

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 211[830 words]

"Maybe I should try it with ice my first time," he says.

"You don't want to get used to the numbing effects. But for me and my family, it's a nice way to unwind at the end of the day. My parents used to sit and have a glass of whiskey every night, talking to each other. When we got older, my sister and I joined them. It's something that I miss about home, and I'd like for you and I to start talking at the end of the day. It will give us a chance to talk through anything that came up that you may have concerns about, questions about, or we can just use this time to talk," I say, pouring another glass for me and grabbing a couple cubes of ice from the mini-fridge in the office. I put the ice in his glass and sit across from him, sipping my whiskey.

He looks in his glass, swirling the amber liquid around the ice. I wait, letting him decide if there is anything he wants to say.

"I'm not sure how to pull myself out of this grief," he finally says, his voice barely above a whisper.

"I don't think it works like that. Grief doesn't just go away. I think it fades over time, gets easier to manage, but you don't pull yourself out of the trenches of it, not when it consumes you like it is," I say.

"But I should be able to, right? Other Alphas who lose their parents figure it out," he says.

"Well, not every Alpha loses both parents within days of each other. Not every Alpha is sixteen when they suffer that loss, and not every Alpha was just starting to learn how to be an Alpha when his parents died. I don't think you should compare yourself to others. Your situation and theirs are different in any number of ways. I think what

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you should focus on is taking day at a time. Get through each **day**. Accomplish the goals you set for yourself or that we set together **and** start finding ways to succeed again. Then, one day, you'll realize **that** you're going through the motions without having to think about them and you'll realize that your grief, while it will always be there, doesn't have the hold on you that it has now."

He finally looks up at me. "How do you know all of this?"

I shrug and take a sip of my whiskey. My mom says I learned this behavior from my father. I use my drink to give me a minute to collect my thoughts. After she pointed it out to me, I realized she was right.

“I am lucky to have come from two very intelligent, very passionate Alphas. They not only raised me to be the Alpha I am today, but they also raised me to become the leader that I became at the Academy. Even with all of that, the Academy was hard, really hard. It breaks you down physically, mentally, and emotionally. But then it builds you back up again, stronger than you were before. I say that because a lot of what I learned, of who I am today, is because of my time at the Academy. It’s hard to explain it unless you’ve lived through it and in two years, you and I will hopefully be sitting here talking about how different you are after you return from the Academy.”

He takes a tentative sip of the whiskey. “This is better,” he says, once he swallows it down.

“My mother would agree with you.”

“You want Enya to go to the Academy, don’t you?” he asks.

“I do, for more reasons than one. I’m not sure how much she’ll let me in over the next few months, but at the Academy, like I said, they take you down to your core. It would give her a chance to work through her grief over the death of your parents. Enya seems like she will be a tough nut to crack. I’m not sure she’ll trust me enough to let me help

her. If I can get her to agree to go to the Academy, she won’t have a choice.”

“How long before she has to make a decision?” he asks.

“We have some time. I won’t rush her decision, but I am going to strongly encourage her to attend.”

He finishes his drink then stands. “I like the idea of sitting and talking every night. I don’t know if it will help me to sleep, but I do feel more calm than I have lately. Thank you, Christian.”

“You’re welcome. We’re going to get through this, Shane. We’ll do it together. I won’t let you fail,” I tell him sincerely.

“I know you won’t. I can already tell you’re a man of your word.”

“That I am,” I say. “Good night.”

“Good night,” he says before walking out.

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Once he's gone, I finish my drink then head outside. I want to see how the patrols are running before I go to bed. I strip down and shift, opening my senses before racing in the direction that I hear, smell, and sense the pack running.

I cut them off, catching up to them quickly. When I get close, I open the mind link and let them know it's me who is coming up so quickly on their tail.

'Any problems?' I ask, my wolf falling into step with theirs.

'No Alpha,' comes the reply from the patrol leader.

'No hints of anyone scouting around, possibly planning another attack?'

'No, Alpha.'

I run the patrol route with them twice around the perimeter, making sure I don't smell anything out of the ordinary either before I head back to the packhouse. When I get there, I shift and pull my clothes on quickly before heading back inside.

It's late and the packhouse is quiet. I open my senses again, listening to the sounds around me. I hear snoring, love-making, pups fussing, and there, almost so quiet I can't hear it, is someone's muffled crying.

I focus on the presence, not pushing into their mind and I realize it's Enya. I jog up the stairs quickly, something pulling me to her, wanting to ease the hurt that I feel inside her. It's there during the day, but now, she's finally letting it out and she's alone. No one feeling this much

grief should be alone.

When I get to her room, I don't knock, I just step into her room. She's struggling so hard to stay quiet that she doesn't even hear me. I quickly scoop her into my arms, telling her that she's not alone and she's safe. Then she curls into me and lets all her pent-up grief go.

I hold her as her tears soak my shirt, as she presses her mouth against my chest to hide the sound of her agonized sobs while I gently rock her back and forth, holding her tightly as her body convulses with the strength of her grief.

I know people grieve differently. I just told Shane that earlier this evening. But there's something in the sound of Enya's sobs that makes my heart feel like it's tearing in two.

When her tears finally stop, she continues to periodically gasp for breath as her body struggles to regain composure after the release of so much pain.

“I’m sorry,” she whispers, still pressed against my chest.

“You have nothing to apologize for,” I murmur softly,, still rocking her.

She nods against my chest but doesn’t say anymore.

Eventually, I feel her body begin to relax and when her hand finally unclenches from my shirt, sliding down my chest, I look and realize she’s cried herself to sleep.

Rather than putting her bed right away, I continue holding her, wanting her to know, even in sleep, that I’m here and she’s not alone.

When her body feels like dead weight in my arms, I know that she’s deeply asleep. I stand and take her to her bed, pulling the blanket and sheets down before laying her on the bed. I pull the sheets and blanket

up over her, then I kiss her forehead, lingering as I breathe in her light floral scent. It’s faint enough that it draws me in. I want to get closer so I can breathe in more of her scent.

Rather than following that instinct, I stand, making sure she looks comfortable. Then I leave her room, closing the door behind me before heading to my room. When I pass Shane’s room, I listen for a moment, hearing his heavy breathing before going to my room, showering and finally crawling into bed.

All-in-all, I think my first day here was a success.

Enya

I wake up feeling disoriented. I’m in my bed with no recollection of how I got here. That is, until I smell Christian’s scent on my clothes. Then, last night comes rushing back and my cheeks flame with embarrassment that I broke down in his arms.

I get up and get ready for warrior training, wondering if he’ll say something to me about last night. When I get downstairs, he’s already outside ready to start warrior training.

“Good morning. Did you sleep well?” he asks me.

Actually, I slept better than I have in a couple of weeks.

“I slept okay, thank you. How about you? Did you sleep well your first night in a new place?” I ask him, quickly turning the conversation away from me. I’m already feeling vulnerable after last night.

“It always takes a couple of days to adjust when you’re in a new bed, you know?” he asks.

No, I don’t know. I’ve only ever slept in my bed.

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“I’ll take your word for it,” I say to him as Shane comes jogging up.

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“Good morning,” he says. He looks well rested too.

“How did you sleep?” Christian asks him.

“Better, thank you. I think your idea of us talking at night is a good one,” he says.

When did he have time to talk to Shane? He was busy holding me while I cried and then apparently putting me to bed when I fell asleep. How the hell is he keeping up with all of this?

“Hey, Alpha, are you going to run patrols with us again today?” a warrior, Reuben, asks him.

“You ran patrols?” Shane asks him before I can.

“I did, and if you never have, we should talk about that,” he says before turning to Reuben.

“I’m not sure I’ll have time today, but when I do, I will be again,” Christian says to him.

He talked to Shane, ran patrols, and held me while I cried? All after arriving, taking down our Beta and several warriors, meeting with me and Shane, officially taking over as Alpha of the pack, re-writing patrol schedules, and working with Shane in my father’s old office? Did he clone himself?

He tilts his head at me. “What’s that look?”

“How did you do all of that in one day?”

“It was a busy day; I’ll give you that. But it’s better to put the work in on the front end and then let everything run smoothly afterward,” he says. Then he turns to the warriors and claps his hands.

“Alright everyone, let’s begin. I haven’t had a chance to talk to Alpha Shane yet about how you practice in warrior training, but one thing I do know is that your pack attacks first and asks questions later. That’s rarely a good strategy. You always want to know who you’re attacking before you attack them, so things like what happened to your other warriors don’t happen again.”

I look around seeing that everyone is watching Christian with rapt attention. One day. One flipping day and he’s earned the pack’s respect.

“Your previous Gamma, Braden, has been promoted to Beta. Your previous Beta, Dorian has been demoted, although he doesn’t yet know that. What I intend to do this week, along with Alpha Shane and Beta Braden, is test your skills. I need a baseline of your abilities before we can begin making you into the powerful fighters I intend to turn you into,” he says.

“No offense, Alpha, but if you haven’t seen us fight, how do you know that we aren’t already powerful fighters?” another warrior, Judith, asks.

“Because I took down your previous Beta and five of your warriors in less than five minutes without breaking a sweat,” he replies.

The warriors all murmur their agreement.

“Pair up, I’m going to have Alpha Shane and Beta Braden assessing your skills today and tomorrow we’ll start learning some new techniques,” he says. He turns to talk to Braden and Shane, as I turn to find a sparring partner. Lately, I’ve been sparring with Shane, so I’m not sure who will be willing to pair with me today.

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“Enya,” Christian calls out to me. I look at him and he crooks his finger at me.

I walk over as Shane and Braden begin walking through the warriors.

“You’re with me today,” Christian says.

“Why?” I ask him.

“Shane and Braden are going to walk around and begin their assessments of the warriors for me, then they’ll start sparring together. While they do that, I want to assess your skills. As an Alpha female, you should be stronger than the warriors here. Who do you normally spar with?”

“Shane.”

“Right, since he’s busy, you get me,” he says, smiling. “You take offense and don’t hold back,” he says, taking a defensive stance.

I look around, watching as Braden and Shane begin working with warriors, then I turn and look back at Christian.

He raises an eyebrow at me as if asking what the hold up is. I sigh and get into my fighting stance. I may not have planned to go to the Academy, but Lunas need to know how to fight too. My father has been training me since I got my wolf so I feel confident that I can hold my own against Christian. I’m still feeling vulnerable because of last night so it’s important for me to show him that I know how to fight.

He said not to hold back, so I don’t. I go at him hard, throwing a jab that he blocks, an uppercut that he dodges and then swinging my leg around going for his head. He ducks but as I spin, he wraps his arms around me, pinning my back to his chest.

“You’re fast, that’s good. Use the strengths that you have,” he says

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before releasing me.

“I know,” I say defensively. No one has ever caught me as I was spinning. Most warriors are usually on the ground from my foot connecting with their head.

But not Christian.

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“Your speed and agility are your two greatest assets against my strength, use them.”

I step back, wanting to impress him. I may only be a she-wolf but I’m a strong Alpha female.

I go at him again. And again. And again. Each time he blocks, swerves, ducks, or leaps away from my hits and kicks. Each time he captures me, pinning me against his body, telling me I’m doing well.

“Except I’m not doing well, am I?” I finally snap when he releases me for the umpteenth time.

“Why do you say that?” he asks me.

“You’ve captured me each time I’ve attacked you. You haven’t even come at me but I’m pretty sure you could take me down before I even knew you were about to strike,” I say, completely frustrated.

“Actually, I doubt that’s true. My biggest competitors are always the she-wolves. I’m fast, but my larger build keeps me from being as agile and fast as most she-wolves. The only Alphas to take me down at the Academy were she-wolves. Why? Because they use their strengths against me. If I could land a punch, it would slow them down enough for me to take them down. But that was a big ‘if’. More often than not, they showed me my own ass. You’re letting your frustration get the

wn better of you. I’ve trained in ways that you haven’t. That doesn’t make you less of a fighter. It just means that I’m going to make you a better fighter by drawing on your strengths.”

cross my arms over my chest, still feeling defensive.

Christian narrows his eyes at me then quick as a snake, he punches a jab at my face.

I knock his armi away before he makes contact.

“Hey!” I snap.

He doesn’t respond, but he continues focusing on me. This time his punch is aimed at my gut. I knock it away, dancing out of his reach.

“What are you doing?” I growl.

He spins fast, his foot aimed at my head. I duck and as he spins, I punch his inner thigh with all my strength.

He grunts as I spin back up to stand, facing him.

He looks down at his inner thigh where I can see a bruise in the shape of my knuckles already forming.

“I’m not trying to make you feel inadequate in your fighting technique, Enya. I am trying to make you better, faster, and stronger. You already have great instincts. Stop fighting against me and becoming defensive. Everything I’m teaching you is meant to improve your fighting skill. Take it in, absorb it, practice it, and enhance your already incredible fighting skills,” he says, lowering his arms.

I lower my arms and stare at him. I don’t get defensive in sparring class, or I never have before. But I’ve also never felt the need to impress anyone like I feel the need to impress Christian.

“Training is over. Let’s eat and then you can show us the kitchens,” he says, gesturing for me/to head inside ahead of him.

I look around and realize that most of the other warriors are already gone. Shane is watching me with a frown on his face. He knows I don’t

get defensive, and yet I did.

“Sorry about today,” I say to Christian.

“No need to apologize. I’ll be working with others tomorrow, but I’d like you to practice what we talked about today with your partner tomorrow.

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“Okay,” I say, heading inside. Shane falls into step beside me.

“Enya, what is up with you?” he asks.

I shrug, looking over my shoulder at Christian who is talking to Braden.

It’s a good question. What is up with me? Why is this man under my skin, making me feel flustered, like a silly schoolgirl who wants to impress the new, cute boy in school? That’s never been who I am. I’ve never cared about wanting to impress anyone before.

So, what is it about Christian that is stirring all these new and uncomfortable emotions inside of me?

Enya

I have to say, it feels good to be able to answer all of Christian's questions without feeling like I'm stuttering or stupid. My mother trained me on how to be a great Luna, so here in the kitchens, I know more than anyone else in the pack.

I can tell that Christian is surprised and pleased with my knowledge. I wish I knew why his impression of me matters so much, but I does. So, I show off more than I planned to. However, no matter what I show him, he seems interested and asks pertinent questions.

When I show him how we decide on the meals for each week, I ask

him if he has any special dishes that he would like for us to prepare.

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"Whatever you make is fine, I'm sure. Like most wolves, I like a lot of meat in my diet, but it looks like you have a wide variety of beef, chicken, pork, and fish on the menu."

