

Welcome To Blacklaw

Kelsey

I had this nagging feeling that I was forgetting something since I got off the plane but couldn't quite put my finger on it, so I continued my struggle and lugged the bulky suitcase out of the terminal. I was only going to Blacklaw for a week - why did I have to pack so much?

To be honest, I'd been an anxious wreck since Eric woke up me this morning with a steaming hot cup of coffee. God bless that man's soul. My wolf had stirred all night causing me to toss and turn, resulting in me getting no sleep. It would be my first time back on pack territory since I had left to flip the page on my life in Arizona. It would also be the first time since I've seen him. As usual, I laid there and fought to get the thoughts of Blake out of my mind, but they still lingered. That mesmerizing smile that never failed to encompass me, the laugh that always gave me heart palpitations and those thick fingers that easily could send me into complete oblivion sent a shiver down my spine.

Blake had tried to contact me only once when I left Blacklaw behind, that was apparently all I was worth to him. I guess the mate bond didn't affect his wolf as badly as it did mine. I could tell that he had gone out and was drunk by the slur in his voice when I answered the call. It didn't help that I heard an irritatingly high pitched female voice in the background. Later when I broke down to Asher, he confirmed that Blake had gotten laid that night by his new flame which was a girl named Ashley.

After a few days of hoping he'd call again, I gave up, gathered my remaining dignity and finally changed my number.

A nearly deafening shriek caught my attention and before I knew what was happening, my mother had her arms wrapped tightly around me. I could see the excitement swirling in my father's eyes to as he stuffed my suitcase in the trunk of the car. They were thrilled that I was finally home even if it was for a short time. We quickly settled into the car and began the three hour drive to Blacklaw. I stared blankly outside the back seat window while we drove through the winding road of the forest, the familiarity of it all receding in my mind.

Mom was going on about how excited the pack was for me to be home and how someone had dropped off some biscuits and pecan pie. True country small town lovin'. I knew I should've listened but I was fighting with my own thoughts that were already a sporadic mess. I was trying to play it cool. I didn't want my parents noticing how uncomfortable I really was. Truthfully, my nerves were shot with all the adrenaline that was coursing through me.

"Shit". I whisper to myself, finally registering what had kept me on edge since I had landed in Alabama. I can see my dad's eyes fixed on me and his forehead wrinkled with concern in the rear view mirror, "what's wrong honey?"

"Oh nothing, I just forgot to text Eric and tell him I landed", I say as my fingers frantically tap against my screen of my phone. I knew there was something I forgot, it must be because I'm so goddamn sleep deprived. "Mmhmm", my mother taunts as if there was something she wanted to say but didn't.

"Where's Mark?"; I finally blurt out. My brother and I had always been super close growing up, he was three years older than I was. Not seeing him at the airport kind've bummed me out. He wasn't exactly thrilled about me moving out to Arizona originally, he may have even resented me for a bit but I swear he was excited that I was coming home.

"Oh carebear, he wanted to come but he had training with the pack. Alpha Blake wouldn't excuse him", my father explained. Ugh, figures. Of course Blake didn't excuse him. Why was he purposely out to get me? First, I'm summoned home early and now he couldn't even agree to let my brother miss one practice. Goddamn Alphas and their power struggles.

I was proud of my brother, Mark was announced as Alpha Blake's enforcer shortly after his father stepped down and announced Blake as Alpha. Working so closely with the Alpha, I knew that Mark had responsibilities to the pack. He had trained tirelessly his entire life to become strong enough to join the upper rankings of the pack one day, he was almost as strong as Asher. Being head of security was also fitting for Mark because it allowed him to use his computer skills that he had gone to school for. Trust me, that kid was a computer whiz. I was pleasantly surprised when I heard the news, I was worried that my past relationship to Alpha Blake would make Mark suffer.

One week, I kept telling myself. One week and I'll be back in Arizona. Back to the life that I had built for myself to my liking, not the one that I was being forced to live. No shifters, no obsessive parents and definitely no Blake.

The rest of the drive was relatively quiet until I realized that we were on the long gravel driveway that I so vividly remember leaving behind, headed straight for the black iron gates.

Welcome to Blacklaw y'all.



Rage and Regret

Blake

The one thing that I'm certain about is that I have to stay away from her at all costs. Here's the plan, I'll keep my head down, keep my distance and avoid her like the plague. Everything will work out, right?

Ever since my father told me that he had arranged for Kelsey and Logan to return to pack grounds for their five year check-in, my life has been nothing short of a blur. When I stood up to stretch from being cooped up in my office all morning like a tiger in a cage, I noticed her parents' black sedan passing through the black iron gates and driving into Blacklaw from my window. My wolf knew she was here too, he could feel her near and he wouldn't stop pestering me. He missed her, I missed her too, but I shouldn't.

