

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 41

### Chapter 41: In Her Shadow

\*\*\*Vanessa\*\*\*

All morning, the pack medical team has been examining me, testing my brain function and my patience with their incessant questions.

What makes this entire experience upsetting, however, is the fact that my own husband has not even bothered to check up on me.

I don't expect to be coddled or doted on as Christian is not exactly a very nurturing man even when he was with Natalia, but still, a simple "Hey, how are you feeling?" would have been nice.

To make matters worse, my head is pounding and it feels like every part of my body is overstimulated.

My ears are so sensitive and the sound of the heart monitor beeping is only making my headache worse.

Even my eyes burn from all the damn light coming in from the window and I've been given sunglasses to alleviate the pain.

All this stimulation seems to be playing tricks on my mind because I swear I hear whines and barks in my head throughout the examinations.

I don't think much of the sounds though, chalking it all up to my imagination and exhaustion.

Where the f\*\*k is my Gamma? I wonder, looking around the empty hospital room.

Shouldn't Jordan at least be here to take care of me? He used to take care of Natalia all the time whenever she was sick.

No matter what I do, I will always be stuck in her shadow.

Growing up, Natalia was the perfect golden child.

She was naturally very smart, always landing a spot on the Honor Roll while I always struggled to keep up.

I had to work twice as hard to make the list and when I showed my mother my report card for a tiny bit of recognition, she just shrugged and tossed it on the table.

"What do you want? A reward?" she scoffed sarcastically.

"Estas pero bien pendeja {You are an i\*\*\*t!}. This is the bare minimum. I did not leave my country for you to not take advantage of your education. You should always make the honor roll, just like your sister. Deja de andar con tus babosadas y ayudame a hacer de comer {Enough with your stupidity and help me make dinner}."

I never showed her my report card again after that.

With Natalia being such a damn star in academics, I turned to the next best thing, sports. I joined the soccer team and worked my way to captain on the cheer team.

Did it matter? No.

My mother was always too busy taking Natalia to her debate meets, her volunteering programs at the local nursing homes, and her community service activities at the rec center to ever see me cheer.

I had to build my own support group, seeking recognition in the amount of friends I had and attention from the football team. I was labeled a slut for most of highschool, though I never did could get attention for: my looks. I inherited my mother's pale skin and green eyes and she always praised me for looking so pretty. I was dumb but pretty.

Of course, that quickly backfired.

One night, while at a highschool party, I met a college boy from the nearby university, Skyler, through some friends.

He asked me to join him for a drink in the master bedroom and being the dumb b\*\*\*h that I was and excited to have caught the attention of an older man, I agreed.

I do not remember most of that night, only that I woke up naked in bed early the next morning with a soreness between my thighs.

Ashamed, I ran all the way home, convincing myself that nothing happened to me, that it was just a strange coincidence.

For many reasons, I never told anyone.

My parents would have been angry at me for sneaking out and the cops would have said I was asking for it by dressing the way I did and agreeing to drink with the boy in the bedroom.

Besides, it was my word against his and who would believe the promiscuous girl in school was raped? After that, I did everything I could to erase Skyler off my body, f\*\*\*\*\*g anything with a pulse to distance myself from that turbid night.

I learned to see s\*x as just an act, an exchange and nothing more.

My nightmare of an existence continued into college.

Unlike Natalia who always knew exactly what she wanted, I was completely lost.

With an undecided major, my parents were not “Become an engineer,” my mom would say.

“They make good money.”

But my brain is not wired like an engineer. It's wired like a cactus s\*\*t really hit the fan when Natalia became an EMT and then started working towards her Medical Assistant certification with the ultimate goal of going to PA school while I was still deciding what the f\*\*k I wanted to do with my life.

I turned to the only thing I knew, partying and drinking to numb the emptiness inside that was slowly starting to consume me.

That all changed when I met Christian.

He was like a beacon of hope. I had seen him in a few classes but it wasn't until we were paired for a sociology project that I finally got to know him.

He was funny and charming, always very polite whenever we got together.

Unlike most men I had met up until that point, Christian didn't try to jump into my pants at the first opportunity.

He made me laugh until my stomach hurt and we'd talk for hours about nothing and everything.

More than anything, though, he was the first person to make me feel smart.

“Damn, Nessa. You are one smart Lady. Why didn’t I think of that?”

He used to tell me whenever I got an idea for our sociology presentation.

A lump forms in my throat as I look into the eyes of the man whose soul completes mine, understanding that my worst nightmares are finally coming true.

“I’m sorry,”

Derek murmurs, tears lining his eyes.

“I’m very sorry...but...we-”

He struggles to find the words, fighting with his own wolf but ultimately winning his battle.

“Please...”

The word leaves my mouth before I can stop it, a part of me hoping it could somehow change my fate.

Derek’s face softens, both of his hands cupping my cheeks as he pulls me in for a kiss.

Time comes to a complete stop, the world and all of its problems fading away with every movement of his lips.

It is the most breathtaking kiss I have ever experienced, but the bliss lasts only for a moment.

“I, Derek Mitchel, Beta of the Silver Crest Pack, reject you, Vanessa Vasquez as my mate,” he whispers, pulling up the blanket to my chin and stuffing into my mouth to stifle my screams.

A sharp pain burns in the center of my chest, spreading like tiny needles across my flesh.

Agony wraps its fingers around my throat, its claws digging into my neck and making it hard to get air ending waves, the tide overwhelming all of my senses until it nearly drowns me.

Tears blur my vision as I sob into the blanket, my wolf howling in anguish with me.

I do not know how long the torment lasts, but Derek never leaves my side until it finally subsides and he removes the drenched blanket from my mouth.

He tries to caress my cheek with the back of his finger but I pull away from his touch, fearful that the pain might return.

Turmoil lingers in his eyes, but he does not act on it, instead stepping away to put some distance between us.

Derek clears his throat to demand I complete the rejection when Dr.Lila comes in with a clipboard in her hand.

“Beta Derek, can I have a word with you? I just want to go over her list of medications with you very quickly. These are human drugs and we do not carry them here so you’ll need to I travel into town to get them,” she explains, eyeing both of us suspiciously.

Derek leaves his car keys on the nightstand, and promises to return shortly to take me home before following Dr.Lila out of the room.

Upon hearing the click of the door closing, I jump out of bed and search the gym bag, finding a change of clothes for me and my wallet.

I dress as quickly as possible, taking Derek's car keys and shoving them into the pocket of my jeans.

Slinging the bag over my shoulder and pulling on my hoodie, down the hall so as not to raise suspicion.

No one tries to stop me or asks me any questions as I walk out of the pack clinic and get into Beta Derek's car.

Luck smiles upon me when I find Derek's wallet with some cash and a credit card in the glove compartment, along with a silver gun.

Stuffing the weapon into my gym bag, I pull out of the pack clinic, my wolf still whining in pain.

With no destination in mind, I drive down the road towards the horizon, determined to never return again.

\*\*\*Derek (Christian's Beta)\*\*\*

Casper could sense the wolf within Vanessa upon seeing her, feeling his other half lurking just beneath her surface.

It appears no one else can sense it, however, as no one has informed me of any changes to the Luna. You rejected her ...my wolf, Casper whimpers.

Why did you reject her? We've waited years. She's the Luna, Cas, I sigh. She can't be our mate...

But Alpha doesn't plan to keep her for much longer...

he argues, his tail hanging between his legs.

Why can't we have her? I don't even know where to begin explaining why Vanessa wouldn't be a good mate for us.

For one thing, she's in love with woman seeking power.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 42

### Chapter 42: Fighter

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

"This isn't working,"

Evan sighs, looking down at me after having knocked me on my ass for the sixth time in a row.

"He's not attacking, just blocking. You can't win a fight by just blocking. You need to attack your opponent," he scolds me, helping me up to my feet.

Aurora bites her lower lip as she tries to think of a new training regimen for me, my self-esteem plummeting.

"You are doing all the right moves, Zane," Aurora tries to cheer me up, but I find it hard to believe given how long we have been at this.

I've been in training all week, exercising my silver wolf gifts with Aurora and learning to utilize my mind control, telepathy, and projection abilities better.

As it turns out, my mind control ability does not work on Aurora or her twin sister, Celina, but it works on pretty much any other wolf.

I do have a limit on how many wolves I can control at once, my magic number being four.

Aside from silver wolf training, I've been working closely with Gamma Evan, building up my muscles, endurance, and flexibility while also working on hand to hand combinations but all my efforts seem futile when I'm put in a sparring circle.

"We just need to find the right...motivation for you,"

Aurora adds with her timid smile, Evan handing me a water bottle while we take a break. I try not to sulk as she and Evan brainstorm when Aurora suddenly starts to squeal excitedly.

"Mia?" Evan asks, scratching his head in confusion.

"Why my mate?"

"Just trust me,"

Aurora smiles, flicking her wrist to open a portal and disappearing into it. Evan only shrugs, tapping me on the shoulder.

"So, how's the mate? She like you yet?" He chuckles.

Like us? Grayson scoffs. She loves this dick- Stop talking, I mutter, forcing a smile and nodding at Evan.

"Listen, if you need any tips, I got you," Evan grins mischievously.

"I never had a brother I could pass on my wisdom to and I don't wanna know what Aurora and Oliver do behind closed doors."

He shivers to emphasize his disgust and sticks out his tongue.

I smile and nod awkwardly, unsure how to add to this conversation. I am still not comfortable using my voice around people other than with Kota or Talia but it seems Evan doesn't mind my silence.

"You remind me of Aurora,"

Evan observes, my ears perking up at this.

When he notices my peaked interest, he sits down on a mat.

"She was not always the strong Queen that you see now. She is still very shy and timid, but she was once also afraid. Very afraid."

I look down at the Gamma curiously. What could a wolf like Aurora have to fear?

"Aurora was abused by her old pack, Lluvia Blanca, for years," Evan explains.

"Her family used to torture her every day and to be honest, I still don't know most of the things she went through. All I know is she showed up here with a lot of scars, both mental and physical, and it took us a while to get her to open up to us and even longer for her to trust us. She still has bad days, though not as often." I saw, but I did not know the extent of her abuse.

She seems so happy now.

I would have never guessed she is still struggling with her past.

"Look, all I'm saying is...you don't have to be ashamed of your past and your fears. There is nothing wrong with needing a little help and guidance, especially with training. Healing is an ugly process and sometimes you're gonna stumble. No one expects you to always have

your s\*\*t together, silver wolf or not. Aurora is the most powerful wolf on the planet and she goes to therapy every week because it helps. I won't lie, therapy sucks, but it's not meant to be easy. It takes a lot of strength to face your demons. I am only giving you this sermon because I can tell you're struggling with something. Don't hold it in no matter how ashamed you are. There's literally nothing to be ashamed of. You didn't ask for your past, so why would anyone hold it against you?"

I like this wolf, Grayson says. I tell you the same thing but you never listen to me. I don't get the opportunity to thank Evan for his words of encouragement because the next thing I know, Aurora and Evan's mate, Mia, pop out of a portal.

Evan jumps to his feet to greet his mate with a kiss and asks Aurora to explain her idea.

"Don't worry about it,"

Aurora smiles, instructing Mia to move to the middle of the sparring circle.

"Zane, get in your fighting stance."

Mia spreads her feet apart and raises her fists as she faces me.

Okay dude, this should be easier, Grayson says, getting into his own fighting stance.

Her punches won't hurt as much when she knocks you on your ass.

Thank you for the encouragement, I mutter, Grayson grinning from ear to ear. Once in position, Mia begins to circle me and I shuffle my feet like Evan taught me to keep her within my vision.

A small smirk curls on her lips before she lunges forward on her right leg and kicks up with her left. I block the kick with my forearm and retaliate with my own weak high kick that she easily slaps away.

Come on, dude, Grayson groans.

You can do better than that! Punch her! I do as I am told and swing my arm towards her face, but Mia ducks and slams her fist against my jaw.

She then spins around for a roundhouse kick to my stomach and I stumble back to recover.

Dude! Grayson growls.

I make a quick kick to her thigh, luckily landing the blow, but she then backs away before I can land a punch to her jaw.

Quick on her feet, Mia turns around and donkey kicks me in the stomach, nearly knocking the wind out of me.

The abrupt sound of Kota's scream somewhere in the trees behind me startles us, both Mia and I putting down our fists.

"He's hurting Mommy!" Kota wails, every instinct in my body telling me to run to him.

Suddenly, a group of guards appear, one of them stepping towards the Queen.

"Your Majesty, we received word that Alpha Jacque and his men have breached the northern and western borders! We are under attack!" he says with urgency, everyone now on high alert.

"Mommy! No!" Kota screams, my heart beating a mile a minute.

“Evan and I will lead the men to the north, Mia, take the west getting in position.”

“Zane, you go protect your family. I will send back up immediately,”

Aurora adds, shifting into her white wolf and rushing towards the north with Evan and the guards at her heels.

I don't need to be told twice and race off in the direction of Kota's screams, anger burning through me at the thought of my pup and my mate being hurt. I attempt to shift to get there faster, but for some reason Grayson won't activate.

Gray, what the hell?

I snap. I don't know, Grayson replies, equally confused. I can't come out. I don't have much time to dwell on my wolf form because Kota once again screams.

Will Just have to do this on my own.

