

Tattooed 231

Chapter 231

"I'd still fuck you." Alec gave me a look before opening the door. "You didn't even try last night." I reminded him as I walked out. Alec shut the door behind me and locked it. "You didn't seem like you wanted to." Alec put his hand on my lower back as we walked down to the garage. "I could have been persuaded." "I'll remember that." Alec rolled his eyes at me. "Are your parents coming along?" I asked as Alec opened the door to an Audi for me. "No. After everything that has been going on, I didn't want them to come." Alec shut the door and walked around to his side. Getting in, he started it and backed out before driving off.

"Where was everyone this morning?" "Probably sleeping in since they had a free morning for a change." My legs were bouncing as I kept shifting in my seat. To say that I was uncomfortable was an understatement. Alec had reached over and firmly placed his hands on my thigh to keep me still. As if reacting on instinct, both my hands wrapped around his forearm and held on tightly. Alec took all my squeezing and then some. "I was hoping to never see these gates again." I whispered as we pulled us. The guards saw me and nodded before opening them and letting us pass. "Kristen, I know this will be hard but remember, this is his choice. He wants this. As much as you and Colt are going to hurt, remember that his soul is being set free." Alec's words were like ice water being splashed in my face. It was a dose so of reality that helped me calm down. Just a little. I was able to take a deep breath. Colt and Penny were standing on the porch steps. Colt had his hand around her as Penny waved big at us. I took one last deep breath before Alec

opened my door for me. When he got out, I wasn't even sure. "Kris! It's so good to see you!" Penny ran down the steps and hugged me. It felt good to see her again. "How are you?" She looked good, no sunken eyes or bruises. "I've had a really good time actually this last week. She didn't have to tell me what she meant, I knew it, "Hey, sis." Colt walked up and I threw myself in his arms. It felt good to be back in my twin brother's embrace. As much as I loved Alec, Colt will always have a comfort to him that I can't find anywhere else. "Hey." It was all I could get out. "How are the shoulders?" Colt let me go and looked at them. "Feel perfectly fine, just a little bruising." I lifted them to show them I had full range. "Good." Colt stepped back and shook Alec's hand before giving him a half hug. "Thanks for coming, man." "Kris!" I heard my dad's voice from the porch. Looking over, dad and Ann walked out to greet us. Dad was a few steps ahead of Ann. Thankfully, she stopped at the steps as dad came down and gave me a hug. "Dad!" Not quite as aggressive but I wrapped my arms around him. Knowing this might be my last day with him had me feeling things I wish I never had to. "You look good, kiddo. How are you feeling?" Dad let me go and like Colt, looked at my shoulders. "I'm good. Feeling great." Even if I didn't feel good, I wasn't going to tell him that. "Good!" Dad nodded before shaking Alec's hand firmly. "Thank you for bring her." Alec wasn't sure how to respond to that as his mouth opened and closed a few times. "It was my pleasure, sir." He finally settled on. "Penny has a beautiful picnic set up for us in the garden." Colt said, interrupting the awkwardness. I half expected Ann to make a remark but instead, she just turned and walked ahead of us. Her nose was kept in the air as she aggressively walked on. Colt and Penny were ahead of us. I saw Penny put her hand on Colt's back as if to calm him down.

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My hand slipped around Alec's arm, holding onto him. Not his hand but his forearm. Why I felt the need to hold onto him and not just hold his hand was something I didn't want to think about. Thankfully, Alec didn't try to move me or even question it. He allowed me to do what I needed to do. The walk to the garden was the longest walk of my life. Everyday, if not more, I would walk to this garden to escape my life. It never seemed this far away. Alec was feeling protective, and on edge but he kept trying to push calmness to me. Maybe those were my emotions he was trying to take from me but I couldn't tell right this second. "This looks amazing." I tried to keep my voice steady as we walked up to the picnic. Penny had put a large round table with an umbrella in the garden. A tablecloth gripped the edges and different fruit, salads, sliders and breads covered the table. "Thank you. I have started cooking and wanted to try a few new recipes. I hope you like them. You will have to tell me what you think." Penny smiled warmly at me. I watched as Alec and Colt moved Penny and I between them as Dad and Ann sat on the other side of them. Colt sat directly beside Ann but there was still enough space for a whole person. Dad didn't sit very close to her either. "Where did you find the recipes?" Ann asked as she scrunched up her nose. She had bent over to smell the sliders.

