back yet. They’re having a hard time accepting what happened, even if it was my wolf that was in control.”

I could tell that he was hurting, his situation was definitely not ideal.

He was important to Alaia, so I would make sure he would be able to feel accepted here.

“I’ll leave you to settle in. If you’d like, we can have your stuff sent over from Opal Moon or you can get new. It’s up to you, just let me know. Dinner is at 6:00 PM and combat training is 5:30AM. One is optional, the other...not so much. I’m sure you’ll figure out which is which.”

I shot him a wave as I walked out the room and shut the door. Things had changed drastically in the last 24 hours, and I knew that even more change was on the horizon.

I just needed to be sure I was ready for it.

# Chapter 47 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alexi POV

I couldn't have just heard what I thought I heard. Or maybe I just misunderstood, that had to be it.

"Xander, I don't understand what you're saying here."

"Don't bullshit me, Alexi, you understand perfectly fine. You love her, and she loves you. But she's mine, and I'm never giving her up to anyone. Putting my selfish, possessive urges aside can allow her to be at her happiest, and there is nothing I wouldn't do to achieve that."

"So, we'd just share her? She's not a toy, Xander."

Xander's eyes flashed black for a moment before he blew out a breath from his nose. "No, she's not. She is a queen, my queen, and I want to give her everything her heart desires. If you are one of those desires, then I won't stand in her way."

He was serious about this. And I could not believe it.

Would I finally have a chance to be with Alaia? She had been all I had wanted for years.

When she hit puberty, and all of those fantastic curves began to form, I would sit and daydream about licking every inch of them. I wanted to rub my hands all over her perfect caramel brown skin and feel those thick thighs wrapped around me. All the girls I was with were just sad stand-ins for the one I really wanted. I could never even cum unless I imagined it was Alaia under me.

But I needed to slow down. There had to be a catch here somewhere. I cleared the lust from my mind and regained a bit of my composure. "So, how would this work? I just live down in the cells and occasionally come out to perform my job as her personal sex slave?" That came out harsher than I expected, and it clearly pissed Xander off.

He stood up and was ready to walk out.

"Fuck it. If this is how you're going to react, then I'll just find some other way to make sure she never wants for anything. We spar in fifteen, get ready."

"Wait! Xander, please wait. I'm sorry. It's just you're handing me all I've ever wanted, and I don't know how to take it. I'm just waiting for the catch. There has to be a catch here, right?"

He sat back in the chair and scrubbed his hands over his face. "I don't know how it would work. I don't even know if Alaia would agree to it. But I do know that you wouldn't be a sex slave, Alexi. You'd have a room on our floor, you'd be made a member of the pack, and you could even have a position in one of my companies if you wanted. You can restart your life here. The only condition to all of this is that your wolf would have to be gone beforehand. As much as I trust you, I don't trust him, and I need all threats to her neutralized."

I never even thought that this could be a possibility for me. I had no idea what I would do or where I would go after we killed Max. Maybe I'd be a rogue forever, but the idea of being able to have my angel wasn't even a thought in my mind. What I did know was that I would be an idiot to turn this down.

"If she's okay with it, I'll do it. I'll do anything to make her smile."

"Okay, good. Now I've just got to find a way to explain this all to her in a way that won't make her feel dirty or unfaithful," he replied.

"A lot of people take part in polyamorous relationships. It's nothing for her to feel ashamed of. You can't help who you love."

He stood up again and reached out to shake my hand.

I got to my feet and gave him a firm shake.

"I wanted to think you were a spoiled brat, Alexi, I really did, but I see that this is not the case. Thank you."

"No, thank you. You're putting her needs above your own and giving me a second chance at a happy life. I owe you big time."

\*\*\*

Fifteen minutes later, we were in the sparring gym with Matt and Kade warming up. We decided to pair off; me and Kade as one pair, with Alexi and Matt as the other.

Alexi and Matt were up first, and I could see that the kid was a damn good fighter. Being in the circle with him at the challenge was one thing, but watching from the sidelines let me see everything clearer.

"Xander, what's up, man? You seem off in your own world today," Kade leaned over and asked.

"I'll explain to you later after I talk with Alaia. I've just made a big decision that seriously involves her, and I'm not sure how she'll take it."

"Was it a decision made for selfish reasons?"

“Ha! Absolutely not. The exact opposite, actually.”

“Then she’ll understand. Bean is a good one; just explain whatever it is to her and trust her to make the right decision.”

“Thanks, I’ll do that.”

Just then, I saw Matt take a step forward and land a punch right to Alexi’s nose before wrapping an arm around his head and falling backward, flipping Alexi over onto his back.

“Fucking shit! I did not see that coming,” he said while laying out on the floor.

Matt stood up and helped him to his feet.

“Don’t worry about it; I’m quicker than people think. Don’t let the Gamma title fool you. We all train to fight like alphas,” Matt replied.

“I’m really off my game here. You kicked my ass, man.”

“You’re just out of practice. It will all come back to you. How is your nose?”

“I’m pretty sure you broke it. I should be back to normal in a day or so; it’s no big deal.”

Matt, Kade, and I all tensed up, making Alexi take notice.

“What’s wrong, guys?” he asked, looking around at us.

“Bean is going to kick my ass, isn’t she?” Matt asked, looking over at me.

“Bean? Who is bean? What am I missing here?”

I took a breath and let out a small laugh. “Bean is Alaia, Alexi and—”

“Hahaha, because she’s so tiny?”

All of us had to laugh at that. It was clear that this name, which drove her crazy, was too perfect ever to go away. She would be bean forever.

“Yes, because she’s tiny. Anyway, she damn near killed the three of us yesterday when our sparring got a little rougher than expected,” I finished.

“Bean doesn’t like ‘her guys’ bloodied up, and I’m pretty sure you classify as one of her guys,” Matt said, looking a bit paler than usual.

“It was an accident; it will be okay. We’re wolves; we’ll heal.”

“Let’s just hope that’s how she sees it. But luckily, it was Matt this time, and he’s her favorite, so I doubt she’ll kill him,” Kade teased.

“We’ll just end this here for now. Alexi, you should go see the doctor and get cleaned up. That will appease Alaia a bit. At least if she knows you’re not bleeding out on the floor, she should be alright.”

“Okay, I can do that.”

“Good, then come to my office when you’re done. I want to continue our talk from earlier.” I left the gym and walked back to my room. I needed to figure out how to tell my mate that I just recruited another lover for her.

Goddess, give me strength.

\*\*\*

Alaia POV

I sat in the sitting area of the room, reading a book when Xander came in. He looked a bit worried, and I wondered if it had to do with our earlier conversation. “Hey, little one. I’m going to grab a quick shower; then we can head to my office. That work for you?”