Not far from the training grounds, I find that stupid French Alpha, Benoit, cornering Talia and Kota by a tree, Talia shielding our pup with her body.

Benoit throws a punch at Talia, hitting her jaw and sending her flying to the ground.

Kota wails just behind her, his large eyes widening when he sees his mom lying very still.

Grayson nearly goes feral as Kota shouts at his mother.

“Mommy!” he screams, sheer terror taking over as he crawls towards her.

“Mommy, wake up!”

All see is red as I run up behind him but Benoit hears me and dodges my punch, retaliating and slamming his fist on my jaw. I stumble back, hearing Kota’s screams as he shields his mom’s face with his hands to protect her.

Benoit makes a series of combination kicks to my face and stomach, most of which I manage to block or dodge.

He then dives and wraps his arms around my waist, dropping into a roll so that he lands back on his feet while I fall on my knees. stomach, but I slam my elbow on his knee cap to stop him.

He then flings his arms around my neck to strangle me but I grab onto one of his arms and flip over onto his back. He lands with a groan and staggers onto his feet, giving me the opportunity to stand up again and grab him on either side of his shoulders.

I slam my knee into his stomach over and over again, Benoit grunting with every blow.

When that doesn’t satisfy me, I let him stand up enough so that I can deliver a punch to his left cheek, then his right and then left again.

Weakened and disoriented, he does little to fight back and I push him away to deliver the final blow, kicking him in the chest and knocking the wind out of him. He goes flying back, his body crashing against a tree.

Blood trickles from his nose, temples, and lips but my thirst for revenge is unquenched.

I stalk over Bencit's slumped body, grabbing him by the collar with one hand and punching his face with the other.

“STOP!”

A voice commands me, my body resisting the urge to obey but submitting to the order.

I raise my head up to see Mia and Aurora watching me and I quickly realize I'm no longer in the forest but back in the sparring circle at the training grounds.

Kota and Talia are nowhere to be found and I look down to see I have Evan by the collar of his shirt, his face bloodied and bruised. I let go of his shirt, completely confused by everything.

Bruh, I'm just as lost as you, Grayson mutters.

Noticing my confusion, Aurora begins to explain.

“Mia is a silver wolf with the gift of illusions, hallucinations, and dream contortions,” she says.

“I remembered how fast you reacted to Kota being fighter in you. I also blocked your wolf connection a little to keep you in human form temporarily. I just didn't calculate how much of a fighter you really are even in your human form,” she smiles nervously at Evan.

“Damn, you are one angry white boy,”

Evan groans, wiping the blood from his nose and getting back on his feet.

“Aurora, I ain't fighting him no more. Hell to the no! He done almost beat the black out of me. Heal me now! This is some bullshit!”

“Aww, does poor little Evan have a booboo?” Mia snickers, Evan narrowing his eyes at his mate.

“Can’t take a punch?”

“Haha, very funny. Now you get in the ring with him. See how f\*\*\*\*\*g funny it is,”

Evan snarls, Mia giggling to herself.

“I’m sorry, Ev,”

Aurora apologizes, cupping both of his cheeks and healing him.

He mutters curses at her, but it’s obvious he’s not really mad at his Luna or his mate, especially when Mia kisses him playfully on the lips.

I hold out my hand to Evan as an apology and he takes it but not without him complaining.

“You’re lucky you’re a silver wolf,” Evan mutters at me, shaking my hand.

“I would have knocked your ass out if it were a fair playing field. Just saying.”

Mia and Aurora burst into laughter, Evan scowling at them for their lack of faith in him, but I only smile knowing he is very likely right.

The three of them help me refine some of the combinations I used on Evan during the attack, giving me pointers on how to deliver impactful blows without wasting too much of my energy and being lighter on my feet.

“We’ll keep working on the footwork next week,”Evan says as the the guys.

“You’ve been assigned to River Moon since this is most likely to be Alpha Jacque and Benoit’s first target.”

I nod silently at him as he offers his hand up in a fist bump.

It takes me a moment to recognize what he wants me to do and I blush in embarrassment as I bump fists with him.

He doesn’t seem to mind my awkwardness and walks me to the daycare center which is on the way to the River Moon pack house.

We wait patiently with the other moms at the gate until we hear a loud bell announcing the end of the school day, several pups pouring out of the daycare to greet their parents.

“Look! Look Zane, look! We did colors today!” Kota cries as he runs to greet me, a string with four beads hanging from his hand.

He holds the beads up to me and proudly shows Evan and I his creation.

“It’s for you!” he smiles.

He places the string in my hand as I kneel down to his level.

“It’s a bracelet for you, see?” He says eagerly.

“Pink is mommy cuz she’s pretty like a flower,” Kota explains as he points to each bead.

“I am green cuz I like green.Green is like the trees.You are blue like the sky and Egg-ness is yellow like the sun!” he adds proudly.

“It’s our family.Do you like it?” he asks, a large grin on his face.

I nod my head, unable to find the words to describe how amazing this is.

“Put it on!” Kota squeals.

I waste no time wrapping the bracelet around my wrist, Kota gasping with pride.

“How come I don’t get a bracelet?” Evan pouts, Kota bursting into laughter.

“I don’t know,” he shrugs, turning to me and grinning.

“Zane, can we Oh dear goddess, I blush, wishing the earth would swallow me.I shake my head at Kota in hopes that Evan does not understand, but as always, things never go my way.

“Hold on.What is Horsey in the Desert?”

Evan asks, raising an eyebrow at me.

Before I figure out how to respond, Kota answers for me.

“Mommy and Zane take off their clothes cuz it’s hot and then Mommy rides Zane all night long through the desert,” he explains, my face competing with a fire engine for the reddest item on the planet.

“Mommy won’t let me play, but I wanna play Horsey too!” he sighs.

Evan looks like he’s about to explode from holding in his laughter, biting his lip to keep it together for Kota’s sake, while Grayson howls with laughter.

“All night, huh?”

He pats me on the back and winks at me.

“My man. You know I’m a pro at Horsey in the Desert, myself. It’s a ‘hard’ game,” he laughs, bending over and wheezing like a tea kettle.

“I’m sorry. That was outta pocket. I’ll leave you two to your games,” he chuckles as he backs away.

“Might I suggest Horsey in Antarctica as a substitute. It’s cold so you keep your clothes on and watch the penguins march by,” he laughs.

Mortified by this entire experience, I try to persuade Kota to play airplane pilot with me instead, but he insists on riding a horse.

Left with no choice, I grab Kota and sit him on my shoulders, pretending I am a horse while he’s the jockey riding me as we race through Antarctica.

At home, Kota helps me prepare a chicken and rice dinner and when Agnes comes home, we do our daily sign activity.

“P-please,” I say, putting my open hand over my chest and moving it in a circle.

“T-this is p-please.”

“Please,” he smiles, showing Agnes his sign.

“H-help,” I say, holding one of my hands open with my palm facing up close my other hand into a fist with my thumb sticking up and put it on my palm.

“H-help.”

“Thank you,” he signs and says aloud.

He then turns to Agnes and mimics my signs.

“Please. Help.” I repeat the motions with him several times, saying the words aloud to match the sign.

It takes him a couple of tries but it makes me happy he wants to learn. I give Kota a quick bath before Talia comes home, Kota eager to show his mom his new signs of the day.

“You are learning so fast,” Talia giggles, pulling him into a hug.

“Because you are super smart.”

“I know,” Kota shrugs.

Talia greets me with a kiss.

“How was training today?”

“G-good,” I blush.

I still get nervous when she asks me to speak.

“I-I beat E-Evan.”

Her brows raise in amusement and she gives me a congratulatory kiss.

“We should celebrate. How about a date? Tomorrow?” She asks, biting her lip nervously as she waits for a response.

Her question catches me off guard but I nod my head eagerly.

“Have you ever been bowling?” She asks, gasping in shock when I shake my head.

“Then we will go bowling tomorrow.”

“Yay!” Kota squeals, clapping his hands in excitement.

“What is bowling?”

“It’s a game,” Talia replies.

“Like Horsey in the Desert?”

Kota asks, both Talia and I turning “A different game,” she mutters, carrying Kota into the dining room.

We have a lovely dinner together, Talia explaining her progress with the girls and waiting patiently for me as I stutter through my training progress.

After dinner, we settle down for a movie in the living room and Talia brings out a pack of Oreos and pours some glasses of milk for each of us.

“I remember you liked the Oreo Dippin’ Dots,” Talia explains as she tucks her hair behind her ear.

“I thought you might like to have the real cookies,” she smiles timidly.

“You don’t have to eat them though. I could have totally misinterpreted that,” she rambles nervously.

“I just thought they might make a good treat since you liked them so much or that Agnes might like to try them. But if you don’t like them—”

I press my lips against hers, Talia shutting up instantly and melting into my kiss.

She has no idea, but her simple gesture is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for me in a long time.

Kota and Agnes giggle at us, but I do not care.

I am the happiest man in the world right now and nothing and no one will ever take this from me.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 43

### Chapter 43: Mine

\*\*\*Talía\*\*\*

Zane's eyes flicker from side to side beneath his eyelids as he sleeps, his brows furrowed and his lips pressed together as if to hold back a scream for help. I hold my breath and watch him for a moment, listening to the sound of his breathing get faster and more haggard by the second.

He then grabs a fist full of the sheets, his entire body stiffening.

Wanting to ease his fears a little, I gently graze my hand against his cheek, Zane's body relaxing visibly beneath my touch and his breathing slowly returning to normal.

I discovered his nightmares many nights ago when he suddenly woke up in a cold sweat, panting frantically as if he had just run a marathon.

Thinking me asleep, he slowly crawled out of bed and stepped out of the room to calm himself down before returning to bed.

He comforted himself in silence, unable to bring himself to cuddle with me.

It broke my heart to see him struggle to ask for help, leaving me to wonder if he feared I would reject him for needing me.

Since that first nightmare, I have been waking up earlier than normal to watch him sleep, guarding his dreams from whatever pain he's holding in.

Touching him seems to help so whenever I sense his uneasiness, I roll over into his arms and lay my head against his chest until he wakes up.

The girls at the clinic also experience nightmares from time to time so as a group activity, we made dream catchers this past week.

Native Americans believe all dreams, good and bad, exist in the night air and dream catchers are meant to capture them.

Bad dreams get lost in the web dreamcatcher.

I made a dreamcatcher for Zane with silver string, beads, and feathers to match his silver wolf, but I'm a bit embarrassed to show it to him.

I'm not a crafty person and the dreamcatcher is a little crooked and not the most eye pleasing but giving Zane a gift I made with my own two hands both excites and terrifies me. I just hope he likes it.

Zane suddenly begins to stir beside me and I roll over into his arms to embrace him, inhaling his scent and pressing my lips against his bare chest.

Two nights ago, Zane started sleeping shirtless and while I can tell it still makes him nervous to show me his scars, I am beyond proud to see him face his own fears.

Besides...I find his scars sexy.

“Good morning, handsome,”

I murmur into his chest, Zane going very still.

When I look up, I’m greeted by a confused smile and some very flushed cheeks.

I did not know it was possible to be turned on by a blush, but every time his cheeks turn red, I feel a tightness in my core, one that can only be satisfied with him inside me.

“M-morning Ta-Talia,”

He stammers in a shy whisper as he wipes his eyes. I can tell he senses the scent of my growing arousal by the way his blush deepens and I decide to tease him a bit.

“You can smell me, can’t you?” I ask, pecking his collarbone and his Adam’s apple.

“N-no,” he murmurs, swallowing the lump in his throat.

“I-I mean y-yes,” he quickly corrects himself when I give him a stern look.

“Are you going to do something about it?” I ask, biting my lip as I look up at him innocently pulling me onto his lap as he rolls over on his back.

A lump hardens in his boxers, my core tightening at the thought of him inside me.

I wait patiently for him to make the next move, however, wanting him to be more assertive with his needs and desires and I adjust myself to sit over his erection.

“Now what?” I ask, slowly gyrating my hips in a circle and resting my arms on his shoulders.

“What would you like to do to me?” I murmur, leaning forward to suck on his bottom lip.

He surprises me when he begins to push my shirt up my torso, stopping just below my breasts.

“I want y-you to t-take off y-your shirt,” He blinks, looking at my belly button to avoid my teasing grin.

“A-and y-your th-thong,” He adds timidly.

Pleased that he’s making an effort, I pull my shirt over my head, my n\*\*\*\*s hardening as the cool morning air brushes against them.

His eyes focus on the tattoo between my breasts, Zane once again swallowing the lump in his throat as he resists the urge to touch it.

He looks adorable as he tries to reign in his lust but I am determined to make him lose his sanity today.

Climbing off his lap and sitting between his ankles, I very slowly slide my thong down my thighs, my eyes observing his facial expressions as he watches me undress.

I raise my legs a little, Zane removing the thong from my ankles for me.

He then instructs me to sit on his lap again, this time with my back to his chest as I straddle him. His fingers timidly brush away the hair off my shoulder, his lips shyly grazing my bare flesh.

I lean my back against his chest, guiding one of his hands over my breast and squeezing it.

A little moan ripples up my throat, his other hand slowly sliding in between my thighs so that his fingers tease stroking the soft flesh.

Hoping to encourage him to finger me, I slide my hand over his and interlock our fingers.

“Have I ever told you how much I love your voice? How much I love the way you say my name just before you kiss me?” I murmur as I sway my hips against him.