They say the best way to get over someone is to get under someone else. I can confirm that's bullshit. None of the countless one night stands I've had over the years have come close to healing the wounds that have now become tattooed scars in my heart. As I'm thrusting into a girl, I imagine that it's Kelsey underneath me. Just when I'm about to release my load into a girl, I imagine it's Kelsey I'm releasing into. She's become my obsession. An obsession that I haven't been able to break free from.

I've spent the past four and a half years torturing myself for letting go of the best thing that's ever happened to me and I was positive that this week wouldn't be any different. She's what I wake up thinking about and what I fall asleep dreaming of. If that isn't enough, I physically get to feel the sting of rejecting the mate bond nearly every damn day. The only thing that I found to slightly numb the pain was keeping myself distracted with booze, women or work.

I know I hurt her, I know I broke her heart. A cruel reality that I now have to live with. The truth is I broke my own too but she doesn't even know it. She sees me as an asshole and I don't blame her for it.

I would have claimed her right there on the dock that night as my mate if I could have. I knew she was my Kelsey, as lame as it sounds I could feel it. There was something different about my Kelsey, something electric that made me feel alive whenever I stared into those big emerald green eyes.

I'm an Alpha by birthright though and like they say with power, comes responsibility. My parents had approached me that morning of her eighteenth birthday at breakfast and explained that while they adored Kelsey, it was better to break things off with her instead of stringing her along. You see, my fate had been sealed when I was only five years old to take Everly from Silver Shadow Pack, the first born daughter of Alpha Jakob as my Luna.

That's right, Crimson Pack's biggest rival. The rivalry had gone on for centuries, every decade or so, there would be another unnecessary war. The union between Everly and I would be the official stitch to finally mend the packs together, the years of bloodshed soon to be nothing but brutal history never to be repeated.

Everly was prim and polished, molded into the perfect picture of what a Luna should be. However, she was a tad too cocky for my liking. Coming from me, I know that says a lot. Being the Alpha's daughter and having lived in the spotlight her entire life, she also didn't hold it against her. Us Alpha kids just had it different than the rest of the pack.

Just as I was about to sit down at my desk and continue working on the details for the pack run next Friday, my Beta Asher mind links me. 'Alpha, the endurance training we had scheduled is done for the day. Do you want to come down and continue with defensive drills or should I let them off early today?'

My Beta Asher had been one of my best friends since we were pups. When my father's Beta had stepped down to spend more time with his grandchildren and shortly after I became Alpha, there was no question in who I believed should take his place as Beta. Asher was quick witted, level headed and strong. His wolf was the second biggest in the pack. I had even come across Alphas who were weary to mess with Asher. My father's Beta trained Asher and had no doubts that Asher would be a valuable asset to Crimson Pack.

Only one issue: he was also close friends with Kelsey, my mate, and it was clear as day that he adored her. I could always tell when she was calling him because Asher was horrible at hiding it. Whenever he glanced at his vibrating cellphone and saw her name, he never failed to immediately tense up. It was like clockwork. Asher knew about my predicament and I knew he disagreed with my decision but I was grateful that he refrained from mentioning anything Kelsey related.

I heave a sigh and massage my temples in aggravation, "ya. It's fine, I'll be there in five minutes" and flick my laptop screen down. Any other day and I would have left the group finish early, we had been training vigorously since the last training session a month ago with the allied packs. The last time the packs got together to train, I had two injured shifters by the end of it and I was determined not to let history repeat itself. I'm pretty sure Alpha Tate isn't going to let me live that one down anytime soon considering it had been shifters from his pack that inflicted the injuries.

Alpha Tate, Alpha Jaxon, Alpha Liam and I renewed the allegiance amongst our packs once I became Alpha of Crimson Pack. A brotherhood of sorts. We were all similar in age, essentially grew up together and have the same goal of transitioning our packs into the modern world. Maybe even the entire werewolf race. As the human world advances, the shifter world cannot stay stuck in place; a testament that our fathers weren't exactly fond of.

But, as always, change might be uncomfortable but it's necessary.

Three out of four packs already had ties to each other from when our fathers were Alphas, with the exception of Alpha Tate's pack. However, their allegiances consisted of having each other's backs in case they required assistance for whatever reason. Our pact inherits their beliefs but adds a little bit more with our warriors actually being familiar with each other. Alpha Tate was from the North. I was from the North, Alpha Liam was from the West and Alpha Jaxon was from East. Even though there are seven werewolf packs, four packs working hand in hand with each other gave us a majority when it came to most Alpha meetings.

