

## Chapter 83

### If Only

“Sebastian Ashford,” Bash introduces himself.

I watch as he and Lucas size each other up. I can't help but wonder if this is a male thing. Dominant Alpha males.

“Lucas Viril,” he responds, shaking Sebastian's hands.

Even from where I am I can see that the hand shake is strong. With each one of them trying to squash each other's hands. Lucas gives Sebastian a look not knowing that he is not someone to be intimidated.

“I've heard about not only from Micah and Lilly, but from other Alphas and the werewolf council as well.”

Lucas finally admits and lets go of his hand.

Sebastian nods, not saying anything. He is back to being the cool, calm, unemotional man he is in front of people. All playfulness gone.

His arms wrap around me and he brings me close. Showing Lucas that I wasn't alone and that we were a united front. I liked this a lot because it proved despite our mating being a contract, he still had my back.

“Let’s go inside, you missed breakfast and I am sure both of you are hungry.”

He turns around and starts walking. We follow behind him. Sebastian’s hand was now holding mine.

The action calmed, pushing back panic.

Unlike yesterday, today there were people walking around. I don’t know if it’s just now they’ve come out or I just didn’t notice them when I ran from the house. Anyway, now I did notice them and they were staring, which made me feel like I was under a microscope.

Thankfully we reached the house quickly. To my disappointment none of them had left. They were now seated in the living room.

“Dad!” Jax shouts when he sees his father. He rushes to him.

Sebastian lets go of my hands and squats down to hug him.

“Hey buddy.” he whispers.

I notice Krystal on the side unsure. She didn’t know whether to come and hug him like Jax did. Or stay where she is. My heart hurts for her because I know she wants to do what Jax did.

Sebastian surprises me when he lets go of Jax and turns to Krystal.

“Aren’t you going to give me a hug sweetheart?” he asks her.

A smile breaks through her face and she runs to him. He captures her in his arms and hugs her.

“I wasn’t sure if I could,” she tells him lowly.

“I will always want a hug from my daughter.” he kisses her temple before setting her down.

She smiles brightly at him. “Then, I will give you a hug everyday.”

My heart swells at their interaction. I feel my eyes filling up but I push back the tears. I love that he included her and claimed her. Maybe this was a sign that things were going in the right direction.

I look at Jax. I wanted to gauge his reaction. He is smiling at the interaction between Krystal and his father. Though I shouldn’t even be surprised given they’ve already claimed each other as siblings.

“Hey, Alpha.” Lilly greets.

I hadn’t even noticed that she had come to us. Just like me she looked haggard and emotionally drained. I still can’t believe that she might be my sister slash cousin. Thinking about it, it wouldn’t be that bad though. Our weird parentage aside, Lilly and I had a good relationship and we share a special bond.

“Good to see you Lilly, I was able to pull Micah from the pack business I sent him on. He will be here tomorrow.” he tells her formally.

“Thank you, Alpha,” she murmurs, tears swimming in her eyes.

It's then that I realize how hard this is also for her. She was holding on and the fact that tears sprang at the mention of her Micah meant that just like me she needed her mate's support and so will Claire.

"Good morning, Alpha, I'm Valery Lilly's mom...I believe both of you haven't had breakfast yet."

The woman was sweet and I couldn't help but like her more. I know that most of the others wanted to dive in at the issue at hand, but Valery was considerate.

"Nice to meet you Valery, and yes, breakfast will be appreciated."  
Sebastian responds politely.

Standing with me was the renowned Alpha Sebastian. The man he was on the beach was tucked away. I didn't mind at all because deep inside I loved the fact that that man only came out around me or the children.

"Why don't you both have a seat and catch up while I will whip up something for the both of you since we are out?" She says smiling.

I smile back at her. "Do you need help, I don't mind assisting."

I was being genuine though the other reason I was offering my help was to escape 'catching up' as she put it.

She must have seen through my act because she chuckles.

"I don't need help Lauren, have a seat and get to know your family." She turns to go to the kitchen.

“Mommy, can we go to the beach now?” Krystal asks.

I was happy she missed the whole family thing. Her mind focused on the beach. Jax, like his father, didn't miss anything and was glancing between me and the people seated in the living room. I wanted them to stay but I also didn't want them hearing what was about to go down. Until it was confirmed that we were blood, Jax and Krystal didn't need to know that we may have found an entirely new family.

“Sure, but get Hunter first and don't wonder away from him.”

She squeals, grabs Jax's hand and drags him in search of Hunter.

With his hand on my lower back, Sebastian leads me to a love seat once the children leave. I turn to look at everyone. When they introduced themselves, it sort of just rushed past my head because I was in panic so they were still strangers.

“I'm sorry that we overwhelmed you earlier, maybe now that you're calm, we can introduce ourselves properly,” one of the older men says.

I nod my head in agreement.

“Okay then, I am Jack and this lovely lady beside me is Kristine, my mate. We are Lucas' parents.” The older man makes the introduction.

“Next to us is Benson and Rose, they're Valery's parents,” he says before pointing to the next couple.

“Those two are John and Olivia, they’re the former Betas, and seated next to them is Layla their younger daughter.”

I take in the information and d\*\*\*\*\*d it. I look at John and Olivia. I don’t find any resemblance between them and Claire but when I turn to Layla I notice some similarities. My heart lurches, as I stare at the woman that is possibly Claire’s younger sister.

“You probably already know who I am and if you don't, well, Krystal already filled everyone in with her long monologue.” I say. “This is my mate Sebastian.”

They nod and greet him, with respect given he is an Alpha.

“I’m just wondering how the hell did you not discover Lauren earlier? She is a media personality since she and Claire own a fashion brand company.” Sebastian asks with a bit of edge in his voice.

I had forgotten to tell him how backward this pack is. It slipped my mind.

Luke is the one that answers. “Our pack is a bit different from the rest, I have been trying to change things, make them embrace technology but it’s been hard given that most of them are still rooted in the old ways.” he says sheepishly.

“So you’re telling me you have no phones, computers, televisions and the rest?” Sebastian asks skeptically.

“No we don’t...The only things we have that are modern are cars and radios. For communications we mostly use landlines and letters.” he replies.

Sebastian looks at them dumbstruck. Like he’s still trying to comprehend what he just heard.

“What about magazines?”

Lucas shakes his head. “We only get newspapers.”

I honestly don’t know how they have survived. It would seem impossible but here is proof that they were still standing.

“You could have avoided all these years wasted if you had something as simple as a phone. They started the company when they were in college, it would have been easy finding them, Hell you would have probably found them earlier.” Sebastian growls almost livid.

“They know that now Alpha. Hopefully now they can see the error of their thinking and finally accept the changes I’ve been trying to make.” Luke says looking at the older generation.

We stay quiet for a while, each of us contemplating how different things would have been if they had technology.

“Can I see a photo of Claire, please?” Anna asks after a while. Hope and fear in her eyes.

I nod and get my phone out. I click on a picture of Claire and Mason before handing it to her. Felix and Layla crowd her to look at the photo too.

I see the moment they realize that Claire and Layla look alike. Because there is pure heartbreak written across their faces.