“I love its richness, especially when you’re just waking up...Sometimes I think about your voice when I’m alone in the shower, imagining you whispering my name in my ear as you f\*\*k me senselessly,” I giggle, knowing his face is likely as red as a cherry.

“I love when you moan my name,” I add in a whisper, as if it is a secret only the two of us can share.

“Especially when you c\*m inside me after losing all control.It’s the most delicious feeling knowing I am the only one who will ever make you moan my name.” I turn my head to look at him, mesmerized by the beautiful brown eyes that stare back at me.

“T-Ta....Ta..Ta,” he stammers, his words almost incoherent.

I change positions so that I am still straddling him but now facing him, his cheeks almost the shade of rubies.I gently hold his face in my hands and pull him closer.

“Ta-Li-Ah,”I murmur, gently nibbling on his lower lip.

“Go slow, baby. Take your time.”

He swallows hard, his lips opening and closing as he grows anxious.

“Don’t be nervous,” I whisper in his ear as I take his hand and slide it in between my thighs.

“Do you want to feel how wet your ‘good morning’ already made me?”

He audibly gasps when I push two of his fingers in between my folds, his favor, my slick pooling around him while the brown of his irises seem to darken almost to the color of his pupils.

Zane suddenly pushes me onto my back, propping up my legs and spreading them apart for him to access my now aching p\*\*\*y.

He then lays on his stomach and wraps an arm around my thigh while his free hand spreads apart my lips.

I hardly have time to process what is happening when I feel his tongue plunge into my folds, my back arching instinctively against the sensation.

His tongue darts in and out of me in quick thrusts, my toes curling in pleasure.

“Oh f\*\*k yes, Zane, just like that,”

I moan when he moves his tongue over my clit in a figure 8.

“F-fuck yes, baby. Just like that. Just like that!”

I cry out, my legs jerking and quaking with every flick of his tongue. I prop myself up on my elbows to watch him work, Zane’s eyes locking with mine as he eats me out.

When he closes his lips over my throbbing button, however, I damn near lose my mind, throwing my head back as the unbelievable feeling of ecstasy washes over me.

“F-fuck, Zane. Don’t stop! Don’t stop!” I plead as he sucks on my clit.

I feel myself on the verge of exploding when he suddenly pulls away, a soft whine escaping my lips.

“No wait-”

Before I finish my sentence, Zane flips me over my stomach, pushing me up on my knees so that my bare ass sits up in the air. I yelp when I feel him smack my right cheek, my c\*m dripping down my inner thighs.

My skin tingles as he slides his hand up my spine towards my head, his finger gripping my hair.

He takes his tip and rubs it up and down my wet p\*\*\*y, the I want him so badly.

“Mine,” he growls, thrusting his thick shaft inside me.

I feel every inch of him fill me up to the brim, my fingers digging into the sheets of the bed for support as I tighten around him.

“Ah! Yes!” I cry into the mattress when he forcefully pounds into me.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!”

His hand still gripping my hair pushes my face into the mattress with every thrust, while his other hand grabs onto my hips.

A tightness fills my chest as I feel myself approach my climax, my legs turning to jelly the harder he pumps.

The sound of Kota's voice and a knock at the door, however, robs me of my orgasm.

In the blink of an eye, I find myself sitting back on Zane's lap with his fingers still between my slit but a small pool of my c\*m now dripping down his hand.

"Mommy, are you awake?" Kota calls out, once again knocking on the door.

"Can I come in?" I look around the room in confusion, blinking furiously to make sure I'm actually awake.

Did I make that all up? I wonder to myself when Zane suddenly gasps.

He looks completely mortified, his eyes wide in shock and his face beet red.

"What?" I ask before it hits me.

That was his fantasy...My entire body tingles with excitement.

"Zane..." I whisper.

"Is that really what you want?" I ask with Too embarrassed to respond, he slowly nods his head at me, my excitement reaching its peak.

"Mommy?" Kota calls out.

"Mommy are you there?"

“I’ll be right there Kota, hold on!” I call back, quickly leaning into Zane’s ear.

“One day...we’ll get there,” I murmur.

“I promise.”

\*\*\*Zanet\*\*

I can’t believe you showed her my thoughts, I grumble as I put the last of the breakfast dishes away. My stupid wolf has been very pleased with himself all morning.

You should be thanking me.

Did you not see how excited she was? Grayson argues back.

She was soaking wet! Soaking wet and now expecting me to rail her like in my fantasy yI grumble.

‘can Aardly touch her without panicking. I can’t...Zane, why do you get so nervous? Grayson asks with genuine curiosity.

What is holding you back? I have asked myself that question many times and the answer is always the same. I am so happy with her and I’m worried that I’m only one screw up away from losing her.

One wrong move and this beautiful fantasy will all fade away into a memory I will never get to relive.

Ugh, it’s too early in the morning for me to get philosophical, Grayson mumbles. it’s almost noon, I reply, Grayson responding with a loud groan desires? He asks.

No...Has she ever punished you? No...I reply.

Has she ever lost her patience whenever you get stuck? No...

Does she go slow? He asks.

Yes...

Does she tell you what she likes and doesn't like? Yes...

Does she talk you through things when you're lost? Yes.

Does she let you set your boundaries? Yes...

Do you realize who has the real issue here, then? Grayson asks, his voice softening when I don't reply.

She does not expect you to be perfect for her, in fact she's prepared for you to stumble and fail flat on your face.

I would have dropped your ass at this point if I were her, but she hasn't because she thinks you're worth the trouble.

Hello!? Wake the f\*\*k up! She likes you, dude.

Someone in this world likes you, despite all your flaws.

She sees your scars and kisses them all, she hears your voice and actually fantasizes about it, she feels your touch and leans into it.

What more do you need to feel adequate? I know he is right, but I do not know how to make the intrusive thoughts go away.

They have always been there to laugh and jeer at me and remind me of my place.

As I close the kitchen cabinets and finish wiping the counter tops, I hear Talia and Kota come downstairs, both dressed and ready to go bowling.

A warmth spreads across my chest as I look down at little Kota who is dressed in a gray t-shirt and cargo shorts...

Just like me.

“He said and I quote, ‘I want to look like Daddy today,’” Talia explains when she notices my silence.

“I hope that’s okay.He refused to dress any other way so I gave in.”

Unable to express his own excitement in words, Grayson yips and bounces like a puppy, his tail wagging furiously from side to side.

He kind of looks like us, Grayson chirrups.If You squint your eyes.

“Mommy, do we look the same?” Kota asks, running up to stand beside me.

Talia smiles at her son, but her eyes get a little misty and she turns away.

Afraid she may be upset, I tell Kota to find Agnes in her room so we can go while I comfort Talia.

“Sorry,” she mutters when I come up behind her and wrap my arms around her waist.

“I just...Kota’s never had a Dad...and he was so excited to look like you.I-I just don’t want you to feel pressured into being his Dad.He’s a huge responsibility and if it’s too much, there’s no shame in walking away.You can walk away right now and I won’t blame you for it.He’s not your baby-”

Before she can say anything else, I turn her around and look her in the eyes.

“Mine,” I say without hesitation.

“He’s mine.” Talia only blinks at me, completely caught off guard by my words but I our pup.

“I-I didn’t... I didn’t have a D-dad gr-growing up...so I-I don’t k-know w-what to expect or w-what to do....But w-what I do know is th-that I-I love K-Kota,”

I murmur as I cup her cheeks.

“A-and I-I want to be in h-his li-life...so if-if y-you allow it, I-I would ve-very much l-love to be his D-dad.”

“What about Grayson?” Talia whispers.

“Does he feel the same?”

Grayson does not hesitate to shove me aside and give his own response.

“Mine,” he growls assertively before stepping back and giving me back control.

Talia nods quietly, processing this information.

“H-he...he’s mine, Ta-Talia.E-even if-if we have our own p-pup,” I explain.

“K-kota will a-always be mine.”

“I found Egg-ness!”

Kota cries as he runs down the hall while pulling poor Agnes along with him. She smiles giddily as the small boy drags her towards us.

“Can we go now, Zane?” He asks, stopping just in front of me.

I lift Kota into my arms and comb back his hair with my fingers, Talia wiping her eyes before Kota can see her tears.

“D-dad,” I correct him.

“Y-you can call m-me D-dad.”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 44

### Chapter 44: Arrival

\*\*\*Wyatt (Sebastian's Gamma)\*\*\*

“We have it on good authority that several powerful silver wolves live within a pack known as River Moon,” I explain on the phone.

“But have you seen him?” Alpha Sebastian asks.

“Have you actually seen him?” ?

“Not exactly, sir. We are headed there n—”

“Then why the f\*\*k are you wasting my time!?” Sebastian snarls.

“Call me when you have that boy on the first flight back to Seattle or don't bother coming back at all!”

The Alpha hangs up before I can respond and I tuck my phone back into my pocket with a heavy sigh.

The past week has been a nightmare searching for Zane, with no one knowing of a silver wolf arriving in San Francisco. We visited several packs, hoping some scout in the region may have spotted him or Agnes, but our search was all in vain.

No one had come across a silver wolf...

Until a few days ago.

While attending an Alpha meeting in the Bay Area as a guest Gamma with the Redwood pack, news arrived of a split between the largest pack in Northern California, River Moon, and some powerful pack from France called Lune de Minuit. I wouldn't have cared had it not been for one small detail.

The split was long overdue from what I gathered but the straw that broke the camel's back was almost hard to believe: a guest silver wolf staying at the River Moon pack peed on the French Alpha's son.

Shortly Upon further investigation, I found out that River Moon is the leader pack of a recently established kingdom, The Ivory Phoenix kingdom, and that its members include high-ranking Silver wolves.

Unfortunately, with their recent split from Lune de Minuit, getting an appointment with River Moon's King has been close to impossible and my connections here in California have been unable to arrange for me to meet with any member of the Ivory Phoenix Royal family.

I am left with no choice but to request an audience with any of the pack members at their gate.

Armed only with a Royal decree demanding Zane's return and the two i\*\*\*t wolves in training that have been assigned to me.

Caine and Korbin have been a pain in the ass all week but I am most concerned with the decree.

Sebastian may have cast out his son but Zane is technically still a subject of King Arthur's kingdom.

Zane cannot merge with another pack until his King casts him out as a rogue as well. I just hope the Ivory Phoenix respects the decree and hands him over without a fuss.

King Arthur will not go down without a fight on this matter.

"I have assigned a number of my men to accompany you to the River Moon pack," Alpha Ryan of the Redwood Pack says.

"River Moon is a well established and highly respected pack. Whatever you do, don't cause trouble. They are armed with some especially gifted silver wolves and you do not want them as your enemy," he warns.

"Is it true their Luna is an Ivory wolf?" my son, Korbin, asks.

"I have never met her but a word of advice? Do not believe every rumor you hear, boy," Alpha Ryan chuckles.

"She is very likely just an overly ambitious silver wolf"

"Silver wolves don't build Kingdoms,"

I counter, Alpha Ryan only shrugging. I can't argue with that logic and finish loading up the car.

The River Moon Pack is about a three hour drive from the Redwood pack so after a quick breakfast, we start heading north.

Caine is suspiciously quiet during the ride up, probably anxious to meet his mysterious older brother.

“How come we never knew about Alpha Sebastian’s older son?” Korbin asks, stretching out his arms and legs.

“It was for his safety,” I reply, watching Caine from the rear-view mirror.

He does not look at me, but I can tell he is curious to know more about his brother.

“After Luna Elenore was killed, Alpha Sebastian felt it was in the pack’s best interest to hide his elder son from the public eye and from himself. He sent him away to live in an undisclosed location. No one, not even the Alpha knows where he is.”

“What’s his name?” Korbin prys, Caine’s ear twitching.

“His name is unimportant,” I sigh, growing annoyed with all his questions.

“We just have to find him.”

“Well how are we supposed to find him if we don’t know what he looks like or what his name is?” Korbin mutters.

“I have all the information we need about the Alpha’s son,” I snap.

“Care to share?” Caine questions me.

“He is, after all, my older brother.”

“You will know when I tell you,” I warn through a snarl.

“Is he going to be the Alpha now that we know he exists?” Korbin blurts out.

I love my son, but sometimes he has a brain the size of a peanut.

“Alpha Sebastian was very clear,” I reply, Caine and I making eye contact through the mirror.

“Caine is the only heir to the Alpha title.

His Little smirk curls on Caine’s lips as he turns away to stare out the window, a cold shiver running down my spine.

**\*\*Zane\*\***

“All you have to do is roll the ball down the lane and knock out all those pins at the end,” Talia explains as we walk towards our lane with our rental shoes, Kota’s eyes widening with excitement.

I have never been to a bowling alley and arcade before, my eyes working overtime to take in all the sounds, lights, and people.

Kids and adults alike laugh and scream at each other while they play games, all of them having a good time.

A lump in my throat forms as I watch a father and his two sons play a racing game together, all three laughing hysterically as the older son wins the match. I would have liked to play games with my father and Caine. I would have liked to have a brother. f\*”k them hoes...

Grayson grumbles.

We got our own pack now. We don’t need no Daddy. We are DADDY.

“Daddy look!” Kota cries, pointing at the multi-patterned bowling balls lined up on the racks.

“Can I have a green one?”

“We will find a small one for you,” Talia says as we arrive at our lane.

