

Chapter 18: After a year

-Mason-

She was standing here, her back in front of me. Her long black straight hair covering her shoulders gracefully, she did not notice my presence while approaching her.

Everything about her was alluring, tempting. Why did I not realize it before?

I hugged her by her waist, startling her while burring my nose on the crook of her neck, inhaling her scent deeply. It took her by surprise.

"It feels so good," Jax said. Her scent was arousing us.

"You smell so good, omega," I whispered in her ear, snring her hair. Oranges and sweet honey. I would recognize her scent anywhere; it was her indeed.

"Amazing," Jax said, and I agreed with him. We felt at home while holding her.

I began to rub my shaft on her soft butt, and the tingling feeling was incredible. She whimpered. But that did not stop me; her smell was driving me crazy.

"Mason, what are you doing?... You are not being yourself!... Let me go!" Her voice is like a melody in my ears. She is here with me, and I am not letting her go.

"You are always around me, omega; I have noticed your sweet scent lingering around me all the time." Her heart is running wild in her chest, same as mine. She is excited and scared at the same time. Why would she be scared? I did not want to scare her. I released her from my embrace, then, and she turned around to face me.

Her beautiful hazels looking into my eyes, into my soul. I am the present. I feel her, and she is happy to see me... us. The emotion in my chest is something I have never experienced before.

I caressed her cheek, but my eyes diverted to look at her plump pink lips... I am so thirsty. She took a step away from me... a step I took to get closer to her.

She looks so vulnerable; I took her hand in mine, and I pulled her closer to me. She did not move, and I took that as acceptance. Leaning impossible closer, I grabbed her face with both hands and kissed her lips softly.

The mere contact with her lips lighted up every cell in my body... she kissed me back, and then our tongues battled with each other. She is mine, and I belong to her as she belongs to me... I feel complete.

I opened my eyes, and I found myself in bed, again with a painful erection. Maybe it was Jax giving me those dreams with Clara. It is his way to torture me further. No speaking to me, no fast healing. Sudden outbursts of anger and anxiety were a constant in my life. Plus dreams about my mate.

This was a good dream. It was mixed with an old memory. The memory of our first kiss, and what could have been between us if only... I acted differently.

Regardless, Jax should know me better, the erection might hurt, but I enjoyed the memories and my dreams of Clara. Even when Jax turns sweet dreams into nightmares.

The day I dreamed of her, I would wake up feeling better despite the silence of my wolf. No one knows it, but when I do not have dreams of her, I lock myself in her room to sniff her clothes. The lingering smell of her soothes my soul.

It has passed almost a year since Clara disappeared from our pack. Every time we locate the Simmons, they have left behind a resignation letter at the Alpha's desk. I fear that Clara might be rogue by now, but I cannot ocially look for her, neither bring her back. Clara is not my pack member, and she was the one who resigned to Blood Moon. I simply have no right.

The rejected Alpha is my nickname now, inside and outside the pack. I was mad at the beginning, I trashed furniture, and acted all ba Alpha. However, time made everyone forget it as new gossips come and go. What happened to me is just an old rumor by now.

I had to le a petition to the King to ascend as Sole Alpha without a Luna at his age. Besides, my uncle supported me before the Council, too.

After letters and failed appointments with the King, I assumed the position in a probation period. My father was in no condition to get back to work as my mother was still unconscious.

The King offered to visit us one day, which was frightening for everyone.

If Alphas have a scary aura, just imagine how it feels to be around the Alpha King. Nevertheless, my mother was his relative. It was understandable a visit.

After my uncle realized a traitor would be among us, we tightened security around my mother. Father guarded her in their room, and the list of visitors was limited. Besides, we installed cameras everywhere... except in the bedrooms and bathrooms.

The support provided by my uncle was beyond just advice. Uncle Richard sent a small army from Silver Rain Pack to help security at our borders until we nish training more patrols.

Furthermore, my uncle even helped me to renew alliance treaties with neighboring packs. After my public humiliation, most of them wanted to drop out.

The pack of Marissa took an oath in favor of Blood Moon; she owed me that much considering my losses. Even though I never talked to her again.

I could not understand the reasons to break any treaty with my pack because of that. I have honor, and I am strong... Still, most Alphas did not trust me because they thought I would not care enough. Since I did not have a Luna to protect, I would not understand the importance of a mate

and would turn my back on them.

My uncle explained that strategically it is better to stay away from some conics but that any Alpha would jump in one if a Luna were in danger.

All the while, I thought it was about being the strongest and scariest to keep away rogues and vampires... I thought my father was weakened by my mother, but I see now that she made him strong.

Thanks to my uncle, I learned a lot and even had deeper conversations with him than with my father. I had week one remote session to talk about everything going on the pack until I felt ready to do it alone... as Sole Alpha.

After taking a cold shower, I had another vivid hallucination of Clara with me in the shower. Damn Jax! As if the f****g dream was not enough... I needed another shower! I was supposed to attend a meeting in ten minutes. I am late!

"Jax, she will not leave my head after that!" I screamed, frustrated while drying my hair roughly with a small towel.

