

## Chapter 51 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

After two hours of training, Henry finally released us from his clutches. I could tell that he was testing Alexi, trying to push his limits, but he never once broke. Alexi ran at the front of the group, never in the middle or back. He sparred with our biggest and best, and when he was knocked on his ass, he got right back up. He breezed through hundreds of push-ups and sit-ups without complaints, and when he was finished, he asked for more. Alexi had proved himself right off the bat, and this would make his acclimation into our pack that much easier.

On my way back to the house, I pulled the guys aside. “After breakfast, I wanted to talk to you three in my office. It won’t take long, maybe fifteen minutes or so. Then I’ve got to head into the office for a few meetings.”

They all agreed as we made our way back to the house to shower and get cleaned up.

After my shower, I went to my closet and pulled out a charcoal gray suit, a crisp white shirt, and shiny black dress shoes.

I much preferred sweat pants or jeans, but I had important business today. These meetings would decide if we could expand into the European market, and I needed to look the part.

When I was dressed, I headed down to breakfast and found Alaia and the guys already seated at the table. The look on her face when she saw me instantly filled me with need, and I wanted to bend her over the table and take her hard and fast and rough right there, right then. “Xander, you look incredible. You should really wear suits more often. Not that you don’t always look delicious, but, wow,” she said breathlessly.

“As much as I appreciate the compliment, not a chance. Suits are just not my style.” I sat down beside her and began to fill my plate while talking and laughing with everyone.

It felt good to connect with them. The craziness of the past couple of months drew so much of my focus, and I didn’t want my pack to suffer because of it.

Toward the end of the meal, my mother and Kimmy came in and headed straight toward me. I could tell that my sister was about to start her usual over-excited ball of energy thing before

Mom stopped her in her tracks. “Kimmy, I told you. Tone it down. Alaia can’t take too much extra excitement right now.”

Kimmy pouted but then nodded her head in agreement.

“Good morning, you two,” Mom said to us.

“Morning, Mom. Mornin,g Kimmy.”

She smiled before she addressed Alaia directly. “Alaia, sweetheart. I’d like to talk with you about the baby shower for the twins. I don’t want to do anything that will overwhelm you, so if I could just have a bit of your time to see if you have any input or like any ideas I have come up with, I promise to set you free within the hour.”

I looked over at Alaia, who looked relieved beyond reason.

“Sure, Katherine. I can do that. Can we meet in ten minutes?”

“Of course, dear. I’ll be waiting up in your office.”

She then turned and grabbed Kimmy’s arm, pulling her down the hall and out of sight.

When they had left the room, Alaia looked up at me and raised an eyebrow. “Xander, what was that?”

“What do you mean, baby? I told you she wanted to plan a baby shower.”

“You know exactly what I mean. Why were they both so calm? Kimmy didn’t pounce on me or even scream. She always screams; that’s how she communicates. And Katherine was the opposite of intense. Whatever that is. So, tell me, why was that?”

I may or may not have told them that if they couldn’t tone it down and let Alaia breathe, they wouldn’t see the twins until they were off to kindergarten. It was a bit extreme, but it was all I could think of to get them to cool it. “I don’t have any idea what you mean, beautiful. Are you enjoying your breakfast?” I asked, quickly changing the subject.

She flashed a knowing smile up at me and nodded her head, then went back to finishing her meal. When she was done, she leaned over and pecked my cheek before standing to head up.

“Wait! Which one of you guys will be escorting little one up to her office?”

I then looked over at the guys.

“Oh, come on! You weren’t really serious about that, were you?” Alaia protested.

I just looked at her, and she knew I was dead serious.

“I’ll take her up,” Alexi offered. He downed his glass of juice before walking over and taking Alaia’s arm.

“This is ridiculous,” I heard her say as she rounded the corner.

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Alaia POV

As he walked me up the stairs to my office, Alexi’s hand lightly grazed against mine, sending sparks shooting up my arm. It was exciting to experience that connection again that was broken such a short time ago.

“Do you feel that, too, Angel?”

“Yes, I feel it. I’ve always felt it, it just took you a little bit longer,” I teased.

He laughed and smiled down at me. “I was an idiot, I know. But I’ll spend the rest of our lives showing you how grateful I am for this second chance.”

“I’ll hold you to that. After I’m done with Katherine, I’ll head to the library to see what I can find out about Max. We’ll get you taken care of, okay?”

“Don’t worry so much about me. And don’t stress yourself looking for the answer. We’ll find it when we are meant to.”

We stopped at the front door to my office before he raised his hand and gently rubbed my cheek.

“Have a good day, angel.” He leaned down and pressed his lips to my forehead, covering me in warmth.

“You’re smooth, Alexi. Now I see why all the girls were falling at your feet in school.”

He laughed hearing that, then leaned in close, so close I could feel his breath fan across my face. His voice dropped to just above a whisper and became obscenely deep and sexy. “It was all a show, the only girl I ever really wanted was this tiny, curvy, incredibly sexy goddess with the most amazing golden eyes. I never told her because I didn’t want her big brother to kick my ass—he’s an alpha and crazy protective. But she smelled like the sweetest honey, and I had so many fantasies about dripping it all over that delicious little body of hers and slowly licking it off. She was all I ever thought about; what I’d like to do to her and what I’d like her to do to me. Every single moment of every single day.”

He traced the outline of my lips with his fingertips, and just like that, my flower was awake and dripping.

Then he straightened up and took a step back. “I hear the guys coming, so I’ll talk to you later, beautiful.”

He was such a fucking tease; he’d pay for that one for sure.

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Xander POV

“You fellas ready? I’ve got to be out of here in thirty if I’m going to make it to the office on time.”

“We’re ready,” Matt said.

We left the table and made our way up. When we arrived, I found that Alexi was already waiting at the door for us.

We went in, and once we were all seated, I addressed Kade and Matt while Alexi looked on.

“So I’m going to make this quick. Alexi is going to become a member of our pack soon. You already know that he’s been moved from the cells and now has the room across the hall from Alaia and me. The reason he has that particular room is, he is now Alaia’s mate as well. Or will be.”

I paused and looked at the guy's faces. They just stared blankly back at me. “Did you hear what I just said?”

“Yeah, but we’re waiting on the big ‘announcement,’” Kade stated.

“What are you talking about? I just told you. Alexi will be Alaia’s mate. She’ll have two, the both of us. You’re telling me that none of this surprises you?”

“Honestly, no. Not at all,” Matt said.

“It was clear that Alaia had feelings for Alexi that she was trying to hold in. And Alexi did a piss poor job of hiding his feelings. I thought I was going to have to kick his ass more than a few times. And we know you’d give her anything she ever wanted, so yeah, this all just makes sense,” Kade reasoned.

“I said it way back when you first found her. The Luna turned our big bad Alpha into a love-sick puppy. This arrangement just proves my point.”

“Fuck off, Kade,” I grumbled.

“Anyway, since that is out of the way, Matt, could you help Alaia find a way to get rid of Max? Nothing will be official with all of this until he’s gone. We aren’t taking any chances.”

“Sure thing, I’ll go find her after we’re done here. I’m pretty sure I know a few places we can look for the info we need.”

“Thanks. And Alexi, I can take you into the office with me if you like. We can see if anything stands out that you’d be interested in doing.”

“That sounds cool, but I don’t have any business clothes yet.”

“Just some jeans and a button-up will work. Go and change, then be down at the garage in ten.”

Alexi nodded, then made his way out of the room.

When he was out of earshot, I again looked at Kade and Matt.

“Alright guys, now is your chance. Tell me what you think, don’t hold anything back.”

They looked at each other then back to me.

“We just told you. You know that Alaia’s happiness and safety are our priority, just like they are yours. She’s not just our Luna, she’s like a little sister to us, and we know this is a good thing for her,” Matt said.

I heaved a sigh of relief.

I didn’t care what the rest of the pack thought, they would fall in line whether they liked it or not, but these two were my closest friends. They were my brothers, and their opinions mattered. More than most. “Okay. Then I guess that’s it for now. I’ll see you guys later this afternoon. And make sure Alaia doesn’t sneak up or down the stairs alone.”

I went down to the garage and hopped into my truck then waited for Alexi.

He came out a few minutes later and climbed into the passenger seat then looked over at me. “Okay, I’m all for a job, but, just an FYI, I refuse to be your sexy personal assistant. These abs and this ass are for Alaia only.”

I pulled out and down the driveway, and I couldn’t help but laugh. “I guess I’ll just have to restrain myself. I don’t know how I’ll manage.”

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Alaia POV

After Alexi’s stunt, I needed to take a moment to get myself together before I turned and walked into the office.

Katherine had four different idea boards set up and tons of samples and favors on the table.

She could make a killing as an event planner for sure.

“Hi, sweetie! I thought this would be the easiest way to make a decision. You can see what you like and just pick, rather than trying to visualize.”

“This is amazing, Katherine, really.”

“I’m glad you like it. Come on over and take a look at the boards. Once you choose one, we can decide on favors, games, etc.”

As I walked over, one board stood out over the others instantly. It was a gender reveal, “What Will It Bee?” themed party. It was adorable with the little bumblebees all over. And I loved the yellow, black, and white color scheme; it worked for a boy or a girl.

“This one,” I said, pointing at the board.

“Well, that was easy. Now, if we can pick a few more items, I can let you get back to your day sooner than I thought.”

Fifteen minutes later, Katherine was off to do what she did best, and I was sitting in the library surrounded by tons of dusty old books.

Matt walked in shortly after to give me a hand. “Stop lifting all these books, bean. Go sit down, and I’ll bring you whatever you need. I told you to wait for me, anyway.”

“Sorry, Matt. I’m just anxious to get this all figured out.”

“I’m sure you are. Xander told Kade and me what’s going on.”

I held my breath. I didn’t know what his reaction would be, and I would hate for Matt to be disappointed in me.

He looked at my face and laughed. “Breathe, bean. I’m happy for you. For all of you.”

“Really? That’s such a relief. I couldn’t handle it if my Matty were upset with me.”

“You’re the only person I’ll ever let refer to me as ‘Matty,’ just remember that.”

“Fine by me. So, what have you got?”

He brought over about five or six ancient-looking leather-bound books and sat them down. “I’d say we start here. These books date back centuries and are full of information regarding the man and wolf connection. I would guess that if they know about that connection, then maybe somewhere someone found how to break it.”

I grabbed the top book on the stack and passed it over to Matt before I took the second one down. “Okay, let’s see what we can find.”

Two hours later, I was starving, my body was stiff from sitting for so long, and I was pretty sure my eyes had permanently crossed. “This is grueling! Why are the words so tiny and so many?”

I looked over at Matt to see that he was quickly scanning a page with an extreme look of concentration on his face.

“Matt? Did you find anything?”

“Just a minute, bean . . .” He continued to scan the page, then pulled out his phone and started furiously typing in Google. Google and ancient tomes working hand and hand—super weird. He finally set his phone down and leaned back in his chair.

“Matt, you’re killing me here. What did you find? What did Google have to add? Give me something!”

“I think I found it. But it’s not good.”

I waved my hands around impatiently. The anticipation was driving me insane.

“On the next full Lunar Eclipse, he has to shift into his wolf, then be drained of his blood. All of it. With the absence of the moon, his wolf cannot heal and will slowly die.”

“But . . . but that will kill Alexi, too. If he dies in his wolf form, the man dies, too.”

“Only two wolves have ever survived it. I don’t know how many have tried, but I’m sure it was more than two.”

“There has to be something else we can try. Maybe a potion or a spell? Or maybe I can just keep suppressing Max forever.”

“Alaia, you can’t do that. Max is a danger, and you know it. And Alexi wouldn’t go for it; he’d die before he let Max have a chance to hurt you again. Having him lay dormant isn’t doing anything to solve the problem. And Alexi is suffering at the same time. He is a werewolf who can’t exist in his animal form. A part of him is locked in a cage. Even if he doesn’t show it, he still feels it.

“So to save him, we have to kill him . . .”

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Alexi POV

Riding into the city with Xander was surprisingly more comfortable than I thought it would be. The more we spent time together, the more I began to like him. And we had a lot more in common than I initially thought.

“So, I always had a way with numbers when I was in school. I didn’t so much care for other subjects, but math always clicked for me. You think you have anything in accounting I could try out?”

“Uhh, yeah, actually. We have a junior management position open in the accounting department at my construction firm. I think you’d have to take an aptitude test and interview with the senior manager, but that could be a good fit. I believe there would be ten or fifteen associates who would report directly to you as well, but you’re a Beta, so you’re a born leader.”

“That sounds perfect. Just let me know who I need to speak to, and I’ll take it from there. If I get the job, I want to know that it’s because I deserve it and nothing else.”

“That’s admirable. I’ll ask my HR director to get the information over before I leave for the day.”

When we arrived at his office, I was surprised by it, to say the least. It was a large glass building, at least twenty stories, with “Black Enterprises” covering the entire top floor.

As we pulled into the underground garage, I turned to him and asked, “Why have I never noticed this place? It’s huge . . . and flashy.”

“We just finished construction a few months ago. We had offices spread across the city, but felt it was better to have everyone housed in the same place.” He parked the car, and we made our way up the elevator to the main lobby.

As we were crossing the floor, I saw someone at the reception desk who caught my eye, but not in a good way.

Xander saw me looking and offered a bit of background.

“We usually have six receptionists working at the front desk. But please, watch out for Elizabeth. She’s only been with us for a few weeks, but I can already tell that she is trouble. She has already hit on Kade, Matt, and me multiple times. She is one misstep from being fired, honestly.”

“Uhh, which one is Elizabeth?”

“The blonde in the red, second from the right.”

When I looked at her, my heart skipped. I knew this girl.

We walked into Xander’s private elevator and pushed the button for the top floor.



“Xander. That girl at reception? Her name is not Elizabeth. It’s Victoria, and she’s Francesca’s sister.”

FIFTY-TWO | REUNION TIME

## Chapter 52 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

Once Alexi filled me in on the true identity of my receptionist, I walked into my office and called down to security to have them make sure she didn’t leave the building.

“Are you sure that’s her, Alexi? 100% sure?” I asked him.

“Yes. I’d recognize Victoria anywhere. That bitch ruined my life; I could never forget her face.”

I had planned to leave her to Aaron to find and deal with, but it seemed the universe had different plans. Even though she wasn’t on my land, she was in my building, and that gave me the right, at the very least, to hold her until her Alpha was notified and made the decision on the next steps.

“Okay. I’ll call down and ask to have her sent up to my office. It just so happens that I have an interrogation room here as well, so we’ll put her there. I still have the meetings that I have to get to, but she won’t be able to go anywhere.” I needed to get to a meeting in less than five minutes. I couldn’t be late. Not for this one. “Alexi, you’ve got to handle this.”

He looked at me like I had grown two extra heads. “What the hell are you talking about, man? This is your thing. I’m just here observing.”

“Alexi, this meeting is ‘make or break’ for this company. I have too many people depending on it going well. You know Victoria, so when she gets here, just put her in the room and call Aaron. Then you just have to wait for him to either send someone for her or whatever he plans to do.”

He looked around the room for a few seconds before his eyes landed back on mine. “Let security know that I’m here, and they can leave Victoria with me. I’ll take care of it. Don’t worry, just get to your meeting.”

Whatever doubts he may have had seemed to disappear. He was confident that he could handle this situation, and I knew he wouldn’t let me down.

“The interrogation room is there to the right,” I said, pointing to the door. “Keys are top drawer, and I think there might be zip ties in there as well. If you need me, just let me know. I’ll be down on the tenth floor.”