They were scheduled to arrive with their warrior packs tomorrow night except for Alpha Tate who had already arrived and was already up my ass to go out for drinks. Crimson Pack was hosting the training session this month. Having an allegiance with each other, we gathered our warrior packs once a month to train together, master skill sets and more importantly learn to fight together as a team. If a war was ever to take place, it was vital that the warriors all saw each other as one force moving in unison instead of four separate identities.

I had made my way into the field and towards the bright eyed warriors. After last month's circus, I could see their determination to showcase their strength to the other packs. Shifters are obviously competitive by nature, particularly against other packs.

I quickly demonstrated a few defensive moves which all they seemed to grasp with ease when they paired off to practice. Two hours of defensive training later and I realized I had completely lost track of time. "Pack up Crimson. Good work today, training is at 3pm tomorrow. One last session before our guests arrive tomorrow night. Do not be late!", I yelled out to the group.

Beta Asher comes and places a hand on my shoulder, "they look good out there, Alpha Tate is going to shit his pants when he sees them this time", he says with a smirk. Beta Asher was beaming from the improvement of the group and I can admit his work has been impressive.

I coil out a laugh and reply, "yeah, I'm stoked to see his face too. That guy may not come back next month when he sees Crimson now". I pull off my black v-neck tee that was drenched of sweat from the beaming hot summer sun.

I notice Beta Asher's eyes bolt to the other side of the field where a small crowd was now gathering, it was like he wasn't even paying attention with his gaze so intently fixed on the horde. The look on his face made me wonder if he was looking for something... or rather someone. "...I'll catch ya later Alpha", he said and jogged over to the crowd.

My cellphone vibrates against my leg and I pull it out my pocket. I groan seeing that it's a text from my father asking where I had left the pack rotation schedule. Unbelievable. I know he wanted to help with the shift of power of Alpha but sometimes it felt like he wasn't ready to let it go.

I stuff the cellphone back in my pocket, I was on my way back to my office anyhow. A high pitched shriek catches my attention from across the field and I glare over to the crowd that Asher had just raced towards. Before I even have time to react or process what was going on, I see my Beta Asher picking up and spinning a blonde in his arms. The already short canary yellow dress exposed her long tanned legs that were wrapped tightly around his waist while his arms held her up right under perky her ass.

I feel my mouth run dry at the sight and a growl escape my chest. "Mine!", my wolf howls. I couldn't fight the urge and nip my gaze off of her, she looks breathtaking. A total fucking Goddess.

I can feel my gym shorts tighten when thoughts flood my mind of how badly I'm craving to have her underneath me. Her petite body trembling under mine while I thrust into that taut little pussy like no time had passed.

I watch her until our gazes lock, her emerald green eyes shining brightly in the reflection of the sun and narrowing directly at me. Fuck, I need to get out of here. This wasn't the plan. The plan was to avoid her at all costs. I'm not sure how much self-control I'll have around her.

I stalk my way into the forest, feeling my wolf whimper and scold me that we're going the wrong way. I lure my gym shorts off and shift, taking off towards the pack borders.

Warm Welcome

Kelsey

A pair of crystal blue eyes staring directly at me from across the field caught my attention. I'd recognize those eyes anywhere. They were burned into my memory like they belonged there, haunting me in my dreams for the past four and a half years.

I watched him until he finally disappeared into the forest. I could feel Asher whip his head in the direction that I was so consumed in, silently acknowledging what had just happened.

What a fucking asshole.

Why was I expecting anything different from a douchebag Alpha who rejected his mate on her birthday? I know he saw me, I caught him staring directly at me. I was sure that he had felt it too, the invisible magnet tugging to pull us together. He could have at least come over as pack Alpha and acknowledged me after four and a half years.

I shook my head, trying to replace my irrational thoughts with the fact that I now had Eric in my life, a true gentleman through and through. I didn't care about Alpha Blake. Right? If he wanted to avoid me, then I would happily let him.

"So whatcha say Kels? The Wolf's Den tonight like old times?"; Asher fields. I'm sure he noticed that I've been distracted since I saw Blake across the field a few moments ago.

"Ahh yeah... just a couple of drinks though. My check-in with Alpha Max is in the morning and I'd rather not sabotage my chances of a smooth meeting by showing up reeking like I had just gone on a bender", I admit.

Asher's eyes crinkled at the corners as he let out a full-fledged belly laugh, "Who you? Never! I think Alpha Max already knows your trouble, Kels, he did watch you grow up".