She helps Kota into his shoes and types in our names on the display screen hanging above us.

Talia goes first, explaining the basics to me.

“Okay so you just step, step, swing, and release,” She smiles, releasing We watch the ball roll all the way to the end, knocking over 8 pins.

“You can also use those dots on the lane to help guide you,” she adds, pointing to the guides at the mouth of the lane.

“Just aim and shoot.” She goes for a second shot, this time missing both pins and chuckling to herself.

“Now you go,” She giggles select a heavier ball and take my fist shot which immediately goes right into the gutter.

“Oh-uh, Daddy!” Kota gasps, cupping his cheeks in shock.

“You missed! Grayson purrs and wags his tag happily every time Kota says Daddy, and I catch Talia smiling shyly to herself every time. I can only hope it makes her as happy as it makes me.

“Daddy gets another try,” Talia explains, a warm tingle running down my spine.

Hehe, Daddy, Grayson smirks. I show her who’s her Daddy... Ignoring Grayson and his inappropriate comments, I take my second shot, knocking over two pins.

“My turn, my turn!” Kota cries, Talia attempting to help him carry the ball.

“No Mommy,” he swats her hand.

“I’m a big boy. I can do it!”

Talia and I both step away from the big boy, Kota waddling with the ball in both hands towards the lane.

The bumpers automatically activate and he chucks the ball onto the lane with a loud bang, Kota grinning proudly from ear to ear as his ball rolls down at the pace of a snail.

We all stand on the tips of our toes and shout proudly at Kota when he knocks over three pins, several other bowlers side-eyeing us.

They’re just jealous their pups didn’t knock out three pins , Grayson Kota makes his second shot, Talia and I congratulate him on his 5 pin victory.

“Now Egg-ness,” Kota giggles, running over to Agnes and pulling her off her chair.

“Dad, how do you say ‘it’s your turn’ ?”

“Like this,” I say aloud, holding my fingers up in a sideways L and thrusting it towards Agnes.

“Y-your turn,” I say before bringing the L towards me.

“M-my turn.”

We repeat the sign to each other, Talia joining in on the practice.

Tears gather in Agnes' eyes when Kota signs 'Your turn' to her and a small anger burns in my heart.

At our old pack, Wyatt was the only person to ever make an effort to learn sign, everyone else simply ignoring Agnes and pretending she did not exist.

She learned to carry a pen and paper around with her or simply pick up on context clues, facial expressions, and gestures.

Many assume she can read lips, but it is a difficult skill she has not mastered.

It is a huge relief to see Kota so eager to communicate with Agnes and be so patient when he does not understand what she says.

Furthermore, Talia is also very accepting of Agnes, always practicing her signs and trying to engage with her when I am not around.

Agnes, more than anyone, deserves to have a family too.

"How do you say Daddy?" Kota asks, holding up his hands for me.

My mind goes blank for a moment as I realize my son is asking me how to sign Dad for me.

Talia watches curiously as well, my heart pounding in my ears as the feeling sinks in. I really am a Dad.

Well you're definitely not a Mom, Grayson snickers.

Shutting Grayson out and doing my best to control my trembling hands, I press the very tip of my thumb against my forehead while my fingers remain erect and slightly spread apart.

Talia and Kota both do the “D-dad,” I say, tapping my forehead with my thumb a few times.

Keeping my fingers and thumb in the same position, I move my hand down to my chin.

“A-and this is M-om.”

“Mommy and Daddy,”

Kota grins as he signs to each of us, very pleased to have learned something new.

“And I’m Kota!” he adds, pointing to himself.

Agnes takes her turn, scoring a perfect strike and stunning us all.

Kota cheers for her, his excitement rubbing off on all of us.

After our ten rounds, Agnes is declared the winner while I come in dead last.

Even the pup beat you, Grayson shakes his head at me.

I do not pay him any mind, however, just happy to have a family with whom to share my first bowling experience with.

“Can we play some games?” Kota asks as we turn in our shoes.

I don’t have time to answer before he dashes towards the Skee ball machines, Talia racing after him.

Keep up Gramps, Grayson mutters as I run after both of them, Talia scolding Kota for running off on his own.

Her anger fades away when he signs the words ‘Sorry’ to her and I, pride and joy flowing through my body knowing that he would like to start expressing himself not only with words but with his hands too.

Talia wraps her arms around our pup, peppering his face with kisses as she explains the dangers of him running off like that.

“What if someone tries to take you?” Talia asks.

“I pee on them. Just like Zane,”

Kota shrugs, Grayson howling with laughter.

That’s my pup! He says between wheezes example.

“Running off like that makes it possible for someone to take you from me. You don’t want that, do you?” Talia asks.

“No, Mommy, I wanna stay with you, Daddy and Egg-ness,”

He cries, hugging his mother.

Talia gives him a squeeze, rubbing his back lovingly and whispering I love you’s in his ear. I drink in their tender moment together, Talia flashing me a smile.

With his lesson out of the way, we grab some lunch before Talia leads us through the arcade, patiently teaching me how to play Skee Ball and air hockey, among other games.

We win several tickets which we then give to Kota for the prize booth and he selects a number of gadgets and small toys, including a set of Chinese finger traps, spring things, and fidget spinners.

Kota's eyes become droopy with sleep so we pack it up and head home to River Moon.

As we arrive at the Pack gates, however, the head guard directs us to the pack house.

"You have a visitor," he informs us.

"Her Majesty would like a word with you in her office."

An unsettling feeling sinks to the pit of my stomach.

A visitor? For me? But I don't know anyone in California! Keep calm and panic later, Grayson sighs.

His words offer little comfort but Talia drives us home nonetheless.

"I'll come with you," She says as we pull up to the Pack house.

I'm about to protest but she shuts me up with a kiss on the lips.

"I'm not asking for permission." the car to collect a sleeping Kota in her arms.

She hands him over to Agnes and takes my hand.

"Let's go," She whispers, interlocking our fingers.

"Whoever it is, we'll face them together."

She pulls me into the house, Gamma Evan already waiting in the foyer for us while several men chatter just behind him and pay us no mind.

Judging by the look on Evan's face, this can't be a good visit.

“Who is it?” Talia asks him as we walk up the steps..

“I don’t know but I haven’t seen Aurora this mad since I superglued all of her things down in her office, including her pens and sticky notes,” he shrugs, leading us up to the third floor and stopping just in front of Aurora’s office.

He pushes the door open, my heart dropping to the pit of my stomach when I see Gamma Wyatt, Korbin and Caine sitting across from Aurora, my half brother’s eyes widening in shock.

Wyatt rises to his feet, his tired eyes swimming with concern.

“Hello Zane.”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 45

Chapter 45: Decree

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

“Hello Zane,” Gamma Wyatt says softly, my stomach churning with fear in his presence.

How did he find me? I wonder, blinking hard to make sure I am not dreaming. That is the least of our worries, Grayson mutters. What the f\*\*k is that shit-stain of a brother doing here?

“Him?” Caine snaps questioningly at Wyatt, his eyes narrowing to slits.

“That mute rapist mutt is my brother? He’s the Almighty silver wolf the King wants?” Several thoughts fill my head but the loudest one makes me squeeze Talia’s hand in a pleading manner.

Would she believe the rape accusation Caine just tossed my way? I think to myself, wondering how I would explain to her that Sara lied. My eyes fixate on my mate, her face neutral and unbothered by his accusation.

Without saying a word, she gives my hand two squeezes, her thumb gently rubbing against my knuckles.

Following her gaze, I realize she is looking at Queen Aurora, likely speaking to her telepathically.

Whatever Aurora is saying seems to keep Talia calm and composed.

“I should have killed you while I had the chance for what you. Why are you just standing there? Do your damn job and kill him! Kill him for touching your Luna!”

Wyatt does not even bother to look at his future Alpha, his eyes focusing on Talia’s hand still holding mine. A look of pain flickers in his eyes.

Did he pity Talia for being stuck with me? Ignoring my brother, Wyatt clears his throat and looks me in the eyes.

“You have a mate?” Wyatt asks, though it is more of a statement than a question.

I nod silently, a hint of a smile curling on his lips as he eyes my mate.

“She’s beautiful...” he murmurs, Talia remaining silent but her cheeks getting a pinkish hue to them.

“Hi, I am Wyatt. I’m the Gamma of the Scarlet Haven Pack, Zane’s pack,” Wyatt explains, holding out his hand to shake hers.

Talia only smiles politely at him, though, the smile on her face not reaching her eyes.

“You mean former pack,” Aurora corrects him, rising to her feet.

Although she is a head shorter than Wyatt, her power ripples off of her like heat waves, everyone in the room feeling its intensity.

“Zane no longer belongs to the Scarlett Haven pack. Your Alpha made sure of that,” she says in a low growl.

“I still don’t understand what game you are trying to play here but Zane is under no obligation to return to his former pack and this,” she adds, holding up a sheet of paper.

“This means nothing to me.

“Well I can’t imagine such big words meaning anything to you,” Caine scoffs, Evan’s calm demeanor evaporating upon hearing the insult made against his Luna.

Aurora, however, remains calm and poised.

“So why don’t you let the adults talk, pipsqueak while you go take a nap? We’ll speak to your Alpha-”

He does not get another word in before he starts choking on his words, his hands clawing at his throat as his face becomes flushed.

Caine’s knees buckle and he crashes on the floor while gasping for air, Wyatt and Korbin staring at him in shock..

“Sounds like you’re choking on those big words, Alpha” Evans snickers, a pleased grin on his face.

“Maybe you should leave the big words to the adults.”

Aurora shakes her head disapprovingly at Evan who only shrugs innocently at her and she releases Caine from her telekinetic grip, Caine gasping frantically to fill his lungs with air.

Caine stares wide-eyed at Aurora, the Queen paying him no mind and returning to her seat.

“Evan, please escort Caine and Korbin downstairs to wait with the other guards,” Aurora instructs.

“I think Gamma Wyatt has a lot to discuss with Zane.”

“You can’t kick me out,” Caine scoffs, his hands forming into fists at his sides.

“LEAVE,”

Aurora says in her royal voice, Caine abruptly standing up and walking past me towards the door, a look of like a fool and walks towards the exit.

“I told you she’s an Ivory Wolf!” he hisses in his father’s ear.

“I told you!”

Wyatt only rolls his eyes in annoyance as he watches his son disappear out the door, Evan escorting the two wolves downstairs.

Aurora lets out a tired sigh, grabbing the sheet of paper from earlier and gesturing at me to sit down. I hesitate, turning to Talia to see how she’s feeling when Aurora’s voice interrupts me.

“She knows the truth about Sara,” Aurora explains.

“I showed her your memory of that day. You don’t have to worry about her believing you.”

As if to prove her point, Talia stands on the tips of her toes to kiss my cheek, her fingers still interlocked with mine.

“I believe you,” She murmurs, pulling me towards the chairs and inviting me to sit down beside her.

Gamma Wyatt follows our lead, turning his chair so that he faces me when he speaks.

He looks to Aurora for permission to speak and swallows the lump in his throat, shifting nervously in his seat.

“I’m sure you’re wondering why I am here, Zane,” Wyatt begins, clasping and unclasping his hands.

“I’ve been asking myself that question a lot lately.”

“Get to the point, sir,” Aurora snaps, her eyes flickering between gold and violet.

“Tell him exactly what you want from Wyatt bites his cheek and proceeds.

“King Arthur found out about your existence recently after Ravenstone left a message for us during an Alpha meeting. He has ...” he clears his throat and sits up right.

“He has requested that your father bring you home.”

My body tenses almost instinctively at the prospect of returning to Scarlett Haven. I have gotten used to the idea of never returning there and

it scares me to think I might be going back to the place where I never felt wanted.

“Tell him why,” Aurora growls, her fingers crumpling a sheet of paper in her hand.

Wyatt looks uncomfortable but he does not disobey the Queen’s command.

“King Arthur would like you to train alongside his army and perhaps even take the lead in defeating Ravenstone and their growing allies,” he explains.

I stare at him in confusion. My own father didn’t even want me in his pack and now all of a sudden the King wants me in his army? For what? To get myself killed? “I understand you might be a little wary,”

Wyatt adds with urgency, reading my anxiousness and confusion like a book.

“But the King has offered you a warrior rank and you would stay in the Crescent Mane Palace with the other warriors.”

His words bring me no comfort, however.

After all, it is King Arthur requesting my presence, not my father. To him and all of What good would come out of going back there?

“Zane, this is a really great opportunity for you,” Wyatt insists.

“They are offering you a rank and shelter. That’s rare for someone cast out as a rogue for a rape crime, regardless if it’s true or not. I’m sure we can work something out for your mate to stay with you.”

“I’m not leaving River Moon,” Talia shakes her head at him.

“And you’re not taking my mate to fight some war,” she adds, her hand trembling in mine.

“You can’t do that,” she snaps, jumping to her feet and pointing an accusing finger at him.

“Your pack rejected him already. He’s mine now. We already have a home and a family so we don’t need anything your pack has to offer.”

My heart skips a beat with every word she says, a warmth spreading across my cheeks in delight.

We’re her family now. Even Grayson cannot help but swoon over our mate as she stands her ground against my former Gamma, his tail wagging furiously from side to side “Miss, I don’t think you understand. We are werewolves. We have to abide by certain laws that I’m sure a human would not understand,”

Wyatt says calmly. Little does he know, he’s speaking to a former Luna, Grayson snickers, settling down to watch the show.