“Sure, I’ll be here waiting.” I heard the shower start up, but I couldn’t focus back on my reading. Something was really up, and I was more than a little curious. I tried, but after reading the same paragraph six times, I looked up to see Xander walk out of the bathroom and into his closet to get dressed. I stood up, put my book away, and waited for him to finish.

He came out a few minutes later wearing loose-fitting jeans and a black button-up. Everything he did was so deliciously sexy; maybe we had time to—

Wait! No. Focus, Alaia.

I needed to figure out what’s going on with him, not jump his bones.

He must have noticed something was up with me because that sexy smirk of his played across his face. “See something you like, little one?”

“You know I do, but there’s no time for that. Let’s go.” I pulled him from the room and down the hall.

When we got to his office, he went and sat at his desk and motioned me over.

“Okay, I know we’re here to figure out what I can do to help you with work, but before we get into that, spill.” He looked a bit confused by what I had said, so I continued. “You were pretty weird after we spoke earlier. Are you sure you’re not upset with me?”

He took my hand and pulled me into his lap. "I'm not upset with you, baby. I could never be upset with you for being honest with me."

"Then what is it? Do you want Alexi to leave?"

I hoped that this wasn't what Xander wanted, but his happiness was just as important as mine. If he wanted Alexi gone, I would have to accept it. I held my breath as I waited for his answer.

"Alaia, look at me."

I did as he asked and stared into his beautiful face.

"You love him; I know you do. I can feel your emotions, remember? When you talk about him, it's different than how you talk about Kade or Matt, or even Aaron."

I felt my eyes go wide. Xander knew my feelings when I didn't even understand them. And now those feelings would cause me to lose the best thing I had ever had. The tears began to fall, and I couldn't stop them. "I'm so sorry, Xander. I love you, so, so much. You have to believe me, please! I didn't mean for any of this to happen; I just wanted to help him."

"Shh, it's alright, Alaia. I know that you love me. And you know that I love you. That's why I made a decision."

Just then, I heard a knock on the door.

Xander cupped my face in his hands and yelled out, "Come in."

My eyes were closed as I leaned into his touch. I had a bad feeling that this would be one of the last times I'd ever get to feel him like this, and it broke my heart.

"Thanks for coming, have a seat," I heard him say.

It was time to be a big girl and face the consequences. I opened my eyes and looked over to see Alexi sitting before me.

He really was going to get rid of him, or maybe the both of us. Wait, why was his nose bruised? Focus, damn it!

"Alaia, calm down, baby. This stress isn't good for you right now. Just trust me, okay?"

I wiped my face and nodded my head. Whatever this was, I'd deal with it as I did with everything else.

"Good, now just listen for a minute. I'll explain everything."

My voice came out so small and weak when I said, "Okay."

Xander's eyes softened before he spoke. "Alaia, you are my entire world, and I can't even imagine what life would be like if I no longer had you. You make everything better without even trying. You are my everything. You always think of others before yourself, but for once, I want you to think about what will make you happy. Can you do that?"

"Y-Yes, I can try," I said.

"That's all I ask. So, you're probably wondering why I asked Alexi to come. I spoke to him a little earlier and came up with an idea. You don't have to do anything or decide anything right now, but I want you to consider it, at least."

Now I was getting nervous. What were they up to? "Okay?"

"All I want is for you to be happy, always. The way you're feeling right now about your feelings for Alexi is the opposite of what I want. You can't help who you love, especially when the Mood Goddess herself deems it. So, if you could have us both, love us both, without consequences, would you?"

What. The. Fuck! My jaw dropped, and I'm pretty sure I forgot how to breathe. Could I have them both? What alternate 'sexual fantasy' reality had I stepped into? This had to be a test. He was testing my loyalty, and Alexi was in on it. "What are you talking about, Xander. I don't need to have you both. You're all I'll ever need. I just want Alexi to find the happiness that I have, that's all."

Alexi spoke for the first time since entering the room. "Angel, nothing, and no one could ever make me happier than you. You're all I've ever wanted; I was just too stupid to realize it before it was too late."

I expected to hear Xander growl behind me or lunge at Alexi, but he was silent.

I stood up and stepped away from them. My mind was a mess, and sitting between the two of them was not helping. "What are you two playing at here? What is this? I don't need this shit; I'm perfectly happy! Why are you doing this to me?" I started to breakdown. This was all too much to handle, and I didn't know why they were springing this on me now.

Alexi looked over to Xander, seemingly asking for permission. Xander gave a firm nod before both of them stood and walked over to me. "Angel? We aren't doing anything to you. We're just asking what you want. Not what you need, but what you want. If you don't want this, then just say so, and we'll never have to talk about it again. Just think about it." Alexi reached over and touched my face.

Sparks and warmth sprang forth, making me gasp. He wasn't my mate anymore; I should not feel like this with him. This conversation was all so confusing, my mind reeled.

Xander took my hand and led me over to the couch. He sat down on my left, and Alexi sat at my right. "Are you alright, little one?"



Was I alright? I didn't even know how to answer that question anymore. I looked at the guys seated beside me, and at the worst possible time, my hormones decided to make an appearance. I imagined the things they could do to my body. The feeling of having two strong pairs of hands roaming my curves, two mouths licking and sucking my breasts, two long, thick dicks filling me to the brim, and I instantly became slick with need.

I jumped up from the couch and backed away.

"Listen, guys; I can't do this now. It's true that I love you, Alexi, but I don't know what that love means right now. And my hormones are going crazy thanks to this pregnancy, and I don't want to make a decision that's fueled by chemically induced lust. Just give me a little bit of time. Maybe a day or so. Would that be alright?"

"Take all the time you need, baby. We want you to be sure about this. We understand that it's a big deal," Xander told me.

A big deal was the understatement of the century.

"Okay, I've got to go now. There is way too much going on here," I said while waving my hand in their direction, "and I don't know how much more I can take. Bye!"

I ran from the room and shut the door behind me. I was two seconds from stripping them both down and having them fuck me over and over right there on the desk.

I need a cold shower. Immediately.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

"Well, that went better than I expected, actually," I said after Alaia rushed out of the room. I could smell her arousal as soon as her juices started to flow. I would know that smell anywhere, and oddly, instead of being upset like I usually would have, I was turned on. The idea excited her, and I loved that. There was no more submissive situation than being taken by two men at once, and I wanted to see that happen. I wanted to be one of those men.

"I guess we will just have to wait and see what she says. I hope it wasn't too much for her," Alexi replied.

"She was alright, better than alright if my nose was correct. We'll just give her the time she needs. Until then, I wanted to talk to you about something else."

"What's that?"

“I wanted to see if you would like to move from the cell in the basement to one of the spare rooms here. I think it would make Alaia more comfortable if she could see that you were becoming part of the pack and not one of our captives.”

“I’d love that, thank you. But I thought you wanted to wait for Max to be gone before you’d let me out.”