Penny looked a little uncomfortable. "It was a new cookbook I got." My back straightened as I look at the sliders. She found the cookbook at mom's house? These were my mom's sliders? "Ice?" Colt got my attention and gave me a look. My mouth was dry as I tried to unscramble my thoughts. "I think it smells amazing!" Alec put his arm on my lower back, saving me from answering. "Let's eat!" Dad said quickly and started putting sliders on his plate. Ann took one but pushed it to the side.

I put some bread, salad and pasta on my plate until the sliders came around. Not sure how hungry I actually was, I put one on my plate and kept passing it. Colt put three like he knew he loved them. "So, Alec. Where you able to eliminate the tunnels?" Dad asked. I was thankful for the change of subject. Deciding to be brave, I grabbed the slider and took a bite. "We did. It went much smoother than I expected. Obviously, we lost a few trees but no damage to the wall. There is a new ravine. I'll probably get some dirt brought in and fill in the holes." The sliders were like a meatball with swish cheese. It had this BBQ sauce that had a different taste to it. Either way, it was amazing. The bun was soft and had a peppery flavor to it. I absolutely loved it. As much as it made my heart ache from the loss of not knowing what else my mom could have made us, I kept my face straight. A time or two, I saw Alec glance over at me. "I have some dirt we can give. Penny had started on a new pool and we needed to lengthen the old one." Dad said. "Emmy wants to build a new pool too." I said, smiling at Penny. "I know! She told me about it last night. She is glowing!" Penny smiled back. "She looked sickly, not glowing." Ann snorted. Dad gave her a look that caused her to roll her eyes and look away. Not sure what he said to her but it seemed to be working. Mrs. Smith Author " Thank you all for reading!!!

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What are the next steps? Dad asked as if to ignore Ann Kristen had a brilliant idea” Alec said taking another bite of pasta and looking at me I had a bite of salad half way up to my mouth when I paused. Looking around, everyone was looking at me, waiting for an answer. Setting my fork down, I had a sudden discomfort for being put on display. “Oh, um... did Penny not tell “She did but I would like to hear it from you” Dad gave me a look that I hated. It was like I was being tested and I got it my whole life. “If we hack into the telephone company, we got find his file based off his location of service and d*****d his call history. Then we can match locations with assigned numbers and find out what locations he calls. From there, we can deep dive. The rest is self explanatory.” “How did you come up with that idea?” Penny asked. “It was really just a snide remark that Alec tuned into. From there, it snowballed.”

“That is actually really good.” Colt said with a mouthful of slider. “Thanks. I hope it works. Has Beckham found anything?” I asked. “He’s still working on it but he is making progress. He is moving slower due to the firewalls and not wanting to leave a footprint so it’s taking a little bit.” Penny nodded. “Where is he doing it from?” Alec asked. “Remember that old abandoned coffee shop a few miles from the city?” Colt asked. “Oh.” Nodding, the image of the shop flashed in my head. The windows were broken, paint was peeling and small rodents called it home. looked over and Ann barely touched anything. Instead, she was just pushing it around her plate. I was finished eating and so was everyone else. “It is such a lovely morning.” Dad looked up at the sun

that was creeping up in the sky. “It really is,” Penny agreed. We all knew what was coming next. Our heads were slightly bowed as we didn’t want it to happen but still did at the same time. “I thought you were going to give me a present.” Ann glared at dad. “You are right. I did tell you that.” Dad nodded. “Well, the kids are here. Not they are grateful for anything I did for them but you wanted them here. So, where is it?” Ann crossed her arms over her chest. Dad smiled at Ann. “We have to go to it. Let’s all go for a walk.” Dad announced and stood up. Colt acted as if he knew this was happening and so did Penny. I wasn’t sure I wanted to have known or not but regardless, I wasn’t ready. We walked behind dad and Ann. Colt and Penny were beside us, quietly walking. Dad had a bounce to his step that I hadn’t seen in years. Ann was practically skipping. I wondered what she thought she was going to get. As we came up to a hill, there was a small arch. It was covered in white flowers that hung down. Pots of more white flowers were lined up, making an aisle. “You did this? For me? Are we renewing our vows?” Ann looked at dad and grabbed his arm. Jacob and Clint were standing on either side of the arch, waiting. Did they know? “Something like that.” Dad smiled brightly as we walked up. Colt nodded for us to sit on the left and they sat on the right. Dad pulled Ann up to the front. Standing in front of each other, he held her hands. Ann had this stupidly large smile with a tear in her eye. “This is lovely.” Ann started. “Let me talk, please.” Dad announced. She appeared to be taken aback but gathered herself. “I have something prepared.” “Okay.” Straightening her back, she looked him in the eye. “Ann, you were an old fling that came into my life when I needed someone the most. I had lost my true