I started to walk back toward my elevator, then yelled out, “You can also call Kade if you need him!” As the elevator doors closed, I tried to push Victoria out of my mind and focus. First, I’d get this expansion finalized; then, I’d make sure she met a similar end to her sister. “We’re coming for you, Victoria.”

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Alexi POV

It threw me off when Xander decided to pass Victoria off to me. I wasn’t expecting it, and I really wasn’t prepared. But I had been trained for these types of situations my entire life. Not ‘crazy ex’s who tried to kill your mate, then hideout at the business of said mate’s other mate’ type situations. I don’t think anyone ever trained for that. But I was prepared to step in for the Alpha at a moment’s notice, so that’s what I would do.

I sat down in Xander’s black leather chair and took a few deep breaths. I hated this girl with a passion and just wanted her out of mine and Alaia’s lives for good. When I ran my hands over the top of the desk to calm myself further, I felt a small button just on the underside. I pressed it and heard the door to the office click.

A lock switch, nice!

I was going to enjoy this.

I turned toward the wall of windows behind me. When Francesca walked in, she would just see the back of the chair and not who was sitting in it.

Very mob-like, I know, but it always worked in the movies.

I heard the ding of the elevator before the doors glided open. The clicking of high heels and the clomp of military-style boots followed before they were at the office door.

“Sir, I have Ms. Elizabeth here as you asked,” the security guard said.

I didn’t move, and I heard him take a few steps back then close the door, leaving Victoria and me in the room alone.

“It’s about time you came to your senses, sexy. I knew you couldn’t resist for too long. It was only a matter of time.”

Her voice was like scraping a fork on a chalkboard. I didn't know how I ever put up with her. But I couldn't hear her mouth anymore. I heard her take a few steps toward the desk when I spun around and looked her dead in the eye.

She sputtered and almost tripped over her own feet.

I wished she would have. That would have been perfect.

“A-Alexi! What are you doing here? Where is Xander?”

“Aww, are you not happy to see me? Have you moved on so quickly? I'm hurt, Victoria, or do you prefer Elizabeth, now?”

Her eyes flicked around while she tried to think of her next move. Then she composed herself and took one of the seats in front of the desk. “You know I'm doing all of this for you, baby. Everything I've done has been for you.”

This bitch was revolting; I really was an idiot to have ever gone for her.

“And what exactly are you doing here, Victoria? Jade City is far away from home.”

She shrugged a shoulder and flipped her hair. “Just research. I've got business to finish and needed information on all the players.”

“You're after Xander?”

Victoria's eyes flashed black, and her canines extended. “Fuck, Xander! It's that fucking cunt, Alaia! She ruined everything for me, and she will pay. Oh, how that bitch will pay.”

Now it was my turn to get angry. “Victoria, I'm going to say this slowly and only once. Don't you ever speak about her like that again. You will keep her name out of your mouth, and if you ever disrespect her in my presence again, I will rip your fucking tongue from your skull. Do we have an understanding?”

I was staring her straight in the eye, and even though my wolf was suppressed, she could still feel the fury rolling off me in waves.

“Y-Yes. I understand.”

“Good. Maybe you're not a dumb as you look.”

Clearly, I spoke too soon, because Victoria was on her feet and walking over to me, trying her best to be seductive. “That was so hot, baby. I love to see you so dominant and possessive. Why were you never like that with me?” She gave a fake pout and sat on the edge of the desk. She intentionally let her skirt hike up, revealing her pale, thin thighs.

She couldn't hold a candle to my angel. I don't know what I was doing, thinking she could ever be a replacement.

She ran a finger along my jaw and down to the collar of my shirt.

When she saw my mark, her eyes went round, and she snatched her hand back. "You're marked. Who marked you?" She was flustered, and I could see her entire plan falling apart right in front of her.

But I still had a little more fun to have. "Don't worry about that; she's not here. But you are." I then reached under the desk and pressed the button to lock the door.

When she heard the lock engage, a wicked smile spread across her face.

I couldn't wait to rip that smile right off. I reached in the top drawer for the keys to the interrogation room, then slid back from the desk and stood up. "Come on, let's go somewhere a little more private. And soundproofed."

She smiled again, and the scent of her arousal hit me.

Old cheese and hot garbage would have been so much more appealing. I repressed the strong urge to gag and gave her my most charming smile. "You want dominant and possessive? I think I can do that." I grabbed a few zip ties and waved them in front of her before walking over to the door and unlocking it.

The room was pitch black, and I could barely see where anything was. It didn't matter, though. I didn't need to see the place to do what I had come here to do.

I swung Victoria around and jerked her arms behind her back before I tightly secured the zip ties.

"Not so rough, baby. I like a little pleasure with my pain."

I leaned down and growled in her ear, "Fuck your pleasure!" I pushed her down to the ground and fastened ties to both her ankles before I stood and found the light switch.

The room filled with light, which allowed me to see it clearly for the first time.

"Alexi, baby. This bondage thing is hot and all, but when are we going to get to the fun? I've missed you so much. Have you missed me, too?"

While she rambled on, I walked over to a table in the corner and grabbed a roll of duct tape. I then walked back to Victoria, ripped a huge piece off, and slapped it over her mouth.

"Finally! You never shut the fuck up. It's obvious I was too nice when I said you're not as dumb as you look. We won't be having any 'fun' today, or ever again. And I didn't tie you up to live out some kinky fantasy of yours. You disgust me, Victoria!"

Her eyes widened, and she finally realized what was happening. She started to panic and struggled to breathe through her nose.

“Oh, calm down, I’m not going to kill you.”

This admission offered her a bit of relief as her huge bulging eyes slowly closed, and her breathing calmed.

“Wait, maybe I should rephrase that. I don't want to give you any false hopes or anything. I’m not going to kill you, but someone is. Xander, Aaron, who knows. But you will die very, very soon.”

She began to hyperventilate again, but I didn’t care. If she passed out, she’d just be less of a headache for me to deal with.

“And to answer your earlier question, I got this mark from my angel. Alaia.”

Her screams were masked by the tape as she thrashed around on the bare floor.

I shut the light off and closed the door, locking her in. I had wasted enough time and energy on her. Now, it was someone else’s turn.

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Aaron POV

I had been lying on the couch in my office, trying to juggle all the things I needed to get done in my head when my phone rang. I went to the desk to see that it was Xander’s office. That was strange; he usually called me from his cell.

“Hey, Xander. Everything okay?”

I was surprised to hear the voice that came through the speaker.

“Aaron, it’s Alexi.”

“Alexi? What are you doing in Xander’s office? I thought you were down in the cells.”

If he had pulled some shit and broken out, or done anything stupid, I was not going to swoop in and save him. He would be on his own.

“It’s a long story, man. One I’ll gladly explain later. But the reason I’m calling is I found Victoria.”

I slumped into my chair. We had been searching tirelessly for Victoria, and never once did I think to look on Xander’s territory. “Where was she? Is Alaia safe?”

“Yeah, Angel is perfect. Victoria was hiding out as one of Xander’s receptionists, using the name Elizabeth.”

I didn’t miss it when he called Alaia “angel.” He used to sometimes call her that when we were younger. When he would be pining for her but refused to admit it, but I’d dive into all that later.

“So, where is Victoria now?”

“I locked her in Xander’s interrogation room in his office.”

“I’d really love to know why you’re at the office doing all this shit. But, whatever. Is this the new building? What’s the address?”

Alexi read off the address as I punched it into my cell. A little over two and a half hours away. We could make it in two. “Thanks, man. We’re on the way. See you in a couple of hours.” I hung up and sighed. Lucas would have to chip away at that to-do list until I could figure out this Victoria nonsense.

I grabbed my things and walked out of the office, running into Jordyn on the way.

“Hey. I’m heading to Jade City. Alexi found Victoria working at Xander’s office.”

She frowned her face at me. “None of anything you just said makes sense to me.”

“Me either, baby. Can you round up the team? I want to be on the road in the next few minutes.”

“I’m linking them now.”

While she was doing that, I shot Lucas a quick link. Lucas? I’ve got to head out to Jade City. We found Victoria. Can you keep things under wraps here while I’m gone?

Of course, Alpha.

Thanks. I’ll be taking a few of the warriors with me, and knowing Jordyn, she won’t miss the opportunity to kick someone’s ass, so she’ll probably come along, too.

He laughed at that. I would expect nothing less from the Luna. Be safe; I’ll keep an eye on things here.

I also figured I should tell him about Alexi.

Lucas, one more thing. Somehow Alexi is involved in all of this. He’s the one who called me with Victoria’s whereabouts. Alexi is the one guarding her now. I do not know all the details, but I don’t think he’s in any trouble. I’ll tell you as soon as I can, though.

Thank you, Alpha. If he could stay safe as well, I’d really appreciate it.

I'll do my best.

With that done, I headed outside and into the back of the waiting SUV. Jordyn slid in beside me, and we were off.

“Alexi better have a damn good explanation for all of this,” I said while looking out the window.

“If he doesn't, I'll kick his ass once I'm done with that slut Victoria. I've wanted to get my hands on her for a while, but he's a nice substitute.”

I chuckled. “Lucas would appreciate if we could leave his son in one piece, if at all possible, babe.”

“Fine! I never get to have any fun.”

I leaned over and grabbed her face, then gave her a quick kiss on the lips.

“I didn't make any promises where Victoria is concerned. You have all the fun with her you want, baby.”

Jordyn smiled her sneaky, devious smile, and I knew then. Victoria was in for a world of hurt when my Luna got her hands on her.

FIFTY-THREE | ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

## Chapter 53 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

Those meetings seemed to drag on and on, and I had become restless. There was some serious shit going down in my office, and I had no idea what exactly it was. Two hours after I had arrived, the lawyers present were still bickering back and forth about clauses and amendments, but I had mentally checked out.

“Mr. Black? Are you ready to sign now?” I heard someone say. I looked up to see my lawyer with a thick contract in his hands. It looked like they had finally come to an agreement.

“Yes, sorry, Dante. Where do you need my signatures?”

It took another five minutes for me to sign and initial all the required spots before everything was done. Black Enterprises was cleared to expand into Europe, which would increase our profits exponentially.

I shook a few hands and excused myself from the room as soon as I could. I glanced down at my watch while waiting for the elevator; Alexi had been left on his own for two and a half hours, and I just hoped that everything had gone okay.

When I arrived at my private floor, I found the lobby area full of Opal Moon warriors.

When they saw me, they gave me a small bow. “Alpha Xander. The Alpha, Luna, Alexi, and the prisoner are all in your office.”

I offered a quick thanks before I walked over and into my office.

Alexi and Aaron were sitting on the desk laughing while Jordyn was in the chair texting. Victoria was hogtied and knocked out on the floor.

“Looks like I missed all the fun,” I said, drawing their attention to me.

Alexi quickly looked over. “Hey, Xan. How was the meeting?”

“Xan? Last time I checked, he wanted to kill you. Now you’ve got nicknames? I’d love to know what is going on,” Aaron said.

“Yeah, sure. But just a quick question. What happened to Victoria?” I asked.

“I happened to her,” Jordyn stated, looking up from her phone. “I’ve been waiting to knock her out for months; I just couldn’t help myself.”

“Works for me.” I walked over and took a seat behind the desk.

“So, do we want to discuss what’s going to happen to my ex-employee over there, or how Alexi is involved in all this first?”

Again, Jordyn chimed in. “Victoria is mine. We’ll take her back to our territory; then I’ll deal with her. I’m not sure what my plan is yet, but she will pay for everything she even thought of doing to my girl. Then she’ll pay for everything that she actually did do to her. I don’t know the details yet, but her days of breathing and slutting around are over. Now that’s out of the way, spill!”

I laughed at how she could switch from being cold and calculating to a girly gossip girl in the blink of an eye.

Aaron just stared at her with stars in his eyes.



Was this what a lovesick puppy looked like? Was this what Alaia did to me? Fucking hell. I shook off my thoughts and shared the recent events that had gone on at my pack. Alexi and I both told them about Alaia being both of our mates, about Alexi joining my pack, and working for my company.

Aaron looked on with a blank face while Jordyn looked like she was watching her favorite soap opera.

“Operation ‘Sex Sandwich’ is a-go. I knew it. She tried to fight it, but I knew it.”

We all looked at Jordyn with confused faces.

“Babe, what in the hell is a ‘sex sandwich?’” Aaron asked her.

She flung her hand between Alexi and me before replying, “This whole ‘thing’ they’ve got going on. These two sexy bastards are the bread and Alaia is the—”

“Stop! I get it! Please, that’s still my baby sister. I don’t want to think of her as anyone’s ‘meat.’”

Jordyn shrugged a shoulder and went back to texting on her phone.

“This is a lot to take in, guys. Alexi, I had hoped that one day, once we were all over everything, you would come back home. And that you would take your place as my Beta. Now you’re leaving all that behind?”

“I can’t be your Beta, Aaron. Not anymore. I don’t deserve it. I don’t know if I ever did really. Plus, I’ll be getting rid of Max soon. You need a wolf as your number two, not a simple human.”

“What do you mean you’re getting rid of him? He is a part of you. That would kill you, Alexi.”

Alexi looked down at his hands for a moment before he replied. “Maybe, but my angel is worth the risk.”

I saw it in Aaron’s eyes when he finally understood. “You really do love her, don’t you?”

“Of course I do. Your sister is everything to me. She’s all I’ve ever wanted, all I will ever want.”

Aaron was quiet for a moment before he exploded. “You are a fucking idiot, man! Why couldn’t you have figured this shit out months ago? Now we’re all stuck dealing with the repercussions. What the actual fuck, Alexi?”

“Aaron, calm down. It was meant to play out like this, don’t you see that? Alaia didn’t just ‘happen’ to end up with two mates. She was destined to have them. Alexi had to fuck up to allow Xander in. Now they’ve got their super hot sex sandwich thing going, and everyone is happy. So just kiss and make up already. I’m sick and tired of seeing you and Lucas moping around the house,” Jordyn demanded. All while still looking at her phone.

Aaron stood up and looked at Alexi. “When you are ready to get rid of Max, let me know. I’ll be there to help; however, I can. But if you die and break my sister’s heart again, I’ll do everything I can to make sure your afterlife is full of hot pokers being rammed up your ass. For all eternity. Got it?”

“Damn, that was beautiful, babe. Make sure you write something just as touching for our wedding vows, okay?”

Alexi and Aaron laughed before they pulled each other into a hug.

The beautiful moment was interrupted by Victoria beginning to moan and regain consciousness on the floor.

Jordyn stood up and swiftly leaned down, rolled Victoria onto her side, pulled her up by her collar, and hit her with a hard right hook. Victoria’s eyes rolled back before Jordyn let her go, allowing her head to hit the floor, and she was once again out cold.

“Aaron, we gotta go. If this bitch makes me break a nail, I’ll skin her alive.”

I looked at her, shocked. “Well, my little one called it. You really are a kick-ass Luna.”

“And don’t you forget it.” Jordyn opened the door and had a warrior come in and scoop Victoria up.

“Make sure to take my private elevator to the parking garage. Some of my employees are human and wouldn’t understand why their coworker was being carried out hogtied.”

“That’s fair. Tell my girl I’ll come to see her soon. I’ve got to make sure she’s nice and pampered before my niece gets here.”

“Oh, right. One last thing . . . it’s twins.”

Aaron’s face broke into a huge grin. “She’s continuing the tradition. The firstborn girls in our family always have twins their first time. It’s like a rite of passage.”

“Well, she could have at least told me! Once those babies are out, I’m kicking her ass, too!” Jordyn stormed out and barked for the rest of the warriors to follow her.