“Max has to be gone before things get physical between you and Alaia if she chooses to go that route. But I trust you and know that you won’t do anything to harm her or anyone else in my pack. You don’t need to be locked up anymore.”

Alexi looked me over before he laughed. “You’re really not an asshole; you know that?”

I couldn’t help it; I had to laugh along with him. “I never thought I was, but I’m happy to see that others agree with me. Come on; I’ll show you to your room.”

\*\*\*

We walked down the hall and stopped at a room across from the one I shared with Alaia. It was one of the larger rooms with a beautiful view of the gardens in the backyard. It was also one that was decorated by me, so it was much more masculine than some of the others. It had thick gray carpet and a large, king-size bed. The comforter was navy blue and white, as was the rest of the decor. The room was simple enough that he could make it his own but nice enough that he would feel welcome.

“I hope this is alright. We can have whatever you need to be changed if you want.”

“It’s great, thank you. Not to diss your cells or anything, but I haven’t slept anywhere this nice for a while. Not since . . .”

“Since you left Opal Moon.”

“Yeah, since then. So, this is perfect, really.”

“Alexi, do you want to go home? Just for a visit? I know you miss them, and I’m sure they miss you as well. Especially your father.”

“Angel has helped me talk to Aaron a few times, and they’re not ready for me to come back yet. They’re having a hard time accepting what happened, even if it was my wolf that was in control.”

I could tell that he was hurting; his situation was definitely not ideal.

He was essential to Alaia, so I would make sure he would be able to feel accepted here.

“I’ll leave you to settle in. If you’d like, we can have your stuff sent over from Opal Moon, or you can get new stuff. It’s up to you, just let me know. Dinner is at 6:00 PM, and combat training is 5:00 AM. One is optional, the other, not so much. I’m sure you’ll figure out which is which.”

I shot him a wave as I walked out of the room and shut the door. Things had changed drastically in the last twenty-four hours, and I knew that even more change was on the horizon.

I just needed to be sure I was ready for it.

FORTY-EIGHT | PROUD UNCLES

## Chapter 48 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

I needed to talk to someone, anyone who could help me figure out what I was feeling and what I should do. The first thought that came to mind was Amethyst. We haven’t talked much lately, and I was sure she would have an opinion on all this mess.

Amethyst? I know you know what’s going on. What in the hell do I do?

You already know what you want to do. Why do you deny yourself?

Because it’s wrong, we have a mate. You have Alastair, and I have Xander. Why do I need to add Alexi into the mix?

You keep saying that word: need. This isn’t about needing Alexi. It’s about wanting him, and you do. You always have. The men you love are trying to give you something that’s just for you.

Won’t it affect you as well?

Not at all. Alexi’s wolf is neutralized for now, and you are planning on helping to get rid of him for good. I only connect with the wolf part of the man, so Alastair and I would be mutually exclusive.

But what will people think when they find out? I want to be a Luna my pack can look up to, not one that they whisper about when she leaves the room.

Werewolves are very sexual beings, doll. No one in your pack will judge you for having two sex gods at your disposal. They’d actually be jealous. I’m somewhat jealous, to be honest.

This is so hard! I would never want Xander to think he's not enough. He is more than I could ever want or need. But the idea of having them both gives me insane butterflies, and my imagination starts to run wild.

Oh, I know, I share the same mind, remember? I'm impressed by some of these thoughts; I didn't think you had it in you. It makes me proud.

Hahaha, Amethyst. You're not helping.

Because you don't need help, Alaia, get out of your head, literally and figuratively, and just do what feels right for you and only you. Be selfish for once in your life. You deserve this, that's why they are offering it to you. You won't lose Xander, we are bound for all eternity, and not even death could break that bond. You will just be gaining Alexi. It's a pretty great deal if you ask my opinion.

It is a great deal. But is it too great? That's what worries me.

Only you can decide that, sweetie.

\*\*\*

I decided to go for a walk in the gardens to clear my mind.

My talk with Amethyst was interesting, to say the least, and it made me think about what I wanted for once. I had never been a person who just lived for what she wanted. What I needed had always been enough. So, to be told to throw need out the window and just be selfish was a foreign concept.

I ended up at the gazebo and stretched out on the bench, letting the sounds of the nearby fountain soothe and relax me. My hand found its way to my bump, and I rubbed circles over it. "Little bean, Momma is in quite a situation here. And as much as I'd like to be selfish, I have you to think about and take care of. My decision will have an impact on you, too, so I've really got to think this through."

I pulled out my phone and shot Jordyn a quick text message.

I hadn't been able to speak to her as much as I would have liked lately, and I really missed her.

She'd definitely have an opinion on all of this, and she would give it to me straight.

J, are you busy? I really need to talk to you about something major. EXTREMELY MAJOR. Call me when you get a minute. XOXO.

Before I could put the phone away, it was ringing.

"Damn, that was quick. Were you watching your phone waiting for my message or something?"

“Shut up, Alaia. What’s going on? Is my little niece alright?”

“The baby is fine, but how do you know it’s a girl?”

“Wishful thinking. So, what’s up?”

I recounted the conversation I had with the guys to her in record time, then I waited. She was silent on the other end for so long I thought she had hung up on me. “Jordyn? You still there?”

“I’m here, babe. But this is a lot.”

“What do I do? Please tell me.”

“No, Alaia. I’m not making this decision for you. You’ve probably already made it; you’re just afraid to accept it fully.”

“Okay, well, will you just tell me what you think then? Tell me something, anything!”

“I hated Alexi for what he did to you. I really wanted to kill him, but you stopped me. Even after what he did, you still protected him, and you’ve been protecting him ever since. I was there when you used to drool over him, and he would parade his whores around. But still, you couldn’t ever stop that twinkle in your eye every time you saw him. You’ve loved him for as long as I can remember, and even though you have Xander, that doesn’t change your past feelings.”

“So . . . what do I do?”

“I told you I’m not making this decision for you! Do what feels right. You’ll have my support no matter what. You’ll have all our support. You’ve been hit with a lot of shit the last few months, and you deserve a ton of happiness. So, go do whatever brings you the most happiness, whatever that may be.”

“You’re an excellent Luna; you know that?”

“So are you, babe. So, besides the possible ‘sex sandwich’ situation, how have things been over there?”

We talked for a while longer, with her filling me in on the gossip from her end and me filling her in on mine. We laughed when we reminisced about the days of being young and stupid, and I decided to go and visit as soon as possible. Or maybe have her come and see me.

When my stomach began to rumble and that all too persistent nausea kicked in, I got up and walked toward the house. “J, I’ll have to talk to you later. I’m starving, and this little one is not happy about it. I’ve got to get some food in me now, or there will be some severe problems.

“Cool, go feed my niece and tell her Auntie loves her. I’ll talk to you soon. Oh, and don’t forget to keep me updated on operation ‘Sex Sandwich!’”