"Can I help you, Alpha?"

"Please, get dress and leave my room, Candice." It is so frustrating.

Fuck! I guess all guards on my mother disregarded my room. Is that anyone can just barge in my room without a problem?

I have received more and more advances from females. All interested in becoming Luna.

"Mason, I can be your Luna... I can mark you; I am eighteen now, I am ready..." She approached me, naked, and tried to touch me.

Jax growled. At least it was directed at her and not me. She is just a pup and denitely not my second chance mate. Do they think I am that desperate to accept just anyone?

"Do you want me to call the guards, or would you just leave me alone?" I tried to stay calm, but I was angry.

I am already late for my meeting with Liam, and my body was unhappy after my session in the shower. How much can I endure temptation?

Candice began to sob loudly, like the child she is. She hid her face behind her hands, and I regretted yelling at her before. There are better ways. Carter will kill me if he finds out I made cry another of his cousins. We were not on speaking terms when he hnd out I slept with Sky at sixteen.

"I am sorry, Candice... I am not the guy for you, okay? You deserve your fated mate..." I took one step forward and contained my aura to not scare her.

Unfortunately, she thought of that as an invitation and threw her arms around my neck to kiss me. I struggled with her, trying to push her away with one hand and using the other to keep my grip on the towel covering my manhood.

Between kisses, Candice said that she was in love with me since a pup, that she wanted me, that I was everything she ever dreamed of...

It has been so long since I touched a female. My body was reacting to her kisses. Who would not? She is here, naked, and she might love me... it would be so easy to just take the chance and let it happen.

But I could not do it...

Clara was still in my head. I do not want to fall into the same pattern. Desire one while taking another. Above all, I did not want any other female. I knew where my heart was... I made my mind at that moment. I decided to end this messy situation at once.

"No, Candice!" I shouted at her when someone knocked on the door.

"I will just open it! No sweat! Mason, cover your..." It was the voice of Liam.

"No, Liam!" Too late... f****g Liam Junior Johnson opened my f****g door at the f****g worst possible moment.

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Candice!

"Mason!"

"Carter! Candice and I yelled at the same time. Her older cousin, my second in command, was at my door.

"Damn! It is not what it looks like..." I raised my hands in surrender, but my towel dropped to the oor, making things worse.

"I am going to kill you!"

My hands were covering my manhood. I could not react on time to avoid Carter's punch. And the fucker of Jax decided to help Carter. My body froze in place! His punch connected straight in my face!

"Why are you so obsessed with my cousins? What is wrong with you? First, Sky, and now, Candice? Liam was holding him now. I am the Alpha and have received the full blow of a Gamma. Not any gamma, my third in command! Is this some sort of joke?"

Candice started to cry again and ran to the bathroom. The three of us, standing there. Liam, holding an enraged Carter. Me, embarrassed, angry, and naked.

"Your cousins are the ones obsessed with me! I am tired of this s**t! Candice showed up here, naked! I was taking a bath, and when I came out, I found her here... Nothing happened! And I did not seduce Sky! I was drunk, she was drunk... we made a stupid mistake. We were young... I admit! I was wrong commanding her to keep it a secret. Okay? What else do you want from me?" I am so tired of this s**t. Everyone is messing up with me here.

"Apologize!" Carter yelled.

"What? But I am the Alpha..."

"So, just because you were born Alpha, you are perfect?" Carter tried to escape from the hold of Liam. The gamma is strong, but Liam as beta is stronger. "You have never made mistakes, then? Are you sure?" He hissed.

"Carter, let's talk..." Liam tried to reason with him, but Carter was ghting him to jump at me. Even his wolf was trying to get out.

Carter is not only the third in command of my pack; he is also my friend since pups. I should have messed up really badly for him to act this way.

"I am sorry, I just wanted to heal our Alpha..." Candice showed up using a white towel to cover her and grabbed her clothes from the oor. Carter relaxed. He realized my scent was not on her, not really.

She is too young for me.

"Get dressed in the bathroom. I will take you home." Carter was still mad.

"Can you explain to me why this my fault?" I am the one angry at Carter now.

"Sky was the one who got me drunk and then got drunk herself. I remember clearly she locked the door... besides, I did not do anything without her consent... She hates me because I did not want her after. Come on! Don't be a hypocrite! You have slept around as much as I did... And you know I have never offered anyone love or to be my Luna. You know it. I never did that for anyone... neither did you!"

"You have to admit it, Carter. This manwhore here never offered the title." I am not sure if the intervention of Liam calling me manwhore can be helpful.

Shit! Where is the f****g respect for the damn Alpha?

"Still, you forced her to keep it a secret. That ruined her... She was a good girl... She..." You have to be a serious man.

"Sky was screwed up since childhood." Liam could not keep it inside, which earned him a growl from Carter.

"She was so obsessed with me that she used a f****g potion to get the title of Luna. Sky committed a crime! Yet, her trial was private, her f****g punishment mild... You know that any other accused of those charges..." Clara came again to my mind. I was so unfair to her, I am a worthless piece of sht... I guess I do have to apologize...

