



38 Chapter 38 Family Dynamics

Elara 1

Zack's eyes narrowed sharply, searching my face for any hint that I was joking.

The cocky smile on his lips froze awkwardly.

"Elara, I told you before, you don't need to play hard to get."

I let a small smile play at my lips. "I'm not joking. And Alpha Zack, one minute of your five has already passed."

His fingers flexed slightly. "I heard you had a fight with your mother."

"Look, it's your business, but don't make such a scene about it. Uncle Enzo nearly went after Anthony because of your drama. If you keep this up, Aunt Nadia will be stuck in the middle."

"Elara, you never used to handle problems so recklessly. When did you become so unstable?"

I shrugged, a playful smile dancing on my lips.

"Funny how you still try to parent me, Zack."

"My actual father is dead, you're not my boss anymore, and we're nothing to each other."



Could you dial down the daddy act?"

Zack's jaw clenched. "Elara, I'm only looking out for you!"

"Looking out for me?" I scoffed. "Anthony locked me up, and apparently I'm not allowed to be upset about it? So I should just smile and take it like I always did?"

"Here's a wild idea - maybe the problem isn't me finally standing up for myself. Maybe the problem is you can't handle me having a backbone."

Zack's eyes went dark. "Elara, what's happened to you?"

"Are you really saying these things just to get under my skin?"

I could feel his Alpha energy trying to intimidate me, but I wasn't that scared little secretary anymore. "Zack, I'm not trying to mess with you. I genuinely got married, which is why I don't want to engage in this pointless back-and-forth."

"You're allowed to find a younger, prettier girlfriend, but I can't find myself a young, caring mate with good stamina?"

That comment made Zack's face go dark with



barely contained fury.

Perfect. I'd hit exactly where it hurt.

"We're done with each other. There's no need to keep beating this dead horse. You don't have the right to lecture me anymore."

I glanced deliberately at my watch. "Well, that's five minutes. My husband's waiting downstairs. Goodbye."

I moved quickly toward the elevator, hitting the close button before Zack could recover from his wounded pride.

By the time his brain caught up with what had just happened, I was already headed to the parking garage.

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I really did have dinner plans with Dominic.

I pulled my phone from my purse to ask where he was and was horrified to see a call in progress – seven minutes and counting.

Dominic's name was blazing across the screen.

"Hello?" I answered, my voice betraying my guilt.

A low chuckle came through the speaker. "Walk straight ahead. I'm in the car with the hazard



lights on. See it?"

I pressed my lips together. "Yes, I see it."

During the short walk, I frantically tried to recall when I'd accidentally answered the call.

And more importantly, how much of my argument with Zack had Dominic overheard?

My heels clicked nervously against the concrete as I approached his car, each step feeling heavier than the last. My wolf was practically pacing with anxiety.

I slipped into the passenger seat with an awkward smile. "I must have accidentally answered your call. When did you call me?"

I tried to keep my voice light, but even I could hear the forced casualness.

Dominic raised an eyebrow, his expression both amused and calculating. He leaned back in his seat, clearly enjoying my discomfort. "Right around when you were saying Zack was old, had poor stamina, and didn't know how to take care of a woman."

Heat flooded my cheeks. Great. Just fantastic.

"So Luna Wolfe prefers younger men..." His lips quirked into a smile. His fingers drummed



against the steering wheel as he spoke, like he was savoring every word. "As luck would have it, I'm three years younger than Zack. I work out regularly, and I'm the top tennis player in our district. Oh, and I definitely know how to take care of what's mine."

The way he said "mine" made my wolf shiver, though I couldn't tell if it was from attraction or warning.

I stayed silent, fidgeting with my purse strap.

"So you see, Mrs. Wolfe, you made an excellent choice marrying me."

I forced a dry laugh, my smile feeling plastic on my face. But the thought remained: he's gay. He could be perfect in every way, but if he preferred men, what did it matter to me?

Dominic's eyes lingered on my face, as if he was trying to read my thoughts.

When I didn't respond with the enthusiasm he expected, something flickered across his expression - confusion, maybe disappointment.

I was relieved when he dropped the subject, letting out a breath I hadn't realized I was holding.

He started the engine, the smooth purr filling



the awkward silence between us.

As we drove into the estate grounds, however, that momentary relief evaporated.

My hands clenched in my lap as the imposing Wolfe mansion came into view, its windows glowing warmly against the evening sky.

Dominic seemed to sense my tension and offered a reassuring smile. He reached over and briefly covered one of my hands with his, the warmth of his touch surprising me. "Don't be nervous. My family is easy to get along with. They already like you."

I thought of the kind-faced Alpha Hunter and relaxed slightly. True.

Taking a deep breath to steady myself, I smoothed down my skirt and checked my reflection in the side mirror.

Without overthinking, I followed Dominic through the winding corridors into the main hall.