“That is such a stupid name, and you are an idiot. I love you. Bye!”

\*\*\*

When I walked into the kitchen, I found Geoff preparing dinner for the house.

“Hi, Geoff. How are you doing? What’s on the menu tonight?” I took a seat at the island.

“I’m good, Ms. Alaia, thank you. And we’re having Mexican tonight. Steak, chicken, and cheese enchiladas, rice and beans, and fresh homemade salsa and guacamole, amongst other things.”

My mouth began to water, thinking of the yumminess he was preparing.

He turned his back for a minute, then came over with a tray holding a B.L.T and some baked potato chips. “I figured you’d be hungry soon, and I know the little ones don’t care for waiting, so I made you a snack. I snuck some spinach in with the lettuce so you can get your vitamins.”

“Geoff, this is perfect. Thank you so much. I was just going to grab some trail mix or something until dinner. This is so much better.”

“Anytime, Ms. Alaia.”

He went back to prepping for dinner as I took a huge bite of my sandwich. It made me think of Jordyn’s stupid name for my situation, and I couldn’t help but giggle. I love that girl so much.

Before I could finish up, Matt walked in to grab a bottle of water.

“Hey, Matt. You just coming back from a run?”

“Yeah, my workout was cut short earlier, so I decided to run a few miles to make up for it.”

“You were at the sparring session with Xander and Alexi?”

Matt tensed up a bit when I said Alexi’s name, waking my curiosity. “Yep, I was there.”

“Cool, so tell me . . . why is Alexi’s nose bruised?”

“Shit, bean. Not again. This is not cool, and not how you treat your friends! All I did is what I was asked to do.”

I laughed at how flustered he got. I loved to mess with him. “I’m just joking, Matt. Take a breath. It looked like he went to get it checked out, so it’s not a big deal. I just wanted to see your reaction to the question.”

“Again, not cool. I think I’ve been harassed enough for the day, so I’m gonna head up for a shower. I’ll see you at dinner.”

He gave me a tight, sweaty hug before laughing and running upstairs.

“Yuck!” I wiped my face.

Geoff handed me a paper towel and laughed. “You two remind me of my children. I have a boy and a girl around your age, and they love to tease each other, too.”

I smiled at him. “My twin brother, Aaron and I, are the same. We love each other endlessly while driving each other insane. Matt and Kade have become my ‘stand-in’ big brothers since I’ve arrived, and I’m really grateful to have them. They made this place feel like home almost instantly.”

“I’m delighted to hear that, Ms. Alaia. You go relax, and I’ll see you at dinner.

\*\*\*

I decided to head up the stairs to freshen up and change before dinner. I was scrolling through my phone, not paying attention to my surroundings at all, and being the klutz that I am, my foot missed a step, and I fell face-first into the stairs.

Luckily, I was quick enough to protect my belly, but my ankle and wrist were not so lucky.

I tried to push myself up but gave up soon after when the pain started to rage and pulse.

“Fucking great,” I muttered under my breath.

Now I had to ask for help, and I wouldn’t ever hear the end of it.

I figured Matt was in the shower by now, and I had no idea where Xander was. Kade and Alexi had been hanging out more and more lately, so they could possibly be together.

Honestly, I had no clue. So, I linked all of them.

Guys, I tripped on the stairs and hurt my ankle and wrist. Would one of you—

I wasn’t even finished with my thought when I heard feet thundering down the hall then down the stairs toward me. I looked up to see a frantic Kade.

“What the fuck, bean. What happened? Are you and the pup okay? Come on, let’s get you up.” He gently lifted me up and into a bridal carry.

As he was taking his first steps down, I heard more running from up above.

Xander, Alexi, and Matt, who was just wearing a towel around his waist, all shot down the stairs behind us.

Maybe linking all of them wasn't the best idea I ever had.

“What happened?”

“Did you fall on your stomach?”

“What hurts?”

They were hitting me with questions left and right, and it was making me dizzy trying to keep up. “Calm down, guys! I was walking upstairs and wasn't paying attention. I was scrolling on my phone and missed the step. I didn't hit my belly, but I'm pretty sure my wrist and ankle are at the very least sprained. I didn't know where you all were, so I figured just linking you at once would increase my chances of getting off the damn stairs. Never doing that again.”

I looked over their faces again, then realized something. “Alexi? How come you were upstairs? I thought you would have been back in your room by now.”

He opened his mouth to answer but was cut off by Xander. “Really, Alaia? That's what matters right now? Why would you take the stairs and not pay attention to your footing? This could have been so much worse, baby. Come on; we're going to get you checked out.” He gently took me from Kade and began the walk toward the pack hospital.

The other guys were following behind when I stopped them. “Wait!”

“Alaia, you need to be checked out now. This isn't up for discussion.”

“Xander, I get that, and I'm not trying not to go, but I really think Matt should put on some clothes ASAP. We'll never get anything accomplished if he goes in there like this.”

They all turned and looked at Matt, who seemed just then to realize what he was wearing.

“Ohh . . . I umm. Yeah. Let me go take care of this. I'll meet you guys there.”

He then sprinted back upstairs and to his room.

“Alright, let's get this checkup over with.”

\*\*\*

I'm sure the scene marching down the hospital halls was insane. Xander looked like a steam roller, pushing everything and everyone out of his way. I was cradled tightly in his arms, clutching my sore wrist while my severely swollen and throbbing ankle dangled in front of him. Then you've got Alexi and Kade right behind us, like two clearly unnecessary bodyguards.

Ridiculous.



We stopped in front of the reception desk and a very stunned-looking nurse.

“We need to see Dr. Bennett immediately. Where can I find her?” Xander asked abruptly.

“She’s in with a patient at the moment, Alpha. But please take the Luna to room 122, and I’ll make sure Dr. Bennett comes as soon as she’s free.”

“She has five minutes.”

Xander turned toward the room we were assigned and walked away without saying another word.

“Thank you!” I yelled over his shoulder at the nurse.

She offered a small smile in return.

We got to the room, and I was gently placed in the bed.

I was a fair-sized room, but when you added three huge men, space got eaten up pretty quickly.

“Xander, you shouldn’t treat the pack that way. Dr. Bennett has to look after a lot of wolves; she can’t just wait around for a clumsy Luna to fall down the stairs.”

“I’m the Alpha. If I can’t pull rank to get my Luna seen first by the doctor, then when can I?” he asked with a smirk.

I shook my head at his reasoning. “Just apologize to the nurse before we leave, please.”

The door to the room burst open, and I expected to see Dr. Bennett, but instead, it was Matt.

“Is everything okay? What did I miss?”

“Nothing but Xander being an ass to some poor nurse. We’re waiting for the doctor now,” I said.

A couple of minutes later, a petite redhead with beautiful green eyes and ivory skin came in. She had a blinding white smile that immediately made me comfortable around her.