"Yes, we try to maintain a variety of dishes so our pack doesn't get bored with their food. Our omegas are exceptional cooks, if you haven't noticed," I say, smiling at them. I can feel their happiness that I not only recognized them but complimented them. It's important as an Alpha and a Luna to make sure your omegas are respected and kept safe. But keeping them happy is just as important in my opinion.

Christian asks specific questions, but Shane and Braden are pretty quiet, absorbing everything I'm telling them. When I take them back to the small office where my mother and now I maintain the records for bookkeeping, Christian steps up, looking over the logs.

"This is very detailed," he says, glancing up at me.

"My mother said it was important to ensure that everything was accounted for. You don't want unexpected expenses that might cause problems in the pack."

"A couple of missed food items wouldn't cause that much of a problem, would it?" Shane asks.

"Not once or twice," Christian says distractedly, still looking at the ledger. In this small space, he's standing very close to me and I can once again feel the heat of his body. It's making my head spin and it's very distracting.

"But if it happens every week," Christian says, looking up at Shane.

“Say fifty dollars this week, a hundred next week, and so on, it **could** begin to cause problems financially and believe me, **finding the** problem after it becomes a problem is a lot harder than avoiding **one to** begin with.”

“May I?” Shane asks, and Christian pushes the ledger closer to him so he can look it over.

“Damn, sis. I had no idea you did all of this,” he says, smiling proudly

at me.

I shrug. “As I said, it’s how Mom taught me.”

The thought of never walking into this room and seeing my mother bent over this ledger again suddenly sends a wave of sadness through me. I feel a large, warm hand take mine and I look up to see Christian watching me. He squeezes my hand, just enough to let me know I’m not alone, then releases it. I’m not sure how I know that’s what he was trying to impart to me, but it makes me feel better even if his touch caused me to blush horribly.

Shane steps back and lets Braden see the ledger as well. I turn, grabbing this week’s invoice and I hand it to Christian.

“Perfect timing, Shane, are you ready to start looking over your pack’s finances?” Christian asks him.

“Now that we have the code to the safe, we should be able to access everything we need,” he says.

Christian turns back to me. “When do you submit these? And can you send them electronically?” he says, holding up the invoice.

“We usually submit them on Sundays since Saturday is the meal planning day and Sunday is the food buying day. And I used to send them electronically, but Beta Dorian requested them to be handwritten.

Sending electronically is much easier and faster.”

“Perfect. Let’s go back to electronic submissions. Is there a system that you use that your father would go into to view the invoices?”

“Yes, I can show you later if you need me to. I know the site, his username and password.”

“That would be very helpful. Why don’t you give Shane and I a couple of hours to get into the finances and then come join us,” he says.

“I can bring you lunch, and we can eat while we go through it, unless you want to eat with the pack,” I tell him.

“No, let’s do that. We can eat with the pack tonight. Oh, and did you keep a record of the paper invoices in case I can’t find them from the last couple of weeks?” he asks.

“They’re all in the system. I figured that eventually Shane would want things back the way they were, so I was doing them in both places,” I tell him.

“Beautiful and intelligent. We’ll see you in a couple of hours,” he says, thankfully turning away as my cheeks heat from his praise.

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Why does this man have such a profound effect on me? He can calm me with a touch and send flames burning through my body with a look.

After they leave, I settle myself and get back to work. Before I know it, it’s time for lunch.

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I grab three trays and head to my father’s old office. The door is closed and I’m about to knock before walking in when I hear Christian talking.

“You’ll get there, Shane. No one expects you to know everything today. I promise I won’t let you fail. We have a year and a half before you go to the Academy and after that, if you need me to stay on as a consultant or a mentor, I would be happy to do it.”

“It just ... it all seems so overwhelming,” Shane says. Even through the door, I can hear how defeated he sounds.

“It’s going to feel overwhelming, probably for a while. You just lost your parents, your Beta was turning the pack against you, you and your sister are both underage, and now, we’re adding pack management to your already overwhelmed mind. Let’s take a break. Enya should be here soon with lunch anyway. After lunch, we’ll go spar, let you work out some frustrated energy and if you’re ready and able after dinner, we’ll come back to it. If not, we’ll run patrols. Then, we’ll sit and talk, like we did last night. Okay?” Christian says.

“I’m really glad you’re here,” Shane says, and I can hear the relief in his voice. “I don’t think ... no, I know I couldn’t have done this without your support.”

“And you were smart enough to contact the Council for help. It takes a strong person, a strong Alpha, to recognize that they need help and to ask for it. I promise, I won’t let you fail,” Christian says, just as I feel him open up the mind link to me.

‘Hey, just wanted an approximate timeframe on lunch,’ he says.

knock on the door. ‘It’s here.’

“Perfect timing,” I hear him say. Rather than walking in, I wait for **him** to open the door, since I know my brother will want to collect himself before seeing me.

Christian opens the door and immediately takes the tray from my arms. “Something smells good,” he says, stepping aside to let me in.

“French dip sandwiches with bread made fresh by our omegas, and homemade chips,” I say.

“Ahh, my favorite,” Shane says, walking over. “Thanks, sis.”

“Nothing but the best for my favorite brother,” I tell him, making him chuckle.

Rather than putting me straight to work, Christian has the three of us sit at the table.

“So, I haven’t had a lot of time to talk to either of you casually like this. I thought we could take some time now to get to know each other. Tell me about yourselves,” he says.

“What do you want to know?” I ask him, frowning as I watch Shane bite into a quarter of the sandwich.

“What?” he asks with his mouth full of food.

I just shake my head at him and focus on my own food.

“What do you like to do in your spare time?” Christian asks.

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“Well, I don’t have much of that these days, but I like to take my out for runs and I like to read at night. It helps me to quiet my mind before I go to sleep,” I say. Shane snorts.

Christian turns to him. “What’s funny about that?”

“The part about it quieting her mind. Enya has been known to **stay up** half the night finishing a book then suffering for it during sparring practice the next day,” Shane says, grinning at me.

“Well, some books are too good to put down,” I say, scowling at him.

“Yeah, I know all about THOSE books,” he says, making me blush.

Christian glances at me but thankfully doesn't ask any more about my choice of books. So what if I like steamy novels? It's not like I have any other experience or knowledge.

"Maybe we can take our wolves for a run together in the next couple of days. I'd like to see your wolf, be able to recognize her by sight," he

says.

"Good luck keeping up with my sister. She's fast," Shane says proudly.

"That doesn't surprise me. She's fast in warrior training too," Christian says, smiling at me.

My cheeks flame again at the praise, and I look down, focusing on my food.

"What about you, Shane?" Christian asks, redirecting the conversation.

I listen, making comments here and there, but as usual when I'm around Christian, I'm completely flustered.

When my brother is done, I look at Christian.

"What about you, Christian? What do you do in your spare time?" I ask him.

"Well, I haven't had any spare time in the last six months. I've only

been out of the Academy for a couple of weeks and the Academy **keeps** you very busy. Any free time you have there is usually taken up with studying," he says.

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Shane leans forward excitedly. "Will you tell us about the Academy? What's it like? What classes did you take?"

"Well, the courses you will take would be prescribed as an incoming Alpha, but for the rest of us, we get to decide what classes we

want to take, or what direction we want to take. I chose the management route, but there are other routes such as finance, warrior's training, things like that," Christian says, looking at me. "Something for you to consider, Enya."

Christian

I'm so glad that Shane asked about the Academy in front of Enya. I want her to hear what she could do and learn if she goes. I'm pretty sure he did it on purpose, but I also know that he's as excited about going to the Academy as Sebastiana is.

"Well, the most intense class is the one that all Alphas choose to take, the sparring class. No matter how good you are or think you are, you become an infinitely stronger and smarter fighter in that class."

"That was obvious in how you took out Dorian and five of my warriors," Shane says.

"Exactly. It's also why I'm working with you, Enya, to become stronger and faster and why I'll be working with you, Shane, and your warriors to do the same."

"I can't wait to spar with you later," Shane says excitedly.

"Don't get too excited. It gets frustrating quickly when he defeats **you** over and over again," Enya grumbles.

"Imagine how good it will feel when you defeat me," I tell her, holding her gaze as she blushes.

My fingers twitch with my desire to brush my knuckles over that blush, to feel the heat of her skin against my hand. I pull my hands off the table and into my lap, fisting them on my thighs to keep from doing just that while I refocus on the conversation.

"There's a pack management class. You'll take that class, Shane. There's also one for Alphas who aren't taking over a pack. It teaches us ways to get into a pack, like now, take over and ensure that we are managing the pack properly and in the way that the current or incoming Alpha would like it to be handled."

"That sounds like a class I really need," Shane says.

"All new Alphas do. But I plan to have you in good shape to ace that class before you go to the Academy. They also have a finance class taught by a really great instructor there. He went to the Academy when my mother did. Alpha Ezra is brilliant when it comes to managing finances and getting packs out of financial trouble. My parents told me he was best in his year in finance and I can understand why.

"I could use that class too," Shane says.

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"Yep, it's part of the primary Alpha curriculum. There's also a sensory class, that I bet you'd really enjoy, Enya," I tell her.

“Why is that?” she asks.

“I’ve seen you take deep breaths of air when you walk outside. Is scent your primary sense?” I ask her.

“Yes,” she says.

“Imagine being in a class of your peers and having to expand your senses to find whatever your instructor has decided you need to find that day. First, it’s incredibly fun to use your senses for a treasure hunt like that, but it’s also a competition to see who will be the first Alpha with that enhanced sense to find it. It draws the competitive nature out of all of us,” I say, grinning as I remember my own joy at taking that class.

“That does sound fun,” she says. At least she agreed even if her tone is begrudging.

“There’s also a communication class which is required for incoming Alphas, but I’d recommend it for everyone. It teaches you many different skills for listening and communicating with others.”

“Is that how you became so focused when someone is talking to you?” Shane asks. “You make it seem like there’s no one else in the world at that moment.”

“Yes. I was lucky enough to have my parents who also taught me that skill, but the Academy hones those skills. There’s also Dealing with Crisis for incoming Alphas. One of the most important classes in my opinion. It’s also a strongly recommended class for those of us who intend to help other Alphas in need. So, when you walk into a situation like I did yesterday, you can assess and de-escalate quickly. But there are other types of crises and it’s the class where each Alpha ends up dealing with their own issues, using your classmates’ strengths to help you work through it. It’s very intense and when you leave the Academy, you leave with lifetime friends. You learn very personal and private things about them, and they learn those same things about you. Working through them together builds bonds that are similar in strength to pack bonds.”

“That sounds... really intense,” Shane says.

“It is. But again, the Academy does a great job of helping you work through it and my Uncle Dane alternates between teaching the Communication class and the Dealing with Crisis class. He’s incredible and I’m not just saying that because he’s my uncle.”

Shane sits back, looking thoughtful. Enya also looks like she’s at least hearing what I’m telling her. I hope she thinks about it, and I can keep nudging her towards going.

“Oh, and there’s a sex class,” I say.

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"I'm sorry, what?" Enya asks, the blush flushing her cheeks again.

"Why is there a sex class?" Shane asks.

"Because Alphas should be the best at everything. You go before you turn eighteen so there's no concern about meeting your mate mid-year and causing problems."

"What do they teach you?" Enya asks, frowning.

"Probably how to do all those things you read about in those steamy books that keep you up at night," Shane says, teasing her. The blush on her cheeks goes from pink to red very quickly.

"Well, I don't know what's in your books, but the class teaches you how to please your partner. No two people are the same and learning how to pleasure your partner and make him or her orgasm with the best, strongest orgasm of their lives is the goal. Once you figure out how to give them that level of orgasm, then it's a small step to figuring out how to make them come as many times as you want them too."

"As many times..." Enya says, her eyes wide.

"How many times did you make your partner come?" Shane asks.

"That is between me and my partner. However, I will say that she had nothing but good things to say about me and both of us won points for the highest number of orgasms achieved in one sitting," I say, remembering Talia telling me I'd ruined her for other men. She and I made good partners/ She had been my partner, and I had been hers for her sex class. Best fucking blow job of my life.

But it was more than that. We both knew the boundaries of the class and we became friends, really good friends, over the semester.

"What was her name?" Enya asks, snapping me out of the memory. If I didn't know better, I'd say there was a bit of jealousy in Enya's question.

"Talia. She ranked fifth on the leaderboard. She's a damn fine Alpha," I say.

“Maybe she’s your mate,” Enya says. I tilt my head, wondering at the change in her tone. I swear she sounds jealous, but about what? Me. having sex or her not ever having had sex?

“No, she’s not. We both turned eighteen in the last week of class. She’s a great woman, but she’s not for me.”

“Is it weird? Having sex with a stranger that you then take classes with?” Shane asks.

“Yes and no. It depends on your partner and if they make it weird. There are classes for men and women. Talia and I chose to be partners for each other, but that’s not a requirement. If you follow the guidelines laid out by the Academy and you remain respectful, you can develop a close friendship with your partner. That’s what happened with Talia and I.”

“Do you keep in touch with her?” Enya asks.

“I haven’t talked to her since she got off the Train. That’s the only way to and from the Academy. But we were both looking for work and now I’m here. I’m sure we’ll talk soon.”

“Hmm,” she says, not meeting my eyes.

I narrow my eyes at her, but since Shane is here, I don’t want to push

her too hard about what’s bothering her.

“So, ready to show us this ordering system?” I ask her.

“Yeah, let’s do that,” she says, plastering a fake smile on her face.

I raise an eyebrow at her demeanor, but she ignores me. I’ll have to make time to speak to Enya about what this is about. I don’t want any festering negativity between us. I’m trying to build trust and respect and whatever this is will definitely get in the way of that.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 219[601 words]

Enya

Of course there’s a sex class. Why wouldn’t Mr. Numero Uno have been the best in his class? Obviously his ‘partner’, Talia, was just as fantastic in the sack as he is.

Does the man not have a single flaw? It’s maddening.

no, it's Shane's office now. I After leaving my father's old office... need to start calling it that. After leaving Shane's office, I can't get the mental image of Christian doing to me all the things I've read about in my books. What would that even feel like?

I'll tell you what it feels like. It feels like delicious sin just thinking about it. I go up to my room and when I look out the window, I see Christian and Shane heading out toward the forest. I know Christian is taking him to spar away from the pack while he tests his strengths and weaknesses.

I remember the feel of Christian's body against mine this morning. He was wearing a shirt, but I could feel every muscle of his body against mine each time he pinned me against him. What would it feel like to be able to run my hands over his muscular chest and abs?