mate and my one true love.” My hand reached out and grabbed Alec. I knew my nails were digging into him but he didn’t move. “I had my kids and this pack that needed me. I needed to live and you gave me

that option.” An n blinked a few times as if trying to wrap her head around what he was saying. “I believed you would be a great step-mother to my kids. I thought you would taken them in as your own. Love them, teach them things and make memories.”

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Dad paused as if trying to let his words sink in. An n tried to pull her hands out of his but he tightened his grip. “Brian.. I don’t...” “I was wrong on all accounts. You did not love them. The only thing you taught them is fear and anger. Every chance you got, you would abuse my daughter, simply because she looks like her mother. Fortunately for you, I needed to stay alive to make sure they lived to adulthood and find their mates. I am a smart man and I had set up their future so when the time came that I passed away, they would be taken care of. I knew you wouldn’t do it. Now they are both grown and have their mates, I have full confidence in doing what I should have done 18 years ago.” “No!” An n tried to take her hands out of dad’s but she failed. He held onto them. It took very little effort as he didn’t even move his feet. An n was crying, “Please don’t! I love you! I have always loved you! I rejected my mate for you!” “You want?” Dad seemed confused. “That’s right! I rejected my mate right before I came to you and proposed us mating!” An stopped fighting like she accepted this. “Who?” “I’ll never tell!” An n spit.

“I, Brian Jeffrey, Alpha of the Blue Fang Pack, reject you, An n Jeffrey, Luna of the Blue Fang Pack.” Dad’s voice was strong as he said those words. An n shrieked in pain. Grabbing her heart, she fell to the ground sobbing. Dad closed his eyes and clenched his jaw as he accepted the pain. Slowly, he opened his eyes and smiled at An n. “I’ll get everything.” An n said through gritted teeth. “You won’t. I have been planning this. Everything get’s passed down to my kids.” “I accept your rejections you spineless as shole!” An n shrieked. Colt got up and went over to dad, helping him stand, dad looked him in the eye. “I, Brian Jeffrey, Alpha

of the Blue Fang Pack, pass on the title of Alpha to my son, Colt Jeffrey.” “I, Colt Jeffrey, accept the role of Alpha of the Blue Fang Pack!” “NO!” An n cried as she watched the exchange. Dad doubled over as I watched the power shift to Colt. “Take her to the cells.” He demanded, looking at grabbed an arm. They had to drag a kicking and crying An n away from us and to the cells. “Kristen.” Dad called out with a weak voice. It was like my feet moved on their own as they crawled over to my dying dad. “What?” I hadn’t realized there was tears in my eyes until I couldn’t see my dad anymore. Squeezing them shut, I felt that water spill over before I could partly see him again. “Here. These are for you.” Dad’s shaky hand reached in his pocket and pulled out a string of pearls. “They were your mothers. I hoped to..” Dad coughed a few times. “...give these to you at your luna ceremony but I won’t make it.” He gave me a weak smile as his shaking hands failed to reach out to me. Grabbing his hand, I pulled it towards me as I took the pearls. “Oh, dad...” I couldn’t stop the tears that refused to slow. Colt knelt down on the other side. “I love you, old man.” Colt’s eyes were filled with tears too. “I’m so proud of you both.” Dad looked between us, before looking up at Alec. “Take care of my daughter. I would trust no one else.” His speech was starting to slow as his breathing grew light. We watched as his eyes flashed black before we

watched his wolf die behind his eyes. "It will be my honor." Alec said firmly. I couldn't look up at him. "Kristen... I'm happy." Dad made a few choking noises. "Dad!" I screamed as his eyes rolled in the back of his head. "I love you." For the first time, in I'm not sure how long, I full on cried. I didn't even try to stop it as I cried for my dad. He might have wanted this. Wanted to be free but that didn't make it less painful. He didn't even make it five minutes after rejecting An n.