“Good evening, Alpha and Luna. Oh, and Beta, Gamma, and friend. What brings you all in tonight?”

All the guys started talking at once, and I knew if I didn’t stop them, it would become a madhouse really, really soon. “Stop! Kade, Matt, and Alexi get out.”

They looked at me, shocked, then saddened that they had been kicked out.

“You three are my guys, you know you are, but this room is way too small to hold four grown men, two women, and the equipment. Dr. Bennett needs space to work and move around. Just wait outside the door. Please?”

“I need an update in five minutes, or I’m coming back in here, bean,” Matt said before they headed out.

“Sorry about that, they’re a little overwhelming and a lot overprotective.”

“You’re their Luna, and very much loved by your pack. It’s understandable. So, can you tell me what happened?”

I recounted my accident on the stairs and the areas I had pain.

After checking my wrists and ankle, it was confirmed they were just sprained and would need to be wrapped for a couple of days. I probably could have just healed myself, but I didn’t want to use my powers frivolously.

Once I was all wrapped up, Dr. Bennett stood and walked over to an ultrasound machine.

“You haven’t had a check-up since we confirmed your pregnancy. I’d like to do a quick ultrasound to make sure the little one wasn’t hurt in the fall if that’s okay.”

I wasn’t expecting to fall down the stairs today, but I was now so happy that I had. I was going to see my baby!

“Yes, please. We’d love that,” I said, gripping Xander’s hand.

Xander moved to the opposite side of the bed, facing the screen and giving Dr. Bennett room to work.

She squirted the cold gel on my belly, then began to move the wand around through it.

The screen just looked to show black and white static for a few seconds before I saw it.

“There it is. Here is the head, the spine.” She pointed to the screen as she showed us the perfect, tiny little parts of our pup.

“And one, two, huh . . .”

She stopped mid-sentence

“Dr. Bennett? Is there something wrong?” Xander asked.

I could feel he was getting nervous, and so was I. I held my breath and waited.

“I’m sorry, just let me get a better angle.” She readjusted the wand a bit, and I stared at the screen, trying to understand what I was seeing. “You were hiding in there, weren’t you sweetie?” we heard her coo at the screen. “Alpha, Luna. I’m sorry if I worried you, your babies are perfect.”

Wait. Babies? Meaning more than one? “When you say babies, how many exactly?” I asked.

“Oh, just two. You’re having twins.”

At that very moment, the guys burst back into the room for their update.

The look on their faces would have been comical if I wasn’t so stunned.

“It’s twins?” one of them whispered from their post at the door.

I was too engrossed at the tiny feet on the screen to decipher which one it was.

“It’s fucking twins!” They were in the hallway, yelling and celebrating the fact that I now had two babies to push out of my honeypot.

“Well, it looks like you’ve got some proud uncles out there. I’ll print out a few pictures and get you out of here,” Dr. Bennett stated.

I just nodded at her; I had no words at the moment.

Xander tightened his hold on my hand and brought it up to his lips for a kiss. “We’re having twins, little one.” Tears shone in his eyes, and he looked so thrilled. The moment was perfect.

Then, just like that, the special moment was gone. “We’re! Having! Twins!” He, too, shot out the door to join the obnoxiously loud celebration in the hall.

I hoped and prayed that these babies were girls. I had more than enough men in my life to last me a lifetime.

“I don’t know how you do it, Luna.” Dr. Bennett laughed while passing me the pictures and looking toward the chaos in the hall.

“Neither do I, doctor. Neither do I.”

FORTY-NINE | COMMUNICATION

## Chapter 49 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

I couldn't believe it. Alaia and I would be having two pups in just a few months. For someone who never actively planned to be a father, I couldn't be happier.

After we had thoroughly pissed off everyone on the floor, I went back into the room to find Alaia waiting for me. Her eyes were clouded over, and I wondered who she was mindlinking.

"Hey, little one. Everything alright?" I asked when her golden-brown eyes had returned.

"Everything is good now. I just apologized to the pack for the nonsense that just went on in the hallway. You guys are insane."

"Maybe it was a little over the top, but I'm having twins. I'm allowed to be excited about it."

"I guess. So, can we head back now? I've got everything I need here, and I'd like to lay down for a bit before dinner starts."

I went over and helped her to stand. The doctor had given her crutches to get around until her ankle was better, but with her sprained wrist, I wasn't sure how that was going to work.

"Babe, I'm going to carry you, okay? There is no way you'll be able to climb the stairs and get to the room in time to relax in this state. And I know that you really need to lay down, so this is just the best option."

"That works. I felt like being lazy tonight, anyway." She smiled at me as I reached down to pick her up.

"You can be as lazy as you want, beautiful; you're carrying precious cargo."

When we left the room, I found Kade, Matt, and Alexi waiting out in the hall.

"We're heading up to the room so Alaia can rest before dinner. You guys go entertain yourselves for a bit, and we'll see you later."

They nodded before they turned and walked off.

"So, you've decided to let Alexi out for good?" she looked up and asked me.

"Yes, it only seemed right. I know he won't do anything to harm the pack, so keeping him locked up was just wrong."

"I have to agree with you, and it was a nice thing for you to do for him."

Maybe I should tell her the rest now. "So, I also moved Alexi onto our floor. He's in the room across the hall from ours. I figured that if you decided to agree to what we talked about earlier,

you'd probably want him close by. And if you decide against it, we can just move him to the floor with Kade and Matt."

She seemed to tense up a bit, remembering our earlier talk but soon relaxed again. "That's fine. I'm just glad he's somewhere comfortable and can start to get some semblance of normalcy again."

"I hoped you'd feel that way."

By the time we had finished talking, I had arrived at the room and was sitting her on the bed.

"You've got about forty-five minutes; then, I'll be back to wake you up."

Alaia stretched her tiny body before she snuggled into the pillow and closed her eyes.

I couldn't wait to see her caring for my pups. She was going to be the most incredible mom.

\*\*\*

Alaia POV

I woke up from my power nap feeling energized and pumped for dinner. I knew that I'd have to fend off a crazed Kimmy and Katherine, but it was worth it; there was Mexican food downstairs that I intended to enjoy as much as I could.

I stood up, and surprisingly my ankle was no longer throbbing. I took a few steps from the bed and found that if I took things slow, I could make my way around with no problem. So, I did just that. I headed for the door and slowly walked downstairs. When I reached the bottom, I found the guys stretched out in the common room playing Call of Duty on the PlayStation. They were so swept up in the noise and action of the game that they didn't even notice I was there. I plopped down on the couch and pulled my feet underneath me to watch.

It wasn't until Xander and Alexi had brutally murdered Kade and Matt that they saw me sitting there. Right beside them.

"If we were ever to be attacked again, I hope it's not while you guys are playing this stupid game. We'd all be done, and you'd never even see it coming."

"Alaia, how did you get downstairs? I was going to come up and get you in a few minutes," Xander asked.