“She’s amazing,” Aaron mumbled while smiling after her.

Alexi looked over at me, thoroughly disgusted.

“Is this how we look around, Angel? Please tell me it’s not.”

“I’m afraid so, man. Love-sick puppies, all of us.”

“Fucking hell.”

\*\*\*

After Aaron and his crew left, I had lunch brought up for Alexi and me while he filled me in on everything that had happened.

“So, she thought the zip ties were for a bondage type situation? She really was fucked up in the head. I’d never use zip ties for that.”

“I’m just happy to be rid of her. When she started running her mouth about Alaia, I almost ripped her throat out. But I knew I had to keep calm; if I got too pissed, I didn’t think I could hold Max in, and I didn’t need him making any unexpected appearances.”

“You did good, Alexi. I’m sorry I had to leave you to deal with it all by yourself, but you handled it perfectly. And I think you are wrong; you do deserve to be Beta. You would have been a great number two.”

“Maybe, but that’s not in the cards anymore. It used to be all I cared about, but now Alaia is. Aaron will find someone great, I know it. I don’t regret my decision at all.”

“Cool, then I can give you this.”

I handed him the job description and requirements for the junior manager position I told him about. “The HR director is from our pack, so you being a born beta will help make up for your lack of experience. The rest is up to you.”

“Thanks. I’ll call tomorrow morning and try to set up an interview. Hopefully, I live long enough to actually complete it.”

“You’re not dying on us, man. You know what? Let’s head home. I’m sure Alaia and Matt have found something to help you out. Let’s go see what they’ve got.”

“I hope it’s something good. I’d rather avoid the ‘hot pokers up my ass for all of eternity’ thing if possible.”

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Alaia POV

I had been wracking my brain for hours trying to think of a way around literally killing Alexi while trying to save him. I’d just gotten him back, and I was determined to keep him. I had my powers, but there was no way I could bring him back from the dead, and completely bleeding his wolf would for sure kill him. I didn’t know what to do.

I heard footsteps coming down the hall, and soon the door to the room opened, revealing both my guys standing there. I turned my head and looked them over. It should be illegal to be half as delicious as they were. And they were all mine.

“Why are you lying in the middle of the floor, little one?” Xander asked, stepping closer to me.

“It’s how she thinks through something that’s bothering her. She’s done it since we were kids,” Alexi answered.

“Hmm. So, what’s bothering you? Maybe we can help.” Xander reached down and grabbed my hands, lifting me to my feet. We then walked over to the seating area, Xander beside me with Alexi in front.

“Matt and I found how to get rid of Max.”

“That’s great, so why are you upset?” Alexi asked.

“Because. We would have to wait until the full Lunar Eclipse, which is about a week away. Then you’d need to shift.”

“We can just make sure I’m secured when I shift, baby. We’ll make sure Max can’t hurt anyone.”

“It’s not just the shifting. Once you’re in your wolf form, we have to drain your blood. All of it. That’s the only way to kill Max.”

“And kill me . . .”

“Probably. We only found records of two people ever surviving this. We’re not supposed to live without our wolves, I guess.”

“You said we have a week, right? We can figure something out. Please don’t worry, angel.”

I smiled sadly at him. I hoped and prayed we found a way to save him. I wouldn’t survive losing him again.

“How about I get a nice warm bubble bath going for you? You can sit and relax for a while. Just unwind. What do you think, little one?”

“That sounds perfect, thank you.”

Xander kissed my forehead before he stood and walked into the bathroom.

I let out a deep breath and leaned all the way back on the couch, letting my head fall onto the pillows. This had been a day, and my brain was mush.

“Come on, angel, stand up.”

I lifted my head to see Alexi standing over me with his hand outstretched.

I just wanted to sulk, but my days with him could be numbered, and I wasn't going to waste them. I smiled at him as I took his hand.

He pulled me up and held me close to his chest, holding my left hand and wrapping his other arm around my waist. He then began to hum and effortlessly glide around the small space on the floor. His voice was so smooth and deep, and soon my eyes were closed, and the side of my face rested against his chest.

The combination of his heartbeat and the vibrations from his song did the trick and calmed me right down.

“Since when do you dance? And how come I never knew you had since a beautiful voice?”

“My mom loves to dance; she used to make me dance with her when I was little. She called it a favor to my future wife.”

“You're mom is the sweetest. I love her. And she's clearly a good teacher; you're very light on your feet.”

“I'll let her know that my 'future wife' approves.”

I stopped in my tracks. “What did you say?”

He reached up and traced his fingers over my eyes, down my nose, and around my lips.

“You are my future, angel. Whether it's just a week or an eternity, you are it for me. And if I'm ever lucky enough to have a wife, it would be you. I'd want no one else by my side.”

He then bent down and kissed away the stray tear that had fallen from my eye.

Damn. I really, really couldn't lose him now.

“Alright, Casanova. Can I borrow our mate now? Her bath is ready,” I heard Xander say behind me.

I smiled at Alexi, then poked my head around to smile at Xander. “I'll be right there, babe.”

He walked back to the bathroom and out of sight.

“Too bad this is a relaxing bath. I wouldn't have minded reenacting that dream of ours. I'd love to see if these fingers are just as nimble in real life.” I reached down and grabbed his hand and

pulled it to my mouth. My tongue slowly slid out and circled his fingertip before I angled my head and took his entire finger in my mouth, touching the back of my throat.

I looked up through my lashes to see his eyes darken with lust.

He reached up and grabbed the back of my head with his spare hand and pulled back, pulling his finger free.

When his face was mere centimeters from mine, I leaned up on my tiptoes and whispered, “I hear Xander coming, I’ll talk to you later.” I then stepped back, smirked at him, and walked to the bathroom.

Payback was a bitch.

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After my bath, I threw on my favorite comfy sweat pants and a fitted tank top. The house would mostly be empty, so I wasn’t too worried about covering up too much. I just wanted to relax with my guys—all four of them.

I checked the time and saw that we had two hours until dinner. That was just enough time for what I had planned.

Hey guys, meet me in the common room in five minutes. No questions, just be there. Oh, and if anyone is close by, I’m heading down the stairs now, sooo . . .

I walked out of the room and headed for the stairs. When I got there, Kade was waiting for me. “You guys are serious about this nonsense. We’ll see how long it lasts.” I took his arm and made my way to the bottom. “Okay, make yourself scarce for a few minutes. I’ve got to set up.”

“Sure thing, bean.”

I went and rummaged in the coat closet before I struck gold. Five Nerf Ultra Blasters. We were going to have the battle of the century. “Hahaha!” I let out my best evil laugh as the guys came into the room.

“What is going on here?” Matt asked with a laugh.

“Glad you asked, Matty. We’re about to have a nerf fight. Choose your weapon, gentlemen.” I dramatically swept my hand over the guns.

They just looked at them, confused.

“They’re all the same, so just grab one!”

They did as they were told, and soon we were all armed and ready.

“Since it’s an uneven number, it’s every man or woman for themselves. We go until we’re out of ammo. Got it?”

“This is fucking awesome,” Alexi said from the corner.

He was bouncing on his toes and shaking out his arms and neck, getting ready.

I had every intention of lighting his pretty ass up; he just didn’t know it yet. “Alright, we’ve all got thirty seconds to find a good vantage point. When you hear the timer go off, its go time.” I was so excited!

“You sure about this, little one? One tiny little woman, pregnant with twins, against four grown men. You don’t stand much of a chance, baby.”

I cocked my gun and fired, my dart landing right in the middle of Xander’s gorgeous eyes. “This little lady is an expert sharpshooter, sir. And now I’ve got you in my sights. Good luck, and may the odds be ever in your favor.” I set the timer and ran off giggling.

I heard the guys scurrying to find a good spot, but I already knew where I was going. Because of my small frame, I fit perfectly in the kitchen cabinets. I pushed a few pots and pans aside and slid underneath the island. I had a perfect view of anyone coming into the kitchen, but they wouldn’t see me until it was too late.

The timer chimed, and it was on.

I heard soft footsteps move down the hall, and as quietly as I could, I cocked my gun and got ready.

I smelled him before I saw him: sandalwood and fresh-cut grass.

Slowly, I pushed the cabinet door open a crack and-Bam!!

Alexi was right there and got two off, hitting me right in the forehead.

“Motherfucker!”

Alexi folded over laughing and had to take a minute to catch his breath. “It’s not the best hiding spot, angel. Anyone would have guessed that you would have gone low to the ground. Plus, I can smell that sweet honey a mile away.”

“Whatever, you dick! We’re teaming up now. I’ve at least got to take Xander down. I climbed out of the cabinet and snuck out of the kitchen.

Kade and Matt were standing face to face in the hallway, shooting each other and laughing like little kids.

This was exactly what I wanted. We were all just letting ourselves be kids again, if only for a little while.

Alexi gave me some weird tactical hand/eye signals that made me bubble with laughter.

“I don’t know what that shit means, silly.”

“He’s in his office, angel. Come on.”

On the way up, I couldn’t help but think this was a dumb place to hide. He was missing all the action all the way up here.

The door was already open, so I crawled in with Alexi behind me.

Once I was far enough in, Alexi kicked the door closed, and the lights flashed on.

Xander was standing on his desk and firing mercilessly down on me while Alexi was shooting me from behind.

I could not believe it. I was betrayed by the men I loved.

I crouched down then curled into a tight ball. “Ahh!”

The guys both stopped and ran toward me, afraid that they had somehow hurt the babies.

Gotcha, suckers.

I quickly rolled on my back and fired, hitting them both between the eyes. “You dirty traitors! I can’t believe you teamed up against me.”

“Correct me if I’m wrong, little one, but didn’t you recruit Alexi to help take me out?”

“Lies!”

Well, not really, but I wasn’t admitting to shit!

“All’s fair in love and war, angel. Better luck next time.”

They’d be the ones needing the luck. This wasn’t over. Not by a long shot.



# Chapter 54 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alexi POV

For the first time in a while, I had real hope for my future. All of the drama after the rejection sent me into a downward spiral I didn't feel I'd ever escape from. But my angel, true to her name, found a way to pull me out. I couldn't begin to express how grateful I was for her.

After we finished our Nerf fight, which no one technically won, we sat down for dinner. I filled the group in on what happened at the office with Victoria and the Opal Moon pack when they came to get her.

Matt and Kade were beyond happy to hear the pushy receptionist was no longer going to be there eye raping them every time they walked into the building.

"That girl was psycho. It makes sense that she was Francesca's sister. Looking back, they were just alike. I don't know why we didn't see it sooner," Kade chimed in.

"Well, I'm just so happy you and Aaron have made up, Lex. It's tough seeing two people you care about hurting just because they refuse to be the bigger person and move forward."

"Not my fault, angel. It was Aaron who didn't want to talk to me. But you're right; it's good to have him back. And now that things are better, I was thinking of going to visit my parents this weekend. I figure that since the eclipse is right around the corner, this might be my last chance."

My statement seemed to dampen the mood just a bit before Alaia did what she did best and brightened it once again. "We won't worry about that right now. Alexi, I think it would be great to visit your family. It will be a good way to put the past behind us all."

"Do you want to come with me? I'm sure your family would like to see you, too." I worded it like the visit was no big deal, and she'd just be going to see her old pack, but it was more than that. I needed her there with me. I didn't think I could go back by myself. At least not at first.

She looked me in my eyes, and I knew that she understood. "Sure, I'll come along. I have to make up with Jordyn anyway, so it will be fun."

"Great!"

I couldn't entirely hide my excitement. This would be the first time I would have Alaia all to myself since we'd reconnected. I knew nothing physical would happen, but I would still have 100% of her attention at least while we were on the road.

"Will you two be gone all weekend?" Xander asked, pulling me back to the present.

"Uhh, probably. I figure we can drive down Saturday morning, sleepover, then head back Sunday after breakfast."

"Sounds good. Just keep Alaia safe. And make sure your resume is put together and sent over before you go. I want it on the top of the pile when everyone is back at the office Monday."

"I've signed up for a lifetime of you bossing me around, haven't I?"

He shrugged a shoulder. "Maybe. But hey, I am the boss, and I like to be in charge. Little one understands that all too well. Don't you, baby?" He winked at Alaia at the same time Snapple came shooting out of her nose.

"Xander!" She threw her napkin at him as her face lit up bright red.

We had to laugh at her. Here she is with two mates, and she was still shy. We were wolves; we knew what mates did with one another, what they did to one another.

"Don't worry, angel. I'll let you be in charge, sometimes."

Her eyes went wide, and she turned an even brighter shade of red. "You guys are the absolute worst. I can't believe I agreed to this."

I leaned over and kissed her temple. "Of course, you agreed. You love us, and we worship the ground you walk on."

"Well, yeah, that's true."

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After dinner was over, Alaia and I were on the couch, flipping through the channels, looking for a movie to watch.

Kade and Matt had some pack business to do, and Xander was on a last-minute conference call regarding the expansion.

"So, what are you in the mood for, angel? I'm feeling like either action or a comedy."

"Comedy."

We scrolled a bit more until we found *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*. Steve Carell was one of my favorites, so this was perfect.

Alaia placed her head in my lap, and I mindlessly played with her curls while we laughed along to the movie. Feeling her warm body so close to mine did things to me, and soon I was lightly teasing my fingers up and down her arm.

I could feel the tiny sparks every time our skin made contact, and the goosebumps erupting on her body told me she felt it, too. “Alexi?”

“Yes, beautiful?”

“If you keep doing that, there are going to be problems. Big ones,” she whispered.

“You have no idea just how big these problems can be, angel.”

She shivered, which made me really want her.

Her body was responding to every part of me, and it was making me rock hard. With her head in my lap, it didn’t take long for her to feel the “problem” I was referring to.

She sat up and looked me in the eye. Hers were full of lust as she chewed on her plump bottom lip.

“We can’t do this,” she said breathlessly.

My eyes were locked on her mouth. I needed to taste her so badly, so I grabbed her hips and lifted her up and over, so she was straddling my lap. I could smell how wet she was. She was soaked, and it took all of my willpower not to strip her naked and lick her until she creamed again and again down my throat.

Her breathing was hitched, and I could see she was trying to control herself as well.

I wanted her, no . . . I needed her. Now. I grabbed the back of her head and pulled her into a blazing kiss. The first taste of her was like nothing I’d ever experienced in my life. It was like fresh cold water on a hot summer day or a warm blanket in the dead of winter. Nothing could compare to how amazing and perfect this kiss was. I wrapped my arms tighter around her waist, careful not to squeeze her belly too much, and ravaged her delicious little mouth. I nipped at her lip, and when her mouth parted in response, I shoved my tongue in, wanting to taste every single corner. When I pulled back to allow her a breath, my mouth moved to her jaw and neck. She smelled and tasted like heaven, and I knew I would never have enough.

“A-Alexi . . .” She sounded like she wanted to stop, but then her hips began to twirl and grind against mine.

The friction on my dick made my eyes roll, and my toes curl. This girl was killing me. I was hanging on by a thread. A dangerously fragile one. This had to stop now. I grabbed her hips and lifted her up. “Angel, if you don’t stop that grinding, I’m going to fuck the shit out of this sweet little pussy of yours. Please, I don’t think I can control myself.”

She took a few deep breaths to compose herself before she swung her leg over and sat back beside me.

After a few moments, she finally said, “Damn, that was hot.”

“Yeah, and now I need a shower. An ice-cold one.”

“I think I’ll take one, too. Otherwise, you may be sucked into another one of my dreams. Pfft, let’s be real. You probably still will, so just be ready.”

She stood to her feet and shut off the TV.

“Come on, help me upstairs, handsome.” She took my hand and pulled me up.

