

# The Alpha and the Mistake

## Chapter 4 - Ryder

I couldn't believe I was actually staring at the clock, excited for class. Well, I couldn't care less about the class. It was the fact I would see my mate again. I rubbed my cheek where she'd slapped me. For a human, she hit pretty hard, but it was no less than what I deserved. In fact, I deserved quite a few more for not stepping in yesterday. That I was trying to bring my uncle to justice was a tiny consolidation.

There had to be a way to unseat my uncle as alpha while keeping my mate safe. Of course, first I had to prove to her that despite what it looked like yesterday, I wasn't like Mike. I didn't get off abusing those weaker than me.

Finally, the bell rang, and I hurried to Science. With any luck, we'd have a few minutes to talk before the teacher started. I walked into the classroom and silently cheered when I noticed my mate was already there. I took my seat and looked over at her. Her fingers gripped the edges of the desk so hard her knuckles were white, her whole body stiff.

"I'm sorry for hitting you," she said, then quickly added, "I'm stupid, really stupid. I'm sure Mike's told you all about it. Nothing like that will ever happen again. I swear. In fact, if you keep this between us, I promise I'll pay you back. I, uhm, get good grades. How about I do all your homework while you're here?"

She said it all so fast it took me a second to process everything. Of course, she'd think I'd be pissed at her for slapping me. I took a breath to tell her she had nothing to worry about when the stupid teacher cleared her throat, shooting a glare at us.

My mate's head snapped towards the teacher and didn't look my way during the entire class. I, on the other hand, wasn't able to keep my eyes off her. I know it sounds lame, but she was perfect. The way her brown hair had a slight red hue to it, the pout on her lips when she frowned at me; I loved it all. She was beautiful, period, and I couldn't wait to get to know her.

When the class was over, I leaned over again to tell her no worries, when with amazing speed she gathered her things and bolted out of the room. Holy crap, she was quick. I hurriedly put my things away. Instead of trying to follow her, I pushed through the mass of students in the most direct way to her locker. I had leaned on the locker next to hers when I saw her emerge from the crowd.

Shock overtook her face, and she tried to backpedal, but she was going too fast and fell on her backside. She literally slid right over to me. I grinned; If that wasn't a sign of fate, then I don't know what is. "Wow, that was... impressive. Are you okay?" I asked and held out my hand to help her up, the smile still on my face.

She looked up at me with those amazing soft brown eyes of hers and I swear my heart about burst. “What do you want?” she snapped, then flinched as if she expected to get hit.

The smile fell from my face, but I figured I would still try to keep it light. “You didn’t let me answer your question.”

She opened her locker, but in a way that her back wouldn’t be to me, and asked, “What?”

I smiled once more. Keep it light, I reminded myself. Show her you’re not a bad guy. “You asked what you could do to keep me from telling Mike about this morning.”

Her eyes widened, then she ducked her head in a nod. “Uhm, yeah. Like I said, I can do your homework or whatever while you’re here,” she replied, putting away her books.

“I don’t want you to do my homework.”

She stiffened and glanced over at me. “Okay, so what do you want?”

“How about a late lunch? From what I’m told, there are some pretty good places around town,” I told her, again putting on my best smile.

Her eyebrows rose. “Excuse me?”

“I bet you didn’t eat lunch today, and I can’t stand the stuff they serve here. So let’s go get something to eat,” I explained. My hands itched to reach out and hold her. God, she was so close and smelled so good.

Her eyes narrowed, and she gave me an icy glare. “How stupid do you think I am?”

Wait. What?

“Is this Mike’s idea or are you that much of a pig you believe you can...” She looked at me, the disgust she felt was undeniable. She stood straight, her chin high as she continued to glare at me. “You know what? Go on, tell Mike. I don’t care if he beats me so bad he puts me in a coma. That would be better than dealing with someone like you.”

I took a breath to defend myself when she grabbed her backpack and marched away from me. I wanted to chase her down, force her to stop to explain myself. Clearly, she got the wrong idea. I literally meant lunch. Nothing more. “Damn it,” I swore and headed out when I heard Mike. I swore again and ducked down a hall to avoid him. The last thing I needed was to deal with more of my cousin’s crap. The apple didn’t fall far from the tree with that one.

I took the long route out of school. I lifted my nose in the air and sniffed. It was faint, but I caught the scent of my mate. Perhaps out of school and away from her fear of Mike, we might have an actual conversation.

I followed my mate's scent to a small two-story house. Summoning up a bit of courage, I stepped up to the door and knocked; more nervous than I ever remember being. When I saw the woman who opened the door, I knew I had the right house. With such a strong similarity, she could only be my mate's mother. "Uh, hi, I came by to see your daughter. We met at school today and I was hoping I could talk to her," I explained when the human woman suddenly opened the door wide with a bright grin.

"Oh, lovely. Come on in," she said, waving me in. "Hey, Harry. It's a friend of Brook's," she told a man who was sitting on the couch.

Brook. Her name was Brook! Finally! I had been trying all day to find out her name, but all anyone ever called her was that horrid nickname — Missy Mistake.

"Now you wait right here," her mom said. "I'll go get her." Brook's mother headed up a staircase to the second floor.

I recognized the man, Harry, from dinner the other night. He wasn't high on the pack hierarchy. I had a feeling it was mainly because his mate was human. Apparently, on top of all his other many faults, Uncle Ryan was against humans, too. My pack wasn't like that. Human, werewolf, it didn't matter. As long as you behaved decently, you were welcome in Blue Crescent.

Harry got up from where he sat and walked over to me. He had an expression that was warring between confused and suspicious. He took a breath to speak when I heard my mate.

"Hey Dean," she said in a bright, cheery tone, like she was happy to see me, but her eyes were wary as she came down the stairs.

"Hey, I wanted to talk, but you left before we had the chance," I told her as I waited for her to reach me.