"I walked. If I move slow enough, my ankle is fine."

"You can't do that anymore, little one. Someone needs to be with you going up and down the stairs at all times. If you fall again, it could really hurt the pups."

I didn't need a babysitter. I could walk on the stairs just fine, this was ridiculous. "First, I didn't fall. I tripped because I wasn't paying attention. There is a big difference. Second, I go up and down the stairs all the time. I don't have time to sit around waiting for a chaperone. But if it makes you feel better, fine. Just understand that it's going to get really old, really fast, and you guys are going to get tired of having to escort me everywhere."

"Don't worry about us; we'll deal. Now, come on, let's get you some dinner."

I made my way to the dining hall and took my seat at Xander's left.

Kade took his place at Xander's right, and there was Alexi then Matt to my left.

Alexi and Matt began to tease each other about the game earlier, and it warmed my heart to see how well they were all getting along.

I knew that going back to Opal Moon was a long shot for Alexi, but at least he would be able to make a life for himself here.

A few other people arrived, and soon the omegas were carrying out huge dishes full of food.

While my plate was being fixed for me, I leaned over to Xander. "Where are your parents and Kimmy? Weren't they here earlier?"

"They went back home. The packhouse is too busy for my parents now that they're retired, and Kimmy missed her friends. They live in Jade City, so it's not too far away."

"Cool, so I don't have to worry about being pounced on tonight because of the twins."

"Nah, that can wait until tomorrow. Mom's already planning the baby shower."

I was a second from protesting when a plate of hot, spicy, cheesy enchiladas was placed before me.

Xander saw the look on my face and laughed. "Eat now, argue later."

"I'll eat when I'm ready to eat. It just happens to be right now, though, so don't think you've won this round," I grumbled while taking a bite of my food. I had to laugh at myself a bit. I was grumpy for no reason other than I was hungry, and poor Xander was taking the hits. Then I shrugged a shoulder at the thought. He'll be fine; he can handle it.

\*\*\*

Alexi POV

After dinner was over, I went for a run with Kade around the territory before heading up to shower and get into bed. Xander had made it clear that I had to attend combat training at 5:00 in

the morning, and since it had been weeks since I'd been up at that time, let alone been to exercise, I wanted to get to bed early that night.

At some point during the day, someone had some fresh new clothes delivered to the room for me. After the shower, I pulled on some black sweat pants, turned on the TV, then climbed into bed. I flipped through a few channels, not really finding anything interesting when I felt the tingle of a mindlink at the back of my mind.

Since I wasn't a member of any pack at the time, I knew it could only be from Alaia.

Angel, are you alright?

I got no response. Instead, it felt like I was sucked into a vortex and dropped off in some alternate reality. Alaia was lying back in a huge bubble bath. Steam rose from the tub and played in the soft light cast by the candles lit around the room.

She grabbed a large bath sponge and gently rubbed it over her shoulders and neck, trying to soothe away the tension that resided there. Her beautiful golden eyes were closed as she continued to rub the sponge all over her body.

I wanted so badly to be that sponge. My body began to move toward Alaia, and I dipped my hand into the water and grabbed on to her ankle, lifting her foot from the water.

She opened her eyes and smiled up at me.

"You look like you could use a bit of help, Angel." My hand wrapped around her small soft foot. I then began to squeeze, twist, and knead her heel, arch, and toes, pulling a moan from her sexy pouty lips.

"That is amazing," I heard her whisper.

I leaned down and began to lick and suck each one of her toes, making her squirm with pleasure. I knew she was getting wet for me, I could smell her, and it made my dick stand to attention and strain against the fabric of my sweats. My hands and mouth slowly worked upwards, teasing her ankle, her calf, her knee, before I finally reached her deliciously thick and curvy thigh. I slid a finger up a bit more until the tip lightly grazed her jewel, then I went to work rubbing, pinching and teasing it.

"Just relax, baby. Let me take care of you," I whispered in her ear.

I slipped two fingers inside her and slowly began to move them in and out.

She was so damn tight; her walls were clutching and clamping down on me, not wanting to let go.

I leaned my head down and flicked my tongue over a hardened, perky nipple, causing a shudder to run through her entire body. I then closed my mouth over the rock-hard bud and started to nibble and suck like my life depended on it. I quickened my pace between her thighs, and soon she was rocking her hips, trying to bring herself closer to release.

A small adjustment to the angle of my wrist, and I was gliding right over her G-spot.

My angel sat straight up in the tub and buried her face in the crook of my neck, panting right in my ear.

I increased my pace, causing her to reach up and dig her nails into my arms. The pain caused a growl to bubble from me as my fingers pummeled her flower.

She threw her head back and held on to the edge of the tub, clearly close to her peak. Her neck was beautifully exposed, and I just had to taste it.

I leaned down and ran my tongue from her collar bone to her ear before I demanded, “Cum for me, Angel. Just let go.”

Then I scrapped my teeth right over her mark, ripping a scream of pleasure and pain from her.

Her eyes rolled back, and her breathing became choppy as I felt her pussy constrict around my fingers.

And still, I kept going.

She began to shake and convulse, her hypersensitive core screaming for mercy, but I wasn't ready to give any. Not quite yet.

“Can you cum again, Angel? Just one more time?”

She bit her lip and nodded furiously. “Y-Yes, just please don't stop . . .”

The muscles in my arm were on fire, but I was a man on a mission.

I removed my fingers from inside her and set my attention on her perfectly engorged clit. I slowly rubbed small circles around it and alternated between gentle pinches and pulls. Her legs were beginning to shake uncontrollably again, so I picked up the pace and applied a bit more pressure.

Again, she reared up and rested her head in my neck, using my body to hold herself up. “Alexi, I'm so fucking close. Please . . .”

I then plunged four fingers into her lotus and used my thumb to rapidly flick across her clit.

Within seconds she was cumming again, coating my fingers in her sweet juices.



She was lost in it, so completely gone, that she leaned forward and sank her canines directly into my marking spot.

Then everything went white and I was thrown back into the present. I was once again in my bed in my room, but it all had felt so real. My heart was hammering in my chest, and my body was coated in sweat. I looked at my arms and saw fresh scratches down my biceps to my forearms.

I leaped from the bed and ran to the bathroom. When I flipped on the light and looked in the mirror, I saw it. There was a huge red bite mark on my neck. Her mark. She had marked me.

What the fuck just happened?

\*\*\*

Alaia POV

I shot up in bed, hoping that I hadn't just done what I thought I did.

My body still tingled from back-to-back orgasms, and I could feel the moisture that pooled between my thighs. "Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit!"

My small panic attack woke Xander, who groggily turned on the bedside lamp, illuminating me with soft light.

"Little one, what's wrong? Are you alright?"

