

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 12

### Chapter 12: Turmoil

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

Zane leaves to collect his things and Agnes from Nikki and Micah's place, giving me the chance to really think about what I just agreed to. I head to the bathroom to splash cool water on my face and neck, letting out a huge sigh as I wipe the sweat from my brow.

My reflection mocks my pathetic situation, laughing at me for accepting yet another wolf into my life.

‘Don't let him get too close’ I remind myself.

‘ Every kind gesture, every kiss, every gentle caress of my face...it will all be a lie. He doesn't really love me. He doesn't care about me no matter how much he says he does’

Tears spring to my eyes as I think about all the times Christian looked me in the eyes with such false sincerity, professing his undying love for me all the while f\*\*\*\*\*g my sister behind my back.

Wiping the tears that stain my cheeks, I inspect my reflection, my eyes scrutinizing every imperfection.

Dark circles hug my eyes from my restless night.

Fearful that Zane would find me, I called out of work this morning, keeping Kota home instead of taking him to daycare.

Of course, my attempts proved futile.

The wolf found me without much effort.

“I am not good enough to fall in love with anyways” I shrug to myself, drying off my face.

“I couldn’t even keep my husband interested in me before he looked elsewhere...Perhaps Zane will also find me inadequate as a mate and move on as well..” I nod at my reflection reassuringly.

“Yes.Sooner or later, he’ll stop liking me and I’ll be free”

Having given myself the pep talk of the century, I hurry to find little Kota playing in the backyard and call him to me.He happily waddles over to me with a grin on his face.

“Where’s Zane, mommy ?” he asks, looking behind me into the living room.

“Can he come play with me ?”

I crouch down and lift him into my arms, carrying him over to the living room and sitting him down on the sofa.I smooth down his hair and cup his chubby cheeks in my hands.

“Kota,” I say, forcing a smile for him.

“What do you think about Zane staying with us ... just for a little bit ?”

His eyes widen with joy.

“Yeah!” He cries, jumping up on his feet and clapping his hands.

“Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!”

“You like that idea ?” I ask, raising an eyebrow at him.

Kota jumps onto the couch and bursts into laughter.

“Yeah,” he giggles, resting his chin in his hands.

“And what about Agnes? Can she stay here too?” I ask.

Kota bounces on his toes, shooting his fingers up in a happy I pout at him.

“I thought I made the best cookies...”

“No,” he grins, shaking his head and jumping up like a rabbit.

I feign hurt at his honesty and he rushes up to kiss me square on the lips.

“But Mommy makes the best pancakes!” He chirps.

Kota suddenly stretches out his arms like a plane and flies over to his toy chest, pulling out his favorite toy train and action figures.

“What are you doing?” I ask as he makes a small pile of toys.

“To play with Zane,” he shrugs as if that were the most obvious answer.

Worry fills my heart as I realize that Kota would be affected by Zane’s imminent departure.

I would need to do everything in my power to make sure Zane rejects me quickly and leaves us both in one piece.

“Remember, Kota,” I sigh, crawling over to him.

“He’s only here for a little while. He won’t be here forever. Entiendes? understand?” I ask.

He nods and continues to make a pile of toys for Zane when he arrives.

Seeing no point in explaining any further, I rush off to the guest room and ensure it's comfortable for Agnes, changing the sheets and myself to share my space with a man.

I clear out two drawers for Zane and make room in the closet for his shoes and clothing.

Uneasiness fills my belly as I stare at the Queen sized bed I was expected to share with a stranger.

It was large enough to fit us both but we would inevitably touch during our slumber.

The thought of this man touching me in my pajamas makes me shudder.

How I wish their Moon Goddess would leave me be and not punish me so! I readjust the pillows and an idea pops into my head, making me laugh knowing he would hate me for it.

Several hours drag on until the sun begins to set in the horizon and a small part of me hopes perhaps Zane had changed his mind.

Just as the thought enters my mind, the doorbell rings, my heart sinking knowing who the visitors are.

I finish cleaning up the bed and rush over to the door, taking a deep breath as I open it.

Zane and his mother smile politely at me, Nikki and Micah waiting just behind them to be let in.

I swallow hard, hoping my saliva will soothe my dry throat, stepping off to the side to let them in.

Zane and Agnes each carry a single small bag with what I assume are their belongings while Niki and Micah carry what appear to be shopping bags.

“Zane!” Kota cries, rushing up to the man with his arms wide open.