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Colt reached his arm out and griped my shoulder. I wasn't sure how long we sat there and cried together but Alec eventually grabbed me and pulled me back. I watched as a couple warriors came over with a wooden stretcher. Carefully, they put dad on it and started carrying him. I guess I was too distracted by the flower to miss the pile of wood that was gathered about a hundred yards away.

When the warriors headed in that direction, I saw my old and current pack walking up the hill. "Dad didn't think he would make it long so he arranged his own funeral." Colt said, his voice was thick with emotion.

Alec kept his arm firmly around me as we walked over and sat down in the front row. I didn't have it in me to look at everyone. Everyone from my past and my present. Penny handed me a tissue before she took her seat on the other side. There wasn't any murmurs or whispers. Everyone was quiet and respectful.

Only when everyone was seated, did Colt start to speak. He was standing directly in front of our dad. Jacob was standing off to the side. When we made eye contact, I realized he was crying too.

"We are brought here together to honor my father, Alpha Brian." There was a few cries in the back but mainly people blowing their nose. "I would like to start with a story. When we were little, our mother passed away. Needing to stay alive for us, dad mated with An n. He had hoped An n would come to care for us as her own. Obviously, we all know that was not the case. However, he needed to make sure our future was secured as well as the pack was not left in her hands." Colt paused as he gathered himself. How he managed to make it through this, I'll never know. "After we turned 18 and found our mates, dad started to planning his exit strategy. He organized this himself and left us with a smile on his face. Alpha Brian to you, dad to us and friend to others, left on his own terms. I always assumed he would die in battle but he was stubborn and liked to do things his way."

That earned a few laughs from people around. Resting my head on Alec's shoulder, he kept rubbing his thumb on my arm. Colt was right, if he was going to die, it was going to be on his term. Dad made sure of

it.

"After a few things fell into place, now was the correct time to move forward with his plan and reject Ann, thus killing him. We were able to shift the title of Alpha over to me, making Penny your new luna." Colt gave Penny a small smile. The love in his eyes was clear. "With Jacob as my beta, I vow to be as great as an Alpha as my dad."

There was cheers around the crowd, louder than I anticipated but Colt had been doing Alpha duties for awhile now, it wasn't that big of a change. I watched as Jacob lit the torch on fire and handed it over to

Colt

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"I will love you, old man. I hope to make you proud and accomplish all you hoped for me... for us." Colt looked at me to see if I wanted to say anything. Slightly shaking my head no, he nodded and rested the torch on dad's chest. His b*dy instantly erupted in flames.

Jacob brought over a larger Elm tree. After placing it in a hole, he used a shovel and finished planting it." We will not be moving his ashes but allowing them to become one with the ground from which he died. This was dad's wish." Colt walked over and sat down beside Penny. Jacob sat in the second row, next to Sherry and his parents.

Everyone was quiet as we watched the ashes fly in the wind before sinking into the earth. A low rumble was heard in the distance, telling us a storm was coming. How perfect it would be to allow his b*dy to seep into the ground, really making him one with the earth as which we came from.

One by one, people got up and went back to their houses or safe location. Colt and I just sat there. Watching what little bit was left of our dad before the flames went out. Jacob got up and started digging

a whole to put the rest of the bones that didn't burn in the fire. After he was completely buried, did Colt stand up.

"Come on, sis." Finally tearing my eyes away from the freshly dug grave, did I look at Colt. "I have a few things for you in

in my

office." I just felt numb. It helped my dad wanted this but it still hurt.

Part of me wanted Alec to just carry me but my pride got in the way. Instead, I took his hand and stood up to follow Colt. My steps were much slower than Colt's so I fell behind as we walked silently down the

hill

and to the packhouse. Alec never once tried to get me to walk quicker or even take control. He just stood

beside me and was my rock.

I wasn't sure if it was out of habit or what but as we walked up the steps, my heart started pounding. More than once I had to remind myself that Ann wasn't in here and I was finally safe here. I was safe to come

back and visit my brother. Visit my old pack, friends and any future kids they might have.

Colt left the office door open as him and Penny had arrived there minutes before we did. He was doing

something on the computer when we walked in. Penny was in one arm chair so I took the other. Alec

stood behind me as we waited to hear what my brother had to say.

Colt sighed and ran his fingers through his hair and down his face before looking at me. "Dad left you this

letter. He wrote it this morning." Colt slid over a vanilla envelope that contained more than just paper.

"What else is in here?" I asked taking it.

"The key and a few other random things." The string of pearls were still wrapped around my fingers.