While we were ascending, my mind replayed what had just happened. Fucking, Max. He’d been suppressed for weeks, and he was still a cock block. I could not wait to no longer have to deal with him.

When we got to our rooms, I leaned down and gave her a quick kiss before backing away.

“See you in my dreams, sexy!”

Alaia then entered her room and shut the door.

That shower was calling my name.

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Alaia POV

Things on the couch had gotten much more heated than I think either one of us was expecting. If he hadn’t stopped me, I would have taken him right there, regardless of the consequences. And I couldn’t blame my actions on my hormones this time. I had wanted him. Mind, body, and soul. He was my mate; his body was made for mine. It was made for me to need to taste and touch, to become one with it.

This was primal.

And this was literal torture. I had Alexi right across the damn hall. I could smell his scent if I breathed deep enough, but I couldn’t have him. Not in the way that I needed. I swear, if I weren’t

already pregnant, I'd swear that I was in heat. This had to be what it felt like. A fire now burned for him that I needed to put out, but we had to wait.

I stood under the cold shower and let the water wash over my body. I wanted to go ice cold, but I had my little bean to consider. So just a few minutes of cool would have to do. Once I felt that most of the burn had subsided, I got out, pulled on my silk robe, and made my way to the bedroom.

Xander was there, sitting on the bed, waiting for me when I came out. "Hey, little one. Are you alright?"

"I don't know what I am," I replied while dragging my feet toward him. I threw my arms over his shoulders and leaned all of my body weight into him, which he easily held up.

"Well, I don't know what that means, so give me another clue."

I heaved a deep breath. "It's Alexi."

Xander raised a curious eyebrow, probably wondering what could have gone wrong in the small amount of time he had left us alone.

"He's my mate, Xander. Just like you are."

"Okay?"

"But I can't have him! And I want him. No! I need that man, and I can't have him."

Xander looked at me, amused.

"Do not smile at me. This isn't a case of a child having a tantrum because they can't have any candy. This is me being denied that physical connection with my mate! It's fucking torture!"

"I understand, princess—"

"No! Don't do that. You can't understand, not this. Don't try to appease me right now. It won't work, nothing is going to work except him—"

My tirade was abruptly cut off by Xander, lifting me up and pressing my back against the wall. Xander's hands were under my robe, and in a blink of an eye, it was ripped off and thrown to the floor, exposing my nakedness underneath. "You do not tell me what will and won't work in regards to this body. You are still mine, or have you forgotten?" he growled in my ear.

"N-No. I haven't."

He took a step back and placed me on my feet.

My legs had become jelly just like that, but I wasn't going to need them for the moment.

"I think you have. You seem to have forgotten how things work, little one. No worries, though. I'll refresh your memory. On your knees. Now!"

I immediately did as I was told. My body was on fire again, and I knew this would absolutely put it out.

Xander began to circle me as he spoke. "You've been such a bad girl. And now I'm going to punish you. Long, hard, and rough. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

He stopped in front of me and began to unbuckle then remove his belt. He moved so slowly, my mouth and my lotus beginning to water. I needed this. I didn't even realize I was licking my lips as I stared at his bulge.

Xander chuckled from above.

"Don't worry, little one. You will have every inch very soon. And you will swallow it all, won't you?"

"Yes, sir."

He unbuttoned his pants and let them drop to his ankles. His boxer briefs were straining to contain the beast within, and I was straining to keep from reaching up and grabbing it. Xander's thumbs slipped under his waistband, and he hypnotically slid that last barrier away, allowing all eleven inches of him to spring free.

It had been too long since I had tasted him. Far too long, and that was the only thing I could think of at that moment—his salty-sweet taste.

He took a step toward me and took hold of the back of my head. "Keep your hands flat on your thighs, little one."

As much as I wanted to reach up and grab him, I did as instructed and placed my sweaty palms on my quivering thighs.

"Good. Now, open."

I opened my mouth as wide as I possibly could and looked up at Xander as he slowly slid his thick cock past my lips, over my tongue, and down my throat. By this time, I no longer had a gag reflex, so I took every inch like the good girl I was. My nose was pressed flat against Xander's stomach when I felt him twitch down my throat and pull back.

He kept his tight grip on my head as he continued his deep, delicious stroking.

I stuck my tongue out to open my throat wider and tickle the underside of his shaft.

This man's dick was a masterful work of art, and I knew every way to appreciate it.

He began to pick up the pace slightly, and his heavy round balls would slap against my chin as he pulled my head forward.

The feeling and sound of it made me leak even more between my thighs. I was sure there had to be a puddle underneath me.

A little faster, he moved. A little stronger. Xander began to moan above me and hearing those sounds that I was forcing his body to create made my core clench.

I loved that I could please him as much as he pleased me.

“You are such a good girl, baby. I love you so, so much.”

And I loved him.

Minutes went by, but it felt like seconds. I would lose track of time when I had him inside of me, the pleasure of it all overpowered everything else.

I felt his grip tighten a bit, and Xander slightly widened his stance. The muscles in his thighs were pulled taught, and I knew that he was close.

I began to move with him, hollowing out my cheeks and swallowing when he bottomed out down my throat, just to allow him to feel the soft walls ripple and roll around him.

Again he moaned, grunted, and growled.

I looked up to see him staring down at me; eyes jet black pools of lust. And I held that eye contact. My head had become Xander's own personal sex toy, and I didn't care.

The slow, gentle strokes were gone; he was mercilessly deep dicking my throat, bearing closer and closer to release. His eyes clamped shut, and with one final thrust, he exploded down my throat. The muscles in his legs and abdomen spasmed out of control as stream after stream of his warm, thick seed slid down into my belly.

I took it all; his cum was like water on a desert island to me, and I wouldn't waste a single drop. When it was all over, and he slid from my mouth, I used my tongue to lick him clean. When I touched my tongue to his sensitive tip, his whole body shuddered, which made me smile. I had owned this man. Completely. I licked my deliciously swollen lips, sat back on my heels, and looked up at him. “So, about this punishment you promised me . . .”

# Chapter 55 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alexi POV

The days passed by pretty quickly, and before I knew it, it was Saturday morning. I was in my room putting a few last minute things in my overnight bag before Alaia, and I was scheduled to get on the road. I was both nervous and excited to go back to my old pack; I had truly missed them, but I was also embarrassed by my behavior the last time I was there. But I had to face them so I could move on.

Aaron's first order as Alpha had been to banish me from the pack, but after we made up earlier in the week, he reversed the banishment, allowing me the opportunity to return.

When I was finished packing, I grabbed my stuff and headed to the door.

Alaia was leaving her room at the same time, so I grabbed her bag and slung it over my back before taking her hand and leading her downstairs.

"Are you excited about our road trip? I've got the best 'road trip' playlist prepared for us," she said with a huge smile on her face.

"I've got to drive for three-plus hours through the mountains in the rain. Not really my idea of the best road trip, but because it's with you, yes, I am excited."

Xander was at the bottom of the stairs when we arrived, trying to settle a heated dispute between two pack members. The two men were yelling back and forth over a small flower garden that lined their shared property line. One wanted to plant roses; the other wanted daisies. And Xander looked like he was one second away from murdering them both.

Alaia saw the situation escalating and stepped up to the group, taking Xander's hand. "Good morning, gentlemen."

"Good morning, Luna," they both replied with slight nods of their heads.

"I couldn't help but overhear your conversation. It's quite the predicament, isn't it?"

"Yes, Luna, it is. But he's too boneheaded to listen to reason!"



“There’s no need for all of that, Benjamin. Since I’m here, though, I was wondering. What do the two of you think of dahlias? They are a beautiful flower with the most amazing coloring. A perfect mix of roses and daisies, in my opinion.”

She pulled out her phone and Googled “dahlias” before showing the pictures to the two.

The men looked surprised for a moment before one spoke. “That . . . sounds perfect, Luna. Thank you so much. I’ll go grab some dahlias right away!”

“You’re very welcome. I’m happy I could help.”

Both men rushed from the house, excited for the idea given to them by their Luna, and ready to make it happen.

“Thank the goddess you came down when you did, little one. I was really going to kill them. Or just banish them from the pack. I don’t have time for shit like this!” Xander said, clearly frustrated.

Alaia placed her hands on his face and pulled him down for a kiss.

“What’s wrong, babe? You handle stuff like this all the time. What’s different now?” He heaved a breath before he pulled her into a hug and buried his nose in her hair.

I knew what was wrong before he even said anything. This would be his first time without Alaia since they had become mates. And it’s tough for a wolf to be without their mate, even if it is only for twenty-four hours.

Xander wanted to be supportive of her spending time away with me, but this was proving to be harder than he thought.

“I’ll just miss you, that’s all. But I don’t want to keep you from seeing your family, either.”

“I’ll be back tomorrow, Xander. It won’t be that long. Maybe have a night out with Kade and Matt to occupy your mind. I’m sure you guys can find something to get into that won’t get you or anybody else killed, right?”

He laughed, then nodded his head. “Yeah, I’m sure we can figure something out. But you call me if you need me for anything, okay? Alastair can get me there in an hour if I push him. I’ll come straight away, no questions asked.”

“I’m going to my old pack, not a third world country. I’m sure I’ll be fine. You don’t have to worry. But I will FaceTime you tonight before bed. How’s that?”

“Naked FaceTime.”

Alaia laughed. “Fine, naked FaceTime. Now, we’ve got to get on the road if we want to miss the traffic. It’s already going to be slowed down thanks to the rain. Please don’t kill any of my pack while I’m gone; I’m pretty attached to them all breathing. Okay?”

“Fine. Let me walk you guys out.”

Xander took Alaia’s hand as we made our way to the garage. He had purchased her a red Range Rover Sport as a belated birthday gift that she had never gotten the chance to drive. We decided that we’d use the trip home as her opportunity to break it in. He helped her into the passenger seat while I tossed the bags in the back, then went to get behind the wheel.

“Mrs. Dyson put together some food for you guys, so you don’t have to worry about stopping along the way. I had it placed in the backseat. Be careful, and call me when you get there, okay?”

“Stop fussing, Xander. We will be fine. I’ll talk to you in a few hours.” She leaned over to give him a quick kiss before she lightly pushed him back and closed the door. She rolled down the window and said, “Go do some work, Mr. Alpha. You won’t even know I’m gone.”

“I’ll keep her safe, man. We’ll see you tomorrow.” I waved before I slowly pulled out of the garage.

Before I was all the way down the driveway, Alaia had turned around to see what goodies we had packed for us. She pulled a substantial insulated bag to the front seat and stuck her head almost all the way inside while rummaging around.

It was so cute watching how excited she was over the food.

She finally pulled her head back and looked at me with the biggest smile. “Sausage, egg, and cheese croissants, strawberries, orange juice, and cream cheese danishes. She also packed some raw veggies, chips, sandwiches, and bottled water for lunch if the trip runs a little longer than expected.”

“Sounds great. And I’m starving, so I guess you have to feed me.”

“Why? You have two hands, and I’ve got to use my own to feed myself.”

“Because you, my dear, are precious cargo that I have vowed to keep safe. I can’t risk driving with one hand through the mountains in the rain! So, strawberry, please.”

She rolled her eyes at me before she pulled the container from the bag and opened it up. She picked up a big dark strawberry and brought it to her lips before sinking her teeth into it. Juices ran down her chin and dripped onto her chest, begging me to lick them off.

“You’re being really mean right now, angel. Not only are you not sharing, but you’re also making it hard for me to keep my eyes on the road.”

“Pull over then.”

I looked over at her to see if she was serious. “We’ve only been driving five minutes, baby.”

“Oh, well. More strawberries for me, I guess.” She picked another up and slowly teased her tongue around the tip before nipping it off.

“They are delicious, too. So sweet and juicy.”

I was going to drive us off a cliff for sure if she kept this up, I had no doubt about it. There was a small clearing up ahead, so I quickly pulled in, put the car in park, and shut off the engine.

“Just so you know, angel, as soon as Max is gone, I’m going to fuck you so hard you won’t be able to walk straight for days.”

Her golden eyes met mine as she bit into another strawberry. “Promises, promises.” She was so sexy like this. So confident and aware of the effect she was having on me.

“Give me a bite now.”

Alaia took another from the container and gently bit into it before leaning forward and offering the other end to me.

I sunk my teeth into the delicious fruit and imagined the juices that exploded in my mouth and coated my tongue were hers. I reached over and unbuckled her seatbelt before pulling her to straddle me. “What’s with this mouth you’ve got now? You’ve gotten much feistier than I remember, angel.”

“Yeah? And what do you plan to do about it?”

I pulled her dress up over her hips and dipped my hand between her thighs.

She was warm and wet already, and I wanted nothing more than to plunge my dick deep inside her.

I grabbed the back of her head and pulled her forward, shoving my tongue down her throat. The combination of strawberries and her sweet honey was intoxicating, and I wanted more. Before I knew it, I had snatched her panties from her body and dropped them to the floor of the truck. I pulled back from the kiss and looked deep in her surprise-filled eyes. “I don’t think you need those. Plus, they were getting in my way.”

She just nodded and bit her bottom lip.

I found myself reaching over to the bowl and picking up another big firm strawberry. I ran it along the seam of Alaia’s full lips, then down her neck and across her throat. I then brought it to my lips and rolled it on my tongue before I dropped my hand and began to rub the berry up and

down her weeping slit. I could feel her juices leaking from her and coating my fingers. The car filled with the scent, and I wanted to bottle it and keep it for always. I alternated between slipping between her lower lips and circling her clit. The seeds of the strawberry creating a sharp contrast to her smooth velvety skin.

“To answer your question, angel. This is what I’m going to do about that mouth of yours. I’m going to fuck you with this strawberry until you cum all over it. Would you like that?”

Again, she just nodded while her eyes slowly shut, and her head fell back. She reached behind her and held onto the steering wheel as she began to rock and grind on my hand.

I changed angles before I plunged my makeshift sex toy deep inside her pussy. The sounds of my fingers moving in and out of her mixed with our heavy breathing and the rain beating down on the roof created an overly erotic symphony. I began to twist and spin the strawberry, wanting the little bit of roughness to tease her sensitive walls. “Mmm, you’re so fucking tight, angel. I love it. I love having my fingers inside you.” I increased my speed and intensity and pulled her in for another kiss.

Her moans and screams of pleasure were mine and mine alone, and with our mouths locked together, I ate them all up.

“Are you close, baby?”

“Yes . . . so, so close . . .”

I removed my fingers and the berry and returned to rubbing it around and over her hypersensitive bundle of nerves.

Her back arched, and her legs began to shake as she tried to hold on.

“Don’t hold back, angel,” I whispered in her ear.

With her last bit of sanity about to snap, I pulled her toward me and sucked, licked, and gently bit down on the spot my mark would one day reside.

“Fuck, Lex! That’s so good, baby.”

I clamped my mouth on her neck and bit down again, not enough to break the skin, but just enough to push her over the edge.

She screamed and shook as the climax washed over her, wave after wave wrecking her body.

“That’s it, baby. So fucking beautiful,” I cooed while looking into her beautiful hooded eyes.

She rocked and bucked her hips, squeezing all the filthy satisfaction she could get out of the moment.

When she finally came down, I pulled my hand from between her legs and brought the strawberry to her lips. “Bite it. Taste how sweet you are, angel.”

She bit into the strawberry and moaned, the mixture of the flavors exciting her even more.