I couldn't help the playful growl that bounced off of my chest, immediately knowing what he was referring too, "I do believe fine sir, that it was you who convinced Mia and I to steal those tractors".

A smirk quickly formed on Asher's face, "I never told you two psychos to drive them into the lake! That was all your own doing".

Mia was like a sister to me. Her family had transferred to Crimson Pack when she was in high school. All of my favorite families in Blacklaw had her involved in one way or another. Since graduating from business and administration at the nearby college, she took over her parents' café in town. Even though we spoke daily on the phone, I hadn't seen her for almost five years. When I finally got unpacked into my old bedroom, I couldn't resist the mouth-watering smother of the pecan pie sitting in the kitchen. My father told me that it was Mia's mother who had actually brought it over as a welcome home gesture. I had come out to the training field to come find her and thank her for the pie and there was still no trace of her anywhere.

"Yeah, yeah. As if you don't remember when you almost set the pack house on fire. Clearly, Alpha Max forgave you for that one", I shot back holding up my finger like I was scolding a child.

Suddenly, I felt slim arms wrap me from behind, "So this is what the entire pack is buzzing about". I turned towards the brunette and I threw my arms around her, "MIA! I've been looking everywhere for you! AH! I missed you so much".

Asher piped up, "if you move back home, you won't have to miss anyone anymore" and winked at me before he took his exit towards the pack house.

"Augh, that man doesn't know how gorgeous he is I swear. I don't know how you two haven't ever hooked up. I would've been all over that like honeybees to honey", Mia whispered into my ear.

I rolled my eyes, "Ugh Asher?! He's like a brother to me! Just ask him out already, he won't bite, I promise".

Asher was definitely attractive, his entire body was shredded and he had gorgeous amber eyes that I was sure glowed when he was excited about something. He had dark blonde hair in a crew cut and had enough tattoos for the entire pack. I didn't know how I would have survived Alpha Blake's rejection without him silently holding my hand every step of the way. He had called every day for a year until he took the Beta position. I knew that Mia had always had the hots for Asher, I guess not much has changed since I've been gone.

Mia insisted that I had to come check out the renovations she had done to the café, The Aroma Mocha. She was adamant that I had to try their supposed legendary caramel latte that they were known for, which was undoubtedly the closest thing I have ever tasted to liquid gold. She was one of those friends that no matter how much time had passed, you instantly pick up where you left off like it was just yesterday that you saw each other. I didn't have to ask twice if she wanted to come to the Wolf's Den. She got all giddy like a school girl, apparently the guy she had been dating for the past three months is in a band that was performing tonight at the bar. I could tell she was really into this guy already.

Just as we were getting up from the table to leave, we were greeted with a few of his enforcer buddies who all gawked at Mia and I like we were their next dinner. Mark squeezed my cheek, causing it to turn red just like he did when we were kids, which resulted in me to dramatically roll my eyes. "If it isn't the ghost of Blacklaw herself, sorry I couldn't come pick you up with mom and dad, baby sis", he said.

I wanted to lash out with some smart ass comment since my cheek was still pulsing, but I didn't have the heart. It just felt so nice to be here, to finally be home and with the people I loved. Instead, I raised my hands up in surrender, "I heard you had pack training Mr. Big-Shot-Enforcer".

He stifled a laugh and shook his head, "Don't you know it Kels. Some of us around here have to protect this pack. Speaking of which, Alpha Max wanted me to let you know that while you're in Blacklaw, you're expected to train with the warriors".

If looks could kill, I was certain that Mark would have been dead by now. "Really?", I whined. "I just got here after five years and he throws me into pack training already? How is that fair?"

He flashed me a sympathetic smile, "don't shoot the messenger: 3pm tomorrow" and returned to his buddies whose eyes could have very well rolled out of their heads if they stared any longer.

Mia and I quickly retreated to my parents' house to get ready for what was supposed to be a laidback night out. I decided to wear my new black long sleeve bodysuit which conveniently plunged down so low that I opted to go braless, with a short black leather skirt. Mia had curled my hair into these beautiful soft beachy waves that I could never seem to get right when I tried to do it myself. I finished it all off with a sharp cat eye to showcase my eyes and my favorite shade of nude lipstick. I stopped in front of the body-length mirror in my bedroom to check out the final results. Perfect, I muttered to myself.

Mia narrowed her eyes at me as she did her make-up in the mirror and bit her lip, "if I didn't know any better I'd think you were trying to be seen by someone tonight".

I could feel the heat penetrating on my face. Fuck, was it that obvious? I didn't care about Blake anymore, but was it bad that I just wanted a taste of sweet revenge? The fact that he didn't even bother to come over and say hello today on the field still infuriated me. "It's my first night back in five years. Is it too much to ask to look presentable?"