Hell, no, I wasn't alright. I'd just literally mind fucked my ex, and I'm pretty sure I marked him, too. I shook my head. I didn't have words to express what was running through my mind. I could feel him starting to panic a bit.

"Is it the babies? Are they okay?"

Xander hopped out of bed and was getting ready to rush me back to the pack hospital when I stopped him.

"The babies are fine, Xander. It's me who is not okay." I grabbed his arm and pulled him back to the bed. I then crawled onto his lap and wrapped my arms around his chest. "Just hold me for a little while, please?"

Xander did as I asked and brought his arms around me in a tight hug.

"You had another dream, didn't you? One of your vivid ones?"

"Yes," I whispered.

I didn't even ask how he knew. This man knew everything about me, so why would this be any different?

"And it was Alexi this time?"

I just nodded. I couldn't bring myself to actually say the words. I felt like I had cheated on Xander, and it broke me.

"It's just a dream, baby. It just feels more real for you because of your powers. You didn't do anything wrong."

"No, that's not true. I did something so, so wrong!"

We heard a soft knock on the door, and I instantly knew who it was.

Xander looked down at me for a second before yelling out, "Come on in, Alexi."

The door slowly opened, and Alexi stepped in before quietly closing the door behind him.

I didn't want to look up at him. If I did, then I'd see what I had done, and it would be all too real.

"I'm sorry to disturb you guys so late. Something weird just happened and I—"

"It's fine, Alexi. Sit down and give us a minute," Xander told him. He looked back down at me and took my face in his hands. "Alaia, just explain it to him. It's a shock to literally be pulled into someone else's sex dream. I should know, it sure shocked the hell out of me."

He sat me next to him, then got up from the bed, grabbing a silk robe for me to put on.

Once I was wrapped up, I stood and walked over to the seating area where both guys were waiting for me.

Just get it over with, Alaia. You can't change what happened now.

"Alexi, I know what you want to talk about. You were pulled into one of my dreams. They aren't like regular dreams; they are much more vivid and feel more real."

"This was real, Angel. I don't know how, but it was."

"Alexi, it's happened to me before. It's not real. It's just Alaia's powers of communication. She's just really, really good with communicating," Xander said with his cocky smirk.

"Xander, these can't be explained away by 'communication,'" Alexi said, showing the scratches up and down both of his arms.

"I felt these, all of them."

Xander and I just looked on in silence. When I had pulled him into my dream, there were no physical marks afterward. I didn't even know that I could do something like this, and now it was staring me right in the face.

This was bad.

“Angel, can you explain these to me? If the dream only feels real, then why are these here?”

“I-I can't. I don't know, Alexi. I wish I did, but . . .”

We sat in silence for a few more seconds before he finally said, “Then can you tell me why you marked me?”

Oh, shit.

FIFTY | MOMENT OF TRUTH

## Chapter 50 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

There it was, out in the open—my mark residing on Alexi's neck. I couldn't deny my feelings anymore. And even if I tried, what good would it have done? I had marked him and claimed him as mine. It seemed clear to me that my body knew what it wanted. My subconscious knew what it wanted. But I was just too afraid to say it.

Xander sat beside me and stared at the mark on Alexi's neck. I'm sure he was not expecting to be hit with this. None of us were. And even though this had been his idea from the start, I was afraid that seeing that I had marked another man would make him change his mind.

I reached over, and tentatively took his hand.

To my surprise, he adjusted and interlaced our fingers, giving me a reassuring smile. “It's alright, little one. Just talk to us. Everything is going to be fine.”

It's all going to be okay. I can do this. I just need to say what I feel, what I know in my heart to be true.

“Okay . . . Alexi, I want to apologize for marking you. It's not that I didn't want to, but it's just that the whole vivid dream deal is confusing enough, and to be physically marked in the process

is unfair. It's almost like a violation, and I wish I could take that back and that you could be marked in the way you deserve."

I took a deep breath and continued.

"The reason you were the subject of my dream is because of our earlier conversation. I think that maybe it opened me up to the possibilities of us being together. And when I sleep, my mind isn't in control anymore, my body and subconscious take over. So clearly, they want you."

My eyes were downcast into my lap. Why was I so embarrassed about all of this? It was clear I couldn't control what I wanted, and trying to fight it wasn't helping at all.

It brought back memories of Xander trying to control Alastair, locking him away until he finally broke free. I'd done the same thing with my feelings for Alexi, and now this had happened. You can't hide who or what you are. Eventually, it will come out, and usually when you least expect it.

"Angel?" Alexi called, waiting for me to look up at him.

When I finally met his stormy gray eyes, that smile that used to make my stomach do crazy cartwheels graced his face. He really was beautiful. He was an idiot, sure, but he was so damn beautiful. "Angel, does this mean what I hope it means? Are you willing to be with me, too?"

This was my moment of truth.

Was I willing to be with him?

Could I get over the rejection or the insane use of dark magic that caused his wolf to lose its fucking mind, or the three weeks said wolf held me captive? Could I forgive him for setting off a chain of events that caused Xander almost to lose his life, and for me, almost to lose my babies? Could I ever really move on from it all and fully accept him? So much had happened since the night of my birthday.

But then I thought about it; I could forgive him for the rejection. Although it hurt like hell, I could kind of understand why he felt it was the best option. And in the end, it was, because it brought me Xander and my babies and my Blue Moon pack, and I couldn't ever regret anything that led me to them. The introduction of the dark magic, I guess I could forgive, too. It wasn't meant to hurt me; it just scared the shit out of me. And at the time, even when I was terrified, I knew that Alexi was hurting and needed my help.

But not the rest. Not the poison, or the pack of rogues, or the horrible kidnapping. I could never forgive that. I could never forget that. I would never be entirely over it.

"Alexi, some of the things that have happened are too much for me to let go of. I just can't. So, no. No, I'm not willing to be with you."

The look on his face when I finally said those words destroyed me. He had genuinely hoped that we could be together, and I had just doused that hope in gasoline and set it on fire.

I leaned forward, took his hands, and looked him in the eye. “I’m not willing to be with you until Max is gone.”

\*\*\*

Alexi POV

When Alaia said she didn’t want to be with me, it was like feeling the breaking of our mating bond all over again. She had rejected me, and now I truly knew how she had felt when I had done the same to her. But then those tiny little hands of hers took mine. I wanted to snatch my hands away and leave. Leave the room, the house, and the pack. I wanted to go off somewhere and lick my wounds, wallow in my own self-pity, but I also wanted to hold on to her one last time.

“I’m not willing to be with you until Max is gone.”

Then I felt it. A warmth that spread through my entire being. My angel was accepting me. She wanted me as I wanted her. No longer being a werewolf was a small price to pay if I got to live my life next to her.

“Of course, angel, I’d do anything. I already wanted Max gone, but now I have no doubts at all about getting rid of him. I’ll do anything to have a chance to make you happy.”