As if of their own accord, my hand comes up to my chest, gently running over my collarbone and wandering lower. I watch Christian and Shane disappear into the forest as my hand drifts lower.

What would it feel like to have those large, muscular hands roaming over my naked body I close my eyes as my hand slides lower. What would it feel like to have his body pressed behind me, his arm wrapped

around me, holding me steady while his fingers explored my body?

With my eyes closed. I remember the heat of his body against mine. feel his strong arm holding me tightly against him, feel his breath against my neck, making my body shiver.

I sit in the chair he held me in last night while I cried. His scent still faintly lingers on the cushions. It makes my heart rate increase as I spread my legs, sliding my hands inside my pants and panties. I gasp when I feel how wet I am just thinking about him.

I turn my head, taking a deeper breath of his scent as I begin rubbing my clit, imagining that it's him. I can feel my nipples hardening inside my bra and I slide my free hand inside my shirt, pushing my bra up and moaning as I gently pinch my nipple between my finger and thumb.

In my books, men enjoy sucking on a woman's nipples and I imagine Christian's warm mouth on me, sucking my nipple while he rubs my clit. I whimper as my hips buck, thinking about how much I want that, how much I want to feel what it's like, not just to be with a man, but to be with him. To be with Christian.

I think about those eyes, those intense blue-grey eyes, watching me as he kisses his way down my stomach. Men like to taste their women, at least in my books. The moment I think about Christian's mouth sucking down on me, an unexpected and powerful orgasm rips through

1. me.

I slap a hand over my mouth, covering the cry of pleasure as my body jerks. But I don't stop. Christian said that he could give a woman more than one orgasm, and I want more. So I continue to think about his eyes on me while he licks and sucks on my clit, moaning as he tastes

1. me.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 220[600 words]

Only a couple of moments later, I'm coming again and then once more before I finally sit back, slowly bringing myself down. I open my eyes, watching the forest where I last saw Christian.

I've never come so hard before, never come three times one after the other. I grunt as I throw my head back against the chair. It can only mean one thing.

I am totally and completely attracted to Christian. I've never felt this way about someone before but, of course, when I find someone who I'm attracted to, it has to be the man who is my guardian and ward. And knowing Mr. Perfect, because he's my guardian, he won't lay a finger

on me.

Do I really want him to? The answer comes hard and fast into my mind. Yes. Yes, I do.

As I sit there, I see Christian and Shane walking out of the forest. They have their shirts off and they're laughing, shoving each other good-naturedly as they return to the packhouse.

My fingers twitch to touch myself again as I look over Christian's hard body, glistening with the sweat of his workout. When my eyes finally lift to his face, I realize he's watching me as he walks back.

I jolt, jumping up and rushing to my bathroom to wash off the evidence of my release. Holy mother Moon Goddess! Did I have the link open?

As soon as I think it, I feel his mind brush against mine like a gentle caress. Thank the goddess I didn't have the link open! But I swear, Christian looked like he knew EXACTLY what I was doing in my

room.

I've just finished washing my arousal off of my legs and scrubbing **my** fingers to get the scent off of them when there's a knock at the **door**.

When I open it, Christian is standing there. His foresty masculine scent is amplified by having just come from the forest and the sweat that is still glistening on his body. I have a nearly irresistible urge to lean over and lick a bead of sweat from his throat.

"Yes?" I squeak.

I see his nostrils flare. Please, please, please don't let him smell what I was doing in here.

"I wanted to check on you. I saw you in the window. Are you okay?" he asks.

"I'm good. I was just getting ready to head downstairs to check on dinner. How was sparring?" I ask him, stepping out of the room.

It was a mistake. In an effort to close my door and any possible hint of what I was just doing in my room, I moved close enough to feel the heat of Christian's skin against/mine, sending a fresh wave of desire through my body.

He takes my chin between his thumb and forefinger, tilting my face up to his. He searches my face, looking for something.

"I don't want you to suffer in your grief alone. You don't need to anymore. I understand why you did before, but when you feel yourself falling apart,

I'd like for you to seek me out. I know we're still building a relationship and trust, but I hope after last night you know I'll be

there for you, whatever you need," he says, making my cheeks flame with the embarrassment of the memory.

What I need at the moment isn't him holding me while I cry. I need

him to ease the ache that has already started building in me just from being this close to him. I shift, pressing my legs together tightly.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 221[589 words]

"Yep," I say again.

He smiles and releases my chin. "Sparring was good. Shane is a strong fighter, like you."

"Yes, he is," I say, finally feeling like I can say something meaningful.

you

“I’m going to shower then I’ll be down for dinner. Why don’t with me tonight. I’ll guide you through conversing with the pack during mealtimes.”

sit

I should say no. I should say that I can figure it out on my own. Instead, I just blurt out my agreement.

“Perfect, I’ll see you downstairs in about twenty minutes,” he says.

“See you then,” I say, turning and forcing myself not to rush down the stairs to get away from this man before he can smell my arousal.

How the heck am I going to get through dinner without him smelling me?

Christian

After a great sparring session with Shane, I’d seen Enya sitting in the same chair that I found her crying in last night as we returned to the packhouse. I wanted to talk with her anyway, but now I’m worried that she might be up there crying alone again.

“It won’t be long before I’m taking you down, Christian,” Shane says good-naturedly. He, unlike Enya, had taken full advantage of our sparring session. Each time I caught him or pinned him, he’d asked me

to show him how I did it and how to get out of it. He’s an excellent warrior and a sponge, soaking in everything I’m teaching him.

“You’re right about that. Soon, I’ll have to pull out all the stops to keep you from defeating me,” I tell him as we make our way upstairs. I was right to get him out of the office. Whether he was just overwhelmed by all the information or if being in his father’s office for so many hours had been too much, getting outside and working off his energy has helped him to bounce back after our talk this morning.

“I’ll see you after dinner. Are we meeting again or running patrols?” he asks. Since I’m not sure if I’ll be able to speak to Enya now about what happened earlier, and I know we still need to deal with the group in the cells tonight, I decide that we’ll run patrols.

“I’m going to check in with Enya. I need to talk to her. If I can’t do that now, I’ll do it after dinner, so let’s plan to run patrols,” I tell him.

“Great. See you downstairs,” he says, going into his room. I turn and knock on Enya’s door.

The moment she opens it, I can smell it. Her arousal. It's so unexpected that all thoughts of everything else leave my mind as my body responds to her light floral scent. It takes all of my training not to close my eyes and take a deep breath as my mouth waters, and my cock stiffens in my shorts. My brain flashes an image of me buried between her thighs, breathing in her scent as I devour her, making her scream in pleasure.

I force those thoughts aside. "I wanted to check on you." That's what I was doing, right?

Instead of stepping back into her room, she steps forward, her body lightly brushing against mine. Thankfully she's too close to see my cock go fully erect inside my shorts. But if she takes one step closer, she'll be able to feel it against her belly. The thought has my wayward

dick twitching as if it's trying to touch her.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 222[610 words]

She tells me she's on her way to check on dinner and asks about sparring. Rather than answer, I take her chin in between my fingers. The desire to kiss her is so strong I can barely contain myself.

Thankfully, I don't see any tear streaks on her face. So, she wasn't crying, she was masturbating. Who was she thinking about when she was touching herself?

The thought sends a wave of possessiveness flowing through me. It shouldn't matter if she's touching herself, thinking about another man. But it does.

Rather than dwell on that, I tell her that I want her to seek me out if she feels alone and sad. I want to be the one to hold her. I want to be the one she comes to if she's scared or lonely. And what I desperately want is to show her that I can ease that ache inside her in ways that she can't imagine. I want to fulfill all her needs.

I'm not sure what she sees on my face, but her beautiful sage-green eyes are wide, and her cheeks are flushed. Once again, I rein myself in.

"Sparring was good," I say, putting us back on neutral ground. I watch her body relax as she, too, focuses on an easier conversation.

I'm not used to wanting someone like this, so I tell her I want her to sit with me at dinner. I know it's not necessary. I watched Enya interact with the omegas this morning. She's a natural with them. But I want to spend more time with her.

After telling her that I'll meet her after I shower, I watch her walk off, then head to my room.

I turn the shower tap to cold, knowing that no amount of cold water is going to ease the ache in my cock. But hopefully by taking care of myself and doing it in cold water, I'll be able to sit beside Enya at dinner and not have to deal with another hard on.

I close my eyes as I begin stroking myself. I think of those big green eyes, watching me as I slide in and out of her. I know she's never been with a man, so she'd be fucking tight. I'd have to move slow, take my time. I clench my fist tighter around my cock and slow my movements, thinking of that blush creeping across her cheeks as I begin to bring her up to the peak of pleasure.

I can almost hear the sounds of her whimpers and moans and when my mind conjures her crying out with my name on her lips, I explode, growling as my release comes hard and fast. I force myself to continue at the slow pace that she would need, milking my cock while I jerk from the force of my orgasm.

When I finally come down, I lean my head back, letting the cold water cool the heat of my desire for Enya. What is it about her that has me on the verge of losing control all the time?

She's beautiful, obviously. She's intelligent. She's strong. She's kind. She's loving. She's the complete package. She's perfect.

I finish showering, then quickly get dressed before heading downstairs. I can hear the warriors already in the dining hall and when I approach, I see Enya waiting for me.

"I wasn't sure where you wanted to sit," she says.

I look around, then turn back to her. "Who do you think could benefit the most from spending time with us?" I ask, knowing she's got a good idea of what's going on in the pack.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 223[716 words]

She looks around, assessing. "That

group with Gabe," she says, making me smile. It's exactly what I was thinking. They are the ones who are

still exhibiting the most discontent in the pack.

"Shall we?" I ask, gesturing for her to proceed me.

The group looks up as we approach. "Mind if we join you?" I ask.

*

The group looks between me and Enya before one of them, the leader I'm guessing, shrugs. "It's your pack, Alpha."

"Temporarily," I say, waiting for the group to make room, then pulling over two chairs. I get Enya seated, then sit beside her.

"When are you planning to let the warriors out of the cells, Alpha," another warrior asks.

"Alpha Shane and I are meeting with them this evening," I say as the omegas bring our plates to the table.

"Thank you, Jolie," Enya says, smiling at the omega.

"Yes, thank you, Jolie," I say, making the omega blush.

"You're welcome, Alphas," she says before heading back to the kitchen.

"Beta Dorian isn't going to like being demoted," one of the warriors says.

"He's already been demoted, Steven. Whether he likes it or not, he wasn't acting as a Beta should. No Beta worth his title would have

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allowed the insolence from this group that you were all allowed, even if you are his brother," she says.

I'm not sure if she's always this confident, or if having me at her side is making her more confident, but I like that she's not taking any crap from the group. I also make a mental note that Steven is Dorian's brother, obviously a younger brother since he didn't have the Beta position.

"You've got a smart mouth, pup," Steven growls.

"Watch yourself," I snarl, leaning forward and letting my aura out. "Or you'll find yourself in a cell beside your brother. I won't tolerate anyone disrespecting others in this pack, especially the Alpha heirs. I was very clear yesterday. Get in line or get out."

I watch as everyone at the table lifts their neck in submission except for Enya.

"I've lost my appetite," Steven says, pushing away from the table and standing. I tighten my aura around him, forcing him to stay in place.

"Tell me you understand what I just said," I growl slowly, standing up to face him.

I see Enya looking around the room which has gone completely silent.

I feel Shane and Beta Braden stand up from the tables they're sitting at, ready if something happens.

"I understand," he spits out.

"If we have to have this conversation again, it won't end well for you. Got it?" I ask, my voice deadly calm.

"Got it," he says. I hold him a moment longer, then release him.

"Anyone else have a problem?" I ask them.

"No, Alpha," they say.

"Good," I say, sitting back down.

'Sorry, I shouldn't have suggested we sit here,' Enya says in the mind link.

"This is exactly where we needed to sit. You have great instincts," I tell her before starting conversations with the warriors at the table.

Tonight's conversation isn't nearly as easy as this morning's, but to their credit, the warriors do begin talking to us and telling me about themselves.

When dinner is over, I thank the group for talking to us, then turn to Enya.

"I need to speak with you, then I need to go check on our folks in the cells," I tell her.

She frowns. "Alright."

Chapter 24

I stay standing, watching him walk away before turning **to the others**.

"Anyone else have a problem?" I ask them.

"No, Alpha," they say.

"Good," I say, sitting back down.

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"I need to speak with you, then I need to go check on our folks in the cells," I tell her.

She frowns. "Alright."

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 224[600 words]

"How about we go to the office?" I say, waiting for her to step away from the table, then following her.

'Everything okay, Alpha?' Braden asks me in the mind link.

'Let's keep watch on that entire group. The others seemed to settle, but I don't trust Steven, especially once Dorian is out of the cells.'

'Will do.'

As we pass Shane, I let him know that I'll find him when I'm done talking with Enya. I want to know his thoughts on that group as well.

When we get to the office, I sit beside her.

"First, I meant what I said earlier. You have great instincts. We needed to be at that table. That situation was and probably still is a timebomb waiting to go off. I'll talk to Shane and I just spoke to Braden, but I need you to keep your eyes open and let me know if you see anything concerning as well."

"I can do that," she says.

"Good. Now, the reason I brought you in here is I want to talk about earlier."

"What about earlier?" she asks.

"When we were talking about the Academy over lunch, you became defensive. I'd like to know why. I don't want anything interfering with our ability to develop a strong, trusting relationship. I'd like for us to

have open and honest conversation and when something bothers **you**. I d like to get to the bottom of it so I can address it and we can move past it.”

I watch as her eyes go wide and the blush spreads across her cheeks again. Well, this should be interesting.

Enya

Shit! Shit! Shit! He wants to talk about earlier? Hell no! I’m not telling him that I was jealous of the thought of him with someone else. I’m not telling him that I’m ridiculously attracted to him! I’ve only known the man a couple of days. I’d sound like a silly schoolgirl.

“I wasn’t defensive,” I say, crossing my arms over my chest.

Dammit, my voice and my actions are at complete odds with my words. I force myself to uncross my arms.

Christian tilts his head at me. “I would like for us to be honest with each other, Enya. We can’t build trust without honesty. Telling me you weren’t defensive when you’re obviously defensive now isn’t a good way to build trust.”

Damn the man! How does know this?

But that gives me an idea, something I CAN be honest about.

I stand and begin pacing. “You want honesty?” I ask.