Talia does not say a word to contradict him but I can see the hint of an annoyed smirk curling on her lips explaining something to a child.

“His King is requesting his return and as a royal subject of the Crescent Mane Kingdom, Zane must fulfill that request.”

A cold laughter erupts from Aurora’s mouth, a document dangling from her fingers.

“This decree is a sham,”

Aurora shrugs before beginning to read the document aloud.

“By decree of King Arthur of the Crescent Mane Kingdom, Zane White, is henceforth restored to his original omega rank. Mr. White is furthermore promoted to Warrior rank and will receive all titles, duties, and rights accorded to him by his position. This includes but is not limited to training, food, shelter, and a guarantee to move up ranks if he proves himself worthy. By will of the King, Mr. White has two weeks to present himself at the Crescent Mane palace or face charges.”

She crumples up the paper in her hand, her palm bursting into flames and engulfing the decree until all that is left is a pile of ashes.

“Last I checked, a rogue is no longer the subject of any King or Queen. That is why they are rogues,” Aurora smiles politely.

“And besides, Zane was never a full member of your pack, was he? Your Alpha never gave him a mindlink, did he?” Wyatt remains silent for a moment, a smile of satisfaction appearing on Aurora’s lips.

“You have no case, Gamma, and you do not have the power to take one of my guests from my pack my eyes widen in shock at the Queen. Her pack is already preparing for war against the French packs. She cannot seriously be considering making another enemy with Crescent Mane. They are small but vindictive. They will not go down without a fight.

“Unless Zane accepts your conditions willingly, you will not be taking him anywhere. That’s my decree,” She snaps.

Wyatt rises to his feet, his eyes pleading with me to reconsider.

“Zane. This is your chance to prove to Sebastian that you are an Alpha. That you are the true Alpha meant to Scarlett Haven. If you work hard enough, your life will be very different than it was before,” he urges me.

“Please. Think about it. I know you have it in you to be our Alpha.”

I look over at my mate and know there is nothing to think about. I have found my family in her, in Agnes, and in Kota and I do not plan on leaving them all behind for a title.

For once in my life, someone sees something of value in me, and not as an Alpha, but as a person. I am home now.

Scarlett Haven is nothing but a scar, one that is slowly healing but will one day fade away completely. I shake my head at Wyatt, informing him of my decision to remain in River Moon.

Wyatt stares back at me in disbelief and maybe even a little disappointment.

“Zane,” he begins to explain.

“Ravenstone killed your Mother and your brother. They have destroyed every aspect of your life drive to annihilate the very wolves who have taken so much from you?” He asks.

“Don’t you want to avenge your family?”

Anger boils through my veins at the suggestion that I did not love my family.

Wyatt knows more than anyone just how much I loved my mother.

She was the first person to ever protect me, to ever love me unconditionally, but while I am saddened for the loss of my mother, my brother and uncle, this war is not mine to fight.

Scarlett Haven never saw me as a pack member.

Why would they see me as a warrior now ? I do not respond and get up to open the door for Wyatt, my old guardian staring solemnly at me.

“Zane-” I gesture toward the door, no longer willing to listen to any more of his pleas.

Hurt and anguish wash over Wyatt’s face, but seeing that he has overstayed his welcome, Wyatt walks to the door.

“I pray to Moon Goddess that you won’t regret this decision,” he says softly, raising his hand to pat my back but retracting it so as not to upset me.

I slam the door shut once he crosses the threshold of the frame, my knuckles turning white from my strong grip on the doorknob.

My mind reels from Wyatt’s visit and I lean my forehead against the door, searching for peace and counting my breaths.

A pair of small hands snake around my waist, and Talia’s firm body presses up against my back.

She does not say a word as she holds my stomach.

“It’s going to be okay,” Talia murmurs.

“I’ll fight too if it means I get to keep you.”

\*\*\*Caine\*\*\*

“You lying piece of s\*\*t!” I snarl, shoving Wyatt against the car.

“You knew, you knew all this time that that mutt was my brother and you said nothing-”

In a matter of seconds, Wyatt has me pinned to the car with my arms behind my back, the old hound still stronger than I am.

Just you wait, I mutter to myself as he slams my head against the car door. I'll get you back for this soon enough.

"You do not get to question me, pipsqueak," he mocks me.

"I was following my orders. His identity was on a need to know basis. You and Sara did not need to know."

"He raped my mother!" I snarl back, attempting to shake my arms out of his grip.

"Your mother is a lying w\*\*\*e," Wyatt says in a low growl.

"The cameras in her office say so."

"What?" I ask, resisting the urge to fight.

"I said," he whispers with a snicker.

"Your mother is a w\*\*\*e. She tried seducing Zane and when he refused, she cried rape.

"You're f\*\*\*\*\*g lying," I snap back, Wyatt laughing at my reaction and tightening his grip on my hands.

"I hope so," Korbin gags.

"Stepmom and stepson? That's got the makings of a bad porno."

Wyatt snarls at his son, meanwhile my stomach churns in disgust. I'm shoved into the back of the car and Wyatt starts making a phone call, the

sound of my father's displeased voice loud enough to send shivers down my spine.

As we drive back to the Redwood Pack to regroup, my mother's instructions replay in my head.

Kill him. But is it really worth it now? I ask myself. He declined to come back? And you think Father is going to take no for an answer? Abel, my wolf, scoffs. Our days as heir are numbered.

Father has been protecting Zane for years and yet he's never hidden you.

Face it.

We have always been a decoy, a dispensable puppet for the real Alpha. We were never meant to be the Alpha of Scarlett Haven.

No, I snarl to myself. No. I am Alpha and no mute mutt is going to take that from me.

\*\*\*Toran\*\*\*

I announces, hanging up his phone.

"We're ready to move in." I let out a sigh of relief and nod at the driver to head North towards River Moon.

The city of San Francisco is bustling with life, thousands of humans running around without a clue that we live among them.

How nice it must be to be so oblivious to our existence, to our problems, to our wars.

Rionna kisses my cheek, resting her head on my shoulder.

I did not initially intend to bring her along, but she knows well that she is my weakness and that I would rather die than deny her anything within my power.

She taps my chin three times the way she always does when I am stressed. I kiss her forehead gently, looking up to see my son watching us from the rearview mirror.

There's a knowing smirk on his lips, a small chuckle erupting from his mouth.

Rionna may not be his mother, but he adores her and all the good she has brought into our lives. I was not always a doting husband nor a caring father and I know he is grateful to her for changing that.

He would die protecting her if things do not go as planned on this trip.

"It'll be okay," she whispers, nuzzling up beside me.

"I promise we'll come out on the other side in one piece."

Little does she know our lives are about to change forever because after almost 30 years, I am finally going to end this war.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 46

The Silent Alpha  
Chapter 46: Revelations I

\*\*\*Talía\*\*\*

Zane is exceedingly quiet during dinner, his mind likely still reeling from the events of this afternoon.

Upon entering the office earlier today, Aurora's voice popped into my head, warning me to not believe a word the visitors said, especially not the young Alpha named Caine.

"He lies," she whispered before flooding my mind with a sickly scene of a woman attempting to seduce Zane but failing and claiming he raped her.

She then showed me his torture at the hands of his brother.

It was a lot of information to process at the time, but I knew my mate was innocent even before Aurora revealed the events to me.

Zane would never harm anyone. He is a man who has seen the ugly side of people, and a man who has faced rejection after rejection.

Despite all of his pain, however, he is never cruel. He is kind and patient, loving and nurturing, strong and beautiful. He is a man worth fighting for...and I will fight for him until the very end.

Agnes also seems to sense his anxiousness and attempts to sign with him but he shakes his head at her and does not respond, keeping whatever turmoil he's feeling to himself.

It makes me angry to think his former Gamma would even try to take him back. How dare he set foot in River Moon and try to guilt trip him into fighting? "Mommy, why is Daddy sad?"

Kota whispers to me as he stuffs the last bite of his pastelitos (Salvadoran turnovers) in his mouth.

"He had a really rough day," I reply, pushing away his hair and kissing his forehead.

“He just needs some time alone.”

Kota wipes his hands and curiously stares at Zane who seems lost in his own thoughts as he picks at his food.

Without a word, Kota climbs off his chair, bouncing on his toes as he walks to my mate, stopping just before his chair and resting his chin on the arm rest.

“Can we build a fort, Daddy?” Kota asks.

Kota’s voice startles Zane for a moment but he quickly composes himself and picks up our son, setting him down on his lap.

No words are exchanged as Zane holds Kota in his arms, his hand gently cradling Kota’s head and massaging his scalp.

After many years of being alone, it is a beautiful sight to see a man hold my baby with so much love and care, as if he were his own.

It is a comforting thought to know Kota will be loved not only by Gwen and I, but by Agnes and Zane as well.

Should something ever happen to me, Kota will always have a family.

“Kota, time for a bath,” I tell him, Kota shaking his head at me.

“Zane will build your fort and we can come join him when It is only after Zane gives him a stern look that Kota finally climbs off his lap and begrudgingly follows me up stairs for a bath.”

When we return downstairs, Zane is far more relaxed, having tucked away his emotions as he and Agnes adjust the last of the bed sheets over some chairs.

“D-done,” he smiles nervously as I carry Kota in for an inspection of the fort.

Satisfied with Zane and Agnes’ construction skills, Kota scrambles inside, burying himself under a pile of pillows and blankets.

“Can you read me a story?” he asks Zane, patting the space beside him.

Before anyone can answer, however, the sound of a knock at the door startles all of us. I hand Zane the book and answer the door, finding Evan waiting outside.

He smiles sheepishly, shifting his weight on his feet.

“I know it’s late...but there’s another visitor here for Zane,” Evan sighs.

Why could they not just leave him alone? I wonder, shaking my head disapprovingly.

“Can this wait until morning?” I ask, stealing a glance at Agnes and my mate currently trying to entertain Kota.

“Zane’s not done processing today’s earlier visit and the last thing he needs is more drama. Tell whoever it is to leave him alone.”

“I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t urgent,” Evan responds.

“Hesitation makes my fingers itch to slam the door in Evan’s face and run to hide Zane away from everyone, but I know these foolish thoughts will do us no good. It is best to get this over with now, so I step aside and let Evan in while I ask Zane to instruct Agnes to put Kota to bed.

“Please sit.If, after you hear me out, you want nothing to do with me, I will leave you in peace.Alpha’s honor,” he says, placing his hand over his heart.

You don’t have any honor...my family to the dining table, pulling Talia’s chair closer to mine.

Agnes seems on edge as she settles down besides me, her hands trembling as she fights to calm herself down.She flinches when I reach for her hand.

“She fears me for good reason,” Toran mutters.

“I was a different man the last time we met.”

I look at Agnes for a moment, wondering how on earth they could have met each other, but Toran offers an explanation.

“Agnes was once a member of Ravenstone...until I sent her to you,” he says quietly, shock washing over my face.

Even Grayson seems at a loss for words at the revelation and I look at the woman who has watched over me for the last 20 years as if she were a perfect stranger.

“Like I said,” Toran sighs tiredly.

“You only know one side of this story.” He suddenly sits up straighter and gestures to Aurora.

“Her Majesty tells me you are able to project memories.Would you like to see the truth behind this wicked war?” I don’t think it’s a good idea for you to see the mind of a psychopath, Grayson mutters.

You're already messed up as it is. Thank you for that, I respond, my eyes flickering to Aurora for guidance.

"You deserve to see the truth," she encourages.

"You'll understand better."

"You can do this,"

Talia murmurs, resting her chin on my shoulder. Taking in a deep breath, I let down a wall, allowing Toran's thoughts to trickle towards me like a small stream until it starts flowing like a roaring river and I find myself almost drowning in the pit of his mind.

It takes me a moment to calm myself down until the memories sort themselves out.

In the pitch black, I hear the sound of giggling echoing off in the distance and I follow it until a sudden flash of bright light blinds me.

My eyes burst open and like a movie projector, images take shape on the table for everyone to watch, but it seems only I can hear what is being said.

A young Toran laughs with my young uncle Cyrus, cracking jokes in a room full of people dressed lavishly in ball gowns and tuxedos.

The marble floors glisten under the lights and everyone holds a drink in their hands.

From across the room, a beautiful woman wearing a blue gown and tiara smiles innocently in their direction.

The look in her eyes is tender and loving, although I cannot make out who she is looking at. She raises her glass at Cyrus and Toran and then turns to dance with King Arthur.

“You know marrying her doesn’t make you the Fated Pair,” Cyrus whispers in Toran’s ears, Toran roaring with laughter.

“I’m fully aware,” Toran replies, smiling to himself.

“But that doesn’t matter. I really like her and I think we will make a decent match.”

“Are you sure about this though?” Cyrus asks.

“You’d be you.”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 47

### Chapter 47: Revelations II

\*\*\*Zanet\*\*

I stop the projection, looking up at Toran in confusion.

Uncle Cyrus and Bre were mates...

How could Bre be Toran’s mate? “Your uncle and I grew up on stories of the Fated gold and silver wolf pair that were thought to create the most powerful wolf hybrids in all the land, the Ivory twins. I did not even think he believed in them, but I guess I was wrong to assume that,”

Toran chuckles dryly.