Then she smiled at me. I had seen her smile before, but this one seemed so much brighter, so much more beautiful. And it was only for me.

“Well, I guess we just need to figure out how to rid a man from his wolf, then we’re good to go,” Xander chimed in.

“Yeah, hopefully, we don’t have to stop my heart or something crazy like that.”

“Don’t worry, Alexi. Starting tomorrow, or later today, actually, I’ll make it my mission to figure this out. I said I’d help you, and I will. Now I just have a little bit more motivation,” Alaia said with another smile.

Damn if she wasn’t the most incredible woman ever created. I couldn’t believe I was so lucky to get a second chance with her. I was going to cherish every moment, so there was no way in hell I was screwing this up. “Sounds good to me. So, I’ll go now and leave you guys to try and get back to sleep,” I said before standing to my feet.

My angel stood up, too, and stepped forward to wrap her arms around my waist. She rested her head on my chest. She was so soft and warm and small and perfect.

I bent my head down and took a deep breath to inhale her scent. “Yep . . . warm honey, just like I said before.”

Xander roared with laughter before he, too, stood to his feet. “Whatever, man. Just get to bed. You still have training at 5:00. No exceptions.”

I kissed the top of her mass of curls before I stepped back and out the door. This was the best night of my life. I didn’t think I’d ever be able to fall back asleep.

\*\*\*

Xander POV

I could feel the relief roll off Alaia as she spoke to Alexi. And in a way, I was relieved as well. I had done what I had set out to do and made sure that she could have any and everything she wanted.

And him saying she smelled like warm honey let me know that this triangle was meant to be. The first time I had heard him say those words, I wanted nothing more than to rip his head from his body. But now it seemed that the Goddess was blessing their pairing again; if he could smell warm honey, it meant that Alaia was once again his mate.

It’s funny how time changed things.

Maybe my little one was always supposed to have two mates. Who knows? What I did know was that she was happy, and I’d intended to keep it that way.

When we were finally back in bed, I pulled her close to me and ran my fingers through her hair.

She placed her hands on my chest and mindlessly drew circles with her fingertips.

“How are you feeling, little one?”

“I feel great. Better than I have in a really long time. And I am so thankful.”

I felt a tear land on my bare skin at the same time I heard a small snuffle escape her. I looked down and gently held her face, lifting it to meet mine. “Hey, what’s the matter, baby? Why are you crying? This is supposed to be a happy moment.”

“I’m so overwhelmed and grateful, Xander. I never, ever, thought anyone could love me this much. And to my surprise, I don’t just get to love and be loved by you; I get to experience it with Alexi, too. I don’t know what I did to deserve all this.”

“You did everything, baby. If anyone deserves this, it’s you. Don’t ever doubt all the good you continuously do for everyone around you, okay?”

She sniffled once more, then laughed. “Okay. I’m done with the tears now. I’ll just blame that on the hormones, too.”

“You cry as much as you want, beautiful. No judgment here. Now go to sleep, you need your rest.”

I wrapped my arms tighter around her until her head rested over my heart, and soon I felt her relax and drift off.

\*\*\*

4:30 AM came all too soon, and I was really kicking myself for scheduling training so early. I carefully removed myself from the bed to not wake Alaia and went to take a quick shower to wake myself up. Fifteen minutes later, I was cleaned, brushed, and heading to the closet to get dressed. I pulled on some black sweatpants with a matching hoodie and my black Nike running shoes before I quietly opened the door and crept out into the hall.

Alexi was leaving his room at the same time, and I noticed that we were matching, head to toe.

“One of us really needs to change,” I said.

“I don’t have any more clothes, my stuff from home hasn’t arrived yet, so that leaves you.”

“And I don’t want to wake Alaia. You never want to interrupt a pregnant woman’s sleep. That’s suicide.”

“Well, I guess we’re twins today. So, let’s just get this over with.”

I sighed as I lead the way out of the house and to the training grounds. “So listen, Alexi. You’re a strong fighter, clearly a Beta, but you’re going to need to train extra hard going forward. Once your wolf is gone, you’ll be more vulnerable. I need to know that even without him, you can still protect Alaia if I’m not around.”

“Absolutely. That’s not going to be an issue at all,” he confidently replied.

“Good, and one more thing. You’re not part of the pack yet, and the warriors are going to be suspicious of you. I’ll introduce you as a friend of Alaia’s from Opal Moon, but we’ll keep the whole ‘King of the Rogues’ thing between us, cool?”

“That’s perfect. I didn’t really want to have to face off against an entire warrior squad. I’m good, but I’m not that damn good,” he said with a chuckle.

Kade and Matt caught up with us as we continued the walk to the clearing.

“Whoa! Why does the newbie get to match with you? I’ve been your best friend for over twenty years, and we’ve never once played dress up!” Kade yelled.

“Will you shut the hell up? First off, why are you so damn loud, and second, no one is ‘playing dress-up.’ These are the only workout clothes he has here right now, and I wasn’t risking going back to change and waking Alaia.”

“If it makes you feel better, Kade, you and I can switch hoodies. Then none of us will match,” Alexi suggested.

I looked over at Kade to see he was wearing a gray sweatsuit—this was perfect. Now I wouldn’t have to hear anyone’s mouth.

“I don’t care if it makes him feel better or not, switch. Now.”

The guys did as they were told just in time for us to arrive at the training grounds.

All of my warriors were already present and warming up.

I took a moment to address them all before we got started. “Good morning, everyone.”

“Good morning, Alpha.”

“Just a quick announcement. As you all can see, we have a new fighter joining us. This is Alexi; he’s a friend of the Luna’s from her old pack. But under no circumstances are you to go easy on him just because he’s close with the Luna. You will give him everything you’ve got, no special treatment. Regardless of who we are, we all fight like alphas. Understood?”

“Yes, Alpha!”

“Alright. Henry, you’re up.”

My lead warrior and trainer, Henry, stepped forward and looked Alexi up and down before looking him straight in the eye. “I remember you and the trouble you caused in your old pack. It was my men and me who had to come there to escort our Luna home. It seems you have made amends for whatever it was you did before and earned the Alpha’s trust, but if you have any intentions of causing my Luna any more harm, I will kill you. Without hesitation or regrets. On my honor.”

I didn’t know what to expect from Alexi after hearing what Henry had to say. But he didn’t back down or shy away at all. He took a step closer to Henry and said, “I would expect nothing less. It’s your job to keep her safe, and I respect that. But don’t worry, if any harm ever comes to our Luna by my hands, I’d kill myself before you ever got the chance to. On my honor.”

I had never seen it done before, but Henry was actually impressed. Hell, so was I.

Alexi had balls, and I was becoming more and more confident that he’d protect Alaia with his life.



“Good, I’m glad to see that we understand each other.” Henry then turned to the group behind him. “Ten-mile warmup. Let’s go!”

This was going to be a long and painful training session.