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{ Raine }

The moment I turned around and opened my eyes I knew I was in trouble. I had tried to fight it but my wolf was too strong, too excited by our new mate. She forced my eyes open and when mine met his I was a goner. She howled and howled, yelling MATE over and over with so much joy I was honestly confused. How was she so excited when our last mate broke us to pieces. I was in an internal debate when I saw him take a step forward. I instinctively took a step back.

A low, warning growl came from his chest and I froze in place. My wolf was reassuring me he wasn't angry but I couldn't help the overwhelming hesitation. He apologized and tried to explain. I could tell he was holding himself back and that worried me. Did he also not want me?

He extended his hand and introduced himself. I hesitated but eventually gave him my hand and I drew in a breath when my hand met his and I felt the butterflies. They were the same as the ones I felt from the tiny boy in my arms except a million times stronger. My wolf was telling me those were the mate sparks, you only feel them with your mate.

My mate asked if we could move this into his office. He seemed to be enjoying the view of his son in my arms and I

was content holding him so I declined the offer for him to take Cooper from me. We turned to walk to the house and both Nel and my father were looking at us like we were aliens. I knew they were confused, but I figured it better to get into the office.

Alexander's office was large. It had a big desk with his chair behind it and two others in front. There was a couch and a vintage sitting chair on one wall and a bar on the other. The room smelled overwhelmingly of my mate's caramel scent as well as a hint of coffee. I walked in and straight to the vintage sitting chair. I situated myself on it, rearranged Cooper so he was comfortable and then looked up to the men in the room.

Alexander was looking at me with the sweetest expression that made me blush. While Nel and my dad were looking at me like I was crazy. It occurred to me that I was being more causal than I should have been and to them it must have looked disrespectful. 1

"I'm sorry, is it ok if I sit here?" I ask Alexander, just to be on the same side.

He nods, with a sort of dopey smile on his face that he then hides. I watched him carefully. Clearly he felt what I felt, but I could also feel that he was hiding something, pulling away the same way I was. Considering I was holding his son I knew there was a woman in his life at one time or another so I had my suspicions that he held an unfortunate past like I did.

"So, you must be Anthony?" my mate asks my father, extending his hand and shaking it before sitting on the couch closest to me and gesturing for the other two to join us.

They both hesitated but my father respectfully answered. They began to chat, Nel included, about the trip and the questions my dad and Alexander had for each other. I took this time to get a good look at my mate. He was large, even bigger than Nel, probably 6'6" which made him nearly a foot taller than me. My head came up to his shoulders and my eyes were level with the top of his chest I had noticed when we were standing. He was absolutely ripped, his button up shirt was pulled up to his elbows and unbuttoned at the top showing off just enough of his chest. He was in casual black jeans and nice shoes and his curly black hair was slicked back. He had a face carved by a god and I could look at his eyes all day long.

"So," I heard Alexander say, drawing me away from checking him out any longer. Although by the smirk on his face I would say that I was caught red handed.

"For right now this does not leave this room, however, it seems that Lorraine and I, are second chance mates," he said to my dad and Nel, confirming my suspicions that I was not his first mate.

Both of their eyes widened and Nel's mouth dropped open which made me snort out loud. Alexander looked at me with

a small smile as if he was amused. I apologized and looked away as a blush crept up my face.

"Why would that need to be a secret?" My dad asked him.

"Well, I would just like to keep it between us for now. Not for long, hopefully but, I want to make sure some things are sorted out before we tell the pack."

"Such as?" my dad presses, his protective side showing more each minute.

"Dad, give him a break," I say, surprising myself and my dad.

Alexander reaches over and puts his hand on mine on my knee. The sparks once again make themselves known and he softly tells me, "It's ok, he has every right to ask."

He leaves his hand there while he tells us both, "My first mate, Cooper's mother, is gone. She left us when he was two weeks old. I severed our mate bond the moment she left and I haven't heard from or seen her since that day. But that day caused a lot of pain for myself, my son and our entire pack losing their supposed Luna."

When he said that she left when cooper was only two weeks old I was suddenly seeing red. My heart rate increased and in a matter of seconds I was fucking livid. How could she? How could she leave her mate AND her son? What kind of a fucking horrible person did that?

I felt Alexander's hand tighten around mine as if he could sense me anger. Maybe he could. When he finished talking

he turned around and looked into my eyes. Then I knew he saw my anger. He seemed to appreciate it, understand it, and just simply nodded his head to me as he kept his hold on my now shaking hand. 1

My father was just as livid as I was and I could see the pain on Nel's face from the memory. He was Alexander's best friend, I'm sure he was the one who saw him through the worst.

"I'm sorry," I told him, pouring out emotions into each word.

"I'm sorry too, for you," he said, holding eye contact to make sure I understood. Someone had told him about my first mate. He did understand my pain.

"I understand why you would need to take this slow, and keep it between us," I told him.

"I appreciate that, the biggest worry isn't myself as much as the pack. They have lost one Luna. While they will be ecstatic over this news, it will be a lot to handle and I just want to give it a little time to decide how to approach it," he told me.

"What is a Luna?" I asked, looking between him and Nel.

"Luna is the Alpha's mate, the Alpha female. The heart and soul of pack. They complete an alpha, make them stronger, keeping peace and showing kindness." Nel told me. My eyes widened a little and I looked to Alexander who was watching me closely.

"I- I don't know enough to do that. I didn't even know what packs were until yesterday, I don't-? I studded out.

"Raine, everything they just said, you are. You are kind, generous, a natural leader and the gentlest soul I know. You are also powerful and true to yourself. Baby this is your destiny," my dad told me.

I gave him my most confused look because what the actual hell was he talking about.

"Look, I was as lost as you when that asshat rejected you in Haven Moon. From what I'd seen, mates didn't do that. And I knew that you had it in you to be the female Gamma of that pack. So I was confused when it all happened, because it made sense to me that you two would be together. But now? Now that all makes sense. Why he rejected you. I have always believed that everything happens for a reason. And this, love, this is why everything that has happened in the past two days happened the way it did. I know it. You belong here."

I felt the tears roll down my cheeks and I closed my eyes. Someone wiped away the tear on my nose and from the sparks I knew who it was. As he went to wipe another one I grabbed his hand and held it in mine with my eyes still closed. His sparks were soothing me, calming me, and I welcomed them.