"Presentable? Girl, you look like an entire happy meal. Guys are going to be drooling all damn night", she said and tossed her head back in a laugh.

Mia puckered her lips together and stood up in the mirror to take a final look, "not too bad", she said under her breath. I'd given Mia a dress to borrow which seemed to look better on her than it ever did on me. She wore a short white bandage dress that emphasized every single curve on her body. The white dress contrasted against her long natural bouncy dark brown curls that I had always been envious of and her glimmering light green eyes. She reminded me of one of those exotic supermodels you would see on TV.

I was thrilled that the walk was short and sweet, but I felt my wolf getting restless for no apparent reason. We approached a glowing sign at the corner of the block that read "The Wolf's Den". The line to get into the bar had wrapped around the building. I shot Mia a concerned look and began to complain, "you do realize before the time we get inside, it'll already be last call". It had been clear that this place had become extremely popular, but I didn't spend the last couple of hours dolling myself up to stand in a line all night.

A huge hand grasped mine and pulled me towards the door abruptly, "Not when you're with the band", a low husky voice taunted. Whoever this dude was, held both Mia and I's hands, one on each side. We approached the front of the line and a bulky bouncer nodded that him, "Band is here!", he belted out to the man in the all-black suit behind him. "Have a great nice ladies", he said as he unclipped the velvet rope, side stepping and granting us access into the bar.

The Wolf's Den hadn't changed a bit since the last time I was here, the entire place had a rustic vibe to it. Once we got inside, Mia grabbed the back of this guy's neck and impatiently kissed him. Serious PDA alert, I thought to myself. After a few moments of watching them exchange spit, Mia pulled back and turned to me. "Kelsey, this is my boyfriend, Jake. Jake, this is THE Kelsey I've been telling you about!" He pulled me into a tight hug, "welcome home", he whispered in my ear.

Mia and I quipped straight towards the bar while Jake took off to get ready for his set, "lemon rrimmed on each glass and smiled at Mia, "I got it, it's on me".

I gave Mia a knowing smirk but didn't dare to say anything as she passed me my shot. She lifted up the tequila shot and cheered, "just like old times" and clinked her glass with mine. I enjoyed the burning sensation of the tequila running down my throat for a moment before I stuffed the lemon into my mouth.

A group of people we went to high school with starting gathering around us, each one insisting on buying another round. Ugh, there's no way I'm going to make my meeting with Alpha Max tomorrow morning sober. Overcrowded. I slipped "thank you" to her when she asked me to come with her to the washroom.

We strolled into the ladies' room quickly and touched up our makeup, neither of us actually needing to use the washroom. "I swear that bartender definitely has the hots for you", I teased as we walked out of the washroom, both of us breaking out into a laughing fit.

"ARIZONA!" came shouting from my right side and I turned to see Asher enthusiastically standing up from his chair at the table that was too close for comfort. I fought to breathe when my eyes shot past him and locked with Blake's. Oh shit, this is how this is going down. This is not how I expected this play out. Blake looked like a deer in headlights and I was pretty sure I had an identical look pasted to my face.

My wolf was howling inside, desperate to rise to the surface and claim her mate. In that brief moment, I noticed the silver swirls in Blake's mesmerizing blue eyes. His wolf was pushing forward too. What was going on? He rejected me almost five years ago, I shouldn't still feel this way about him.

Asher looped his large arms around my waist and pulled me close to his body so I could hear his over the loud music, "Give me five minutes to get away from work, I gotta buy you a drink".

Just then the other man that was sitting with them, pushed his beer up to his lips and said "come on Asher, you're going to keep these beauties all to yourself?" His eyes bolted up and down my body, I had felt violated like he had just eyes fucked me right there.

My wolf immediately picked on his strong Alpha aura, he demanded dominance on a level that almost made me shudder. Admittedly, he was strikingly handsome. He was tanned and buff jacked, he had dark purple eyes that radiated off him long dangerous and a fanned buzz cut. I could feel Asher's hesitation rolling into his when he struggled to introduce us. "Well, this is my old friend Kelsey and Mia from Crimson Pack. Kelsey, Mia: this is Alpha Theo of the Black Moon Pack and his beta, Luke. You already know Alpha Blake obviously, so I'll skip the introduction there".

My heart was pounding outside of my chest being so close to Blake, all those memories that I'd fought so hard to forget came pouring down. I had to ignore the urge I had to jump over the high top table that they were sitting at and throw my body up against his. That same chiseled and rock-hard body that lit something explosive deep inside of me.