“Yes. We won’t be able to work through this unless you’re honest with me.”

I turn and glare at him. “Why do you have to be so perfect?”

He blinks, staring at me a moment before bursting into laughter.

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Chapter 28

“I am far from perfect, Enya.”

“You’re number one on the leaderboard at an Alpha Academy. **I may** not have been raised to go to that Academy, but I know **what that** means. It means that in the world of the best, you’re the best of the best. You’re good at EVERYTHING! You’re strong enough **to take on** six warriors without getting a wrinkle in your perfectly pressed **shirt**, you’ve somehow made Shane feel confident and excited about taking over this pack, you held me

while I cried then put me to bed, **you** were the best lover in your class ... what don't you excel at?" I ask.

"Let's break all that down, shall we? First, I'm not sure my shirt was perfectly pressed," he says, grinning at me.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 225[607 words]

We should add that he's got the sexiest smile I've ever seen to the list, but I keep my mouth shut.

He sighs. "I trained to be able to take on multiple opponents at one time. It helps that your warriors weren't working together, they were just reacting. That skill didn't come naturally for me. I had to work at it. I trained hard at the Academy to become adept at fighting multiple opponents at once. Since I didn't know what type of job I wanted when I finished the Academy, I thought it was a good idea to learn that skill in case I wanted to become an enforcer for the Council."

"But you still excelled at it, didn't you?" I ask.

"I worked extremely hard to be the best, yes. I got my ass handed to me multiple times. Each time I did, I took the lesson and learned from it, making me a better fighter. Not everyone does that which is why I was top of the class and someone else wasn't. That's also why I am working individually with you in warrior training. I want to give you that same opportunity. Learn from your mistakes and improve on your weaknesses."

Okay, when he puts it like that, it makes sense.

"Regarding Shane, having someone here who he knows is supporting him, someone he knows is going to help him succeed, is what's making him feel confident. He lost that when you lost your parents. The Council sending me here has given him that same level of support which, in turn, becomes confidence."

"I was supporting him," I say, still defensive.

"I know you were and still are. But you are also drowning in your own grief. I'm an objective party. I'm not suffering with the loss of my parents which gives me the opportunity to focus on this pack and the two of you. Both you and Shane are still struggling to process **your** loss. That's understandable. Losing two parents so suddenly must be horrifying. I know if that happened to me, if I suddenly lost both of **my** parents... well, I wouldn't be confidently standing here in front of you. You'd have someone else here helping you manage this pack while I suffered in my own grief."

I nod, looking down. He somehow makes me feel understood in ways that others don't.

"With you," he says, standing and taking a step toward me. "I don't like seeing women cry, ever. But I certainly don't like seeing a woman cry when she's lost in her grief and feels like there isn't anyone around to hold her while she cries. I was serious when I said I want you to seek me out any time you need me. I don't care if it's the middle of the night. I will hold you so you don't feel alone. You're not alone, but just like you can't always be the support that Shane needs, he can't always be the support you need either, because you're both lost in your own grief. Will you at least agree that you'll come to me if you need me? Or if I'm not close, reach out to me so I know I need to come to you?" He slides his hands down my arms as he asks, his eyes, always so intense, stay focused on me.

"Okay. You'll probably regret that. I cry almost every night," I tell him honestly.

"Then I will come check on you, every night. I will hold you, every night. I will comfort you as best I can while you work through your grief, Enya.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 226[660 words]

His words are so sincere, his eyes so truthful, that I know he means what he's saying.

He steps back and I immediately miss the heat and comfort of his touch.

"About the sex class," he says, turning and running a hand through his hair. That wayward curl falls right back into place over his forehead, as if it's the only part of his body that is defiant and it insists on remaining so out of spite.

"I want to be the best possible partner that I can be when I meet my mate. I want to know that no matter who she may have been with before me that she'll never have regrets about me being her last or question that I am her best."

Wow.

He chuckles, looking down. "My parents set a high standard, and they're not fated mates. My father's fated mate died after my half-brother was born. My mother never found hers. But you would never know it to see them together. They are so in love, and I have a much better understanding of what their love life entails now that I've been through the Academy."

He turns to look at me. "I want what my parents have. I want that kind of love and devotion from my mate and I want her to know that she'll always have that from me. I want to be her best kisser, her best lover, the best person to make her laugh, the best

person to hold her when she's down, the best person to father her pups. I never want a day in her life to go by where she questions that I'm not the most perfect man

for her. So yes, I did everything I needed to do, learned everything I possibly could in the sex class so that I can be the best possible man and lover to my mate."

This time I say it out loud.

"Wow. Set high standards much?" I say, a bit overwhelmed by his declaration. I wonder if my mate will even come close to wanting to be all those things for me.

Mo

He chuckles. "My parents taught and my sister that mates should be treasured. They are gifts sent from the Moon Goddess herself. My mother says that even though my father had a fated mate before her, she still feels that he's a gift from the Moon Goddess. She says she can't imagine him loving anyone more than he loves her. And she'll tell anyone who listens that she couldn't love anyone more than she loves my father."

"You don't seem bothered that your mate might have had other lovers. I was under the impression that Alphas wanted their mates 'pure'."

He chuckles again. "Well, that would be quite the double-standard wouldn't it? I wasn't a virgin when I went into the Academy, and I certainly wasn't one when I came out. My mother has always been very clear in her stance that double standards against women won't be tolerated in our family. She's actually the one who fought the Council to allow female Alphas to have their own sex class."

He smiles. "She won, of course. My mother is quite a force to be reckoned with."

"I'd love to meet her someday," I say, thinking about how different Christian's parents seem to my own.

"I'm sure you will. Not only will they want to come see me, but I will

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invite them to your eighteenth birthday party, along with several other important Alphas, and of course, eligible unmated Alphas," he says

"You're already planning my eighteenth birthday party?" I ask, frowning.

"It's less than a year away, Enya. Whether or not you go to the Academy, young Alphas will want to know if you are their mate."

“And what about you, Christian? How are you going to find your **mate** while you’re here babysitting me and Shane for two years.”

—

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 227[591 words]

“I’m not babysitting. I’m guiding, protecting, and supporting the two of you.”

“How are you always so confident, so controlled,” I whisper. Somehow, we’ve moved closer to each other.

“I’m not always in control. Sometimes I struggle to maintain control,” he says softly, his eyes dropping to my lips. I feel my heartbeat quicken and my mouth goes dry.

“I’ve never noticed,” I say to him. Without conscious thought, I reach up and run my fingers over Christian’s forehead, sliding the wayward lock back, only for it to fall forward again. His hair is soft, like silk.

I feel the tension between us, like electricity bouncing between our bodies, awakening mine in unexpected ways.

“I, uh” he says, his face leaning toward mine.

A sharp knock at the door jolts us out of whatever trance we were just in. The two of us jump away from each other like we were shocked.

“Christian, are you ready?” Shane asks.

“Yeah. Yeah, I’ll be right there,” he says. His chest heaving, his dark eyes still watching me.

Then, without another word, he tears his eyes away and heads for the door. As he reaches for the door, he turns and looks at me once more, then opens the door and heads off with Shane.

As soon as he’s gone, I finally feel like I can breathe again.

What in the Moon Goddess’ realm was that?

Christian

‘So controlled.’ Yeah, that’s what I am. In truth, I’ve always been in control. Until Enya.

Goddess, I almost kissed her. She smelled so good. Her fingers stroking my hair sent electric tingles through my body, igniting it with desire. Then she'd stared up at me with those big green eyes, her perfect lips slightly open just begging for me to kiss her and taste her.

FUCK! I need to get my shit together!

"So, what's the plan?" Shane asks me.

The plan is that I don't lose control and fuck your sister while she's my ward.

Of course, that's not what I say to Shane.

"What do you think we should do?" I ask him, using this as a teaching opportunity.

"I've been thinking about that. I think we should leave Dorian for last and interview the others individually first. Depending on what we get from the others, we'll have a better idea of what to expect from Dorian," he says, watching me to see if I approve.

"I think that's a great idea. Let's go with that."

"Yeah?" he asks excitedly.

I smile. "Yeah."

Shane feels a lot like the little brother I never had. Unlike his sister, he never seems to tire of my company, which is good, since we'll be

spending a lot of time together in the next year and a half.

"Do you have places where you can interview these warriors privately?" I ask, diverting to Braden's office to get the chalice for the warriors in the cells to accept me as their Alpha.

"I think there's a room down there for interrogation," he says.

"Let's double check before we begin. Do you have an idea who you'd like to interview first?"

"I was thinking we should start with the ones who seemed less against Enya and I, then work our way to the harder ones. That way, we might get intel we can use against the ones that might really be against us."

"Again, a well-thought-out plan," I tell him as we get to the top of the stairwell for the cells.

I nod at the guard. "Any problems?"

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 228[602 words]

“No, Alpha. Some grumbling about the length of time they’ve been down here, but that’s it,” he says.

“Is there an interrogation room downstairs?” I ask.

“Yes, Alpha. To the left of the stairwell there are three rooms that have been used for interrogation. The cells are to the right.”

“Thank you.... Reuben,” I say, trying to remember his name.

He smiles, pleased. “That’s correct, Alpha.”

“Thank you, Reuben. Hopefully and you can take the night well be releasing everyone tonight

He nods and we head downstairs.

“Finally!” Dorian says from the cell where he’s sitting and watching the stairwell. He stands, watching us. “Are you going to let us out now?”

“That will depend on each of you,” I say, turning left to find the room I want to use. “Are you good with this room?” I ask Shane.

“Yes.”

“Okay, who are we starting with?” I ask him.

“Let’s start with Jack,” he says.

We walk to the side where the cells are located. “Which one of you is Jack?” I ask.

“That’s me,” a warrior says, standing.

“You’re first,” I say.

“You’re not letting all of us out?” another warrior, Corey, I think, asks from his cell.

“Not until we’ve had a chance to talk,” I say, gesturing for Jack to follow Shane to the interrogation room.

When we walk in, I close the door. “Have a seat.”

“I didn’t know who you were,” he says immediately as he sits. I sit across from him, and Shane remains standing with his arms crossed.

“No, you didn’t. You didn’t ask either,” I say to him.

“You attacked our Beta,” he says.

“No, he attacked me, and I took him down. He’s no longer your Beta, by the way, although he doesn’t know that yet.”

I watch the surprise flash across his face.

“Who is Beta then, Steven?”

“No, Braden has been promoted from Gamma to Beta.”

He looks from me to Shane and back again.

“Then who’s Gamma?”

“No one yet. That position is currently vacant.”

“Dorian is going to flip his lid over that, just so you know.”

“I imagine he’s not going to be very happy about it. Especially when I confront him on the reasons behind his demotion.”

“What reasons?” Jack asks.

Rather than answer, I lean forward. “How do you feel about your Alpha heir?”

His eyes flash back to Shane.

“Honestly, he’s too young to run this pack, especially after our recent attack. No offense, Alpha Shane, but you’re dealing with your own grief. It’s a lot for a young Alpha and the pack needs to feel secure,” he says. I’m impressed that he says it politely. And he’s right.

“The Council agrees with you which is why I’m here. I’m the interim Alpha, sent to manage this pack until such time as Alpha Shane passes the Academy and comes of age.”

“That’s good. You’re the Alpha heir, after all. It just sucks what happened to your parents and the timing of it all,” he says to Shane.

Something flickers in the subconscious part of my brain at his words, something instinctive. I push it aside for now, but I want to come back to it.

“So, you have no problem accepting me as your interim Alpha and respecting both your Alpha heir and his sister?” I ask.

“No problem. You know how packs are. We need to feel safe. If we don’t, we begin challenging our leadership. I wasn’t feeling safe, but I wasn’t actively against you or Alpha Enya, Alpha Shane.”

“And now? Do you feel safe now that I’m here?” I ask.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 229[601 words]

“Fuck yeah, I do. You took out a Beta and five warriors,” he says.

I look at Shane to see if he has any questions for him.

“Thank you for your honesty, Jack. In the future, if you have questions or concerns about how the pack is being run, please bring those to myself or Alpha Christian,” Shane says.

“Yes, Alpha,” he says.

“Are you willing to accept me as your Alpha?” I ask him.

When he agrees, I slice my hand, and he says the words to commit to me and this pack. After he drinks and I feel the mind link click in, I release him.

“What do you think?” I ask Shane when he’s gone.

“I think I was right, that he was the easy one. I get it that he didn’t trust the safety of the pack. I am grieving and I am young,” he says.

“But you’re not stupid or weak. You’ll get there. When we’re done, maybe in a day or two, I’d like to go over the timing of the attack, your father’s admission to the pack hospital, and his death. Something about what Jack just said triggered something in mind.”

“What?”

my

instincts

“I don’t know. Just a feeling, an instinct. But I always trust my and my wolf and so far, I’ve never been wrong. So, who’s next?”

The next two warriors are about the same as Jack. They weren’t **feeling**

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Chapter 30

secure in the pack, but they’re feeling better about it **now that I’m here**. They both accept me as their Alpha and then are released.

It isn’t until we speak with Corey that I start to see problems.

“We were attacked. Our Alpha died. That doesn’t leave warriors feeling confident in an Alpha heir who is underage. What if they come back and attack us again,” Corey asks, slouching arrogantly in his chair.

“Why did they attack?” I ask him.

“How the fuck should I know. He’s the Alpha heir. Ask him.”

“I have,” I say, even though I haven’t. I hadn’t gotten that far into processing the events of the pack, but as we’ve been talking to the warriors, that niggling feeling in the back of my head has become more pronounced. Something is off about the timing of the attack on this pack and way in which Alpha Colin died.

I can feel Shane’s question in the mind link. He knows we haven’t talked about it, but he’s smart enough not to say anything in front of Corey.

“It’s strange, isn’t it Corey? The timing of the attack?” I ask, watching him carefully. If I hadn’t been watching for it, I wouldn’t have seen it. A flicker, just a momentary one, but it was there in his eyes.

“I wouldn’t know. I’m just a warrior,” he says, still smug and arrogant.

“Yes, you are. A warrior who has actively been working against Alpha heirs in this pack. I’m not sure I feel comfortable letting you out of the cells yet,” I say, watching the arrogance turn to fury.

I’m ready the moment he leaps at me. I smash my fist into his nose, hearing the crunch as it breaks.

Chapter 30

11 238 Vouchers

I watch his body collapse to the ground at my feet as the guards rush

1. in.

“Put him back in the cell,” I say, waiting until they’re gone before turning to Shane.