“We had known Princess Breanna, a gold wolf, our whole lives and being a silver wolf himself, Cyrus saw an opportunity he could not pass

up. Though he did not know who Bre's true mate would be, before our 18th birthday, Cyrus sought the help of some Spirit witches to not only shield Breanna from her true mate, but also forge a false mate bond with her. This meant that when Bre and I turned 18, neither one of us could feel the bond...but she could feel it with him. I, however, had been betrothed to Bre for years and we were both committed to taking over the Kingdom together, even if we found our true mates. It was what we were taught to accept. Cyrus had hoped Bre would fall for him and leave me altogether, but his fake bond with her was not as strong as he had hoped. He could never convince her to leave me, because mate bond or not, she was falling in love with me...and I with her. Wane because he could not mark her and it was not long before Breanna realized something was wrong with their bond."

Toran pauses for a moment to gather his thoughts, the memory of her fate still a fresh wound in his head.

"My wife was a smart woman," Toran says proudly, his eyes flickering with melancholy.

"And when the sparks began to fade between her and Cyrus, she realized her bond with him was nothing more than an illusion. On the day she no longer felt the sparks of their bond, she confronted him, demanding an explanation for what he had done. It was then that I experienced the true power of the mate bond for the first and only time. My heart felt like it was about to burst and I had a terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach. My wolf was practically inconsolable so I ran home to check on her and found her..."

He does not finish his sentence, his eyes fixating on a small spot on the table.

"I watched my mate die in my arms...and I never got to enjoy being hers," Toran whispers.

“Your uncle robbed me of my one and only soulmate...so I killed him and thus began my war.”

“You see, Cyrus outsmarted us all,” Toran adds quietly, leaning forward in his seat.

“He turned the truth against me and King Arthur believed every word. Bre and I were married several years, never once feeling the bond, and so, when I told King Arthur years, Bre had confided in her father that she felt the bond with Cyrus and several of Bre’s closest companions confessed that she had, in a moment of weakness, given herself to him. My heart became ice the moment I realized the world had turned against me and I waged war to seek my revenge. King Arthur chose to support Scarlett Haven and Ravenstone left the Kingdom.”

A single tear rolls down his cheek but he quickly wipes it away, straightening his tie and clearing his throat. I try to make sense of everything he just explained, but there are still so many questions left unanswered, so many things I still do not understand, too much to just forgive.

“You have questions,” Toran chuckles softly.

“Ask away.”

Words spill out of my mouth before I have time to process them and I do not even care about my stutter anymore.

Something flickers in Toran’s eyes as I speak but I cannot decipher what he thinks of me.

“Y-you said y-you knew A-agnes....Th-that y-you sent her to m-me,” I stutter, also signing the words so Agnes can follow along.

“That is not a question.”

“H-how? H-how do you know her?” I demand.

“You can read minds and yet you have never thought to search her memories for that answer?” Toran asks, tilting his head to the side.

“Did you never wonder where she came from before? I have always been curious about Agnes’s past but she never answered any of my questions when I asked and I could never reach into her thoughts without hurting her.

Toran eyes Agnes for a moment, and she furiously glares back at him, revealing to me that whatever their relationship was previously must not have been a good one.

“Agnes was a former pack member of mine,” Toran explains.

“I hardly noticed her in Ravenstone but I knew her husband well. He was a good hunter. One of my best scouts actually.”

Agnes was married? I ask myself, glancing at the small woman trembling in anger.

“She was happily married and had a small boy, maybe only a few months old when your father committed the most horrific war crime to punish me,” he adds, a hint of anger in his voice.

“You see Zane, your father is a cold-blooded killer who sent four bombs to a daycare center in my pack... We lost 26 pups, among them, Agnes’ only son.” I stare at the man in front of me, unwilling to believe my father would do such a thing to innocent children.

Agnes seems unaware of the revelation Toran has given me and I tap her on the shoulder.

“Did my father kill your son?” I ask, hoping with every fiber in my body that Toran is lying, that my father is not truly the monster Toran makes him out to be.

My heart sinks, however, when she signs the word yes, tearsday without wanting to tear him to pieces for destroying her family.

How could she even look me in the eye and love me like her own son after what my father did?

“And your husband?” I ask her.

“Killed in action,” she replies, pressing her lips together to hold back her tears.

“Damon, her husband, was killed in battle shortly after they lost their son,” Toran explains.

“A-and how d-did she end up in S-scarlett Ha-Haven?” I ask, dreading his response.

Toran is unable to meet my gaze and stares at his hands as he answers.

“I knew you survived my attacks,” he murmurs.

“And I knew Sebastian was hiding you somewhere in your Pack house. All I needed was to get inside and I would repay Sebastian for what he did to the pups of my Pack.”

“So y-you sent Agnes,” I reply, realizing the woman I have seen as my mother for the past 20 years was sent to kill me.

“I didn’t give her much of a choice,” Toran shrugs.

“I was so angry, so full of hatred that I did not care what I did so long as I made your father pay. I gave Agnes an ultimatum: become a rogue or kill you.”

My mind is in turmoil trying to make sense of everything Toran just revealed to me and I find myself unable to look at Agnes anymore.

Has she ever loved me or has she always been looking for a way to complete her twisted mission? Her, hurt that perhaps everything we ever shared, all the laughs, the memories, and the love, was never real.

“What did he tell you?” She sighs, tears rolling down her cheeks in heavy streams.

“Because it’s all lies!”

“But you wanted to kill me,” I retort, her kind eyes filling with pain.

“Is that a lie?”

“No,” she shakes her head adamantly.

“Never did it cross my mind to go through with it,” she replies.

“Because you are not your father. You were just a boy locked away in a room. A boy who needed love and I had so much love in my heart left to give and no one to give it to. It only took one look,” she begs.

“One look and I loved you. You are my son. You are my baby and that will never change, no matter what that man says!”

Toran seems to understand the conflict.

“Agnes is not to blame for what I asked her to do. She was just another victim of this war.”

“V-victim?” I snap angrily.

“Y-you are n-no different from m-my fa-father,” I growl, unwilling to shed any more tears in front of him.

“Y-you take and y-you destroy...j-just like him!” Toran says nothing in his defense, allowing my anger to sink in.

“y-you killed m-my br-brother,” I stammer, remembering all the times my mother would get lost in her thoughts as she played with me, likely wondering what it would be like to have both of her pups together.

“W-why? W-what d-did h-he ever do to y-you?!” The tiny smile returns to Toran’s lips and he shrugs.

“Nothing ...That is why I did not kill him.”

“W-what?” I gasp in shock.

“I did not kill your brother,” he replies.

“I don’t know who really killed Jonathan, although I have my suspicions,” he shrugs.

“But I am sorry I cannot answer that for you.”

“B-but you d-did kill my m-mother,” I retort, unwilling to forgive all of his sins.

“My mate was murdered right in front of me,” he says quietly.

“AllI felt was anger and pain and I wanted nothing more than to inflict that onto the man who took everything from me.

Unfortunately, I never could.

Cyrus never did find his true mate and in my rage, I killed him too quickly to enjoy it.

When your father took over as Alpha, he became just as bloodthirsty as I was and he set about to slaughter my pack. I could not let him get away with it.”

A look of shame washes over his strong features, his fingers drumming against the table top anxiously.

“So on the night of King Arthur’s birthday party, I sent my warriors to the King’s Mansion with one goal in mind. Hurt Sebastian as his brother hurt me.”

Anger burns through my veins at the thought of this war.

How many innocent lives have been destroyed for the sake of revenge ?

“But I failed...”

My head jerks up in his direction and before I can ask what he means, I hear two sets of footsteps walk towards the dining room.

The door opens and a young man with similar features to Toran approaches us.

A familiar scent fills the room, one I have not smelt in over two decades, and I notice a pair of small feet behind the young man.

He steps aside, the blood draining from my face as I stare at the beautiful woman smiling back at me.

Her hair is long and silver now, but her eyes have not changed despite all these years. I stumble onto my feet, my heart nearly pounding out of my chest.

“M-Mom?”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 48

### \*Rionna\*\*\* Chapter 48

“M-mom?” the man stammers, his face pale as he gawks at me.

I turn my head to see if there is anyone behind me but just find a closed door in my path.

Who is he calling Mom? I wonder.

Toran chuckles softly to himself and I frown at him for teasing me before turning back to the frightened man.

A single tear rolls down his cheek but he does not move any closer to me, as if he is afraid I might disintegrate should he so much as breathe near me.

He looks so familiar... I tell myself though I can't quite make out where exactly I have seen him.

“Look harder, Ry,” Toran mind-links me.

“You know him.”

“I do?” I ask, squinting my eyes at the mysterious man. I study his features, taking in his dark hair, his smooth pale skin and his warm brown eyes.

Those eyes...Where have I seen those eyes....

“I think we should sit down first, Ry,” Toran says, getting up to offer me his chair.

I step towards my husband only for the young man to whimper.

A memory suddenly pops into my head of a little boy with a stutter doing his best to recite a poem, a few sad tears trickling down his cheeks as he stumbles through his words.

“You’re the little boy from my dreams...” I murmur, a soft smile curling on my lips as I turn to face him.

“You used to read poetry to me...You would get so frustrated with yourself when you couldn’t say a word right...” I mutter to myself, snapping my fingers in thought.

“You’re all grown up now, aren’t you?” I add, my excitement growing about meeting someone from my past.

...Perhaps he can tell us more about you than Toran can... my wolf, Senara whispers.

The man’s eyes glaze over with tears, his silence making me mildly uncomfortable, but I push onward, determined to figure out who he is.

“You’re very handsome,” I chirp, holding up my smile despite the man’s silent stare.

Am I making him uncomfortable?

“Is she your mate?” I ask, turning to the young woman beside him clinging to his arm.

“She’s very beautiful,” I smile, hoping to get a reaction from either of them.

The young woman smiles at me but I can tell she and I have never met by the way she looks at me. I turn to the small older woman who has her brows furrowed in anger at Toran and I, my heart skipping a beat at her clear Had I upset her in my past life?

“And who are you?” I ask her, the small woman shaking her head at me.

“Honey, will you sit down, please?” Toran sighs, ushering me towards the chair.

He gestures at the young man to sit as well, but he refuses to move an inch, completely paralyzed by his emotions.

The longing in his eyes awakens something within me, something so loving and pure yet so familiar, like sitting by a fireplace on a cold winter’s night, the glow of the flames touching every inch of me, enveloping me in the safety of its warmth.

“Who am I to you?” I whisper, a nauseating feeling growing in my belly when a pained look flashes in his eyes.

“Y-you don’t ....Y-you don’t know w-who I- I am?” he whispers after a long silence, his words cutting into my heart with their anguish.

Guilt washes over me as his despair grows with my silence and I close my eyes to concentrate, willing my memories to come back to me, but all I see is an empty abyss.

“It’s okay, Rionna,” Toran murmurs via mind-link, his voice soft and soothing.

“Don’t push yourself. Your memories will come back when you are ready.” This is why I love my husband so much. He is the voice of reason when I feel so completely lost and useless. He’s my anchor, my home, my love. Tylan and I. Toran wraps his arms around my waist and pulls me to his side, the young man watching us in utter shock. “This is my wife, Rionna and my son, Tylan,” he smiles at us. “Rionna, this is Zane, his mother Agnes, and his mate, Talia,” he adds, pointing to the man, his mate and his mother. Toran then points to a beautiful woman with long white hair and gorgeous honey eyes.) feel the urge to pay respect to her and bend over in a low bow along with Tylan. “And that is Her Majesty, Aurora and her King, Oliver,” Toran explains. “Pleasure,” I smile at everyone. The Queen studies me carefully for a moment but ultimately gives me a warm welcome and urges me to take a seat. Zane opens his mouth to speak but decides against it, pursing his lips and clenching his fists at his sides as he sits with his mate and mother. “I think it’s best if my wife tells her story to you, Zane, before you ask any questions,” Toran explains, turning to me. “Is that okay, hun?” I have grown used to explaining myself to Toran’s allies before, so this is not out of the ordinary for me, but Zane’s pained stare makes this more difficult than usual. Clearing my throat, I start with my very first memory.

“Unfortunately, I don’t remember much, but several years ago, I woke up in a hospital with no memories of who I was or how amnesia, I think,” I shrug apologetically, hoping Zane’s sadness will fade away as I explain myself to him. “Toran was there when I opened my eyes for the first time. He didn’t like me very much and was quite angry at me for being awake,” I chuckle, Toran smirking mischievously and kissing my hand. “He told me I had died, but for some reason, I came back...” I add, still unable to wrap my head around the story myself. Toran sighs heavily and explains in further detail the events of my rising. “After I ordered the hit during King Arthur’s birthday party, I requested that my wolves bring me back her body as proof of her death. As she was being transported to Ravenstone, she sat up in the back of the van, the wound on her neck

completely healed,” Toran adds with emphasis. “My wolves told me she was awake for a while, but it was as if she were in limbo, not really ‘here’ at all. She said nothing, ‘ust sat up like a stone the entire ride to Ravenstone. My wolves were terrified of her so they didn’t even try to touch her until they arrived at the pack hospital. A doctor came to check her out and she fell into a deep coma a couple minutes into the examination,” he shrugs. “I was tempted to kill her...” he adds with a chuckle as I smack his arm playfully, Zane watching curiously. “But then I realized Moon Goddess would not have bestowed the gift of life to her again without good reason. She must have a bigger plan for her. So...rather than kill her, I kept Elenore, or rather Rionna, as my prisoner until I could figure out what that reason was,” he says, pulling out my smoky quartz had Rionna wear this fae enchanted stone to mask her appearance whenever she leaves the pack house. It’s kept her safe from being spotted for the last 20 years.” I chance a glance at Zane and find him looking at me with so much emotion, hanging on to every word of my story. “I didn’t feel much like a prisoner, however,” I add with a smile. “I was given a comfortable room after I woke up from my coma and was allowed to explore the pack house whenever I pleased.) even had company with Tylen. He would visit me every day to share a meal with me or play board games,” I explain, patting Tylen’s shoulder, though he appears lost in thought, his eyes focusing on Agnes. How odd...I sigh. “Toran would also come to visit a lot, asking me if I could remember anything about my past but never giving me much information about myself.” “The doctors told me it was best not to force you to remember,” Toran grumbles grumpily. “I was only doing what I was told.” “And I thank you very much for protecting me,” I reply, leaning over and pecking him on the lips to Zane’s horror. Why does it seem my relationship with Toran upsets him so much ?