I had to taste for myself. I took the remainder of the strawberry into my mouth, and when it touched my tongue, a deep growl bubbled from my chest. This adventure had ruined strawberries forever for me. I could never enjoy them again unless they were covered in her flavor. I stared her in the eye as I sucked each of my fingers dry, savoring every last bit of her cream. Not wanting to be done, I took two fingers and quickly reached down and swiped them along the length of her opening and over her clit once more before bringing them back to my hungry waiting mouth. “Nothing in this world can compare to how incredible you taste, baby.”

After my fingers were thoroughly cleaned, I pulled her down for one last kiss, swapping her essence between the two of us. I eventually released her lips and lifted her up, placing her back in her seat.

She was in that post-orgasmic haze, so I reached over and buckled her seatbelt before starting the car again and pulling back onto the road.

“Now, angel, are you going to be a good girl and feed me as I asked, or am I going to need to pull the car over again?”

“Mhmm,” was all she said.

I glanced over and saw her nodding her head while she pulled more food from the bag.

If I could make her speechless with just my fingers and a strawberry, she wasn’t ready for what was going to happen when she was finally wrapped around my dick.

I’d tame that sexy little mouth of hers, and every other part of her along with it.

FIFTY-SIX | HOMECOMING PT. 1

## Chapter 56 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

I was absolutely right! Alexi had some kind of ancient erotic sorcery flowing through his fingers. If I thought the dream was good, it was nothing compared to the real thing. He made me see stars

while straddling him in the front seat of my truck. I couldn't imagine what magic he could work when he had more space to maneuver. It truly wasn't my intention to tease him that way, but I'm so happy that I did. It slightly helped soothe that burning desire I had simmering for him.

Once I was placed back in my seat, I proceeded to feed him just like he had asked. Although, if I were honest, I would have loved for him to pull the car over again. There were plenty of exciting things he could have used on me in our goodie bag, but I was still hungry. And didn't want all the food to taste like me. Besides, feeding him was a treat all in itself. I broke off a piece of danish and held it to his lips.

He leaned forward and took it, along with my finger, into his mouth. I felt his tongue swirl over my fingertip, and all I could do was stare with my mouth wide open. I'd always had a thing for his mouth; well, his lips, to be exact. Thick, full, and petal-soft. But his tongue? Oh, the pleasure he would create with that thing!

When he was done molesting my finger, he pulled back and smiled at me. "That might be the best danish I've ever had. Mrs. Dyson must have a secret ingredient. What do you think?"

He was turning my brain into mush again, but I wasn't completely gone. Not yet. I licked that same finger that had just left his mouth before looking over at him. "Maybe it's honey. You know nothing could ever taste quite as sweet."

He jerked his head in my direction as I slid my finger to the back of my mouth and quietly moaned.

His eyes were fixated on my mouth like he was in a trance.

"Alexi?"

Still, he just stared at my lips.

"Alexi!"

"What? What's up, angel?"

"Eyes on the road."

That broke him out of his daze, and he quickly looked back out the windshield. He shook his head and chuckled. "You're a tease, angel—a big one. But two can play this game. I'll have you begging for it soon enough. You really have no idea what you've started, baby."

I just shrugged a shoulder at him. Honestly, I didn't care what I had started. I was going to start having fun and enjoying myself. And I was pretty sure that this was going to be fun.

"Do you remember all the times when we were in school, and you'd have some random girl hanging on your arm? That was teasing. You were dangling something in front of me that I

couldn't have, but I'm sure you knew I wanted. What I am doing is enjoying my breakfast on a road trip with one of my mates."

I flashed my most innocent smile at him.

"Don't forget that I know you, angel. You're not as innocent as that look on your face would suggest."

I had to laugh. "Eh, it was worth a shot. Now it's time for the music. I feel a sing-along coming." I pulled out my phone and scrolled to my road trip playlist before connecting it through Bluetooth.

The music blared through the speakers, and Alexi and I sang at the top of our lungs—horribly. And the hours flew by.

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When we arrived at the outskirts of my old land, I began to get excited when I saw familiar scenery pass by my window. It had only been a few months, but I had missed the Opal Moon territory more than I thought. I rolled down the window and breathed in the familiar earthy scent that I had grown up with. Even though I was the Luna of the Blue Moon pack, this place would always be special to me.

"Did you want to go see Aaron and Jordyn first, or my parents?"

We would be staying in my old room at the packhouse, which was on the Alpha floor, so I was sure we'd run into Jordyn and Aaron at some point. "Let's see your parents. Jordyn and Aaron understand how important this visit is for you. We'll see them in a bit."

Alexi nodded and pulled up to the front of the house before putting the car in park.

Aaron's Gamma, Jason, waited for us at the bottom of the porch steps and walked over to open my door. "Hey, Alaia. How's it going?"

"It's good. How about you? How do you like being the Gamma? I'm sure it takes time away from your training."

"It does, but it's worth it. And I can train in my free time." He smiled at me as he took my hand and helped me out of the car. "How are the little ones doing in there?"

"They're asleep right now, so everything is great. When they wake up, it will be a different story."

Alexi walked around the car to stand beside me, and the two just looked at each other in a tense standoff.

Eventually, Jason smiled and walked over, pulling Alexi into a hug. “Alexi, you asshole, we’ve missed you around here. I’ve had to keep up with the ladies all by myself. Do you know how hard that’s been?”

Alexi laughed and returned the hug. “I’ve missed you, too, bro. And I don’t miss the days of chasing behind the shewolves one bit. I’ve got my angel now. Nothing else can compare.”

“Perfect answer, Alexi. Points for you,” I teased.

“Aaron told some of us about you guys finally getting together. I don’t think your mom knows, though, so it will be a nice surprise for her. It’s about time if you ask me. I’m happy for you.”

“Thanks. I’m pretty happy about it myself. So, have you seen my parents? I wanted to go see them before I made my rounds with everyone else.”

“They should be on our floor as far as I know. One sec . . .” Jason’s eyes clouded over as he entered a mindlink. “Yep, your dad says he’s in his office. He’ll have your mom meet you there in five minutes.”

“Thanks, Jay. We’ll head up now.”

“I’ll get your bags to your room and put the car away. See you guys later.” Jason walked around and opened the driver’s door before he stuck his head in and whistled in appreciation. “Sweet!”

I had to laugh at how excited boys got with their toys. “Just bring it back in one piece, Jay,” I yelled as he hopped in and took off down the driveway.

I guess we’d have to wait on our bags.

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Alexi took my hand, and we made our way up the stairs and into the house. Quite a few pack members were roaming around who seemed both shocked and excited to see Alexi and me back. And together at that.

We didn’t owe them an explanation, though, so we continued to the third floor, which was shared by Lucas and Jason.

When we stopped in front of Lucas’ office, Alexi took a calming breath to steady himself.

“Don’t worry, babe. Your dad loves you. Everything will be okay. I promise.”

He smiled at me then raised a hand to knock.

Before he could, we heard Lucas boom, “Come in, Alexius,” from the other side of the door.



Alexi paled a bit, hearing his dad's voice.

Using the full first name, maybe this wasn't going to be the happy reunion I thought it would be. I squeezed his hand, then reached to open the door. I walked in first, pulling Alexi behind me. Maybe I could soften Lucas up a bit. He always had a soft spot for me when I was growing up. "Hi, Lucas! How is your day going so far?" I walked over and gave him a tight hug, which he quickly returned.

"My day was okay, but much better now that I get to see you, sweetheart. You look beautiful."

"Oh, you charmer. I see where Alexi gets it from now."

Lucas looked over at his son with an expressionless face. "Yes, Alexius got my charm, but some of his other traits I'm not so sure about."

Yikes. This reunion was gonna be brutal.

"It's good to see you, too, Dad," Alexi sarcastically replied.

I wanted to smack him for that, but this was between him and his dad. It wasn't my place.

A couple of tense seconds later, his mom, Lauren, rushed in and pulled him into a huge hug. "My baby! You had me so worried about you. Why would you do something like this to Alaia or me? How are you? Have you been eating? Are you hurt?" Lauren had turned Alexi away from her and pulled up his shirt, looking for any injuries she could find on her perfect boy.

"Mom, would you stop that? I'm perfectly fine. I'm better than fine, actually. Please, just calm down."

Lauren looked up at his face and began to cry. Big fat tears rolled down her face as her body was wracked with sobs.

"Mom, don't cry. I'm right here. Nothing is wrong. Why are you upset?"

"You're my baby, Alexi. I don't care if you're a grown man, you're still my baby, and I worry about you. I was so worried when you left that I'd never see you again. Do you know what that does to a mother?"

Alexi wrapped his arms around her and let her cry into his chest. "I'm sorry, Mom. I really, really am. But guess what?" he said, lifting her face up to meet his. "I finally found that 'future wife' you were always telling me about. She even loves my dance moves, thanks to you."

Lauren's face lit up when she heard that. She was so cute and so sweet. "Oh, Alexi. Did you get a second chance mate, just like Alaia? Oh, I'm so happy for you, sweetie. When can I meet her? Please tell me you brought her home with you." Lauren started fussing with her hair and clothes, excited over the idea of meeting her son's mate.

“Yes, Mom, I brought her. But you have to calm down a bit before I introduce you. Okay?”

Lauren nodded her head and grabbed a tissue from Lucas’ desk to wipe her face. After a few more snuffles and dabs to her eyes, she tossed it in the trash. “Okay, I’m ready now. How do I look? Do I look okay?” she turned to me and asked.

“You look perfect, Lauren,” I smiled.

She reached up and lovingly touched my face. “You have always been such a sweet and loving girl, Alaia. It’s just too bad; my son is a complete idiot. I swear he gets that from his father. Anyway, I’m ready. Bring her in now, Alexi.”

Alexi walked over to me and took my hand before bringing it up to his lips.

Lauren looked at us like an exhibit at the zoo before it finally clicked for her. She gasped and dramatically slapped her hand over her mouth. “It’s Alaia. Is she your mate? Please tell me you’re not playing with me right now. My heart couldn’t take it.”

“My angel agreed to give us, to give me, another chance. She is mine, and I am hers.”

“Oh . . .” Lauren’s lip trembled before she broke down, crying again and pulled me into a hug.

“Thank the goddess! I knew you two were destined for one another. You were always so cute together when you were younger. Oh, Lucas, our grandbabies will be gorgeous!”

Great, another mother-in-law anxious to rent out my womb. Let me get these two out first, please, and thanks.

“Mom, slow down a minute. It will be a little while before you can start talking about kids. Besides, she’s already got two on the way with Xander.”

“Oh . . . two mates? Alaia, you lucky, lucky girl. I always dreamed of having two mates. Two strong dominant wolves taking me—”

“Lauren!”

“Mom!”

Lucas and Alexi yelled out simultaneously.

The looks on their faces were priceless and made Lauren and I double over with laughter.

She straightened up and smiled at me. “A girl can always dream, can’t she?”

“Alright, Lauren, I’m sure there is something else you can be doing now. I need to talk with Alexi for a bit. Alaia, will you ladies excuse us?” Lucas asked.

“Sure thing. I’ll just go find my parents and catch up with them. Lauren, would you like to come with me?”

“Of course, dear. I left your mom in the gazebo a little earlier. She’s probably still there. Come on.”

Alexi walked over and placed a gentle kiss on my forehead before he turned to sit before his father’s desk.

Lauren and I walked out, and I really wished I could be a fly on the wall and hear what was going to happen once these doors closed behind us.

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Alexi POV

I wasn’t looking forward to this talk with my dad. He hadn’t called me Alexius since I was fifteen and drove his car into the lake. I’m pretty sure he wanted to kill me that day, so I was not enthusiastic about what would happen now.

Once Mom and Alaia left the room, I just sat and looked around. I remembered playing in this office when I was little—it would have been mine if things had gone differently.

My dad eventually took a deep breath and looked over at me. “Son, I don’t know the best way to start this conversation. You disappointed your mother and me so much. And you broke our hearts. I had to stand by and watch as the order to banish you from our pack was signed. Then I had to enforce it. I had to follow my alpha and leave behind my only son.”

I had known that my actions had caused him pain, but hearing it first hand stung. I had always looked up to him and never wanted anything but the best for him.

“I should have retired along with Alpha Jonathan, but as your father, it was my responsibility to do the job that you no longer could. But now you are back. Are you here to take your rightful place as this pack’s Beta?”

Eventually, I would have to tell him about my plan, and this seemed like as good a time as any.

“Dad, I can’t be Beta. It’s not that I don’t want the position, I was trained by the best Beta ever, so I know I could do the job. But I don’t plan to be a wolf for much longer. The Lunar Eclipse is this Wednesday. Once it starts, we’ll begin a ritual that will kill Max.”

“What the hell are you talking about, Alexi? Why would you try something so stupid? You can’t live without a wolf.”

“I’ve heard all of this already, Dad, but it won’t change anything. You always taught me that a mate was a treasured gift. I didn’t understand that at first, but I do now. I will do anything to

keep her safe. And you also taught me to own up to my mistakes and do whatever I can to right my wrongs. That's what I'm doing here. Please understand, and just support me. I need your support, Dad."

"Support you in killing yourself? She already has a mate, Alexi, a competent one. Why can't you just stay here and let her go home to him? You can keep your wolf and do what you were destined to do. You know I love Alaia, but use your head, son!"

This conversation was pissing me off. I had made my decision, and he had no right to question it. And definitely, no reason to dismiss my Angel. "Dad, she is my destiny. Not a role or a title, Alaia. She was made to be mine, and I'll do what needs to be done to make that happen."

"We can find you another mate—"

"No! Do not do that, Dad. She is my mate, my only mate. There will never be anyone else for me. Letting her go would kill me. Guaranteed. I have a much better chance of survival by getting rid of Max. If you want me alive, this is the only way it will happen. I will die without her."

I stared him in his eye when I said the last sentence. He needed to know how serious I was about this, and about her.

"I'm proud of you, Alexius. You finally get it."

Wait. What?

"Huh?"

"Alexi, I never had any intention of trying to talk you into leaving Alaia behind. It's because of her that you are alive right now. She truly is your guardian angel. I just wanted to test the strength of your decision. Aaron told me about your plan when he returned home. It terrifies me, and I wish there were another way, but you have my full support."

"Seriously, Dad? I was about to walk out of here and never come back. What the fuck?"

"Watch your mouth. I'm not too old to be able to kick your ass still. And you better not die. Your mom and I really want those grandbabies." When he stood up and wrapped me in a hug, I finally felt complete. And even if things didn't go the way we planned, I at least had this moment.

FIFTY-SEVEN | HOMECOMING PT. 2

## Chapter 57 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

## Alaia POV

Lauren and I walked out to the gazebo, talking about my relationship with Alexi and how excited she was to have me as part of her family. “I always wanted a daughter, but we were just blessed with Alexi. And his behavior throughout high school was just so deplorable; I was afraid he’d never find the one. Thank you so much for putting up with him and sticking with him through all of this. He’d be lost without you.”

“What can I say? I love him. I couldn’t see my life without him in it. I really didn’t think we’d ever be mates, or even friends again after the rejection, but fate had different plans for us. Something just wouldn’t let me give up on him.”

When the gazebo was finally in sight, I saw both my mom and Jordyn sitting together, sipping ice-cold glasses of tea. “Well, don’t you ladies look nice and cozy, mind if we join you?” I asked.

My mom beamed at me, then patted the spot next to her, signaling me to sit.

I scooted in close to her side and leaned on her shoulder, enjoying her soft floral scent.

She reached over and rubbed my belly in soothing circles that made me want to pack her up and take her back home with me. “How are you, sweet girl? Are the babies giving you any trouble?”

“We’re good, Mom, all of us. I’m happy to say that the little beans have been much nicer to me lately. The nausea isn’t so frequent anymore, but my hormones are still a raging storm. So I guess you win some and you lose some.”