“We need to look into the attack on your pack and your father’s death. I’m starting to think that the first wasn’t random and the second wasn’t accidental.”

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 230[616 words]

Shane

I’m still stunned at how fast Corey attacked Christian and how much faster Christian reacted. You’d think that Corey would have learned his lesson the first time, but apparently not.

After he’s dragged out, Christian drops the bomb on me..

“What do you mean the attack wasn’t random and my father’s death wasn’t accidental?” I ask him. .

“I’m not sure yet. But during these next two interviews, pay attention to what’s NOT being said. Watch their eyes to see if they glance away, even for a second. Watch their hands to see if they flex with an involuntary reaction. Watch their faces to see if they flush with knowledge they aren’t willing to share. Look past the arrogance and bravado. I want to know what you see. Tomorrow, you and I are making a trip to the pack hospital, and I better be happy with what I find out,” he says, angrily.

This is the first time I’ve seen Christian angry. He doesn’t get angry. However, based on what he’s saying, it sounds like my father didn’t die of natural causes. He was murdered.

“What’s the last warrior’s name?” he asks me.

“Dexter,” I say, still reeling from what he’s told me. I feel his hand, confident and unwavering on my shoulder.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes,” I say, not sure that I really am

He calls Dexter in next.

“What the fuck? You’re punching us until we’re unconscious **again?**” he asks as soon as he walks in.

“Only if you attack me or Alpha Shane,” Christian says, which makes Dexter focus on him, then look at me.

“Have a seat,” Christian says.

He starts out with the questions he’s asked everyone, about the attack on him, how they feel about the safety of the pack especially now that he’s here. Then he drops the bomb.

“So, how do you feel about the timing of the attack on the pack?” he asks.

If he hadn’t told me to watch for it, I wouldn’t have seen his fingers flex instinctively.

“I don’t know what you mean,” he says. He’s not slouching as arrogantly as Corey was, but that’s because he’s smarter. That’s why his interview came after Corey’s.

“Why did they attack in the first place?” he asks, but Dexter *is* better prepared for the question this time.

“I don’t know. Aren’t you the Alpha now? Isn’t that part of what Alphas do? Figure out why someone attacks their pack?” he as-s

“Yeah, it is. I’m working on that. It doesn’t really make sense to me that a pack would attack this well-established pack. Where were you during the attack?” he asks him.

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288 Vouchers

“I was on the battlefield with all the other warriors in this pack.”

“What pack was it that attacked?” he asks.

“I don’t know. I didn’t recognize any of the warriors.”

“So, an unknown pack attacks this one for an unknown reason. Interesting.”

“I don’t find it interesting at all. Our Alpha and Luna are dead,” he says.

“Yes, they are. Who has the most to gain from losing the Alpha of the pack?” he asks.

Dexter’s eyes flicker to me as if he’s going to say I have the most to gain.

“Besides the Alpha heir,” Christian says.

“No one,” he says, shrugging. Even I know that’s a bullshit answer. The next person in line for succession is the Beta. It’s the obvious answer and any pack member, even down to the omegas, knows it. He’s covering for Dorian.

“You, maybe?” Christian asks.

“What would I have to gain?” he asks.

“That’s the question, isn’t it? What did you have to gain?”

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Chapter 32

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 231[606 words]

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Don’t you? The obvious answer as to who has something to gain by attacking the pack and killing off the Alpha is the Beta. And yet, you don’t seem to know that. Are you stupid?” he asks, obviously trying to get a rise out of Dexter.

Dexter growls, leaning forward. “I’m smarter than you.”

“I doubt that,” Christian says, maintaining what must feel like an infuriating calm to Dexter. “So, if you’re not stupid, then you’re covering for your previous Beta.”

“Previous?” he asks, outraged.

“You didn’t think I’d allow him to remain in his position after attacking me, did you? Oh no, he’s out. So, whatever promises he made to you, those are out too.”

He growls, before realizing that he didn't respond properly. Then he shrugs quickly to try and cover it up.

"You're the Alpha. You get to make those decisions."

"Yes, I am. And, by the way, Steven isn't Beta now either."

I watch Dexter's lip curl. "Then who is?"

"Braden. Beta Braden now," he says. "I guess your ability to manipulate the pack/warriors just diminished significantly."

"Still don't know what you're talking about. Can I go now?" he asks,

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Chapter 32

288 (Vaucheze

looking like he's utterly bored with this conversation.

"Sure," he says, and Dexter stands. I'm shocked, but I don't say anything. I've already learned to trust Christian.

Christian opens the door and looks at the guard. Dexter takes the opportunity to sneer at me. Something in his look makes me feel like I need to sleep with a knife under my pillow.

"He goes back to the cells," Christian says, making Dexter's head snap to him.

"The fuck! I answered your questions," he snarls.

"Not to my liking," Christian says.

Rather than leaping at Christian like Corey did, Dexter leaps at me. I'm about a second too late but Christian isn't. Before Dexter can get to me, Christian's hand reaches around Dexter's throat and rips it out.

He drops to the floor, and I watch the guard's eyes go wide as my own heart feels like it's about to beat out of my chest.

"Are you okay, Shane?" Christian asks me, quickly looking me over.

"Y-yes. Yes."

He turns to look at the guards. "Dorian can sit overnight. Keep him and Corey separated until I decide what I'm doing with him."

"Yes, Alpha," the guards say.

"Let's go, Shane," he says, leading me from the interrogation room.

"Hey! Hey, where are you going? Aren't you going to let me out?" Dorian yells from his cell.

Chapter 32

Christian ignores him and leads me out of the cells to my father's... to my office.

I stand there, feeling shaky. I wasn't ready for one of my own warriors to attack me.

Christian walks to the side table in his office and pours the two of us a drink. He hands me a shot glass.

"Shoot it. It will help settle your system," he says.

I take the shot, the fire of the alcohol startling me out of my stupor. I suck in air, letting the heat of the whiskey spread through my body, warming the cold that felt like it had seeped into my soul at Dexter's betrayal.

"Have a seat," Christian says gently.

I do as he says, and he hands me a glass of whiskey this time with ice in it before going to pour one for himself. Then he comes back and sits across from me, leaning forward to put himself at eye level with me.

"Are you okay?"

"He wanted to kill me," I whisper.

"Yes."

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 232[604 words]

I search his face, finding nothing.

"Was he responsible for killing my father?"

“That’s what we’re going to find out.”

“Why?” I ask him.

“We’ll figure that out too, but I’m guessing it was about power. If I had to guess, Dorian offered him a position in the pack. If not Beta, then probably Gamma. I’m guessing that Steven was offered the Beta position, since he’s Dorian’s brother.”

I set the glass down and scrub my hands over my face. “You’re saying that the attack, my father’s death, it was orchestrated? That our pack members set it up?”

“I’m saying it’s a possibility.

I nod, thinking about how Enya will be devastated if she finds out.

“Don’t say anything to Enya, not until we know for sure.”

“Alright,” he says, sitting back. “We can’t do any more tonight. Do you want to talk it through?”

“No, I think I’m done for the day. Is it okay if we skip our ch tonight?”

“Of course. If you need me, you know where to find me.”

I head upstairs to my room, thinking through how much has occurred

Chapter 33

in the couple of days since Christian has arrived. Then, a horrible thought occurs to me.

If Christian wasn’t here, would Dorian and his group of rebels **have** killed me and Enya to get what they want?

The answer does not make it easy for me to sleep.

Christian

After Shane leaves, I send an email to the Council letting them know that I killed a warrior who attempted to attack Shane and that I have concerns that Alpha Colin and Luna Ciara might not have died accidentally.

“Please keep us informed and let us know if there is anything you need from us,” came the instant reply.

I didn’t know the Council worked this late, but I’m glad they do. I’m very concerned about who attacked this pack and why.

I begin making a list of everything I need to accomplish. Now, besides having to ensure that the pack is stabilized, I need to figure out if Beta Dorian or someone else was involved in the deaths of the leaders of this pack.

When I finally finish, I look at my watch and realize that it's late. I close everything down and head upstairs. As I do, I open my mind to the packhouse, feeling the different levels of activity from sleep to sex, then I reach out past the packhouse to the patrols making sure they don't have any concerns. Once I'm sure the pack is secure, I reach out to Shane, brushing against his mind and finding him thought okay. I reach out to Enya, and find her awake, but also okay.

out

That's good, it gives me a chance to do something I've wanted to do since I almost kissed Enya earlier today.

Chapter 33

I head up to my room and shower quickly and pulling **on a pair** of boxers before grabbing my phone. I sit on my bed and **lean against the** headboard. I press the number on my speed dial and put the **phone** to

my car.

"Christian, how are you? I was wondering when I'd hear from **you.**"

"Hey, Dad," I say. "How is the fam?" I ask.

"We're good. I'm surprised that you're calling so late. Is everything okay?"

I look at the door to my room. *IS* everything okay?

I'm quiet too long and my father notices, of course.

"Christian?"

"I'm not sure I was the right person for this job, Dad," I tell him.

His tone is instantly serious.

"Talk to me. What's going on?"

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 233[571 words]

I tell him about how Shane and Enya are dealing with their grief, what I walked in on when I got here. I tell him about what I think is going on, the possible murder of Alpha Colin and inadvertently his mate.

“How is your relationship with Alpha Shane?” he asks me.

“Good. It’s really good. That has been easy. Shane has taken to me like I’m his older brother. He’s a sponge who wants to learn. Based on what I’ve gotten from him and from Enya, I don’t think their parents put the same level of importance on the Academy that you and mom did with me and Sebastiana.”

“Well, we were instructors for years. We understand the value of the Academy better than most.”

“True,” I say, scrubbing my hand down my face.

“What’s really going on, son,” my father asks astutely. It’s why I needed to talk to him. I knew he’d help me get to the root of the problem.

“Enya,” I say, thinking of her big green eyes looking up at me when I almost kissed her earlier today.

“She doesn’t trust you?” he asks.

“That’s an understatement, but it’s more than that, Dad. We’re really close in age. I feel drawn to her like I’ve never felt drawn to any other

I’m/meant

woman in my life. I’m meant to be her guardian. She’s my ward.. shouldn’t be having the feelings for her that I am, especially not so soon after meeting her. But I do, and I don’t know what to do about it. I can’t leave Shane here alone. I wouldn’t do that to him. And things

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Chapter 34

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here aren’t stable. After he was nearly attacked today, I wouldn’t **trust** his safety to anyone else, except possibly someone in our family. But I ve accepted responsibility for his welfare and his future, and I **can’t** pass that to someone else now, even if I am having the most intense feelings I’ve ever had for his underage sister.”

“Tell me about the feelings,” he says. As always, my father never makes me feel stupid for what I say. He acknowledges, accepts, and moves on from there. I love that about him.

“I almost kissed her today. I could tell that she had a problem with me earlier, so after dinner, I called her into the office to talk about it,” I say, huffing out a laugh as I remember her anger about me being ‘perfect’. I’m SO far from perfect, especially with her.

“So, it was just the one time?” he asks,

“No. Well, yes. But last night I found her in her room crying. I scooped her into my arms and held her until she fell asleep. Then I continued to hold her. She felt so right in my arms, Dad, like no one else in the world will ever feel as right in my arms.

”

“What else?” he asks. I can hear a change in his tone, the intensity, but since he hasn’t said more, I’m not sure what it means yet.

“I went to her room earlier. I had been sparring with Shane and on the way back I saw her in her window. I wanted to talk to her, but I was worried that she was once again crying alone. You know how I am with women who cry,” I say.

He chuckles. “You’re just like me.”

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 234[658 words]

I smile. “Exactly. So, I went to her room and ... I could tell she’d been masturbating. Her scent, oh goddess her scent. Dad, I’ve never smelled a woman who made my mouth water like she did. My body responds to her just by being in her presence. It took all of my training not to drag her back into her room so I could taste her and make her scream with pleasure like I’ve been trained to do.”

I cover my eyes, waiting for my father’s verdict.

“Son, have you considered that she might be your fated mate?” he asks gently.

“She’s underage, Dad. I wouldn’t feel the pull to her yet.”

“Maybe, maybe not. You’re both Alphas. That matters. She’s close to eighteen, you just turned eighteen and your wolf will be actively looking for his mate.”

“Right, but what if my wolf is finding her attractive but she’s not my mate? What then? I have to be appropriate with her. I’m in a power position ...” I begin and my father begins laughing.

“What?” I ask indignantly.

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“It sounds to me like SHE’S in the power position, Christian. You’re the one struggling to maintain control. She may be as well, but as you said, she’s not the one trying to figure out if her parents were murdered, trying to make sure that the Alpha heir is safe and prepared to take over the pack/ And let’s be honest, you and I both know that your mother is the one with all the power in our relationship.”

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Chapter 35

I chuckle. “I’m guessing she’s there?”

“She is, but that doesn’t change the truth of my words.”

I remain quiet as I hear my mother talking in the background.

“Brilliant as always, my love. Christian, your mother has a great idea. She suggests that we come visit you this weekend. That way, if you need help with any pack members, we can help with that, and I can objectively see you and Alpha Enya together and give you my thoughts.”

“Dad, I would love that! Plus, I think Sebastiana and Shane are around the same age, so they’ll both be going to the Academy at the same time. It would be great for them to meet each other now and hopefully become friends. Neither he nor Enya have the confidence that Sebi has,” I say, making my father snort.

“Who does?” he asks, making me chuckle.

“No one. But maybe seeing Sebi will help Enya see that going to the Academy will be good for her.

“1

“You want her to go to the Academy?” my father asks, obviously surprised.

“Well, yeah. She should go. She shouldn’t feel like her only option in life is to be a Luna,” I say.

“And you’d be okay if she’s your mate and you sent her to the Academy?” he asks, obviously referencing the sex class.

“Did you really just ask that in front of Mom?” I ask. “And besides, I won’t know until after she’s back if she’s my mate. What kind of a guardian would I be if I deny her that opportunity just because she might be my mate?” I ask.

12:240

Chapter 35

388 Vouchers

“A good point that your mother is sure to remind me of tonight,” he says, and I can hear in the tone of his voice that she will definitely be doing that.

There’s a knock at my door and I walk over, opening it to a very grief- stricken Enya.

“Dad, I have to go.”

“Me too. We’ll see you this weekend?” he asks.

“See you then,” I say, ending the call without taking my eyes off Enya.