Colt's eyes landed on them. "Mom wore those on her luna ceremony. It took months for him to find those. He refused to put them in the envelope. Wanted to give them to you himself."

"Can I see her house?" I asked, my voice was quiet but controlled.

"Of course you can." Penny said. "I actually have some stuff I wanted to offer you. Since I have been there, keeping away from Ann. I had went through the house and cleaned it. I'm guessing you already made the connection from the food that the cookbook was at your mother's house. I made copies for you

but if you want the original... I would understand."

It took me a minute to wrap my head around what she was saying. Part of me was annoyed she was offering me anything. It was all rightfully mine but dad did leave it to Colt in the will, including all the contents of it. She was probably thinking she was being nice and doing the right thing by offering stuff to

me. It was also that she picked out what she wanted before I even saw it.

“Ice, we can go through the house and decide together what you want to keep and what we will keep.

Penny just pulled out things like your baby blanket and stuff like that. Stuff you might want to use for your

own kid that mom picked out for you.” Colt must have read my face.

Taking a deep breath, I forced my emotions down so I could keep a straight face. “Okay.”

“Like my dad, I will be working directly with you.” Colt said, looking at Alec.

“Understood. I am handling things on my end. I’m prepared to do what I need to do to see that my pack is

protected.” I could see that Colt read between the lines as he glanced at me.

“Let me know if you need anything.” Colt said as he stood up.

Following his lead, I looked around one last time at dad’s office. Colt would probably change a few things

but this would be the last time I saw it like this. Alec placed his hand on my lower back, as if wanting to

give me comfort but he was unsure how. Taking the vanilla envelope from me, Alec stood beside me.

“Do you need anything before we head over to the house?” Penny asked, somewhat timidly.

“No....thank you.” I said as I grabbed the door handle and shut it quietly. Alec didn’t put his hand around

me back as we walked so I reached out and held onto his arm as we walked down the stairs. People were

moving around, doing their tasks like this was a normal day. I knew mentally that this was normal but I

still felt a way about it.

“We need to drive there. If you want to follow us, that would be good.” Colt said to Alec. He glanced down

and saw me holding onto Alec’s arm like it was my lifeline. Colt frowned but didn’t say anything.

“Sure.” Alec nodded. He steered me to our car and opened the door for me.

Sliding in the driver’s seat, he put the envelope on the dash before starting the car. He didn’t ask me

anything or even try to get me to talk. Instead, he started the car and followed Colt. Instead, he put his

hand on my thigh as I watched the packhouse fade away.

Was made our way through the little town that has been growing until we got to the outskirts. I remember

very clearly as a child how overgrown the brush was in this area but now it was cleared out. A small

driveway was partially hidden when Colt turned down it. Alec crept along as we looked at the amazing

scenery around us. Thick, lush trees that hadn’t been touched by man filled the hole around until it

opened up and a beautiful two-story house sat in front of us.

The paint was chipping but the structure looked good.

Alec stopped the car at a short distance away so I could see the whole thing and take it in. It looked like it

weather had got to it.

A white screen sat in front of a wooden door. I noticed the brushes and different tools off to the side as I

got out of the vehicle and started walking towards it.

The bushes had been trimmed and new flowers were planted in the flower beds. No doubt Penny wanted

to get out of the house for a little in the middle of the day. There was even a decent size tree with a little

baby swing hanging from a branch. The swing was stained from sitting rain water and years worth of

neglect but knowing my mother put it up there for Colt and I to use one day was warming.

Colt and Penny didn't talk but just watched me walk around as if I was taking it all in. The trash bags were

filled with scrapped off paint, rags with spider webs on them and a very distinct smell of bleach around

them. There were cushions with mold growing on them next to the trash bags. Looking on the porch, they

must have replaced the moldy ones with new ones. What caught my eye, Penny chose a fabric that was

almost identical to the one that mom had chosen.

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If I had any tears left to give, I probably would have. However, I was just going through the emotions at

this point. Walking up the steps, Colt opened the front door for me. Penny had already walked in and was

standing in the living room. There was a closet to my left. The wall extended and the T.V was mounted to

the wall. The livingroom opened up to my right. It was a good sized livingroom with two dark grey

couches facing eachother and two matching black recliners directly in front of the T.V. A glass coffee

table sat between the couches. An off grey rug extended between the two couches but came up short for

the recliners. The wood floor appeared to be original with the tiny slats.