“Oh, please, girl. Raging hormones just means more sex for you and your ridiculously hot men. You get no pity from me.” Leave it to Jordyn to always shoot me straight and never mince her words.

I couldn’t hide the embarrassment, though.

I was sitting with the mother of one of those “ridiculously hot men,” and I didn’t want to discuss what I did with her son in front of her.

“Don’t worry, dear, I know my son is a looker. He got that from me,” Lauren said with a wink.

“And it’s not like we don’t know where babies come from, so don’t look so shocked. You have sex, and we have sex, you love it, we love it, blah blah blah,” my mom added.

“Please, Mom. Stop.”

“Fine. Us old ladies will just leave and allow you two to speak freely. But do not push yourself too hard, Alaia. Carrying twins is brutal on your body, and if you feel you need a rest, you take it. Do you understand me?”

I felt like a kid again, being chastised about my homework or something.

“Yes, ma’am. I understand.”

“Good.” She leaned down to kiss my head before she stood up and walked back to the house with Lauren.

When I turned to look at Jordyn, she had this smug smile on her face.

“What?”

She just suggestively raised her eyebrows.

“Jordyn, what in the world is going on? What is it?”

“Spill, now.”

“I have nothing to—”

“Lies! You’re banging two of the hottest men ever created, after my Aaron, of course, and you have nothing to share? Please, you have everything to share.”

“This is grossly unfair. I can’t hear about your sex life, but I have to give all the super juicy details of mine? What do I get out of it?”

“I won’t kick your ass for not telling me I have two nieces on the way instead of one.”

I guess I could share something if it got me off her shit list. “Fine. But I’m not telling you everything. So, the trip up has given Alexi and me a newfound appreciation and respect for fresh fruit.”

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Jordyn and I sat in the garden for about an hour or so laughing and catching up before she had an idea. “Hey, do you want to dress up and go out with me tonight? We can get all dolled up and have a nice dinner somewhere. What do you say? Two hot Lunas enjoying a nice Saturday night together.”

I thought for a second before I replied. “That sounds amazing, Jordyn. Alexi wants to spend time with his family and Aaron anyway, so this is perfect. But what would I wear? I didn’t bring anything dressy, and I’m too tired to be dragged through the mall for hours.”

She stood up and took my hand. “Come with me. I may or may not have planned this out when I heard you were coming.”

We weaved through the garden and up to her and Aaron’s floor before we entered her dressing room. Hanging on the wall in front of me was a floor-length, strapless chiffon dress with a sweetheart neckline. The high-waisted design made it perfect for my bump, as it wouldn’t squeeze too tight. It was a gorgeous royal blue color with silver accents, and on the floor underneath the dress was a pair of silver ballet flats.

She had thought of everything.

“Jordyn, this is breathtaking. Where did you find this?”

“I’ll never tell. But I just know with your curves; you’ll rock the hell out of it.”

“Thank you! I’m so excited. So, what’s the plan?”

“Well, how about you head to your room and shower and wash your hair. I’ll have some snacks brought up, and we can get dressed together, then head out to dinner and whatever else the night throws at us. What do you think?”

“Sounds perfect. I’ll see you in a bit.” I walked down the hall to my old room and straight into my familiar old bathroom. It looked so small now that I had gotten used to the one I shared with Xander. But it would have to do.

I turned on the water, and twenty minutes later, I was washed, scrubbed, and shaved. I put on my bathrobe and tied my hair up before heading back to the dressing room. Luckily, Jordyn really had thought of everything, because she had underwear and a strapless bra waiting for me. She helped me into my dress before getting into her own. We then sat at the vanity together and nibbled of finger food while her stylists did our hair and makeup.

At around 5:00 PM, we were ready.

My natural curls had been tamed and straightened, so my hair spilled down my back in loose waves. My makeup was kept minimal, with just a little eyeliner, mascara, and lipstick. I looked like myself, but a bit more polished.

Jordyn had her hair pulled up in an elegant Dutch crown braid with small curls at the back of her neck and ears. Her dress was similar to mine, but in a pale blush color with golden accents, and her makeup was muted in light peaches and pinks. She looked like a doll.

“Oh, Jordyn. You’re beautiful. It’s too bad Aaron won’t get to see you tonight.”

“We’ll snap a few selfies for the guys later. Now, come on, the car is outside already.”

We lifted our dresses and ran down the stairs giggling like school girls. When we got to the front, I saw that she had a black limo waiting for us. When the driver, who waited at the back door of the car, saw us, he lightly bowed and tipped his hat. “Lunas, you ladies look lovely this evening.” He opened the door, and we both hurried in.

I felt like I was going to a grand ball or something, but it was just a date with my best friend. She always knew how to make everything so much better.

As we pulled out, Jordyn reached over to the minibar and brought out two champagne flutes, handing one to me.

“Sparkling cider for you and the good stuff for me. Here’s to an amazing night out, one we’ll never forget.”

We clinked our glasses and took a sip. I had no idea what Jordyn had planned, but I was so excited to find out.

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We drove for about twenty minutes when we finally arrived at the beach. I looked out, confused for a moment before Jordyn offered some clarity.

“I was in the mood for seafood, and I know you always have a taste for steamed crab legs. There is a new spot here that has the best seafood in the region. You’ll love it, trust me.”

Crab legs did sound amazing, so she wouldn’t hear any complaints from me.

The driver came to a stop and walked around to open the door and help us out.

I could hear the waves crashing on the sand and smell the moist salty sea air. The sun was starting to set, casting a fantastic orangish glow to the skyline. Being here was making me more and more excited about the evening.

We started to walk down the pathway before she stopped in her tracks. “Shit, I left my clutch in the car, and we’ve got to pay for this somehow. You go on ahead, just to the end of the path. I’ll catch up with you.” She then turned around and rushed back to where the car had left us.

The promise of crab legs and an amazing sunset view pushed me down the path toward the sound of beautiful soft music. I looked down and saw the ground had become littered with rose petals. “Geez, Jordyn. You didn’t have to go all out like this,” I muttered to myself. I followed the path, pedals, and music for a bit longer until I finally reached the beach.

The sight before me stole my breath.

Both Alexi and Xander were standing side by side next to the dinner table. They both looked so handsome. Both were wearing jet black suits, with Alexi donning a gray tie and Xander a blue



one. I wonder if the ties were part of the plan, as the colors made their eyes shine like jewels. Xander's wild black curls were perfectly tamed and combed back, and he had shaved just enough to leave that sexy shadow of scruff along his jawline that I loved. Alexi's dirty blonde hair was freshly cut and combed back as well, to reveal his smooth babyface. They looked like two Greek sculptures come to life, and they were here for me.

When I finished gawking, I took a few shaky steps forward before finally speaking. "H-Hi guys." I had so much more I wanted to say and ask, but I was utterly speechless.

Alexi stepped forward and took my hand. "True to your name, you look like an angel, baby. You're perfect."

"I agree, you are stunning, little one." Xander took my other hand, and they led me to a chair looking directly out into the ocean.

Once seated, they came around and sat beside me, Alexi, to my left and Xander to my right. "This is so incredible. I can't believe you two did this for me."

"The credit has to go to Alexi, little one. He planned all this out and told me about it last night. I left the house about an hour after the two of you to make it on time."

I turned to Alexi, stunned. "You did all of this? But why?"

"What do you mean, why? You deserve this and more. Plus, we never got to experience a first date, so I figured it should be an epic one. And, since you and Xander never got to have a first date either, it was only fair that he be here as well."

"Wait! What about Jordyn? She got all dressed up just to drop me off?"

"Nah, her and Aaron are a little farther down the beach having a date of their own."

"That sneaky little witch."

"So, do you like it?" Alexi asked.

"Will there still be crab legs? I was promised crab legs."

The guys laughed at that, but I was so serious.

"Yeah, there will still be crab legs."

"Then, I love it. I wouldn't change a thing. It's absolutely amazing. Thank you both."

A few minutes later, a waiter appeared carrying a massive tray of steamed king crab legs with roasted potatoes, corn on the cob, and melted butter. Not the type of food you'd usually want on a first date, but I was well beyond the "getting to know each other" first date facade.

The three of us sat and laughed and ate until we were close to exploding.

I listened to the waves dance across the shore and watched as the sun disappeared below the horizon, turning the orange sky to a deep and endless blue.

Once again, I was made speechless when all around us, thousands of tiny sparkling fairy lights lit up and illuminated the night. "It's so pretty," I whispered while looking up in awe.

Alexi stood up and held his hand out to me. "Would you dance with me, angel?"

My face broke into a huge smile, and I looked back over at Xander.

"Go, baby. Enjoy yourself."

I took Alexi's hand as he pulled me along with him to the dance floor I didn't even see being set up. He pulled me close to him and began to skillfully move to the music. Being wrapped in his warm arms in this place was everything I had ever wanted. The rhythmic sound of his heartbeat, combined with the waves behind us, lulled me into a sense of ecstasy I had never before known.

Alexi brought a hand up and began to slowly stroke my hair; the motion sent tingles shooting through my entire body. "I really hope you've had a good time, angel. I was so nervous planning all of this out."

"I don't know why; it's clear you know me very well. If I were to plan a first date for myself, I would have been very similar to this one. You did good, kid."

He chuckled and continued to sway and stroke my hair. "Well, I was nervous because of this . . ." He let go of me and stepped back before he went down on one knee. With a shaky hand, he reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a small blue box and opened it.

Inside was the most beautiful ring I'd ever seen. It was a platinum and diamond-encrusted band with a huge diamond-covered crescent moon in the center. The fairy lights bounced off the brilliant stones, shooting colorful light in every direction.

With his spare hand, he grabbed mine and said, "Alaia Miller, you are the most incredible person I've ever known. I've watched you grow from a small, annoying little girl to a strong, sexy, and powerful woman. You've seen me at my best, and you've seen me at my worst, but still, you never gave up on me. You fought for me when I didn't want to fight for myself. Through all of our trials, we found our way back to one another, and I want to always find my way back to you. You are my home, my true north. I love you with every fiber of my being. So, angel, would you please do me the honor of being my wife?"

My eyes were clouded with tears. I had never expected something like this, but here Alexi was down on one knee, asking me to be his forever.

I didn't care about what the outcome of the eclipse would be; I just knew that I wanted to be his wife. "Yes! Of course, I'll marry you!"

He leaped up and spun me around before gently placing me back on my feet and sliding the ring into my finger.

It fit perfectly, and I knew I'd never grow tired of looking at it. I grabbed Alexi's tie and pulled him down into a steamy hot kiss. I poured all of my love for him into those few seconds our lips were locked together.

When he pulled away, he gently held my face and smiled down at me. "There's just one more surprise for you, angel." He then spun me around to reveal Xander down on one knee.

Holy. Fucking. Shit. I must have been dreaming.

I felt Alexi take a few steps away as Xander reached into his pocket to pull out a similar blue box.

He then took my hand in his. "Little one, you control my mind, my heart, and my soul. I can't go one moment without thinking of you; my heart skips a beat whenever I see you smile, and my soul would surely die without you. I thank the goddess every day that she felt I was worthy enough even to know you, let alone call you mine. You've done nothing but brighten my world since you've come into it, and I want that light to continue to shine forever. So, Alaia, my Luna, my queen, and mother of my children, will you be my wife?"

He opened the box, and once again, I was floored. His band was also platinum and covered in diamonds, but at the very top was a single diamond wolf, howling.

My face was probably a mess as at this point; I was in the middle of a full-blown ugly cry. My legs and hands shook so badly that I could hardly stand still. I could barely breathe, but I managed to squeak out one single word. "Yes."

He slid the ring onto my finger, and the two fit together perfectly—a lone wolf howling up at a crescent moon.

It was the best moment of my entire life.

Xander stood and gently wiped my tears away with the pads of his thumbs before placing a gentle kiss on my lips. "I love you so much, baby. Thank you for taking and accepting me."

"I love you too, Xander. Always."

Our moment was sadly interrupted by Jordyn rushing down the beach, screaming her lungs out.

Both Alexi and Xander immediately went on the offensive, but I knew better.

This nonsense was her happy scream.

“Did I miss it? I told Aaron to get his ass moving. Oh my goodness, babe, please tell me I didn’t miss it!”

I held my hand out to her and laughed.

She screamed again, causing both Alexi and Xander to jump.

“I’m so happy for you! And that ring! It’s magical. Good job, boys!”

I was wrapped in a bone-crushing hug that I quickly had to tap out of. “I need to breathe, J.”

“Sorry, sorry. Damn it! Aaron did this on purpose. I knew he was stalling.”

“Yes, I was Jordyn. They deserved to have this moment to themselves, and they’d still be having it if it weren’t for you,” Aaron said, walking up to the group.

“Whatever. They have already said what needed to be said,” Jordyn replied.

“So tell me, what did they say?”

She bounced on her toes, bubbling from excitement, but I had to let her down.

“Sorry, Jordyn. Those words were for the three of us alone. But you’ll be front row at the wedding, so you’ll get to hear all of the lovey-dovey stuff then.”

She pouted for a second, then smiled. “That’s fair, I guess. Well, my job here is done. You enjoy your night with your fiancées, and I’ll see you in the morning.”

She and Aaron both gave the guys and me quick hugs and congratulations before they headed back up the beach.

I stood there and stared down at my finger. I couldn’t believe Xander and Alexi had proposed. Together. I was honestly proud of myself that I didn’t pass out from the shock. I looked up at my two gorgeous men and smiled. Nothing could have made this night any better.

“Oh, we almost forgot. We got you strawberry cheesecake for dessert,” Xander said.

Scratch that, now the night couldn’t get any better.

# Chapter 58 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

Jordyn may have been hiding the true meaning behind us going out, but she was 100% correct when she said it would be a night I'd never forget. Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever imagined that my first real date would end with not one, but two marriage proposals.

I sat in the back seat of our limo, draped between my guys, so totally happy. My head rested on Xander's lap, and my feet were in Alexi's.

Xander's fingers ran through my hair and ran circles on my temples, while at the same time, Alexi had removed my flats and was massaging my feet.

These two were spoiling me rotten, and for once in my life, I wasn't going to question it. I was just going to enjoy it.

"Did you enjoy your surprise, little one?" Xander asked while lovingly gazing down at me.

"Enjoy isn't a strong enough word for how I felt back there. I don't think it's possible for anyone anywhere to have ever felt more loved and wanted than I have tonight. You amaze me, both of you."

"I'm so happy to hear it. So, we were wondering, do you think you are ready to handle two husbands at the same time? Needing you, wanting you, and taking you? Night after night?"

Xander's fingertips lightly traced the neckline of my dress, causing goosebumps to erupt on my heavy breasts. "Twenty nimble fingers exploring your creamy depths, four strong hands roaming all of your incredible curves, two tongues to tease and taste you all over, and two thick, long dicks to make you scream in pleasure. Are you ready for that, baby?" Xander's voice was a deep, sexy whisper as he spoke to me. His eyes never once left mine, but his fingers continued to dance across my exposed flesh.

Down below, Alexi had lifted one of my legs and was placing open-mouthed kisses on my feet, ankles, and calf muscles. His hands rubbed and kneaded all the way up my leg to my thigh, but teasingly missing my hot core by millimeters.

My breathing was becoming labored as I tried to focus on Xander's words, but having both of their hands on me made that impossible to do.

“Open your eyes, little one. Look at me and answer my question.”

My eyes fluttered open just as his hand slipped into my dress and under my bra. He quickly found my nipples hard as rocks and standing to attention and began to pinch, pull, and roll them between his large fingers.