I open my arms, and she collapses into me. I scoop her up, closing the door and carrying her to the love seat in my room. I sit down, holding her tightly as her tears begin to soak my chest.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 235[564 words

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Enya

I don’t know why it’s harder at night, but it is. I tried to avoid it, tried to resist going to Christian. But I felt better in his arms last night and as the grief begins to overwhelm me, I make my way to his room.

I can hear that he's talking to someone, but I knock anyway, hoping that I'm not interrupting anything. I'm thankful when he opens the door with a phone to his ear.

"Dad, I have to go," he says.

He opens his arms, and I practically collapse into them. He picks me up easily, carrying me into his room that already smells like him.

"I've got you," he says, sitting down and getting me settled in his lap. He's not wearing a shirt, but something about being skin to skin with him, smelling the lingering scent of soap mingled with his masculine scent helps to calm me.

"Why is it harder at night?" I ask as the tears stream down my cheeks.

"It's quiet at night. You don't have the distractions of people talking to

you,

the pack being noisy around you. It's just you and your thoughts or memories," he says softly, rocking me gently.

I fist my hand against his chest. If he was wearing a shirt, I would be holding on to it.

"When does it get easier?" I ask.

"I don't know. I wish I could take this pain from you. I wish I could

Chapter 36

make this easier for you, but grief is just something **that you have to** drag yourself through. There's no easy way around it."

I nod, letting him hold me.

"Thank you for coming to me tonight. I know you're grieving, but you don't have to do it alone."

"I miss them," I say as a fresh wave of tears begin pouring down my cheeks.

"From everything I've heard from you and Shane, your parents were good parents. They obviously loved you both very much," he says.

I nod against his chest, lifting my face until it's tucked up against his throat. He stills and I wonder if this is too vulnerable of a position for him, but then he begins rocking me again.

“I don’t know why, but I feel safe in your arms,” I say, my vulnerability making me more honest than I u. am.

“You are safe. I won’t let anyone or anything hurt you.”

I nod again, letting his strong arms, his foresty scent, and the gentle rocking motion soothe me.

“You were talking to your dad?” I ask.

“I was. My family is going to come visit this weekend. You’ll get to meet my mother, you said you wanted to.”

“Yes. I think she must be very different from mother.”

my

“Different doesn’t mean one of them is better than the other. I’m sure your mother’s life was different from my mother’s. Most Alpha females haven’t taught at the Academy, or at least, the ones my mother’s age

haven’t.”

“Is she a strong fighter like you?”

“She’s fantastic,” he says. “She taught the strength class at the Academy most of the semesters she wasn’t pregnant or nursing. Between her, my father, and Alpha James, I had quite the lessons in fighting during my childhood.”

“Who is Alpha James?” I ask him. I begin absently running my fingers over his chest while I listen.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 236[612 words]

“He’s my father’s best friend. They worked at the Academy together for years. Both of them lost their fated mates and used the Academy to

find their way again. I grew up hearing their stories of the Academy, learning from the best how to spar and how to use my senses. It’s why my second heightened sense, smell, is almost as good as my first, which is hearing.”

I pull my face away from his neck to look at him. “And you still learned things and improved at the Academy?” I ask, surprised.

“Every instructor has something different to teach you. Even the other Alphas in the Academy bring their own knowledge, their own way of doing things with them. I tried to absorb as much as I could in the six months that I was there.”

I lay my head against his chest again, tucking my face against his throat. It feels very comfortable sitting like this.

“Your parents must be very proud of you,” I say.

“I think so. Now, my sister she’s a different story.”

...

“You haven’t mentioned her before,” I say.

I feel him press his lips to my forehead.

”

“Sebastiana is Shane’s age, and I expect that the two of them will go to the Academy at the same time, so I’m glad that they’re meeting now.”

“Why is that?” I ask,

“Your pack seems pretty isolated from the other packs. I think it will be

Chapter 37

good for Shane to know someone before he goes to the Academy Of course, Sebi might rub him the wrong way. She’s doesn’t do a good job of filtering what comes out of her mouth, and she really doesn’t **care** who likes it and who doesn’t.”

“She’s not worried that her mate will be offended by that?” I ask, remember my mother saying that I should always be appropriate so **my** mate would be thrilled that the Moon Goddess had chosen me for him.

“According to Sebi, if the Moon Goddess knows her at all, then she’ll mate her to a man that has big enough balls to handle her.”

I sit up quickly, positive that Christian is joking. His face is completely serious, and he just shakes his head.

“I agree that the Moon Goddess doesn’t make mistakes. But honestly, whoever ends up with my sister better have balls of steel.”

A laugh bursts out of me unexpectedly. I cover my mouth with my hand, my eyes going wide.

“You can laugh, it’s funny. And you think I’m joking? Wait until you meet her. I’ll be shocked if you don’t have a headache before the end of the first day she’s here,” he reaches out and pulls my hand away from my mouth.

“You don’t need to hide from me. Not your grief, not your happiness, not anything,” he says, his deep voice resonating inside me, making my wolf sit up in my head.

Well, he doesn’t need to know about the dirty thoughts of him that I have while I’m masturbating. I’ll definitely be keeping THAT to myself.

I put my head against his chest again so he can’t see the flush on my cheeks.

Chapter 37

He leans back, settling me against him and beginning to **rub** his fingers in my hair, massaging my scalp.

I try unsuccessfully to keep the moan from slipping out, but damn, the man has magic hands.

He chuckles. “I take it that feels good?”

“Yes,” I murmur, hoping he won’t stop.

Thankfully, he doesn’t. He just continues to massage my scalp, running his fingers through my hair and making goosebumps rise all over my scalp, shoulders, and back.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 237[599 words]

“Your hair feels like silk,” he murmurs. He almost sounds like he’s enjoying himself as much as I am.

I feel his fingers slide into my hair at the base of my skull before gripping it and slowly tugging.

I whimper as my scalp ignites with pleasure.

“Hmmm, you like that too,” he asks. His voice sounds deeper, more guttural.

“Yes,” I say, my own voice not sounding like me at all.

He releases his grip, sliding his fingers through my hair before doing it again.

I whimper again as I feel my body relaxing under his expert care. He moves his hand around my scalp, gently tugging on a hand full of hair in all different places, each one sending a wave of goosebumps and pleasure over my body.

I begin to feel like I’m floating which makes me open my mouth and say something I really hadn’t intended to say.

“You really are perfect.”

He chuckles softly. “I’m not, but if I’m perfect for you, I’m good with that.”

“You’re exactly what I needed tonight,” I tell him, feeling my eyes starting to get heavy.

Chapter 381

I feel the vibrations of his wolf in his chest. It **feels** like **he’s calling** to me, drawing me into a comfortable, sleepy state.

I’m nearly asleep when I realize that my wolf is answering **his, purring** back at Christian. She’s never done that before, but I don’t have **time to** think about it before all his careful attention puts me to sleep.

Christian

I started out with good intentions. I wanted to make Enya feel better. I wanted to take her pain away.

But then she started moaning and my body responded. Thankfully, she didn’t seem to notice, but the desire to hear more of those sweet sounds from her pushed me to not only try to make her feel better, but to make her feel good.

Her sweet whimpers were music to my ears. I’m practically desperate to hear her make those sounds, only louder, as her pussy walls pulse around my cock buried as deep inside her as she can take.

Fuck! I’m such a mess. Even my wolf pushed forward enough to purr at her, calling to her, telling her in an instinctual way that he wants her. I was shocked when her wolf responded.

Now, I'm sitting here with Enya in my lap. She's sound asleep, but I don't take her back to her room. Instead, I take this rare moment to enjoy her in my arms. She feels so right here, so perfect. She's as perfect as she says I am.

wolf I thought, when she tucked her face against my neck, that my would take offense. She was very close to being in a position of forcing my submission, But rather than being offended, my wolf had acted like it was the most natural thing in the world to have a person's, a woman's, mouth that close to our throat.

No, not just any person, Enya.

So, as her breathing deepens, and the weight of her body **settles** against my chest, I hold her in my arms, completely and utterly **happy** to have her here.

She loved having her head rubbed and she liked having her **hair** pulled. That was a bit of a risk, but Talia taught me that most women like having their hair pulled if you do it right. She'd taken time to teach me the right way to pull, hard enough to matter, but not **so** hard that the hairs began to pull out of the follicles.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 238[601 words]

I'm glad that I got to use that on Enya and she seemed to really enjoy

1. it.

Since she's asleep, I use the opportunity to kiss her forehead. I'm not sure she'd allow it when she's awake, but it just feels right to press my lips against her skin. It makes me wonder if my father isn't right. Could this be the beginning of a mate bond that neither of us will realize until she's eighteen? If so, how do I feel about her going to the Academy?

It would be so wrong for me to deny her that opportunity just because it would make me jealous. I know what my relationship with Talia was like. Yes, you become intimate, you have to. But if you set the parameters of the relationship from the beginning, then it's nothing more than two young Alphas exploring their sexuality and learning how to appreciate a partner's body while drawing out the most amazing orgasms of their life. You can become temporary friends with benefits, so long as both parties understand and agree that it's temporary.

I was raised to understand that the sex class is still a class. It's not about hooking up. It's not about cheating on your mate. It's about becoming the best lover possible for your mate. And if that's the case, should I deny that for Enya, especially if it turns out that she's NOT my mate?

At some point, I fall asleep with her still lying against me. I wa. up in the middle of the night and realize that while I'm horribly

uncomfortable, she is still curled up on my lap fast asleep.

What I want is to put her in my bed, curl up around her, and go back **to** sleep. But instead, I take her to her room and put her to bed like the good guardian that I am.

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That doesn't mean that I don't kiss her forehead again. But I **leave** her there and go back to my room wishing I'd had a shirt on that **would** now smell like her. Since I don't, I just sniff her lingering scent **on my** skin and fall into a deep sleep.

The next morning in warrior training, I notice that she's once again acting shy, but I put her with a warrior I feel will challenge her and then I focus on the other warriors. I need to spend some time with Braden, but I haven't had that chance yet.

So, rather than focus on one warrior, I begin to work with the group, giving them the skill set I want them to work on and then going around to help them improve.

I'm impressed that the ones who came out of the cells are actually working hard to improve and through the Alpha bond, I can tell it's because they are excited to learn, not because they want to overthrow Shane.

He and I worked on these same skills yesterday so he's able to assist me in working with the pack members, which seems to go a long way to helping them begin to accept him.

About halfway through warrior training, a warrior calls out to me.

"Alpha, can you help me?" I see Shane helping another group of warriors, so I turn realizing that it's the same female who was practically inviting me to her bed with her eyes yesterday.

"What seems to be the problem?" I ask.

"Alpha, I don't know if you remember, but my name is Violent. I just can't seem to get this maneuver. Can you help me?"

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 239[604 words]

She's working with another female warrior who doesn't seem impressed with her request for assistance.

"Why don't you show me what you're doing," I say. "And I'm sorry, I don't remember your name."

"It's Eliza, Alpha."

"Eliza, why don't you take defense and Violet you take offense."

They get into position and if Violet were any kind of warrior, Eliza would never have been able to get her on the ground so easily.

"See, I'm just not getting it," she pouts, holding out her hand for me to help her up in a move so blatantly obvious that I have to force myself not to roll my eyes.

I mentally sigh, but I take her hand and help her up with less force than I normally would, so she doesn't fake stumble into me.

"Switch and let's see how you do, Eliza," I say.

Once again, Eliza takes Violet down much too quickly.

"You see?" Violet says, from the ground. She's got her eyes open so wide she looks like a deer in headlights.

"Yes, I do see the problem, Violet. You need to work on your strength. If you can't stay on your feet longer than thirty seconds, you shouldn't be considered a warrior at all," I tell her.

I watch Eliza duck her head quickly to hide her grin.

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"What?" Violet asks, obviously offended.

"This is not a difficult maneuver, Violet. If you can't master this, then you're never going to be able to keep up with the other lessons I **teach**. I would suggest that you work on building your strength so you can hold your own on the sparring field," I say to her.

"Tomorrow, rather than coming to warrior training, you should go to the gym and begin working to increase your strength. Let's try that for a week and then you can come back next week and try again."

She stares at me, mouth agape. I look around, searching for a new opponent for Eliza and my eyes connect with Enya's. She's been watching the interaction, and I can tell from her face that she's annoyed. I'm just not sure if she's annoyed with me or Violet.

I realize that she has far outmatched the warrior I put her with, letting me know that she wasn't showing me her complete skill set yesterday. I may have to pull her aside like I did with Shane so she feels comfortable showing me how strong she really is.

"Enya, you're with Eliza," I say, needing to mix up the group a bit. "Violet, you're done for today.

"But Alpha ..." she begins.

"When you return next week, we'll assess your strength and see if you can continue in warrior training," I say, cutting off her argument.

"Yes, Alpha."

As Enya passes me, I see her fighting a smile. I guess she was annoyed with Violet, not me.

When we finish warrior training, I meet up with Braden. "I need to assess your skills, but I have some other things I need to take care of today."

37.45%

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"Anything I can help you with?" he asks.

I wait for everyone else to leave the sparring field before I turn back to him.

"What do you think of the timing of the attack on Alpha Colin and this pack?"

He looks at me a moment before running his hand through his hair and sighing, walking away then turning back.

"Hindsight being twenty-twenty? It was awfully convenient."

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"Who had the most to gain by Alpha Colin dying?" I ask him.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 240[611 words]

He huff's out another sigh, the sound hissing through his teeth. "Beta Dorian. You think he orchestrated the whole thing?"

"I don't know. I just know that during our interviews yesterday, things weren't adding up. Something is off about the attack and Alpha Colin's death. Whatever it is, I intend to figure it out."

"Let me know what you need from me," he says.

"Thank you. Keep your ears open. Shane and I are going to go to the hospital today. I want to see the medical records that they have on Alpha Colin."

"What are you going to do with Dorian?"

"For now, he stays right where he is. I need more information before I let him out of the cells. If his brother so much as breathes in the wrong direction, you have my permission to throw him in as well. I will not allow Shane and Enya to be put at risk. I'd rather be wrong and ask forgiveness, than be right and not do anything."

"I'll let you know if I hear anything."

"Thank you," I say, heading inside to get some breakfast before starting what promises to be another long day.

Enya

I watched Violet and her ridiculous attempt to get Christian to touch her.

"Alpha, are you okay?" Jesse, the warrior Christian put me with, **asks**.

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She's definitely not as strong as I am, which means either Christian underestimated my abilities or I gave a very poor showing yesterday.

"What is Violet doing?" I murmur.

Jesse turns and watches her fake her inability to fight. "What Violet does best. Draw men to her bed."