Everything had wear spots like it was used but still in good shape. My first impression was homy. It was

the type of house you could walk into and put your feet up on the couch without worrying anyone would

be upset. Pictures were on the wall. I recognized our mother's parents from other pictures dad showed

us. Since mom was the only child, I assumed the dated baby pictures were of her. The mantel had

pictures in a gold frame of who I assumed was mom growing up. One from when she was around nine months and then when she was many five or six. The next was her high school prom and finally a picture of her and dad with a swollen belly. They looked so in love.

“I kept everything as I found it. I wanted you to see it before we made any changes to it.” Penny said, pulling my attention away from the pictures.

“If there is anything you want to take with you, just let me know.” Colt said as he came up beside me. He took the picture I was just looking at and held it in his hands. “I’m not getting rid of anything but I’ll put them in a safe place.”

“You’re right. This is just how I would have pictured it.” I whispered as I looked around. I kept noticing more things the longer I looked. The white ceiling fan that had a gold pinstripe design to it. The curtains were a solid sheer white that covered the wooden blinds. Even the faded white paint on the walls that desperately needed touched up.

“Over here is the kitchen with a small bathroom in the hallway.” Penny said as she left the kitchen. The doorway was larger than a traditional doorway but still just a doorway. The kitchen was an L-shaped layout with cabinets lining the left wall, just after another doorway that lead into the hall. A large island sat in the middle with three stools and a small table pushed against the right wall.

I could see and smell the wood refinisher that Penny used to clean the light stained oak cabinets. The golden handles were shiny. Even the floral wallpaper that covered the kitchen was faded but cleaned. The wooden floors extended into the kitchen and from what I could see, down the hall. More pictures of

mom and dad or our grandparents hung on the wall. There was one with a large number of people in it that I

wasn't sure who they all were.

"That is mom's family." Colt said coming up to me. "Dad told me who everyone was: Not sure I'll

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her parents and siblings."

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"There are like twelve..."

"Yeah, grandma had eleven siblings. The women moved on with their mates. Penny has been trying to track them down to see if we have any other family out there."

"Did dad not know?" I looked at Colt.

"He wasn't sure. It wasn't a priority for him at the time and when things started falling into place, he had to seal this place up so it would be safe."

It was all I could do to nod. Things must have been really bad for him to felt the need to preserve this place. The front door opened and Jacob walked in. As soon as his eyes locked on mine, I ran up to him

and hugged him tightly. He returned my hug, wrapping his arms tightly around me. It had been so long since I seen him and it just dawned on me how much I missed him. I missed our friend group. I missed getting pizza at the parlor, or going to the club.

“Hey, Ice.” Jacob laughed as he let me go.

“It’s been a long time since I seen you. I tried to give him a smile.

“I know. You have been... busy.” Jacob reached around him and pulled Sherry against him.

“Sherry. It’s good to see you.” I immediately felt bad for hugging Jacob. I knew she had a rough time accepting him and I’m sure seeing him hug another girl wasn’t easy. Especially one that she only had met

like twice.

“I’m good. I really like being here and Jacob and I have really come a long way in this short time.” Sherry looked up at Jacob. “I’m sorry for your loss.” She said after a moment and looked back at me.

After a moment of silence, Penny spoke up. “Would you like to continue to tour?”

Alec was just standing in the corner with his hands in his pockets, just letting me take it all in. Jacob walked up to Alec and shook his hand as I followed Penny down the hall.

“That is a bathroom.” Penny turned the light on. It was directly behind the kitchen wall. It was a basic bathroom with the same wooden floor. The vanity was light blue with a white counter top and a blue sink.

The toilet was light blue and so was the tub. She had it decorated in a water theme with sea-shells and sea-horses on the shower curtain.

“Here is the master bedroom with on-suit and this is the stairs.” There was a door next to the bathroom

When penny opened it, it revealed a massive bedroom. There was a four-poster bed with white lace hanging down. The bed was made with a white down comforter. There was probably a dozen pillows of front and center and was all hand stitched.

Picking it up, I smelled it. It didn't have a smell to it. “Do you want to keep that?” Colt asked.

Looking at it, I traced the letters. “No, it should stay here. I'm not a Jeffrey anymore.” Setting it back down, I saw double doors. It was open enough that it was a closet and I'm sure the bathroom went under

the stairs.