“Umm, y-yes. I think I’m r-ready, ohh.”

“We don’t think you are yet, angel. Let’s just see which one of us is right,” came Alexi’s voice from down below. His hands ran under my dress and up the length of my legs to my hips. He hooked his fingers on my panties and slowly pulled them down and off.

My eyes were still locked on Xander’s face, but I saw when Alexi passed my lacy white thong over to him. Xander pressed it against his nose and took a long, deep breath, taking in the scent of my freshly flowing juices. “I’ll never get tired of your smell, little one. You’re so sweet.”

Alexi repositioned himself on his knees on the floor of the limo as he lifted my dress and spread my legs wide open. The cold air of the car danced across my body and made me shiver. “Never in my life have I seen something so beautiful,” Alexi mumbled, looking down at my weeping sex. He lowered his head and ran his tongue from the bottom of my entrance along my slick lips to my clit.

“Ahhhhh!” My backed arched.

“Don’t move, angel. I need you to stay right where you are. Can you do that for me, my love?”

I nodded my head and whispered my reply. “Yes, I can.” I then felt as two of his fingers came up and slowly entered my channel. I instinctively clenched down on them, wanting to hold them in place forever.

“You’re so tight, angel. But let me in just a little deeper.”

I focused myself and relaxed my muscles, letting Alexi slide deeper inside me, all the way down to his knuckles.

Xander lifted my head from his lap and slid onto the floor as well before gently laying me down on the seat. His hands slid under my back to the zipper of my dress, which he quickly pulled down. He skillfully unsnapped the clasp of my bra before pulling it away to reveal my bare breasts. “So perfect,” he whispered to himself before wrapping them both in his large hands.

Because of the pregnancy, my breasts were extremely sore and tender, but he took great care to make sure that all I felt was pleasure. He lightly squeezed and massaged them before he lowered his head down and softly began to suckle on my nipple. The feeling when his mouth made contact, coupled with Alexi’s fingers plunging my depths, quickly forced an orgasm from me.

Again my back arched, and my thighs quaked. I could feel myself squirting all over Alexi's skilled hand down below.

"Mmm, you're so wet for us, angel. But I think I should clean this up," I heard him say before he leaned forward and replaced his fingers with his tongue.

The feeling made me bite down on my lower lip so hard I tasted blood. I was lost in ecstasy but didn't want the driver to know what was going on back here, so I tried to muffle my cries.

"You scream as loud as you want, little one. It's soundproofed. Let us hear you, baby."

I nodded furiously while mumbling a few incoherent thoughts and phrases.

Xander smiled, then went back to work, nibbling on my sensitive nipples.

My entire body was on fire.

Alexi began to really get going as he wrapped his arms around my thighs and pulled me closer to him. His face was completely buried in my flower as he lapped, licked, and sucked me senseless.

My head whipped back and forth on the seat of the limo; my last few brain cells were being used to keep myself breathing. It was all I could do.

I heard Xander chuckle in my ear as his mouth moved to tease my neck and throat. He tilted my head all the way up, then ran his tongue along the line between my breasts up to my chin.

Again, my body shuddered in response. Having them both at the same time was a sensory overload, and I knew I was close to breaking.

He started to suck on my jaw, my ear lobe, and my neck, teasing over his mark.

Alexi was down below humming and growling as he ate me like I was his last meal.

"I . . . I can't . . . need . . . oh my god!"

Alexi wrapped those perfect lips of his around my clit and bit down at the same time as Xander sunk into my mark.

I screamed out so loud; it felt like my throat was on fire.

Both continued to lick and suck their respective spots as bursts of light exploded behind my eyes. My entire body quaked so hard, Alexi had to wrap an arm across my waist to keep me from sliding off the seat.

He slurped at every drop of nectar he could, and I could feel that I was close to passing out. I completely forgot that my body needed to breathe, so my lungs were burning, begging for

oxygen. I inhaled deeply like I'd just surfaced from underwater. And, as my lungs happily expanded, dark closed in and took me under. My body went limp and pliant on the seat.

I heard their deep, sexy chuckles before I was out and floating on my cloud of euphoria.

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Alexi POV

I was so proud of my beautiful angel. For her first time being with two men at the same time, she did surprisingly well, only passing out at the very end. When she went limp underneath us, Xander and I gently repositioned her and began to pull her clothes back into place. She was so exquisitely gorgeous; I was in awe as my fingers ran over her flawlessly smooth skin. We finally had her fully dressed as we pulled up to the front of the packhouse.

"I'll take her up to her room. She's probably done for the night," I told Xander with a smile. I lifted her tiny body into my arms and climbed out of the car.

Aaron and Jordyn were there on the steps waiting for us. "Is she alright?" Aaron asked as he stepped forward. "She's perfect. Just a little bit wore out. It was quite a ride back home," I smirked.

"I should never have even asked. Why?" Aaron huffed, then turned and walked back inside.

"That's my girl," Jordyn said before following Aaron in.

I adjusted Alaia against my chest and made my way to the fourth floor to her room. Her bag had been placed on the floor, so after I laid her on the bed, I went and fished out her pajamas and changed her into them.

Jordyn came in a few minutes later with a small bag in her hands. "I just need to wash her face; then she's all yours." She proceeded to remove the little bit of makeup that had survived the night before she pulled Alaia's hair up and into a bun. "She's all set. You guys be gentle with her, or else you'll have to deal with me."

Xander entered the room as Jordyn left, so he heard the warning as well. When the door closed, we both looked around the small room, then back at one another.

"So, how are we doing this?" I looked at the small, queen-sized bed Alaia was passed out on.

It was obvious we both wanted to spend the night sleeping beside our fiancé, but there was no way the three of us would fit in such a small bed.

"I'll just ask to have some extra blankets and pillows brought up. I'll take one side of the floor, and you can have the other. Now that I think about it, I should probably look into having a custom bed made back at home, so we don't continue to have this issue."



I guess neither one of us ever thought of the logistics of something like this—one wife with two husbands. Neither one of us would have any more claim over her than the other. She'd be ours equally, and night time would be no different.

Then I had a thought that made me laugh out loud. "I never would have guessed back at the alpha meeting that one day we'd have the same fiancé and would share a bed. Back then, I wanted you dead for trying to steal my mate. Now we're cohabitating. Crazy shit."

Xander laughed. "I was taking my mate, not stealing yours. But I get what you're saying. The little one has a way of changing people into better forms of themselves."

A few minutes later, a couple of omegas showed up at the room with loads of blankets and pillows.

Xander and I went and changed into our sleep clothes, then came back to find our makeshift beds set up for us.

I leaned over Alaia's beautiful sleeping form and kissed her forehead before going back to my spot and crawling under my blankets. I was asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow, dreaming of my future with my beautiful wife.

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Alaia POV

I woke up early the next morning, a bit hazy about what had happened the night before. I sat up and saw that I was in my bed in my old room, but I didn't see anyone else. Maybe I had dreamed the whole proposal thing. If I did, at least it was a damn good dream.

I swung my feet and jumped out of bed, landing on a sleeping figure on the floor.

"Oof!"

I felt myself start to fall when Xander's hand shot out and caught me. I landed softly on his chest. "I'm so sorry, babe. I didn't know you were down here. Are you alright?"

He pulled my head down and buried his face in my neck.

"I'm better than alright, love. Last night, the most perfect woman in the world agreed to be my wife, and this morning she literally fell into my lap. What else could a guy need?"

So, it wasn't a dream. I looked at my left hand and saw the rings they had given me sparkling in the morning sun. "Oh, shit. That was real."

Xander laughed out loud.

“It was very real, little one. You’re all ours, now and forever.”

“I like the sound of that. But why are you here on the floor?”

“Your bed is a little small. It’s barely big enough for the two of us, let alone all three.”

My lips formed a small ‘o’ hearing the facts. So that meant Alexi was probably on the other side. I leaned down and gave Xander a quick kiss before I stood to my feet.

“I want to go greet my other fiancé, too.”

He smiled, then rolled back onto his side.

When I walked to the other side of the bed, I found Alexi on his back with one arm draped across his perfect abs and the other over his face. The sunlight shined through the window and made him look like he was glowing.

I took a few soft steps forward and placed one foot on either side of his hips before I gently lowered myself to straddle him. He was sleeping hard, so I decided to tease him a bit. I rotated my hips against his and felt at least one part of him begin to wake up underneath me. I leaned forward and placed tiny soft kisses along his jaw before I landed on his mouth.

He still hadn’t fully woken up, so I bit down on his bottom lip. Hard. The jolt finally pulled him out of dreamland, his body jerked, and his hands landed on my hips. He then opened those stormy gray eyes of his and locked onto mine.

“Good morning, gorgeous fiancé of mine. How did you sleep?”

His incredible face was overcome with that butterfly-causing smile that made me swoon. “I dreamed of you all night. I slept like a baby.” He grabbed my head and pulled my lips back down to his for a deep kiss.

Because I was still straddling his waist, I could feel his coming to full attention down below. I could feel it poking through his thin sweat pants, and before I knew it, I was completely grinding against him while he ravaged my mouth. Eventually, I somehow fought my way out of the lustful haze and pulled my face away before jumping up, breathless.

“Easy boy, settle down now. I need breakfast, and you need a cold shower. Now. Let’s do this!”

Clearly not happy about the abrupt change in plans, he groaned, then pulled his pillow over his face in frustration.

I walked around the bed, then winked at a chuckling Xander.

“Just a few more days, man. You’re almost there,” I heard him tell Alexi as I walked into the bathroom and shut the door.

Just a few more days indeed, and I'd finally get to have all of him. I couldn't wait.

FIFTY-NINE | THE ECLIPSE PT. 1

## Chapter 59 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

After we returned home from our trip to Opal Moon, the days passed quickly, and soon it was Wednesday, the day of the Lunar Eclipse.

I could sense Alexi was nervous, although he tried to hide it by showering me with all love and affection he could.

After breakfast that morning, Xander pulled Alexi and me into his office for what he called a quick meeting. When we arrived, Matt and Kade were also there waiting for us.

Xander motioned for us to sit down before he spoke. "So, I know the ritual is tonight, and I wanted to do this before that got underway." Xander pulled his golden dagger from his drawer and set it on the desk. "Alexi, I have every confidence that you will pull through this just fine. But right now, you do not belong to a pack. If you were to die, your body would be disposed of as a rogue would. You would be in an unmarked grave in the woods since you couldn't be buried on my or any other packs grounds."

"I never thought that much about it, but I guess that makes sense. I don't really plan on dying tonight, though, so . . ."

"Doesn't matter. We're making you a member of Blue Moon right now. Stand up and step over here."

Alexi stood and walked to stand before Xander.

"Alaia, I need our Luna here as well."

I went and stood next to Xander as he reached over and picked the dagger up.

"Alexius Kostov, today, I, Alpha Xander Black of the Blue Moon pack, open the doors for you to join us. I, along with my Luna, offer you shelter, family, and an eternal bond that will be with you for all your days. Do you hereby swear to honor your Alpha and Luna for the rest of your days and to the best of your abilities, as required of all members of the Blue Moon pack?"

“I swear to do so.”

“And do you swear to protect the life, happiness, and wellbeing of your Luna, with your last breath, for the rest of your days, and to the best of your abilities, as also required of all members of the Blue Moon pack?”

Alexi smirked before he answered. “Oh, I absolutely swear to do so.”

Xander and I both tried to hide our smiles at hearing that.

I took Alexi’s right hand and placed a thin cut across his palm before doing the same to Xander’s. They then pressed their palms flat against one another’s, allowing the pack link to flow from Xander to Alexi. Alexi’s eyes clouded over as the voices of the Blue Moon echoed through his mind in welcome.

As Alexi’s eyes cleared, Xander removed his palm and smiled. “Welcome to the family, brother.”

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Alexi POV

After I left the office, I decided to spend most of the day in the gym training. It had always been the best way for me to take my mind off things that are bothering me. I was worried about the ceremony much more than I let on, but I refused to show it. I didn’t want to place any extra stress on Alaia; with her being pregnant, she didn’t need to carry my problems on her shoulders. But I was afraid of the ritual not working. It wasn’t that I was scared to die; it was more so that I was afraid of the idea that my time with my angel was coming to an end. I wished I had recognized how perfect she was for me years ago. It should have been her that I was with instead of all those random shewolves. But, there was little that I could do about the past anymore.

I pumped through over a hundred push-ups, then moved to sit-ups, then squats. My muscles were on fire. I didn’t want to continue, so I got on the treadmill and set it to the highest setting. I ran until my lungs burned, then kept on running. Sweat poured from my body and stung my eyes. My legs were beyond sore and screaming for rest. But I had to be strong. If I had any chance of surviving tonight, my body had to be strong. I needed to push through the pain. Stopping wasn’t an option.

I didn’t even notice when Alaia came into the gym and called out to me. I pushed harder and faster. She was soon standing next to me, looking up into my face. I saw her mouth moving but didn’t register what was being said. I kept going. It wasn’t until I saw a lone tear slide down her face that I was pulled from my trance. I yanked the kill switch on the treadmill and placed my feet on the sides while the belt slowed to a stop. I grabbed my towel, then stepped over to her.

“I’m sorry, angel. I was in my own world. What’s wrong? Why are you upset?” I wiped the tear from her cheek and kissed her forehead.

“Why are you doing this to yourself, Alexi? How will you have the strength to survive tonight if you push like this? Do you want to leave me, is that what this is?” Her voice was barely a whisper, and it broke my heart.

“Angel, that’s not it at all. I’m trying to make myself stronger for you. So I can stay here with you. Nothing but death could keep me from you.”

“Then come with me now. Give yourself a break and just, please, spend this time with me. I need you with me now.” Alaia lead me from the gym and to her bedroom.

It was being upgraded to allow for the three of us to occupy the space, but at that point, it was still just shared by Alaia and Xander.

I followed behind her into the bathroom, where she turned on the shower and proceeded to remove my clothes. When I was undressed, she stepped back and pulled off her own until she stood before me totally bare. She again took my hand and pulled me behind her into the large shower.

The water was on its warmest setting, and she positioned me directly under the spray. The heat beat down onto my over-worked muscles and offered them some of the relief I was too stupid to provide myself. She took a fresh bath sponge, and after applying soap, washed my aching back. She then turned me and locked her eyes onto mine as she ran the sponge up and down my front, covering me in suds. She was so tender with her touch. No one had ever handled my body this way.

When she was done, she placed the sponge aside and reached up to cradle my face. “After you are clean, we are going to hang out on the couch and watch movies, okay? For the rest of the day.”

“Okay, angel.”

“I’m going to need you to hold me close, Alexi. I have to feel your touch. I need it.”

“I’ll be right there, for as long as you need.”

“And tomorrow morning, we’re going to make breakfast together, and then we will begin to plan our wedding.”

“Sounds good, baby.”

I heard a sob escape her mouth. “No, you promise me, Alexi. Please . . .”

I didn’t even know that tears had begun to fall from my eyes until I tasted them on my lips. My angel was begging me to live, and I didn’t know if I could.

“Promise me, Alexi.”

I took a deep breath and cleared my throat before I found my voice. “I promise Alaia.”

She pulled me down and pressed her lips against mine. Tears ran down both our faces as we savored the taste of one another. This kiss was fiery, it was passionate, and it was final. And in case I couldn’t be the man she needed me to be and keep my promise, this kiss would be goodbye.

So I gave her all that I had left to give.

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Alaia POV

Alexi and I spent the remainder of the afternoon alone in my bedroom. Xander knew how important this time was for us, so he made sure we were only disturbed when a late lunch was brought up. We curled up together on the couch and binged our favorite comedy movies. True to his word, Alexi held me close the entire time. We were never separated for more than a few seconds, and this gave me so much peace.