“You’re here!”

The large man throws his bag over his shoulder and bends down with a flip at the sight of my son running into Zane’s arms so freely and happily.

They had only met this morning and Zane had already won Kota over. Would I fall so easily for him too? \*No, I shake my head.

“No, I’ll Be strong. I have to be strong for both of us”

“Sorry we’re late,”

Micah smiles, “but we promised Agnes we’d take her to town to go shopping for more clothes. They...they didn’t bring much with them to begin with.”

I nod silently and lead Agnes to her room while Micah and Niki begin unloading the shopping bags in the car.

When we reach the room, I turn to Zane and have him translate for me.

“This is your room” I sigh.

“I left you some towels on the bed. The bathroom is down the hall to the left,” I say, pointing down the hall to show her.

She smiles kindly at me and I find it impossible to hate her. She was not my mate. She had not forced me into this arrangement.

“Thank you,” she signs, her eyes widening as she takes in the room.

She signs something to Zane and he smiles back at her, nodding happily.

Agnes takes a seat on the bed, shocked by how bouncy and comfortable it is, her hand feeling the soft fabric of the quilt I put on the bed for her.

She wipes at her eyes and rushes to hug me, my body stiffening. It was just a simple room with a large window looking into the garden and a comfortable bed.

Unsure what else to do, I wrap my arms around Agnes and accept her hug.

Kota stares curiously at us, leaning his head against Zane’s neck.

“Mommy, why she crying?” He asks innocently.

I turn to Zane for an explanation but he remains silent as ever, only patting Kota’s back gently.

Agnes pulls away, her cheeks flushed pink in embarrassment as she wipes her eyes.

She turns back to the room and begins unpacking her things.

“Follow me,” I say curtly, gesturing to Zane and turning to leave Agnes alone.

To my relief, Zane puts Kota down and follows close behind me, Kota running down the hall to get his toys.

Alone with Zane, I force my thoughts elsewhere as I feel the urge to turn around and hold him.

Stupid bond, I mutter to myself.

We arrive at my room and I point to the dresser.

“I’ve cleared out these two drawers for you and left some space in the closet for you to hang your things,” I shrug. I turn to find him staring at the bed and feel my cheeks heat up.

Eager to clarify the bedding arrangement, I go to the closet and select chest.

“You’ll be sleeping over there,” I smirk, pointing to the floor.

He stares at me completely dumbfounded at the change of plans.

“What?” I shrug indifferently.

“The agreement states we share the ‘bedroom’ It did not specify that we had to share the bed.”

He presses his lips together in what I can only assume is annoyance and nods solemnly, knowing he could not force me to share my bed.

I almost feel bad for making this small adjustment but it could not be helped.

It was bad enough I had to share my home with a wolf, a stranger no less, but I could not stomach the idea of sleeping in the same bed with him.

He and his entire species disgusted me.

“Great, now that the formalities are all out of the way, I will leave you to unpack,” I say, stepping around him and exiting the room.

I find Kota chattering away with Micah in the living room, Kota inspecting the tattoos in Micah's arms with admiration.

"Mommy look!" He chirps as he hears me walk in.

"Micah has a wolf on his arm! Look! Look!" He cries excitedly.

I glance at Micah's tattoos and nod.

"Very cool," I say, forcing a smile for his benefit.

"Everything okay?" Nikki asks as she comes in with the final shopping bag.

I hadn't stopped thinking of last night and the possibility that my friends were not who I thought they were. I decide to bite the bullet and ask for confirmation.

"A-are you....Are you also ..." I gulp, looking over at Kota who continues to stroke Micah's tattoos in amazement.

"Are you like Zane and Agnes?" I ask, clasping and unclasping my hands anxiously.

Micah and Nikki exchange glances before Niki sighs a response.

"y-yes....and we know he's your mate too."

I feel a cold anger tremble under my skin, not at their lie but at the fact that I had never been truly free of werewolves as I believed.

They were everywhere, infecting every aspect of my life like a virus.

"Are you upset with us?" Niki asks, a worried look on her face.

“Because we never meant you or Kota any harm,” she adds quickly, as if to clarify that they were not the monsters they truly were.

“We would never dream of hurting you or Kota.” I almost scoff at her reply.

“ I won’t hurt you..”

That’s what every werewolf promised before they sank their teeth into your back when you weren’t looking.I nod quietly.