Colt opened the door to the stairs. Only Penny and Alec followed me. I noticed Jacob and Sherry sat

down on the couch, as if to give us space. The L-shaped stairs opened up into a living area. There was a couch and few rocking chairs with pink and blue baby toys. Matching playmates sat along the wall with matching teething toys or rattlers. The only difference, one was blue and one was pink. There was huge

windows that over looked a backyard and into the forest.

The wooden floors kept going but was covered by a large colorful rug. It had the rainbow on it, the numbers and different toddler stuff on it. It seems our mother was making this our play room. Her excitement caused her to get things that we didn't need yet. It was like looking at a could-have-been life.

"There are bedrooms down here." Colt said as he walked out of this room and into a hallway. We

followed him to the first bedroom. It was covered in a light pink with a dark stained wooden crib against the far wall. A changing table and dresser each claimed a wall with decals of different flowers on the

walls. The crib set was pink and purple flowers with a matching blanket hanging off it. Like the rest of the house, a large rug at in the middle but continued the floral theme mom apparently picked out for me.

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"Those boxes are clothes and blankets that she had picked out. I boxed them up for you to take if you want. You don't have to but if you wanted to use them on your own child, you could. I left this blanket here just because that is how she had it but obviously, all the bedding and crib is yours. Everything in this

room is yours." Penny said, quietly.

I was so numb I wasn't sure what to say. Kids was the furthest thing from my mind that I didn't even think

what I might want. However, I knew I didn't not want the option.

"How about we take everything and we can put it in our storage and when we have kids, you can decide what you want?" Alec came up beside me and put his hand on my lower back.

"Okay." I was thankful he stepped up and answered for me. I wasn't sure what to think, say or even feel.

“My room was pretty much the same just blue.” Colt said as he walked to another room. I followed him but instead of flowers, he had a wolf or animal theme. Decals of a large wolf sat behind a wooden toy chest. His room was mainly blues, grays and blacks but the furniture was the same.

“There is a bathroom across the hall and a guest room at the end. That is the room I have been staying in.” Penny said.

I didn’t realize how late it had gotten when I heard Colt’s stomach growl. Penny looked at him and smirked as he put his arm around her. “Are you going to Florida to see what the key reveals?” Colt asked.

“Yeah, when things get figured out here we will.”

“Hopefully sooner than later.” Colt walked out of his old bedroom and down the hall. I followed him but stopped one last time in my room.

“Do you want me to carry these down?” Alec asked.

“Yes, please.” Alec and Colt both grabbed a box and headed down stairs. There wasn’t anything on the dresser so I assumed Penny put all that in the boxes. Grabbing the blanket, I followed them down.

“Jacob, go get the other box.” Colt ordered as he walked out the front door.

“Do you want to stay for supper?” Penny asked as Jacob got off the couch and headed up stairs.

“Oh... ummm...” I wasn’t sure if I wanted to leave or not. Part of me was ready to run away. The other part

wanted to never leave this place. However, I didn’t want to face everyone yet.

“Thank you but I think I just want to go home and watch a movie.”

Penny gave me a knowing look. “I understand. The door is always open to you. You don’t need an invite to

come over. I am going to live here permanently and not in the packhouse. Your mother wanted to raise

you both here so I decided to do the same our kids. I want any kids Colt and I have to have the childhood

that your mother wanted for you.”

“Thank you.” Was all I could get out. I wish I could raise my kids here but maybe I could get Alec to build

me a house for us to raise our kids and isn’t in the packhouse. I wasn’t a fan of the layout but I loved how

it made me feel welcomed.

The guys walked back in. Alec looked at me, trying to read me. “Beckham is still trying to figure it out. You

are welcome to stay for supper or however long you want to or I can call when he figured it out.” Colt

stood right inside the doorway.

“Just call me when you hear something.” I said as I looked around one last time.

“Sure you don’t want to stay for supper?” Colt asked as he walked up to me.

“I’m sure. I want to get something ordered in and just lay on the couch watching a movie.” Colt nodded

and gave me a hug.

“I love you, sis.” He whispered.

“Love you, too.” I whispered back. I felt his smile but he hid it when he let me go.

Walking out, Alec followed me to our car. Opening the door for me, I stopped and gave the house one last

look. I knew I would be back but it will probably look different when I would. Finally, I got in the front seat

and Alec shut the door. After he sl*pped in to his seat, he started the engine.