“I’m afraid not many memories have come back since I’ve woken up. I know my name was once Elenore and Toran tells me Imore me. Sometimes I get these recurring dreams, but they don’t really feel like

dreams; they're more like little fragments or hints of my memory....And you are always in them," I smile at Zane, several tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Although you are much Bigger now," I laugh.

"You used to read poetry to me and we would watch the butterflies flutter by," I smile.

"I-I don't remember who you are...but every memory with you is always beautiful and I look forward to dreaming more about you. I don't know much about Elenore in her past life, but I know she was happiest with you...so thank you. Thank you for making her life so special."

Zane turns to hide his face from me and the guilt once again returns, making me wish I could remember who he is.

"Don't feel bad," Toran reminds me, grabbing hold of my hand and squeezing it.

"This is all my fault, not yours. I did this to you,"

The pain in Zane's heart, however, makes it hard for me to not give in to my guilt.

"Who am I to you?" I whisper aloud, hoping if Zane gave me a hint, I might somehow remember who he is.

Unable to bear his anguish any longer, Zane storms away from the table only to be stopped by the Queen, her command felt even by me.

"Zane, stop," she calls out, Zane's grip on the door knob tightening so that his knuckles turn white.

“This is hard for her Toran sighs heavily, as he always does when something is weighing heavily on his mind.

“You’re his mother, Ry.” The blood drains from my face as I stare at the man at the door.

“H-his what...”

“Zane is your son,”

Toran repeats, the blow of this news not any lighter the second time around.

Zane trembles where he stands, his mate walking up to comfort him but unsure if she should touch him or let him have his space.

Meanwhile, several emotions bombard me all at once, the most powerful being shame.

How could I not know I had a son? How does a mother forget a son? HOW? My chest burns with anger and I push myself onto my feet, glaring down at the master behind this mess.

“H-how could you?” I scream at him, Toran’s face remaining irritably calm as he looks up at me.

“How could you not tell me I have a son?”

“He was on enemy territory-”

“And? What right did you have to hide my son from me!?” I retort, furious at the thought of Zane growing up without me.

“What good would knowing have done for you?” Toran replies calmly, though I hear the slight tremor in his voice.

“I didn’t know if he was actually alive when you first woke up. I sent Agnes to Scarlett Haven on a hunch that he was alive, but even then it was difficult to determine who Zane really was. No one had ever seen him before. There were no records, no birth certificates, no school weren’t even photographs of him at his supposed memorial when your ex-Alpha announced your deaths!” he argues.

Quickly composing himself, Toran shifts his weight on the seat and takes a deep breath. “When I heard Agnes was given a pup to look after, I didn’t suspect he could be the hidden heir. Orphans are a common side effect of war and I wasn’t surprised that they gave a motherless pup to Agnes to care for. I was not about to torture you with the pain of his memory if I could not verify that Zane was in fact alive.”

“So how long?” I ask, Toran raising an eyebrow at me. “How long what?” “How long did you plan to keep this from me? How long did you know my son was still alive?” I snarl at him. His face grows very grim and after a long pause, he finally answers. “Not long, but I never stopped looking for him, hoping one day I could bring him home to you.” At this revelation, Zane turns to face us, a bit of surprise in his eyes. “I watched Scarlett Haven for years, noticing patterns and studying my enemy very carefully, and after years of observation, I realized Agnes and Zane were being watched at all times. They worked close to the pack house, they were never allowed off the territory and they never participated in pack runs. The former Gamma was like Zane’s shadow, never stepping in to stop any abuse Zane faced but always watching.” pain all these years? I glance at Zane, his eyes lowering in shame at the disclosure of his maltreatment.

It’s moments like that I hate myself with every fiber in my body for being so utterly useless in my state. “Again, I had no way to verify if Zane was actually your son. Just a hunch. But about three or four weeks ago,” Toran

continues, pulling me out of my thoughts. “Something unexpected happened.Zane and Agnes were cast out as rogues...and for some reason, the Gamma and his scouts were sent to keep their eyes on them.) knew then that Zane was special to Scarlett Haven and I sent my own team to watch over him.They were able to collect DNA samples from a hair found in a motel room he stayed in and I compared it to you.It was a match.My team has been watching him ever since, following him all the way here, to the Ivory Kingdom.” A knowing smile curls on Toran’s lips and he shakes his head at himself. “Given his gift, I’m sure by now he knows what I want from him...just as I’m sure he knows what I truly feel for you, Ry,” he adds quietly. “I am not a perfect man...I made a lot of mistakes regarding you, hun.I did not intend to fall in love with you.I did not intend to care so much about a person I should hate.But I do ...and I am paying dearly for it.”

I don’t know what to make of all of this, my heart and my head in a battle for my memories whispers in a small voice. “But I was afraid you might try to find him on your own and get yourself killed in the process...” “You had no right to keep this from me,” I whimper, wiping at my eyes to keep the tears at bay. “No right.” “I know,” Toran replies, unable to look at me. “Which is why I did not object to you coming along.” “You are a coward and a liar!” I shriek, my head pounding from all the thoughts in my head. “I am,” he shrugs. “And I am not ashamed to admit that a part of me fears you’ll see Sebastian one day and still feel your bond with him or that you’ll leave Tylen and I for your Zane.” I can’t stand it when he’s so calm and rational. “I have robbed you of 20 years with your son.Don’t let your anger and hatred towards me rob you of any more,” he says, rising to his feet. “I have come here with the purpose of ending this war and giving you all a chance at a happy life together, but I can’t do that alone.Nearly three decades of war has left my army quite vulnerable.” “You want him to join your army,” I murmur my realization. “I want to show Sebastian that he threw away his best chance at winning this war,” Toran snaps. “You’re not dragging my son into your mess,” I shake my head in disbelief. “No...No.Forget it!” I turn to Zane, hoping

he will deny Toran's request, but helped raise and at his mate. "You don't have to do this," I beg him. "You are not required to help anyone anymore." But it seems his mind is already made up. "T-The King has th-threatened to w-wage war on me if-if 1-1 do not p-present myself with-in two we-eks," he says in a low voice. "A-After all these y-years, 1-1 finally have a fam-family to 1-love and i-it is being th-threatened..."he says, looking sternly at my husband. "W-hen t-the King co-comes looking for m-me, 1-1 want him and m-my father to regret e-ever th-throwing me away."

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 49

### Chapter 49: Turmoil II

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

After declaring that I would fight alongside Ravenstone and translating the events to Agnes, she, Rionna, and Talia do their best to convince me otherwise, but I hear none of it.

Scarlett Haven has already taken so much from me and it appears they are not yet done taking from me. But no more. This war ends now.

Despite their best efforts, no one is able to convince me out of my decision, Queen Aurora calling for a recess and asking us all to go home and rest before making any more decisions.

Rionna asks for a room separate from Toran in the pack house and storms off but not before asking to see me again in the morning for breakfast.

"I..."

I stammer, looking over at Agnes, who appears uncomfortable with my mother's presence.

“Just breakfast...” Rionna smiles meekly.

“Please...I have so many questions...So many things I don't know about you or myself...I just...I just want to know who I was and who you are...I nod silently, Rionna sighing with relief and stepping in for a hug, but I flinch away from her involuntarily.I feel bad almost instantly, but she seems to understand my reaction.We are strangers after all and she doesn't know who I am “

“I look forward to breakfast...” She murmurs.

” Goodnight.”

An omega comes to collect her and I watch her walk away, unable to believe she is actually still alive...still here after all these years.

With the meeting over, we collect Kota who is fast asleep with Evan, both of them snoring away in the middle of the floor surrounded by toy trucks.

Talia is silent as we walk back to the guest house, carefully holding Dakota's head against her shoulder as he sleeps.

She ignores me when I try to hold her hand, anger radiating off of her as she picks up her pace and walks ahead of me.

Agnes can't even look at me, staring ahead and pretending I don't exist.I can hardly understand my own emotions at the moment, but Agnes and Talia's silent treatments are not helping me sort them out any faster.

As we enter the house, Agnes storms off to her bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her and not giving me a chance to explain myself to her.

Talia is no different, going to Dakota's room to tuck him in for the night and leaving me alone in our bedroom. My emotions finally start to pour out of my heart, flooding out of me in thick droplets.

My head feels as though it might explode from all the thoughts ricocheting like bullets against my skull, The drumming of my heartbeat grows louder and louder against my ears until all I hear is incessant thumping drowning out the world.

A tingling sensation ripples along my skin and my throat feels as though it's closing up me.

Deep breaths, Grayson inhales slowly.

I mimic him and we both slowly let out the breath, repeating the process until my thoughts slow down.

For years, I had believed my mother was gone, her soul resting in the Kingdom of the Moon Goddess for all eternity.

After I was allowed to leave the pack house, I would sneak off to visit my mother's grave on our birthdays, leaving flowers for her on Mother's day and speaking to her tombstone for hours in hopes that she was listening to me and telling me it was okay to live without her.

I lost my voice the day she died. I had no one else to speak with freely, no one patient enough to care about what I had to say.

Seeing her now after all these years without a clue of what we've been through together is like losing her all over again.

As for Agnes, she came into my life, offering a sliver of hope through her kindness.

She took me in when no one else would, shielding me as best she could from all the pain I was feeling.

She never let her own pain shine through though, giving me all smiles and laughs when she was most likely shattered inside.

But it was all a lie...Her only goal was to kill me.

That's not true and you know it , Grayson growls defensively, wanting to protect Agnes from my wrath.

She lost everything before coming to Scarlett Haven and despite facing the man who took her son, she saw you and turned the other cheek.

She chose had no choice in and you cannot hold it against her when she chose you.

You are only angry that she didn't tell you sooner but she has likely been fighting every day with her conscience about it.

So don't you dare judge her, Zane! Not after all the love she has given you! He huffs.

I sigh heavily, knowing he is right.) cannot judge her. No matter how angry or confused I am, she is still the only person who cares for me in my darkest hours...She is still my mother. Talia suddenly burst into the room, a look of disappointment on her face. She does not say a word as she paces back and forth at the entrance and I sit silently on bed, bracing myself for her attack. When it seems she is unable to process her own feelings, I rise to my feet and inch towards her in hopes of soothing her, but this only seems to infuriate her. She steps around me toward the bed, grabbing a pillow and slamming it against the bed over and over again. She beats the mattress until her breath grows ragged in anger and I watch in fear as she screams in frustration. When she finally loses fuel, she tosses the pillow off to the side and closes her eyes as she catches her

breath. "He called you Dad today," Talia whimpers after a long pause, her voice broken. She bends over to grab the pillow again and throws it at me. "Kota called you Dad!" She snarls, tears rolling down her cheeks. "Did that mean nothing to you?" I stare atherdumbfounded. It meant everything to me... How could she not see that? throwing it at me. "Then how could you?" she pants angrily. "How could you offer yourself up for war like that? After claiming Kota...How could you leave him like that?" she cries. "Tell me! Tell me how?" I swallow the lump in my throat, trying to form the words in my head but nothing spilling out of my mouth. "I trusted you..." She whines, wiping her tears aggressively. "I trusted you with my heart.With Kota's heart.What am I supposed to tell him now?" She cries. "What am I supposed to say? That you're just leaving us for some war we have nothing to do with? That there's a chance you might never come back? What am I supposed to do!" She shrieks. "You are supposed to be his Dad.That is what you made me believe.How can you just leave him? He won't understand it, Zane.He won't understand why one minute he has a Dad and then the next minute, he doesn't!" She weeps into her hands, her shoulders shaking violently with every sob. I try to pull her into my arms and comfort her but she just swats away my hands. "Don't touch me! Don't you dare touch me!" she shrieks, pushing me away. But I know my touch is the only thing that's going to calm her down right now so I grab her wrists to prevent her from pushing me away again. "Zane, don't you f\*\*\*\*\*g touch me!" She screams, thrashing I cup both of her cheeks, pressing my lips against hers to soothe her anger. A t first, she bashes her fists on my chest and shoulders, but as I suck on her lower lip, she slowly calms down.) feel her tears on my face as I kiss her, her body trembling in my embrace. "Don't- Don't leave us..." she whimpers, wrapping her arms around my neck and pulling me closer. "I just got you...Don't leave me.Don't leave Kota without his Daddy," she sobs. "Please.l'm begging you.Don't go." For a moment, time stands still as I process her words, my heart beating a mile a minute. Don't leave us... "I-I'm not le-leaving

you,” I whisper, my lips grazing hers. “I-I’m fighting for y-you.For K-Kota.For Agnes.”