"As a member of the gamma family, she received special treatment... Clara did not..." our system is corrupt. I can see it now.

"And it was Sky the one who bought more potion and staged it in her room to incriminate her... You know what it did to me... what it made me do."

"You decided to reject Clara! When you nd out she was your mate, it was your choice... you had plenty of chances! You choose to believe in that f****g box. It was you!" It was as if Carter were vocalizing Jax's anger.

Being almost naked in front of my friends and looking back to everything that happened last year...

"I am sorry..." I said, lowering my head. Liam gasped, but Carter was disarmed by my words.

The belligerence of the gamma reduced, but there was still resentment, probably because there is more to say.

Intended or not, I hurt his family member; I lied and forced Sky to lie... I did not want to face any consequences. More importantly, I did not apologize to her or my friend either... I have my part of the fault.

I guess I have hurt more people than I thought.

"Guys... I am ready to go home." A girl's voice interrupted us.

Candice was wearing a short sleeveless pink dress. It reminded me of the dress Clara was wearing the day I threw her in the dungeon. I need her scent today. One day it will vanish, and I will get crazy.

"Mason, my feelings for you are real. I want to heal your wolf and be your Luna. Please..." Candice said when Carter interrupted her.

"Candy!" Carter looked at her more annoyed than angry now. "It is Alpha Mason to you! Do not disrespect your Alpha!" He took her outside then. Liam and I could hear him scolding the young female for her recent actions.

Liam and I were silent for a moment after they left my room.

"Well, this is awkward..." Yeah, like don't tell me, Liam!

"You are still naked... and I have a mate. Not all of us are into you, dude." I laughed. We both did. Same Liam.

After I put some pants on, Liam and I sat down at my ooe for our emergency meeting.

"I am sorry about this whole mess. s**t keeps happening to me. I am jinxed!"

"Look at this... how apologies can come out of your mouth so easily now!"

"Do not tease me, Liam. That was hard for me, bro." I have always thought I was right because I am an Alpha.

"Okay, Okay... I am sorry, too. Touchy subject..." Then, I noticed that his smell was different.

I think Fernando accepted him because Liam smells like him. I am not sure how to ask him what he did and how it works taking back your rejection... to get a mate back. I have just had a revelation myself while being attacked by Candice.

After a year and I am still longing and lusting over my true mate. There is no other female for me. I mean, now that I do not care about ranks, Candice would be a good mate, young and sweet. Not sure if tied for the role of Luna. Yet, no one can be a better Luna than my fated mate.

Suddenly, I felt Jax waging his tail in happiness. He was hopeful... I felt it. To have part of my soul back with me was an incredible feeling.

"Finally!" I exclaimed, standing up from my chair, leaving Liam startled at my abruptness.

"Yes, nally! It took you more than a year to realize that there is only one female for us and that one is Clara. Moron!" That attitude! Jax, my pall! You are yourself again.

"I was about to give up on you when you almost accepted that Candice... if you mated with her, I was going to take over your body in your sleep and jump off a cliff!" Yes, he might. He despised me; he still does, but now he hopes to get our mate back.

"Someone mind-linked?" Liam asked me intrigued.

"Yes, Jax is back! And I have decided I want to get back my mate. My true mate, Clara." Even I sound hopeful now.

"Mason, I am sorry... but are you sure? We do not even know where she is."

"I know I can nd my mate!" Jax answered for me.

I could feel my aura increase, strengthen, and expand from my body by the presence of my wolf.

"Holy s**t! Jax is really back!" He said, smiling widely.

"Enough with the disrespect!" Jax is still a cocky wolf.

"Okay... but I guess you are not going to like what I came to tell you."

I was happy with my resolution now. There is nothing bad enough to change how I feel right now. Well, something that would change my mood for good, Clara walking into my ooe now. Then I would be ecstatic.

"Tell me at once!" Still, Jax.

I was relaxing at the back of my head. It feels so good to be able to do this again with Jax.

"Alpha... Very early in the morning... s**t! This is hard. Okay... the reason I called for an emergency meeting was to tell you in person... well, also Carter..." Liam does not talk that way. It must be serious.

I jumped to the front, leaving Jax alert at the back of my mind.

"My grandmother is a member of Fleur-de-Lis. We found out early in the morning..."

I gasped. How is it possible? Our former beta female a member of a crazy cult.

"Liam, she might be involved in the attack on my mother. She is almost a terrorist."

How is that nobody knew? Probably she is a descendant of that crazy s**t pack same as the Simmons and Clara herself were descendants of Moonlight pack.

"There might be others involved. I need to interrogate her!"

I went to the door, but he was not following me.

"Yes... But there is more, Mason. Do you remember the theory of my father where the incidents were connected? He was right... and what I am about to tell you will be in mind-link, but you need to stay calm... s**t! Good day to decide you wanted Clara back!"

"I am not following... What are you talking about?" I walked back to my seat to face him again. He did not move from where he was sitting.

"The attack was not meant for Luna Michelle... the target was Clara..."