Jesse is single, but Eliza is mated. I can see that she's pissed with how Violet is acting. Violet may not be the strongest warrior we have, but she's better than this. It makes me angry, not only because I feel the flood of jealousy that she's trying to get into Christian's bed, but also because her lack of skill reflects poorly on my father and how he taught his warriors.

I look at Jesse. "You don't act like that."

"I have self-respect. Violet is willing to make herself look weak to get into someone's bed. Especially if that bed is filled with a tall, dark, and handsome Alpha. I mean, I'm not saying I'd say no to the man, but I'm not going to act like I can't fight just to try and get myself there."

I guess I shouldn't be surprised, that others in the pack are attracted to Christian. Even I've told him he's perfect.

What I didn't expect was for Christian to put her in her place without accepting anything that she's obviously offering. He has somehow managed to discipline her by making it about her lack of skill.

"Well, would you look at that. I guess our Alpha has some self-respect too. Good for him," Jesse says.

One part of me is glad that he's putting her in her place. She shouldn't be disrespecting my father by acting incapable. But the other, larger part of me is thrilled that Christian isn't accepting what Violet is obviously offering..

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When he tells **me** to join Eliza in sparring. I fight hard to hide my smile. Violet is obviously pissed that she's now been relegated to what amounts to glorified pup training.

"Well, my respect for our temporary Alpha just went up a couple of notches," Eliza says to me.

I smile at her and take a defensive stance.

"Now, are you going to fight me, or are you going to pull that bullshit you pulled with our temporary Alpha yesterday?" she asks.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 241[626 words]

"I don't know what you're talking about," I say.

“I saw you. You’re better than that, Alpha Enya. So, come at me like you mean it. Don’t be a Violet. Nobody likes a Violet,” she says, making me laugh before switching to offense.

The rest of warrior training goes by quickly. Eliza forces me to focus. She’s a good fighter and she values being fast and strong.

When we walk inside, I see Christian hanging back with Beta Braden. I also see Shane talking to the warriors about what they learned today. It’s the first interaction that I’ve seen with them and him since my father died that looks positive. Of course, Mr. Perfect is already having this effect on my brother and the pack.

“I can’t believe he thinks I need strength training. Is he blind! I’m an excellent warrior!” Violet says a bit too loudly as she walks in. I’m guessing that she’s only being this vocal because Christian and Braden are still outside, which means she doesn’t respect me or Shane.

“Oh, stuff it, Violet. You did this to yourself, acting like a poor damsel in distress so you could try to get Christian into bed. It was pathetic and he obviously saw right through it,” I say.

The entire room goes quiet. I don’t usually confront people so publicly or vocally, but she’s rubbed me the wrong way and I won’t allow her to start making people question Christian.

“Excuuuuuuuse me

Pup?” she says, turning her venom on me.

“Shall we see which one of us wins in a fight, Violet. You or the pup?”

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I ask, popping the ‘p’ and turning to face her fully.

“What’s going on, Enya,” Shane asks, walking up beside me.

“Violet apparently needs to be reminded that although I’m under eighteen, I’m still an Alpha female who could wipe the floor with her without breaking a sweat.”

“Don’t pretend you’re not jealous. We all see the way you look at Alpha Christian. What does happen on your floor at night when the lights go out?” she taunts.

Maybe it’s because she’s too close to the truth, that I do end up in his arms every night, or maybe my frayed nerves just can’t take anymore, but I leap at her.

My entire body is jerked to a halt by a steel rod. I turn, wanting to know what happened, only to find Christian, his arm wrapped around my waist, halting my movements.

“So, Violet, you didn’t heed my warning about respecting your Alphas. Perhaps a couple nights in the cells will change your mind,” he says, not releasing me, but not taking his eyes off her.

“You can’t do that!” she screeches.

“I can and I am. Keep it up and your stay in the cells will just get longer and longer.”

I watch Braden come up behind her, grab her arm, and begin escorting her to the cells, screaming all the way.

“If no one is hungry, you can all get to work,” Christian snaps

the

group of warriors who are still standing around staring. That gets their attention, and they head to the breakfast buffet.

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288 Vouchers

“Come with me and don’t make a scene about it,” Christian says in my ear before setting my feet back on the ground.

I grit my teeth, but he’s right. The pack has already had enough drama for one day.

I follow him to the office. He steps aside to let me enter before him, then closes the door behind us. I cross my arms, feeling like I’m a schoolgirl about to be scolded for doing something wrong. Well, I didn’t do anything wrong.

“Enya...”

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“I was defending you!” I say.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 242[605 words]

I watch Christian pace in front of me, his hand going through his curly hair, that wayward curl falling right back onto his forehead. I can see his jaw ticking in frustration, anger, or an attempt at patience. Who knows. All I know is that he's angry at me and I did nothing wrong.

"I am perfectly capable of defending myself," he growls.

"You weren't around!" I growl back.

He turns on me. "What if she attacked you?"

"I would have reminded her that I'm an Alpha. I may not have impressed you yesterday on the sparring field, but I actually AM a good fighter," I say, stepping up to him. How dare he be angry with me for defending him?

"That's not the point!" he says, getting in my face.

"Then what IS the point, Christian? Why are you mad at me? I did nothing wrong!"

"I'm not mad at you, Enya. I'm worried about you."

I jut my chin up at him. "Well, you don't need to worry about me, Christian. I won't come crying at your door anymore. Goddess knows who might be warming your bed. I wouldn't want to interfere ..."

In an instant, Christian has me pressed against the wall, his b caging mine in.

"This isn't about me being with someone, Enya," he growls. The sound is low, and it reverberates through my body. "This is about me keeping

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you safe."

“I am perfectly capable of taking care of myself,” I say.

“I have no doubt that you’re an excellent fighter, Enya. I have no doubt that you could have wiped the floor with Violet as you said. But that doesn’t mean that I don’t take your safety very seriously,” he says. The growl in his tone has turned into something different, something that **is** making my body respond.

“You don’t need to worry about me,” I say softly.

His eyes drop to my mouth.

“Don’t I?”

I lick my lips, as my mouth goes dry. His growl gets louder.

“No,” I say, my voice barely a whisper.

“No?” he asks, his voice as quiet as mine, but still full of an emotion I can’t quite identify.

I shake my head. My mouth is so dry I’m not sure I can speak.

“What if I like worrying about you?” he growls before his mouth crashes against mine.

Christian

When I walked in to find Violet and Enya squaring off, the first thing that came to mind is what if Violet is part of Dorian’s group? Enya could be at risk. I have no idea how many people are part of throup to undermine the Alpha family, but I’m not willing to risk Enya or Shane.

I have no doubt that Enya could have defeated Violet in a fight, but

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Chapter 43

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that’s not the point. I needed to make an example of Violet so the others realize that I’m absolutely serious about not allowing anyone to undermine them. And I need to talk to Enya. What if I hadn’t walked in when I did?

To hear her say that she was defending me both excited me and infuriated me. She doesn't realize that defending me puts her at risk and there is something deep, instinctually deep, inside me that refuses to allow Enya to put herself at risk for me.

And then she just had to go and fight me on this, telling me that she's capable of taking care of herself. Does she not realize that is not the point? I am her guardian! It's MY job to take care of HER.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 243[599 words]

It wasn't until she implied that I would have another woman in my bed that the tenuous hold on my control finally snapped. I slammed her against the wall, furious that she would ever think that I would take another woman to my bed when she's just down the hall.

Ever since I laid eyes on her, there's only been one woman for me. I may not understand it, but I know my wolf would never accept another woman. Not now, maybe not ever.

Maybe I'm more my mother's son than I ever realized.

It was then that something shifted between us, something raw, something that burned in my soul.

She told me I didn't need to worry about her, as if that's even an option for me. Even if she wasn't my ward, I would worry about her. My need to ensure her safety is so strong it's almost instinctual.

And then I snapped. My mouth claimed hers in a demanding, possessive kiss.

The moment my lips touched hers, I realized just how inexperienced Enya is. If this isn't her first kiss, it's very close. But that didn't stop my wolf from claiming what he feels is his. He, or maybe it's me, I'm not sure anymore, demanded entrance to her mouth.

She gasped when I ran my tongue across her lips, and I took advantage of the opportunity to slide my tongue into her mouth and taste her sweet, floral taste. Like a moth to a flame, I already know I'll never get enough of her taste. It's delicate and earthy, and oh so sweet.

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Chapter 44

Her hands slide around my neck, and I press my body against hers, needing to possess her, needing to brand myself on her body and soul forever.

It isn't until my brain finally registers her sweet moans and my nose finally acknowledges the strong scent of her arousal that reality comes crashing back to me.

I rip myself away from her, panting with my need for her and the effort it took to pull away from a taste and a scent that is unlike anything I've ever experienced before, and I know I'll never get enough of.

She stares back at me, her eyes wide, her lips swollen from my kiss, and her hair a mess from my hands.

I slide my hand through my hair, trying to get a grip.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that."

I watch the surprise and the desire dissolve into anger and shame.

"Sure," she spits out, turning toward the door.

I slam my hand against the wall, refusing to let her leave.

"This is NOT a rejection," I say slowly.

"Really. Because that's EXACTLY what it feels like," she says, voice catching.

her

I growl and push forward, pressing her body against the wall again. I take her chin between my thumb and forefinger and turn her face, forcing her to look at me.

"You think I'm always in control?"

"Aren't you," she growls at me.

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"Most of the time, yes, I am. But not with you, Enya," I say, watching the uncertainty flicker in her eyes.

“From the moment I’ve met you, I’ve struggled to maintain control around you. I even called my father to talk to him about it,” I tell her honestly.

“What did he say?” she asks.

I swore I’d always be honest with her and Shane, and I intend to keep that promise.

“He asked me if I thought this was the early signs of a mate bond.”

“Is it?” she asks.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 244[591 words]

“I don’t know. What I do know is that I’m your guardian. That puts a power differential between us. I never, ever want to worry that something happened between us because of that power differential.”

I close my eyes, trying to regain some semblance of the control that Enya so easily steals from me.

“I never want anything to happen between us because of that power shift. It’s not fair to you. I know we’re very close in age, but the reality is that you are not eighteen and I am. In our society, that is a big difference. I’m responsible for ensuring your safety, not exploiting my position to take advantage of you.”

“What if I want this too?” she asks. Her sweet voice is nearly my undoing. But I can’t fuck this up by having sex with my ward, no matter how desperate I am to have her.

“That could be a result of me holding you at night, or you feeling safe because I’m here. What you feel for me may not be the mate bond. We won’t know that for sure until you turn eighteen. Until then, I have to keep you safe, even if that means keeping you safe from me.”

“I see,” she says, putting her hands on my chest and pushing me away from her.

“Do you?”

“Yes. Don’t worry, I’m not Violet. I won’t throw myself at you,” she says, her voice practically a growl.

“I know very well that you are not Violet. Violet holds no interest for

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1. me. You, on the other hand, are extremely interesting to me,” I say.

“But not interesting enough that you’ll bypass your precious morals?”

“I’m trying to do the right thing here, Enya.”

“Yes, I see that,” she says, moving away from me. I suddenly feel cold, like the heat of her body was the only thing keeping me warm.

“I’ll make it easy for you, Christian,” she says.

Before I realize what she’s doing, she walks out of the room.

I stare at the door, not sure if I want her to come back in so I can finish what we started, or stay away, so I can be the man and guardian that I’m supposed to be.

While my brain is still struggling with instinct, one side wanting to do what’s right and one side wanting to claim what my wolf considers ours, there’s a knock at the door.

“Come in,” I say, turning away so whoever it is can’t see the struggle on my face.

“I brought you some food, Christian, since it seemed like you and Enya were going to miss breakfast,” Shane says.

I school my features before turning around to face Shane.

“Thank you. Ready to go look over some medical records?” I ask, taking a bite of the breakfast burrito he brought for me.

“Let’s do it,” he says.

Enya

The moment Christian’s door closed, I raced to the nearest bathroom

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and locked myself in. I press myself against the wall, fighting the tears that are threatening to fell.

My lips are still tingling from the kiss. My very first kiss. It had felt so right. Everything about that kiss had been what I've dreamt of for

years.

Until it wasn't.

I squeeze my eyes shut, willing myself not to cry, but the tears refuse to be contained. I swipe at them, ineffectively trying to keep them at bay. But they just keep coming.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 245[613 words]

I slowly slide down the wall to the floor, pressing my head to my knees as the tears come. He can call it whatever he wants, put a pretty little bow on it like he's doing the noble thing, but in the end, he rejected

1. me.

I hear Christian and Shane walk past the bathroom, talking about whatever they are going to do today. I hold my breath, willing him to not hear me. I clamp the walls of my mind down, refusing to allow him to feel or see me like this; not when it's about him.

When I finally feel more like myself, I stand and go to the sink to wash my face. When I look in the mirror, I barely recognize the woman looking back at me. My hair is a mess, my lips are swollen from his kisses, and my eyes are bright, too bright, like I'm running a fever, or have just experienced the most mind-blowing kiss of my life.

I splash cold water on my face then run my fingers through my hair, trying to put it back into place. I finally give up and after taking a deep breath, I step out of the bathroom. Breakfast is over and nearly everyone has left the dining hall.

I walk to the kitchen and see the omegas cleaning up.

"Hi, Alpha. Did you miss breakfast?" Jolie asks me.

"I did, Jolie. Is there anything left?" I ask.

"I saved you a plate," she says.

"You did?" I ask.

“We saw that woman verbally attacking you, Alpha. And we saw

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Chapter 46

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Alpha Christian defend you and send her to the cells. We thought maybe he was getting on to you about nearly attacking her and when you didn't return to breakfast, we figured we were right. Now, seeing the tear stains on your face, we know we were right. So, it's a good thing we've got you covered, Alpha,” another omega, Ellen, says to me, handing me a plate of food.

“You ladies are the best,” I say, ignoring the comments about my tear-stained face. They don't need to know the real reason for my tears, but they couldn't be farther from the truth.

While I eat, I take the time to ask them about their lives, what's going on with them, and then if there is anything I need to focus on for the kitchens.

“We heard a rumor that Alpha Christian's family was coming this weekend. Is that true?”

“Yes, his parents and his teenage sister will be arriving on Friday afternoon. I'm not sure how long they're staying but at least through the weekend,” I say.

“Do you know what they like to eat? We want them to feel at home here,” Jolie says.

“Let me ask Christian,” I say, opening the mind link. His connection to me is so quick that I get a mental image of opening a door and having him fall in, like he was leaning against the door just waiting for me to

it for him. open

‘Enya ...’ he begins, but I cut him off.