“I’m not mad at you,” I reply coldly with a shrug.

“You can’t change what you are.Besides, what’s done is done.” Niki shifts nervously on her feet and I ask a question that kept me up last night.

“Are there any packs nearby ?” I ask, my heart in my throat.

If Christian and the Silver Crest wolves came looking for me.I would need to leave at once if that was the case.

“No,” Micah shakes his head.

“We are the only wolves in Poulsbo.Nikki and I are rogues just like Zane and Agnes.”

“Where is your pack ?” I pry, wanting to know exactly who I am dealing with.

A solemn look takes over Micah’s face.

“Gone...They were slaughtered in an attack.Niki and I...W-we were the only survivors.”

“So Zane and Agnes...?”

“We don’t know what pack they come from or why they are rogues. You’ll have to ask them that,”

Micah shrugs, patting Kota gently on the head. An awkward silence engulfs us and I drum my fingers against my thighs.

“Well, we should go... We have some things to take care of at home... I’ll be back for Zane at 8:30 for work,” he smiles awkwardly, inching his way to the door with Niki.

“See ya around, Tal.”

I press my lips into a small smile and lead them out, knowing I was probably being a b\*\*\*h but I couldn’t help it. I was frustrated out of my mind with my situation.

Zane appears in the hallway and Kota rushes off to drag him into the room.

My son points at the ten shopping bags sitting on the floor with curiosity.

“What you got there?” He grins, poking his nose where he “Kota!” I scold him, the little boy jolting up in shame.

“That is not your stuff! Leave it alone!”

Zane frowns at me and crouches down to console the small child. He reaches into a bag and pulls out a stuffed wolf, placing the little grey wolf in Kota’s arms.

Kota stares at it in awe, hugging it tightly to his chest.

“Mommy look! I got a wolfie!” he squeals, the blood boiling inside me.

I glare at the real wolf in the room and he shrugs at me before reaching into the same bag and selecting a small black box.

He timidly inches closer to me and holds out the box to me, a slight blush on his cheeks.

For Kota's benefit, I swallow back my anger and take the box from him.

Very carefully, I remove the lid and peer into the little box, a rose gold bracelet sitting inside.

It was a stunning gift in its simple elegance, tiny diamond studs embedded in the chain.

This isn't part of the arrangement...

"I-I didn't ask for a gift," I mumble, at a complete loss of words.

Is this a peace offering? He scratches the back of his head and nervously smiles at me.

Despite my better judgment, his timid demeanor is adorable and I look down at the bracelet in my hands, trying to decide what to do.

getting each other gifts! I want to say but a dark thought enters my mind.

Would he retaliate if I didn't accept his gift? I glance back at Kota who plays with his new wolf and I decide it is best not to get on the wolf's bad graces for now.

Jack had a temper, who knew what Zane's wolf would be like if I upset it.

For now, I would have to play by the wolf's rules. I am about to tuck the bracelet back into its box when Zane places a timid hand on my wrist.

He holds out his hand and I understand what he wants.

“I’ll put it on later,” I say, offering a polite smile and ignoring the incredible sparks rippling up and down my arm.

He looks dejected as I pull away from his grip but it seems Kota is eager to aid him.

“Mommy! Mommy!” he cries, pulling my arm down to take the box from my hand.

“I wanna see! I wanna see your present!” he giggles, pinching the bracelet with his chubby fingers to look at it.

“Oh pretty!” he smiles up at Zane.

“Put it on, Mommy! Put it on!”

He bounces up and down in his own excitement, handing the bracelet to Zane in the process.

You little traitor! I glare at my son.

If I could strangle my own son, I would.

Zane looks at me with hopeful eyes and holds the bracelet up to me.

Left with nowhere to run and hide, I stick out my arm reluctantly for him.

Zane slowly inches closer, gently resting his fingers on my skin as he drapes the chain on my wrist.

Little sparks tingle across my skin as he ties the clasp.

His fingers linger on my hand for a little longer, a delightful shiver spreading within me.

I close my eyes for a moment, remembering a time when those tingles brought me a sense of peace.

The sound of Agnes' small footsteps break the spell, however, and my reality comes crashing back to me.

Mates aren't real ,I remind myself, flinching away from Zane's touch.

"I'll get started with dinner," I say, stepping away from him, a look of pain filling his eyes.

You'll only hurt me more if I let you in, I want to tell him but instead decide to keep my thoughts to myself.