Eventually, the sun began its descent, signaling that it was time to start preparing ourselves. I just laid in his arms on the couch, unmoving. I needed to listen to his heartbeat and feel his warmth. I didn’t want to have to move.

“Angel?”

“Not yet. Please, just a few more minutes.”

“It’s starting soon, baby. We have to go.”

I knew he was right, but it didn’t make this any easier.

He leaned forward and placed his face in my neck, leaving a light kiss where his mark should be. “You’re strong, Alaia. You can do this. And when it’s all over, we will start our lives together. Babies, wedding, everything you want.”

I could do this. I could do this. I could do this. I just had to keep repeating it, then maybe I’d believe it. I stood from the couch and grabbed Alexi’s hand, pulling him up with me. “Come on. We can do this.”

We walked hand in hand out of the bedroom and down to the first floor.

Xander had the backyard prepared for the ritual, so we made our way out the back door. Off to the side, Xander, Matt, and Kade were standing next to a cleared space. There were four large stakes in the ground holding thick heavy chains. These would be used to keep Max in place once Alexi had shifted.

“Hey, guys. Are we all ready?” Alexi asked. He was trying to appear confident, but I could feel his hand shaking in mine.

Xander gave a small smile and walked over. “We’re ready whenever you are. You’re strong as hell, Alexi, don’t ever forget that. You push through this and come back to us. You can be a real cocky pain in my ass, but this pack needs you. And most importantly, Alaia needs you.”

Alexi laughed. “I’ll do my best, Alpha.”

Kade and Matt walked up to offer words of encouragement as well before they placed the chains on Alexi’s wrists and ankles. Once they were done, both stepped back and shifted into their wolf forms as an added layer of protection. I noticed that they both stood right at my sides, towering over me and on guard.

Just relax for a bit, guys. Everything will be okay, I linked them.

They gave a small nod, then sat back on their hind legs, prepared for what was to come.

Seeing as this may be my last opportunity, I walked over to Alexi and gave him one long, final kiss. I didn’t want to have any regrets once this night was over. “You remember your promise to me.”

“I remember, angel.”

“Good. And you keep it.”

“I promise. We’ve got this, don’t worry so much.” He gave me his most beautiful smile, then crouched on the ground in preparation to shift.

I put my hand on the top of his head and concentrated on removing the suppression that I had placed on Max all those nights ago. Once I felt the wall I had built fall down, Alexi’s eyes flashed black for a moment, letting us know that his wolf was back with him.

“Step back, little one. I’ll need to open Alexi’s veins right before he shifts, but I don’t want you too close,” Xander stated.

I did what he asked, never taking my eyes off Alexi.

When I was a safe distance away, Matt and Kade came to stand in front of me. I looked up at the moon and watched as it slowly disappeared from sight. Before the last cast of its light was gone, Xander stepped forward and ran his silver-tipped blade down both of Alexi’s arms.

Max howled in pain but didn’t come forth. It was like he knew what was happening and refused to allow it.

But we knew better. Xander knew better. He stood in front of Alexi and called out to him. “Shift. Now!”

As his alpha, Max had no choice but to comply with Xander’s order, and the familiar sound of popping and dislocating bones filled the air. Within seconds, there was a huge, reddish-brown wolf standing where Alexi once was.

Seeing him in this form for the first time frightened me, and brought back memories of those weeks Max kept me locked away. I quickly shook the fear off. He was no longer in control, and I knew without a doubt that Max could never hurt me. He growled and fought against the chains, and blood gushed from the wounds Xander had opened. Because they had been created with silver, they would take much longer to heal.

But Max didn’t care. His focus was solely on Xander, who stood before him, unmoving. Max wanted to get to Xander; he wanted to kill him. But like a true alpha, Xander stood in his human form and showed no fear. It was almost like he was watching this all play out on TV.

Finally, Max began to feel the effects of the blood loss, and his focus no longer was Xander. His eyes searched the scene before him, and eventually, he looked over and locked eyes with me.

Then the moon went completely dark.

SIXTY | THE ECLIPSE PT. 2

## Chapter 60 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Aaron POV

I had promised Alexi that I would be there for him for his ritual, and I had let him down. A last-minute pack matter had placed me well behind schedule. I tore out of the house and shifted into my wolf. I knew I had no chance of making it on time by car, so only Flint could get us there before it was too late. The scenery passed by in a blur, and I saw the moon go dark when I was still miles from the Blue Moon territory. I pushed Flint to run faster. We had to make it. I couldn’t break my last promise to my best friend.

Flint, I don’t care what you have to do, but get us there now. I don’t know how much time we have left.

Just a few more minutes, Aaron. We’re almost there.



He dug deep and shot us across the Blue Moon border. Because of our strong alliance, the border patrols let me cross with no interference, and I ran right to the packhouse and into the backyard, where I knew the ritual was being held. What I found for a moment stopped my heart: the area was lit with large torches, and Maximus was chained with blood pouring from his front legs. He was still alive, and he was still fighting, and that was all that mattered.

I shifted into my human form and pulled on some basketball shorts Xander had out for me.

“I’m here, Alexi. I know you can do this, man. I cannot lose my best friend tonight, so you’ve got to fight,” I told him, walking straight up to Max.

He sat back on his haunches and looked me in the eye before he lost the power to stand and laid down on the ground.

I knew there was no way Alaia would ever be the same if he didn’t come through this. So, I prayed to the Moon Goddess above that she would grant us a little grace. We really needed it. I walked over to Alaia and took her hand in mine. “You good, sis?” I asked her, still looking at Max.

“Not at all, but I hope I will be. I hope we all will be.”

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Alexi POV

Once Matt and Kade had the chains on me, I knew it was go time. I hadn’t heard from Max in so long, and I wasn’t looking forward to having him in my head again, but this needed to be done. When Alaia removed the block, it felt like my brain was on fire as I tried to acclimate to having to share the space with my wolf again. Max came charging back, full of fury and loathing, seeking revenge for what he felt was done to him.

Max, I don’t have time for your bullshit right now. We’re going to shift, and there isn’t anything to can do to stop it.

Alexi, that’s where you’re wrong. I don’t know what you have planned, but I’m King of the Rogues and can do as I please. Don’t think I’ve forgotten just because you had me locked away. I will get what’s mine.

You’ve missed quite a lot, Max.

Just then, Xander commanded us to shift, and Max quickly obeyed.

How can this wolf command me? I’m King—

You’re not the king of anything, Max. Xander is our Alpha now, and it’s time for you to go. For good.

A short time later, I had taken the back seat and watched as Max struggled to break free and attack Xander. I was impressed by his ability to challenge our Alpha, but all of his bravadoes would only lead to him bleeding out quicker.

Max, I'm sorry that it's come to this, but you're going to die here tonight. I know you feel our blood draining from your body. It's only a matter of time.

I'll just heal like I always have. Whatever this is, it won't stop me.

You won't heal, Max. You can't. Not during a full lunar eclipse.

What is this? I always knew you were fucking soft. And now you're going to kill the both of us? For what?

For my mate. What you were so determined to take through force, I achieved through love. And I love her so much that I'm willing to risk my life to keep her safe from you.

Max looked out at the small crowd, and in the end, his eyes found Alaia. Then moon when totally dark, and there was nothing left to see. Xander walked around and lit torches that had been set up surrounding the area. When the final flame flicked to life, I saw Max still had not taken his eyes off my angel.

She is magnificent. I just wanted her to be ours. I needed her to be ours.

That doesn't forgive all that was done to try to get her. Mistakes were made, and now we both have to face the consequences.

I was surprised to see Aaron run over to the circle. I had honestly thought he had forgotten, but seeing him here made me proud that our friendship was still so strong. He spoke to me, but I could barely understand his words. It was like hearing underwater; everything was muffled. Then he walked over to Alaia and took her hand. A sense of relief overcame me. He was just one more person who would support her if this went wrong; I knew that he would make sure she was alright.

Max began to sway a bit before he laid down, placed his head on the ground between his front paws, and closed his eyes. I could feel him getting weaker and weaker. The blood flow had slowed down tremendously, as did the strength of Max's heartbeat. He was bleeding out. There was no turning back now.

I, too, was beginning to feel sleepy and knew that I was slipping away as well.

"Alexi. You stay with us, damn it. You promised me!"

I forced Max to open his eyes again and look at her. She needed to know I was still here, and that I was doing all that I could not to let her down. The minutes ticked by slowly, and it became tougher and tougher to keep Max's eyes open. I could feel our organs begin to shut down from

the blood loss, and soon the rest of us would follow. By this time, Max was on his side, lying in a thick pool of crimson blood. It was all he could do to keep breathing; he no longer had the strength to hold up his massive head or open his eyes.

“Alexi? Can you hear me? You keep fighting. It’s almost over, but you have to push through,” came my angel’s voice.

And I was trying, so hard.

My consciousness began to slip and fade, and my mind started to replay scenes from my life. I saw myself playing with Aaron and Alaia when we were children: Me pushing her off the slide in elementary school, making her scrape her knee. Her stuffing her gorgeous face with blueberry muffins on one of our last days at school. Then I saw the rejection, and how she looked when I broke her heart, how I felt when she, in turn, broke mine. These scenes flickered across my mind like an old movie, and I knew then what it meant to watch your life flash before you.

I pushed, and I fought, but it felt like this was a battle that I was going to lose.

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Alaia POV

When Max fell down to lay on his side, I knew it was almost over. It had been fifteen minutes since everything had started, so it wouldn’t be too much longer. The pool of blood beneath him was huge, and there was no way he had much more to give. His gums were pale white, and his eyes had lowered to small slits. If it weren’t for the slow rise and fall of his furry chest, I would have thought he was already gone. I watched as small twitches sprung over his body, and it wrecked me.

My Alexi was in there, and he was suffering through this, fighting to survive so we could have a future. “Alexi? Can you hear me? You keep fighting. It’s almost over, but you have to push through!” I called out to him, but there was no response.

All the previous times I had spoken to him, I at least got a flick of his tail, or lifting of his head, but this time it was nothing.

“I’m losing him, Aaron. I just know I am,” I whispered in a broken voice.

“Trust in this, Alaia. If he’s meant to survive, he will. All this is happening for a reason. Trust in it.”

I couldn’t bring myself to trust in anything that could possibly destroy my world right when it was finally all going so right.

No, I had to fight, too. I couldn’t leave this up to fate. I wouldn’t. I let go of Aaron’s hand and walked toward Max.

Xander and the rest of the guys made a move to block me, but I stopped them. I had to do this. “It’s alright, guys. I need to do this. I won’t sit back and do nothing and watch him die. And I can’t accept the idea that I was given these powers but can’t somehow use them to save my mate. So, please, move out of my way and let me try.”

“Alaia, it’s too dangerous. Think about the babies,” Xander reasoned.

I placed a hand on my swollen belly for a moment before I heard Amethyst speak.

Our babies are protected. I will keep them safe, I promise you.

I smiled up at Xander. “They’ve got powerful protection of their own. Nothing will happen to them or me.” I felt my body began to warm all over, and when I looked down at my hand, I was casting a soft purple glow.

Seeing this, the guys stepped aside and allowed me to move up to Max.

At this point, his chest barely moved. He probably had less than a minute of life left in him.

I sat on the ground and placed his massive head on my lap. His muzzle was right next to my belly, but I knew my babies were safe. I stroked his head and watched his ribcage make one final rise and fall before it stopped for good.

“Alexi, baby. I know you can hear me. Follow the sound of my voice, okay? Don’t leave me yet.”

I closed my eyes and began to hum. But it wasn’t the usual melody. I hummed the song that Alexi and I danced to the night he proposed. I knew my powers alone couldn’t save him, but I hoped that combining the love we had for each other would be just what we needed to make it through. I leaned down and laid my head on his as I continued to stroke his fur and hum him back to life and back to me.

Aaron came up and sat beside us. There were tears in his eyes as he placed a hand my shoulder, then started to stroke Max with his other.

I couldn’t say how long this went on for, but soon the light from the moon began to shine down on us again. A strong gust of air swept over, blowing out the torches. The only light left to illuminate the scene was that of the moon.

Max’s body began to shake and seize before it started slowly, fading away and shifting back into Alexi’s human form. Max was gone forever, but what about Alexi?

I ran my fingers through his dirty blonde hair and kissed his face.

He looked like he was sleeping in my lap, so peaceful and serene.

Take Aaron's hand, Alaia. Do it now. We can't heal him alone, but a full Amethyst pair can. He's more powerful than some may think.

My eyes snapped open, and I grabbed hold of both Aaron's hands.

Amethyst purred our familiar melody, and I began to hum again. Aaron's eyes instantly changed to purple, and I knew our powers flowed between the two of us. The warm, purple glow spread from my body to his, then flowed down to cover Alexi's resting form.

Then I saw it—the first sign of life.

Alexi's foot twitched. Then his fingers. He was slowly coming back to us. It was working. After what seemed like an eternity, I saw his chest expand as he took in a deep breath. He opened his eyes, and I was met with those incredible gray orbs.

Through teary eyes, I smiled down and stroked his face. "Hey, Alexi."

He just stared back at me for a moment before his features became laced with confusion. "Alaia, what are you doing here? And what's going on?"

He sat up and looked around, disoriented, and my heart sunk. This couldn't be happening. He looked back over to me, then down to my swollen belly. "Whoa, and you're pregnant? Is it mine? Aaron, what in the hell is going on, man?"

Aaron passed him another pair of shorts, which Alexi snatched when he finally realized he was naked.

Alexi then shot up to his feet, pulled them on, and looked around. When he laid eyes on Xander, his face scrunched up in anger.

"Alexi, calm down for a minute, alright? You've just been through a lot, and you just need a minute to get yourself together," Xander said.

"I don't know what you all are talking about. I don't need a minute to do shit. You already got my mate, what else do you want from me?"

I slowly stood to my feet and took his hand. "Alexi, look at me."

He was still wary of the situation around him, but soon his eyes met mine.

"You are mine, and I am yours. And you promised you'd come back to me."

"You're mine?"

"Yes, I am yours."

“But I don’t understand. I don’t know what is happening.”

I pulled his head down to my level, then moved to interlace our fingers together.

I pressed my forehead against his as all the memories of the last few months played in my mind. When the last one faded, he leaned up and looked around at the concerned faces circling him. We all just wanted him back—all of him. We needed the Alexi we had grown to know and love.

He then looked down at me and smiled. “What do you think of an April wedding, angel? You would be the most beautiful spring bride.”

Relief washed over me, and I jumped into his arms, wrapping my arms as tight as I could around him.

“Careful now, Xander would kill me if these rock-hard abs of mine hurt one of his pups,” he teased before setting me back down on my feet.

“Damn right, I would. It’s good to have you back, Lex. I thought I was going to have to kick your ass again for a minute there,” Xander said, pulling him into a hug.

“Luckily, that’s not the case. I’m not a wolf anymore, so I’d rather not go up against an Alpha.”

“How do you feel?” I asked him. He’d just lost a significant part of who he was, so there had to be some feelings involved.

“I feel the same, but much lighter. I had gotten used to not having Max around, and now the only difference is that I don’t have to worry about him ever coming back. I loved being a wolf, but I love being yours even more. It will take some time to adjust fully, but I will be alright. I promise.”

“I thought I had lost you, Alexi. That was a pain far worst than rejection,” I whispered.

He held my face and lifted it up. “I made a promise to you, didn’t I? You’re stuck with me forever.”

Forever could never be long enough.