‘Is there anything in particular we should prepare for your family while they are here this weekend?’

‘They eat anything. No allergies to worry about,’ he says.

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Chapter 46

Jas Face Pers

‘Any favorite dishes?’ I ask.

‘My mother makes a mean chicken fricassee. If your omegas can make one that is top-notch, she’ll love it. Oh, and they all love fresh pasta.’

‘Great, thanks,’ I say.

‘Enya...’ he says, but I slam the walls of our mental connection closed before he can say any more.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 246[679 words]

I relay the information, then go upstairs to check on the rooms on our floor. My room is a couple doors down from where Christian is staying on, the opposite side of the hall. Shane’s room is across from mine, but farther down the hallway, there are empty rooms for special guests.

I spend the rest of the morning and early afternoon going through the rooms, making a list of what needs to be done and making sure that everything will be ready for Christian’s family to feel comfortable when they arrive on Friday.

Throughout the time I’m working, I periodically feel Christian push against the mental wall I have up. Well, he should realize that being my guardian doesn’t mean that he has unrestricted access to my mind. I leave my walls shut tight, refusing to allow him entrance.

I’m not sure what time it is when there’s a knock on the door behind me. I turn, seeing Jolie with a tray of food.

“Alpha asked if you’d eaten. When I said no, he asked me to bring you a tray of food.”

“Where is he?” I ask, walking over to take the tray from her.

“He and Alpha Shane are in the pack hospital.”

“What are they doing there?” I ask.

She shrugs. “Don’t know. I just know he asked for two trays of food and when I delivered them, he asked if you’d eaten. He’s really great, isn’t he?” she asks, smiling.

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I want to say no. I want to tell her he's a complete and total jerk. But instead, I nod.

"Yeah. He's great. Thanks for the food."

"Do you need help up here?" she asks me looking around.

"Actually, I have a list started of things we need to do before Alpha Christian's parents arrive. Do you want what I have so far?" I ask her.

"Sure," she says.

"Did Alpha Christian say how long they were going to be in the pack hospital?" I ask her.

"No, but I think he's planning to start afternoon warrior training today. That's what the warriors are saying anyway."

"What time?" I ask her, looking at the clock.

"Four o'clock, I think."

"Great, thanks Jolie."

"No problem, Alpha," she says.

After she leaves, I feel Christian nudging against my mind again.

I take a deep breath and settle my nerves as best I can.

'What?' I snap, opening the mind link.

'Are you okay?'

"I'm fine, Christian. As I mentioned earlier, I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself."

36.34%

08:57 0

"That's not what I mean, and you know it," he growls.

'What do you mean?' I ask snarkily.

'I mean after I kissed you this morning, are you okay?' he asks, surprising me by being so honest and upfront about what happened.

‘I already told you. I’m not Violet. You have nothing to worry about. I won’t harass you for attention, Christian,” I say. Even I can hear the venomous words spitting out of my mouth.

‘Warrior training. Four o’clock. You’re with me,’ he says, his own venom matching mine.

Oh, hell no!

I grunt in a non-committal way, then shut my mind off to him again. I’m pretty sure I heard the start of an angry snarl before I slammed my mental walls closed.

I look at the clock. It’s two o’clock. I sit, eat the lunch that Jolie brought me and make my final list. At three o’clock, I take my empty tray and the final list of things we need to do in the rooms downstairs, handing both to the omegas that are working in the kitchen making dinner.

Then I make my way outside to the forest, before stripping and shifting. I have no intention of sparring with Christian this afternoon. If he thinks he’s going to use that time to talk to me or make n him, he’s about to find out that he’s very, very wrong.

ilk to

I take off running, letting my wolf stretch her legs and enjoying the freedom that being a wolf shifter allows.

63.04%

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 247[551 words]

Christian

The time in the pack hospital is frustrating, made more so because I’m worried about Enya and struggling to focus. I know she felt rejected. She couldn’t be farther from the truth.

I press myself against her mind, but she doesn’t open herself to me. I could force it, but I don’t want to. I don’t want to force her to do anything, especially after this morning. This is the exact power differential that I was trying to avoid.

When she opens her mind to me mid-morning, I physically jerk, unprepared for mental connection. I quickly recover and discuss food preparation for my family’s visit. Then, when I try to talk to her, she slams her mental walls back down.

“Is everything okay, Christian?” Shane asks.

“Fine. Are you seeing anything/out of the ordinary here?”

“No, but I don’t know much about medicine. It all seems pretty standard.”

That’s my thought too. The problem is, if their Alpha was getting worse, shouldn’t they have done more than the standard tests?

I force myself to focus until I hear Shane’s stomach growling. I reach out to Ellen and ask her to bring two trays of food to the hospital.

When she arrives, I ask her if Enya has eaten.

“I haven’t seen her Alpha. She went upstairs this morning to inventory

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the rooms and what was needed for your family’s visit. She might have lost track of time,” she says.

“Can you have someone take her a tray of food please?” I ask.

“Sure thing, Alpha.”

When she’s gone, I pull my plate over.

“Is everything okay with you and Enya?” Shane asks. I know he’s protective of his sister. He’s either already very intuitive, or he’s hyper aware of her, possibly feeling a protectiveness because he’s the Alpha heir, even though she’s older.

“Yeah.”

“Is this about what happened with Violet earlier?” he asks.

“Yes, partly. She doesn’t understand why I was concerned about that interaction.”

“Why were you concerned? I mean beyond the obvious that Violet was challenging Enya and bad mouthing you,” he says.

I look around, making sure no one is around. Then I lean in. “Because we don’t know who might be helping Dorian. He couldn’t have done all of this alone. That’s why we’re here looking at the medical files. What if Violet is part of that group. What if she, or someone else, decides that Enya or you are too much trouble. I’m not willing to put either of you at risk. She may have merely been mouthing off after I put her in her place during warrior training, but it could be more than that. And since your sister doesn’t know that we’re questioning your parents’ deaths, she won’t know to be extra careful.”/

“What are you going to-do?” he asks.

41.05%

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“I know you didn’t want me to say anything to her, but I think I need to. She needs to understand why I went a little ballistic on her this morning. She needs to understand that when I say I’m worried about her, it’s because I have a very good reason to be concerned. And honestly, this...” I say, gesturing to the medical records we’ve been pouring over, “isn’t making me feel any better.”

“What do you mean?” he asks.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 248[604 words]

I look around again. If the medical records have been doctored, or information wasn’t documented properly, then it means someone in the hospital was involved in letting Alpha Colin die. If they did document properly but failed to identify that he was dying, then it’s treatment and the doctor and clinical staff need to be fired and replaced.

poor medical

“Why wouldn’t they have done more testing on your father? Like you, I’m not a medical person. But this all seems like standard protocol. At some point, they must have realized that your father was dying. Why didn’t they start checking other options? It all remained very standard.”

I watch as realization dawns on him.

“Someone here had to help.”

“Maybe more than one someone. I’m starting to cross reference names of who was providing care to your father and when. I’m also going to get a recommendation from the Council and send this to a medical professional who CAN determine if this is appropriate care for an Alpha whose health declined until he died.”

After we finish eating, I get back to reviewing the medical records and autopsy report of the Alpha Colin. Because it’s still bothe

g me, I nudge Enya's mental walls a little harder, trying to get her attention.

As soon as they open and I hear her snappish 'What?' I know she's still pissed off with me. Once again, I lose my control when it comes to her. I tell her that she'll be sparring with me this afternoon. She may not be willing to talk to me, but she damn well isn't going to ignore me. At least during warrior training she can punch me. Maybe this time I'll get

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to see just how strong she is while she works off her anger. Then, hopefully, we can talk.

By three thirty, I'm ready to pack it in. I need to see Enya. I need to **see** if my foolish loss of control has ruined *the* started to earn with her. I pack up the medical records, letting the little bit of trust I had medical staff know that I'm taking it with me. They are obviously not pleased with that, but too bad. They're going to be even less pleased if I find out that they were involved, in any way, in Alpha Colin's death.

When we get back to the packhouse, I jog upstairs, smelling Enya's scent in the hallway. I love her light floral scent. And damn if that doesn't remind me that her taste is even better than her scent.

I quickly go to my room, drop off the medical records, and change for warrior training. Then I go to Enya's room and knock. When she doesn't answer, I open the door and find her room empty. Good, hopefully she's already downstairs.

I don't wait for Shane, knowing he'll be right behind me. Instead, I quickly jog downstairs needing to see her. I need to know if I've destroyed the trust between us.

As soon as I walk outside, I realize she's not there. I reach out to her mind again, but her walls are still on lockdown.

I growl but keep it quiet. This woman is trying my patience. Where the fuck is she?

When Braden and Shane arrive, I realize that Enya has no intention of coming to warrior training.

I start the class, showing the warriors a new skill.

'Where the fuck is your sister?' I ask Shane in the mind link. If he doesn't know, then I'll blast through her mental walls. I've had enough

49.37%

of this bullshit.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 249[590 words]

‘I just reached out to her and asked. She said she can’t make it today.’ ‘Why?’ I ask, barely containing my fury.

I can tell he’s battling between protecting his sister and being honest with me.

‘She sounded like she was out for a run,’ he finally says.

“Braden, Shane, can you guide the class through the maneuvers I just taught. I need to go check on something,” I say.

“Yes, Alpha,” Braden says. Shane nods, but he looks concerned. He probably should be. I have a very strong desire to put Enya over my knee and spank that obstinate ass of hers.

I force myself to walk casually away from warrior training. Once I hit the forest line, I strip quickly and shift, letting my wolf stretch while I search for her scent. When I catch it, I take off, running hard and fast.

I growl, but I keep it low, and I force my wolf to stay silent. He wants to howl that he’s on the hunt, but that will only warn her that I’m coming.

I keep our head low, following her trail. It seems like sh. looping the pack lands, staying as far away from warrior training as possible.

Her scent begins to get stronger, and I know I’m catching up to her. I’ve just followed her scent around the front of the packhouse, into the forest on the other side where very few people go. I’m even more angry now, because if someone was to go after her, this would be a perfect place to ambush her.

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I turn a corner and catch a glimpse of red fur. I push my wolf harder and leap over some fallen debris that is in my way. The sound of **our** landing must have been loud enough for her to hear me because her wolf turns and sees me barreling down on her.

She gives a startled yelp and starts to push herself harder. I growl, this time loud enough for her to hear me and push my wolf as fast **as he** can run. Enya is large being an Alpha wolf, but my wolf is larger.

When I'm close enough, I leap, my wolf tackling hers to the ground. She begins to fight me, her wolf scrambling to get out from underneath me, but I bite down on the back of her neck, snarling as I blast through her mental walls.

"ENOUGH, ENYA! Do not make me force your submission!"

She yelps again. I'm not sure if it's because I've pinned her by her neck or perhaps no one has ever forced themselves past her mental walls. Either way, it works, and I feel her wolf begin to calm underneath my hold.

I hold her there, physically making my point that she needs to calm herself. I force her mental walls to remain open, but I don't push into her mind. I really don't want to force her submission. I'm trying to force her compliance.

When I finally feel her mind and body relax, I slowly release my hold on her neck. I slowly lift my body off of hers and step back. As she slowly gets to her feet, I shift, standing in front of her, chest heaving with the force of my run and from my frustration and anger at her defiance.

"Shift!" I say. I don't put my Alpha command behind it. I don't want to I want her willing compliance.

When she doesn't immediately respond, I feel my anger increasing.

45.40%

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 250[694 words]

"Enya do not make me give you an Alpha command. This is EXACTLY what I was talking about earlier today. You are putting **me** in a position where I'll be forced to use my power over you, and I don't want to *EVER* do that. So please, I am asking you again, shift."

This time, she listens. She shifts but stays on the ground, looking **up at**

1. me.

I crouch, not liking the position of me standing over her. I don't want to be threatening, especially not with her.

"We're going to talk and we're going to talk now," I say to her.

"There's nothing to talk about Christian," she says, but the catch in her voice betrays her feelings.

"I disagree. You have two choices, Enya. You can talk to me here. Or you can go to the packhouse, put some fucking clothes on, then spend what's left of warrior training punching me and getting this anger out before you talk to me. Either way, we're having a conversation and we're having it today."

I watch her lips tremble, and she looks away. I stay still, waiting for her to decide which option to take.

"That was my first kiss, and you pulled away and said it was a mistake," she says, turning to look at me with tormented eyes that nearly break me.

"Tell me how that's not a rejection."

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08 58

Enya

I watch Christian sigh, most of the fight going out of his posture.

On top of everything else, the man is built like he was made **by the** Moon Goddess herself. He has broad muscular shoulders that **slide in a** deep V to his narrow hips. His sculpted chest flows into a chiseled eight-pack with an adonis belt that makes my mouth water and my tongue desperate to lick it. His muscular legs are tight with the force **of** his run and what's between his legs... holy mother Moon Goddess! **I** had no idea they were that large or long or thick.

I shake my head, getting rid of the mental image of Christian standing in front of me, panting like furious god ready to rain hellfire on me. I also have to push away the desire to know exactly what that hellfire would feel like.

It's the reminder that he doesn't want me that has it feeling like a bucket of ice water was just thrown over me, washing away the heat that his body caused. He's not for me. He's made that very clear.

"I didn't say it was a mistake," he says, softly and slowly.

"You said..."

"I said I shouldn't have done it!" he interrupts. "And I stand by that. Geez, Enya, this right here is a perfect example of exactly WHY I shouldn't have done it."

He stands and begins pacing, running his hand through his hair. I watch that sexy wayward curl drop back over his forehead.

"Rejecting you would have looked a whole lot like what I did with Violet this morning. THAT was a rejection. I made it perfectly clear to her and anyone else that was watching that I have absolutely no

interest in her.

"

34.12%

He steps towards me, his eyes intense with his emotions. "You,

however, try my patience, you make me feel so fucking out of control that I want to pull my hair out, and every time you mouth off to me; all I want to do is teach you a lesson with MY mouth. I have been attracted to you since the moment I first saw you. Under normal circumstances, that wouldn't be a problem. But for some reason, Enya, I don't seem to have any control when it comes to you. And that's not fair to you. I am supposed to be helping you work through your grief, helping you regain your footing after losing your parents, helping Shane claim his pack so he's ready to take over in two years. I am NOT supposed to be losing control and kissing the woman I'm supposed to be protecting."

"But I wanted it, too," I say, my own voice sounding small.

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