But you’re-” I press my fingers on her lips to silence her.

“I-I don’t want to r-run...I-I don’t want y-you to live in fe-fear.

“I’m already running,” she argues.

“What’s a little more running? We can leave.We can go somewhere far away.Somewhere where no one can find us.We can be safe-”

“N-no,” I shake my head.

“N-no more run-running.Th-that’s not the li-life I-I want for y-you or K-Kota.”

“But-”

“I-I love y-you,” I blurt out, my heart in my throat as I confess eyes filling with tears.

“I-I love y-you and K-Kota.But I-I can’t love y-you in fe-fear.I-I can’t do th-that to you.P-p-please, p-please try to unders-stand.I-I am fi-fighting for y-you.”

“You don’t have to!” She cries.

“We can-”

“Y-you don’t kn-know my fa-fa-father, Ta-Talia,” I shake my head at her.

“He’s be-en at wa-war with Toran for ye-years.I-if he finds out m-my mother is still a-alive and that s-she’s married to his wo-worst enemy, h-he will stop at n-nothing to bring wa-war here.I-I can’t let that happen.I-I can’t let any ha-harm come yo-your way.I-I have to h-help Toran end this.”

“It’s not fair!” Talia snaps.

“This isn’t your war! Why do they have to drag you into it?” She snuggles up to my chest, squeezing me tightly as if to keep me with her forever...

And I would gladly stay by her side for all eternity.

“I-I won’t ta-take any un-unnecessary ri-risks,” I explain.

“I-I’ll follow all of Toran’s instru-instructions and be ex-extra careful when facing off with the Sc-scarlett Haven wolves and the K-King’s army.”

“Zane, this entire war is a risk,” She retorts.

“Nothing you do will be low risk.”

I know she is right but I am running out of ideas on how to calm her fears.What if we mark her? Graysonasks.

What if that helps to strengthen our bond so she’ll know we are okay? Perhaps we thoughts.

Maybe a mark will let us connect even further.

She doesn’t want to be marked though, I argue.And there’s no guarantee that a mark would make a difference for us.

We won't know unless we ask, Grayson encourages.

Besides, if we die out there, I want to go out knowing my mate had my mark and that she knew I was thinking of her when I took my last breath.

Ask her, he demands and when I refuse, he threatens to take over. Fine, I sigh, swallowing the lump in my throat and licking my dry lips.

"Wh-what if...wh-what if..." I stammer, feeling as though I have cotton in my mouth blocking my words. "What if what?" Talia asks, her eyes twinkling with hope that I might give up on the idea of war. "Wh-what if...I mark y-you?" \*\*\*Agnes\*\*\* I pace around my room, unable to believe Toran is here. After all these years, he came back and for what? To drag my poor Zane into his messy war? It boils my blood to think Zane paid the price for Toran and he joins the war. But how do I convince him to stay? How do I tell him to not protect his little family? It's all so frustrating! Not to mention the mixed emotions I felt when Rionna and Tylen walked in for the first time.) had never seen Rionna while I was at Ravenstone, Toran hiding her well with the masking spell but I knew who she was the instant she walked into the room. She was the woman from the picture in Zane's bag, the one Wyatt asked me to pack when we were removed from Scarlett Haven. Zane's mother. The look of devastation in Zane's eyes when he realized his mother was not the same woman he knew all those years ago shattered my heart. He had loved his mother so much and now he is facing a shell of the person he once knew. Moreover, I couldn't help the tinge of jealousy that bubbled up in my chest when he agreed to meet her for breakfast, angering me because her presence shouldn't bother me at all. Zane, more than anyone, deserves answers and he deserves to be happy. To add to my turmoil, I recognized Tylen the second I caught his scent, my wolf growing restless in his presence. It was so hard to contain her as he looked at me, so hard to avoid his gaze. He did not say a word, luckily, and for that, I am grateful. I need to run, I tell myself as my feelings begin to cloud my heart...I need to feel the wind rush through my fur...I need to Having made up my

mind, I tiptoe out of the house towards the woods, tucking my clothes near a tree and shifting into my little brown wolf, Cynthia.) sprint between the trees, attempting to out run my feelings. The cold night air feels like a dagger tearing at my lungs, but I welcome the sensation, running faster into the dark void. Finally, my legs grow exhausted as I reach a small stream and I stop for a drink, resting for a moment on the river bank to atch my reflection in the water. My little wolf tilts her head and wiggles her ears when the gentle breeze carries a familiar scent. I look up immediately to find Tylen's wolf standing on the other side of the stream, staring curiously at me, but remaining calm and stoic. Cynthia wants to run to him, but I have no interest in getting near the young wolf and slowly begin to back away. Tylen's wolf jumps across the stream and blocks my path to freedom, his wolf challenging me to escape. When I remain motionless, the wolf shifts into his human form and I turn to shield my eyes from his naked body, feeling my cheeks heat up. The young man taps me on my shoulder, sparks rippling across my body beneath his touch. My body goes frigid, afraid to feel the impending rejection but he only smiles gently at me. "Mate," he spells out in sign, my eyes widening in amazement. He chuckles at my reaction and amazes me even asks.) shake my head at him, his smile widening. "My step-mother taught me," he signs, a look of sadness in his eyes. "She used to have dreams of a little boy who could not talk.It made her sad to see him struggle to speak so when she became Luna, she convinced my father to implement ASL as an unofficial second language for the pack.Many pack members were taught ASL so that no pup or pack member, for that matter, would ever feel left out and voiceless like the boy in her dreams," he adds with a slight smile. I do not know what to make of this revelation, unwilling to trust another Ravenstone wolf. "I'm sure you have your reservations about my family," he signs sheepishly upon seeing my hesitation. "But if it's alright with you, I-" No, it's not alright, I want to scream at him, slowly backing away. My wolf tries to take command upon seeing the smile on his face fade away, but I do not relent and instead make a run for the trees.

Tears trickle down my cheeks as I leave my mate in the woods, but I refuse to stop running until I make it all the way home, shifting and tucking myself into the safety of my room.

I once had a mate and he was more than enough for a lifetime.) don't need another. N. Apologies if you cannot see the previous author's notes or have not read the blurb but this book is updated once a week, Saturday or Sunday PST. I have a full-time job and am writing The Earth Witch as well, so that is all I can manage in a week. Thank you for your patience.

You are so dramatic, I mutter, Grayson snarling at me.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 50

### Chapter 50: A Deal

\*\*\*Talialia\*\*\*

“Wh-what if...I mark y-you?” Zane asks timidly, his voice low and soft.

My heart feels as though it might pound out of my chest as a silence falls between us.

He wants me to bear his mark? Now? I stare at him, wondering why he would bring up marking now of all times? Zane seems to understand my confusion and smiles sheepishly at me.

“T-this is w-war, Ta-Talia,” he says quietly, a warm tingle traveling down my spine when he says my name.

“A-and if some-something happens t-to me-me...then I-I want to go out kn-knowing my ma-mate wore my mark p-proudly...”

“Zane...” I sigh tiredly, pinching the bridge of my nose and closing my eyes as I think of an answer.

“You know how I feel about marking.”

“I-I do,” he replies.....

“B-but so do y-you.” I groan in frustration, thinking back to the day he explained his mark to me.

It was a beautiful speech and I loved hearing him tell me I meant more to him than I had initially thought...

but I had already made this mistake before.

I had fallen for pretty words and jumped into a marriage with a wolf after a couple of nursing my broken heart.

With every passing day, the wall around my heart crumbles, Zane making me believe that perhaps a wolf can love a simple human, but I am afraid and I do not know how to stop being afraid.

“I-I am not h-him,” he murmurs, cupping my cheeks and pulling me in for a tender kiss.

Tiny sparks ripple across my face like little waves of pleasure, my body molding against his.

“I-I love you,” he whispers, his lips grazing mine as he speaks.

It is the second time he has said it, but my breath still hitches in my throat at his confession.

I, however, cannot bring myself to repeat those words to him because it would make them real and I would be unable to deny him any longer.

“I-I am not h-him,” he repeats, his thumbs wiping the tears gathering in my eyes.

“I know that,” I whimper, Zane shaking his head at me.

“Do y-you?” he asks, the pain evident in his warm eyes.

“B-because it doe- it doesn’t fe-feel that way.” I don’t know how to respond and my silence seems to make him anxious.

“D-do y-ou still love h-him?” He asks, his eyes unable to meet mine.

“A-am I...am I-I not...Do y-you still think about h-him..?”

“I don’t love him,” I shake my head adamantly, appalled he would think that.

“I stopped loving Christian the day Kota was I was his wife of two years after all and I thought we would always be together. Those types of feelings don’t go away overnight. Those dreams die hard. But that all changed the moment I held Kota in my arms. Christian destroyed my trust and whatever possibility there was of us ever being a family died the day he slept with my sister. And I will never forgive him for that. I will never love him again. Never.”

Zane weighs my words carefully, as if deciding if I meant them.

“I do think about Christian every day though,” I add, Zane looking down at me in shock and I quickly try to explain myself.

“I think about all the lies he fed me to keep me by his side...all the pain I felt while being his Luna. He is a constant reminder that I should be careful with my heart and who I give it to.”

“I-It’s safe with m-me,” Zane blurts out and I smile at him.

“I...am trying to believe you,” I reply quietly through a small smile.

“I am trying to believe you are different. That your words are real and not some fantasy you are trying to feed me, so I’ll fall for you. But then I remember all the beautiful poems Christian used to tell me, all the picnics under the moonlight, all of our beautiful mornings after a night of passion, all of the little things he did in the beginning that made me believe we would last forever. I remember these things every time I feel myself getting comfortable with you...and then the pain comes crashing down on me all over again. There is a constant war waging in my head thoughts away. I try to remember how happy you make Kota whenever a bad thought enters my head. It’s just hard sometimes, ” I admit.

But I will keep trying...Because I want to be happy with you. I want to love you so much. I do....I-”

My words get caught in my throat as Zane’s lips crash against mine, one of his hands gripping the back of my neck and pushing me into him while the other slides down to my waist, teasing the waistband of my shorts. His lips ignite a fire within me, my skin burning with pleasure as he lifts me up by my thighs. My arms snake around his neck and he carries me to the bed. He gently sets me down on the soft mattress, spreading my legs apart and climbing on top of me while not crushing me under his massive body. It’s times like these that I remember how tiny I am compared to him, how broad his shoulders are to protect me from any harm, how muscular his arms are from all the hard labor he must have done during his childhood. My back arches as his tongue twirls in my mouth, his hands exploring every curve of my figure. A small gasp escapes my lips when he cups one of my breasts, molding it to the shape of his hand over and over again like a stress ball, my n\*\*\*\*e hardening against his palm. He pulls away to tug his shirt over his head, my eyes mesmerized by his beauty. The room is dark but the moonlight spilling into the room illuminates his face and I see the hint of blush on his cheeks. His timid nature never fails to make me brave enough to show me his scars. I watch him as he struggles to figure out his next move and I pull my shirt over my head to give him a hint. His eyes linger on my tattoo for a moment,

his fingers emitting sparks against my skin as he traces the intricate design of the flowers and the wolf. There's a slight tremor in his hands as he reaches the clasp of my bra, but he swallows hard and undoes it, my breasts spilling out of their cage. Heat builds up in my core as he admires my bare chest and I reach for his jeans, unbuttoning them and pulling down the zipper. The spell of my breasts breaks and Zane hurriedly removes our clothes until there's a small pile of garments on the floor. He once again settles in between my legs, his hands resting on either side of my head as he holds his weight above me. Our lips collide against each other, our tongues meeting for an erotic dance that leaves my spine tingling. My hands travel along his shoulders and up his neck as he pours his heart into every kiss. "M-mine," he murmurs when we pull apart to catch our breaths. "Yours," I whisper as his lips travel down my neck to my collar bone.

"I'm yours. "M-mine," he says again, his voice lowering almost an octave. "Y-you're m-mine." "Y-yes," I moan, his mouth wrapping around one of my curls as the heat builds up in my core. My legs hook around his naked thighs, my body craving his the more he bites and licks my breasts.) rock my hips against his growing member, Zane groaning into my chest as he fights to keep his composure. "Make me yours," I whisper against his ear when I can take the heat no longer. "I want to be yours." He growls softly as he suckles on my n\*\*\*\*e and slides his hand along my thigh, his fingers squeezing my bare ass and pressing me harder against him so that my hips meet his waist. His beard hairs prickle my breasts but add to the pleasure as they brush over my sensitive flesh every time he sucks and licks my tits. "Zane..." I pant, needing him now more than ever. Reaching his own limit, Zane lines himself up against my entrance and, in a swift thrust, fills me up with his length, my ails welcoming his girth in a warm embrace. "Ah f\*\*k," I whimper as he starts to move, pulling his c\*\*k out slowly and pushing it all the way in in deliberate pumps. My body sways with his rhythm, his tip hitting a spot that makes me see stars behind my eyelids. "Ah!" I gasp, Zane groaning as he hits the same spot again. "Ah....Ah...Oh god!"

